



# Friendly, fun, and Informative Bird Watching

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[southernoceanbirdinggroup.org](http://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.**

## Great Bay WMA Clean Up

Over 20 people came out on April 10 to help with our Annual Clean Up of Great Bay WMA. With over 40 bags of trash and assorted other garbage, it was quite the success. We thank all our members who came out to help; there were also several volunteers from the area who saw the article in The Sandpaper. We couldn't have done it without you.



## Members May 6, 2021 Virtual Meeting



We will have a virtual Zoom Meeting on May 6, 2021 at 7 p.m. Our May meeting will be an overview the history and goals of the New Jersey Bird Records Committee (NJBRC) presented by Carole Hughes. She will discuss the record submission/review process and talk about some

of the more interesting records both historical and recent.

Carole's love of birding began when she was introduced to a Crested Caracara while a docent at the Houston Zoo. Upon moving to New Jersey, she began volunteering as an Associate Naturalist for NJ Audubon leading adult and youth birding trips, served on the NJ Audubon Board of Directors, and is a current member of the New Jersey Bird Records Committee. Join us for this Zoom meeting.

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

## Field Trips

- April 24—Belleplaine State Forest
- May 15—Double Trouble State Park
- May 22—Heislerville and Delaware Bayshore



## Cape May House

The Board has decided to rent the Lakeside Lodge from October 4-8, 2021. Most of the rooms are already spoken for, but we will accept a few names to be put on a wait list. Everyone will have been vaccinated by then and hopefully so will all the people in Cape May. We will start collecting the fees after the contract is received and sent back to the owner.



## Pelagic Trip and Other Possibilities

**By Bob Leifeste**

Ready to try something different? Want to see some life birds? See some marine mammals? Six members of the SOBG went on a pelagic trip out of Cape May on 3/21/21 with Cape May Whale Watch. They do pelagic trips that leave at 6:30 AM and return at 6:30 PM. They go out about 45 miles where they start throwing out small pieces of meat to attract birds and it works like magic.



All photos were by Chris Thomas.

You may be worried about identifying such birds, but not to worry, Tom Reed is a professional guide who tells you where to look on a loudspeaker and the ship moves for the best view. Several other people on board are very competent and also shout out where the birds are. So, if you are not up on your pelagic birds, it is no problem. Just look where all the people are looking with bins and listen for comments and you will get on the bird.

Many of the birds we saw were sitting on the water. You don't have to write down the birds you see. An

hourly list will be emailed to you. Just make sure they have your email address.

Another element of the trip was marine mammals. We saw a Right Whale mother and calf. They are a very rare species of whale. There are only 350 in the world. It was a life mammal for me. There is a



database of all 350 in the world and several pictures were taken with hopes

of identifying them by the marine staff on board. Their heads have knobby white patches of rough skin, called callosities, which appear white because of whale lice. The shape of the callosities are what scientists use to identify each one. When the right whales spout water, it is in a "v" shape. It is the only whale that spouts like that. The last time one was seen by this ship was 10 years ago.

We also saw common dolphins, which are not the ones you see by the shore, a seal swimming, and other species of whales spouting.

As an added treat, we saw the US Coast Guard officer training sailing ship, the Eagle, which has a bold red stripe on the side. One of the last times I saw this ship was in 1976 at Operation Sail celebrating our Bicentennial.



There are several other options available for pelagic trips. Miss Barnegat Light has evening trips all summer that stay close to the shore but has great views of wildlife. There are plenty of other places that do this type of trip. Cape May Whale Watch runs 3 hour trips all summer. You can see lots of inshore birds and mammals. No puffins! Also, in Cape May there are pontoon boats called the Skimmer and the Osprey that do salt marsh and bay trips that are focused on birds. The guides are professionals, and the boats are very stable with next to no rocking. So, try something new at the level you feel comfortable with. The boats I have been on all limit the amount of people. So social distancing is not an issue.