



CAPE MAY MIGRATION MADNESS

SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 4, 2021

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE EVANSTON NORTH SHORE BIRD CLUB

Tour leaders: Josh Engel and Jason Weckstein

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I love Cape May in early October. Not only is the birding fantastic, but Monarchs sometimes steal the show. We saw lots of great birds this trip, yes, but watching thousands of Monarchs waking up after roosting in the Cape May Dunes, taking off as the sun warmed the fall air and setting off across Delaware Bay, was an experience that will stay with us forever.

But that was just the first morning of the trip. In our remaining time, we visited some of the country's most fabled birding hotspots, place like Cape May Point State Park and its hawkwatch platform, Higbee Beach, South Cape May Meadows, and Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. Our lodging was within a stone's throw of those spots.

We had beautiful weather, warm enough that we were able to eat all of our meals outside. We also had good weather for raptor migration, getting repeated great views of birds like Merlin, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, and Osprey. We also had tremendous coastal birding, getting great views of a variety of shorebirds, gulls, and terns, plus Black Skimmer, Tricolored Heron, Clapper Rail, and Seaside and Saltmarsh Sparrows. Cape May always holds a few surprises, too--on this trip those included Eurasian Wigeon, Common Raven, Wilson's Phalarope, and Golden-winged Warbler.

Top 5 Birds as voted by the group

- 1. (tie) Clapper Rail and American Avocet**
- 3. American Oystercatcher**
- 4. Black Skimmer**
- 5. Osprey**



Birding in Higbee Beach

BIRD LIST. 129 species (including 1 heard only and 2 leader only). Taxonomy follows the Clements/eBird Checklist, 2021 update. Former (or alternate) English names are in parentheses. (Heard) = heard only; (Leader) = tour leader(s) only. The global IUCN red list status is listed for threatened and near-threatened species: CR=Critically Endangered, EN=Endangered, VU=Vulnerable, NT=Near-threatened.

Snow Goose	<i>Anser caerulescens</i>
Brant	<i>Branta bernicla</i>
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Blue-winged Teal	<i>Spatula discors</i>
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>
American Wigeon	<i>Mareca americana</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
American Black Duck	<i>Anas rubripes</i>
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>
Clapper Rail	<i>Rallus crepitans</i>
Virginia Rail (Leader)	<i>Rallus limicola</i>
Sora	<i>Porzana carolina</i>

American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>
American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>
Black-bellied Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>
Semipalmated Sandpiper (NT)	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>
Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>
Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>
Wilson's Snipe	<i>Gallinago delicata</i>
Wilson's Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>
Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>
Willet	<i>Tringa semipalmata</i>
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>
Laughing Gull	<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>
Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>
Black Skimmer	<i>Rynchops niger</i>
Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum auritum</i>
American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>
Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>
Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>
Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>
Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>

Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>
Red-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>
Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates villosus</i>
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>
Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>
Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
Fish Crow	<i>Corvus ossifragus</i>
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Carolina Chickadee	<i>Poecile carolinensis</i>
Tufted Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>
Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Corthylio calendula</i>
Golden-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>
Red-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
Sedge Wren (Heard)	<i>Cistothorus stellaris</i>
Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>
Carolina Wren	<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>
European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>
Brown Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>
Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
Veery	<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>
Swainson's Thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>
American Goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>
White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>
Seaside Sparrow	<i>Ammospiza maritima</i>
Saltmarsh Sparrow (EN)	<i>Ammospiza caudacuta</i>
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>
Swamp Sparrow	<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>
Common Grackle (NT)	<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>

Boat-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus major</i>
Northern Waterthrush	<i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>
Golden-winged Warbler (NT)	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>
Nashville Warbler	<i>Leiothlypis ruficapilla</i>
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>
Northern Parula	<i>Setophaga americana</i>
Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>
Blackpoll Warbler (NT)	<i>Setophaga striata</i>
Palm Warbler	<i>Setophaga palmarum</i>
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>
Prairie Warbler	<i>Setophaga discolor</i>
Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Setophaga virens</i>
Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>
Blue Grosbeak (Leader)	<i>Passerina caerulea</i>
Indigo Bunting	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>

MAMMAL LIST. 3 species.

Eastern Gray Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
Common Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>



Osprey carrying menhaden over the South Cape May Meadows on our first afternoon. Photo by Josh Engel.



Saltmarsh Sparrow on the final morning of the trip. Photo by Jason Weckstein.



Northern Parula. Photo by Jason Weckstein.