

THE



OSPREY

Newsletter of the

Monmouth County Audubon Society

www.monmouthaudubon.org

Over **50 Years** of Birds and Conservation

Volume 55, #1 Spring 2020

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➤ Local membership coming to an end

by Colette Buchanan

We are making some changes at Monmouth County Audubon Society due to the departure of several Board Members and Chairs. In order to streamline our record-keeping and bookkeeping, we are suspending our Local Chapter and Sustaining Membership program. Many of our Local Members are also members of National Audubon Society. We request that you continue that membership, as that automatically provides you with membership in Monmouth County Audubon Society.

Those of you who are members of MCAS only will continue as members for the rest of the calendar year 2020. After that time, we invite you to join MCAS through joining National Audubon Society by using the link on the Monmouthaudubon.org website or by using one of MCAS' paper membership applications. Your membership will be coded for the MCAS Chapter. While the cost of membership in National Audubon is slightly higher, at \$30.00 per year, it does include the beautiful and informative Audubon Magazine, in addition to the benefits of local membership. MCAS receives financial support from National based on membership, so you will be continuing to sustain MCAS through your membership.

MCAS is also changing its newsletter, The Osprey. We have not published a newsletter since the Spring, 2019 issue, which was the final one produced by our former Newsletter Chair. MCAS has been searching for a replacement who can produce, edit and publish a newsletter in a similar format, but have not found a qualified volunteer. In the interim, MCAS will be switching to an online only newsletter.

Monmouth County Audubon Society is a volunteer organization that relies on members like you to continue our mission of promoting awareness, appreciation and conservation of nature and wildlife through activities and educational outreach. We will continue to provide fun, informative and educational field trips and programs as long as members and friends like you continue your support. MCAS sincerely thanks all its members for their support through this transitional period.



Scarlet tanager by Bob Henschel

Monmouth County Audubon Society

Officers 2019-2020

President

Colette Buchanan

Vice President

Robert Henschel

Treasurer

Howard Mason

Recording Secretary

(vacant – volunteer needed)

Committees

Conservation

Mike Davenport, Chair

Education

JoAnn Molnar, Chair

Field Trips

Lisa Fanning, Chair

Programs

(vacant – volunteer needed)

Publicity

(vacant – volunteer needed)

Social Media

Lisa Fanning, Chair

Website

Mike Davenport, Chair

Elected Directors / Directors at Large

Scott Barnes, Rob Fanning, Robert Henschel, Linda Mack, Nano Mardones, Janice Mason, Debra Stewart, John Temple, Dena Temple, Ken Thoman

Newsletter Staff

Mike Davenport, Editor

The Osprey is published 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, NJ. Inquiries concerning the organization, newsletter, letters to the editor or material submitted for consideration are encouraged and may be sent to: P.O. Box 542, Red Bank, NJ 07701
E-mail: info@monmouthaudubon.org

► Items of note – local tidbits of interest

Volunteers urgently needed! In the column to the left is a list of the people that power the Monmouth County Audubon Society by volunteering their time to run the many programs that benefit the community and our environment. Please note that there are several openings and consider volunteering your time to keep MCAS a vital organization, taking pride in knowing that you've made a difference to the community – and the birds!

Reminder: Ted Engberg Conservation Scholarship... For 15 years, Monmouth County Audubon Society has awarded \$1,500 scholarships to qualified Monmouth County high school students continuing their education in a field related to wildlife conservation. The scholarship is awarded in memory of Ted Engberg, who was on the MCAS Board and a generous donor for decades.

Full information on the scholarship and the application are available on our website, www.monmouthaudubon.org. 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 500-word essay, "Why wildlife conservation is important to me." Applicants must be residents of Monmouth County.

Applications must be postmarked on or before May 1, 2020. The MCAS Scholarship Committee will review all eligible applications and award the \$1,500 scholarship checks to the winners by June 2, 2020.

Christmas Bird Count Results (2019):

Sandy Hook CBC (Scott Barnes) – Date: 12/15/19

The 42nd annual Sandy Hook CBC tallied 101 species. Highlights were King Eider, Iceland Gull, 50+ Razorbills (in Raritan Bay off Ideal Beach...surprising), Short-Eared Owl, Ash-throated Fly, Blue-headed Vireo, 5 Co. Ravens, & 2 Orange-crowned Warblers.

Long Branch CBC (Tom Brown) – Date: 12/28/19

The 85th Long Branch CBC tallied 113 species. Here are some highlights. There were two count firsts with Lincoln's Sparrow and a Henslow's Sparrow being added as new species. New Jersey's run of Ash-throated flycatcher continued with another found on the count, the 3rd ever (last was 2011), Northern Saw-whet Owl (a good find in a poor flight year), Cackling Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Orange-crowned Warbler, Pine Warbler, and a count week Eastern Phoebe round out the list of highlights.



► After 30 years as Treasurer, Howard Mason retires from Monmouth Audubon

by Robert Henschel

"You'll have to check with Howard...He'll know!"

That's the advice I've given Audubon members an untold number of times since 1990... Confused about your membership? No problem. Howard can straighten that out. "Got flaky video connection?" Not to worry, (Howard's a retired electrical engineer) he'll know how to fix it. "Forgot your slide projector?" He probably can run home for one. "What's our chapter IRS status?" "Where's the light switch for the ladies room?" "Does our insurance cover visiting penguins?"... Good questions; talk to Howard!

Howard Mason, our "official" chapter treasurer, has been Monmouth County Audubon's indispensable "Jack-of-all-trades" for 30 years. Howard and wife Jan, Little Silver residents since 1968, first learned about Monmouth County Audubon (then known as the Monmouth Nature Club) while attending a "bird program" presented by some upstart County Park Naturalist. Over the next few years they went to a few lectures and field trips and then in 1974, when our meeting place relocated to Trinity Episcopal Church in Red Bank, became full time members.

In 1990, Jim Nestel, our treasurer for the previous two decades, announced his retirement. Facing the reality we were short on volunteers; President Ken Thoman held a special meeting to address the predicament. Asking those concerned members if anyone had a particular task they were willing to take on, Howard answered TREASURER! The job was his. But I'm not sure if he knew what he had just gotten himself into.

Over the next 30 years, the Mason family took on many projects and responsibilities beyond what their job titles called for. For 10 years they staffed a MCAS information booth at the Red Bank Street Fair and for many more years hosted "Stamp and Sticker Parties" to process our "Osprey" newsletter for mailing. Jan looked after refreshments while Howard got involved with scholarships and dealing with the US postal system. Our meeting room at Tower Hill...Howard is responsible for arranging that too!



Osprey by Mike Davenport

Life in "Audubon World" can be even a little more interesting and rewarding when the unexpected comes your way. Jan recalls one evening several years back that involved Len Soucy, founder of "The Raptor Trust" avian rehabilitation center in Millington NJ. ..."There was a time we took our speakers to dinner. Linda Mack was president at the time and did not know Len Soucy that well and asked us to join them. On our way, Len gets a call. There is an Osprey caught by a fisherman, still had the hook in its foot and was now at the police station at Monmouth Beach. Scrap Dinner! The bird was retrieved and then taken to our MCAS meeting. (It was an interesting experience for me riding in the back seat of the car with the Osprey in a box between Len and me.) The bird was shown and discussed at the meeting. Then Len took it- rehabilitated the bird -and then returned it to Monmouth Beach for release." ...

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Ring-billed gull by Mike Davenport

Howard and Jan diplomatically recall that almost all of the hundreds of Wednesday meetings they attended were interesting and worthwhile; with the exception of one! On paper it was straight forward enough: “Gulls of New Jersey.” The problem was, as Howard describes it...“Pix after pix of dead gulls on into the night—people got up and left”. THREE hours of gulls-gulls and more gulls!..

As many of you know, a number of National Audubon chapters have shut down in recent years, mostly for lack of volunteers willing to take on leadership roles. MCAS has been around now for more than half a century thanks especially to the dedicated efforts of Jan and Howard Mason.

Sad to say, this coming May Howard and Jan will be stepping away from their multitasking responsibilities. But the good news is, they’re not sailing off to Tahiti. Little Silver will remain home town... That also means they’ll still be around Tower Hill and, when their busy lives permit, be able to attend our second Wednesday night programs...that is, as long as G-U-L-L is not the title!

► Noteworthy Sightings in Monmouth County

by Rob Fanning

- Ash-throated Flycatcher: 2 continuing thru 1/21 with at least one still present 2/2 (up to 4 showed up in November).
- King Eider: female at Sandy Hook thru most of December.
- Cackling Goose: several at various locations including 2 at Lake Takanassee on 1/17 and another at Thompson Park on 1/24.
- Barnacle Goose: seen at several locations in December including Lake Takanassee.
- Snow Goose: 3 immature individuals at Lake Takanassee on 1/17.
- Trumpeter Swans: returning/over-wintering birds at Assunpink WMA thru period; up to 3 reported.
- Iceland Gull: Deal Lake on 1/25.
- Eurasian Wigeon: drake seen by many thru period at MacLearie Park/Shark River area.
- Orange-crowned Warbler: several reports from Sandy Hook.
- Laughing Gull: 1/23+ Manasquan inlet (usually absent in winter).
- Razorbill: several at the Manasquan Inlet 2/3.
- Black-throated Blue Warbler (male): visiting feeder in Holmdel area most of this Winter.

amazonsmile

You shop. Amazon gives.

Every dollar you spend at Amazon.com can benefit MCAS!

Amazon has a program called AmazonSmile. Instead of logging in at www.amazon.com when you shop, enter smile.amazon.com. You will be asked which organization you want to benefit – just select us. This small change in your routine offers big benefits – 0.5% of every purchase you make goes back to MCAS in the form of a donation! It costs you nothing to participate, so why not Smile!



Black-and-white warbler. At 3 degrees of warming, it could lose 70% of its current breeding range. Photo by Bob Henschel.

➤ “Survival By Degrees”

National Audubon Assesses the Future of Bird Species in a Changing Climate

The National Audubon Society released a report in 2019 titled “Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink”, which examines how climate change is projected to impact North American bird species. An update to their 2014 “Birds and Climate Change Report”, Audubon scientists used 140 million observations, recorded by birders and scientists, to describe where 604 North American bird species live today—an area known as their “range.” They then used the latest climate models to project how each species’ range will shift as climate change and other human impacts advance across the continent.

A tool on the study’s website, the “Birds and Climate Visualizer”, allows you to enter your location to see which impacts from climate change are predicted for your area, and how birds near you will be affected by increases of 1.5, 2.0, and 3.0 degrees Celsius (2.7, 3.6, and 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit). According to the website, those temperatures were chosen because scientists agree that we should take immediate action to hold warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius or else face increasingly dire consequences. If we do nothing, 1.5 degrees is imminent, 2 degrees could happen as soon as 2050, and 3 degrees could occur by 2080.

For Monmouth County specifically, the study found that with a projected 1.5 degree Celsius increase in temperature, 3 bird species are identified as “high vulnerability species”, meaning that their predicted range may no longer include Monmouth County. Those species are the fish crow, least tern, and yellow-throated warbler. With an increase by 3.0 degrees Celsius, the number of high vulnerability species in Monmouth climbs to 13 and includes species such as the scarlet tanager and wood thrush. In addition to those, 27 species are identified as “moderate vulnerability species”, 28 as “low vulnerability species”, and 68 species as stable. The website provides information on how climate change may impact specific species.

One of the interesting yet sad findings from this study is that many states, including New Jersey, may no longer be home to their state bird in a changing climate. The study classifies the eastern goldfinch as a “moderately vulnerable species” with a 3.0 degree Celsius increase and the range map shows a dramatic change in its range. In fact, the map displays the entire county of Monmouth as “range lost” for this species. “Rising temperatures and shifting weather patterns affect birds’ ability to find food and reproduce, which over time impacts local populations, and ultimately continent-wide populations, too. Some species may even go extinct in your state if they cannot find the resources they need to survive and raise their young.”

Due to climate change, the range maps in your 20-year old field guide may no longer be correct.

These range shifts may cause some of Monmouth’s bird species to re-locate further north, while some accidental southern species may become more frequent visitors or residents here. It’s not an equal trade however. The county may not possess the proper habitat for a southern species. With its southern habitat no longer suitable due to climate change and a lack of proper habitat further north, the

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species' population may decline and ultimately become extinct. Due to climate change, the range maps in your 20-year old field guide may no longer be correct.

A changing climate is impacting more than birds. As noted in the study, "New Jersey sea levels have risen up to 12 inches since 1950 and could rise another inch in the next five years, eroding beaches and wetlands and also increasing damages from coastal storms. Annual rainfall and heavy downpours have increased, a pattern that could lead to regular flooding if it continues. Ocean acidification threatens commercial fishing, specifically scallop and surf clam fisheries. Heat waves threaten vulnerable communities, including children and the elderly, sick, and poor."

Though the findings for birds are dire, the situation for less mobile species, such as reptiles and amphibians, is even worse. The Audubon study does not address those species groups, but consider the obvious fact that reptiles and amphibians, as well as other species groups which cannot fly, are often limited in expanding their range due to urbanization or other barriers. For some species which may currently be at the northern extreme of their range in New Jersey, moving northward would require them to traverse interstate multi-lane highways and residential communities.

Though the findings of this study are bleak, not all is lost. There are ways in which you can help lower the threat to birds and the study offers some suggestions. The most obvious way to help is by curbing the release of greenhouse gases, which can be achieved by using renewable energy sources, such as solar, and by using more energy efficient vehicles. The study also suggests urging our elected officials to support policies such as energy-efficiency standards while incentivizing clean-energy sources to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

The entire report and website with climate model scenarios may be accessed via:

<https://www.audubon.org/climate/survivalbydegrees/>



American oystercatcher, a species which is impacted by climate change through the loss of beach habitat due to rising seas. Photo by Mike Davenport.

"Some climate change is inevitable. What isn't inevitable is our action or inaction." – National Audubon Society

➤ **State Takes Action to Address Decline of Ruffed Grouse**

At their regular meeting on July 17, 2019 the NJ Fish and Game Council unanimously voted to close the ruffed grouse hunting season statewide, effectively immediately. According to the Division of Fish & Wildlife's website, "ruffed grouse populations in the state have declined due to lack of suitable habitat (young-aged forests) which they require. Such forests now comprise less than 1% of the state's forests."

A draft report, "Species Status Review of Land Birds and Waterbirds" completed by the Division's Endangered & Nongame Species Program in March 2018, proposes a status of "Threatened" for the ruffed grouse in New Jersey, but this has not been formalized through filing of a formal rule proposal. That report may be accessed via: https://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/ensp/species_assessment.htm

MONMOUTH OPEN SPACE SPOTLIGHT

► Durand Park & Conservation Area

Location: 225 Randolph Rd, Freehold Township, NJ 07728

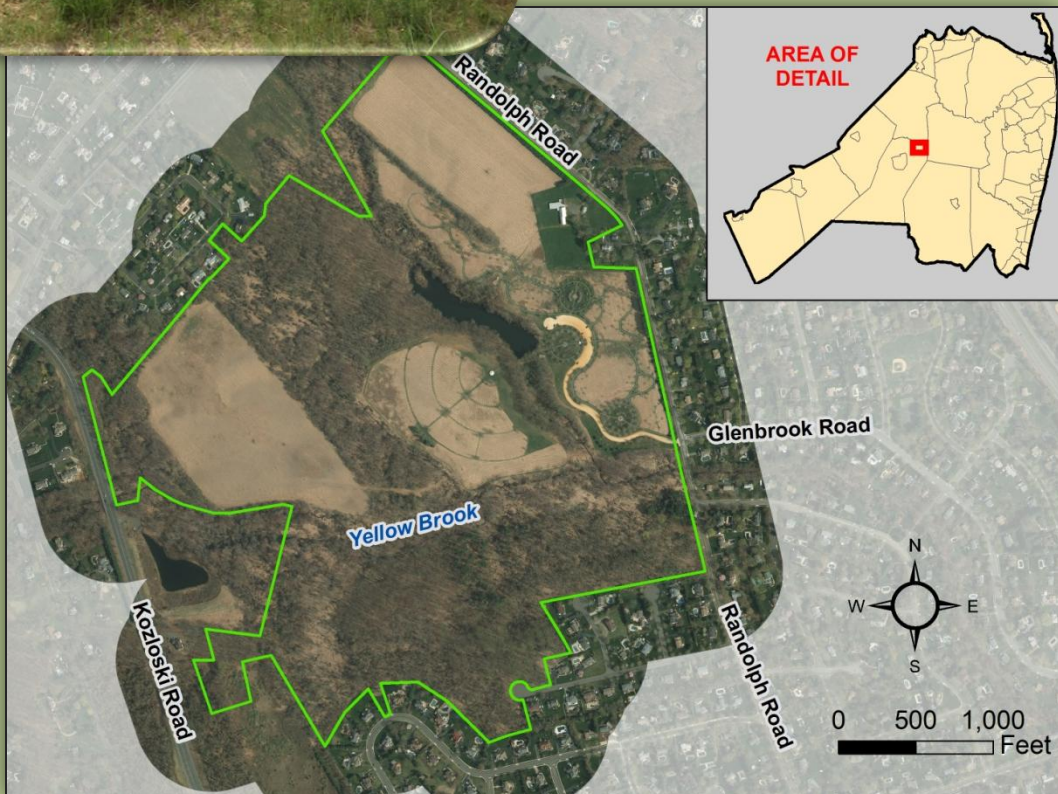
Acreage: 235.3

Habitat(s): Deciduous forest, wetland forest, agriculture fields, meadow.

E-Bird Stats*: 51 species & 5 checklists.

**as of Jan. 2020*

Located off Randolph Road in the northeast corner of Freehold Township, Durand Park & Conservation Area is a township-owned and managed park. The park features well-maintained walking trails which wind through an arboretum adjacent to fields, forests, and wetlands. Eastern bluebirds are a common sight throughout the park, as several nest boxes are maintained throughout the park. A small pond is home to waterfowl, such as hooded mergansers and ring-necked ducks during the winter. Picnic tables are located near the pond, and a butterfly meadow is located uphill from the pond to the west. Further west, riparian deciduous forest as well as additional agricultural fields can be found. The diverse habitats within such a compact area provide a great opportunity to observe a diversity of wildlife.



➤ **coming up**

Wed., March 11 7:00 pm
Family Night: Feathers & Fur – Investigating Animal Coverings. Turtle Back Zoo
Note early time. Space is limited; please RSVP to info@monmouthaudubon.org
 Tower Hill Church, Red Bank.

Sat., March 14 8:30 pm
Timberdoodle Walk at Big Brook Park. 520, Marlboro
 Meet in main parking lot.

Wed., April 8 8:00 pm
Songbird Migration at Sandy Hook. Tom Brown.
 Tower Hill Church, Red Bank.

Sat., April 11 11:00 am – 3 pm
Hummingbird Garden “Stop By” event at the Morganville Flower Farm.
 406 Route 9, Morganville.
 Stop by to ask about hummingbirds & gardening to attract them.

Sat., April 18 10:00 am
Sandy Hook Bird Walk.
 Meet at the Old Visitor’s Center Parking Lot (unmarked lot just after D lot)

Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month September-May at Tower Hill Church, 255 Harding Road, Red Bank. Meetings are open to the public. See map on our website.

Sat., April 25
Navesink River Bird watching Boat Cruise.
 Details were not available at press time, please check our website for updates and details.
<https://www.monmouthaudubon.org/field-trips>

Sat., May 2 8:15 am
Spring Migration at Allaire.
 Meet in the main parking lot.

Wed., May 13 8:00 pm
Bats of New Jersey.
 Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ. Tower Hill Church, Red Bank.



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