



Publication of the Montclair Bird Club

Montclair, N.J.

June 2019

Volume LXIV, Number 5

Another year flies by



Bobolink, by CheepShot on Wikimedia Commons, CC by 2.0

Members Meeting June 12

The Montclair Bird Club's annual Members Meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. Bring your dinner and enjoy the company of other members. The club will supply ice cream for dessert! And then it will be time to share images of nature adventures we have enjoyed over the last year. Please have your images on a memory stick.

This is also the time to renew your membership. Remember to bring a dues check and save us a stamp and a reminder letter! Looking forward to seeing everyone at this fun-filled evening.

FIELD TRIPS

All field trips are open to Bird Club members and the public at no charge. Please RSVP by calling the MBC field trip hotline at 973-746-0256 to let us know that you intend to join us on the field trip. Leave a message that includes the field trip you are going to attend, your name and the best number to reach you in case of last minute changes.

You can also call the hotline the day of the trip to see if the trip is cancelled because of weather or other factors.

Wednesday, Aug. 7: **Mill Creek Marsh**

Leader: Rick Wright

Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot of Bob's Discount Furniture in Secaucus. The gathering of southbound Semipalmated Sandpipers is the highlight of this trip, a natural phenomenon as impressive as any in northern New Jersey. As the tide rises and pushes the birds out of the salt marshes of the Meadowlands, as many as 6,000 Semipalmateds and a smattering of other shorebirds seek shelter in the impoundments and on the ancient cedar stumps of Mill Creek. We will also enjoy breeding birds such as Baltimore Oriole, Marsh Wren, and Yellow Warbler; migrant passerines at this time of year can include Bank Swallows and Warbling Vireos. Our walk is about a mile on the broad, level paths. We plan to be done by 10:30 a.m. Wear long pants and long sleeves, and bring a good sunhat, notebook and pencil, water, and a snack; binoculars are helpful but not necessary, as the shorebirds often feed on the mud just below the trails.

Looking ahead to next year...

A note from Bill Beren: Please be generous with your time and volunteer to lead a walk to your favorite birding places, particularly if you haven't previously led a field trip. In the meantime, mark your calendars for the field trips that are already on the calendar:

Oct. 19, 2019: Brookdale Park. Leader: Rick Wright
March 22, 2020: Liberty State Park Birds and Beer. Leader: Bill Beren
May 9, 2020: Bonsal Preserve. Leader: Deb DeSalvo
May 16: Verona Park. Leader: Deb DeSalvo

IN MEMORIAM

One of our newest club members, Ted Kiesewetter, passed away on May 24. His interest in bird watching and photography began when he started enjoying our members' pictures. His first bird walk with the club was at DeKorte Park where the first birds we saw included a Sora and a Virginia Rail. I believe Ted thought every walk would have similar results. He enjoyed listening to our stories and always had a wonderful attitude about taking more walks and taking more pictures.

— Sandy Sorkin



Photo courtesy of
Laura Kiesewetter

Editor's note: Ted's obituary suggested that memorial donations may be made to the hospice organization of your choice, the YMCA of Montclair, or the National Audubon Society.

Field notes

Liberty State Park Birds & Beer

April 7, 2019

This year we opted for better weather and pushed the field trip into the first week of April. While the weather cooperated, the birds didn't, as the bird count was much lower than in recent years.

Gone were the great flocks of brant and bufflehead, although a few were still hanging around. We did see a red-breasted merganser, green-winged teal, and quite a few black-backed gulls off in the distance. A beautiful red-winged blackbird took flight right in front of us, displaying his bright red wing bar. One lone killdeer, mockingbirds, a great blue and a great egret, cormorants, herring and ring-billed gulls and a crow rounded out our list, along with expected robins, mockingbirds, grackles, Canada geese, and mallards.

As usual, the evening ended with brats and beer (pale ales for JoAnn and myself) at Zeppelin Hall and a drive through Branch Brook Park on the way home to see the cherry blossoms.

— Bill Beren

Nebraska Sandhills

April 13-17, 2019

Including Rick Wright, our Nebraskan guide, seven of us made our way out west to see thousands of sandhill cranes, and dancing greater prairie-chickens and sharp-tailed grouse. I believe the total species seen on the four-day trip was 111, and for the least experienced bird watcher of the group (that would be me) 10 life birds.

All my previous trips to Nebraska centered around the eastern part of the state where cornfields extended to the horizon. In April what you see is quite different. The fields haven't been planted yet, and the vistas appear to be endless. The

itinerary took us from the Omaha airport, located between Omaha and the Missouri River boundary with Iowa, across most of the state to Mullen, a village in Hooker County. An interesting ecological side note is that we followed train tracks most of the time, and every hour included coal trains of 100+ cars going east from Wyoming and an empty train making the return trip.

Rick demonstrated his acquaintance with every side road and birding location over a 1,300-mile round trip. On Saturday we birded Fontenelle Forest – Uplands North, specifically looking for red-headed woodpeckers. At least two were accommodating and alit nearby for photographs. A total of 22 recorded species included: hairy woodpecker, downy woodpecker, northern flicker, yellow-bellied sapsucker, and 25 white pelicans. Later that Saturday, we saw 33 species at Schramm Park SRA, 20 species at Wehrspann Wetlands Mitigation Pond, and 33 species at lake Manawa. Lake Manawa had some large numbers: 100 lesser scaup, 120 ruddy ducks, 85 double-crested cormorants, 80 white pelicans, and 1,000 American coot.

On Sunday we visited five more locations on the drive from our hotel to Mullen. The drive is a little over five hours if you don't make birding stops, and it took us to the next time zone on the other side of the state. The most exciting stop of the day was at sunrise at the Alda Bridge Overlook. The estimate is that we saw at least 10,000 sandhill cranes on the river or migrating overhead punctuated by a stunning sunrise. Later in the morning we stopped at the Crane Trust Nature and Visitor Center. The species there included: field sparrow, Harris's sparrow, vesper sparrow, song sparrow, and 350 yellow-headed blackbirds.

Monday and Tuesday mornings, we left the Sandhills Motel at 4:30 a.m. for a ride in the motel's little yellow school bus to visit the blinds. The first day we went to see the sharp-tailed grouse and the second to see greater prairie chickens. Both leks were a short distance from the motel, and the blinds by the leks were repurposed school buses. (This was my first ride in a school bus in over 50 years, and it was exactly as I remembered.) The mornings were very cold, but the lighting improved as the sun rose, and in short order it even warmed up.

I've seen grouse before, but never at a lek performing their dances. The greater prairie chickens seen from the school-bus blind were a completely new experience. Both mornings viewing and photographing from the blinds, along with seeing the thousands of sandhill cranes were the highlights of my trip experience. I should also point out that the landscape in western Nebraska, even without the birds, would warrant a driving trip. The colorful rolling hills, bright blue skies, and herds of Black Angus cattle with their calves dotting the slopes made the entire drive an interesting treat.

— Sanford Sorkin

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The MBC Bulletin Bird

MBC meetings and dues

Regular meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m., at Union Congregational Church, 176 Cooper Ave. All programs are open to the public.

MBC does not meet in July, August, or December.

Annual membership dues are \$35 for a family, \$25 for an individual, and \$5 for students. Applications for membership can be found at montclairbirdclub.org on the About page.

BROADWING

publication schedule

The Broadwing is published five times a year: January, March, May, late summer, and October.

Send photos, field notes, or articles to the editor at oguss.editor@gmail.com or mail to Elizabeth Oguss, 200 Valley Road, Montclair, NJ 07042. Thanks!



Photo by E.O.

Useful links

New Jersey Audubon:
njudubon.org

Cornell Lab of Ornithology:
<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/>

Links of interest:

Something fun, courtesy of Bill Beren: [Balloon birds](#)

What [United Airlines](#) is doing about raptors at Newark Airport, courtesy of Sandy Sorkin.

Thanks to Bill Beren for this one too. Get out a hanky (happy tears!) for this bobcat.



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