



Friendly, fun, and Informative Bird Watching

August 2019

Issue 24

www.southernoceanbirdinggroup.org

Volunteers Needed!



The SOBG has tables at the Ocean County Decoy Show on Sept. 24, Tip Seaman Park in Tuckerton. Time 10-4 p.m.; and the Pine Barrens Jamboree on

October 14, at Wells Mills County Park, Waretown. 10-3 p.m. We need a few volunteers from our membership to help with the tables, where we distribute free information about the SOBG and sell our field guides. If we were to have enough volunteers, we could split the day, with members only having to be at each 3 hours. Please let us know if you are interested in helping. These events are great for getting our Group known to the public.

Field Trips

- **August 24**—Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge for migrating shorebirds; meet at Visitor Center Parking Lot at 8:30 a.m. to carpool
- **September 14**—Sandy Hook for migrants; meet at Parking Lot B at Sandy Hook at 8:30 a.m.
- **September 23-27**—Cape May Point house at 508 West Lake Drive, on Lily Lake. Come down for the day if you're not staying over.

September 5 Meeting



Our next meeting is September 5, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. at the Hunting Shanty of Tuckerton Seaport. Our September meeting will be the *History of Bass River State Forest*,

presented by Cynthia Coritz, a member of the SOBG and Supervisor with the NJ Division of Parks and Forestry. She will present the interesting history and current status of this natural area, filled with wildlife and stories.

Bass River State Forest is a 23,563 acres state park in Ocean County, New Jersey, United States. The park, named for the Bass River which crosses through it, shelters a portion of the environmentally sensitive Pine Barrens but also provides a variety of recreational resources to visitors. The park is operated and maintained by the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry.

So, come and learn about the forest, which is right in our backyard; a fun and informative program that all will enjoy. Light refreshments will be available.

Feathers and Eggs

- **Forsythe NWR Big Year**
https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Edwin_B_Forsythe/visit/visitor_activities.html

Evenings at Forsythe

The next Evenings at Forsythe is Sept 19, 6:30-8 p.m. at the Visitor Information Center. Program is **“The Future is Now: How the Internet of Wildlife (IOW) is uncovering the mysteries of bird behavior around the Globe”**, presented by David LaPuma. Only the first 80 people will be allowed in, so come early.

Birding Southern California Part 3, By Greg Prelich

We spent three days in the desert on this trip: one day at Anza-Borrego State Park, and two in the Joshua Tree / Big Morongo area. Our main targets were the difficult thrashers (LeConte’s and Crissal) along with the more typical desert birds. Needless to say that we don’t have much desert habitat in New Jersey, so seeing even the common desert species was fun for us. The highlights here were numerous Phainopeplas, a pair of Loggerhead Shrikes, and a group of more than 20 Swainson’s Hawks lifting off from their overnight roost north of us. We then



moved on to the WTP ponds where the mesquite was thicker, and there we had a little more success. We spotted a couple pairs of

Black-tailed Gnatcatchers, a pair of Verdins including one making a nest, and shortly after speaking with a trio of local birders who assured us we were at ‘Ground Zero’ for thrashers, I was able to get a quick view of a Crissal Thrasher singing atop the mesquite.

We moved onward to Yucca Valley, where we skipped the motel routine and instead rented a spacious home for the next two nights, but on the way, we stopped at the Coachella Valley Preserve, where some interesting birds were being seen. Unfortunately, by the time we arrived, we were tired, and it was windy and mid-afternoon, so activity was low. When we neared the McCallum Trail

pond and oasis though, we started hearing bird chatter



that turned out to be a mixed flock of Lesser Goldfinch and Lawrence’s Goldfinch. Lesser Goldfinch are relatively common, but this was the only location where we would see a Lawrence’s, which was a lovely bird and a lifer for me.

We began at Covington Park because Big Morongo was not yet open, and the cottonwoods were filled with Mountain Chickadees, Audubon’s Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Lesser Goldfinch, with a few new species mixed in. We found three male Vermillion Flycatchers sparring over a single female in the group, had super views of a pair of Red-breasted Sapsuckers, and Pete spotted a Great Horned Owl in the still-bare cottonwoods. In Big Morongo we added a Barn Owl hiding in the fan palms and we spotted Bushtits paired up and making their nest near the trails.



We returned to Joshua Tree for our final morning in the desert, to the Black Rock Campground. I was looking at a trail map at a kiosk before beginning the walk, when I noticed some quails moving between the brush. I quickly called Jeanine and Pete over for what I assumed would be tough views of these Gambel’s Quails scurrying away



from us. We all had good views eventually, but then it got even better, as one bird started singing and then flew into a low cactus in the morning light and continued singing for a few minutes.



Friends in Southern Ocean Birding Group (group)