

The Broadwing



Publication of the Montclair Bird Club
June 2021

Montclair, NJ
Volume LXVI, Number 10

Myakka River State Park

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President's Message June 2021

My tenure as president concludes at the end of the month. The new slate of candidates is in this issue for your review. Voting will take place at the June meeting. This year's candidates include new, but familiar, faces. I believe we can look forward to an exciting new year.

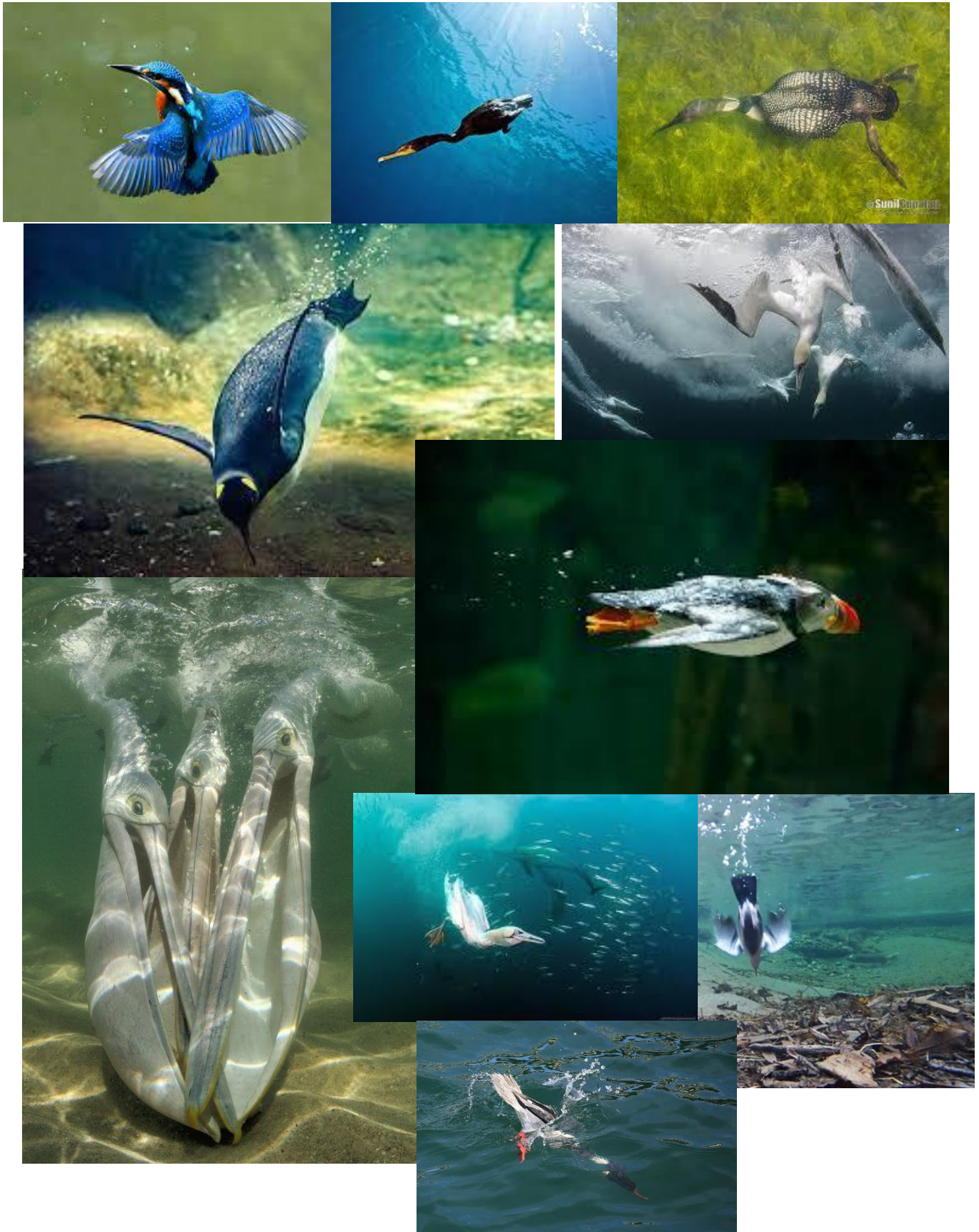
In past years, the June meeting was a forum for members to show their images and enjoy a small meal together. It won't be the same this year, but our Covid compromise is to make the Virtual Bird Walk the member and friend meeting giving everyone an opportunity to take the stage.

Thanks for a great year,

Sandy

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 9
Virtual Bird Walk: Thursday, June 17

Birds Underwater



June 2021 Virtual Bird Walk

The theme of the June Virtual Bird Walk is members and friends and their ***Favorite Pictures of the Last Year***. The last year restriction is removed because of the difficulty with birding during the Covid year.

Participants will be able to share their screens or email their pictures for inclusion in a group PowerPoint. Emails should be sent at least three days in advance of the meeting to MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com.

Breeding Shorebird Atlas

I'm seeking your help with the latest citizen science program of the Shorebird Conservation Society. The Breeding Shorebird Atlas is a new and very ambitious program that was launched earlier this year. We ask you to help us to map our breeding shorebirds wherever you are located. Whether there is a breeding colony of avocets or a single nesting Killdeer, we'd love to hear about them. The program runs for 7 years, and volunteers survey 1x1 km UTM squares (grids or tetrads if you like) and register the number of breeding pairs of any shorebird species. The surveyor decides when to do the survey and also how many 1x1 km grids to cover during the 7 years. Note that this is a global program!

Please register if you are happy to help,

<https://www.shorebirdconservation.org/shorebird-atlas>

and if you already have confirmed nesting shorebird records from this year, please submit them.

Gyorgy Szimuly
Shorebird Conservation Society
<https://www.shorebirdconservation.org>



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BIOBLITZ

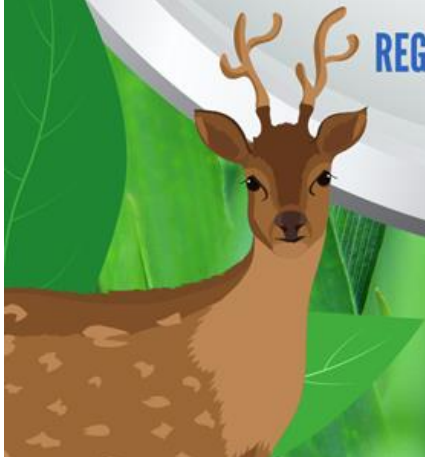
WITH FRIENDS OF GARRET MOUNTAIN RESERVATION

A BioBlitz is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a 24 hour period. At a BioBlitz, scientists, families, students, teachers, and other community members work together to get a snapshot of an area's biodiversity. We're inviting the community to help us by attending one of our expert led nature walks or events and by downloading the iNaturalist app to take pictures of the plants and animals you find around Garret Mountain Reservation and Rifle Camp Park.

GARRET MOUNTAIN RESERVATION | RIFLE CAMP PARK

Starts Friday, June 11 at 4 PM
through
Saturday, June 12 at 4 PM

REGISTER: [PASSAICCOUNTYREC.ORG](https://passaiccountyrec.org)



@passaiccountynj

Named for a Neighbor Rick Wright



One of the great things about living in New Jersey is the depth and continuity of our birding tradition. From William Bartram through Wilson, Audubon, and Bonaparte, there is an unbroken line of descent from the earliest birders right down to you and me.

Not all of our forebears are so renowned, of course. It's humbling and exhilarating to walk in the footsteps of the giants. But we are also, every day, retracing the paths of birders hardly anyone alive has ever heard of—and it's especially exciting to know that one

of those forgotten nobodies was your neighbor, and was far from a nobody, and deserves a little remembering.

Clarence B. Riker is still well known, at least in name, to entomologists, but a casual poll of my birding colleagues here in northern New Jersey has come up blank.

Riker, born in November 1863, met Frank Chapman when both were about 19. Chapman would later write in his *Autobiography* that

Riker was my age, but he had more initiative . . . and in the summer of 1884 procured leave from the shipping firm by which he was employed and went up the Amazon as far as Santarem. In 1887 he repeated the trip.

The results of those youthful expeditions were published in a series of articles in the *Auk*, describing some 400 bird skins Riker had brought back to his home in Maplewood, New Jersey. Among the specimens from Riker's first visit to the Neotropics was a bizarre furnariid, an adult male individual “of very striking appearance . . . entirely different in coloration from any Dendrocolaptes bird.”

A LIST OF BIRDS OBSERVED AT SANTAREM,
BRAZIL.

BY CLARENCE B. RIKER.

With Annotations by Frank M. Chapman.

IN JULY, 1884, I visited Santarem, a town of 5000 inhabitants, situated on the Amazon at the mouth of the Tapajos River, 500 miles from the ocean. I made a second trip in June, 1887, and remained until the end of July. At this season the easterly trade winds blow constantly, tempering to a remarkable degree the intense heat of the tropical sun. The two seasons, the wet and the dry, are well defined; the dry period lasting from the middle of May until the middle of November with but occasional showers.

In 1886, Robert Ridgway described Riker's _____ bird as a new species, *Picolaptes rikeri*, thanking the collector:

The type specimen, the only one obtained, was kindly presented to the National Museum by Mr. C.B. Riker . . . after whom I take pleasure in naming it.

We know it today as the **point-tailed palmcreeper**. With the subsequent erection of the genus *Berlepschia* by Ridgway in 1887, this became one of the relatively few birds to bear the names of two ornithologists—one of whom lived just a few miles south of us here in New Jersey.

A quarter of a century later, Ridgway was still working through Riker's Santarem material. As he wrote in 1912, a nunbird his New Jersey colleague collected on June 30, 1887, had

*hitherto been referred to M. morphoeus [the **white-fronted nunbird**] of eastern Brazil, but is decidedly smaller and differs further in the black instead of white malar apex.*

Ridgway's analysis of the Riker specimen and five others led him to describe a new species of nunbird, *Monasa rikeri*, named, obviously, for the collector of the type.



Unlike the palmcreeper, **Riker's nunbird** has not stood the test of taxonomic time, lumped once again with just the "normal" **white-fronted nunbird** of the nominate race.

Whether that bothered Riker I don't know. My impression, fair or not, is that his ornithological field work ended once he discovered butterflies—a common fate still today—but he did continue to provide what was then still the AOU his expertise in a different field, as investment trustee, a task he performed from the comfortable

surroundings of his house, now known as the Kip-Riker Mansion, in South Orange.

As we bird the fields and marshes and woodlands of northern New Jersey, we can't realistically hope to have birds

named after us. But we can find some inspiration in remembering our intellectual ancestors and the birds they watched—and the birds they discovered—more than a century ago, here and in the still wild wilds of South America.

Great Reed Warblers Fly High Over Sahara and Mediterranean

A team of researchers from Lund University, the University of Copenhagen, and the Nature Research Centre in Lithuania has found that some Great Reed Warblers climb as high as 6,000 meters when they fly over the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. In their paper published in the journal *Science*, the group describes monitoring migrating Great Reed Warblers by attaching tiny data loggers to their backs.

Prior research has shown that there are thousands of species of birds that migrate across various parts of the planet to suit their needs. Among those are many songbirds, one of which is the great reed warbler. The bird is very well known in parts of Northern Europe, where it lives in the summer. Great Reed Warblers have been the subject of multiple research efforts, and local birdwatchers await their arrival each spring. But as the temperatures drop in the fall, the birds take flight, migrating to sites approximately 7,000 kilometers away in sub-Saharan Africa. In this new effort, the researchers sought to learn more about two parts of their migratory journey that have not been studied—what happens when they cross the Mediterranean Sea and the Sahara Desert?

Prior research had shown that like many other migrators, the birds tend to fly at night and rest during the day. Noting that there would be few places to rest over a vast sea or desert, the researchers wondered how they made it across. To find out, they captured and attached very small sensors to the backs of 63 birds and then set them loose.

In studying their data (from just 14 sensors that had usable data) the researchers found that instead of landing and resting when the sun rose in the sky, the birds not only kept flying, but they climbed higher into the sky. In some instances, the birds were recorded flying as high as 6,000 meters.

The researchers note that the air is much thinner at these altitudes, and much cooler—below freezing. They suggest the birds might be climbing so high because it is the only way they can keep cool during their flight as their muscles generate constant heat. Researchers on a prior study found that frigatebirds can stay aloft for months due to prevailing winds that allow them to fly with almost no effort.

The Montclair Bird Club 2020–2021 Presidential Year in Review June 2021

This month completes my two years as president of the Montclair Bird Club. I wish our new president well, and have every confidence that his leadership will carry us forward in positive directions. These are still tumultuous times, but there seems to be some normalcy on the horizon. Our in-person meetings remain on hold, while field trips are starting to be scheduled. Planned travel is still problematic if you plan to leave the country, but domestic trips are certainly possible.

Virtual meetings continued, with a variety of excellent speakers. The virtual bird walks have introduced many of us to the travels and experiences of friends and members. Overall, the Club's efforts at fostering contact were rewarded, and our distribution list continues to grow.

Listed below are some of the highlights of the last year of my term.

The Broadwing

The Broadwing continues as a monthly publication. Once we return to in-person meetings, the distribution schedule will probably shift to quarterly. The newsletter has started to feature our "foreign correspondents," and we have included articles from Trinidad & Tobago, England, and Heligoland.

Additionally, we have started to include information about birding locations and lodges around the United States.

Virtual meetings have expanded our reach to include attendees from across the country. One of our friends has also contributed field trip articles from Arizona and Hawaii.

All issues of *The Broadwing* can be accessed in the archives on the Club website.

Quizzes

Another project to keep us connected was quiz distribution. A new quiz is sent every Sunday morning. The other objective of the quizzes is to be educational. No one is expected to know all the answers. We will have emailed approximately 100 quizzes by the end of June. Quizzes will remain a weekly feature.

Bird Club Meetings and Zoom

Last year, we were still guiding people in the use of Zoom technology. Now it seems that everyone is conversant. Computer teleconferencing helped realize our ambition to remain connected with friends and members. It would appear that our membership is comfortable using Zoom, and we had no difficulty with the implementation. Meeting invitations are distributed the day before the scheduled meeting.

The question the Club faces over the next year is how to continue with hybrid meetings using in-person and Zoom technology. Zoom has enlightened us all and created wonderful new opportunities. The club is no longer restricted to Montclair. Zoom has allowed us to locate speakers across the country. Hybrid meetings will also allow us to reach nursing homes and assisted-living facilities with our lectures and virtual bird walks.

Virtual Bird Walks

Virtual bird walks have been very successful. In the past, all meeting socialization took place before or after the scheduled speaker, and now we have the second meeting each month that highlights membership activities. Each of the meetings is loosely themed: big birds, little birds, birds in motion, etc. We have also delved into travel locations and photography. We have also learned about people's backyards and where to engage in socially distanced bird walks.

The Club will decide whether to continue the virtual bird walks once in-person meetings resume.

New Website

The redesigned website (www.MontclairBirdClub.org) continues to attract visitors. The essential elements of the site are routinely updated, giving visitors a reason to return to the site. Members and friends are urged to contribute to the photo galleries.

The **Let's Chat!** feature is being used, and has introduced us to new bird watchers with requests to join the club and attend meetings.

Our **Archive** menu gives users access to the quizzes, *Broadwing*, and useful links.

If you haven't visited the website recently, it will be worth your while to explore it again.

Essay Competition

The Else Greenstone Avian Essay Competition was initiated this year. Details can be found on the website. The competition will also be promoted by NJ Audubon, which should produce a superb selection of essays.

A 100-word essay challenge was offered to Montclair high school and middle school students. We had two winners, and their essays were published in *The Broadwing*.

High School Student Lectures

An RFP has been sent to Montclair High School to identify students interested in submitting proposals for a nature lecture. We repeated the RFP for 2021, but Covid closing restrictions have limited student response. Hopefully, with school reopening, the teachers will be able to encourage and mentor students who want to submit proposals.

High School Birding

Evan Cutler worked with school faculty and arranged a local field trip around the high school. All Covid protocols were followed, and the students indicated they enjoyed the experience. A

few pictures from the trip can be found on the website. Evan also worked with vendors to acquire ten pairs of binoculars to be used on school outings.

University Student Lecture

Another RFP for a university student to present a lecture was distributed by Montclair State University on January 1, 2021. We received a few inquiries, but no proposals have been submitted yet.

Membership

The Club membership tally at the end of May is 77.

A Membership Committee was created in December and met earlier this year. They distributed a letter asking friends to become dues-paying members.

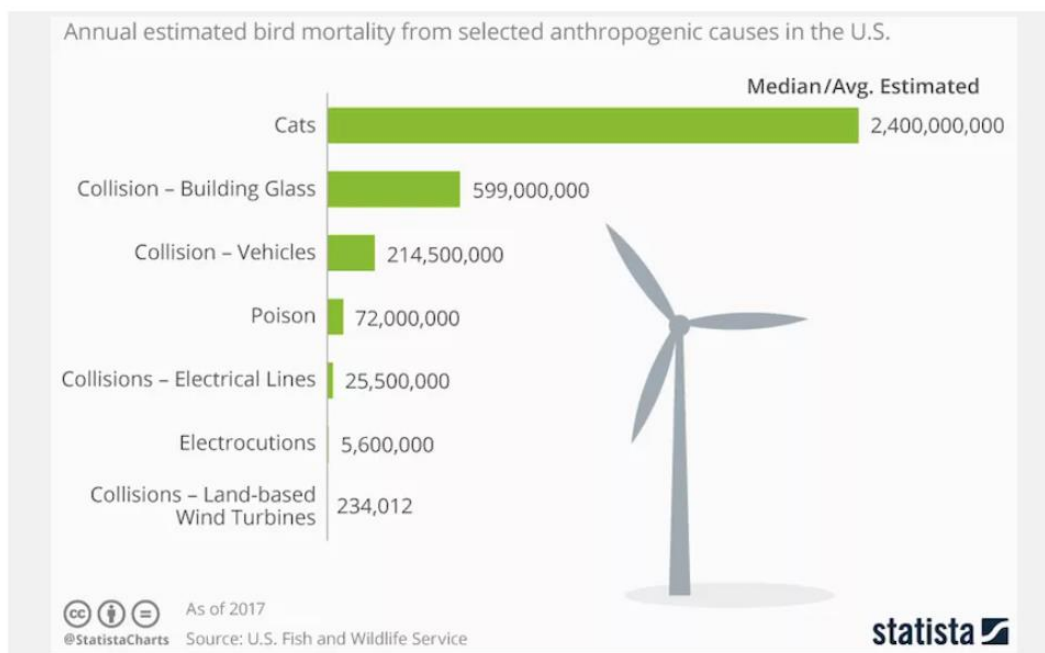
The Broadwing and quizzes are distributed to 270 email address.

Field Trips

Field trips are gradually being restarted. Wednesday warbler walks at Garret Mountain are well attended, and Rick Wright led a trip to South Amboy and Conaskonk Point.

Respectfully submitted by Sanford Sorkin, President

Outdoor Cats



South Amboy and Conaskonk May 14, with Rick Wright

Seven MBC members and friends spent a gloriously spring-like morning on the shores of Raritan Bay, first visiting South Amboy's Morgan Avenue mudflats, then proceeding to the salt marshes of Conaskonk Point, in Union Beach. A lingering red-throated loon was a pleasant surprise in South Amboy; the beach and the sand and mud at the mouth of the tidal creek there gave us close views of Bonaparte gulls, greater yellowlegs, and eastern willets, while seaside sparrows—after playing hard to get for a while—perched up and sang to us from the marsh behind the low dunes. Ospreys were busy taking fish back to their nests, and an adult bald eagle and a last-minute Cooper hawk beefed up our raptor list. By the time we arrived at Conaskonk, the warm morning had grown almost hot, but glossy ibis, yellow warblers, marsh wrens, and boat-tailed grackles accompanied us on our walk. Out on the beach, a few turkey vultures joined the loafing gulls, and a black-bellied plover worked the shallow waters with American oystercatchers and more willets. Even better, perhaps, was the mere fact that we were together again outdoors, enjoying each other's company as much as we did the birds.

SOUTH AFRICA: WESTERN CAPE AND KRUGER September 27 to October 14, 2022 with Rick Wright and Patrick Cardwell

We start in Cape Town and return from Johannesburg, in between visiting sites such as West Coast National Park, the Cape of Good Hope, Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden, and Kruger National Park. We will enjoy a vast range of birdlife, from penguins to rollers to cisticolas, along with many of the large mammals that South Africa is so famous for. With visits to Robben Island, the site of Nelson Mandela's long imprisonment, and Johannesburg's Apartheid Museum, our trip also offers insight into the history and culture of this beautiful and diverse country.

Strictly limited to 12 participants plus the two leaders, this trip is open to LSNY members, members of the Montclair Bird Club, and clients of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours. For more information and to register, please email or phone Erik Lindqvist at erik@ventbird.com or (800) 328-8368.

Maricopa and Yavapai Counties, Arizona May 19–25, 2021 with Rick Wright

It can be disconcerting to find that your arrival coincides with the tail end of migration—but when those tails are attached to such fine birds as hermit warblers, black-headed grosbeaks, and spectacular western tanagers, there's no room for disappointment. These colorful passage birds were joined by more somber but no less delightful western woodpeckers, western flycatchers, and pine siskins; our only obvious passerellid migrant was an *oriantha* white-



crowned sparrow, while Abert towhees, black-throated sparrows, and pale *fallax* song sparrows were already hard at work with a view to the next generation.

As expected, the ducks of winter were long gone, but Tres Rios and the irrigated landscapes around Palo Verde were home to large numbers of neotropical cormorants and green herons, with black-necked stilts on the alfalfa fields. An American white pelican over the ponds at Tres Rios was decidedly tardy; the least bittern that flew across the open water there was one of what must surely have been many hiding in the dense vegetation. The surrounding drylands were a mixed bag: the atriplex flats failed to reveal even a single LeConte thrasher, but a Bendire thrasher and three extremely photogenic burrowing owls almost made up for the miss.

Another miss was the red-shouldered hawk, a species known to breed in Arizona only on the Hassayampa at Wickenburg. Searching for one bird invariably turns up many others, though, and the highlights of our last excursion on the river included once-in-a-lifetime views of zone-tailed hawks close overhead, along with equally fine looks at MacGillivray warblers, western tanagers, western warbling vireos, and other high-elevation breeders.

We quickly found that we did not need to even leave the considerable comforts of “home” to enjoy great birding. Gentle little Say phoebes—certainly nesting on or very near the house—greeted us each morning and evening, and a dazzling male Costa hummingbird was a frequent and belligerent visitor to the backyard salvia. Black-throated sparrows, verdins, and Lucy warblers introduced their young to the world as we watched. The beautiful evenings were a reminder that the desert never sleeps: lesser nighthawks swooped within a few feet of us as they hunted over the pool, and a great horned owl took a song perch atop a blossoming saguaro.

Birds are great, but good company is greater. We were happy to have an abundance of both this past week.

The Bird List

Mallard, <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Bell Vireo, <i>Vireo bellii</i>
Gambel Quail, <i>Callipepla gambelii</i>	Warbling Vireo, <i>Vireo gilvus</i>
Pied-billed Grebe, <i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	Loggerhead Shrike, <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
Rock Pigeon, <i>Columba livia</i>	Common Raven, <i>Corvus corax</i>
Eurasian Collared-Dove, <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Verdin, <i>Auriparus flaviceps</i>
White-winged Dove, <i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	Horned Lark, <i>Eremophila alpestris</i>
Mourning Dove, <i>Zenaida macroura</i>	Northern Rough-winged Swallow, <i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>
Greater Roadrunner, <i>Geococcyx californianus</i>	Tree Swallow, <i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>
Lesser Nighthawk, <i>Chordeiles acutipennis</i>	Violet-green Swallow, <i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>
Black-chinned Hummingbird, <i>Archilochus alexandri</i>	Barn Swallow, <i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Anna Hummingbird, <i>Calypte anna</i>	Cliff Swallow, <i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>
Costa Hummingbird, <i>Calypte costae</i>	Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, <i>Poliophtila melanura</i>
Common Gallinule, <i>Gallinula galeata</i>	Bewick Wren, <i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>
American Coot, <i>Fulica americana</i>	Cactus Wren, <i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>
Black-necked Stilt, <i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	European Starling, <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Killdeer, <i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	Curve-billed Thrasher, <i>Toxostoma curvirostre</i>
Neotropic Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>	Bendire Thrasher, <i>Toxostoma bendirei</i>
American White Pelican, <i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	Northern Mockingbird, <i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
Least Bittern, <i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	Cedar Waxwing, <i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>
Great Blue Heron, <i>Ardea herodias</i>	Phainopepla, <i>Phainopepla nitens</i>
Great Egret, <i>Ardea alba</i>	House Sparrow, <i>Passer domesticus</i>
Green Heron, <i>Butorides virescens</i>	House Finch, <i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron, <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Pine Siskin, <i>Spinus pinus</i>
Turkey Vulture, <i>Cathartes aura</i>	Lesser Goldfinch, <i>Spinus psaltria</i>
Cooper Hawk, <i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	Black-throated Sparrow, <i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>
Swainson Hawk, <i>Buteo swainsoni</i>	White-crowned Sparrow, <i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>
Zone-tailed Hawk, <i>Buteo albonotatus</i>	Song Sparrow, <i>Melospiza melodia</i>
Red-tailed Hawk, <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Canyon Towhee, <i>Melospiza fusca</i>
Great Horned Owl, <i>Bubo virginianus</i>	Abert Towhee, <i>Melospiza aberti</i>
Burrowing Owl, <i>Athene cunicularia</i>	Yellow-breasted Chat, <i>Icteria virens</i>
Gila Woodpecker, <i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>	Hooded Oriole, <i>Icterus cucullatus</i>
Ladder-backed Woodpecker, <i>Dryobates scalaris</i>	Red-winged Blackbird, <i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Gilded Flicker, <i>Colaptes chrysoides</i>	Bronzed Cowbird, <i>Molothrus aeneus</i>
American Kestrel, <i>Falco sparverius</i>	Brown-headed Cowbird, <i>Molothrus ater</i>
Western Wood-Pewee, <i>Contopus sordidulus</i>	Great-tailed Grackle, <i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>
Willow Flycatcher, <i>Empidonax traillii</i>	Lucy Warbler, <i>Leiothlypis luciae</i>
Black Phoebe, <i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	MacGillivray Warbler, <i>Geothlypis tolmiei</i>
Say Phoebe, <i>Sayornis saya</i>	Common Yellowthroat, <i>Geothlypis trichas</i>
Vermilion Flycatcher, <i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	Yellow Warbler, <i>Setophaga petechia</i>
Ash-throated Flycatcher, <i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	Audubon Warbler, <i>Setophaga coronata</i>
Brown-crested Flycatcher, <i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>	Black-throated Gray Warbler, <i>Setophaga nigrescens</i>
Tropical Kingbird, <i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	Townsend Warbler, <i>Setophaga townsendi</i>
Western Kingbird, <i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>	

Arizona Birds







Burrowing owls don't have dating apps.

When Rat Island became rat-free

Eleven years ago, invasive Norway rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) that had arrived on a 1780s shipwreck were eradicated from a remote island in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. The benefits to nature extend all the way down to the sea floor. With the return of native shorebirds as the apex predator, diverse species—from limpets to algae—recovered so that [the island's ecosystem looks the same as those of Aleutian Islands that never had rats](#). And the island has a new name: once called Rat Island, the idyll is now called Hawadax Island.

From The New York Times: This 'Angry' Bird Is the Most Photogenic, Research Finds

Researchers in Germany reviewed more than 27,000 images to identify the world's "most Instagrammable bird." An odd-looking nocturnal species native to Australia and Southeast Asia stood out, they said.



A tawny frogmouth. Frogmouths, which a study has deemed the world's "most Instagrammable" birds, "look perpetually angry," said Tim Snyder, a curator at the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago.

Birds in This Issue

Page 1:	Black vulture
Page 14:	Yellow-breasted chat, greater roadrunner, black-chinned hummingbird, Green heron, vermilion flycatcher
Page 15:	Black-throated gray warbler, curve-billed thrasher, black-crowned night- heron, Say phoebe, zone-tailed hawk
Page 16:	Donkey from Shrek (they fly sometimes), burrowing owl on the prowl
Page 17:	Tawny frogmouth

2021–2022 Montclair Bird Club Officer Candidate Slate

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Vice president – Donna Traylor
Treasurer – Sandy Sorkin
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The MBC Bulletin Bird

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President..... Sandy Sorkin
Vice President..... Jim McGregor
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Recording Secretary ... Pat Sanders

Committees

Field Trips..... Bill Beren
Programs..... Donna Traylor
Publicity Wayne Greenstone
Refreshments JoAnn Katzban
Betsy Cohen

**The Broadwing Editor
and Photographer** Sandy Sorkin

THE BROADWING

The *Broadwing* is published five times a year:
January, March, May, late summer, and October.
Or monthly during a pandemic.

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

From the Editor's Desk

Please feel free to email 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



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