



Friendly, fun, and Informative Bird Watching

October 2020 Issue 38

southernoceanbirdinggroup.org

Due to the CoVid-19 emergency, we are announcing that all meetings, field trips, and events are cancelled for the foreseeable future. Some field trips may go on as we can drive individually to location and use social distancing. The Tuckerton Seaport is closed, as is Jacques Cousteau NERR, Long Beach Island Foundation, and the Visitor Information Center at E. B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. The Wildlife Drive is open to drive around the Refuge, and Cedar Bonnet Island is also open; Ocean County parks facilities are open, and you can walk around the park trails. Please use common sense, a face covering, and 'social distancing'.

Annual Dues for 2021

Dues for 2021 can start to be paid in August, which will cover you until December 31, 2021. Singles are \$20, and couples are \$35 for the year. 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. **Online Paypal is now available for renewals, new memberships, and donations on our website.**

Virtual Holiday Party—December 3

Looking for ideas for a virtual party. Send them along.

Tuckerton Christmas Bird Count

December 19; details to follow. Will be separate cars and no lunch or meals together. Report individually the results to Morry Kaptian.



November 5, 2020 Virtual Meeting

We will have a virtual Zoom meeting on November 5 at 7 p.m. At that time, Stephen Fieldler will present a movie on "Twelve Tenacious Invasives" and lead a panel discussion after the movie.

The video created by the Galloway Township Environmental Commission about non-native plants that are so common they grow along roadways, in parks, fields and in many backyards. The film, "12 Tenacious Invasives," discusses just one dozen of thousands of non-native species that have been brought to the United States as ornamentals. However, their proliferation often crowds out, smothers, or kills native plants that are beneficial to pollinators, such as bees and butterflies.

Project Manager Stephen Fiedler, who chairs Galloway Township's Environmental Commission and is a member of the Native Plant Society of NJ Southeast Chapter, which meets monthly at Stockton University.

The Zoom invitation to the program will be sent out shortly.

Field Trips

- **October 24—Cape May, meet at Hawk Watch at 9-9:30 a.m. Raptors, sparrows, and some warblers**
- **November 21—Island Beach State Park, looking for late migrants**

Members Write What They Did the Summer That Wasn't

We are asking our members to send an email with one sentence to tell us what you did outside your home the summer of 2020 that was fun or interesting; doesn't have to be birdy, just something that broke the boredom of staying in the house. Join In!

Jeanine Apgar: 3 kayak trips down the Wading River near Chatsworth-it was cool, green, and shady.

Greg's Florida Birding Adventures—Part 1

This past year I spent a few months in central Florida visiting family, giving me ample time to explore new habitats and to begin acquainting myself with the flowers, butterflies, herps, and birds of Florida. I have visited Florida many times in the past, but typically for a rushed week or so in relatively touristy areas. When you find yourself in a new location for an extended period of time, life slows down and there is no need to rush, with so much to see and learn in the immediate area and little need to travel far to find something new. In this newsletter I will describe what it was like in the village where I stayed, and in next month's newsletter I'll describe a few highlights of some better-known birding sites that we visited nearby.



So, what was it like to wake up in Florida for a month during mid-winter? Picture this: wearing shorts every day even in February. Picking fresh bananas or papayas from the backyard tree. Sandhill Cranes and White Ibises strolling across the lawns. Not bad at all. The village where my brother lives is smack-dab in the middle of Florida, near the city of Leesburg, so we were far

from the coast. This is citrus country, and lake country, and now retirement community country. There is a nice variety of interesting birds in the village itself, which has preserved natural areas and several wetlands. You can easily imagine seeing plenty of the common waders: Snowy and Great Egrets, Little Blue and Tricolored

Hérons, and the aforementioned Ibises and Cranes are all over. What I didn't expect to see right in the village (on nearly every walk) were many species that we'd consider rarities in NJ but which are daily ho-hum occurrences down there, such as Wood Storks, Anhingas, Common and Purple Gallinules, and Black-bellied Whistling-ducks.



During summer months there, a few new and interesting species arrived; every evening during summer, like clockwork, we enjoyed the booming calls and flights of Common Nighthawks directly

over the front yard. It was not too unusual to see graceful Swallow-tailed Kites feeding and soaring just above the homes or spotting the impossibly colorful Painted Buntings trying to hide in the bushes. I was even treated to a few local rarities, such as a pair of Roseate Spoonbills that



visited the village when a retention pond was being drained, a Loggerhead Shrike that favored his personal lamppost a block from our house for a week or the biggest highlight was reading a book under a palm tree during midday, gazing up, and spotting a Short-tailed Hawk (a much sought-after lifer!) soaring just over the treetops.



So yes, it was great to see on a daily basis birds that are rare for NJ, but to put things in perspective, in my experience the year-round birding in Florida is not as diverse as here in New Jersey. It's a great place to see the specialty species that I listed above, but unexpectedly for me, the number of warblers and shorebirds in Florida, even during migration, was very disappointing. So, stay Jersey Proud and enjoy the ever-changing and diverse birds here at home while Floridians become jealous of the Harlequin Ducks and Razorbills and Iceland Gulls and Pine Siskins and Red-breasted Nuthatches that we are seeing up here in winter.



Friends in Southern Ocean Birding Group (group)