

The Broadwing



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Message from the Editor March 2023

Dear Members and Friends,

Members periodically make suggestions about improving The Broadwing that make me wonder how I never thought of that. So, this issue has upcoming field trips and upcoming events listed.

We introduced Virtual Bird Walks to keep us connected when we couldn't have in-person meetings. This month we will Zoom with VBW 28.

Quizzes were also an effort to keep us all in touch. March will begin with Quiz number 178, and I realize I was mistaken in thinking we might run out of material long ago.

Sandy

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Next club meeting: Wednesday March 8, 2023
Virtual Bird Walk: Thursday, March 16, 2023
Theme: Egrets, Herons, and Wading Birds

Brewer Sparrow in New Jersey

By Rick Wright

East is East. And West is West.

And then there's Mill Creek Marsh.

These 200-some acres of tidal marsh and open impoundments, bordered by the Hackensack River and the eastern spur of the New Jersey Turnpike, are best known as the most important staging site in northern New Jersey for southbound semipalmated sandpipers—more than 6,000 individuals feed and loaf here at the end of July.

Birders visiting at other times of the year have tallied more than 225 other species, among them a notable number of strays from the West. An American avocet, rare anywhere in New Jersey away from the southern shore, spent several days here last August, and a yellow-headed blackbird



materialized in a large cowbird flock in September 2020. In July of that same year, a decidedly out-of-season meadowlark along the trails, first reported as an eastern, turned out to be Hudson County's first western meadowlark, one of very few records from New Jersey since the first in 1951.

Even more surprising was a prairie falcon photographed on the mudflats in March 2015, an extremely rare sighting—if the bird was in fact a wild vagrant and not, as is apparently the case for most other easterly records, an escaped captive. The matter of provenance notwithstanding, no one expected this spectacular find to ever be eclipsed.

And indeed that dashing predator from the High Plains went unequalled—until the early autumn of 2022. On October 6, Ewelina Gradzka, Sandy Sorkin, and I encountered a tiny, long-tailed gray sparrow on the path around the southern impoundment. It took only the briefest of first looks to convince us that this was a sighting requiring careful documentation, and Sandy was able to take a number of photos from all different angles as New Jersey's first Brewer sparrow obligingly shifted

on its perch—a good thing, as the bird evaded all efforts to relocate it after our initial sighting.

This sparrow is an extraordinary rarity anywhere east of its breeding range, which stretches from the western Great Plains to eastern California; extremely few strays have ever been detected even just 100 miles east of the usual distribution in Nebraska and Kansas. Farther east, this species has occurred only at long intervals, in vanishingly small numbers, at widely dispersed sites from northern Quebec to Virginia's Eastern Shore. Another was seen in New Brunswick, Canada, in January and February of this year.

The Brewer sparrow is the rarest of western passerellids along the Atlantic Coast, easily outnumbered, for example, by vagrant golden-crowned sparrows or green-tailed towhees; as such, this species was far from the top of any list predicting the next additions to New Jersey's avifauna.



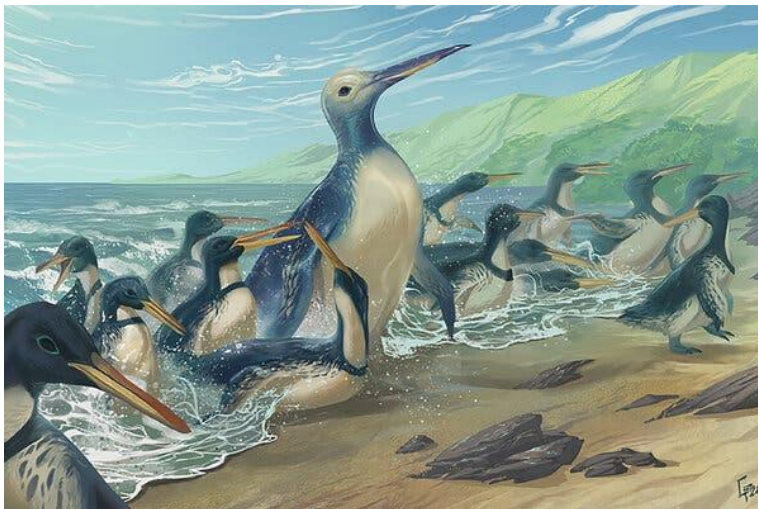
'De-extinction' company looks to the dodo

A company that made headlines two years ago with its plan to bring the mammoth back from extinction now says it wants to revive the dodo. Colossal Biosciences, which was co-founded by geneticist George Church, says it will investigate how to "de-extinct" *Raphus cucullatus* by piggybacking on the genome and reproductive cycle of its closest living relative, the Nicobar pigeon (*Caloenas nicobarica*). The effort is not expected to make money, but would be a symbolic win for Colossal's genetic technologies, the company says. Others call it a wasteful distraction. "Preventing species from going extinct in the first place should be our priority, and in most cases, it's a lot cheaper," says biologist Boris Worm.

[Scientific American](#)

The Biggest Penguin That Ever Existed Was a "Monster Bird"

Fossils found in New Zealand highlight an era after the dinosaurs when giant flightless birds prowled the seas for prey.



Simone Giovanardi

New Zealand has been a haven for earthbound birds for eons. The absence of terrestrial predators allowed flightless parrots, kiwis, and moas to thrive. Now researchers are adding two prehistoric penguins to this grounded aviary. One of them is a beefy behemoth that waddled along the New Zealand coastline nearly 60 million years ago. At almost 350 pounds, it weighed as much as an adult gorilla, and is the heaviest penguin known to science.

New York Times

Not Only Are Bird Species Going Extinct, but They Might Also Lose the Features That Make Each Species Unique

July 21, 2022 — Climate change is causing a mass extinction the likes of which has not been seen in recorded history. For birds, this biodiversity loss has implications beyond just species loss.

Higher Elevation Birds Sport Thicker Down

Feb. 15, 2021 — A new study examined feathers from 249 species of Himalayan songbirds, finding that birds at higher elevations have more of fluffy down than lower elevation birds.

Big Brains or Big Guts: Choose One

Aug. 23, 2019 — A global study comparing 2,062 birds finds that, in highly variable environments, birds tend to have either larger or smaller brains relative to their body size.

Birds' Voice Boxes Are Odd Ducks

Sep. 24, 2018 — Birds' voice boxes are in their chests instead of their throats as in mammals and reptiles. Scientists aren't sure how or why birds evolved these unique voiceboxes, but a new study sheds some light.

Diving birds are more prone to extinction, says new study

Dec. 19, 2022 — Diving birds like penguins, puffins, and cormorants may be more prone to extinction than non-diving birds, according to a new study by the Milner Centre for Evolution at the University of Bath. The authors suggest this is because diving birds are highly specialized and therefore less able to adapt to changing environments than others.

From the Archives

1943 article in *Audubon* magazine on hawk watching in the Watchungs, which describes efforts by MBC members at the site of the Montclair Hawkwatch as early as 1937.



EDWARDS:
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F. P. W. A. PETERSON

HAWK WATCHING

in the Watchungs

—By Edward B. Lang—

BROAD-WINGED hawks — hundreds of them in climbing, swirling flocks—appear over the factories and teeming suburbs of northeastern New Jersey on some fall days. They climb until they are only tiny specks in the sky, then straggle off into the southwest on set wings. Before they have disappeared other flocks come out of the smoky haze. Flock follows flock in a slow parade before the astonished eyes of members of Newark's

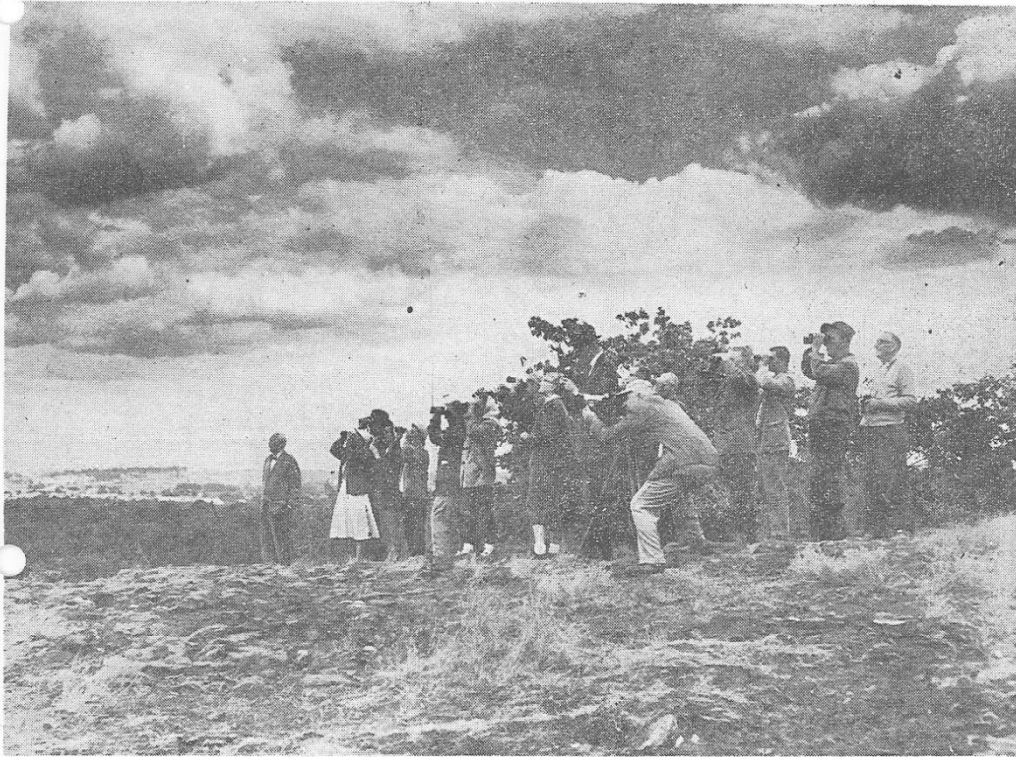
Umer Ornithological Club, watching from a clearing on the crest of the Watchung Mountains.

Such an observation is the reward of many week-ends spent patiently watching migrating hawks. The watchers are less interested in seeing rare and unseasonal birds than in discovering some new facts about the hawks that fly over their very back yards each spring and fall.

Unlike so many of our birds that

SEPTEMBER 19, 1959.

The New York Times.



EYING HAWKS: Birdwatchers keep a vigil atop high cliff at the Montclair Hawk Lookout Sanctuary, dedicated yesterday at Montclair, N. J. The New York Times

Bird Club in Montclair Dedicates Hawk Lookout

Quarry Bought by Engineer Given to Audubon Group

By JOHN C. DEVLIN
Special to The New York Times.
MONTCLAIR, N. J., Sept. 18—Bird lovers today dedicated the Montclair Hawk Lookout Sanctuary at the edge of a tract here where bulldozers are turning earth for a housing development.
The observation point in an old quarry has been described as second only to the Hawk Mountain observation point near Pottsville, Pa. The land here was purchased by an electronics engineer, George W. Breck of Bloomfield, who turned it over to the Montclair Bird Club.
He joined the club ten years ago, and said he had made the gift "so our children's children can enjoy such spectacles as we see here today."

Today's treats for bird lovers included the passing of a flock of 255 broadwing hawks on their way south for the winter.

The dedication ceremony was attended by twenty-five bird watchers. The deed for the promontory and its approach on Edgecliff Road was presented by Frank P. Frazie of Upper Montclair, president of the Montclair Bird Club, to John J. Neal Jr. of Greystone Park, first vice president of the New Jersey Audubon Society. The deed makes the land a sanctuary in perpetuity.
The gift is under the control of the New Jersey Audubon Society, which operated nature havens that extend from the Bennett Bog Wildlife Sanctuary in Cape May County to the Lucine L. Lorrimer Sanctuary at Franklin Lakes in Bergen County.
The old quarry here is thir-

teen miles due west of Times Square and has long been a favorite of hawk enthusiasts. Because of the cliffs on the face of the quarry, vertical air currents are used by the hawks to gain great heights, from which they soar on stiff wings to the next point where new thermal currents send them aloft again.

The present hawk migration was first observed here Sept. 9. Since then an estimated total of 3,000 hawks, mostly broadwings, have been observed passing over the promontory. Tomorrow, bird lovers will begin an across-the-state hawk watch to record and tabulate the numbers of each species of hawks passing south.

WESTPORT MOVING TO BUY SHORE CLUB

Officers Deny It's for Sale but Group Will Make Study

Special to The New York Times.
WESTPORT, Conn., Sept. 18—A committee has been named here to investigate the feasibility of the town's purchasing the Longshore Beach and Country Club, despite a club statement that the club was debt-free and not on the market.
First Selectman Herbert E. Baldwin said that he had reason to believe the club could be purchased and named a committee of sixteen.
The club, on 169 acres, is on South Compo Road. It consists of an eighteen-hole golf course;

Man Who Spurned U.S. Wins Back Citizenship

WASHINGTON, Sept. 18 (AP)—Nicholas Petrulli, who renounced his United States citizenship to stay in the Soviet Union and then changed his mind, has been declared an American national and given a one-way passport back to the United States.
The State Department ruled that Mr. Petrulli's attempted renunciation of United States nationality Sept. 3 in Moscow was not a legally competent act.
Mr. Petrulli, 38 years old, a sheet metal worker from Valley Stream, L. I., received a medical discharge from the United States Army Air Force after World War II. He went to Moscow this summer with the announced intention of becoming a Soviet citizen, saying he was troubled by too many contradictions in the democratic way of life.

Migrant Trap

Æneas Faber

Two

"I missed it." Anne Marrow, Do's younger sister, glowered at us in a red-hot fury, as if her failure to see the bird had been not bad luck but betrayal. I'd seen that look before on the faces of the club's die-hard listers—most memorably on Tuck's, twenty years before, when he emerged from a park restroom to find that the sounds of the plumbing had just flushed the Swainson's warbler the rest of us had been watching. But this morning the smoke wasn't coming out of Tuck's well-furred ears, or Bob Lenquist's, or those of any of the other three or four numbers-obsessed fanatics among us; this was Anne, who, I was sure, had never even heard of a black-throated gray before that morning, and whose attendance at our last three or four field trips, while certainly welcome, was a bit of a puzzle. Up until this spring, Anne had always declined Do's invitations to visit such inscrutably punctuated local hotspots as Veteran' Park, Macdonalds Meadow, and Bed-Ford Woods; and when she did finally accompany us on our late April rail foray, she seemed more interested in keeping her feet dry than in keeping her daylist. This morning, she'd showed not a spark of enthusiasm for any of the lifers we patiently tried to show her, and I had started to wonder why she would want to participate in anything as strenuous as a big day if she couldn't even be bothered to look at the birds. And now here she stood, her little fists clenched, looking at me in a way that made me wonder if we shouldn't perhaps search her daypack for weapons, or at least put her at the front of the group so I wouldn't have to keep looking over my shoulder all day.

"Here, Anne, over here, have you got a blackpoll yet?" It was Phoebe, bless her, and Anne stalked off to pretend to admire the little boreal visitor; she was calmer when they rejoined the group, and I saw Do and Phoebe exchange one of those infuriatingly knowing smiles I had noticed them sharing before. After lunch, when we split into two parties to cover the flooded fields on the outskirts of Averno, Phoebe helped Dorothy and Anne squeeze into Penny's yellow sportscar, then joined me in Tuck's Subaru.

"Not exactly the ideal birdmobile, that Italian job," Tuck sneered. "Hope we don't hit any mud out west of the sewage ponds, or they'll have a long afternoon waiting for a tow. Remember the curlew sandpiper, Andy? Took Triple A three hours even to find us out there on those gumbo flats, and about that long to figure out how to yank us out!" I always had the feeling that a bird didn't count for Tuck unless the circumstances of its discovery were somehow at least potentially calamitous. I buckled my seatbelt.

Phoebe answered from the back seat: "No, I've never understood either why Bob couldn't have bought her something a little more practical. But we shouldn't have any problems today. The front didn't drop that much rain last night, and the wind's coming up—it'll dry out the roads, but probably keep the birds down, too. We're going to have a hard time with the grassland sparrows, I'm afraid." Phoebe ran down her checklist and shook her head, then tapped me on the shoulder. "Andy, couldn't you try to be just a little more sensitive when it comes to Anne? I know she can be difficult, but she is a lovely young girl, and I'd really hate to see her hurt. And in the long run, it will be easier for you and Dorothy if you've managed to bring her around to the idea gradually."

To be continued

SAVE THE DATE COUNTING FOR ELSE

The Montclair Broadwings will soar once more in the fortieth New Jersey Audubon World Series of Birding, on May 13, 2023.

We are calling all hawk watchers, counters, interns, friends, and family of the Montclair Hawkwatch to count birds on that day, wherever in the world you are, to add to our species list—and to raise funds to support its important conservation mission.

Our goals are simple: to have the highest number and diversity of bird species of any team in the World Series and to raise the most funds by a New Jersey Audubon Ambassador team.

Details on how to register and submit your count will be provided in future communications.



Montclair Bird Club Upcoming Field Trips

Week of March 5–12 Woodcock Watch

specific date dependent on the woodcock's calendar

Meet at 5 p.m. at the address provided on registration. To register, text Beni at 973 202-5579 with your phone number and email, or email that information to MBCoutings@gmail.com. Attendance limited to 12 people.

Each spring, American woodcock males put on an amazing courtship display that we can witness here in New Jersey. At dawn and dusk, the males produce a loud *peent* call from the ground, then spring up into the air, flying in a wide spiral with their wings twittering. Once they reach an altitude of 200 or 250 feet, they zigzag back to the ground, chirping as they go.

Club member Deb DeSalvo has generously offered to host a group to view the woodcock courtship dance at her farm in Tewksbury. When the woodcocks have begun to display, Deb will give us a heads-up, and the outing will happen in the next day or two. Woodcock courtship usually happens sometime between March 5 and 12. Once we arrive, we will walk around Deb's property for a short time, birding as we go. At sunset, which is around 6 p.m., we will walk to a wetland area where we are likely to hear and, with luck, see the birds.

March 19 (rain date March 20) Liberty State Park: Birds & Beer

We will meet at the south end of the park, in parking lot 4 near the administration building on Morris Pesin Drive: [see Park Map here](#). Best access is via the NJ Turnpike Extension, exit 14B. Weather in March can be cold and windy, so dress appropriately. We will be walking the paved Hudson River Walkway past the Caven Point wildlife preserve, about 1 mile each way. Expected birds include bufflehead, hooded mergansers, red-breasted mergansers, green-winged teals, American black ducks, mallards, double-crested cormorants, Atlantic brants, and maybe some early migrants among the common wintering passerines. Scopes will be helpful. Restrooms are available in the park office.

We will bird for approximately 2 ½ hours, after which those who are interested can meet at [Zeppelin Hall Biergarten](#) for lunch, featuring a wide selection of European and American beers, German sausages, and American barbecue.

For more information, please call Bill Beren at 862 283-8754.

April 15 (rain date April 22)

Mill Creek Marsh Photography Trip

Join us for a Montclair Bird Club photography field trip to Mill Creek Marsh. We'll meet at the entrance gate by Bob's Discount Furniture at 8 a.m. with cameras, tripods, scopes, and smartphones. We'll take our time on the trail, keeping the sun over our shoulders and concentrating on photographing birds, landscapes, butterflies, groundhogs, and any other slice of nature we encounter. If you are new to photography or just prefer to watch photographers, you are welcome to come along. Email Sandy Sorkin at MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com if you have questions.

Directions to Mill Creek Marsh from the Montclair area:

Search your gps for Mill Creek Marsh Trail, Secaucus, NJ 07094, or for Bob's Discount Furniture and Mattress Store, 3 Mill Creek Dr., Secaucus, NJ 07094. The entrance to the marsh is right next to the furniture store.

1. Take NJ Route 3 East. Stay to the right, as you will want to get on the Service Road.
2. Follow NJ-3 E to State Rd 3 E Local in Secaucus (Service Road). Take the exit toward North Bergen/Kennedy Blvd/I-95 from NJ-3 E. The exit comes up quickly, *immediately* after the second overpass.
3. Take Harmon Meadow Blvd. and Park Plaza Dr. to your destination. Once on Harmon Meadow Blvd., there is a T-intersection by Sam's Club; turn left and stay to the right. This will take you to the Mill Creek Marsh entrance next to the furniture store.

April 24 (rain date April 25)

Paulinskill Wildlife Management Area (Hyper Humus)

Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at Warbasse Junction Rd., Lafayette, NJ.

Paulinskill Wildlife Management Area (Hyper Humus) consists of ponds, marshes, and wooded areas that create a diversified habitat for plants, birds, and other animals. The area was once a large bog, filled with endemic plants. In the early 1800s, the bog was partially drained in an effort to decrease the mosquito population. Mining of the peat bog began in the early 1900s, creating several ponds. Once the peat mining stopped, the Scotts Company used the facility along Route 94 to bring in and package peat moss, but they were forced to close due to excessive truck traffic. The packaging facility was bought by Carson Construction, and the rest of the property was donated to the state, becoming Paulinskill Wildlife Management Area. The Paulinskill and Sussex Branch rail trails border the property.

Our trail will be fairly flat, with occasional slight rises in elevation, and some spots might be wet if it has rained recently. We will start along the Paulinskill River rail trail and then walk into

Hyper Humus. We will be looking for early migrants, waterfowl, and the nesting bald eagles. There is always something different to see at this rich and diverse hotspot. Bring binoculars, a scope if you have one, water, and a snack. This trip will last about half the day.

NOTE: There is construction at the bridge on Warbasse Junction Rd. just north of the parking lot, so you can't access it from Route 94. If coming north on Route 15, turn left onto Sunset Inn Rd. (Quik Check and Exxon stations are at this corner), then take the first right onto Sunset Inn Limecrest/Garrison Rd. (the two names are on Google Maps but most know it as Garrison Rd.). At the "T," make the right turn onto Warbasse Junction Rd.; the parking lot will be about half a mile ahead on the left. There is a bathroom there.

For more information or questions, contact the trip leader, Karyn, at kdc05@ptd.net.

May 4 (rain date May 5) Central Park, Manhattan

A Birder's Meet-up

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the northeast corner of 72nd Street and Central Park West, is across the street from the B and C subway entrances and the Dakota apartment building.

In the midst of the steel and concrete of New York City, Central Park is an oasis of trees and plants, insects and other food sources for birds migrating along the Atlantic coast. Over 210 species of birds have been seen in Central Park, and club member and NYC resident Ardith Bondi has offered to show us around the park and familiarize us with some of its bird-rich areas.

Expect a 3-hour walk. Bring binoculars, and wear a hat and good walking shoes. You may need bug spray and sunscreen.

We will go to a nearby restaurant for a late breakfast/early lunch after birding. Please let Beni know at mbcoutings@gmail.com if you want to join us.

May 13 (rain date May 14) South Mountain Reservation, West Orange

Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the main parking lot on Crest Drive (2nd on the right; you'll see a wooden sign that says Bramhall Terrace, entrance to Summit Field).

South Mountain Reservation is a 2,100-acre nature reserve in southern Essex County. Nestled between the first and second ridges of the Watchung Mountains and overlooking the urban sprawl of the greater Newark area, it can serve as a tremendous migrant trap in the heat of spring migration. We will walk several trails in the reservation and hope to see good numbers of warblers, thrushes, sparrows, and other birds taking advantage of the feeding opportunities

in the varied habitats here. Many of the trails are paved, but it is recommended that you wear sturdy hiking boots, as some trails can be a little rocky and uneven.

For more information, email mbcoutings@gmail.com.

Directions from the Montclair area: From Exit 7 on I-280, take Pleasant Valley Way south for 3.5 miles, then turn left onto South Orange Avenue. Take this road for 1 mile and turn right onto Crest Drive, marked with a sign for the dog park (you will encounter Crest Drive just after you've reached the crest of the hill). Stay straight on Crest Drive; within half a mile, there will be a very long parking lot on the right, in an open space with a vista to your left. We will meet at the far end of this parking lot.

Cold Brook Farm, Tewksbury, NJ Saturday, May 27, 2023 8:30AM (Rain or shine—trip to be held unless it is pouring)

Join us at Cold Brook Farm, the home of club members, Deb and Jason DeSalvo. We will explore the farm fields, wooded areas, river and wetlands on and bordering their property to discover the many different migratory and breeding bird species that use this restored property to refuel and to nest. Deb and Jason have been working hard to remove invasive plant species and plant native species to improve the habitat for insects, birds and other animals, so this it is a real treat to explore this bird-friendly habitat. Last year, we visited earlier in May and saw 39 species including four varieties of swallows.

Bring binoculars, a snack, something to drink. If it has rained recently, waterproof boots are recommended.

Email mbcoutings@gmail.com if you want to attend. Address and driving directions will be sent to you once you register.

RECENT OUTINGS

Richard W. DeKorte Park—January 28, 2023

Beni Fishbein

Six of us gathered in the parking lot by the West Shorebird Pool in DeKorte Park at 8 a.m. The day started out cold and blustery, but warmed up nicely as the sun gradually came out. The birding started out well, with a smattering of ducks including northern shovelers, American black ducks, and many northern pintails seen right from the edge of the pool. We walked south to the Transco Trail, where we delighted in seeing hundreds of canvasbacks, bunches of common and red-breasted mergansers, and an unexpected Eurasian wigeon. Common goldeneye had been reported in the area, and three of these handsome ducks were visible in the scopes across the Saw Mill Creek Mudflats. Along the Saw Mill Creek Trail, we got excellent looks at buffleheads in good light, close enough that we could see the greens and purples of their iridescent black head feathers.

After our exploration of DeKorte, two of us continued to Clarks Pond in Bloomfield. There we found, among the hundreds of Canada geese, a single cackling goose that had been reported there the day before.

In total, 38 species were seen, 33 at DeKorte and 5 additional at Clark's Pond.

Cackling goose	Double-crested cormorant
Canada goose	Turkey vulture
Mute swan	Northern harrier
Northern shoveler	Bald eagle
Gadwall	Red-tailed hawk
Eurasian wigeon	Belted kingfisher
Mallard	Blue jay
American black duck	American crow
Northern pintail	Black-capped chickadee
Green-winged teal	Ruby-crowned kinglet
Canvasback	European starling
Bufflehead	Northern mockingbird
Common goldeneye	House sparrow
Common merganser	House finch
Red-breasted merganser	American tree sparrow
Mourning dove	White-throated sparrow
Ring-billed gull	Song sparrow
Herring gull	Red-winged blackbird
Great black-backed gull	Northern cardinal

Eagles and Owls—February 6, 2023

Donna Traylor

On February 6, thirteen MBC members and friends met up for an eagle search along the Delaware River. It was in the low 40s with a light chilly wind that just reminded us that it was still the middle of winter. We headed up Route 97 on the New York side of the Delaware, enjoying the views from Hawk's Nest. Our first stop was a short ten-minute walk down to the river. Normally this park-like setting is good for winter passerines— not this day. The woods were very quiet and there were no ducks on the water. However, our first two bald eagles made a distant appearance along the ridge. Well, now I could rest easy knowing that the eagle portion of the trip was golden (actually bald...). The group made three additional stops north along the river. These are well-defined locations with "Eagle Viewing Area" signs along the way. Next stop, no sightings. Stop after that, two eagles perched. Final stop at the Roebling Bridge was the best. There were eagles sitting in a tree not far from the bridge, which provided the photographers in the group a good opportunity for images. There were eagles flying up and down the river disturbing the flock of rock pigeons. A conservative total of the bald eagles observed today would be ten, all adults. We also added hooded and common merganser, Canada goose, northern harrier, eastern bluebird, and Carolina wren to the trip list. As a note, once we crossed the bridge, we were in Pennsylvania. There is a rest room at the parking lot, and on weekends, the Zane Grey House is open just half a mile upriver. The house also doubles as the Eagle Institute headquarters, so it is worth stopping in to watch the short film and get the most up-to-date information. The Eagle Institute also runs a blind at Rio Reservoir, about 20 minutes south on Route 42, another worthwhile destination.

There were now owls to find, so the group double backed to New Jersey and headed for Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge. Our first stop was the parking lot at Oil City Road at the Liberty Loop Trail. The refuge here straddles Sussex County in New Jersey and Orange County in New York. As we got out of our vehicles, we saw three sandhill cranes flying away from us on the New York side; eventually they doubled back and we got them in New Jersey. An immature white-crowned sparrow was skulking in a bush in back of the kiosk and allowed itself to be photographed. Since it was still pretty light out, most of us decided to do some birding along the sod farms just down the road. This was a good choice, since we added an up-close look at American kestrel and red-shouldered hawk along with thousands of snow geese in the distance and red-tailed hawks circling overhead. As we started to lose light, Wayne texted that he had a short-eared owl back at Oil City Road. We zipped back and were treated to two short-eared owls hunting over the marshes. There was a little back and forth between the owls and the northern harriers, who felt they still had hunting rights since dusk had not quite fallen. As the photographers put away their cameras, one of the owls decided to circle directly overhead: always the way. All in all, it was a great day to be out birding with friends!

Nevada—February 15–18

Rick Wright

February: A natural time to seek out some warmer weather and some fancy birds. Both elements—the birds and the weather alike—are a bit of a gamble at this season, so what better destination for a quick trip than Las Vegas?

If we'd bet on warm weather, we'd have lost. The temperature on each of our early morning starts was at or even just below freezing, and only on our last day did even the afternoon see 50 degrees. Happily, the wind that made our first visit to the Henderson Preserve so chilly let up for the rest of our stay, and jacket and gloves were enough to keep us from shivering. All the same, we found ourselves drawn to the sunny spots whenever we found ourselves standing for more than a few seconds.

We arrived in Las Vegas at 8:40 am, after a long and uneventful non-stop from Newark. The shuttle to the rental car offices felt nearly as long, but soon enough we were on our way to see



some birds. The connection of Sandy's phone to the car's navigation was a godsend, making it easy for us to find just about any site. Our first was the Henderson Preserve, Las Vegas's most famous birding locality and even more impressive in person than in the celebratory articles and essays that have appeared in such

abundance since it was established almost thirty years ago.

Even this late in the season, waterfowl numbers were dazzling, with swirling shovelers everywhere. A pair of blue-winged teal made for a nice local sighting, and everything from a Ross goose to flocks of gobbling cinnamon teal offered excellent opportunities for watching and photographing. A soaring red-shouldered hawk was a surprise. Best of all, though, was a fine crissal thrasher in a patch of desert quailbush, running down the path and eventually letting itself be photographed in documentation of Sandy's lifer.



After lunch, we returned to the area just north, where the Clark County Wetlands Park preserves and protects a long stretch of Las Vegas Wash. We started from the nature center parking and walked up the wash to the Big Weir Bridge. The usual desert birds gave good views even at midday, and here too, waterfowl numbers were surprisingly high; common goldeneye and a dozing common merganser were the highlights among the abundant ring-necked ducks and a dozen other species.



Flocks of American coots swam against the current at the rapids created by the weirs, looking bizarrely like small sooty torrent ducks in the white water. From the bridge, we watched Savannah, Lincoln, white-crowned, and song sparrows come to drink, and two soras emerged from the cattails and rushes.

We celebrated the day's successes with dinner at Remedy's [sic]. The next morning found us up early for the hour's drive to Corn Creek. Patches of snow still lay on the roadsides and trail edges, but Townsend solitaires, phainopeplas, mountain and western bluebirds, and a second red-shouldered hawk adult helped us overlook the chill. As the morning warmed, sparrows and goldfinches came into the feeders for some leisurely watching.

On our way to lunch, we stopped in at Floyd Lamb Park, where the large lake hosted an assortment of native waterfowl mixed with feral birds of in some cases indeterminate ancestry. The stands of pines harbored a red-naped sapsucker, American robins, and a small flock of red crossbills; our only greater roadrunner of the trip was here, too. The biggest surprise was a gang of three evening grosbeaks busily and silently chewing on elm buds; the long bill, most easily seen on the male, identified them as *brooksi*, the expected subspecies west of the Great Plains and north of Arizona.



With such good birding already behind us, we decided to spend a couple of afternoon hours at Red Rocks, where the scenery was as stunning as the birds were hard to find.



The startling scarcity of anything feathered was made up for to some extent by the antics of several remarkably tame Woodhouse jays, on the sharp lookout for spilled cheetos, sandwich crumbs, and human infants in the picnic area.

Our second dinner at Remedy's made us yearn gently for some of that picnic scrap ourselves. But it

was solid food, and it provided enough energy for us to rise the next morning in time to arrive at the Henderson Preserve just as it was opening. Once again the waterfowl numbers were almost overwhelming, and our morning's decent total of nearly sixty species included several we hadn't seen on our earlier visit.

After several hours at the preserve, we decided to check Sunset Park, halfway between our hotel and the airport. GPS worked in mysterious ways, but we eventually found ourselves on the edge of a large, decidedly urban lake and picked our tentative way through the Pokémon



fans to see what we might see.

We found a riot of barnyard ducks and geese and tremendous numbers of feral pigeons, all quite assertive in demanding their right to be fed. But the island—named Easter, no doubt, both for the great stone head at one end of it and for the likely hatching date of most of the domestic waterfowl—had a nice flock of cormorants, their double crests waving

in the breeze, and a fine female ladder-backed woodpecker was an addition to our trip list.

Still hoping for rarities, we returned to Corn Creek after lunch. Unsurprisingly, it was much quieter in the afternoon than it had been on our first visit, but the local raven pair was still loudly adding material to the nest a-building in a tall cottonwood, and the feeders remained attractive even as most of the white-crowned sparrows seemed to have switched to feeding on buds and leaflets in the trees. It was drinking and bathing time for the ruby-crowned kinglets and Townsend solitaires, and we enjoyed some unusual perspectives on birds more often seen above eye level than on rocks in the middle of a small stream.

We were back in Las Vegas in time for a final supper—not at Remedy's—and a good night's rest before setting off to the airport in the morning. The trip had been short, but full of good birds and good times, even if we did lose our dollar's stake at the airport gambling machines.



THE BACKYARD AND BEYOND

February 2 to April 30, in the Wayrick Gallery at the NJA Scherman Hoffman Sanctuary

This show is about a journey of birding photography, beginning right where you live and expanding outward to other horizons. It showcases a part of my own photographic journey of discovery and expansion into new and unexplored areas. Ultimately, I hope that it will in some small way inspire others to begin their own photographic journey from right where they are and expand into something greater. The Gallery of Images is separated into four parts:



Backyard Birds. Start where you live. Take a moment to stop and look at the treasure that is right in front of you. You might be surprised at what you find!

Shore Birds. Explore the incredible birding diversity that New Jersey waters provide you with.

Raptors. Our Garden State provides many more opportunities to photograph birds of prey than many would think.

Beyond. Time to blaze your own photographic trail. Create your own personal projects. Tell a story unique to you, a tale that is personal and rooted in your experiences. Share what you see with others through the medium of photography.

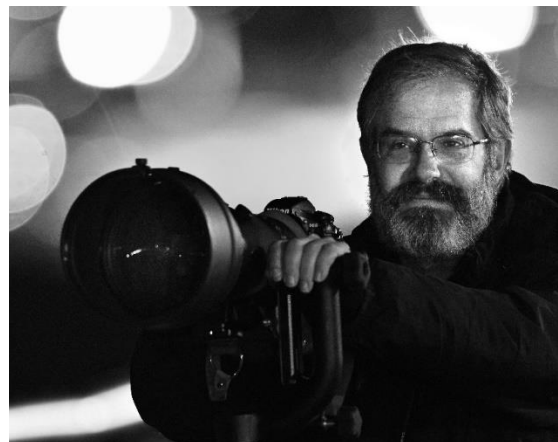
I have sincerely enjoyed capturing the images chosen for this show and hope you will enjoy them too.

Robert Mathewson

Robert Mathewson is a full-time professional photographer, who holds bachelor's and master's degrees in cinema from Bob Jones University. He has also earned CPP (Certified Professional Photographer) status from the Professional Photographers of America and holds the position of program chair on the Board of the Professional Photographers of America, New Jersey Chapter (PPANJ).

Mathewson states, "In recent years, wildlife photography generally and bird photography specifically have become a passion of mine. I love sharing my appreciation of creation with others through the medium of photography."

Over the years, Mathewson has held a variety of jobs in the photo industry, and has experience in wedding, product, commercial, portrait, sports, and volume photography.



Virtual Bird Walks

2023

January	26	Winter
February	27	A Month in a Birder's Life

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

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

2020

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

Montclair Bird Club Meetings

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 Greenstone.
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	Member's Meeting.
September	Exploring the Big Bend in Southwest Texas, by Donna Traylor.
October	Build-a-Bird, 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

2022–2023 Officers

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Vice President	Evan Cutler
Secretary	Pat Sanders
Treasurer	Sandy Sorkin

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Wayne Greenstone
Don Traylor
Rick Wright

From the Editor's Desk

Please feel free to email any items you would like included in future issues of *The Broadwing*. Please include pictures and any other news that will reduce anxiety and make us smile.

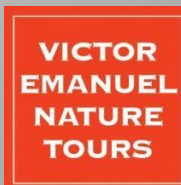
Sandy

MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com

Upcoming VENT Tours

VentBird.com

Kansas	Shorebirds on the Prairie	April 23–29, 2023
France	Birds and Art in Provence	May 22–30, 2023
Colorado	A Summer Stay in Estes Park	June 18–24, 2023; June 17–23, 2024
Colorado	Northeast Colorado Extension	June 24–27, 2023; June 23–26, 2024
Germany	Birds and Art in Berlin	September 28 – October 7, 2023
Italy	Venice and the Po Delta	October 7–15, 2023
Israel	Birds and Culture in the Holy Land	November 3–15, 2023
Nebraska	Sandhill Cranes and Prairie Chickens	March 15–22, 2024
Alabama	The Gulf Coast and Dauphin Island	April 21–26, 2024
Greece	The North of Greece	May 5–20, 2024
Scotland	Wild Scotland	May 26 – June 27, 2024
Spain	Birds and Art in Asturias	August 28 – September 6, 2024



In This Issue

- Page 1: House sparrow, by Sandy Sorkin (SS)
- Page 3: Brewer sparrow (SS)
- Page 9: Peregrine falcon, by Wayne Greenstone
- Page 16: Sage thrasher, Ross goose, by Rick Wright (RW)
- Page 18: Woodhouse jay (RW)
- Page 19: Phainopepla (RW)

March Virtual Bird Walk

The theme for March 16: **“Egrets, Herons, and Wading Birds”**

You select the birds.

You are welcome to display your own images or forward them to Sandy at MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com, to be included in a group PowerPoint.



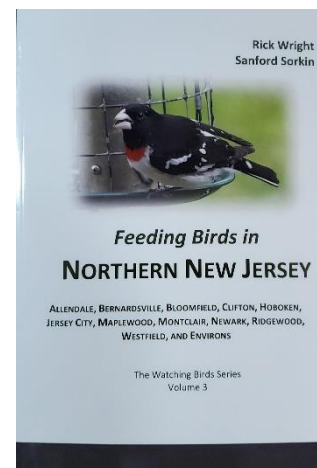
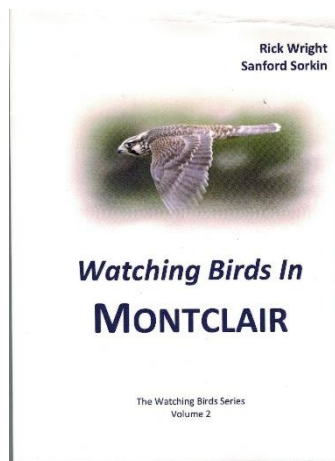
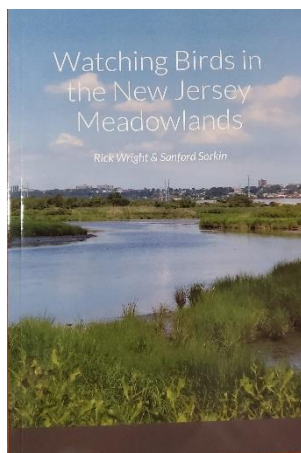
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The MBC Bulletin Bird

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Refreshments JoAnn Katzban
Betsy Cohen

**The Broadwing Editor
and Photographer** Sandy Sorkin

THE BROADWING

The *Broadwing* is published ten times a year:
We vacation during July and August.

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

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