

Cape May: Spring Migration | Species List

May 18 – 24, 2022 | with Naturalist Journeys



**With guides Rick Weiman and Pat Lueders and the following trip participants:
Nancy, Lee, John, Kathleen, Tracy, Ronda, Marilyn, Andrea, Thomas, & Barbara**

Our journey to Historic Cape May, one of the top birding destinations in North America, to witness spring migration, was very successful seeing 17 shorebird and plover species from land and sea, ten gull and tern species, enjoying delicious cuisine at renowned restaurants in the area, and exploring the miles of fresh and salt-water marshes that provide unmatched habitat for numerous species of nature.

(HO)=Distinctive enough to be counted as heard only

BIRDS (127 species recorded, of which 6 were heard only):

Family or Species Common Name: Scientific Name

DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*—Seen numerous times at many locations

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*—We counted 41 on our first day at Cape May Point State Park (CMPSP) from the Hawkwatch platform & others at Forsythe NWR

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*—Only one! Male, spotted in a tree by Thomas, at Forsythe NWR

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*—A few at CMPSP & other locations

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata*—Scope views of two on visit to the sea watch & at Higbee Beach WMA

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*—Our mystery duck, identified from photos, seen on visit to Higbee Beach jetty overlook

PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS, AND ALLIES: Phasianidae

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*—Seen by both vans while driving near Jake's Landing

GREBES: Podicipedidae

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*—Seen once, in striking breeding plumage, on visit to CMPSP from the hawk watch platform

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*—Seen in town & around the marina

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*—Seen almost daily at most locations

CUCKOOS AND ALLIES: Cuculidae

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*—We finally got good looks during visit to the Beanery/Rea Farm

SWIFTS: Apodidae

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica*—We enjoyed watching hundreds of vocalizing swifts entering a chimney roost after dinner our first night

HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris*—Seen at feeder at the CMBO Center for Research & at the Belleplains park headquarters

RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae

Clapper Rail *Rallus crepitans*—Heard at all marshes, we were treated to great looks in the open at Forsythe NWR and at Two-Mile Landing after lunch at the Crabhouse

OYSTERCATCHERS: Haematopodidae

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*—What a treat to watch at close range a number of this species feeding in the marsh at Forsythe NWR; also seen nesting at CMPSP & other beach locations

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*—In breeding plumage! Large numbers seen at close range from the Osprey boat tour & on other sand bars

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*—Seen at many locations on the beaches

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*—Seen & heard at Heislerville WMA & CMPSP

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*—Seen on the nesting islands during our boat tour on the Osprey

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*—Colorful, in breeding plumage, seen at many locations

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*—Seen only once on the nesting island with other shorebirds on our boat ride on the Osprey

Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*—Scope views with other shorebirds for good comparison at South Cape May Meadows

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*—Seen in large numbers, many in breeding plumage, at most locations

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*—What good luck to see two of this rarer species on the jetty at Stone harbor Point

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*—Small group found huddled together at Two Mile Landing

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*—Scope views of two individuals at Heislerville WMA

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*—Large numbers seen at all locations with shorebird habitat

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*—The other shorebird seen in large numbers at shorebird habitat

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*—Seen from the Osprey & at the East Point Lighthouse beach

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*—Seen by all during the drive at Forsythe NWR

Willet *Tringa semipalmata*—A local breeder, seen at numerous locations

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*—Lucky find, seen from the blind at South Cape May Meadows

SKUAS AND JAEGERs: Laridae

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*—Exciting sighting on our pelagic cruise! Two were seen sitting on the water and chasing gulls

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae

Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*—Immature individuals seen twice; one from the Osprey & one on a pond at South Cape May Meadows

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*—The Osprey boat trip cruised around sand islands hosting the largest population of nesting Laughing Gulls in the U.S. Also seen at all locations daily

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*—Best seen at close range on rocks at the East Point Lighthouse with four other gull species for nice comparisons

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*—Seen in large numbers, adults & immatures, at many locations

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*—A surprise sighting, seen at close range with hundreds of gulls around newly arrived Horseshoe Crabs at Reed's Beach

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*—This largest U.S. gull was seen on a nest during boat ride on the Osprey, at the East Point Lighthouse & at Forsythe NWR

Least Tern *Sternula antillarum*-- We saw large numbers of this endangered tern on nests in protected beach areas & others were feeding at many locations

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*—Seen on a pier from the CMPSP Hawkwatch platform & nesting on the gull island from the Osprey

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*—Most common tern, seen & heard at most of the locations that we visited

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger*—A group favorite, we had good numbers feeding at Forsythe NWR

LOONS: Gaviidae

Common Loon *Gavia immer*—Close looks at two, one in breeding plumage, on our boat trip on the Osprey

STORM-PETRALS: Oceanitidae

Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*—One individual flew across our boat during the pelagic off Cape May

GANNETS AND BOOBIES: Sulidae

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*—Individuals, & a group of 9 containing adults, flew across our platform at the sea watch location at Coral Ave.

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae

Double-crested Cormorant *Nannopterum auritum*—Seen often at many locations flying & perched

PELICANS: Pelecanidae

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*—We watched a few groups fly past us during sea watch at Coral Ave.

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*—Single bird seen at Heislerville WMA & 4 at Forsythe NWR

Great Egret *Ardea alba*—Seen often at the wetlands that we visited

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*—Seen often in breeding plumage & nesting at the Ocean City Welcome Center

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor*—Only seen once, in the marsh during our visit at the Wetlands Institute

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*—One individual seen flying from the wetlands & back at the Wetlands Institute

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*—A good number were seen on our extremely productive visit to the Ocean City Welcome Center's heron & egret rookery

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*—What a treat! A few were seen at close range on our visit to the Ocean City Welcome Center's heron & egret rookery

IBIS AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae

White Ibis *Eudocimus albus*—Out of range according to the field guides, we were delighted to find a few nesting at the Ocean City Welcome Center's heron & egret rookery

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*—Seen fairly often, flying & feeding, at many marshes & nesting at the rookery

NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*—Seen soaring twice, on the boat trip on the Osprey & at the Beanery

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*—Seen daily at all locations

OSPREY: Pandionide

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*—Happily, this species is thriving well in the Cape May area with numerous seen on nests & soaring

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae

Mississippi Kite *Ictinia mississippiensis*—Wow, we were in the right place at the right time to see two of this unexpected species, which is beginning to expand its northern boundary, during our visit to the CMBO Northwood Center

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*—Nice looks at a perched adult on our visit to the canal overlook jetty at Higbee Beach WMA

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*—Only seen once, an individual flew across the vans on drive at Forsythe NWR

OWLS: Strigidae

Barred Owl *Strix varia*—Our last new trip species, one was perched in the woods on the drive into Jake's Landing on the last morning

WOODPECKERS: Picidae

Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus*—Seen & heard often on our visits to forested habitats

Downy Woodpecker *Dryobates pubescens*—Pair seen at the CMBO Northwood Center & at Higbee Beach

Hairy Woodpecker *Dryobates villosus*—Close looks while on our walk at Higbee Beach WMA

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*—Spotted on a tree close to the road on our drive at Forsythe NWR

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae

Merlin *Falco columbarius*—Exciting! Good scope views of a perched individual during our visit to Higbee Beach WMA

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae

Eastern Wood-Pewee *Contopus virens*—Hearing this distinctive flycatcher often, we finally saw one perched on walk at Higbee Island WMA

Acadian Flycatcher *Empidonax virescens*—Heard often, but most saw this flycatcher at Belleplain SF

Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax traillii*—Heard & seen well on our walk on the boardwalk at Forsythe NWR

Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*—Pairs seen 3 times; at Belleplain, CMBO, & Forsythe NWR

Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*—We finally got good scope views of this vocal flycatcher on our walk at the Beanery/Rea Farm & at Beach Plum Farm

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*—A pair was seen interacting from our lunch area at CMPCP

VIREOS: Vireonidae

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus*—Quick looks at this skulking vireo at Belleplain SF, Higbee Beach, & the Beanery

Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus*—(HO) Heard during our visit to Belleplain SF

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*—Difficult to see, but heard well, at Belleplain SF, Willow Creek Farm, & Higbee Beach WMA

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae

Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata*—Seen while traveling & individuals at the Northwood Center

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*—Seen often, usually being chased by smaller birds, at many locations

Fish Crow *Corvus ossifragus*—Identified at many locations by their distinct vocalization

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae

Carolina Chickadee *Poecile carolinensis*—Individuals at Belleplain SF, CMBO Center, & Higbee Beach

Tufted Titmouse *Baeolophus bicolor*—Heard often & seen from the blind at the CMBO Center

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*—Seen feeding over the water from the Osprey & at Forsythe NWR

Purple Martin *Progne subis*—Many chances to study males, females, & juveniles in Purple Martin houses on our visits to CMPSP

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor*—Seen often feeding over water but great looks at one perched on a Bluebird house at Forsythe NWR

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*—Seen feeding over water at all locations

GNATCATCHERS: Polioptilidae

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Polioptila caerulea*—Good looks at a pair during visit to Belleplain SF

WRENS: Troglodytidae

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*—Quick looks, but heard often, at CMBO Northwood Center, Higbee Beach, & Forsythe NWR

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*—What fun to see this spunky, colorful wren at close range on our visit to Jake's Landing; many vocalizing on walk on Forsythe NWR boardwalk

Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus*—Heard & seen occasionally at all locations that we visited

STARLINGS: Sturnidae

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*—A few seen in the grass at CMPSP & Forsythe NWR

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae

Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*—Best seen on the fence at dinner one night; also seen at East Point Lighthouse & Forsythe NWR

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*—Seen often at many locations

THRUSHES: Turdidae

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*—Found across from the parking area at Forsythe NWR

Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*—(HO) Heard at one location, Belleplain SF

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*—Seen almost daily at many locations

WAXWINGS: Bombycillidae

Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*—Scope views at Higbee Beach WMA

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*—Seen occasionally at various locations

FINCHES: Fringillidae

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus*—Seen best at CMBO Northwood Center & Forsythe NWR

American Goldfinch *Spinus tristis*—Seen at Northwood Center & Forsythe NWR

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*—Good looks at many locations

Field Sparrow *Spizella pusilla*—Seen best from the Hawkwatch Platform, CMPSP

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*—One individual seen around the feeders at the blind at Northwood Center

Seaside Sparrow *Ammospiza maritimus*—A life bird for most, we had great looks at vocalizing & perched individuals at Jake's Landing & from the boardwalk at Forsythe NWR

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*—Seen & heard often at many locations

Eastern Towhee *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*—Finally! Good looks at a perched male on beach walk at Stone Harbor Point

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: Icteriidae

Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens*—Scope views of a vocalizing individual when we arrived at South Cape May Meadows

NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*—Seen at all locations that we visited

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*—Seen at 3 locations: CMBO, South Cape Meadows, the Beanery

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula*—Seen daily at most locations

Boat-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus major*—Best scope views while perched at the Wetlands Institute

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae

Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapilla*—Spotted perched in a tree by Rick during visit to Belleplain SF

Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorum*—(HO) Heard, but not seen, during our visit to Belleplain SF

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*—Great looks on our visit to Belleplain SF

Swainson's Warbler *Limnothlypis swainsonii*—(HO) Known location for this rare visitor, we heard it on our walk at Higbee Beach WMA

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*—Heard daily at all locations & seen well at Forsythe NWR

Hooded Warbler *Setophaga citrina*—(HO) Patiently we worked, but unsuccessfully, to see this deeply hidden individual, vocalizing continuously, at Pine Swamp Rd. in Belleplain SF

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana*—Quick looks were had by a few in Belleplain SF

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia*—Good looks at a beautiful male on beach walk at Stone Harbor Point

Pine Warbler *Setophaga pinus*—Heard & then seen well on our visit to Belleplain SF

Yellow-throated Warbler *Setophaga dominica*—(HO) Heard well in the parking area at Belleplain SF

Prairie Warbler *Setophaga discolor*—Seen on walk at Higbee Beach WMA

CARDINALS, GROSBEEKS, AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*—(HO) Heard at Belleplain SF parking area & CMBO Center

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*—Seen daily at all locations

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea*—Great looks at male, female, & immature male on walk at Higbee Beach

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*—Close looks at a beautiful male at Beach Plum Farm

MAMMALS

Eastern Cottontail *Sylvilagus floridanus*—Seen at many locations

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

Muskrat *Ondatra zibethicus*—Seen swimming in the lake from the Hawkwatch platform at CMPSP

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*—Great close looks at many during the pelagic

Harbor Seal *Phoca vitulina*—One seen close to the boat on the pelagic

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Diamondback Terrapin *Malaclemys terrapin*—Great looks at sunbathing individuals on drive at Forsythe NWR