



# Friendly, fun, and Informative Bird Watching

January 2020 Issue 29

[www.southernoceanbirdinggroup.org](http://www.southernoceanbirdinggroup.org)



The SOBG will be doing the count on **Feb. 15 at Cloverdale Farm Ocean County Park.**

We will meet at the park headquarters at 9 a.m. It will be done in conjunction with the monthly bird walk given with Greg Prelich. After the scheduled walk concludes, teams may

split up and take different sections of the park to continue the counts. We will meet up afterwards in the park headquarters to collect the count sheets for compilations and the totals will be entered into the Cornell Lab database the following week. Of course, we also encourage you to participate in your backyard count, for which you can get information

at: [Gbbc.birdcount.org](http://Gbbc.birdcount.org)

## Annual Dues for 2020

It's that time of year again to pay your annual dues to the group. Singles are \$20, and couples are \$35 for the year. We cannot accept at this time dues online, but you can send a check, payable to Southern Ocean Birding Group, to: SOBG, c/o Jeanine Apgar, 206 N. Frankfurt Ave, Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215. Or you can pay at meetings.



## February 6, 2020 Meeting

Our next meeting is February 6, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. at the Hunting Shanty of Tuckerton Seaport.

We are having a team bird trivia competition with

surprise awards for the winning teams. After each round the winning team will be announced and have a selection of prizes. So, come out and test your knowledge of all things bird. We will have teams comprising of novices paired with more experienced members. This will be great fun and enjoyment for all!

## Field Trips

- **January 25**—Forsythe NWR (maybe canceled due to weather)
- **February 15**—Cloverdale County Park, 9 a.m.
- **March 21**—Wings Over LBI

## Evenings at Forsythe

The next Evenings at Forsythe is February 20, 6:30-8 p.m. at the Visitor Information Center. Program is Pinelands 101: A Walk Through the Pines, with Joel Mott, NJ Pinelands Commission.

# Wings Over LBI

Plans for the *Wings Over LBI* event are taking shape. We are having a Wine and Cheese fundraiser at the Long Beach Island Foundation of Arts and Sciences on Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:30 p.m., raising funds for our MATES scholarship. The committee has secured Chris Huch, former Executive Director of Alliance for a Living Ocean as a speaker and are awaiting another speaker commitment early in January. Donation amount TBD.

On March 21, we are presenting for Science Saturday, *Identifying Shorebirds* with Greg Prelich. After the presentation at 1 p.m. (allowing time for a quick lunch break), we will be offering two field trips: Barnegat Inlet with leaders Greg Prelich and Jeanine Apgar; Cedar Bonnet Island (Forsythe NWR) with leaders Alex Majewski and Bob Leifeste.

## Gone Missing—3 Billion Birds Panel Discussion

**DATE & Time:** March 7, 2-5 p.m.

**Location:** Alton Auditorium, Stockton University

Details of how to register will be sent out by February 1.

## Winter Birding, by Greg Prelich

It's February, and the birding is slow. Or is it? There is a quote that says, "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." I happen to be a birding optimist, so yes, it is



somewhat difficult to go birding in the middle of winter, bundling up against the cold, but on the positive side we don't have to worry about mosquitoes and ticks

and there are opportunities for good birds to be seen this time of year. So where are those good birds? Well, a good place to start is wherever there is open water. Have you seen all the duck species yet this winter? Have you been at Brig when the large flock of Snow Geese takes off in unison? Wow! A visit to the Barnegat Lighthouse jetty (bring your camera) should yield the expected Harlequin Ducks, Purple Sandpipers, Common Eiders,

Long-tailed Ducks, and all three scoters, often at close range. A walk along the beach at locations such as Island Beach or Holgate or Sandy Hook could result in seeing Snow Buntings or a Snowy Owl, and both Common Loons and Red-throated Loons should be found almost anywhere along the coast. Horned Grebes should be in the bays and inlets, but keep a watchful eye out for any Red-necked Grebes or Eared Grebes that might be mixed in. And speaking of inlets, these are good places to look for alcids. It might take a bit of patience (pick a warmer and less windy day), but Razorbills are out there, and there's always a chance that Dovekie or a rarer alcid such as January's popular and highly coveted Black Guillemot might appear.

Bald Eagles seem to be very abundant this winter. They will be on their nests in February, so keep an eye out if you're near their traditional nesting sites. Maybe you could even find a new nest! In the marshes, Northern



Harriers will be hunting by daylight, followed (if you're lucky) by Short-eared Owls and Rough-legged Hawks as twilight approaches.

This is not a great winter for us to see the

winter finches (Pine Siskins, Crossbills, Purple Finch, Evening Grosbeak) due to good cone crops further north, but we can always hope a few will visit us, so be alert. Other winter species such as Red-breasted Nuthatch and Brown Creeper have been scarce for me so far this winter, but the cold of February might bring more to our area.

So yes, there is plenty to keep us busy in February. Stay warm and stay optimistic during winter before these species leave us once again when spring rolls along. By the end of the month the crocuses and Snowdrops will be blooming again, Ospreys will start returning, and Woodcocks will be peenting, signaling the onset of a new season.



**Friends in Southern Ocean Birding Group (group)**