

# THE



# OSPREY

Newsletter of the

Monmouth County Audubon Society

[www.monmouthaudubon.org](http://www.monmouthaudubon.org)

Over **50 Years** of Birds and Conservation

Volume 56, #2 Spring 2021

## ***In this issue...***

***Looking Forward to Spring.....1***

***Items of Note.....2***

- *Volunteers needed*
- *Ted Engberg Conservation Scholarship*

***Wintertime Waterfowl.....3***

***Noteworthy Sightings.....4***

***Focus on Conservation.....5***

- *Bird Rescue & Rehabilitation*
- *Litter is Killing Birds*

***Astronomy for Birders.....9***

***Open Space Spotlight.....11***

***Coming Up.....12***

## ➤ **Looking Forward to Spring**

*by Colette Buchanan*

As March begins, we who watch and admire wild birds are looking forward to Spring migration. We are grateful for the rhythms of nature, which continue despite the turmoil and tragedy of the ongoing pandemic. The wild birds will follow their instinctual drive, awakened by earth's seasonal changes, to travel to their breeding territory. Many colorful songbirds such as warblers, tanagers, orioles and vireos won't reach Monmouth County until April and May, but raptors and ducks will be returning or passing through in March. The MCAS mascot, the Osprey, typically return to our area in late March. Look for your favorite Osprey at its nesting platform after March 20.

Unlike the birds, the rhythm of life has changed for many of us. Like all of you, MCAS has had to adapt to life with COVID-19. We suspended in-person programs, but we have hosted several virtual programs online through the Zoom app. We have filled our Spring calendar with some new and interesting speakers. All programs will be on the Zoom platform and links will be posted to the MCAS website and Facebook page a few days before the event. For those of you who have not yet tried Zoom, it is quite user friendly. All you need is a smartphone or a computer, laptop or tablet. We use the Webinar format, so participants other than the hosts don't need to be on camera to participate. Give it a try!

In March, we will experience the wildlife of India with birder, photographer, and writer Donna Schulman with her program "Indian Rollers, Bengal Tigers & the Ugliest Duck in the World: Birding India." Donna will bring us to the Taj Mahal, the popular state of Rajasthan and the fascinating northeastern state of Assam. The presentation will feature India's iconic mammals (Bengal tiger!) as well as charismatic, common, and endangered birds in photographs and video. India published its first report on bird distribution and conservation in 2020; this is a country we are just beginning to bird and appreciate. This is a program not to be missed!



*Male ruby-throated hummingbird by Bob Henschel.*

*(continued on Page 12)*

## Monmouth County Audubon Society

### Officers 2020-2021

#### President

Colette Buchanan

#### Vice President

Robert Henschel

#### Treasurer

Chris Vanderstad

#### Recording Secretary

(vacant – volunteer needed)

### Committees

#### Conservation

Mike Davenport, Chair

#### Education

JoAnn Molnar, Chair

#### Field Trips

Lisa Fanning, Chair

#### Programs

(vacant – volunteer needed)

#### Publicity

(vacant – volunteer needed)

#### Social Media

Lisa Fanning, Chair

#### Website

Mike Davenport, Chair

### Elected Directors / Directors at Large

Scott Barnes, Rob Fanning, Robert Henschel, Linda Mack, Nano Mardones, Janice Mason, Debra Stewart, John Temple, Dena Temple, Ken Thoman

### Newsletter Staff

Mike Davenport, Editor

The Osprey is published 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: monmouthaudubon@gmail.com

## ► Items of note – local tidbits of interest

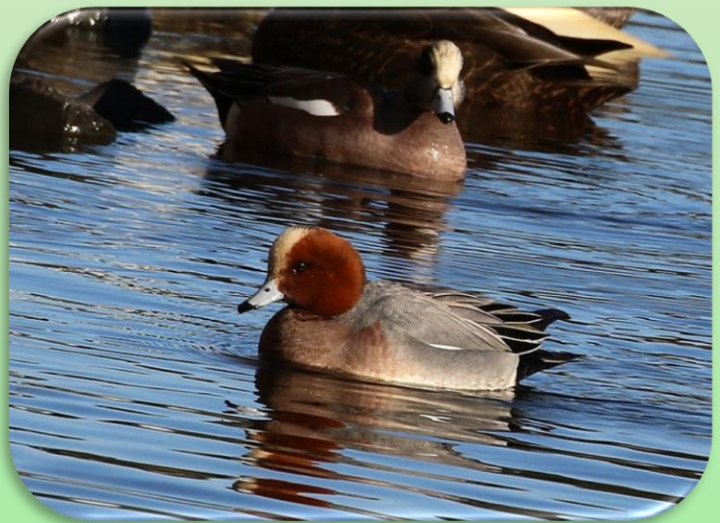
**Volunteers urgently needed!** In the column to the left is a list of the people that power the Monmouth County Audubon Society by volunteering their time to run the many programs that benefit the community and our environment. Please note that there are several openings and consider volunteering your time to keep MCAS a vital organization, taking pride in knowing that you've made a difference to the community – and the birds!

**Reminder: Ted Engberg Conservation Scholarship...** For 16 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 scholarship and the application are available on our website, [www.monmouthaudubon.org](http://www.monmouthaudubon.org). Students graduating from a Monmouth County high school can also get information through their Guidance Office.

The one-page application requires: name and contact information; high school transcript with current GPA; a letter of acceptance from a four-year college or university, and a 500-word essay, "Why wildlife conservation is important to me." Applicants must be residents of Monmouth County.

Applications must be submitted by May 1, 2021. The MCAS Scholarship Committee will review all eligible applications and award the \$1,500 scholarship checks to the winners by June 15, 2021.



*Eurasian wigeon male (front) with American wigeon in background, taken in Belmar. Photo by Linda Mack.*



*Surf scoter by Bob Henschel*

## ➤ Wintertime Waterfowl

*by Robert Henschel*

For birders fond of waterfowl, Winter 2020/21 was a wonderfully “ducky” season. Of the 31 wild duck species on Monmouth County’s checklist, all but three were observed in Monmouth County from late November to mid February. Combined with unusually tolerable winter weather (no snow until February, no pipe-bursting arctic blasts and no frosted earlobes), birders were able to locate, count and photograph them in relative comfort.

This season the “sea duck” species seemed especially plentiful. Flocks of these primarily Arctic breeders chose to spend their “off season” along our county’s 25 mile ocean border. All three scoters were particularly abundant along the shores of Sandy Hook. A raft of more than six hundred white-wings made an impressive sight in February. Joining them up and down the coast were groups of long-tailed ducks, greater scaup and red-breasted mergansers. A few harlequins and king eiders showed up at several locales between the Hook and Manasquan Inlet. They were sort of the “Waldos” of the bunch.

But the one duck that especially intrigued me this year was the common eider. Way back in time (the 1950’s to be exact) in an era known as fourth grade, I remember our teacher telling us about how people in North Atlantic countries stuffed a certain duck’s feathers into winter coats and large fluffy blankets. That’s when I learned “down” wasn’t just the opposite of up. I also recall being somewhat upset that the birds had to painfully (I presumed) part with their protective coverings just to fill someone’s winter jacket. What was wrong with wool? Fact is, like most fourth graders, I just hadn’t paid attention to the details.

Years later, I was relieved to learn that no one needed to kill or harm a mother eider to get her down. She actually pulls the small delicate feathers from her own chest and arranges them within a twig and grass nest, helping to warm and cushion her eggs. Only after mother and young depart the nest site do the local human residents gather and clean the ultra light natural insulation. Better yet, their human neighbors along the North Atlantic coast have become quite protective; constructing shelters and weaving nest-like vegetative frameworks before the birds return in spring. And even more impressively, in the year 676 (1345 years ago!) a law protecting the well-being of common eiders was created in the Farne Islands of northern England. This is generally recognized as the first bird conservation legislation in history.



*Common eider male (front) and female by Bob Henschel, taken along the shoreline of Avon-by-the-sea*

As birders know, every “lifer” has its own back story. I actually didn’t see my first common eider until June 1972 at the Maine Audubon Camp on Hog Island. It was Spring, it was beautiful, and everything was all new. But, I have to admit, I was a little disappointed. The ducks there were all hens! Those magnificent males whose field marks I had just memorized from my “Peterson” were nowhere to be found. “They’re out to sea” I was told.

During the late summer a year later I made a return visit to Acadia National Park. This time there were many

*(continued on Page 4)*

common eiders. But again they were all hens and chicks - many chicks! They were all scooting around with several adult chaperones in sort of a floating daycare center. The males were still out to sea.

Thankfully, during the following years my experiences earned an upgrade. Scoping flotillas of ducks at Barnegat Light finally got me the males, most nonchalant, riding the Atlantic swells. Problem was, some were so distant they might as well have been in another time zone.

But then came this winter, and on a day in late December while I was scanning the ocean from the Avon boardwalk, a raft of common eiders paraded into calmer waters on the north side of the Shark River Inlet. After years of watching them from hundreds of yards away, here they were - males, females and every plumage in-between. And they were close; a mere 30 feet in front of me. No scope or even binoculars seemed necessary. And they were big! The common eider is the largest duck in the northern hemisphere. And they were hungry! Those basalt boulders at the "L" jetty were coated with mussels. The birds simply plucked them off and swallowed them whole.

The proverbial cherry on top (or perhaps "pistachio" is more fitting) was finally getting close enough to see and photograph the adult male's gray-green colored feathers at the nape of its neck. And with that simple experience, I think the "birding diary" chapter about me and the common eider is pretty much complete.

## ► Noteworthy Sightings in Monmouth County

*by Rob Fanning*

- Bullock's Oriole: Young male. 1st Monmouth Co record, about the 5th for NJ. Chestnut Point field (across from Manasquan Res). Seen 12/27 thru at least 1/14.
- Baltimore Orioles: Many feeder reports throughout the county, some households with multiple birds (up to 4).
- Barnacle Goose: 11/28. Horse Park of NJ.
- Trumpeter Swans : 3 at Assunpink WMA 11/27.
- Pacific-slope Flycatcher: 1st Monmouth record, 4th for NJ. Dorbrook Park 11/9 and 11/10.
- Common Redpoll: Big Brook 11/4, others seen at various sites including Shark River inlet, Belmar.
- Evening Grosbeaks: scattered reports including private feeder in Middletown and Sandy Hook.
- Red Crossbills: reports from Sandy Hook, 7 Presidents Park, Belmar, Manasquan WMA.
- Greater White-fronted Goose: 12/29 Willowbrook Rd and vicinity in Holmdel.
- Cackling Goose: 11/4 Lake Takanassee & 12/16 Willowbrook Rd.
- Dovekies & Razorbills: Various locations including Belmar to 7 Presidents Park, mainly mid-January.
- Golden Eagle: 11/4 Clayton Park
- Black-headed Gull: Adult and immature, seen at Manasquan Beach/Inlet thru winter.
- King Eider: Females at Manasquan Inlet, 7 Presidents Park, throughout winter.
- Harlequin Duck: 2 at 7 Presidents Park 12/3.
- Purple Sandpiper: 7 Presidents Park 12/3.
- Osprey: 12/5 Red Bank.
- Eastern Phoebe: 1/28 Chestnut Point field.
- Lapland Longspur & Snow Bunting: Several reports Sandy Hook, 12/28.
- Eurasian Wigeon: Silver Lake most of January.
- American Pipits: Several at Dorbrook 11/12+.
- Wilsons Snipe: 15 at Imlaystown Lake 11/26 and 12/27.
- Nashville Warbler: Attempting to over-winter at a suet feeder in Locust 1/28+.
- Dickcissel: Private feeder in Interlaken 1/29, 1/30 and 2/1.



*Common eider male by Bob Henschel, taken along the shoreline of Avon-by-the-sea*

## ➤ Bird Rescue & Rehabilitation: How to Avoid Needing It & What to do When You Do

by Mike Davenport



*Fledgling American robins within days of leaving their nest. Photo by Mike Davenport*

Along with Spring comes nesting season and a reminder to avoid kidnapping baby birds from their parents. Although the sight of a baby bird separated from its parents may instinctively propel a person to want to “rescue” the baby, doing so may actually do more harm than good. There are a few key considerations to take into account before taking any action.

**Nestling or Fledgling?** The life stage of the baby bird is important to determine. A nestling is a bird’s first stage of life after hatching. Some birds at this stage, such as robins and other songbirds, lack feathers, are completely helpless, and are dependent on their parents. Nestlings such as these stay within their nests while their parents care for them, until they reach the next stage in their development when they are referred to as a fledgling. Fledglings are young birds which have feathers and are about ready to leave their nest or have recently done so. They often perch on branches near the nest or hop around on the ground near the nest as they exercise their legs and learn to fly.

If you see a nestling outside of its nest, try to place the nestling back into the nest if that can be done safely. If you do not know where the nest is or cannot reach it, contact a licensed rehabilitator. The old warning that bird parents will not care for a baby touched by humans is a myth. Observe the nest once the nestling has been returned to it for about an hour to see if the parents return. If a parent returns, then your job is done. If, however, a parent does not return after about an hour, contact a rehabilitator.

**Parent birds do not recognize their young by smell. They will not abandon a baby if it has been touched by humans.**

If you see a fledgling outside its nest, that is normal, unless it has been frightened prematurely out of its nest by a predator, one of your pets, or a human. The parents are likely nearby and feeding it, so leave it alone. If, however, the fledgling is threatened with harm by people or a pet, gently herd the bird to a safer, sheltered location. Continue to observe the fledgling to see the parents are still nearby and feeding it. If they are, your job is done, so long as you can continue to keep your pets and people away from the bird. If the parents are nowhere to be seen, contact a rehabilitator.

Other types of birds, such as ducks and geese, are known as precocial and they are born with their eyes open and are covered in downy feathers. They can walk and/or swim on their own shortly after hatching and rely on their parents, not so much for food, but for protection and in some cases of young precocial birds, warmth. Precocial young typically stay close to their parents and follow them wherever they go.

(continued on Page 6)

Precocial young are much more independent than songbird (altricial) young and don't need human assistance unless the young get completely separated from all adults of their species or find themselves in a situation which endangers their survival – the common example with ducks are the young falling into a storm drain. In such cases, immediately contact a rehabilitator or your local animal control.

Strive to avoid nestling evictions and premature fledging by following some of these practices:

- **Avoid cutting down or trimming trees, bushes, hedges, and vines during the nesting season** (approximately mid-March to late July for most songbirds, though some birds, such as raptors, are nesting as early as February). If pruning or cutting down vegetation is absolutely necessary during the nesting season, inspect the branches and tree cavities for any signs of active nesting beforehand. An especially vociferous or dive-bombing adult may be one sign that a nest is nearby.
- **Keep pets and young birds apart.** Though cats should always be kept indoors, that's even more critical during nesting season. Cats and dogs should also be kept away from active nest sites and, if fledglings are observed or suspected to be nearby, supervise all pets when they go outdoors - better yet, keep your dog on a leash. It only takes one paw swipe to kill a bird.
- **Warn your landscapers and contractors about known nests** and ask that they avoid them. Keep in mind that in some instances, such as having your roof or gutters worked-on, it may become necessary to relocate resident starlings or house sparrows. Ask your contractors to do so as gently as possible.
- **After severe storms, inspect your property for any fallen nests or nestlings.** Mourning doves are known for their lack of nest building skills – a couple of sticks or grasses which barely form a platform is all they seem to strive for. So its no surprise then when a few eggs, nestlings, or the entire “nest” get dislodged from a tree or bush after a strong storm. Try to reconstruct the nest and return the nestlings if possible and watch to see if the parents return. If they do not, contact a rehabilitator.
- **Talk to your neighbors.** Though birds are territorial, they don't understand that the fence between your yard and the neighbor's may be a barrier between a bird-friendly yard and one which isn't. If there's a nest in your yard and the young are about to fledge, or recently have left the nest, let your neighbors know, especially if they have pets and/or children.

## Injured Birds

If you find a bird which is clearly injured and in need of assistance, contact a rehabilitator or your local animal control. How to respond will be determined by the nature of the injury as well as what species the bird is. For some situations, such as a songbird striking a window, the bird may simply be stunned and may recover if moved to a safe location. In other instances, it may be necessary to capture the bird in order to bring it to a rehabilitator. I travel with a “wildlife emergency kit” in my car which consists of the following:

- A box (approximately 18” by 12”) with holes in the top to allow for air
- A towel to rest on the bottom of the box, so the animal has a soft place to sit
- A large blanket, in the event I need to throw it over an animal to capture it
- Pliers and/or scissors to cut fishing hooks and lines
- Gloves (both latex and heavy duty electrical to avoid sharp talons and beaks)



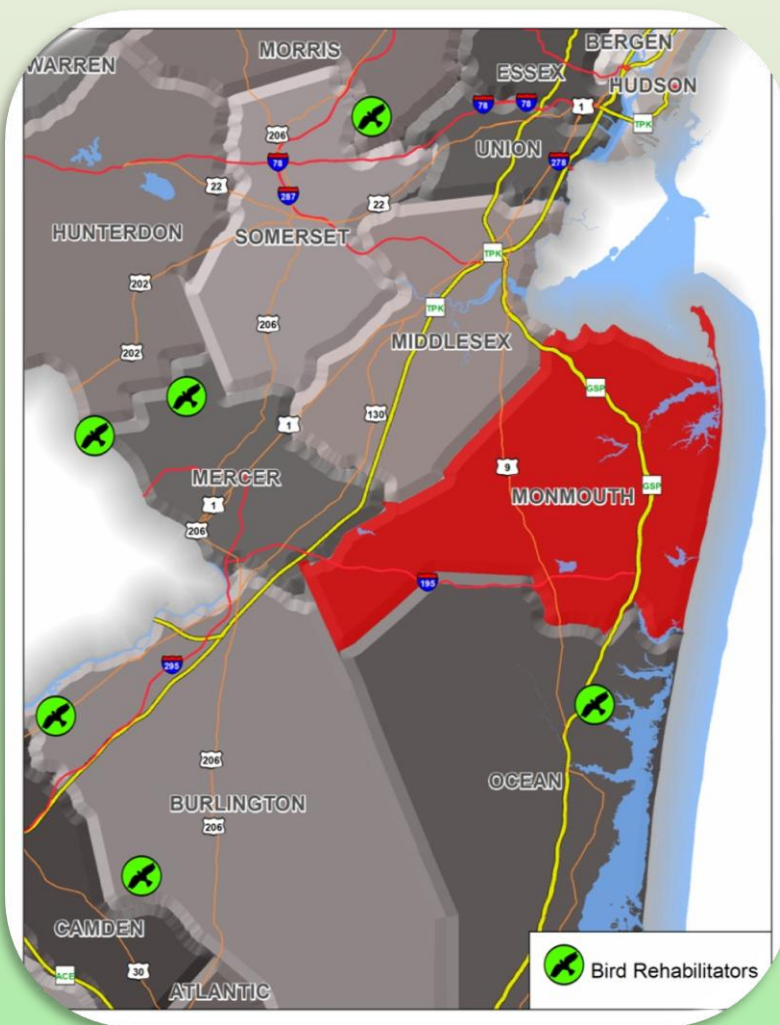
*Feeding time for fledgling blue jays and American robins at The Raptor Trust. Photo by Mike Davenport.*

*(continued on Page 7)*

If you do end up providing ambulance service for a bird to a rehabilitator, please keep in mind that the bird is already traumatized and likely regards you as a predator. Keep the injured bird in a warm, dark, and quiet location. Be mindful to keep children and pets away as they will increase the stress on the bird. Blasting your car stereo is a bad idea as well.

For many more details on how to respond to injured birds, please visit the website of the Raptor Trust (<https://theraptortrust.org/education/what-to-do-with-an-injured-bird/>), a licensed bird rehabilitator located in Morris County which has been rescuing and rehabilitating birds for several decades. According to their website, in the year 2019 alone, they admitted 4,484 individual birds of 156 different species! The NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife issues licenses to those who rehabilitate wildlife in NJ – for the current list of rehabilitators, please visit their website at: <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/bornwild.htm>

**\*\*Due to COVID-19, wildlife rehabilitation facilities may be operating with limited volunteers and/or limited capacity for wildlife intake. It is important that you speak to someone at a facility before bringing an animal there. Appointments may be required.**



According to the NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife [website](#), Monmouth County (shown in red) does not have any rehabilitators licensed to handle birds. The nearest rehabilitators can be found in adjacent counties and beyond. Please visit the Fish & Wildlife [website](#) for the most up-to-date list as well as more details.



Visit our Facebook page  
[www.facebook.com/Monmouthaudubon](http://www.facebook.com/Monmouthaudubon)  
"Like" us for special  
messages and updates.

## ► Litter (Particularly Plastics) is Killing Birds

by Mike Davenport

Last summer, I had the good fortune of having two pairs of American robin nest in my yard. One pair nested in a small maple located in a corner of the yard, so I made sure to avoid that area when I knew the young would soon be fledging. Several weeks later, when I knew the fledglings would have left the nest, I went to inspect the nest. I was distraught to see a dead fledgling hanging from the nest by a plastic ribbon which had become wrapped around its leg. That plastic didn't come from my yard, but the adult robins collected it nearby after it had been carelessly discarded.

Plastic is everywhere. It's nearly an impossible feat to go grocery shopping without purchasing something which has single-use plastic packaging. As a result, plastic litter abounds along roadsides, stream banks, beaches, and oceans - you may even be ingesting microplastics and not know it. Items we purchase today, which never came wrapped in plastic previously, now for some reason need it. Bananas now come wrapped in plastic, grass sod has plastic netting within it for erosion control, etc.



*A robin's nest removed after use. Even thin plastic ribbons can be lethal to birds. One of the small pieces of plastic shown above became wrapped around the leg of a fledgling robin, resulting in the young bird's death when it couldn't escape. Photo by Mike Davenport.*

Albatross chicks being raised on isolated Pacific islands nowhere near the mainland and large cities, are dying as a result of ingesting plastic refuse their parents bring back to them after mistaking it for food. Here in New Jersey, plastic litter has become so commonplace that birds, such as osprey, routinely use the stuff as nesting material. Often, this results in their young becoming entangled and then dying unless humans happen to intervene. According to a Conserve Wildlife Foundation, ["almost all osprey nests in New Jersey contain some type of plastic"](#).

What can you do about it? Here are several suggestions on how to help:

- Never release balloons. And if you're a real estate agent, consider another way to advertise your open house without using balloons.
- Reduce your consumption of single-use plastics. Use your own reusable bag, water bottle, and coffee cups. Buy beverages in glass or aluminum containers. Purchase detergents in cardboard rather than plastic. For take-out food, support businesses which use less or no plastic in their packaging.
- Recycle what plastic waste you do have and reuse or repurpose things which can't be recycled.
- Pick-up plastic litter. Participate in beach clean-ups, organize a park or community cleanup, or take it upon yourself to pick-up some plastic litter in your neighborhood the next time you walk your dog.
- Dispose of your own trash responsibly. Tossing a plastic wrapper out your car window does not magically make it disappear. The sad fact is, that wrapper will still be around somewhere as litter even after your lifetime or your children's lifetime.



## ➤ **Astonomy for Birders**

### Keeping those optics pointed up when the birding is slow

*by Lisa Ann Fanning*

During the pandemic, I have been finding new and creative ways to keep busy and stay connected to nature. So when the birding became slow, I decided to pick up my binoculars and spotting scope and turn them towards the night sky.

Astronomy has always been one of those intimidating subjects that I always wanted to explore but didn't know where to start. A few years ago, my husband Rob suggested we take our birding scope outside and look at Saturn. Once I locked eyes on the rings of Saturn and then four of Jupiter and its largest moons (Io, Ganymede, Europa and Callisto), I realized that the possibilities were endless.

After that, fall birding picked up again, and my optics were once again pointed at our feathered friends, but not for long. I picked up a copy of John A. Read's "50 Things to See on the Moon" and "50 Things to See with a Telescope." The format of these books caters to beginners and even offers views using different types of optics - including binoculars! I soon figured out that my Swarovski spotting scope is also the equivalent of a 65mm telescope and with my 20 - 60x eyepiece could pick up some decent detail for beginning astronomy.

Once the pandemic started, and I stayed much closer to home, I began to get more serious about my viewing and even joined an online class presented by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC) which was co-hosted by Mr. Read, along with Jenna Hinds, the outreach coordinator for the RASC. Through the program, I realized there is so much more to see in the night sky, other than Jupiter and Saturn, using binoculars! Last summer, we enjoyed wonderful views of Comet NEOWISE, Mars, Venus, split stars, some nebula and star clusters and don't forget the moon! Many people don't realize how exciting it can be looking at the moon through a pair of binoculars, and given that views of the Moon change every single night, each session unlocks a new set of treasures. Views of craters and Mare change every single night based on shadows.

#### **"BIRDING" IN THE NIGHT SKY**

Constellations were named thousands of years ago as a way to help people "navigate" through the night sky and identify where stars are. The night sky will not change in our lifetimes, though visibility of the constellations are cyclical in a year.

For viewers in the Northern Hemisphere, if you would like to keep with the theme of birding, you can look for the following constellations:

- Cygnus** - the name itself means "swan" in Latinized Greek - viewable in the night sky during the summer and early fall, it is one of the most recognizable constellations and it includes the asterism (a group of stars smaller than a constellation but still given a name based on the formation they create) "the northern cross." The brightest star in Cygnus is Deneb.
- Aquila** - "the eagle" - in Greek & Roman mythology, the eagle was the bird that carried Zeus/Jupiter's thunderbolts. The brightest star in Aquila is Altair. This constellation is also viewable during summer and early fall.

First Nations in the north, like the Mi'kmaq and Iroquois have many bird-themed legends in their night sky viewing. One legend has Ursa Major the Bear being followed by seven birds, represented from three stars in the Big Dipper and four stars from the constellation Bootes. These seven stars represent seven birds (Robin, Chickadee, Moosebird (a.k.a Gray Jay), Pigeon, Blue Jay, Owl (some sources say Great Horned Owl), and Saw-whet Owl) hunting the bear, going into the autumn.

*(continued on Page 10)*

The Ojibwe (or Chippewa) tribe of the Minnesota region also have “bird” constellations:

- The “Maang” or **Loon** constellation is comprised of stars in Ursa Minor or “the Little Dipper.” In Ojibwe culture, the loon is an important leader and messenger.
- The constellation named by the Greeks “Cygnus,” is named by the the Ojibwe “Ajijaak” or **Crane**. The crane is a leader.

These are constellations and lores associated with the Northern Hemisphere. Should you ever be fortunate enough to skygaze in the Southern Hemisphere, look for birds like the Toucan, Bird of Paradise and Corvus (the Raven.)



*This is a stacked photo I created, using multiple frames extracted from a 2 second video to show progression of 2 birds flying in front of the moon on October 3, 2020 at 12:28 AM EDT. The phase was Waning Gibbous and the moon was approximately 98% illuminated.*

## BIRDS, MIGRATION AND THE MOON

During times of heavy migration (May and October), one can step outside and hear chip notes as birds pass overhead at night, migrating in the cover of darkness. Did you know that you can sometimes focus on the Full Moon with your binoculars or scope and actually SEE them passing by?

There is always so much to see in the natural world, and I always say “I love it when my worlds collide.” Birding and Astronomy are two worlds that I really am grateful for and have so much fun when I can bring the two together. Wishing you clear skies and good birding!

If you have any questions, feel free to messenger me via the Monmouth County Audubon Society Facebook page, attn: Lisa and I’ll be happy to help.

In the meantime, if you would like to learn more, please consider the following resources:

### Books:

- John A. Read, [50 Things to See on the Moon](#) (Formac Publishing).
- John A. Read, [50 Things to see 50 with a Telescope: A young stargazer's guide](#) (Formac Publishing). And definitely consider checking out the workbook version to keep track of your sightings.
- Gary Seronik, [Binocular Highlights: 99 Celestial Sights for Binocular Users](#) (Sky & Telescope Stargazing).

### Applications:

- Stellarium - “Stellarium is a free open source planetarium for your computer. It shows a realistic sky in 3D, just like what you see with the naked eye, binoculars or a telescope.” [www.stellarium.org](http://www.stellarium.org). There is also a phone app version available in your phone’s app store.

### YouTube Channels:

- Learntostargaze YouTube Channel - this is John A. Read’s YouTube channel which offers wonderful information about how to buy a beginner’s telescope, what targets to look for in the night sky (and is a great, coordinated system for beginners, should you choose to use the workbook.)
- Mik’ maw Moons YouTube Channel - “Celebrating the time-keeping traditions of the Mi’kmaq nation and their scientific interpretation through Two-Eyed Seeing.”
- Astronomy By The Bay - also on Facebook. Offers live shows on YouTube and FB Sundays 7PM ET

# MONMOUTH OPEN SPACE SPOTLIGHT

## ► Natco Lake Park

**Location:** Route 36, Hazlet, NJ

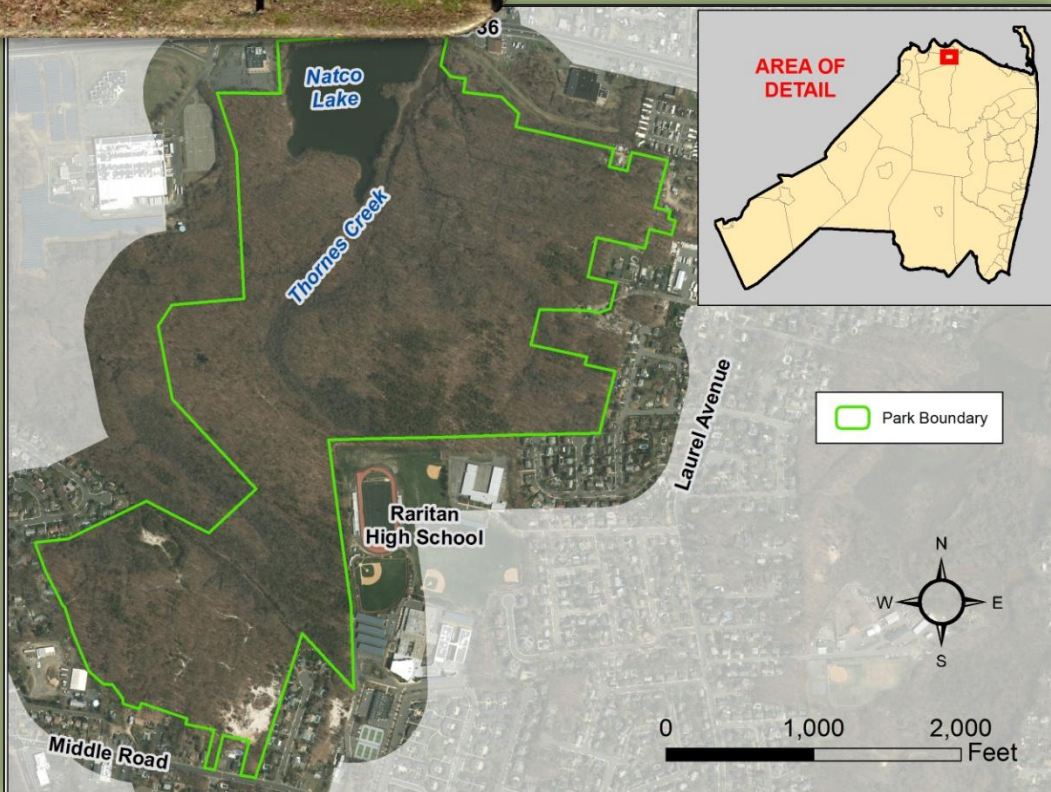
**Acreage:** approx. 260

**Habitat(s):** Deciduous forest, wetland forest, brackish lake.

**E-Bird Stats\*:** 128 species & 28 checklists.

*\*as of Jan. 2021*

Located off Route 36 in eastern Hazlet, Natco Lake Park is a township-owned and managed park. The park features walking trails which wind through forests, freshwater wetlands, and along the perimeter of Natco Lake. Small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians can be observed in the park as well as both migrating and nesting birds. Bald eagles, osprey, and both species of night-heron reside nearby and often forage within the lake. Once a quarry, mining equipment in the 1930's had dug so deep that the underground aquifer was reached. The quarry filled with water so quickly that mining equipment was abandoned at what is now the bottom of the lake. An attempt to drain the lake failed and resulted in saltwater entering the lake, which is now a mix of fresh and saltwater. Originally owned by the Lorillard-Natco Company (National Tile Co.), the land was acquired by the township beginning in the late 1970's.



("Looking Forward to Spring" continued from Page 1)

In April, we welcome Tykee James of National Audubon who will present his new initiative "Freedom Birders." Spurred by events of 2020 that exposed the difficulties and impediments that people of color face in simply enjoying nature, Tykee started this initiative with his friend New Jersey resident Jeffrey Train. Freedom Birders is a racial justice education project built on inspiration from the Civil Rights Movement, the Freedom Riders, the Black Lives Matter Movement, and #BlackBirdersWeek 2020. Tykee told us, "While our target audience is the birding community, we seek to inspire more leaders in the natural world to advance and boldly support racial justice, build connectivity and intention toward achieving racial equity and environmental progress, and share the stories of lessons learned through excellence, resistance, strength, and style." MCAS hopes you will join us for this very important program.



In May we will wrap up Spring with a prelude to summer: Butterflies. MCAS is honored to host two giants of the New Jersey Butterfly community, Sharon and Wade Wander. Sharon will present her program "Enjoying Butterflies with the NJ Butterfly Club." This will be a wonderful introduction to the many and varied butterflies that can be found in New Jersey in the warmer months, as well as how to find them. It will be a great kickoff to summer!



Snowy owl taken in Avon-by-the-sea.  
Photo by Bob Henschel

## ➤ coming up

- |  |         |  |         |
|--|---------|--|---------|
| Wed., March 10   | 8:00 pm | Wed., April 14   | 8:00 pm |
| <b>Indian Rollers, Bengal Tigers &amp; the Ugliest Duck in the World: Birding India.</b> |         | <b>Freedom Birders, an Initiative to Inspire Birders to Boldly Support Racial Justice.</b> |         |
| by Donna Schulman  |         | by Tykee James of National Audubon Society   |         |
| <i>via Zoom - access info. will be available via MCAS Facebook page and/or website.</i>  |         | <i>via Zoom - access info. will be available via MCAS Facebook page and/or website.</i>    |         |
| Wed., May 12   | 8:00 pm |  |         |
| <b>Enjoying Butterflies with the NJ Butterfly Club.</b>                                  |         |  |         |
| by Sharon Wander   |         |  |         |
| <i>via Zoom - access info. will be available via MCAS Facebook page and/or website.</i>  |         |  |         |

**amazon**smile

You shop. Amazon gives.

**Every dollar you spend at Amazon.com can benefit MCAS!**

Amazon has a program called AmazonSmile. Instead of logging in at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) when you shop, enter [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com). You will be asked which organization you want to benefit – just select us. This small change in your routine offers big benefits – 0.5% of every purchase you make goes back to MCAS in the form of a donation! It costs you nothing to participate, so why not Smile!