



Friendly, fun, and Informative Bird Watching

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www.southernoceanbirdinggroup.org

Scott Weidensaul at Friends of Forsythe Program

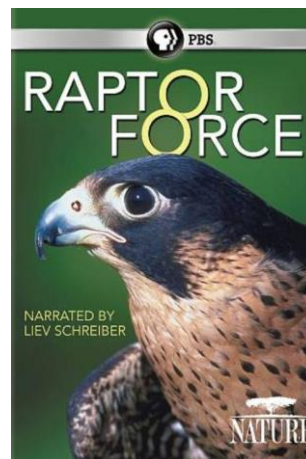


Many members of the SOBG attended the rescheduled program of Friends of Forsythe presented by Scott Weidensaul at JCNERR on Jan. 15th. It was on **Project SNOWstorm**, and everyone greatly enjoyed it.

Feathers and Eggs

- The next field trip is January 26 to Forsythe NWR to see our winter waterfowl. Meet at parking lot at the Oceanville division at 9 a.m.
- If you haven't paid your dues for 2019, you can at the next meeting or mail check to: SOBG, 206 N. Frankfurt Ave, Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215 (At this time, you cannot renew online—hopefully next year it will be available)
- The Cape May Point Lakeside Lodge will be rented from Sept. 23-27 this year. Price TBD. Mark your calendars; first come, first reserved.

February 7 Meeting



Our next meeting is February 7, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. at the Hunting Shanty of Tuckerton Seaport. The movie, **Raptor Force**, will be shown as the program. Armed with powerful beaks and razor-sharp talons, raptors are nature's elite killing force—winged predators

whose graceful beauty belies their stunning speed, acrobatics and precision. Dramatic original footage from cameras mounted on their backs shows why falcons, owls, eagles, and hawks are masters of the sky.

Light refreshments will be available.

News from EB Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

The Refuge at Oceanville is open for the Wildlife Drive, but the offices, store, and restrooms are closed due to the government shutdown. We all hope this will be resolved soon as important science is not being done, and at some national parks, destruction is happening by idiotic people.

Exciting news about celebrating the 80th Anniversary coming soon! Get those cameras out.

2018 Tuckerton Christmas Bird Count

By Greg Prelich

On Jan. 5, 2019, sixteen intrepid birders, spearheaded by members of the Southern Ocean Birding Group, participated in the 119th annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. The group included three birders who had not participated in any CBCs previously (yay for the newbies!) and four more participants joining our count for the first time. Our group covers the Tuckerton CBC, which originated with a single participant in 1967. The Tuckerton CBC was active from 1967 through 1986, when it was discontinued. The count restarted in 2004 but was halted again after just two years. Shortly after SOBG was organized in 2008, our group revived the Tuckerton count in 2010, and has spearheaded the count since then, led originally by compiler Linda Gangi, and this year Linda helped the transition to our new organizer, Morry Kapitan. A map of our 15-mile diameter count circle and the 10 sectors that we monitor is shown below. Due to historical precedence, the areas of our circle that overlap with adjacent CBC circles (Barnegat CBC and Oceanville CBC) are covered by those groups.

Weather for the 2018 Tuckerton CBC was an issue. The count was originally scheduled for Dec. 15, 2018, but it was postponed due to substantial rain and fog. The weather for the re-scheduled count was only slightly better, with drizzle through most of the day after a night of heavy rain that created muddy conditions. Freshwater ponds were completely open due to the warm winter conditions. Despite the fog and drizzle, the group did extremely well, ending with a total of 80 species, easily surpassing the previous high of 74 species since the count was re-organized in 2010. The most notable sighting was a first-ever for this count report of Orange-crowned Warbler, spotted on Great Bay Boulevard. New high counts were established for Snow Goose, Surf Scoter, Common Goldeneye, Great Egret, Black Vulture, Eastern Screech-owl, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Carolina Wren, Northern Cardinal, and House Sparrow. Notably, this was the sixth straight year that Great Egret was seen on this CBC, and mirroring its spread northward in recent years, Black Vulture was seen for the seventh straight year despite not being seen from 1967-2007, with an all-time high of 59 (easily surpassing the previous high of 21!). New lows (since 2010) were established for Canada Goose and Hooded Merganser. Although there was no ice

on the freshwater ponds, waterfowl levels were low, an observation made in other local CBCs this season. The idea is that open water north and west of us has retained those ducks for longer than normal outside of NJ. Notable misses were Tundra Swan, Gadwall, Killdeer, and Common Grackle, all of which were spotted on approximately half of our previous CBCs, and Greater Scaup, which has followed a feast-or-famine pattern. This has been a banner year for winter finches in NJ, but we were unable to locate any Purple Finches, Pine Siskins, Red Crossbills, or Evening Grosbeaks. Maybe next year.

CBC participants shared pizza and summarized our sightings at the Hunting Shanty in Tuckerton afterward. Birders of all skill levels can participate and contribute in different ways in this global event, so please consider joining us for the 2018 Tuckerton Christmas Bird Count, set for Dec. 14, 2019.



Photo by Terry Lodge

Details of the past counts from 2010 can be found at our website. Thanks to Morry, Linda, Greg and all those who participated!



Friends in Southern Ocean Birding Group (group)