



The Osprey

Our 44th Year!

Newsletter of the Monmouth County

Audubon Society

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Message from the President

by Bob Henschel

During my three days at his year's Great Backyard Bird Count in February, I was pleasantly surprised by something I hadn't really seen over the five years we've conducted our survey at the Manasquan Reservoir.

It wasn't the number of species, which, at 40, was just about average for the weekend event. In fact, we missed some easy birds - House Sparrow, Rock Pigeon and Brown-headed Cowbird - three we've had before outside the Environmental Center. Although, now that I think more about it, while higher counts are certainly more satisfying, I should actually be rather pleased by those particular "no-shows."

Our Bald Eagles provided no real surprises either. A few days before, their two eaglets hatched. But we'd known for weeks when they were coming, the birds having announced their impending parenthood on January 4 - the day they began incubating egg number one. Of

course, it was impressive to put an eagle count of 4 on the tote board each day, but it was almost a non-event for those of us who work at the MREC and see our resident raptors all the time.

And no, it really wasn't the Pine Siskins that made the days particularly unique. Yes, it's a species making its first appearance on our cumulative GBBC list and by and large the little striped goldfinch "cousins" were new to the life lists of most casual backyard birders who stopped to look and chat. But they too weren't that amazing, since we, like everyone else in New Jersey, had been entertaining the northern visitors for weeks.

So what was the most surprising thing about the Great Backyard Bird Count? It was the people. Not only did they come in greater numbers than on previous Presidents Day weekends, they were noticeably more curious and knowledgeable than just a year ago. And

those who didn't know that much about birds or the natural world seemed unusually eager to become more in tune with their environment. They had many more questions and even more concerns about the welfare of the little feathered animals, many of which they were viewing for the first time. And to see

this environmental ethic having grown significantly in so short a time was both impressive and encouraging.

Of all the visitors, one little girl was particularly memorable. Although her family lives just down the road, they hadn't been to the reservoir before.

As her father tried to amuse her fidgety younger brothers, the young girl sat on the windowsill, watching the lake, the feeders and me as I changed or added numbers on the white board. I pointed out some of the easily recognized species: chickadee, nuthatch, house finch and the like; as well as the faraway ducks and gulls and how sometimes they're hard to figure out. The whole concept, not just the birds, seemed to capture her attention. "Would you like to help me write the numbers?" I asked. She smiled and nodded as I handed her the marker. Pointing to the Mourning Doves I challenged her to see how many she could find. Counting once and then once more just to be sure,

(Continued on Page 2)

SPECIES		Feb 13	Feb 14	Feb 15	Feb 16	SPECIES		Feb 13	Feb 14	Feb 15	Feb 16
1	PINE SISKIN	29	23	20	29	23	Song Sparrow	1	2	1	1
2	Com Grackle	1	2	1	3	29	Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	1	1	1
3	MALLET	19	16	19	14	30	Cooper's Hawk	1	1	1	1
4	Canada Goose	2	2	2	3	31	Mockingbird	1	1	1	1
5	House Finch	5	6	11	4	32	Blue Jay	1	1	1	1
6	E Goldfinch	6	6	12	5	33	Common Crow	1	30	9	1
7	Tufted Titmouse	2	2	2	2	34	White-throated Sparrow	1	2	5	1
8	Cassins Chickadee	2	2	3	1	35	Carolina Wren	2	2	1	1
9	Bald Eagle	5	4	4	4	36	Starling	6	2	1	1
10	Red-winged Blackbird	25	10	18	19	37	Phoebe	2	1	1	1
11	Mallard Duck	2	2	2	2	38	Great Black-headed Gull	2	1	1	1
12	Tree Toad	1	1	1	1	39	GADWALL	1	1	1	1
13	Sharp-shinned	1	1	1	1	40	American Osprey	2	1	1	1
14	Downy Woodpecker	1	1	1	1	41	Barn Swallow	1	1	1	1
15	Blue Jay	9	3	7	2	42	White-necked Duck	2	2	2	2
16	Red-eyed Vireo	2	1	2	2	43	Common Goldeneye	2	2	2	2
17	Downy Woodpecker	2	1	2	2	44	Common Goldeneye	2	2	2	2
18	Mourning Dove	3	9	21	7	45	Common Goldeneye	2	2	2	2
19	Blue Jay	2	6	1	1	46	Common Goldeneye	2	2	2	2
20	White-breasted Nuthatch	1	2	2	2	47	Eastern Bluebird	1	1	1	1
21	Red-tailed Hawk	2	2	1	1	48					
22	Common Nighthawk	10	10	10	10	49					
23	Hooded Merganser	3	1	4	4	50					
24	Ring-billed Gull	10	12	10	10	51					

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The Osprey is published bi-monthly by the Monmouth County Audubon Society, local chapter of the National Audubon Society. Our mission is to promote the awareness, appreciation and conservation of natural resources through activism and educational outreach, and by representing the National Audubon Society in Monmouth County. Inquiries concerning the organization, the newsletter, letters to the editor or material submitted for consideration are encouraged and may be sent to:

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Volunteer positions available with Monmouth County Park System

Beach Nesting Bird Monitors (ages 18 & up) - The coastal properties within the Park System often provide habitat for Threatened and Endangered species, especially beach nesting birds. The Park System has opportunities for people to serve as monitors at known nesting sites at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park. This job provides on-site monitoring of the activity of beach nesting birds, especially Piping Plovers, and interacting with the public using the park providing information on Piping Plovers and discouraging actions which may have a negative impact on the birds and their chicks.



Scott Elowitz

The job will require attending a brief training course provided by experts on Piping Plovers and other beach nesting birds. After completing training, the monitors will participate in a schedule between April 1st and July 15th to assure monitoring coverage, especially during peak summer use and special events such as the Fourth of July celebrations in Long Branch. Techniques for monitoring and suggested equipment will be provided during training. Educational materials will be provided for public information.

Training for the bird monitoring program will be held on Sunday, April 19, 10am - 12pm at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park, Long Branch. Todd Pover, Beach Nesting Bird Project Manager from NJ Fish & Wildlife, will conduct the workshop.

Please contact Karen Livingstone, Volunteer Coordinator, at 732-842-4000 ext. 4283, or klivings@monmouthcountyparks.com to register for the training.

President's Message, continued from Page 1

she proclaimed with certainty, "Nine." Picking up the eraser and quickly eradicating the old number, she wrote in the new total. Stepping back, as if now in charge of the project, she looked at the board and then at me. "Can I change your 2s?" she asked. "You mean the ones that look like upside down 5s?" I replied. She looked back at me with a silent stare that emphatically stated, "Of course that's what I mean!" The self-assured seven-year-old then proceeded to take control, fixing up my jagged lines and other numbers that didn't meet her penmanship standards. It was pretty obvious she thought she was doing something purposeful.

But then came the inevitable. Her restless siblings had finally gotten to Dad. Reluctantly, she surrendered her black marker, put on her coat, and headed toward the lobby. "Maybe you can come back next year and be my helper," I suggested. "OK!" she exclaimed.

As she walked away, her eyes apparently still focused on the white board's empty spaces, my newly empowered assistant offered one final insightful suggestion: "I think you need to find more birds!"



by Harden Fowler

2009 Ted Engberg Conservation Scholarships

The Monmouth County Audubon Society is pleased to announce that for the fourth year we will sponsor the Ted Engberg Conservation Scholarship. This year a total of \$4,500 will be available. MCAS hopes to award scholarships of \$1,500 to three qualified Monmouth County high school graduates who will continue their education this fall in a field related to conservation. The Board has approved these scholarships as an important part of our mission to promote the awareness, appreciation and conservation of natural resources through educational outreach. The scholarship is awarded in memory of Ted Engberg, who was on the MCAS Board of Directors and was a generous supporter of our organization for decades.

Full information on the scholarships and applications are available after March 15th on our website: www.monmouthaudubon.org, or by contacting us at: Monmouth County Audubon Society, P.O. Box 542, Red Bank, NJ 07701. Students graduating from a Monmouth County high school can also get information through their Guidance Office.

The one-page application requires: name and contact information; high school transcript with current GPA; a letter of acceptance from a four-year college or university, and a 250-500 word essay, "Why I am majoring in conservation." Applicants must be residents of Monmouth County. The deadline for submission is May 1. The MCAS Scholarship Committee will review all eligible applications (supplemental information will not be considered), make their decisions and award the \$1,500 scholarship checks to the winners by June 15, 2009.

Previous awardees are: Katherine Houg (High Technology High School) in 2006; Jessica Krug (Wall High School) and Lauren Gretzula (Middletown High School North) in 2007; Adam Rice (Manalapan High School), Allison Linnell (Marine Academy of Science and Technology) and Brett Thompson (Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School) in 2008.

Monmouth County Audubon Society looks forward to awarding the scholarships to worthy students with an interest in conservation again in 2009. We are delighted to support their interest in a healthier ecosystem and cleaner environment for future generations to enjoy.

Bird-friendly plants

Now that spring is here, gardening probably will be on the agenda of most area homeowners. If you are considering adding some new plants to your landscape, consider these bird-friendly alternatives.

Trees -- Mulberries produce berries that provide food for more than 40 species of birds. *Dogwood*, a popular ornamental tree, is also an excellent choice for wildlife, producing red fruits from late summer to November. *Crab apples* and *serviceberries* are also welcome fruit-bearing trees. Bird-friendly conifers include the *Eastern red cedar*, for its fruit and its suitability for nesting; and *spruce*.

Shrubs and vines -- Northern bayberry, a semi-evergreen shrub, produces fragrant berries that are favorites to Tree Swallows, catbirds, bluebirds and others. *Staghorn sumac's* hairy red fruit stays on the plant through the winter, providing a much-needed winter food source. *Viburnum*, a large genus of easy-to-grow shrubs, provide both food and cover for wildlife. Beneficial vines include *wild grape* and *Virginia creeper*.

Enjoy spring with MCAS

Well, we made it through another winter! It's time to celebrate the joy of spring by witnessing one of nature's true miracles, spring migration, on our spring field trips. First, on **Saturday, April 11** we will visit Sandy Hook to enjoy the first wave of migration. "The Hook" is interesting at any time of year, but spring can be downright amazing. (10:00 am, Visitors Center.) Then, on **Saturday, May 2** we will return to a favorite "migrant trap," Allaire State Park, at the peak of spring migration for warblers, orioles and tanagers. You'll learn to identify common spring migrants by sight *and* sound. (8:15 am, meet in parking area by Allaire Village)

We also have two very interesting programs coming up. First, on **Wednesday, April 8** we'll welcome butterfly guy Jeffrey Glassberg for a visit south of the border for "The Butterflies, Landscapes and People of Mexico." If you think our area's butterflies are interesting and beautiful, wait 'til you see these amazing and abundant tropical creatures. Then, on **Wednesday, May 13** we travel halfway around the world for "On the Brink: Conservation of Endemic New Zealand Birds." Learn why 42% of the country's endemic bird species have become extinct, and why another 26 species are listed as "nationally critical." *Trinity Episcopal Church, Red Bank*



Join the MCAS eGroup!

An eGroup is a bulletin board just for MCAS members. You will receive information on upcoming trips, local conservation news, bird sightings, etc. We also use this system to announce the availability of the newsletter online.

To subscribe, send an e-mail to mcas_newslet-subscribe@yahoo.com.



Monmouth County
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Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member of the Monmouth County Audubon Society (Q04) and/or the National Audubon Society. My check is enclosed for:

- \$10 **Regular** Chapter member
- \$20 Chapter **Sustaining** member - all funds stay in our area, helping us to support local efforts and provide services here in Monmouth County.
- \$20 **National Audubon Society** member - includes Chapter membership (rate for new members only; renewable at \$35)
- Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities.
- Do not add my name to the mailing list; I will read the newsletter online.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

E-mail _____

Please make checks payable to MCAS and return along with application to:
 Monmouth County Audubon Society, P.O. Box 542, Red Bank, NJ 07701.

Membership questions? Call us at 732-USA-BIRD.

C9ZQ040Z

coming up

Wed., April 8. 8:00 - 9:30 pm
"Butterflies of Mexico," Jeffrey Glassberg

Sat., April 11. 10:00 am - noon
Early Spring at Sandy Hook; meet in parking area by Visitor Center

Sat., May 2 8:15 am - noon
Spring Migration at Allaire State Park; meet in main parking area (by Allaire Village)

Wed., May 13. 8:00 - 930 pm
"On the Brink: Conservation of Endemic New Zealand Birds"
 David Errol Pattermore

(All ending times are approximate.)

* Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month Sept.- May at Trinity Episcopal Church, White Street, Red Bank. Meetings are open to the public, and refreshments are served.

Call (732) USA-BIRD for details on field trips, activities or cancellations due to weather. This is a 24-hour message line.