



# Friendly, fun, and Informative Bird Watching

July 2021

Issue 47

[southernoceanbirdinggroup.org](http://southernoceanbirdinggroup.org) Due to Covid, all in person meetings at the Tuckerton Seaport are cancelled for the foreseeable future.

## Annual Dues for 2022

Dues for 2022 are due from now until December 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 available for renewals, new memberships, and donations on our website.**

## SOBG Picnic—July 10



the hospitality were wonderful and we all had a great time. Thank you Nancy Lynch and family for hosting us again. We couldn't do it without your kindness.

July 10 turned out to be a beautiful warm day with gentle breezes on Mystic Island, where we all enjoyed being together again after 18 months. The food and



## August 5, 2021 Virtual Meeting

We will have a virtual Zoom Meeting on **August 5, 2021** at 7 p.m, with a presentation on “Birding the Dry Tortugas” with Chelsea Hockenbury. The Dry Tortugas is one of the hidden gems in America’s National Parks system, situated ninety miles due west of Key West, Florida in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico, the seven small islands comprising this archipelago hold many natural and historical wonders. While the Dry Tortugas National Park draws thousands of history buffs and snorkelers every year, the park is also a birder’s paradise.

Chelsea moved to Ohio from Louisiana to study at Hiram College, where she was introduced to the world of ornithology and wildlife rehabilitation. After graduation, she moved to Florida and worked as a natural and historical interpreter aboard the *Yankee Freedom II*, the only contracted passenger ferry to bring visitors to and from the Dry Tortugas every day from Key West. In her spare time, Chelsea volunteered with the Key West Wildlife Center, helping to rescue, rehab, and release native wildlife in the Florida Keys and educate the public at the same time. In 2014 she moved to Toms River, where birding is still an important part of her life.

A Zoom invite will be sent shortly. In the meantime, stay safe and get vaccinated. Only vaccinated people will be allowed into indoor events.

## Field Trips

- August 21—Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge
- September 18—Palmyra Cove Nature Center

## Birding by Boat on the Osprey



Ten members of the SOBG went out on the Osprey, Bird by Boat, in Cape May on July 12<sup>th</sup>, and enjoyed 2.5 hours out on the back bays and salt marshes. The hi-lites were the young Laughing Gulls, 2 young American Oystercatchers, and 1 baby Willet. Of course, the eagles and ospreys were always a welcomed sight, as were the many Whimbels.



## Cape May House

The Cape May house is fully reserved for Oct. 4-8.

As always, friends and members are welcome to visit and stay the day birding with us. The address is 1112 Washington Street, Cape May. It is right next to the Physick Estate.

## Filling the Birding Gap with Butterflies

By Greg Prelich

After the frenzy of spring migration is done and summer arrives, many birders anxiously await the arrival of fall migrants. So, what is a birder to do during the heat of summer besides studying the confusing fall warblers? If you are looking for something different to keep you outdoors and excited during summer, have you considered expanding your interests into the world of butterflies? Sure, we all recognize the occasional Monarch or one of the large Swallowtails flying by, but how many other butterflies could you identify or name?

Well, that's the situation I was in this summer, so I decided to start learning more about these wonderful critters, actually going on walks to specifically look for butterflies, and it has been a wonderful journey so far.

As an avowed BIRDER, butterflying sometimes feels like abandoning an old friend, but there are distinct advantages to this hobby. First of all, butterflies tend to be most active between 10AM and 2PM, unlike those picky birds that awake and start feeding at dawn and vanish before you've downed your first coffee of the morning. Second,



they like sunshine, so summer becomes a perfect time to search for them and fill in the time between avian migrations. Third, there is a nice selection of butterflies to see in NJ, with a total of ~125 species having been documented in the state (compared with NJ's 486 bird species). That's a perfect number to make things interesting, but not so much that it is overwhelming. Fourth, you don't need any new equipment; a pair of binoculars are all that is needed, with a digital camera (no big lens needed!) being a big advantage to document your findings. And finally, no matter where you travel in the US or abroad, there will be new butterflies to attract your interest.

You can look forward to an amazing array of butterfly sizes, shapes, habits, colors, and patterns, along with intriguing names like American Snout, Falcate Orangetip, Sleepy Orange, Great Spangled Fritillary, and Hoary Elf.

As in birding, there are challenges, with the Skippers being even more difficult to distinguish than fall shorebirds, but

enjoy the challenge, and take advantage of the many helpful on-line resources such as iNaturalist.





So, if you're looking for something to fill in your days as the summer and fall progress, grab a friend and give butterflying a try. Don't be too surprised if it leads you to be more observant of other parts

of nature, including learning how to recognize the host plants and their vital connections with the butterfly life cycle. You'll probably find (as I already have) that the world of butterfly watchers is inhabited by former and current birders, including members of the Southern Ocean Birding (and Butterfly) Group. Join us out in the butterfly field!

## Whale Watching in July (minus the Whales)

A group of SOBG members went out of Belmar



searching for whales on July 19. Unlike Ahab, we did not find any, but a

group of around 100 dolphins did give us some fun for about 20 minutes. Thanks Bob Harvey and Linda Gangi for the photos.



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