

The Broadwing



Publication of the Montclair Bird Club
August 2020

Montclair, New Jersey
Volume LXV, Number 8

President's Message August 2020

The July Zoom Virtual Bird Walk was quite successful. Members displayed 100 pictures and bird lists. The next one is scheduled for August 24, 2020, and I hope everyone is responsibly birding in the field or in the backyard to be ready and participate.

The new club website is attracting new visitors from all over, and we even have a few new corporate friends. You'll find their links on the home page and in the new **Friends** menu.

I would like to include photographs from more members on the website. Please let me know if you want to show your work.

Sandy

Turtles

August Meetings

12 MBC Wednesday meeting 7:30pm

24 Virtual bird walk 7:30pm

All meetings are virtual this year.

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Sparrows in the Yarrow

By Sally Poor

July 3, 2020

Since May, I have been re-evaluating the plants in my flower beds and yard, trying to plant more native plants so as to invite more native birds and insects into the yard, and to remove non-natives that provide no ecosystem benefit or that are invasive. One of the non-natives that I haven't removed yet, since it's not aggressively spreading, is a yarrow plant of the traditional yellow variety. Given its European origin, I was not entirely surprised when a bunch of house sparrows that have colonized my forsythia bushes (also European) started to congregate excitedly on the yarrow plant every morning. What was so compelling about this plant, I wondered? They hop around on the different branches, pecking at the leaves.

At first I thought they were eating something on the leaves, or even eating the leaves, but then I began to notice that occasionally one of them would fly away to the bushes carrying a little branch in its mouth. I've since learned that one of the things they may be doing with these branches is fumigating their nests. If you know yarrow, you know it has a distinctive fragrance, which is apparently a natural bug repellent. Smart sparrows! The yarrow plant is especially busy in the mornings right now because there are some new fledglings hopping around getting the hang of things. They haven't figured out what to do with the yarrow, but they clearly know they're supposed to do something. The sparrow yarrow party is now part of my morning ritual, too.



Sally Poor was born and raised in NJ (Bloomfield and Montclair). She went to Cornell for her BA, and Duke for her PhD. During her first academic job in California, she became interested in birds after joining a local hiking group and seeing a grouse for the first time. She now resides in Lawrenceville, NJ and teaches at Princeton University.



Caption Quiz

Starting with this issue, there will no longer be captions with the names of the pictured birds. The challenge will be to identify the bird. The name is probably in the accompanying text, but maybe not. It could be a random picture to fill in some empty space. You will be able to evaluate yourself with the answers found on the last page.



There were no arguments over who sat in the middle seat.



Passing through security is a breeze when you don't have pockets.

Our first online quiz, with questions and answers by Rick Wright, was a hit at our May 2020 meeting. Try your hand at the 29 questions below, and join us for the next virtual quiz at our August 12 meeting. *The answers are at the end of the quiz.*

1. What TV western's title character provides a nickname for the common yellowthroat?

2. Why do eared grebes eat their own feathers?

3. What owl is famous for asking "who cooks for you?"

4. Which US state is home to more endangered breeding bird species than any other?

5. What is the job of Harry Potter's snowy owl?

6. What was John James Audubon's native language?

7. What common New Jersey bird was once known as the bee martin?

8. Which direction does the bird face on a can of Kiwi shoe polish?

9. What is the principal food of the world's largest bird?

10. What is the state bird of Utah?

11. What extremely rare, extremely charismatic peep has been seen in North America less than six times and winters locally on tidal flats in southeast Asia?

12. What is the official English name of the bird once known as the marsh hawk?

13. Who provided the music for the movie version of Carl Hiaasen's "Hoot," the story of children fighting to preserve burrowing owls in Florida?

14. Where was the headquarters of Boehm Porcelain, famous for its china birds?

15. What is the official English name of the North American raptor whose scientific species name translates as "broad-winged"?

16. In what city are the wild parrots of Telegraph Hill resident?



17. What mythical creature is traditionally considered the monarch of the birds in China?

18. What was the name of the magazine published by Don Knotts's character in the movie "The Love God"?

19. Who sat all day on "six white eggs on a bed of hay" in a poem by William Cullen Bryant?

20. What New Jersey wildlife refuge was created to protect the Atlantic brant?

21. What do oxpeckers eat?

22. What bird visited a famous American poet once upon a midnight dreary?

23. What is New Jersey's only species of stifftail?

24. Which wood warbler sings "I am so lazy"?



25. Which of his students at Cambridge did Audubon's friend John Thomas Henslow send off on an exploring trip to South America in 1831?

26. What rare aerial insectivore did Paul Lehman discover over the South Cape May Meadows on November 6, 1997?

27. Which tern has been seen in the United States only at Cape May and across the bay in Delaware?

28. What startling seabird did Shawneen Finnegan discover flying over the median at mile marker 6 of the Garden State Parkway on May 21, 2000?

29. What did John James Audubon lose in St. Louis on Saturday, April 22, 1843, as he and his companions were preparing for the steamboat trip up the Missouri River?

Answers are on Page 6

The next virtual quiz will be held at the August 12, 2020, Montclair Bird Club Meeting. All the details will be found on the club website: MontclairBirdClub.org. If you are on our distribution list (you are on the list if you receive the Broadwing via email), the Zoom invitation will be sent the day before the meeting. To be added to our distribution list, send an email to MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com.

1. (5 points) *What TV western's title character provides a nickname for the common yellowthroat?* The Lone Ranger. (5-point bonus: *Name the actor who played the Lone Ranger on television.* Clayton Moore.)

2. (10 points) *Why do eared grebes eat their own feathers?* To aid in the digestion of brine shrimp.

3. (2 points) *What owl is famous for asking "who cooks for you?"* The barred owl.

4. (5 points) *Which US state is home to more endangered breeding bird species than any other?* Hawaii.

5. (5 points) *What is the job of Harry Potter's snowy owl?* It delivers the mail. (2-point bonus: *What is the owl's name?* Hedwig.)

6. (2 points) *What was John James Audubon's native language?* French or, perhaps, Haitian Creole.

7. (10 points) *What common New Jersey bird was once known as the bee martin?* The eastern kingbird.



8. (2 points) *Which direction does the bird face on a can of Kiwi shoe polish?* Left, or right, or down.

9. (10 points) *What is the principal food of the world's largest bird?* Grass, leaves, and seeds.

10. (5 points) *What is the state bird of Utah?* The California gull.

11. (10 points) *What extremely rare, extremely charismatic peep has been seen in North America less than six times and winters locally on tidal flats in southeast Asia?* The spoon-billed sandpiper.

12. (2 points) *What is the official English name of the bird once known as the marsh hawk?* The northern harrier.

13. (10 points) *Who provided the music for the movie version of Carl Hiaasen's "Hoot," the story of children fighting to preserve burrowing owls in Florida?* Jimmy Buffett.

14. (5 points) *Where was the headquarters of Boehm Porcelain, famous for its china birds?* Trenton, New Jersey.

15. (5 points) *What is the official English name of the North American raptor whose scientific species name translates as "broad-winged"?* The broad-winged hawk.



16. (2 points) *In what city are the wild parrots of Telegraph Hill resident?* San Francisco.

17. (5 points) *What mythical creature is traditionally considered the monarch of the birds in China?* The phoenix.

18. (10 points) *What was the magazine published by Don Knotts's character in the movie "The Love God"?* The Peacock.

19. (5 points) *Who sat all day on "six white eggs on a bed of hay" in a poem by William Cullen Bryant?* The female bobolink.

20. (2 points) *What New Jersey wildlife refuge was created to protect the Atlantic brant?* Brigantine, now Edwin B. Forsythe NWR. (5-point bonus: *The die-off of what plant in the 1930s caused the crash in brant populations?* Eelgrass.)

21. (10 points) *What do oxpeckers eat?* Ectoparasites taken from large grazing mammals.

22. (2 points) *What bird visited a famous American poet once upon a midnight dreary?* The raven.

23. (10 points) *What is New Jersey's only species of stifftail?* The ruddy duck.

24. (5 points) *Which wood warbler sings "I am so lazy"?* The black-throated blue warbler.

25. (5 points) *Which of his students at Cambridge did Audubon's friend John Thomas Henslow send off on an exploring trip to South America in 1831?* Charles Darwin.



26. (20 points) *What rare aerial insectivore did Paul Lehman discover over the South Cape May Meadows on November 6, 1997?* A brown-chested martin.

27. (20 points) *Which tern has been seen in the United States only at Cape May and across the bay in Delaware?* The whiskered tern.

28. (20 points) *What startling seabird did Shawneen Finnegan discover flying over the median at mile marker 6 of the Garden State Parkway on May 21, 2000?* A yellow-nosed albatross.

29. (25 points) *What did John James Audubon lose in St. Louis on Saturday, April 22, 1843, as he and his companions were preparing for the steamboat trip up the Missouri River?* The last tooth in his upper jaw.

How to Cook a Barnacle Bird

By Rick Wright

July 15, 2020

Some years ago, I made the claim to have solved the mystery of the origin of the English bird name “scoter” (tinyurl.com/RWScoter). My argument was straightforward:

- Early modern scholars placed the scoters among the seabirds said to be generated by barnacles on rotting wood;
- Such miracles were said to take place at northerly latitudes, especially in Scotland;
- The birds produced by the magic cirripods were sometimes named “anseres” or “anates scotorum”;
- “Scot-orum,” a genitive plural meaning “of the Scots,” was transformed by barbarous misanalysis into an accusative singular “scotor-um,” which must then have given rise to the English “scoter.”



I ended my 2015 remarks by asking readers to join me in the search for a “smoking gun” in the chapter headings, marginal apparatus, and manuscript annotations of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Latin literature devoted to barnacle birds and other apparent natural wonders. No one appears to have leapt at the invitation.

I, however, have remained true to the quest, and have expanded my field of search to include tracts on Lenten dietary restrictions and early manuals of malacology. Many of the former discuss at surprising length the barnacle-born scoter’s suitability as a fast-day food, while the latter approach the question of the bird’s origin from the point opposite that of contemporary ornithologies.

Neither set of sources has yielded definitive contemporary confirmation of my hypothesis. Leafing and e-leafing through so many old books may not have turned up the desired proof, but inevitably, there have been other, unexpected revelations. One of them is culinary.

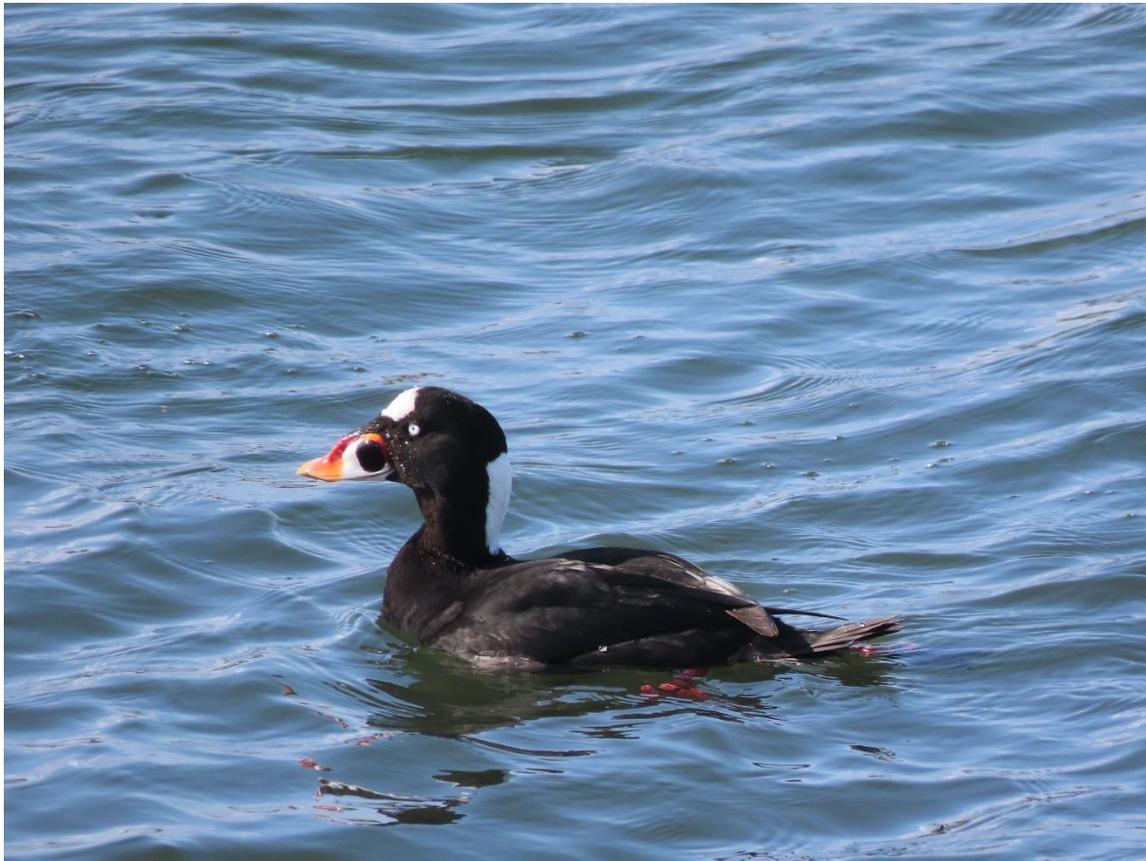
No matter where the scientists and clerics came down on the question of eating scoter during Lent, they were of one accord in their assessment of the big black duck’s table qualities. The still famous French physician Nicolas Andry de Bois-Regard, in a now forgotten 1713 *Treatise On Foods for Lent* (tinyurl.com/AndryScoter), notes that the scoter’s flesh is “hard and tough, [producing] an offensive juice.” Happily, desperate cooks have discovered “methods to improve—at least in part—the foul taste and poor quality of the scoter by using seasonings,” including salt, bay leaf, pepper, and cloves.

But Andry's favorite recipe features an unexpected ingredient:

Wash the gutted carcass thoroughly and blanch it over the fire; then place a little water into an earthen pot and cook the bird with salt, pepper, bay leaf, and fine herbs. Then prepare a little chocolate in the same manner as if for drinking and add it to the pot.... The scoter is much less tough prepared in this way than in any other, thanks to the fine, sulfurous nature of the chocolate, which penetrates the flesh and tenderizes the muscle fibers.

Andry also recommends stuffing the bird's cavity with a paste made of gingerbread and orange peel.

I have not given up hope that someday somewhere someone will find an offhand remark—“scoters, so-called because they are *anates scotorum*”—to vindicate my original suggestion. Meanwhile, the search continues, and the unexpected little discoveries remain surprising.



I Have a New Camera

By Sanford Sorkin

July 19, 2020

I have mentioned my cameras a few times while discussing how I participate in birdwatching activities. My first bird walks were problematic when it came to identifying birds. Field guides are a necessity, but awfully heavy to carry. It seemed much easier to carry a camera, photograph the sightings, and leisurely look up birds at home with a glass of wine. The process was going well until I realized that photography was just as much fun as hiking and sighting birds.

In many ways, cameras and boats have much in common. Boat owners tend to want to upgrade to a new boat every few years just because the new one will be two feet longer than the old one. I was once told by a friend who owned a boat that if I wanted to know how suited I would be to boat ownership, I should follow a simple script:

1. Go to your bank;
2. Withdraw lots of \$100 bills (the more the better);
3. Go home with your fistful of \$100 bills;
4. Sit in your kitchen and tear each bill into small pieces and then put all the pieces in the trash.

If trashing the money doesn't faze you, you are ready to be a proud boat owner, and probably to buy a slightly larger one every few years.

Cameras are similar, and you might want to follow the boat procedure to estimate your suitability to the purchase of a new camera. After purchasing your first camera, you will have camera ads delivered to your mailbox every week, and soon you realize that you need more megapixels. You may not know precisely what a megapixel is, but you know you need more of them. And don't forget the need for a suitable lens, and that most bird photographers are confident that longer lenses are better. When it comes to lenses, bigger is more than simply better: it is an absolute necessity. It comes down to wanting as many megapixels as possible and the longest telephoto lens you can still carry without the aid of a strong assistant to carry your gear.

I have progressed through ten Nikons, starting at 6MP and eventually reaching 46MP with the D850, and a series of lenses that culminated with my very reliable 200-500mm telephoto zoom lens. While I am extremely pleased with the quality of the images, there is a very serious problem associated with all this equipment. Namely, the stuff is heavy. The camera and lens weigh a little over seven pounds. That may not seem like a lot of weight, but add another two pounds for the binoculars, and you will be carrying almost ten pounds total for an entire day.

Carrying so much weight prompted me to investigate lighter cameras. Fortunately, camera technology is bringing us lighter, mirrorless cameras. I am not locked into any specific camera brand. My original motivation to shoot Nikon was that no one else in my family had Nikon, so I didn't have to worry about familial lens pilfering. But once you make a commitment to a brand, your investment in lenses makes it prohibitive to change. Nikon recently introduced two higher-end mirrorless cameras, the Z6 and the Z7. The Z7 is comparable to the D850 I routinely use, but much lighter.

The introduction of mirrorless cameras and their unique lenses presented another concern. DSLR's played a significant role in the obsolescence of film cameras. People still shoot film, but you must question the expense of the venture. In the digital world, it is not unusual for a bird photographer to shoot between 500 and 1,000 shots in a morning. A single digital card can hold all the images that would have required between 14 and 28 36-exposure rolls of film. The film has a cost, and you pay for processing, and you don't see the results for days.

I've already decided that DSLR's are not the future. Mirrorless is currently the practical alternative. The comparison of the D850 and the Z7 finds them fairly even. When Nikon introduces the Z8, I will probably buy one. In the meantime, they have introduced a low-end Z50, and I thought I would enjoy giving it a try. The total cost of the camera and two kit lenses was less than \$1,000. The table below has a few of the pertinent characteristics of my two cameras. Note that my concentration here is on weight.

	Nikon D850	Nikon Z50
Megapixels	46	22
Storage Slot 1	SD/SDHC/SDXC	SD/SDHC/SDXC
Storage Slot 2	XQD	None
Camera Body	2.01 lb	13.93 oz
200-500mm F Lens (f/5.6)	5.07 lb	
50-250mm DX Lens (f/4.5-6.3)		14.29 oz
Camera + Lens Weight	7.08 lb	1.76 lb (28.22 oz)
80-400 F Lens f/4.5-5.6 (3.45 lb)		
	Total with binoculars	Total with binoculars
10x50 Swarovski binoculars add 2.19 lb	9.27 lb	3.95 lb

I have no complaints with the picture quality of either camera. They both perform well. The weight difference, however, is significant: almost 5 ½ pounds. Adding binoculars to the carrying load is even more dramatic.

The good news is that everything is lighter and easy to carry with mirrorless. When the successor to the Z7 is introduced, it will not have most of the limitations of the Z50. But for anyone interested in the Z50,

I offer a list of what I perceive as deficiencies for a bird photographer. Keep in mind that I would recommend the Z50 to anyone who wanted an excellent camera to take on holiday. But here is my list for the bird photographer:

1. The electronic viewfinder does not display immediately, creating a bit of lag time before you can actually see to shoot. If you choose to use the back screen, it is faster, but you are holding the camera in front of you. The viewfinder is not activated until you look through it.
2. The lag time makes it extremely difficult to shoot birds in flight. The camera is also slower to capture focus than a higher-end DSLR.
3. The focus point doesn't have a lock. If you take a picture by tapping the rear screen, it moves the focus point. Pressing OK puts it back in the center, but you have to remember to press it. (One tap on the rear screen focuses on the subject and takes a picture, which is a nice feature.)
4. Having only one card slot always worries me. I like the idea of always using two in case one fails. The reality is that I have never had one fail, but I still worry.
5. To use lenses other than Z lenses, you need an adaptor, which adds a small amount of weight.

These are all minor issues for most other types of photography, but birds add the extra dimension of movement. I'm pleased that I have the camera and get to learn more about mirrorless photography before making a larger expenditure. Remember, this is the smallest mirrorless camera offered by Nikon. I have had the opportunity to use the Z7 with a 500mm prime Z lens; the results have been spectacular, and it is much easier to hold than my D850.

My conclusion after using the Z50 is that I like the camera for basic photography, but not so much for birds. I still believe the future is mirrorless, and I won't invest any more in DSLR technology. And when Nikon introduces the next generation of Z cameras, I will probably purchase one.



Nikon D850 with
200-500mm lens



Nikon Z50 with
50-250mm lens

Birds in this Issue

Page 2 Verdin

Page 4 Eared grebe, California gull

Page 7 Feral pigeons, monk parakeets, ruddy duck

Page 9 Surf scoter

Rick's VENT schedule through September 2022

- **February 22 - March 1, 2021** Guatemala: Birds & Art in the Highlands
 - **April 20 - 28, 2021** France: Birds & Art in Provence
 - **April 29 - May 9, 2021** France: Birds & Art in Burgundy
 - **May 12 - 20, 2021** Poland: Birds & Art in Royal Krakow
 - **July 18 - 31, 2021** Circumnavigation of the Black Sea
 - **August 19 - 28, 2021** England: British Birdfair & Coastal Norfolk
 - **September 8 - 17, 2021** Spain: Birds & Art in the Northwest
 - **September 19 - 28, 2021** Germany: Birds & Art in Berlin & Brandenburg
 - **May 12 - 20, 2022** France: Birds & Art in Provence
 - **May 20 - 30, 2022** France: Birds & Art in Burgundy
 - **May 30 - June 9, 2022** Germany in Spring: Birds & Art in Berlin & Brandenburg
 - **September 7 - 22, 2022** Hungary & The Czech Republic: Birds & Music from Budapest to Prague
-



The MBC Bulletin Bird

Broadwing

The Broadwing is published five times a year: January, March, May, late summer, and October. **Or more often if there is a pandemic.**

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!

Support the Montclair Bird Club

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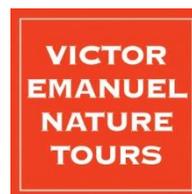
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From the Desk of the Very Temporary Editor:

Please feel free to e-mail me with 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.

MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com



Walter J. Hunziker, Jr.

December 2, 1929 – July 19, 2020

Walter Jacobus Hunziker, Jr., known by all as Skip, died on Sunday, July 19, 2020.

Skip, a longtime resident of Montclair, NJ, passed away peacefully on Martha’s Vineyard, where he retired several years ago. He is survived by his loving wife, Norma Holmes, of Edgartown, MA; his daughter, Robin Smith, of Winchester, MA; and sons Stuart Hunziker and his wife, Bonnie, of Topsfield, MA, and Gordon Hunziker and his wife, Katherine, of Glen Ridge, NJ. Skip also leaves behind his beloved grandchildren, Margaret, Haley, Chris, Elizabeth, Kurt, Emily, and Brooke, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Born and raised in Paterson, NJ, Skip attended College High School at Montclair State, Amherst College, and Yale Law School. He served aboard the USS Intrepid during his term of service in the US Navy before joining his father in the family law firm in Paterson, from which he retired in 2015. He was an avid birdwatcher and hiker, and served as Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 13 in Montclair. Skip had the distinction of serving as Chair of the Montclair Planning Board for 19 years. His family and friends will fondly remember Skip’s engaging sense of humor and his love of poetry and song.

A celebration of Skip’s life will take place at a later date. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Mass Audubon or to the local food pantry in the donor’s community.

**Montclair Bird Club
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- Recording Secretary Pat Sanders

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- Programs Donna Traylor
- Publicity Wayne Greenstone
- Refreshments JoAnn Katzban and Betsy Cohen

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