



March 2019

Volume LXIV, Number 4

Cape Ann



Surf scoters, photo by Donna Traylor

From the president:

Amazing how quickly another year has passed by and it was again time for our annual Cape Ann, Massachusetts birding trip.

As we did last year, Don and I opened this Montclair Bird Club trip to the Sussex County Bird club members. We had a great — and large — group joining us up north. There were 17 of us: eight members of Montclair, five members of Sussex, two prior members of both clubs who had retired to New Hampshire, and two friends now living in western Massachusetts related to a past Montclair member.

My brother, the meteorologist, promised good weather for the first two days and he was spot on. Temperatures were in the upper 30's and low 40's on Saturday and Sunday with gentle breezes Sunday — excellent for Cape Ann.

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SPRING AND SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

MBC has a new field trip hotline!

All field trips are open to Bird Club members and the public at no charge. Please RSVP by calling 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 due to weather or other factors.

Upcoming trips. Starred trips are described below. Details on summer trips will be in the next issue of Broadwing.

* March 20: Sandy Hook. Leader: Rick Wright

* April 7: Liberty State Park: Birds & Beer. Leader: Bill Beren

* May 4: Verona Park. Leader: Deb DeSalvo

* May 11: Bonsal Preserve. Leader: Deb DeSalvo

June 5: High Point and Stokes State Forest. Leader: Rick Wright

Aug. 7: Mill Creek Marsh Leader: Rick Wright

Wednesday, March 20: Return to Sandy Hook

Leader: Rick Wright

Meet at 7 a.m. in parking lot B, the second lot on the right (ocean) side of the road after entering Sandy Hook. We will bird several sites on the ocean beaches, on the bay, and in the woodlands. March is unpredictable at the Hook, but along with the last of the winter waterfowl and raptors, we can hope to encounter some migrant passerines and shorebirds. Most of our walks will be short; the trudge out the sandy Fisherman's Trail in search of eiders and shorebirds is about a mile each way through often deep sand. Dress for the weather, and bring binoculars, a spotting scope if you have one, a sunhat, notebook and pencil, water, and lunch.

Sunday, April 7, 2:30-6:30 p.m.: Liberty State Park Birds & Beer

Leaders: Bill Beren & JoAnn Katzban

Meet at the second parking lot on Morris Pesin Drive at the South end of Liberty State Park (exit 14B on the NJ Turnpike.) We will stroll on the paved Hudson River Walkway for about 1 mile in each direction, viewing waterfowl and some early migrants along the way. Typical species include brant geese, shovelers, green-winged teal, killdeer, red-breasted mergansers, buffleheads, yellow warblers, red-winged blackbirds and others. Then on to Zeppelin Beer Hall for bratwurst, BBQ and beer. Dress for the weather with comfortable walking shoes. Binoculars recommended.

Saturday, April 13, 8:30-11 a.m.: Garret Mountain Reservation

Leader: Walter Koenig

Meet at the Stony Brook Picnic Grove Parking Lot in Garrett Mountain Reservation, 8 Mountain Ave, Woodland Park. We will walk along groomed park trails circumnavigating the reservoir. We will be looking for early migrating warblers, towhees, orioles and other passerines.

Saturday, May 4, 8:30-10:30 a.m.: Verona Park

Leader: Deb DeSalvo

We will meet by the bridge, just south of the boathouse, in the center of the park. Verona Park is off Bloomfield Avenue in Verona. You can also access our meeting point by foot, if you park along Pleasant Valley Way. Bring binocs and wear walking shoes. We will remain on paved paths and will do a full loop of the park. This is a great walk for beginners. Last year's highlight was a young red-tailed hawk sparring with a mature Canada goose. We will definitely see a host of spring migrants, some of which will be nesting in the park.

Saturday, May 11, 8:30-10:30 a.m.: Bonsal Preserve

Leader: Deb DeSalvo

Meet at the entrance to Bonsal Preserve in Montclair (Riverview Drive, off Alexander Avenue, east of Grove Street). Spring migration brings a great many species to this jewel of a natural area hidden away in Montclair. Usual sightings include lots of migrating warblers, scarlet tanagers, woodpeckers, and ruby-throated hummingbirds. Excellent opportunity for families to be introduced to birding. Bring bug spray! And dress in protective clothing. Parts of the trail will be quite muddy, so wear appropriate footwear.

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Overnight Sunday there was a little snow but road conditions were fine until the snow began again around mid-morning Monday.

We began birding Saturday with a trip to Salisbury Beach State Reservation, followed by a number of stops in Newburyport and then on to Plum Island/Parker NWR for the afternoon. Sunday morning we headed south to Gloucester and Rockport to concentrate on the rocky Massachusetts coast. We concluded the trip with a morning at the New Hampshire shore, stopping at many of the small state parks to scan for species missed the previous days.

The birds were good but the species tally was low. One of our MBC members has kept records for the three decades plus that we have been doing this trip and he cited that this was the fourth lowest amount of species seen. However, the quality was good. We had satisfying looks at all three scoter species (including a cooperative group of three surf scoters at the jetty at Eastern Point in Gloucester — great for the photographers), long-tailed duck and harlequin ducks, common eider, red-breasted merganser, one northern pintail (nice find Glenn), gadwall and bufflehead, among others.

Raptor numbers were a bit low (although Jack tallied over 50 red-tailed hawks on the drive up), but we enjoyed northern harrier, bald eagle and merlin. Purple sandpipers didn't show themselves until far north on the New Hampshire coast.

New Hampshire also produced the only white-winged gull of the trip — a great look at an up close and personal glaucous gull. Alcids were fairly represented with a number of black guillemots (lifer for Maria!) and an extremely cooperative razorbill that had all the photographers grabbing for their cameras in Gloucester at the Fisherman's Monument.

We had a nice flock of horned larks in New Hampshire with a lone snow bunting thrown in (good sighting, Valerie) but not much in the way of passerines.

We finished the trip with three species of owls — snowy (several at Plum Island), barred (perching and flying in the dunes at Plum Island — great find, George) and an eastern screech in Newburyport (three times the charm — took that many tries to show it to the group after Don and I had found it in its hole Friday afternoon).

All in all, it was a wonderful weekend shared by good birding companions — with new friendships being developed between the clubs!

— Donna Traylor



Plum Island,
Newbury, Mass.

Photo by
David Oguss

Spring 2019 meetings of the MBC

March 13: From the Grasslands to the Sands: A Comparison of American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) and Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) Conservation Efforts in New Jersey

Emilie Luttman, graduate student at Montclair State University

April 10: The Annual Ruth Webster Lecture Series: Connecting Habitats Across New Jersey

The Nature Conservancy is partnering with the New Jersey Endangered and Non-Game Species Program to implement Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey, a project launched in 2012 to improve conditions for animals as they navigate around the dense road network in our state. To determine the most beneficial plan for wildlife, the work involves first assessing movement patterns across the landscape and identifying high wildlife mortality areas. Learn about this initiative and TNC's efforts from Neha Savant, Lands Connectivity and GIS Technician for The Nature Conservancy in New Jersey. She is TNC's science lead for this work in 2018, completing surveys in Northwest New Jersey in an area we call Bobcat Alley and around the Conservancy's High Mountain Park Preserve.

Neha Savant has a wide background in wildlife biology. Originally from California, Neha has studied red-eyed tree frogs in Costa Rica, tracked fritillary butterflies in western Oregon and most recently she's analyzed the DNA of long-tail salamanders across northern New Jersey. She just completed her master's degree in ecology, evolution & conservation biology from Columbia University. Neha is also a leader in the ongoing effort to make the field of wildlife conservation more inclusive and equitable for people from a diverse range of backgrounds.

May 8: Gardening from the Birds' Perspective

When we garden, we can bring beautiful birds to our yards through the plants we choose. Learn how to create bird habitats by using native bushes and flowers to provide cover and four types of bird food: seeds, fruit, insects, and nectar. Learn about what our backyard birds need to flourish and raise their young and how you can help them through specific plant recommendations.

Deb Ellis is a Master Gardener of Essex County and a co-leader of the Essex Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey.

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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: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kqy9hxxUxK0>

More on New Caledonian crows, courtesy of Sandy Sorkin: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-00032-0>



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