



Friendly, fun, and Informative Bird Watching

February 2022 Issue 54

southernoceanbirdinggroup.org Due to Covid, all in person meetings at the Tuckerton Seaport are cancelled for the foreseeable future, but we are hoping that we can all get back together for meeting in the spring.

Annual Dues for 2022

Dues for 2022 are due from now. 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.**

Program Exchange with Tucson Audubon

Exciting news for our April 7 meeting; we will have a presentation by Tucson Audubon on "Southeast Arizona's Most Wanted Birds". More details in next newsletter but save the date!

Wings Over LBI

Keep the date on your calendar for March 19 when the SOBG will hold its 11th Annual *Wings Over LBI* event. This year it will be held at the Long Beach Township Field Station, 127 W. Osborn Avenue, Holgate. The program, "Shorebirds of New Jersey" with Greg Prelich will begin at 10:30 a.m.

Afterwards at 1 p.m., members of the SOBG will lead a choice of three field trips: 1 at Barnegat Inlet, 1 at Cedar Bonnet Island, and 1 at Holgate Unit of Forsythe NWR.



March 3, 2022 Virtual Meeting

Our March 3 meeting will be our annual member participation event entitled "**Favorite Birding Moments of 2021**", 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. Just share the moments that you found most interesting, and you can bet that it will be interesting to the other club members.

Greg Prelich will be coordinating this program and assembling the submitted photos into a PowerPoint presentation, so let Greg know if you want to participate, and send any documenting photos that can be incorporated into the slide show to Greg (gprelich@gmail.com), preferably by Feb. 26. This is a popular event, so we have to limit each member to a maximum of five minutes. You can divide that time as you please, but we suggest describing up to five birding experiences. You can certainly present fewer than that if you prefer and can show more photos as long it doesn't exceed the time limit. If you don't have photos, you should still feel free to share the story to help us relive your birding highlights of the past year. We look forward to a fun evening of great bird stories.

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

Field Trips:

March 19—Wings Over LBI

April 9—Annual Clean Up Great Bay Blvd

April 24—Early Spring Migrants—tbd

May 14—Spring Migrants—tbd

Tuckerton Christmas Bird Count by Morry Kapitan

On Saturday, December 18th, 21 birders of varied experience gathered to participate in the 122nd annual Christmas Bird Count. While this is a national event sponsored by the National Audubon Society, the SOBG organizes the count for the local area centered around Tuckerton. SOBG members make up the majority of persons attending, although this year we had counters from both Burlington and Morris counties rounding out the effort. Six of the counters were first timers for the Tuckerton count (thanks folks!), and all participants were organized into nine teams to cover the entire area we had to count.

Mid December weather is sometimes unpredictable, but we lucked out with temperatures in the upper 40's to low 50's and open water in the ponds and marshes. The species and individual totals were pretty interesting. Our own Greg Prelich had a quick look over the data and here are his comments regarding how we did this year:

Looking through the data and comparing it to the past 12 years, when SOBG re-vitalized the count:

First the positive numbers:

Although short of our record of 96 species from last year, the total of 89 species this year is way over our average of 73 species over the past 12 years.

Four species were new for the count (YAY): Short-billed/Long-billed Dowitcher, Sedge Wren, Laughing Gull, Western Kingbird.

We had new highs for: Mallards, Northern Shovelers, Ring-necked Ducks, Long-tailed Ducks, Bald Eagles (25 vs previous high of 15 !!), Greater Yellowlegs, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied

Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Carolina Chickadee, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, Fox Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, House Finch. These numbers probably reflect good coverage and relatively warm temperatures with plenty of open water for waterfowl.

These were the first Wood Ducks (4) seen in the last 12 years since SOBG revived the count. Yellow-rumped Warblers new record of 579 far surpassed the previous high of 328!

And now for some downward trends or misses: The number of Brant (9) is by far the lowest ever. Previous low was 55. Red-breasted Mergansers were missed for the first time in 10 years. New low for Dunlin. Big drop in Boat-tailed Grackles. Brown-headed Cowbirds was another somewhat glaring miss that we find in more than 50% of our Christmas Bird Counts.

So, a really good result and solid data that will help research into the future. Thank you again for all who participated.

The next Christmas Bird Count will tentatively be on Saturday, December 17, 2022, and the call will go out via email in mid-November should you want to join in on the fun next year - there really is something for birders of every experience level. We hope to see you on next year's count.

Annual Clean Up of Great Bay Blvd

Hold the date of April 9th for our Annual Clean Up of Great Bay Blvd, Little Egg Harbor. This is our service project; our way of giving back to the community and protecting a valuable birding location in our own backyard. More details to follow next month.

SOBG Wine and Cheese Scholarship Fundraiser—April 22

Reminder of our fundraiser at the LBIF on April 22, 6:00 -8:30 p.m.



Friends in Southern Ocean Birding Group (group)