

Publication of the Montclair Bird Club

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Summer field trip roundup



White-faced ibis. Donna Traylor's account of the club's Arizona trip is on page 4.

Photo by Sandy Sorkin

President's Message

As the colors of autumn begin, we say farewell to our summer feathered friends and begin to welcome our winter visitors. Hummingbirds are still migrating, so keep your feeders filled through at least the end of October and be vigilant for stray western hummers. This is a perfect time to wander up to your local Hawk Watch. Montclair Bird Club members have always helped staff the NJ Audubon Montclair Hawk Watch (check NJAS.org for directions if you are new to hawk watching).

Continued on page 3

October meeting

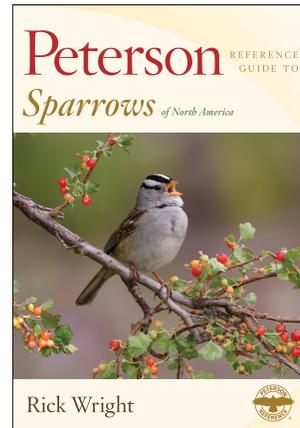
Hallowed Ground: The Montclair Bird Club in Arizona

Roger Tory Peterson famously, and understandably, said that if he could live anywhere, it would be in southeast Arizona, where the light and the birds and the landscapes come so close to perfection. He was not the first and will not be the last birder to fall in love with the Sonoran desert and their Sky Islands, and every visit finds us retracing the steps of generations of ornithopilgrims that have preceded us, from the earliest pioneers of natural history to some of the most distinguished scientists of our day.

Join Rick Wright at the Oct. 10 meeting for an exploration of the tradition of birds, birding, and birders in the American Southwest, illustrated with photographs taken by Donna Traylor and Sandy Sorkin on the club's recent Arizona field trip.

About Rick Wright

Rick Wright leads birding and birds and art tours for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours; his 2019 destinations include Guatemala, Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Estonia, Spain, and Austria. Rick is the author of five books, including the “Peterson Reference Guide to North American Sparrows,” due out in March.



It is a quiet evening and I have been lying in the alders watching wild ducks on the lake. There is a very special wildness about autumn evenings such as this, cool and crisp and still as a broken clock that might start any minute. It is the stillness, perhaps, that makes the wooded points, the brook mouth here, the hills, the mirror lake, the first stars, one vast enthralling work of art. I wonder for how many centuries on evenings like this the wild ducks have swept out of the sky and circled in with that heart-rending curve of speed to this very cove.

From “Green Mountain Farm,” by Elliott Merrick, published in 1948. Merrick was born in Montclair ca. 1906.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Oct. 17: Glenhurst Meadows. Leader: Rick Wright (details below)
Nov. 14: Sandy Hook. Leader: Rick Wright
Dec. 12: Great Swamp. Leader: Rick Wright
Jan. 16, 2019: Shark River. Leader: Rick Wright
Feb. 20: Meadowlands. Leader: Rick Wright
March 20: Sandy Hook. Leader: Rick Wright
April 7: Liberty State Park: Birds & Beer. Leader: Bill Beren
April 13-17: Nebraska Sandhills: Dancing sharp-tailed grouse and greater prairie-chickens.
Leader: Rick Wright
June 5: High Point Leader: Rick Wright
Aug. 7: Mill Creek Marsh Leader: Rick Wright

Glenhurst Meadows **Wednesday, Oct. 17, 7:30-11 a.m.**

Meet at 7:30 in the Glenhurst Meadows parking lot (driving directions [here](#)). We will spend the morning birding the fields and woodland edges in search of migrants and resident specialties. Famous as one of central New Jersey's finest sparrow spots, Glenhurst is also good at this season for warblers, pipits, winter finches, and raptors. Wear long pants and long sleeves, and bring binoculars, a good sunhat, notebook and pencil, water, snacks, and a head net and light gloves.

From the president
continued from page 1

The Montclair Bird Club has initiated a new series of Wednesday bird and nature walks throughout the season — check montclairbirdclub.org for dates and details. These walks are geared for all levels of expertise so don't be hesitant to join us if you are new to bird watching! There are additional weekend and multiple day trips also — check the website regularly for new locations.

The club is always looking for trip leaders — you do not have to be an expert birder to be a leader so consider helping out. Informative programs encompassing both bird and nature topics are presented every second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. (except December, July and August) at Union Congregational Church in Montclair. Bring your friends and family — all are welcome. If you aren't already a member, please consider joining us. And, when you are making purchases through Amazon Smile, realize you can now help the Montclair Bird Club with your donations by designating our organization as your charity. All contributions are appreciated.

Enjoy birding and the natural world every day. If you have suggestions for the club or would like to volunteer, please contact me directly at dtraylor@ptd.net. Thank you.

— Donna Traylor

Montclair Bird Club Southeast Arizona trip Aug. 11-18, 2018

On Aug. 11, nine members of the MBC were led by Rick Wright on an adventure exploring Southeast Arizona. For anyone new to the area, this was a bonus birding trip yielding many life birds, some of which do not roam far from the Mexican border.

Using Tucson as our base camp for the majority of the trip, we began our trip at the Green Valley Sewage ponds. Although the ponds produced good luck at western, spotted, solitary, least and Bairds sandpipers, Wilson's phalarope, black-necked stilt, cinnamon teal, yellow-headed blackbird and vermilion flycatcher, I believe two of the best birds to be viewed were zone-tailed hawk and prairie falcon. Other water features visited in the Chihuahuan desert included the Bensen Sewage Ponds, Willcox Playa and Whitewater Draw — we added ruddy duck, redhead, mallard, gadwall, green-winged teal, black tern, black-billed plover, coot, white-faced ibis, lesser and greater yellowlegs, black phoebe, sora, black-crowned night heron, California gull, long-billed curlew, avocet (*above right, photo by Sandy Sorkin*), marbled godwit, lazuli bunting and tree, cliff, bank and barn swallows. These were great places for dragonflies and butterflies, too.



Madera Canyon is one of those must-see places in this part of Arizona and we made a number of stops there at various times of day and night to reap the most benefit of species. Key birds seen included varied bunting, Bewick's wren, blue grosbeak, painted redstart; broad-billed, black-chinned, broad-tailed and Rivoli's hummingbirds; elf owl (heard), common poorwill (heard), Mexican whip-poor-will (heard) and Northern pygmy owl (heard). There is a comfortable feeding station set up near the cabins where we could enjoy watching and photographing the many birds coming in to feed and perch.

A day was spent in the Chiricahua Mountains at Portal, Cave Creek (South Fork) and up and over Rustler Peak. I believe this is one of the birdiest places in the US! Even a walk down the short street in Portal can yield lots of Arizona specialties. Violet green swallows soared overhead, bridled titmice, ladder-backed woodpeckers, curve-billed thrashers, and Inca and white-winged doves were found in the yards along the way. Blue-throated hummingbirds (this is a big hummer!) fed in the flowers along the road. Scott's, Bullock's and hooded orioles were relatively common. Lesser goldfinch replaced our American as Mexican jays replaced blue jays. On a hike along South Fork, we were all treated to great looks at Arizona woodpecker and sulphur-belled flycatcher — both SE AZ specialty birds. Elegant trogons proved elusive but a few quick looks were had. The prize dragonfly was a giant darner — seen and well photographed by many in the group. As we gained elevation going toward Rustler, we added hepatic tanager, yellow-eyed junco, olive and hermit warblers, pygmy nuthatch, olive-sided flycatcher, plumbeous vireo,

calliope hummingbird, Steller's jay, hermit thrush and Mexican chickadee to the list while enjoying the cool temperatures and wildflowers the higher elevations provided.

There are many locations in this part of Arizona where people open their yards to visiting birders. These yards have produced rare hummingbirds — among the more common SE AZ birds — throughout the years. Ash Canyon Bed & Breakfast (in the Huachuca Mountains), the Paton Center for Hummingbirds (in Patagonia) and several places in Portal are known for their hospitality. We spent many hours on comfortable seating in shaded areas enjoying birds and other flying critters.

A super specialty bird of southern Arizona is the five-striped sparrow. This is not an easy bird to get (in most years) and involves a daylong adventure to California Gulch. Although this location can strike fear in many birders' hearts (it's a long, bumpy, dirt road with many twists and



Broad-billed hummingbird. Photo by Sandy Sorkin

confusing turns) our fearless leader and driver, Rick, handled it in the best way I've ever experienced! Yes, it was long and bumpy, but definitely not dusty since the monsoon rains were following us every day of our journey. So, in addition to the heat of the desert, we dealt with the humidity the daily downpours brought. California Gulch produced more low lying large "puddles" that Garry surveyed with large sticks to ascertain the safety of our van crossing than I care to recall! We made it through and were rewarded with great looks at the sparrow we sought. Additionally, we viewed rufous-winged sparrow, loggerhead shrike, Bell's vireo, yellow-billed cuckoo and a healthy looking coyote. Arivaca Lake on the way back produced common ground dove, tropical kingbird and

a plethora of butterflies — lots and lots of sulphurs, blues and desert black swallowtails!

Although there were many more stops than I have room to write about, a last special location is Mount Lemmon. In a 25 or so mile drive, you go through many ecozones as you head toward the upper elevations (Mt. Lemmon is 9,157 feet). The bird species vary widely as you go from desert floor to Ponderosa pine forest. Rufous-crowned sparrows, Gila, hairy and acorn woodpeckers, spotted towhee, Woodhouse's scrub-jay start out your journey. Gaining in elevation you add Hutton's and plumbeous vireos; Grace's, black-throated gray, Townsend's, hermit, Nashville, orange-crowned and Wilson's warblers; western bluebird, brown creeper, greater peewee, and yellow-eyed junco. The prize was red-faced warbler!

Although numbers varied amongst individual participants, we tallied 182 species in our week together in SE AZ. We covered a lot of great locations and eateries during the week and enjoyed each other's company and knowledge about dragonflies, butterflies, insects, flowers and critters. Our leader imparted great knowledge of not only the birds but the history and flora and fauna of this part of the country. If you ever have the opportunity to join Rick Wright on one of his MBC or VENT field trips, take it!

— Donna Traylor

MBC summer 2018 field trips

with Rick Wright

birdingnewjersey.com, ventbird.com

Brookdale Park

July 17, 2018

Mid-July can be a discouraging time for the birder, but three Bird Club members resolved to fill in a long-standing eBird gap on a dark, damp, oppressively warm morning. Though the birding was, as expected, slow, we found northern flickers in what must have been a nest tree; juvenile red-bellied and downy woodpeckers were also seen. Just as we finished our walk and turned to the parking lot, a loud, musical fluting song announced the presence of one of the park's summertime specialties, a wood thrush singing from a low branch in the oak woods.

Mill Creek Marsh

July 28, 2018

Twenty-two birders joined us on a slow stroll around these Secaucus marshes and impoundments, the site every year of one of the largest roosts of semipalmated sandpipers in northern New Jersey. Our count this time was 4,600, all adults; a smattering of other shorebirds included a single pectoral sandpiper, scarce at this locality. Mill Creek is less well-known as a passerine site, but warbling vireos, willow flycatchers, and orchard and Baltimore orioles all gave good views. Yellow warblers, at this date probably mostly migrants, were common, and the normally coy marsh wrens were seen well many times as they hunted prey for young in their well-concealed grass softballs of a nest. The morning's biggest surprise was an adult glossy ibis, a bird only rarely seen here and a "lifer" for some in our enthusiastic group.

A new way to support the Montclair Bird Club

The Montclair Bird Club is now registered as a 501(c)(3) with Amazon. If you order from Amazon, but have never chosen a charity, consider the Montclair Bird Club. Place your orders at [smile.Amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) (not just amazon.com) and select a charity from the upper-right corner of the home page. MBC will be credited with .5 percent of each Amazon Smile order.

The MBC Bulletin Bird

MBC meetings and dues

Regular meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m., at Union Congregational Church, 176 Cooper Ave. All programs are open to the public.

MBC does not meet in July, August, or December.

Annual membership dues are \$35 for a family, \$25 for an individual, and \$5 for students. Applications for membership can be found at montclairbirdclub.org on the About page.

BROADWING

publication schedule

The Broadwing is published five times a year: January, March, May, late summer, and October.

Send photos, field notes, or articles to the editor at oguss.editor@gmail.com or mail to Elizabeth Oguss, 200 Valley Road, Montclair, NJ 07042. Thanks!

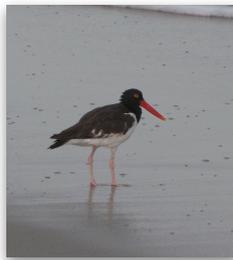


Photo by E.O.

Useful links

NJAS online: njudubon.org

Hawk watch: <https://tinyurl.com/cqawsnq>

Article **of interest:** The [Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com) reports on avian extinctions in the 21st century. Eight bird species have been confirmed in this decade, most caused by deforestation. The URL for those reading this in print: <https://tinyurl.com/y9cp923f>.

Thanks to Sandy Sorkin for the link.



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montclairbirdclub.org
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