

The Broadwing



Publication of the Montclair Bird Club
December 2022

Montclair, NJ
Volume LXIX, Number 4

Message from the Editor December 2022

Dear Members and Friends,

If birding had a fiscal year, my guess is that this year it would end in December with a Christmas Bird Count and include a giant sigh of relief that Covid currently seems to be under control. We hope it remains this way as we resume our outdoor group birding activities.

You'll note that this issue includes descriptions of field trips and meetups for December and January. Remember that the current details are always found on our website.

Enjoy your holidays,

Sandy

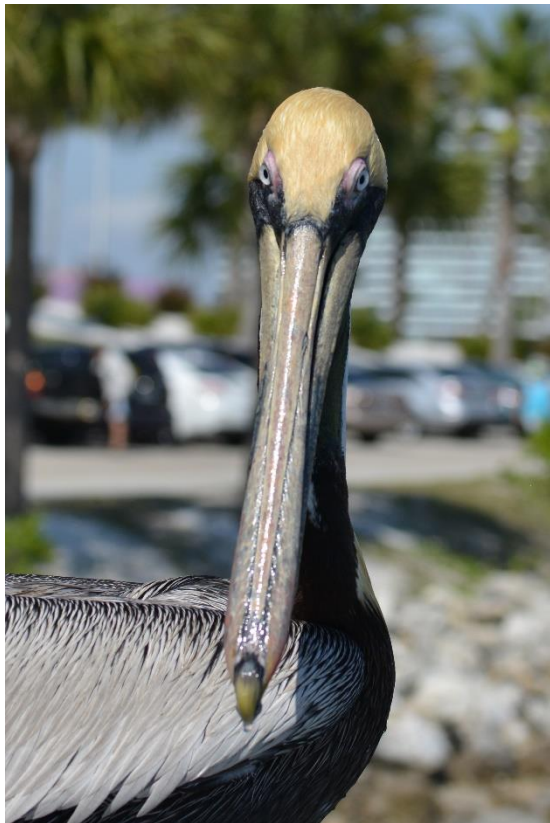
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Next club meeting: Wednesday, January 11, 2023
Virtual Bird Walk: Friday, December 16, 2022

**“A wonderful bird is the Pelican.
His beak can hold more than his belly can.
He can hold in his beak
Enough food for a week!
But I'll be darned if I know how the hellican.”**

Dixon Lanier Merritt (1913)



New species of owl discovered in the rainforests of Africa's Príncipe Island

A new species of owl has just been described from Príncipe Island, part of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe in central Africa. Scientists were first able to confirm its presence in 2016, although suspicions of its occurrence gained traction back in 1998, and testimonies from local people suggesting its existence could be traced back as far as 1928.

The new owl species was described in the open-access journal *ZooKeys*, based on multiple lines of evidence such as morphology, plumage color and pattern, vocalizations, and genetics. Data was gathered and processed by an international team led by Martim Melo (CIBIO and Natural History and Science Museum of the University of Porto), Bárbara Freitas (CIBIO and the Spanish National Museum of Natural Sciences), and Angelica Crottini (CIBIO).

The complete article: [New Species](#)

Just like humans, more intelligent jays have greater self-control

A study has found that Eurasian jays can pass a version of the “marshmallow test”—and that those with the greatest self-control also score the highest on intelligence tests.

This is the first evidence of a link between self-control and intelligence in birds.

Self-control—the ability to resist temptation in favor of a better but delayed reward—is a vital skill that underpins effective decision making and future planning.

Jays are members of the family Corvidae, often nicknamed the “feathered apes” because they rival non-human primates in their cognitive abilities. Corvids hide their food to save it for later. In other words, they need to delay immediate gratification to plan for future meals. The researchers think this may have driven the evolution of self-control in these birds.

The complete article: [Jays](#)



Feeling chirpy: Being around birds is linked to lasting mental health benefits

New research from King's College London has found that seeing or hearing birds is associated with an improvement in mental well-being that can last up to eight hours.

This improvement was also evident in people with a diagnosis of depression—the most common mental illness worldwide—indicating the potential role of birdlife in helping those with mental health conditions.

Published in *Scientific Reports*, the study used the smartphone application Urban Mind to collect people's real-time reports of mental well-being alongside their reports of seeing or hearing birdsong.

The complete article: [Chirpy](#)



Crows able to understand the concept of recursion

Researchers at the University of Tübingen have found that crows are capable of understanding the concept of recursion. In their paper, published in the journal *Science Advances*, Diana Liao, Katharina Brecht, Melissa Johnston, and Andreas Nieder describe experiments they conducted with crows and what they learned.

For many years, scientists believed that humans were the only animals capable of understanding recursion, in which meaningful structures are embedded in other structures. An example: "The rat the cat chased ran." In this example, the words "the cat chased" are embedded in another sentence. Two years ago, a team of researchers conducted experiments that showed that some kinds of monkeys are able to understand the idea of recursion on a par with three- to four-year-old human children.

In this new effort, the research team conducted similar experiments with crows that show that they, too, have the cognitive ability to understand recursion.

The experiments by both teams involved training test subjects to choose bracket pairs in a sentence made of symbols—choosing the parentheses in the sentence $\{\{\}\}$, for example. Once the crows got the idea, the researchers then created longer sentences to see if the test subjects could still pick out the ones that were embedded. As with the monkeys, the researchers found that the test subjects could pick out the embedded characters in numbers that were greater than chance would allow.

The complete article: [Crows](#)

An Interesting Fact about the Role of Monarch Butterflies in Mexican Culture

By Bill Beren

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead—observed on All Souls’ Day, November 2) is a Mexican and Central American holiday rooted in indigenous Aztec, Maya, and Toltec traditions. In these cultures, death was considered part of the cycle of life, with new life emerging from the dead, as in agriculture, where new crops arose from the same ground as the previous year’s harvest.

Monarch butterflies are one symbol of the holiday, along with the fragrant and colorful native marigold known as the cempasúchil and brightly colored skulls. Monarchs are believed to hold the spirits of deceased family members, at least in part because the first monarchs arrive in Mexico around November 1. Perhaps the life cycle of the monarch, in which successive generations of the butterflies participate in the annual migration, may also be a reason that monarchs have become a symbol of this holiday.

This article is based on “Five Facts about Día de los Muertos,” by Maria Anderson and [published by the Smithsonian Institution](#).

Meetup at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park November 17, 2022

Sand, surf, sun, scopes, winter coats, gloves, mittens: ah, birding the Jersey Shore in winter! Brrr! With temperatures in the 30s and a stiff and blustery wind, it was cold for the 11 of us gathered on the beach. Though there were not lots of birds, we did get excellent looks at common loons, royal terns, and laughing gulls (unusually high numbers of them for this time of year). We also enjoyed watching graceful Bonaparte gulls flying low over the waves and northern gannets plunging arrow-like into the water. Distant skeins of scoters were visible, but mostly unidentifiable, as they flew along the wavering horizon. We also visited Lake Takanassee, where we picked up a few additional species.

- Beni Fishbein

Canada goose	Great blue heron
Mallard	Turkey vulture
Black scoter	Bald eagle
Scoter sp.	Red-tailed hawk
Hooded merganser	Cooper hawk
Mourning dove	American crow
Bonaparte gull	European starling
Laughing gull	Northern mockingbird
Ring-billed gull	House sparrow
Herring gull	House finch
Great black-backed gull	White-throated sparrow
Royal tern	Song sparrow
Red-throated loon	Red-winged blackbird
Common loon	Brown-headed cowbird
Northern gannet	Yellow-rumped warbler
Feral pigeon	

Meetup at Scherman Hoffman Wildlife Sanctuary and Viewing of The Peregrine Project exhibit, November 4, 2022

NJ Audubon's Scherman Hoffman Sanctuary was beautiful in the early morning fog, but seeing and hearing the birds was challenging. Most were fuzzy silhouettes, difficult to identify in the distance. We did find flocks of white-throated sparrows and American goldfinches actively feeding low on dried flowerheads, and slate-colored juncos abounded on the paths and in the weeds along the mowed walkways. Thankfully, the fog eventually cleared, and we were able to see more of the birds around us. Our walk brought us through the deer enclosure and down to the stream, where we found several pileated woodpeckers flying from tree to tree. Most of our group were able to get at least a glimpse of the birds, which were also heard calling and drumming loudly.

After our walk, we joined club member and photographer Wayne Quinto Greenstone at the gallery to view his exhibit about the two peregrine falcons who have returned to inhabit the Palisades around State Line Hawk Watch in Alpine, NJ. Wayne explained that by the early 1960's, the devastating effects of DDT had eliminated all nesting peregrine falcons east of the Mississippi. The return of these two falcons and their successful nesting are the result of a concerted effort to breed these magnificent birds in captivity and release them to nest in traditional and new nesting areas. Amazingly, four pairs of peregrines now nest in the area between the Tappan Zee and George Washington bridges. Wayne's main point was that if we can bring these birds back from the brink of extinction, we can also be successful in addressing our current environmental climate crisis, if we can all work together. After Wayne's talk, many of us visited the hawk watch on the third floor of the visitor center, taking in a few sightings before leaving. A total of 29 species were seen or heard.

Mourning dove	Carolina wren
Great blue heron	Eastern bluebird
Turkey vulture	American robin
Black vulture	Cedar waxwing
Bald eagle	House finch
Sharp-shinned hawk	Purple finch
Cooper's hawk	American goldfinch
Red-bellied woodpecker	Dark-eyed junco
Pileated woodpecker	White-throated sparrow
Blue jay	Song sparrow
American crow	Chipping sparrow
Common raven	Fox sparrow
Black-capped chickadee	Common grackle
Tufted titmouse	Palm warbler
White-breasted nuthatch	

Scherman Hoffman Wildlife Sanctuary





Monday, January 9, 2023, Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (Brigantine)
Meet in the main parking lot (by the bathrooms/porta potties) at 10 a.m.
Inclement Weather Date: Tuesday, January 10, 2023

Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (aka Brigantine) encompasses 48,000 acres of coastal habitats, 78% of which is salt marsh. Easily reached from Exit 48 on the Garden State Parkway, Brig is the site of great bird migrations spring and fall, but winter is an equally wonderful time to visit. We may be treated to the sight of many thousands of snow geese spooked into flight by a circling peregrine falcon. Northern harriers hunt low over the marsh, and in the past, we have been fortunate to be able to watch a short-eared owl during daylight hours surveying its winter home. Our plan is to drive the eight-mile gravel loop; depending on the weather, a short walk may be added. Bathroom facilities are usually available at the parking lot. This is a fee area (currently \$4/vehicle); bring a current duck stamp or another pass if you have one. Dress warm, since even if we do not take any extended walks, we will still be standing outside the vehicles to scan the marshes. A scope is helpful if you have one; the leaders will have one available for use. Depending on the weather, we may spend the better part of the daylight hours here, so bring a lunch or snack. Leaderless Walks will be joining us on this field trip.



ROUND VALLEY RECREATION AREA

Saturday, January 21, 2023

a birder's meetup

Hunterdon County's Round Valley Reservoir and the adjoining Recreation Area cover about 2,400 acres. The reservoir does not usually freeze over, making it a good spot for wintering water birds including loons, grebes, buffleheads, mergansers, and scaup. The walking trails along the reservoir and through the adjacent pine forests can be good for waxwings, nuthatches, several species of woodpeckers, and the occasional red crossbill. We'll walk about two miles on these trails, which are slightly hilly but not steep; tree roots and some rocky patches make hiking boots preferable. It can be windy, so dress for cold weather. Bring binoculars, water, and snacks or lunch. A scope will be useful while birding along the reservoir, which is quite large.

We will meet at 9:00 am at the East Picnic Area, where the restrooms will be open. We can bird along the sandy beach here before heading over to the trailhead at the south parking lot. The two-mile loop we will hike includes a portion of the Pine Tree Trail and the Water Trail. We should finish by noon.

For more information, contact Dawn Pompeo at 973-715-8451. See this website for directions, trail maps and information about Round Valley: <https://nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/roundvalleyrecreationarea.html>.

Montclair Bird Club 1935 CBC

Montclair Bird Club Members List
3,166 Individuals in Annual Census

The annual Christmas census was taken by a group of birders from the Montclair Bird Club with the temperature thirty-five degrees and rain and snow falling part of the time. The area covered was territory within a radius of fifteen miles of Montclair which included the Newark marshes and the total count was forty-nine species and 3,166 individuals.

This was four species less than last year and the scarcity of more common birds as song sparrow and chickadee was interesting and the absence altogether of the flicker and the Winter wren. Those listed on the cards this year, not noted last, were screech owl, short-eared owl, migrant shrike, rough-legged hawk, pileated woodpecker and towhee.

The list for 1934 is:

Great blue heron, one; mallard, seventeen; black duck, fifty-one; American merganser, forty-one; red-tail hawk, eight; red-shouldered hawk, two; rough-legged hawk, one; marsh hawk, two; sparrow hawk, five; pheasant, thirteen; herring gull, 404; ring-billed gull, fifty; Bonaparte's gull, 300; screech owl, one; short-eared owl, two; kingfisher, one; pileated woodpecker, one; hairy woodpecker, ten; downy woodpecker, fifteen; horned lark, fifty-one; blue jay, fifty; crow, fifty-eight; chickadee, forty-four; tufted titmouse, thirty-eight; white-breasted nuthatch, twenty-four; brown creeper, two; robin, four; hermit thrush, one; bluebird, one; golden-crowned kinglet, two; migrant shrike, one; starling, 777; myrtle warbler, two; house sparrow, thirty-five; meadowlark, four; red-winged blackbird, 361; rusty blackbird, one; grackle, one; cardinal, three; goldfinch, ten; tow-



THE PEREGRINE PROJECT

October 1, 2022, through January 25, 2023

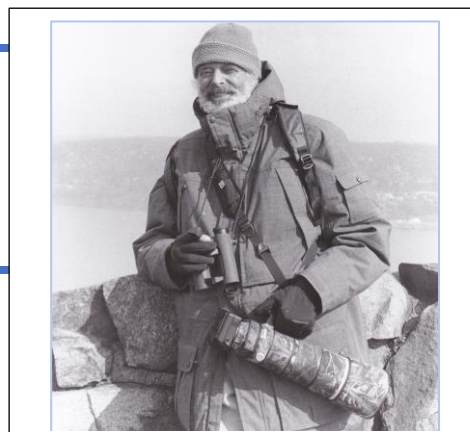
The peregrine falcon is the fastest animal on Earth, capable of reaching speeds over 200 miles per hour when diving upon prey. Yet this master of the skies fell victim to the pesticide DDT—and by the early 1960s, there were no known nesting pairs east of the Mississippi River. As the result of extraordinary human efforts to ban this dreaded poison and raise falcons in captivity for release into the wild, these formidable birds have made an incredible comeback over the past two decades.

This classic tale of human sin and redemption as told by the peregrine falcons of the Palisades holds the promise of hope and the belief that we can address our current existential threats with the same focus and resolve that brought the peregrine back from the brink.

For the past year, photographer Wayne Quinto Greenstone has been documenting the peregrine falcons that have returned to their historic nesting sites on the cliffs of the Palisades, some 500 feet above the Hudson River.

His extraordinary images and creative renditions will be on display at the Wayrick Wildlife Art Gallery at New Jersey Audubon's Scherman Hoffman Wildlife Sanctuary, 11 Hardscrabble Road, Bernardsville, New Jersey.

*The Gallery is currently open
Thursdays 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Fridays and Saturdays 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Sundays 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.*



DUES

Annual membership dues are due. Individual dues are \$25, and family dues are \$35.

Students are free.

Please make your check out to the *Montclair Bird Club* and mail it to

**Montclair Bird Club
c/o Sanford Sorkin, Treasurer
3 Marquette Road
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043-2625**

Montclair Bird Club Meetings

2020

May	An Online Quiz, with Rick Wright.
June	A Walk on Pipeline Road, by Sandy Sorkin.
July	The Real James Bond, by Jim Wright.
August	An Online Quiz, with Rick Wright.
September	Manakins and Microbes, by Jennifer Houtz.
October	Bizarre Breeding Behaviors of Tropical Cuckoos, by Christine Riehl.
November	Dispersal in Young Peregrine Falcons, by Elise Morton.
December	An MBC Story Slam, by Pamela Olsen.

2021

January	Modern-Day Exploration in the Tropics, by Dan Lane.
February	Winter Raptors, by Giselle Smisko.
March	Damselflies and Dragonflies: The Other White Meat, by George Nixon.
April	Wolf Natural History and Tourism in Yellowstone, by Paul Brown.
May	Sandhills and Saw-whets, by Matthew Schuler.
June	Magnificent Namibia, by Linda Woodbury.
September	Raptors, by Wayne Greenstone.
October	Watershed, by Hazel England.
November	Build-a-Bird, with Rick Wright.

2022

January	A Tale of Many Penguins, by Ardith Bondi.
February	Oh! Canada, by Chris Sturm.
March	Tracking the Migration of New Jersey Birds Using the Motus Network, by Cailin O'Connor.
April	Spotlighting Voices in Bird Conservation, by Mardi Dickinson.
May	101 Great Birds from Around the World, by Mark Garland.
June	Member's Meeting.
September	Exploring the Big Bend in Southwest Texas, by Donna Traylor.
October	Build-a-Bird, with Rick Wright.
November	On Safari: Botswana and South Africa, by Ric Cohn.
December	No scheduled meeting.

December Virtual Bird Walk

The theme for the December 16 VBW is “A Trip.”

Wherever you went, with whomever or solo, anywhere in the world,
including new Jersey.

You are welcome to display your own images or forward them to Sandy
at MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com, to be included in a group
PowerPoint.

2022–2023 Officers

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Ric Cohn
Wayne Greenstone
Don Traylor
Rick Wright

Sunday, December 11, 2023
Assunpink Wildlife Management Area
a birder's meetup
8:00–11:00 am
(Inclement weather date: December 18)

Assunpink Wildlife Management Area, in western Monmouth County, has been designated an [Important Bird Area](#) by the National Audubon Society. IBAs, which have been named in 130 countries around the world, with 92 of them in New Jersey, must meet one of three criteria: they are a place where large numbers of birds congregate at one time, where an at-risk species can be found, or where a collection of habitat types supports groups of birds.

Assunpink's mixture of scrub-shrub, upland forest, and lake habitats supports a wide variety of bird life. According to eBird, 131 species have been seen at Assunpink in December over the years. We can expect a variety of waterfowl on the lakes and passerines in the upland forest and scrub-shrub habitats. Assunpink is known as an occasional wintering site for trumpeter and tundra swans, which we hope to see; there are also many species of ducks. The walking trails are delightful, though it can be a bit muddy in winter. Bundle up and bring your binoculars and a scope if you have one. We will be walking on flat ground throughout, and I estimate we will walk no more than 2 miles. We are most fortunate to have Alex Bernzweig help lead this walk.

We will meet at 8:00 am and finish about 11:00, when those interested can continue to nearby [Roosevelt](#), New Jersey, grab lunch, and look around this historic town. There is a nice [radio piece from WNYC](#) on the history of this New Deal Town. The unique housing and development of the town involved notables such as the architect Louis Kahn, artist Ben Shahn, and even Albert Einstein. Etra Lake is nearby, with wonderful trails and birding. For anyone returning in spring, check out Holland Ridge Farms' famous tulip festival . . . not to be believed, believe me! – *Josh*

To reach our meeting site, enter Lake Assunpink Boat Launch into your GPS. Take the Garden State Parkway to the New Jersey Turnpike, south to Exit 8, and follow your GPS from there. [Driving directions from Google Maps here.](#)

For additional information, call the coordinator, Josh Schor, at 973 902-2477.

Montclair Bird Club 2022 Bird of the Year

Eastern Screech Owl

These little owls are found throughout New Jersey, including Montclair. They occur year-round in small woodlots, yards, and forests, although they are often overlooked. They could be in your backyard. They are in ours! Most of the time we only hear them.



A juvenile eastern screech owl photographed in Montclair. The mother is in a nearby tree watching the youngster



If your bird was not selected as last year's Montclair Bird Club "Bird of the Year," you have another chance in 2023. Personally, I plan to nominate the lesser yellowlegs again. Based on last year, my guess is that the competition will intensify if the lesser yellowlegs must compete with cedar waxwings, redstarts, gray catbirds, and yellow-rumped warblers. But as always, the winner will be the choice of our readers.





Upcoming VENT Tours

VentBird.com

**VICTOR
EMANUEL
NATURE
TOURS**

Kansas	Shorebirds on the Prairie	April 23–29, 2023
France	Birds and Art in Provence	May 22–30, 2023
Colorado	A Summer Stay in Estes Park	June 18–24, 2023; June 17–23, 2024
Colorado	Northeast Colorado Extension	June 24–27, 2023; June 23–26, 2024
Germany	Birds and Art in Berlin	September 28 – October 7, 2023
Italy	Venice and the Po Delta	October 7–15, 2023
Israel	Birds and Culture in the Holy Land	November 3–15, 2023
Nebraska	Sandhill Cranes and Prairie Chickens	March 15–22, 2024
Alabama	The Gulf Coast and Dauphin Island	April 21–26, 2024
Greece	The North of Greece	May 5–20, 2024
Scotland	Wild Scotland	May 26 – June 27, 2024
Spain	Birds and Art in Asturias	August 28 – September 6, 2024



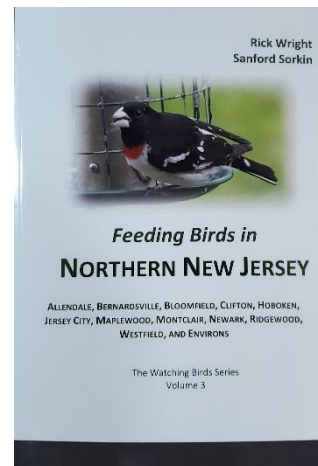
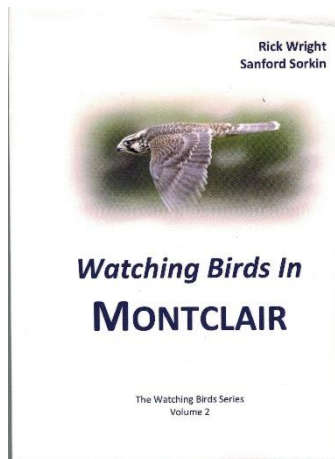
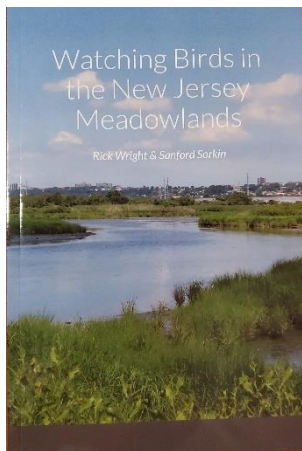
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With over 70 combined years of bookselling experience, the staff knows how to choose challenging, nurturing, and inspiring books, and knows, too, how to value the input and advice of readers and writers in our area's thriving literary community. Watchung Booksellers further serves the community with a full schedule of events, including author presentations, poetry readings, children's story times, in-house book groups, and special programs for writers and readers of all ages. The store and its staff are fierce supporters of our community's schools and libraries among many other political, religious, and civic institutions, including the Montclair Bird Club.



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From the Editor's Desk

Please feel free to email 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.

Sandy

MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com

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The MBC Bulletin Bird

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**The Broadwing Editor
and Photographer Sandy Sorkin**

THE BROADWING

**The *Broadwing* is published ten times a year:
We vacation during July and August.**

**Send photos, field notes, or articles to Sandy at
MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com.**

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