

the osprey

Monmouth County Audubon Society

www.monmouthaudubon.org

Over 50 Years of Birds and Conservation

► The Bald Eagle success story

by Colette Buchanan

Volume 54, #3 Spring 2019

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My first Bald Eagle was on a guided snowshoe tour at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in 2002. It was a goal of mine to see a Bald Eagle, a bird that was to me a symbol of the wild and western United States. The image of that beautiful large bird with its gleaming white head and white tail, a large, fierce beak and piercing eyes, watching us from high in a tree in the snow-covered landscape, was truly majestic.

At that time I had no idea that there were Bald Eagles in New Jersey. Back in New Jersey the following month, I went on an "Eagle Cruise" of the Maurice River, in Cumberland County. During the cruise, the guides explained that Cumberland County was the site of the only Bald Eagle pair that remained in New Jersey after the devastating die-off of eagles and other birds of prey in the 1960s due to the pesticide DDT. DDT was banned in 1972. By 2002, Cumberland County and other areas of the Delaware Bayshore were home to multiple nesting Bald Eagles.

While Bald Eagles were often seen along the Maurice River, none were seen during my cruise. As we left the boat, we were given a map which showed the way to a monitored Eagle's nest in Bear Swamp, Cumberland County. At the designated nest site, I was thrilled to see a Bald Eagle. There I met a local man who was an unofficial eagle spotter. He told me he knew of other Bald Eagle nests in the area and invited me to follow him. We proceeded to see five more eagle nests and four more Bald Eagles along the backroads of Cumberland County. I traveled to Wyoming to see my first Bald Eagle, and had just seen



five in New Jersey in one afternoon!

Today, you do not have to travel far to see a Bald Eagle. According to the latest report from the Conserve Wildlife Foundation's Bald Eagle Project, there were an astounding 204 monitored Bald Eagle nests in New Jersey in 2018!

Historic records are incomplete, but one study indicated New Jersey hosted more than 20 pairs of nesting bald eagles in the Delaware Bay region of the state. As a result of the use of the pesticide DDT, the number of nesting pairs of bald eagles in the state declined to only one by 1970 and remained there into the early 1980s. The DDT ban, combined with restoration and management efforts by the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP), have resulted in a steady recovery as New

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The Osprey is published 3x per year by the Monmouth County Audubon Society, local chapter of the National Audubon Society. Our mission is to promote the awareness, appreciation and conservation of natural resources through activism and educational outreach, and by representing the National Audubon Society in Monmouth County, NJ. Inquiries concerning the organization, newsletter, letters to the editor or material submitted for consideration are encouraged and may be sent to: P.O. Box 542, Red Bank, NJ 07701 E-mail: info@monmouthaudubon.org

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➤ **Items of note - local tidbits of interest**

Volunteers urgently needed! In the column to the left is a list of the people that power the Monmouth County Audubon Society by volunteering their time to run the many programs to benefit the community and our environment. Please note that there are several openings, and Newsletter, Website and Publicity will also soon be vacant as well. Please consider volunteering your time to keep MCAS a vital organization, and take pride in knowing that you've made a difference to the community - and the birds!

New Conservation Chairman... We are pleased to welcome Mike Davenport of Asbury Park as our new Conservation Chairman. Mike, who worked with the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey for 12 years, is a welcome addition and will be assisting with all issues related to local conservation. You can read his first article on Page 3 of this issue of The Osprey!

Reminder: Ted Engberg Conservation Scholarship... For 14 years, Monmouth County Audubon Society has awarded \$1,500 scholarships to qualified Monmouth County high school students continuing their education in a field related to wildlife conservation. The scholarship is awarded in memory of Ted Engberg, who was on the MCAS Board and a generous donor for decades.

Full information on the scholarships and applications will be available after March 15 through Monmouth County high school guidance offices, on our website, www.monmouthaudubon.org, or by contacting us at: MCAS, P.O. Box 542, Red Bank, NJ 07701.

Applications must contain contact information, school grades, a letter of acceptance to a college majoring in the field of conservation, and an essay, "Why wildlife conservation is important to me," highlighting conservation activities and future goals. Completed applications must be mailed to MCAS and postmarked by May 1, 2019. The Scholarship Committee will make all final decisions and award the certificates along with the checks to the winners by June 15, 2019.

Hummingbird season is almost here! It may be almost March when you read this, but to be sure, our beloved hummingbirds are on their way back to New Jersey!

Ruby-throated Hummers are the delight of every birder and wildlife gardener and provide hours of entertainment to people of all ages. Is your yard ready for their return?

Like all birds, hummingbirds need three elements to survive: food, water and shelter. Beyond that, if you provide them with suitable nesting habitat, you can enjoy watching the young hummers cavort around your yard all summer long, until they begin their southbound migration in September.

Hummers will drink from a birdbath but most often get their water from garden dew. Setting our hummingbird feeders will attract them to your yard, but be sure to keep the feeders full and clean once they've established residence. Tax Day, April 15, is the date we recommend for setting out feeders. Also plant tubular-shaped flowers such as trumpet vine and honeysuckle as natural nectar sources. You will be surprised at how many flowers they will visit! And while the nectar offers quick energy, hummers also eat insects for protein, so restrict your use of pesticides.

Many thanks... We are happy to have several people to thank in this issue for special donations. Special thanks go to John Luthin, Leslie Smith, Traci Carr, Betty DiFrancesco, Judy Blair and John Heidema. We appreciate the special help provided by these individuals.



by Mike Davenport

➤ Protecting important habitat

Your observations can safeguard areas critical to threatened wildlife

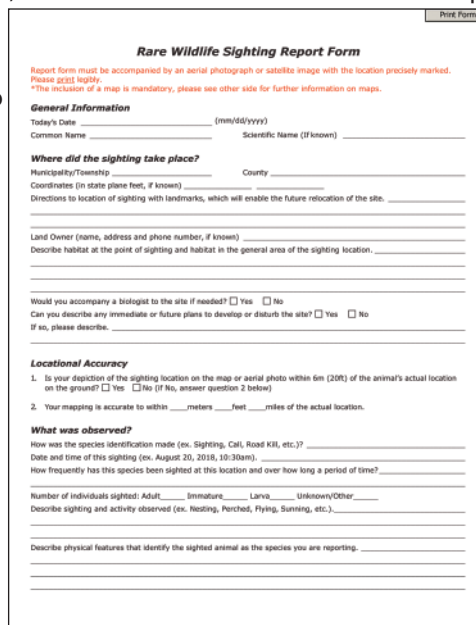
Winter is a great time of year to review your birding notes and logs from the past year. It's also a great opportunity to use that data to support scientific research as well as wildlife conservation.

Many birdwatchers, or nature enthusiasts of other species groups such as reptiles or butterflies, share their observations of wildlife on websites, phone apps, or bulletin boards. In addition, several organizations, such as the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and NJ Audubon, recruit "citizen scientists" who collect species observation data and submit that data electronically via websites such as eBird. That data is important for those organizations' scientific research and assists scientists in analyzing population trends over years. However, more often than not, it never finds its way to New Jersey's state biologists or to the state regulators whose task it is to protect rare species habitat in the state.

The New Jersey Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) collects data not just for rare birds, but for all of the state's endangered, threatened, and special concern species. Rare species data which makes its way into the state's database plays a critical role in wildlife and habitat conservation. It is the foundation of the NJ DEP's Landscape Project, a GIS product that maps critical areas for imperiled species based upon species locations and land-use classifications. The resulting maps allow state, county, municipal, and private agencies to identify important wildlife habitats and protect them in a variety of ways. This information is used to regulate land-use within the state and assists in preserving endangered and threatened species habitat remaining in New Jersey.

Reporting your rare wildlife observations is relatively easy. A Rare Wildlife Sighting Report Form is available on ENSP's website for download as well as instructions for completing the form. Simply complete the form, attach a map of where the animal was observed, as well as any photographs taken, and then mail or e-mail the form and map to ENSP at the address provided on the form. ENSP has also been developing an on-line method for submitting sightings so that it can be as easy as using your smart phone to submit an observation. Though not publicly available at this time, it is planned to be released in Spring 2019.

Please visit ENSP's website at <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/ensp/rprtform.htm> to access the Rare Wildlife Sighting Report Form. Observations going back as early as 1980 are currently accepted, as long as you can provide a precise location and date (the month and year may suffice if the exact date isn't known). A list of all of the rare species for which data is being sought can be found at: http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/downloads/cwnj_694.pdf.



Rare Wildlife Sighting Report Form

Report form must be accompanied by an aerial photograph or satellite image with the location precisely marked. Please print legibly.
*The inclusion of a map is mandatory, please see other side for further information on maps.

General Information
 Today's Date _____ (mm/dd/yyyy)
 Common Name _____ Scientific Name (if known) _____

Where did the sighting take place?
 Municipality/Township _____ County _____
 Coordinates (in state plane feet, if known) _____
 Directions to location of sighting with landmarks, which will enable the future relocation of the site. _____

 Land Owner (name, address and phone number, if known) _____
 Describe habitat at the point of sighting and habitat in the general area of the sighting location. _____

Would you accompany a biologist to the site if needed? Yes No
 Can you describe any immediate or future plans to develop or disturb the site? Yes No
 If so, please describe. _____

Locational Accuracy
 1. Is your depiction of the sighting location on the map or aerial photo within 6m (20ft) of the animal's actual location on the ground? Yes No (if No, answer question 2 below)
 2. Your mapping is accurate to within _____ meters _____ feet _____ miles of the actual location.

What was observed?
 How was the species identification made (ex. Sighting, Call, Road Kill, etc.)? _____
 Date and time of this sighting (ex. August 20, 2018, 10:30am) _____
 How frequently has this species been sighted at this location and over how long a period of time? _____
 Number of individuals sighted: Adult _____ Immature _____ Larva _____ Unknown/Other _____
 Describe sighting and activity observed (ex. Nesting, Perched, Flying, Sunning, etc.) _____
 Describe physical features that identify the sighted animal as the species you are reporting. _____

NJ Wildlife Sighting Form is simple to complete and important for habitat protection.

Bald Eagles (continued)

Jersey's eagle population has rebounded from the edge of extirpation.

185 of the 204 nests monitored in 2018 were active, with eggs. The remaining nests were territorial or housekeeping pairs, which did not breed. Thirty of the nests were newly discovered in 2018. 121 nests produced 172 young, for a productivity rate of 0.94 young per active/known-outcome nest. The Delaware Bay region remains the state's stronghold, with half of the nests located in Cumberland, Salem and Cape May Counties.

In 2018, Monmouth County had nine monitored nests, with six of the nests active. The most well-watched is the nest at the Manasquan Reservoir, which is monitored by Monmouth County and Conserve Wildlife. When you visit the Environmental Center, you can view the nest on camera during the breeding season. Other times of the year, you can usually see a Bald Eagle soaring over the reservoir or perched in a tree. Bald Eagles also nest on the Navesink River near Hartshorne Woods, at Swimming River Reservoir, and along the Shark River.

The federal government removed the Bald Eagle from its list of Endangered Species in 2017, but its official New Jersey status remains state-endangered for the breeding season and state-threatened for the non-breeding season. Bald Eagles nesting in New Jersey face many threats, with disturbance and habitat loss the greatest threats in our state. If you encounter a Bald Eagle, remember to view it from a safe distance so as not to cause any change in its natural behavior.

The recovery and resurgence of the Bald Eagle in New Jersey is a conservation success story. It demonstrates that endangered species can come back from the brink of extinction when humans are willing to change their behavior, as in discontinuing use of DDT, and work to preserve, restore and enhance the habitat required for the species to thrive.

To read the complete 2018 report of the New Jersey Bald Eagle Project, go to http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/downloads/cwnj_855.pdf.



**Monmouth County
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➤ **Membership Application**

Please enroll me as a member of the Monmouth County Audubon Society. My check is enclosed for:

- Regular Chapter Membership \$15**
You get *The Osprey*, the newsletter of the Monmouth County Audubon Society, plus monthly meetings/programs featuring a wide range of speakers, exciting field trips, and volunteer opportunities to help make a difference in our community!
- Chapter Sustaining member \$25**
You get all the benefits listed above, but this level allows members to provide additional financial support to the Chapter.
- Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities.
- Do not add my name to the mailing list; I will read the newsletter online.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

E-mail _____

Q04

Please return your check along with this application to:
Monmouth County Audubon Society, P.O. Box 542, Red Bank, NJ 07701.

Membership questions? Email us at info@monmouthaudubon.org.

➤ **coming up**

- Wed., March 13 7:00 pm
Family Night: "Penguin Pointers," Jenkinson's Aquarium (Note early time!)
- Sat., March 16 6:30 pm
"Timberdoodle Walk" at Big Brook Park, 521 County Road 520, Marlboro; meet in parking lot
- Wed., April 10 8:00 pm
"The Eastern Bluebird and Nest Box Trails," Dr. Laura Stone
- Sat., April 20 10:00 am
Early Spring at Sandy Hook, meet in the parking lot by Visitor Center (1.8 mi. from park entrance)
- Sat., May 4 8:15 am
Migration-palooza at Allaire State Park, 4263 Atlantic Ave., Wall Twp.; meet in main parking lot
- Wed., May 8 8:00 pm
"Monmouth County Nature Trivia," Bob Henschel, MCAS
- Thurs., June 20, July 11, Aug. 22 6:00 pm
Summer Bird Walks at Sandy Hook, check website for meeting location

Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month September-May at Tower Hill Church, 255 Harding Road, Red Bank. Meetings are open to the public, and refreshments are served. See map on our website.