

Cape May: Fall Migration | Species List

October 17 – 23, 2023 | with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by Rick Weiman with guide Dan Donaldson and Naturalist Journeys employee and special guest Laura Koehne, along with clients Ross, Robert, Nancy, Janet, Julia, Suzanna, Paul, Diana, and Jay.

The second of two back-to-back fall Cape May tours resulted in many highlights. 127 species of birds, and happy clients.

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Tour Daily Itinerary:

- Day 1** - Upon arrival in Cape May we headed to the Cape May Point State Park and its famous hawkwatch. We also walked the nearby boardwalk trail and scanned it's 2 ponds, adding a few duck species to our list. Dinner was at Sapore Italiano.
- Day 2** – Early visit to the Morning Flight at Higbee Beach WMA, followed by a trail walk at Higbee, then on to Beach Plum Farm for brunch, followed by a visit to the CMBO Northwood Center and a walk in the gardens, then on to The Nature Conservancy's South Cape May Meadows for a walk around the preserve, and finally a visit to Two-Mile Landing and its salt marsh habitat. After our dinner at The Blue Pig, Emmy Casper, Biologist of the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ, gave us a presentation on a new American Oystercatcher monitoring project she leads.
- Day 3** - Morning beach walk across from the Sea Crest Inn, then on to the Coral Ave. platform on Delaware Bay, back to the hawkwatch, lunch at the Lobster House, then our Osprey salt marsh boat tour with our Uganda tour partner Herbert Byaruhanga joining us. Dinner at Harbor View.
- Day 4** - Breakfast at Ocean View followed by a journey north to Edwin B. Forsythe NWR, a quick to go lunch at WaWa, then a quick stop at the Avalon SeaWatch, dinner at Bella Vida Garden Cafe.
- Day 5** - We started at the 2nd Ave. & Beach Ave. pavilion to scan for ocean birds and then drove to the Wetlands Institute in Stone Harbor (after a coffee shop stop at Coffee Talk). We spent the rest of the afternoon returning to the Avalon SeaWatch, followed by a stunning sunset at windy Sunset Beach and then we had our pizza party in Dan's room.
- Day 6** - NJ Audubon and CMBO fall festival trolley tour with guides Michael O'Brien and Louise Zemaitis - just fantastic at the Cape May Point State Park - big morning migration flight. Then back to Coral Ave and after the trolley tour to convention hall. We had lunch at Taco Caballito and then visited Two-Mile Landing again and did a beach and dune walk at the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge. Our farewell dinner was at Oyster Bay. Favorite birds mentioned during the final species checklist were American Oystercatcher, Peregrine Falcon, and Black-crowned Night Heron.
- Day 7** – Departure day - breakfast with the group at Bella Vida Garden Cafe then those not driving home stopped at Jakes Landing Road which is part of the Dennis Creek WMA. Then it was on to the Philadelphia airport for our departures.

Other species recorded that were not birds on the tour were:

MAMMALS (4)

Eastern Gray Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*—Seen at most forested locations

White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*—Several also seen along the Garden State Parkway and one at Forsythe N

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*—Nice looks at several at Cape May Point State park

Common Raccoon *Procyon lotor*—Laura spotted one early one morning by the hotel.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (2)

Pond Slider *Trachemys scripta*—Observed basking in the ponds around the Cape May Point boardwalk trail.

Eastern Mud Turtle *Kinosternon subrubrum*—We helped this little guy cross the road at the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.

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