



Friendly, fun, and Informative Bird Watching

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southernoceanbirdinggroup.org

Due to the CoVid-19 emergency, all in person meetings are cancelled for the foreseeable future.

Annual Dues for 2021

Dues for 2021 are due. 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.**

SOBG Clean-up Great Bay Blvd.

Save the date of **April 10th** for our Annual Clean Up of Great Bay Blvd. This our annual community service project, which was canceled last year. This is our way to give back to the community and protect a valuable birding location right in our own area. Volunteers come out to help bag and dispose of plastic waste and other garbage that are polluting our oceans and bays. More info will follow shortly. Time is usually 9 to noon, depending on the number of volunteers participating.



Friends in Southern Ocean Birding Group (group)



March 4, 2021 Virtual Meeting

We will have a virtual Zoom Meeting on March 4, 2021 at 7 p.m. Our March meeting will be an audience participation event entitled “**My Favorite Birds of 2020**”, where members are invited to tell us about their favorite birding experiences of the past year. Tell us about some rare bird that you chased, or a common bird that was doing some interesting behavior, or an exotic bird that you saw on vacation, or an interesting visitor to your yard, or a bird that posed nearby for a great photo opportunity.

Greg Prelich will be coordinating this program, so let Greg know how many birds you want to share and send any documenting photos that can be incorporated into the slide show to Greg:

gprelich@gmail.com, preferably by Feb. 25.

A Zoom invite will be sent next week. In the meantime, stay safe and get vaccinated.

Field Trips

- **March 20—Barnegat Inlet and Environs**
- **April 24—Belleplaine State Forest**

Wild Goose Chases, or the Ones that Got Away

By

Susan Puder

Last week I drove down to Cape May after reading on eBird that a White-fronted Goose was seen frequently in the area of the Shunpike. Needless to say, I never found it that day. That added to a growing list of possible lifers I have tried to track down over the years. They say birding is a crapshoot, and I can attest that it is true.

My favorite response I usually receive is, “You just missed it. It was here just 10, 15, 20, 30 or yesterday ago.” Now I am positive I’m not the only birder who has had this happen, and I won’t be the last. But it does get a bit frustrating at times. Like the times recently I went searching for American Pipits, both in Toms River and Stone Harbor, and struck out.

Or the many times I’ve headed to the Lake of the Lilies to



find Waylon the Wood Duck and his accompanying Redheads. What! You’ve never heard of Waylon and the Redheads? They’ve had several hits on the

Cornell’s Billboard Top 100.

Apparently, they are on tour when I make it up to the Lake.



Maybe it was the several times I went to Forsythe NWR for the Townsend’s Warbler, where I was looking for the bird in all the wrong places. The third time proved to be a charm, especially when there are over a dozen people pointing it out.



I decided in 2021 that my goals were to get 12 lifers and see at least 200 species this year. Not being able to travel last year or even get out of the house much because of Covid-19, I only saw a total of 40 species with 5 lifers for the entire year. This year was going to be better; I’m going to get out there and see them birds (masked and social distancing of course).

With a spring in my step and a hybrid car to travel in, I started my search. I traveled to Manasquan Inlet several times to see the Black-headed Gull with no luck. Finally, the last time, a group with NJ Audubon was there on Baltimore, and they pointed it out. Running back to the car to record the find with my camera, returning to “It just flew away.” Oh, well.

Okay, let’s try Barnegat Inlet for alcids. Got there on the walkway, looking out when another birder comes by and says, “You just missed the Dovykie, it was quite close. And there was a Razorbill here, too, but it flew out the inlet.”

One of my biggest misses was at Northwood Center in Cape May Point last October. Three of us had rented a house at the Point and the birding was great. My target bird was the Connecticut Warbler. It was reported at Higbee, so I drove over there to search and came up empty. People were seeing ones in various places, all the places I was not. Finally, at Northwood, a group had assembled by the parking area for a Blackpoll, which was giving us nice photo ops. I check ‘Group Me’ on my phone, and our Greg just posted the warbler in the back of Northwood. I implored him to take me to this warbler, and we all head down the stairs. I’m excited, I’m finally after years of searching going to see this elusive bird. We search and search, Greg and Jeanine say, “We just saw it not more than 5 minutes ago.” But alas, it is still elusive to me.

I’m sure you all must have tales of just missed birds, so I can’t complain as it’s just fun to get out and about these days. Soon, we hope that everyone will get vaccinated, and we can all spend more time together, still masked, but we can all experience wild goose chases with others.

Cape May House

The Board is waiting until April to see how things are going in the country and in NJ to determine whether we will rent the Cape May Lodge, probably the first week in October. We are all anxious to be able to spend the week down there together, but safety must come first. First, everyone will have to be vaccinated before we can even consider it. It’s tough right now, but hopefully more vaccine will be available for all soon. We’ll keep you posted on the house.