

The Broadwing



Publication of the Montclair Bird Club
October 2022

Montclair, NJ
Volume LXIX, Number 2

Message from the Editor October 2022

Dear Members and Friends,

The summer flies by and it's October again, giving us bird migration and Halloween. The same urgency with which the birds fly south also manifests itself in the hearts and minds of birdwatchers, who may not be concerned with direction if there are birds to be seen. It also means that we have a lot to see and talk about at meetings and virtual bird walks.

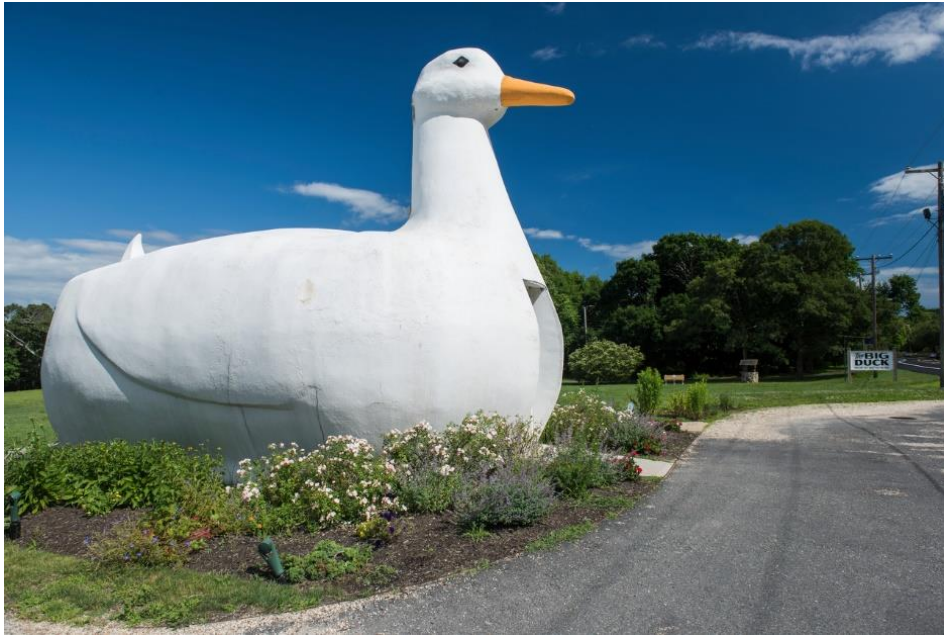
For now, we will continue with Zoom for regular meetings, but hopefully resume in-person gatherings in June.

Sandy

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Next club meeting: Wednesday, October 12
Virtual Bird Walk: Thursday, November 17



THE BIG DUCK, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, overlooks Reeves Bay in Flanders, Long Island, New York. The vision of Long Island duck farmer Martin Maurer, THE BIG DUCK was designed by Broadway set designers the Collins Brothers and crafted by locals George Reeve, John Smith, and Merlin Yeager in 1931. Originally nesting in Riverhead, our fine-feathered friend has waddled three times and now rests in its most popular and familiar setting—BIG DUCK RANCH.

Roadside architecture designed to promote what is sold inside is now commonly known as "Duck Architecture", in honor of the whimsical granddaddy of them all.

-Friends of the Big Duck

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**

Named for a Neighbor

Rick Wright

One of the great things about living in New Jersey is the depth and continuity of the birding tradition in which we stand. From William Bartram through Wilson, Audubon, and Bonaparte, there is an unbroken line of intellectual 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 when you discover that one of those forgotten nobodies was your neighbor, and was far from a nobody, and deserves a little remembering.



Here is Maplewood's first traffic jam. Two White steam cars, both owned by the Riker family of Mountain Avenue, are trying to pass each other in the South Mountain Reservation about 1907. Clarence B. Riker is standing in the car on the left; his son, Carleton Riker Sr., is at the wheel of the car on the right. (Courtesy of Carleton B. Riker Jr.)

Clarence B. Riker is still well known, at least in name, to entomologists, but a casual poll of 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

of very striking appearance ... entirely different in coloration from any Dendrocolapine bird....

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 erection of the new 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 our 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 at all 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 the



AOU his expertise in a different field, as Investment Trustee, a task he performed from the comfortable surroundings of his 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 still find 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.



White-fronted nunbird in Costa Rica

HAWKS AT SUNRISE MOUNTAIN

October 29, 2022

a birder's meet-up

Meet at 9:30 am in the parking lot for Sunrise Mountain Overlook, Stokes State Forest

[Driving directions here](#)

This event will be held only if weather conditions are favorable to hawk migration.

At an elevation of 1,653 feet above sea level, Sunrise Mountain Overlook, along the Appalachian Trail in Stokes State Forest, is the second-highest peak in New Jersey. The vistas are wide from up here, and in the right conditions, eye-level views of migrating raptors are likely, hopefully including bald and golden eagles. The overlook, which is approximately a quarter mile's walk from the parking lot, has a picnic shelter and an outhouse. Viewing is best with a blustery northwest wind, so dress warmly. Bring a chair and lunch if you want. If the raptors are flying, you may want to stay all day! For further information and confirmation that the trip will take place, text Fred Pfeifer at 973 809-7674.

For more information, visit [Sunrise Hawks](#) or [Stokes State Forest](#). The October eBird list from Sunrise Mountain is [here](#).

For GPS directions, use Sunrise Mountain Overlook, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Branchville, NJ.

SEVEN PRESIDENTS PARK

November 17, 2022

a birder's meet-up

The open waters off this Monmouth County park are a well-known but relatively little-birded highway for southbound seabirds each autumn. On a good day, scoters, gannets, and gulls pour past in impressive numbers, some of them settling on the water's edge for good views. There is very little vegetation in the park, but the scrub pines often harbor red-breasted nuthatches, hermit thrushes, or even red crossbills, and horned larks and snow buntings are possible in the dunes. Meet in the Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park parking lot at 9:00 am (directions here). Dress for very cold, windy weather, and bring a notebook and pencil, binoculars, and water and a snack; if you have a scope, you will probably find it helpful. Expect to finish by noon. No registration needed.

Let's Have More Field Trips!

Beni Fishbein

Field Trip Coordinator

When I first joined the bird club, which must have been in the late 1980's, the club had a full schedule of field trips visiting many of the top hotspots in the area. We went to Brigantine, Pequannock Watershed, the North Shore, Cape Ann in Massachusetts, the Delaware Water Gap, Jones Beach, and local parks, to name just a few. I was a beginning birder and went on as many trips as I possibly could, learning from the more experienced birders who were there while probably missing at least half of the bird species that were seen. I learned a lot on those trips, and am very grateful to all the club members who so patiently mentored me and tolerated my bumbling ways. I stopped birding in the mid-90's, for personal reasons, but happily was able to return to it again in 2015.

When I rejoined the Montclair Bird Club, I was astonished at the limited list of field trips being offered. My hope, as the new Field Trip Coordinator, is to build our list of field trips back up. But I need your help.

Is there an area near you that you know well and go to bird? You could volunteer to host a field trip to it. You don't have to be an expert birder to lead us on a meet-up style field trip. These trips are designed to work like a group of friends going birding. No one person has to find and identify all the birds.

Is there a field trip you wish we would do? Great! Let's do it! All you have to do is show us around. You don't have to find the birds and you definitely don't have to identify them. We'll all help with that.



Brookdale Park Nighthawk Meet-up

Birding not your thing? No worries! How about a botany walk or a butterfly walk? We're open to anything nature-related.

So, please contact me at benitafishbein@icloud.com and volunteer to lead a field trip for us.

Lots of Birders—No Nighthawks!

One of the participants in our Walker Avenue Wetlands field trip asked what I would think about an impromptu meetup at the Brookdale Park rose garden on September 1 to watch the flight of the common nighthawks. "What a great idea! Let's do it!" was my response. Alas, the nighthawks failed to get the message. Twenty birders showed up, but only one nighthawk was seen, by this author, on her own, walking down the street to the park. Dang! No matter: people had a nice time socializing.

Beni Fishbein

Links to Ponder:

100+ Vulture Deaths Close NJ Trail, Bird Flu to Blame: DEP

A Sussex County walking trail is closed until further notice due to over 100 bird flu-related vulture deaths in the area, officials said.

A portion of the Sussex Branch Trail in Lafayette is closed until further notice due to over 100 black vulture deaths in the immediate area – and experts say bird flu is to blame. The full story is on [Patch](#).

Artificial intelligence is helping scientists decode animal languages

A Google Translate for rodents and whales doesn't exist yet, but researchers are working on it.

An article in the *New York Times* this week documented major efforts from five groups of researchers that looked at using machine-learning algorithms to analyze the calls of rodents, lemurs, whales, chickens, pigs, bats, cats, and more. The story in the [New York Times](#).

Public Art Takes Flight

A gallery owner and a crew of artists bring Audubon's legacy to life in the Manhattan neighborhood where he lived. From the [New York Times](#).

The Birds of Prey That Stand Guard Over California's Vineyards

Without them, the state's lucrative wine grape crop could be gobbled up by [smaller birds](#).

Clever Cockatoos [Birds and humans battle over bins](#)

October 12, 2022
Build-a-Bird, *with* Rick Wright

Most of the time, bird identification is simply a matter of matching the feathered creature in front of us to a mental image of its species. But not all of the birds all of the time are so kind as to show themselves in classic field guide poses. Join Rick Wright for a closer look at the parts of birds and what they can teach us about how birds live. If you are not already on our mailing list, just write MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com to attend.



This is the regular club meeting. Zoom invitations will be sent the day before the meeting.



THE PEREGRINE PROJECT

October 1, 2022, through January 25, 2023

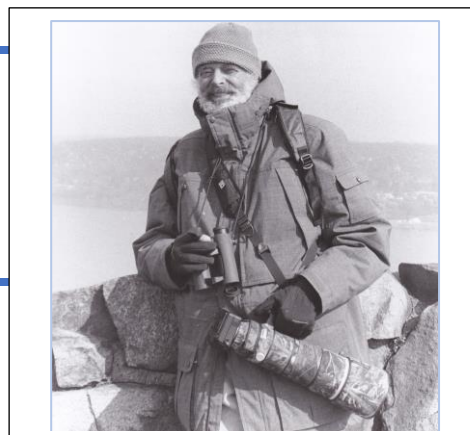
The Peregrine Falcon is the fastest animal on Earth, capable of reaching speeds over 200 miles per hour when diving upon prey. Yet this master of the skies fell victim to the pesticide DDT—and by the early 1960's, there were no known nesting pairs east of the Mississippi River. As the result of extraordinary 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.*



PUTTING A LID ON RAT POISONS

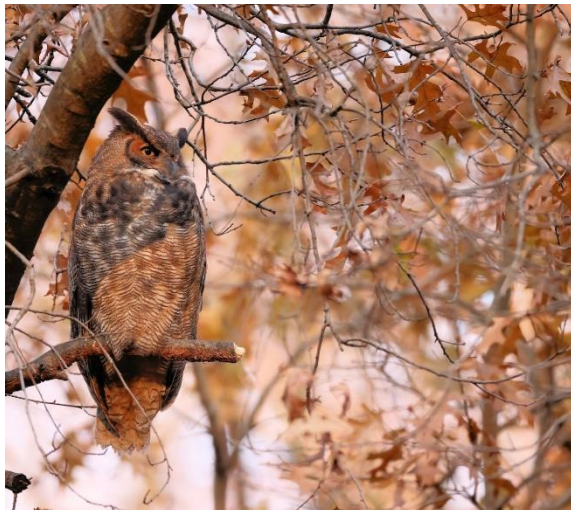
By Jim Wright and Don Torino

“Most rat poisons kill more than rats—they also pose a fatal threat to birds of prey.... This issue should not only get attention when a culturally iconic species like a bald eagle dies. Nearly every raptor species is vulnerable to rodenticide poisoning, from eastern screech owls to red-tailed hawks.”

— Massachusetts Audubon

Next time you visit a shopping center, office park, or downtown, look around for black plastic boxes that resemble shoeboxes, only a bit flatter. They are so common they have become an invisible part of the New Jersey landscape.

The vast majority of these black boxes, known as “rat bait stations,” contain some of the nastiest poisons around, and they kill more than rats. They also kill or weaken any great horned owl, bald eagle, hawk, or other wild animal that eats the rat.



Great horned owl
Photo Kevin Watson

As New Jersey develops its open spaces, raptors must increasingly try to adapt to suburban and urban areas. The rat poisons they encounter there could mean a dim future for many of these magnificent birds.

This is the brief story of rat poison and a strikingly beautiful raptor with a long, barred tail.

At Cape May Point State Park last October 11, rain began falling around 3 p.m., and bird bander Bob Studholme placed a small aluminum loop on one last raptor’s left leg before calling it quits. A young male Cooper hawk headed south got band number 1134-02332.

Fast forward to late June. Peter Romano of Cresskill heard a commotion in his yard, and found blue jays and robins pecking a hawk to death. When Romano disposed of the body, he noticed a leg band and contacted Don Torino and me.

While Don obtained more information about the hawk from its leg band, I retrieved the bird and drove to the state wildlife veterinarian in western New Jersey.

Dr. Nicole Lewis performed a necropsy (an animal autopsy). Initially, she found that the hawk had indeed been pecked to death. Further testing showed that its system contained lethal amounts of two second-generation rat poisons—Brodifacoum and Bromadiolone. The blue jays and robins merely finished what the poisons had started.

In some ways, this dead Cooper hawk is an exception. Because it was banded, a concerned citizen brought it to Don’s and my attention. Few dead raptors get tested for rat poison, because most wildlife deaths go unreported. When a hawk or fox dies in the woods or wetlands, no one even knows it died, let alone investigates what killed it.

Alternatives to the nastiest rat poisons

Raptors Are the Solution, a national coalition of non-profits, municipalities, scientists, and individuals, recommends

*ContraPest, a non-toxic rat fertility control product. The coalition is using it in a pilot redevelopment project in Seattle, and has had a 90 percent reduction in rats over several months.

*The Raticator, an American-made electronic rat and mouse trap product that uses flashlight batteries to exterminate rodents humanely.

*The Good Nature C 24 trap, which some people claim is effective.

*Snap traps in boxes are OK, but should be used only in places where other animals can't get caught in them.

Note: Most pest control companies in California have switched to Cholecalciferol, which is a Vitamin D3 overdose. But it's not recommended, because it not only poisons rats but also non-target mammals, including dogs that get into the bait. On the plus side, there's no evidence that it causes secondary poisoning or infiltrates the food web the way second-generation anticoagulants do.

For more information on these alternatives:
raptorsarethesolution.org/ and saferodentcontrol.org/.

Our state's raptors have fought back from the ravages of DDT. Now this.

The deadliest poisons are called second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides, and here's how they work:

A rat enters the black box, eats the bait, and leaves. The rat poison slowly takes effect, preventing the rat's blood from clotting, and the rat slowly bleeds to death. In its weakened state, the rat is an easy meal for a hungry owl or hawk. And the raptor eats the poison inside.

Sometimes the poison kills the raptor outright. Other times, the raptor consumes sublethal levels that accumulate in its system, like DDT. The weakened bird is then at greater risk of death from other causes.

These poison dispensers were designed as a last resort to curb rat problems. Now they have become the go-to solution, often ignoring the underlying causes: many restaurants and other businesses that use these rat-poison dispensers often leave their dumpsters open or put their garbage in plastic bags, a significant reason for the

upsurge in rats in downtown Montclair. These free buffets attract more and more rats, creating an endless cycle of rat infestations and poisoned wildlife.

How serious is the problem?

In New Jersey, The Raptor Trust, the premier avian rehabilitation center in our region, no longer sends raptors that likely died from rat poison to the state for testing, for one simple reason. "We are all aware of the poisoning issue, so from my perspective, identifying one more bird that has succumbed to poison doesn't do much except confirm what we already know," Raptor Trust executive director Chris Soucy wrote in an email.

Nationally, the EPA has banned these poisons for household use after several reports of the poisoning of pets and children—but the poisons are still widely available online.

A study released earlier this summer by Cornell University found that two-thirds of the red-tailed hawks tested in New York State have anticoagulant rat poisons in their systems.

A 2021 University of Georgia study tested 116 bald eagles and 17 golden eagles for the presence of these rat poisons. Researchers found rat poison in 82 percent of the eagles. An earlier study in New Jersey found residues of the worst types of rat poisons in 81 percent of the red-tailed hawks and 82 percent of the great horned owls tested.

According to State Wildlife Veterinarian Dr. Nicole Lewis, New Jersey is taking a closer look at these poisons. “We’re currently doing a study on eagles. We’ve collected 100 liver samples from them over several years, and they are in the process of being tested.”

She says that rat poisons have been detected in many of the samples so far, and that a recent New Jersey study on bobcats found residual rodenticides in this endangered species as well.

Opposition to these second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides is growing across the continent. California and British Columbia have placed moratoriums on their use, and Massachusetts is considering a similar step.



A dozen prominent environmental groups are now asking Bergen County to pass a resolution opposing these poisons, as the boroughs of Allendale and Saddle River have done. We are building a grassroots movement to expand our efforts statewide.

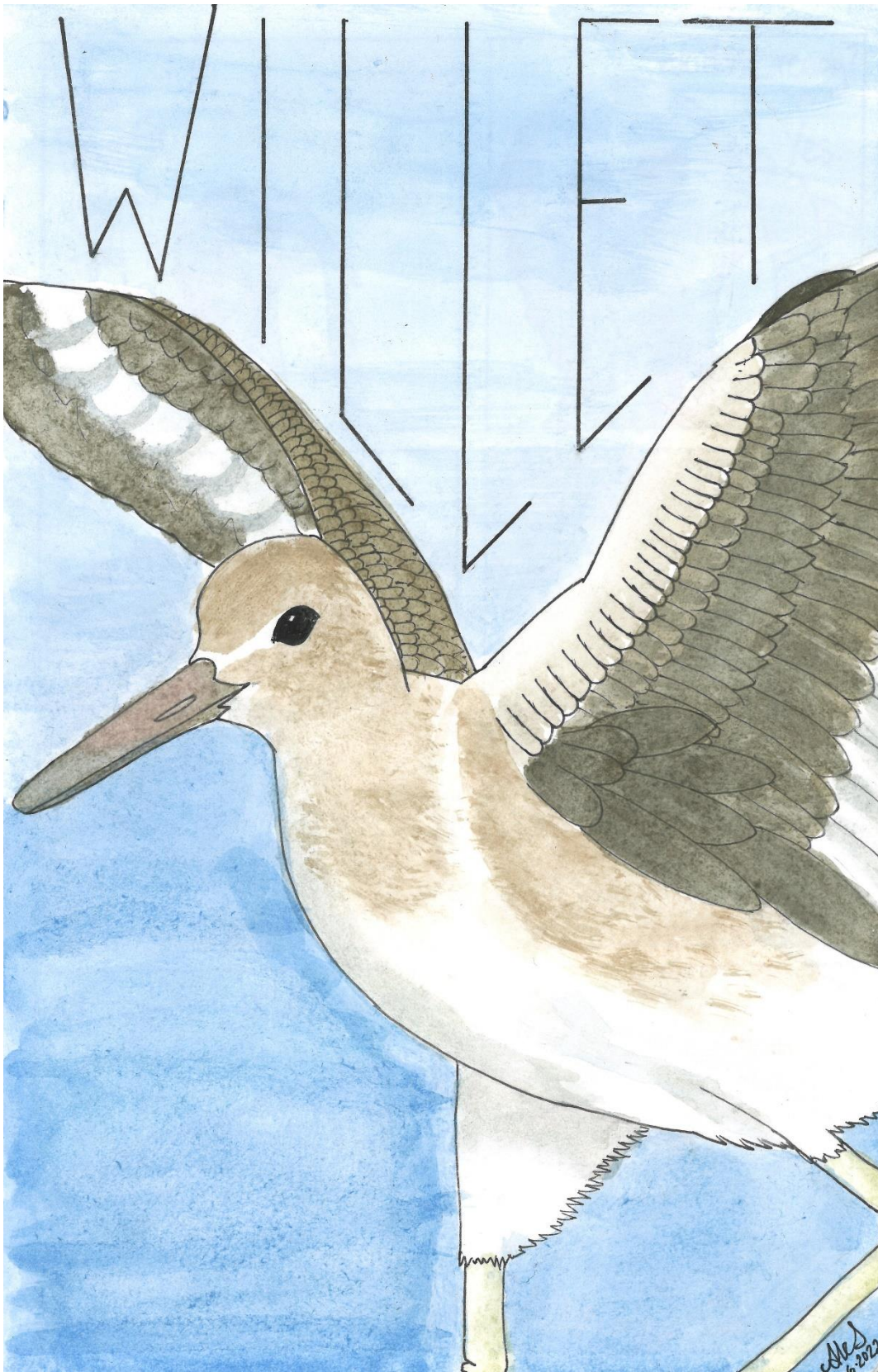
New Jerseyans have worked together to do great things for wildlife, protecting and preserving habitat, banning DDT, cleaning up the water environment, and helping to bring back such iconic raptors as the peregrine falcon, the bald eagle, and the osprey.

We need to join together once again and reduce the threat of rat poison to our wildlife.

Jim Wright is a long-time nature writer and “Bird Watcher” columnist for The Record. Don Torino is president of the Bergen County Audubon Society.

GROUPS SUPPORTING AN ANTI-RAT POISON RESOLUTION FOR BERGEN COUNTY

Bergen County Audubon Society, Bergen SWAN, Closter Nature Center, Flat Rock Brook Nature Center, Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway through Teaneck, Fyke Nature Association, Grow Torah, Hackensack Riverkeeper, Lorrimer Sanctuary (NJ Audubon), Palisades Nature Association/Greenbrook Sanctuary (Administrative Council), The Raptor Trust, Tenafly Nature Center.



From Anna Karapin-Springorum: "The drawing is of my noisiest coworker, the willet."



From Anna Karapin-Springorum: "Cape Cod had a plethora of wild turkeys roaming the streets this past summer, and they kept finding their way into the middle of highways."

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, by 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 Virtual Bird Walk

The theme for the VBW on November 17 is “Pairs.”

Two birds, two rabbits, or two cans, you’re the judge.

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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Vice President	Evan Cutler
Secretary	Pat Sanders
Treasurer	Sandy Sorkin

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Wayne Greenstone
Don Traylor
Rick Wright

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 the 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.





Roman theater of Arles

Upcoming VENT Tours

VentBird.com

**VICTOR
EMANUEL
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TOURS**

Israel:	Birds and Culture in the Holy Land	November 2–14, 2022
Kansas:	Shorebirds on the Prairie	April 23–29, 2023
New Jersey:	Birding the American Revolution NEW	May 13–20, 2023
France:	Birds and Art in Provence	May 22–30, 2023
Colorado:	A Summer Stay in Estes Park	June 18–24, 2023
Colorado:	Northeast Colorado Extension	June 24–27, 2023
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



Triumphal arch at Glanum,
first century BCE



Viking ship burial
on Öland



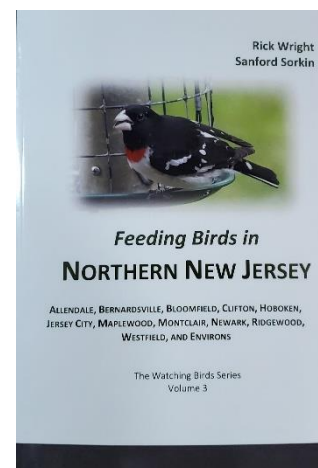
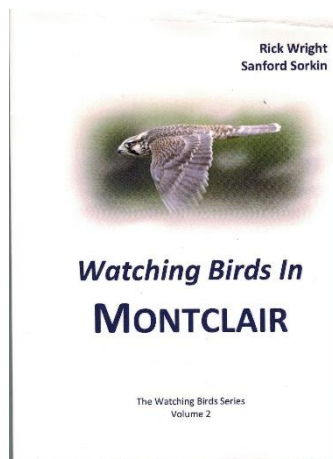
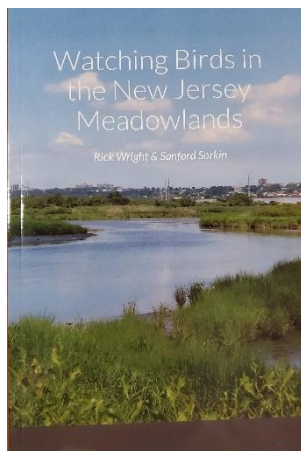
watchung booksellers

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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.



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

2022–2023 Montclair Bird Club Officers and Executive Board

President – Donna Traylor
Vice President – Evan Cutler
Treasurer – Sandy Sorkin
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Bill Beren
Ric Cohn
Wayne Greenstone
Don Traylor
Rick Wright

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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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