



Late December 2016

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Don't miss... George Nixon on "Slitherin', Slimy, Creepy, Crawly: Reptiles and Amphibians" at the Jan. 11 meeting. See page 2 for more info

## November birding on Cape Cod

A travelogue with photos, by Sandy Sorkin

November birding on Cape Cod is accompanied by the distraction of amazing foliage, good food, and unpredictable weather. The weather shouldn't be an issue, but none of the forecasting services seem to have any consistency in telling me what to wear and whether the sun will be shining. Luckily for us, we almost always have better weather than we're told to expect.

Our Cape destination is consistently Chatham, right on the Cape's elbow. We visited once about 20 years ago and just keep coming back. In that time my interests have transitioned from sand, water and food to birding, photography, and food. Not that there is anything wrong with the beach, I appreciate the beauty of the sun and surf, but I am much more interested on what I find walking at the water's edge, flying over, or hauling out. But this is November and the month doesn't lend itself to basking anyway.

But back to the November birds... The top four birds by the water every day will be double-crested cormorants, herring gulls, ring-billed gulls, and great black-backed gulls. They are in the air, on the sand bars, and begging at the Fish Pier side-by-side with the grey seals.



Mockingbird



Black-backed gull with crab

## January 12 meeting: George Nixon on reptiles and amphibians

Reptiles and amphibians have been around since before the dinosaurs. Some are quite common and easily observed while others remain elusive and mysterious. All of them have fascinating life histories with aspects that can be quite surprising. Yet many of these species, especially the frogs, are threatened with fungal diseases that threaten to wipe out entire populations. Some species especially snakes, are often hated and killed on sight. All however, are inoffensive and deserve admiration. In this program we will examine the natural history of these marvelous animals.



Photo courtesy of MBC website

Cape Cod report, continued from page 1

(Other than hard core birders, everyone you meet will talk about seagulls not gulls. Be wise and never correct them. Remember that it wasn't *Jonathan Livingston Gull*.) But depending upon when you get here, the common eider will outnumber just about every other species with estimates are well into the thousands. You will also see hunters on North Beach with their hounds going after every eider daring to fly by.

Back from the beach and in the scrub, goldfinch and house finch are plentiful. There is, of course, always a mockingbird hanging around until you take its picture. The picture is my priority and I am always encumbered with a large lens and a pair of binoculars. Feeding alongside the finches you can expect to see palm and yellow-rumped warblers. The occasional robins, cardinals and titmice will also periodically flit into view, and are usually preceded by a small band of black-capped chickadees. Not as often, the downy woodpeckers and red-breasted nuthatches will make an appearance.

Raptors in the late fall are not as plentiful. Northern harriers continue to work the marsh and grassy areas adjacent to the bay. Resident red-tailed hawks are distributed nicely around town. The occasional sharp-shinned and Cooper's can also be found where there is a good chance of nabbing a smaller bird.

I don't try to count the "wire" birds. Starlings are quite numerous, and the Mourning Doves compete with them for the premiere spaces closest to the telephone poles. You can also expect Fish crows, American crows, and a house sparrow or two.

Other late season species that can be seen regularly include: loons, white-winged scoter, black-bellied plover, long-tailed duck, greater yellowlegs, mallards, great blue herons, and black ducks. Be prepared for winter or eclipse plumage.

I know I haven't included everything, and your best bet is to check eBird before a trip.

## Search for Eagles field trips

The next trip in the Search for Eagles series takes place on Sunday, Jan. 1, but if you miss it, there are two more chances to participate, in February and March.

From the MBC website:

Dr. S. Marie Kuhnen Memorial Field Trip Series: Search for Eagles in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Upper Delaware Scenic River

Join John (Jack) Padalino, president emeritus of the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) and Paul F-Brandwein Institute, in partnership with the National Park Service Delaware-Water Gap NRA. Travel by caravan to search for eagles the first Sunday of January, February, and March 2017. (The first trip took place in December.)



Photo by Sandy Sorkin

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Meet at 8 a.m. at the Pocono Environmental Education Center OR 10 a.m. at the Historic Callahan House, 101 Route 209 South at mile marker 21, Milford, Pa., WEATHER PERMITTING. Dress warmly, bring binoculars, field guides, and a lunch. The search for eagles will conclude along the Lackawaxen River approximately 4 p.m.

To participate in a Search for Eagles field trip, please register via email to [jack@brandwein.org](mailto:jack@brandwein.org) or call 570-296-6752, to indicate which field trip(s) you will be attending. There is no charge to participate.

Remaining Eagle Field Trips take place on Sunday, Jan. 1, 2017; Sunday, Feb. 5; and Sunday, March 5

Eagle observation data that we collect will be shared with the National Park Service, Sussex County Bird Club, Eagle Institute, and Hawk Migration Association of North America HMANA.

An Eagle identification field guide and a "Search for Eagles" activities hand-out will be provided by the Brandwein Institute. Join us to search For Eagles, the symbol of our nation.

*Mark your calendar: Feb 18-20, 2017, Presidents Weekend: Cape Ann, Mass., trip led by Don & Donna Traylor*

On Saturday, birding will most likely begin at Amesbury, Newburyport, Plum Island, and Salisbury Beach. This could produce winter finches, snowy & short-eared owls, northern shrike, and white-winged gulls. Sunday we will work toward Gloucester and Rockport doing a circuit concentrating on waterfowl, grebes, and gulls. The longest hike will be approximately half a mile out to Halibut Point. A scope will be handy if you have one. On Monday we will visit any spots missed or need rechecking depending on bird reports. We normally conclude about midday to allow the drive back to NJ during daylight.

If you're planning to attend, email the Traylor at [dtraylor@ptd.net](mailto:dtraylor@ptd.net). For hotel information, see the Field Trips page of the MBC website.



## Coming up...

Look for a wrap-up of the 2016 fall Hawk Watch, more info on field trips for the coming year, and your photos in upcoming issues of the Broadwing.

Thanks to Sandy Sorkin for permission to use so many of his photographs in this issue.

At right, a red-tailed hawk from Sandy's photo files



## The MBC Bulletin Bird

### Article recommendation

<http://www.nature.com/news/the-sparrow-with-four-sexes-1.21018>



Photo by E.O.

### Bird alert information

NJAS Hotline: 732-872-2595  
NJAS website: [www.njaudubon.org](http://www.njaudubon.org)  
Hawk Watch: <http://>

### A note from the editor

Thanks for the nice comments I got on my inaugural issue, and for your patience as I learn my way around putting a newsletter together.

Send trip reports and other items that may be of interest to the members to me at [oguss.editor@gmail.com](mailto:oguss.editor@gmail.com), or mail to Elizabeth Oguss, 200 Valley Road, Montclair NJ 07042

Best wishes for a healthy 2017 with lots of great birding.

### Meetings of the Montclair Bird Club

Regular meetings of the Montclair Bird Club are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at the Union Congregational Church, 176 Cooper Ave., Upper Montclair. The public is welcome at all programs.

There are no meetings in July, August, and December.

Find the Montclair Bird Club at  
[montclairbirdclub.org](http://montclairbirdclub.org)  
[facebook.com/montclairbirdclub/](https://facebook.com/montclairbirdclub/)