"Is It Me or Are There More Birds This Year?"

As I was getting into my truck a few weeks back a nice woman noticing the BCAS logo on my door waved her arms to flag me down. “This may be a stupid question,” she said hesitantly, “but Is it me? or are there more birds around this year ?” I stopped and smiled and said “Well its Spring time and you are certainly hearing more birds at this time of year but in reality, yes, it is you!” She smiled and thanked me and turned around and said, “I knew that” which was magic to my ears.

They say out of great tragedy comes great wisdom and judging from all the emails, text messages, and photos I have been getting, I think we are on our way to gaining greater understanding when it comes to our connection to nature. Throughout my life it has always been that in one way or another I have searched out nature at my times of hurt and vulnerability. At periods of loss, death and sadness nature has always been there for me, taking me under its wing and letting me know things are as they should be. Nature is the healer, the one constant in our lives that no matter what we do, where we are - it is there waiting for us, seemingly silent when no attention is paid, but loud and enlightening as it reminds us to join and connect our lives once again in the natural world around us.

People more than ever now have been getting back to nature. It might be feeding the birds, planting a butterfly garden or vegetable garden, hiking the local trails and YES even getting out birding for the first time. Our hearts and souls have led us back to where we have always been just waiting for us to open our eyes and see. I have been receiving more questions on climate change, bird populations, cutting down of trees and, best of all, could I please ID a bird for them. Which when all is said and done may be the most important question ever as people discover for the first time the nature that is right outside their door.

Our most serious threat to the environment and to our own lives is not climate change, not pollution or habitat loss or for that matter any particular politician, the biggest threat is disconnecting from nature. How can we ever ask people to preserve habitats, clean up the water, protect endangered species and yes halt climate change if we don’t care about the nature that exists right in our own backyard? As we return to work, school and begin to emerge from this horrifying pandemic, we must not forget what we found important, where we looked for peace and solace and where we rediscovered what is real and truly important. And yes something that is there for everyone to embrace and hold close to our hearts forever, Nature.

It is my hope that you will continue to venture outside, wander the woods and fields, watch the butterflies in the backyard and, yes, smell the flowers as you begin to live your lives again. And by all means, please let your hearts be curious enough to ask the question, I wonder what bird that is?
SPRING COUNT 2020 -
Total birds: 4,784. Total species: 144

BCAS WEATHERS A FROZEN SPRING IN STYLE

The year 2020 remains a challenge for all of us in many ways, yet we would love to encourage our members to find ways to get outside and appreciate the natural world, despite the current limitations. Until just prior to our 27th Annual Spring Bird Count event, it remained unclear if we could even venture to a local park at all. We redesigned this year’s event to focus on our own backyards and our local parks, as close to home as possible. We could not assign leaders in the usual manner, so just asked members to guide themselves, and to do their best to discover our migrating birdlife. At the last minute, Governor Murphy did re-open the parks, so that we could responsibly bring people back into the field, but not in big groups. We were grateful for that decision.

But Mother Nature still had another strange twist in this tale. The week leading up to the event was exceptionally cold, with a polar vortex pressing down to stop migrants short of their goals. The wind chill on the morning of Saturday May 9 was around 23 degrees due to a blasting cold wind, and the real temperature hovered in the 30s for much of the day, before snow started to fall in mid-afternoon. This was one challenging event. Many volunteers remarked that they had worse weather than during our recent Christmas Bird Count back in December! Perhaps a few winter species held on later than normal?

Many of our volunteers live far from Bergen County, so I chose to expand our zone of interest this year, allowing birds to be recorded from farther realms. This was helpful, since we were not supposed to be travelling distances. Although cold weather slowed down migration, you will see from the list on pg. 7 that our members were still able to discover lots of great birds – some resident species, and many migrants en route northward. Our total number of species was not quite so high as in normal times, but the diversity of birds was still remarkable. The absolute number of some migrants was surprisingly low, perhaps because so many birds were stalled to our south.

I thank our intrepid volunteers, whether they watched the birds in their yards, or hiked off into wilds of North Jersey to see what they could find.

DAVE HALL

(See page 7 for full species list)
Interview with Terry Doss, Assistant Director of Natural Resources for New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority.

I met Terry at River Barge Park in Carlstadt where she had just been on board the NJSEA Privateer, a small boat used by NJSEA natural resource staff to analyze and appraise the marsh and wildlife found on different tracts of the Meadowlands. She mentioned doing avian point counts – I asked what that was and she told me that a point count is a method used to inventory and monitor bird populations. A point count is a tally of birds detected by sight and sound by a single observer located at a fixed position during a specified period of time.

NJSEA has been undertaking avian point counts over the past twenty years. Terry is a restoration ecologist with a background in science as well as economics and policy studies, which are useful for analyzing policy and understanding legal issues which often crop up in the Meadowlands. She has a BS in Agricultural Science and an MS in Marine Sciences. Terry joked that she focused her studies so that she could live and work near the beach, but hadn’t planned on working on the creeks and marshes of the Meadowlands. Terry has been with NJSEA for almost 2 years; before this, she worked as an environmental consultant for 30 years. This work included the restoration of 200 acres of marsh in the Meadowlands.

Terry sent some photos of her recent sightings. She said a highlight this day was the sighting of a Long-tailed Duck which is highly unusual at this time of year as this bird breeds in Alaska and across northern Canada. (Shown 1-7 Diamondback terrapin from Mill Creek marsh, white pelican at Sawmill Creek marsh, 2 Long-tailed duck at Sawmill Creek, three black skimmers at Anderson Creek marsh).

Terry and the rest of the NJSEA natural resource staff undertake a myriad of tasks including Terrapin surveys along the river and creeks and bird nesting surveys throughout the marshes and closed landfills in the Meadowlands. She is also interested in analyzing past marsh mitigation and restoration projects in the Meadowlands to determine which sites are successfully providing functioning habitats. An example is the Richard P. Kane Wetland Mitigation Bank where horned pond weed is prevalent. Terry has been visiting the site to observe “Who is eating the horned pond weed? Is it food preferred by waterfowl? Or just carp” and so on.

She is excited about the Kearny Freshwater Marsh where nesting birds such as common Gallinule and Least Bittern can be found. Terry hopes to renew the status of this freshwater marsh to its former State Natural Heritage Priority site in order to protect the habitat and wildlife. In addition, Terry hopes to attract more nesting wildlife by creating more sandy habitat in parts of the Meadowlands. Maybe this can help to repopulate species of concern?

Terry and her staff are busy creating GIS maps of the Meadowlands to document habitat and wildlife conditions, and then use these maps to understand how these conditions change year to year so that NJSEA can be more proactive in preserving and conserving the Meadowlands’ natural resources. Terry also hopes that NJ will once again assign Wildlife Conservation Officers in the District and surrounding counties to help preserve the wildlife.

It’s apparent that Terry enjoys her job and wants to reach out to all wildlife organizations and lovers of the natural world. BCAS is definitely in that mix as Terry thanks all the volunteers who have helped her as she tries to effect change – Don, Jimmy and Chris came to mind. As you walk in the many varied locations of the Meadowlands, let Terry know if you have an unusual wildlife sighting. tdoss@njsea.com.
BIG THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPRING COUNT DONORS. 144 Bird Species adds $4,965.

On May 9, BCAS had its annual Spring Bird Count redesigned as "backyard" in recognition of the COVID-19 constraints. By Pay-pal, Facebook, and the traditional old school checks you found us and helped us continue our mission to preserve and protect the native wildlife in Bergen County and the surrounding area. Our total bird species was 144 resulting in a total donation of $4,965 from over 98 separate generous donors, surpassing last years' totals.

* * * * *

ANONYMOUS, KARIN AHMED, KARIN ASAKAWA, KEVIN AVERY, LYNN BASS, JOAN BENNETT, DAVID BERNSTEIN, RICHARD BOROWSKI, MARCO VAN BRABENT, LISA BRESLOF, LINDA CALAMITO, HYE MEE CAMPollo, MARIA CASAZZA, LINDA CARMODY, DENNIS CHEESEMAN, JOYCE CLOUGHLY, HOLLY COWAN, JEANIE CURTIS, JOSEPH D'ANgELI, DONNA DANGLER, DEBORA DAVIDSON, MARGE DOREMUS, ROBERT DOREMUS, MARYANN FAHEY, ALEXA FANTAcone, ROBERT FARO, CARSON FERNANDEZ, PAM FERRERI, DAPHNE FOX, PETER GARVEY, SANDY GELMAN, DAWN GIAMBALVO, BARBARA GIARMO, BILL GIAIMO, BETH GOLDBERG, SACHIKO GOODYEAR, LEN GREER, NICK & CYNDI GRIEPENBURG, NATALIE GREGORIO, ROBERT GRIFFITH, DAVE/NANCY HALL, CYNTHIA HAMMOND, THERESA HEIDEL, MARIANNE HERMAN, JEFF HILL, JOHN HUGHES, EUGENIA JACKSON, RON KISTNER, DAVE KLEINER, JOSEPH KOsCIELNY, MARY KOSTUS, Dede KOTLER, LESLIE KRIEgEL, LAUREN LARKIN, SHELLEY LARSON, TAMMY LAWERTY, RICHARD LYCH, JAMES MACALUSO, ALEC MADOFF, SALLY BYRNES MAGIN, DEB MANFREDONIO, LINDSAY MCNALMARA, NANCY MEDNICK, MARY MEAKMAN, JOHN MORAN, ANNA MOSCA, LINDA MULLANEY, DENNIS MURPHY, KAREN NICKeson, LESLIE/MARK OLSON, VERA OLSON, PEG O'NEILL, MADDIE PALDEN, JAMES PREISENDANZ, MARTHA PRIDAY, JERRY QUINN, STEPHEN QUINN, BARRIE RAIK, ROSELYN RAUCH, PATTI RENEGAR-FAY, SARDOT RIOSLUGO, CARMEN RODRIGUEZ, PAULA ROGOVIN, KAY SADIGNI, PURBITA SAHA, MARJORIE SANDBERG, KATHLEEN SARG, BILL SCHOENEBAUM, NANCY SLOWICK, NANCY SALVATI, PAT/DON TORINO, CHRISTINE TOTH, SUSAN TOZZOLI, IOANA VOICU, STEPHANIE WALKER, BILL WASSERMAN, STEPHEN WIESNNER, FUSHENG ZHANG, TANJA ZIMMER

Corporate: Johnson & Johnson matching gift. Memorial Gifts in memory of Peggy Dalton who died in April from Nancy Slowick, Karen Nickeson.

In addition to the list of donors, I wish to thank Julie McCall and Dee Santis for the creation of the flyer, Joe Kosielnky for regularly going to the Post Office, Steve Quinn in collecting the donor checks and forwarding them, Nancy Hall for her record keeping and banking and our President Don Torino for his patience he wears many hats.

Thank you all and I apologize for any mistakes.

PEGGY O'NEILL

SCHEDULE OF MONTHLY EVENTS & MEETINGS ARE ON HOLD TILL FURTHER NOTICE

Please check your e-mail, Facebook and/or website for updates.

Tentative speakers for September and November are:
September 2020, Karl M. Soehnlein on the State Line Hawk Watch
November 2020, Don Torino, on Al & Alice, a Grassroots Movement.

Contact Marilyn Sadowski at 201 982-0483
for speaker and program suggestions.
Nature Never Shuts Down

While we were sheltering in place, did you notice the sky was clearer? The water also seemed bluer and, right on schedule, the Osprey arrived bringing sticks into the tower on Degraw Avenue in Teaneck. Osprey reveal the aquatic health of our environment. There are now so many of these “fish hawks” in our area that we are scrambling to provide them with acceptable nesting sites of proper location and elevation.

We know about the health of the Osprey population because we have dedicated chapter members who volunteer to monitor the activity of these charismatic birds and other species. When I first joined the Board of BCAS, I helped to compile a table of endangered and threatened species that inhabit the Meadowlands. I learned that there were records dating far back documenting nesting and roosting birds. The data compiled on our endangered and threatened species by our BCAS volunteers is sent to NJDEP and is critical to long-term conservation efforts to preserve and protect these birds for future generations.

This year, while most parks were closed, Jim Macaluso observed nine Osprey nests. They all appear to have chicks. Gathering this information required multiple visits to each nest, documenting activity with photographs and sending the information to Ospreywatch at the Center for Conservation Biology. At Overpeck, Jim also manages 17 active Tree Swallow nests. Five House Wren and one Carolina Wren nest are active, as well. The former Raven nest at Laurel Hill Park is being occupied by Peregrine Falcons, but they do not appear to be breeding.

Dee De Santis has been faithfully watching our Ridgefield Park Eagles. They are doing well, but did not produce young this year. Chris Takacs likewise kept his eye on two other nests in the area. One fledged two young in June. I was able to observe a mated Eagle pair on the Palisades, but didn’t locate a nest. Chris also managed to gain access to county golf courses to check on nest boxes. Five boxes at Soldier Hill were occupied by Tree Swallows. Rockleigh Golf Course hosted two Bluebird families and another three Tree Swallow nests. A second clutch of Bluebirds looks promising and House Wrens seem to have occupied one of the other boxes.

Monitoring efforts presented extra challenges this year. County parks were closed and patrolled by security staff. Gaining access required negotiation and diplomacy. Luckily, Jim and Chris were able to convince Overpeck guards and county authorities to allow them access so that nest boxes could be maintained and prepared in time for the arrival of the birds.

I feel fortunate that my favorite occupation can be pursued despite our current restrictions. Our neighborhoods and town parks reward us with birds at little effort or expense. At the same time, we can gather information and help protect our birds. The Osprey prove that nature is resilient, but it is our role to foster the success of our wildlife.
ANNOUNCING THE 11TH ANNUAL “BCAS/HAROLD FEINBERG CONSERVATION AWARD”

One of the best things about leading Bergen Audubon as the President has been the opportunity to meet many devoted, hardworking people in many small communities around Bergen County that are committed to conservation and making the environment a better place for their neighbors and the wildlife around them. These unsung heroes have given of themselves with little recognition and often with personal sacrifice. So it is in their honor that we are proud to announce our annual “Bergen County Audubon/Harold Feinberg Conservation Award”.

This award is named in honor of Harold Feinberg, a long time member and field trip chairman for many years. Harold had been a mentor, an enthusiastic supporter of our endeavors and had always given freely of his expertise with a combination of patience and knowledge that few possess. **We are asking you to nominate a candidate that you think should be recognized with this award. Please send us the name of someone who you think has worked on behalf of the environment and the BCAS board will consider them for the Award.**

(Current BCAS board members are not eligible).

**Nominations must include:**

a) Name and address or phone number of the individual.  
b) Description of their accomplishment; why you think this individual(s) should receive this award (400 words or less).  
c) Your name and address or phone number.

All nominations must be received no later than September 30, 2020.  Award presentation in December.

Submissions may be mailed to BCAS, PO Box 235, Paramus, NJ 07653 or email to Don Torino at greatauk4@gmail.com
### 27th Annual BCAS Spring Count --

**144 Total Species, 4784 total birds**

By DAVE HALL

- **MAY 9, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red-tailed Hawk</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red-winged Hawk</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peregrine Falcon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring-necked Pheasant</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Pintail</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red-spotted Kinglet</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palm Warbler</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palm Warbler</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson's Warbler</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black &amp; White Warbler</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amer. Redstart</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worm-eat. Warbler</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ovenbird</td>
<td>128</td>
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<tr>
<td>N. Waterthrush</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Yellowthroat</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooded Warbler</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rare birds shown in boldface</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144 Total Species: 144, 4784 total birds: 4784. Rare birds are shown in <strong>boldface</strong></td>
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Bergen County Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. As Members of Bergen County Audubon Society, we share a love for birds and a concern for the environment. Our mission is to promote and protect wildlife in their natural habitat by providing opportunities for observation and conservation.

All field trips and programs are open to the public and free of charge.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2020

Please enroll me as a member of the Bergen Audubon Society (Q07) and/or the National Audubon Society. My check is enclosed for

( ) $20 Chapter Sustaining Member or ( ) $35 Family Membership. All funds stay in our area, helping us to support local efforts and provide services in Bergen County and surrounding areas. Make check payable to Bergen County Audubon.

( ) $20 - National Audubon Society Member. (1st year rate for new NAS members only). Includes Chapter membership. Make check payable to National Audubon Society.

Name: __________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________
City: __________________ State: ____ Zip: _________
Phone: (___) ________________________________

E-mail (I would like to be notified of upcoming events online and receive the newsletter electronically.)

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

Please mail to: BCAS Membership Chair, PO Box 235, Paramus, NJ 07653-0235

Volunteer opportunities in local chapter activities or committees are available. Please circle your interest and mail with your subscription or see any officer or chair at one of the meetings.

__ Conservation  __ Membership  __ Publicity  __ Field Trips
__ Education  __ Newsletter/Website  __ Gardening