



Friendly, fun, and Informative Bird Watching

May 2022

Issue 57

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 August.

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**.

May Field Trips

*M*ay is a fun month for birding as migration is at its peak. The SOBG takes advantage of that by conducting two field trips, visiting two different habitats for migrating birds.

First, we went to Allaire State Park with a group of 15 people on May 15 for warblers and other passerines. We were not disappointed as warblers were in abundance, even at the start of our walk. Over 40 species were seen by the group.

Next, a small group of 6 traveled to Heislerville and the Delaware Bayshore. The shorebirds numbers weren't great, but we did see about a dozen Red Knots at East Point, where we were treated to a tour of the lighthouse. At Reeds Beach the Iceland Gull gave us good views and was a lifer for almost everyone.



June 2, 2022 Virtual Meeting

Our June 2nd meeting will be "Attracting Birds to your Jersey-friendly Yards", presented by Becky Laboy, M.Ed., Education Outreach Specialist for the Ocean County Soil Conservation District.

Birds delight us with their cheery songs, fluttery movement, and colorful attire. Attract birds to your Jersey-Friendly yard by selecting native plants that provide food, protection, nesting material and places to raise young. Learn to use the Jersey-Friendly Plant Database to choose the wildlife-friendly plants that are appropriate for the soil, water, and light conditions in your yard.

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

Field Trips:

July 9—SOBG Picnic

August 6—Birds and Butterflies at Forsythe NWR



Friends in Southern Ocean Birding Group (group)

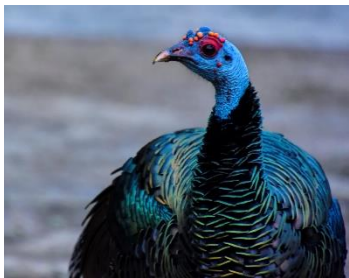
SOBG 2022 Picnic

The SOBG Annual Picnic will be held on July 9th at the home of Nancy Lynch, 102 S. Commodore Drive, Little Egg Harbor. A list will be sent out to all members for what you plan to bring to the event. The SOBG will supply the hot dogs and burgers as always.

Birding Belize—Part 1

By Susan Puder

Belize is about the size of Massachusetts, but with a population of 330,000 people, about half the size of Ocean County. It is one of the most environmentally conscious countries in the Americas, located on the Yucatan Peninsula. I went on a trip with NJ Audubon and Wildside Nature Tours in early January, along with members Dave and Carol Yorkanis, where we stayed for 3 days at the Rio Bravo Conservation Area in La Milpa Station.



The first day, we all met Phil, the Ocellated Turkey, who joined us on several walks in the area. Over 600 birds have been seen in the country, and we explored the tropical dry forest region during our stay there. From dawn to dusk,

with a few hours to rest in between after lunch, birding was the name of the game. At the feeders, Olive-backed Euphonias and Black-cowled Orioles gave everyone great photo ops.

There were hummingbird feeders that attracted Rufous-tailed, White-bellied Emerald, Wedge-tailed, and White-necked Jacobins flying all over the place. A Great Curassow also made an appearance on the grounds where we were staying, along with 3 Plain Chachalacas.



So many birds, so hard to find in the dense forest. Flycatchers, tanagers, woodcreepers, and woodpeckers. I



missed many. Walking the grounds during our siesta time did provide a constant stream of new birds for me. Blue Buntings were beautiful, as were the Squirrel Cuckoos.

We did have some interesting flyovers with a King Vulture, Black Eagle Hawk, and a White Hawk.



The third day we headed up to the La Milpa Mayan ruins, which have been investigated but not excavated like some of the other ruins we went to later on. Our member, Jason Nargiz, spent time here years ago working at La Milpa, which was a fun fact. Summer Tanagers and a Yellow-throated Warbler gave us some great views. Now we know where some of our migrants spend the winter months.

Over 60,000 people once lived in this area, and shards of pottery could be found all over. After lunch and a rest, we headed out to the Blue Creek Mennonite Community for raptors and other grassland birds. Gray Hawk and Roadside Hawk were on posts next to the road, giving us great photo ops.



A Laughing Falcon flew over the road right in front of

us, and I finally saw a Bat Falcon after 4 trips to Central America.



Also seen were Eastern Meadowlarks, Forked-tailed Flycatchers, and Vermillion Flycatchers. And I found out that Aplomado Falcons can be found in country. It never crossed my mind that we could see them, thinking only in Texas, where they are being reintroduced. That shot to the top of my Wish List for the trip.

The last day in La Milpa was spent trying to get those clean-up birds that have so far been missed. Brown Jays, parrots, and other species came into view. We packed up the vans and headed out to Crooked Tree for the last 4 days of our trip, birding along the way. Another quick stop at Blue Creek gave us Jacana, a Jabiru (not near its normal habitat), Wood Storks, and Black-throated Bobwhites, flushed out of the high grasses.

Part 2 will continue the trip at Crooked Tree