



Friendly, fun, and Informative Bird Watching

August 2022 Issue 60

Annual Dues for 2023

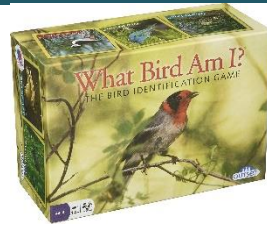
Dues for 2023 are due and can be paid starting in August. Singles are \$20, and couples are \$35 for the year. You can send a check, payable to Southern Ocean Birding Group, to: SOBG, c/o Jeanine Apgar, 206 N. Frankfurt Ave, Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215. Online Paypal is available for renewals, new memberships, and donations on **our website**.

Fall Migration is Here!

Now is the time to get out and look for migrating warblers, vireos, shorebirds, and raptors. As an added attraction, Monarch and other butterflies can also be seen during this time of year.

Cape May is considered one of the best birding destinations in North America to witness fall migration, especially for raptors. Peregrine falcons, sharp-shinned hawks and northern harriers are just a few of the incredible raptors you'll see on our preserves during fall migration. NJ is on the Atlantic Flyway, and with Northwest winds, migrants can be found almost anywhere along our coast, but Cape May is the spot to be.

On their journey south to Mexico, monarch butterflies stop in Cape May County for a few weeks, numbering in the tens of thousands! Migration runs from September to October, peaking in the last weeks of September. [The Garrett Family Preserve](#) is a great place to spot monarch butterflies, as the preserve fills with goldenrod come late August. This nectar-bearing perennial is a vital food source for monarchs during their migration.



September 1 Meeting

We are meeting in person at the Hunting Shanty, Tuckerton Seaport on September 1, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. We will again have a meet and greet to see old friends again, and then break into teams to play “What Bird Am I?” Trivia game, since it was such a hit last month. We'll have prizes for the winning teams, too.

We hope to see you in person, and please feel free to wear a mask if you wish. We will have light refreshments and a chance to catch up with everyone. Hoping to see you there.

Field Trips:

Sept. 10—Searching for Fall Migrants (location TBD)

October 15—Searching for Fall Migrants (TBD)

Cape May House

The Cape May house still has a bed or two available if you wish to come down for a day or two. Again, that's October 17-21. All are invited to visit for the day and head out to bird with the group.



Friends in Southern Ocean Birding Group (group)

Trip Report: Brig Birds and Butterflies. Aug. 6, 2022

By Greg Prelich

The second annual Brig Birds and Butterflies trip took place on Aug. 6 this year, and it was a super day, enjoyed by eight participants. The weather was virtually ideal, with the temperature in the high 80s, but it felt cooler due to being in the open with a 10 mph breeze that kept the annoying green-headed vampire flies at bay. Perfect.



The group started by searching for butterflies in the native plant garden and field by the visitor's center and walking a short loop through Toad Alley. Here the non-butterflies were introduced to species such as Zabulon Skippers and the delightful and unmistakable Silver-spotted Skippers that were



enjoying fresh Sweet Pepperbush blossoms. The large Tiger Swallowtails and Spicebush Swallowtails and at least 16 Monarchs appeared here and, later on as we traversed Wildlife Drive, pleasing all and confirming that size indeed does matter. More common yet delightful species such as Common Buckeye, Pearl Crescent, Red-banded Hairstreak, and American Lady were found today, along with three species of Sulfur butterflies and the distinctive Saltmarsh Skipper. It served as a nice introduction to butterflies for those who are not familiar with them.

After the initial morning walk and a bathroom break, our attention turned to birds along Wildlife Drive. It's a difficult decision, trying to figure out if you should be looking at the shorebirds strolling along the mudflats or at the nearby butterflies fluttering on the roadside flowers. We were not disappointed by the birds though, with highlights being scope views of

an American Avocet (any view of an Avocet is welcomed!), and a few juvenile White Ibises that are likely to be an annual late summer sighting at Brig now that they are breeding nearby.

Shorebird enthusiasts were not disappointed, with a few Whimbrels returning from their northern breeding grounds, a family group of American Oystercatchers, and a roadside group of Stilt



Sandpipers joining the numerous peeps and Dowitchers. Terns were well-represented with Gull-

billed, Caspian, and the delightful Least Terns joining Forsythe's numerous Forster's Terns. And who is not excited at every opportunity of seeing Black Skimmers in action or viewing an adult Bald Eagle perched in the saltmarsh? The trip ended with a Pied-billed Grebe spotted hiding in the Experimental Pond.



For those who keep track of such things, we tallied 17 species of butterflies and at least 44 species of birds, but it was a good reminder that Brig is about more than just birds, and a more balanced view of the natural world is a worthwhile goal.

Just extra information on the banded Oystercatcher we saw on the trip that I (Sue) reported: first banded in Georgia on 10/25/2010, on Little Egg Island. First reported sighting in Forsythe Wildlife Drive was 5/18/2013. She spends her winters back in GA, and summers at Forsythe since 2013. She's 12 years old.