

Cape May: Fall Migration Species List

October 11 - 17, 2022 | Compiled by Rick Weiman



Itinerary:

Day 1 – Morning beach walk, CMBO gardens, Seagrove Ave., Cape May Point State Park, Cape May Hawkwatch, Osprey Back Bay Salt Marsh boat trip, talk by Todd Pover of Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ after dinner

Day 2 – Morning beach walk, Edwin B. Forsythe NWR, Avalon Sea Watch

Day 3 – Morning Flight, Higbee Beach WMA, Beach Plum Farm, Stone Harbor, Wetlands Institute, 2-Mile Landing, TNC South Cape May Meadows Preserve, Cape May Hawkwatch

Day 4 – Ferry from Cape May to Lewes, DE, Cape Henlopen State Park, Fort Miles, Prime Hook NWR

Day 5 – NJ Audubon Fall Festival, Coral Ave., TNC Garrett Family Preserve, Pelagic Trip on the American Star

Day 6 – Departures from Philadelphia airport

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

BIRDS (124 species recorded, of which 2 were heard only, and 3 were introduced species):

Family or Species Common Name: Scientific Name

DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae (16)

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

Mute Swan (I) *Cygnus olor*—We counted over 25 on multiple days at Cape May Point State Park (CMPSP) from the Hawkwatch platform and several were observed at Forsythe NWR.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*—Three seen together at Forsythe NWR

Blue Winged Teal *Spatula discors*—Observed at the pond in front of the CMPSP Hawkwatch platform and at Forsythe NWR

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*—Several were spotted at Forsythe NWR

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*—Observed at the pond in front of the CMPSP Hawkwatch platform

Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope*—One handsome male observed in the first pond on the CMPSP boardwalk

American Wigeon *Mareca americana*—Several observed in the first pond on the CMPSP boardwalk

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

American Black Duck *Anas rubripes*— Several were spotted at Forsythe NWR and the CMPSP ponds

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*—Several were spotted at Forsythe NWR and the CMPSP ponds

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca*—Observed at the pond in front of the CMPSP Hawkwatch platform

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*— Several were spotted at Forsythe NWR and the CMPSP ponds

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata*—Scope views of migrating flocks at Coral Ave.

Black Scoter *Melanitta americana*—A flock of 9 were observed during our Delaware Bay ferry crossing in the AM on the way to Delaware

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*—About a dozen observed at the pond in front of the CMPSP Hawkwatch

GREBES: Podicipedidae (1)

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*—Two individuals observed at the pond at CMPSP

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (2)

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

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

RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae (3)

Clapper Rail *Rallus crepitans*—A quick look at one near Two Mile Landing and heard at the Wetlands Institute

Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata*—An immature bird was spotted by a few of us at Forsythe NWR

American Coot *Fulica americana*—Six were seen at Forsythe NWR

STILTS & AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae (1)

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*—Approximately 75 were observed resting at Prime Hook NWR

OYSTERCATCHERS: Haematopodidae (1)

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*—Around 40 observed on our back bay boat tour

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae (3)

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*— Around 40 observed on our back bay boat tour on the Osprey resting on rock jetties

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*—A few were seen on our back bay boat tour on the Osprey

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*—Seen & heard at Two Mile Landing and the TNC Garrett Family Preserve

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (8)

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*—Five were seen on our back bay boat tour on the Osprey

Sanderling *Calidris Alba*—Observed on the beaches and large flocks seen on the Osprey tour

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*—A few birds were mixed in with the Black-bellied Plovers on the jetties

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*—A few birds were seen at Stone Harbor on the jetty

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*—Observed at Forsythe NWR and the Osprey tour

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*—Observed multiple times on this tour

Willet *Tringa semipalmata*—Spotted at The Wetlands Institute salt marshes and at Prime Hook NWR

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*—At least six were observed at Forsythe NWR

SKUAS AND JAEGER: Stercorariidae (1)

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*—An exciting sighting on our pelagic cruise! At least four were seen sitting on the water and also harassing gulls

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (10)

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*—Observed at most shore and bay locations daily

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*—Not as common as Laughing Gulls but observed several times

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*— Adults & immatures seen at many locations

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*—Several observed during the week

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*—This largest U.S. gull was seen on multiple days

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*—At least six were observed at Forsythe NWR

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*—A few birds were observed at the Coral Ave. platform on Delaware Bay

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*—Observed at multiple locations that we visited; more common than the Common Tern this time of year

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus*—Quite a few (over 50) seen at multiple locations

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger*—A group favorite, we had good numbers (200+) on our early morning beach walks across the street from the Sea Crest Inn

LOONS: Gaviidae (1)

Red-throated Loon *Gavia stellata*—Four spotted by Dan flying together over Higbee Beach while we were looking for songbirds!

GANNETS AND BOOBIES: Sulidae (1)

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*—Several flew near our platform at the sea watch location at Coral Ave; also several were observed during our Delaware Bay ferry crossing in the AM on the way to Delaware

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae (2)

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*—Observed on both our back bay boat tour on the Osprey and on our pelagic trip; about 9 birds in total

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus*—Several hundred were seen often in large migrating flocks and fishing in the small ponds

PELICANS: Pelecanidae (1)

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*—Flocks of birds were still lingering before heading south. We saw approximately 22 birds over 4 different days.

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (7)

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*—At least 8 counted at different locations.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*—Very common throughout the trip at multiple saltmarsh and freshwater stops

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*—Seen often throughout the trip with the highest quantity (20+) at Forsythe.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*—Observed only at Forsythe and the Wetlands Institute salt marsh

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor*—Two birds spotted in the marsh during our visit at the Wetlands Institute

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*—Several immatures and adults seen at Forsythe and also on the Osprey boat tour

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*—Two birds spotted on our Osprey back bay boat trip

NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae (2)

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*—Several observed soaring on multiple days; not as common as Turkey Vultures

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*—Seen daily at all locations, with some migrating through

OSPREY: Pandionide (1)

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*—Happily, this species is thriving well in NJ and along the east coast. At least 13 observed fishing and migrating.

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (7)

Northern Harrier *Circus hudsonius*—At least one harrier was seen every day

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*—A good week for accipiters; observed on most days

Coopers Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*—Even more common than migrating Sharpies; seen just about every day

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*—Single birds, both adults and immatures seen every day including an adult that perched on a telephone pole near our hotel with a fish, seemingly oblivious to mobbing Fish Crows

Red-shouldered Hawk *Butea lineatus*—One observed at the Hawkwatch

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*—One very late bird seen soaring over the gardens at CMBO

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*—Only seen twice, once over Beach Plum Farm and the other near the ferry station

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae (1)

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*—At least eight observed on 3 different days

WOODPECKERS: Picidae (4)

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius*—A lone individual on a tree near CMBO

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

Downy Woodpecker *Dryobates pubescens*—Several observed during the tour

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*—Many were migrating through all week, well over 50 observed

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (3)

American Kestrel *Falca sparverius*—We picked a good week for falcons! Migrating and hunting kestrels were seen just about every day.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*—Ditto for Merlins, quite common during the week especially at the Hawkwatch

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*—We saw about five, including one that landed on the lighthouse!

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (1)

Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*—One was seen near the morning flight platform at Higbee Beach WMA.

VIREOS: Vireonidae (1)

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*—Observed at the CMBO garden

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (3)

Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata*—Many large flocks and individual birds were migrating through Cape May

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*—Seen or heard often at several locations

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

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae (2)

Carolina Chickadee *Poecile carolinensis*—Individuals observed at CMPSP Hawkwatch and Cape Henlopen SP
Tufted Titmouse *Baeolophus bicolor*—Individuals were also observed at the Hawkwatch and Cape Henlopen

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (1)

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor*—Probably the most abundant bird during the week with huge flocks of thousands of birds witnessed

KINGLETS: Regulidae (2)

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula*—Individual birds seen at multiple locations

Golden-crowned Kinglet *Regulus satrapa*—Only 2 observed, one at Higbee and one at Beach Plum Farm

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae (2)

Red-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta canadensis*—Very common with at least 25 seen and heard at Cape Henlopen

Brown-headed Nuthatch *Sitta pusilla*—The star of the show in Delaware with a small flock observed at close range near the vans at Cape Henlopen SP.

TREECREEPERS: Certhiidae (1)

Brown Creeper *Certhia americana*—A single bird was spotted at the new Seagrove Ave. preserve

WRENS: Troglodytidae (1)

Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus*—Heard and seen occasionally at most locations that we visited

STARLINGS: Sturnidae (1)

European Starling (1) *Sturnus vulgaris*—Observed around the ferry docks and city areas

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae (3)

Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*—Very common, heard and seen often during the week

Brown Thrasher *Taxostoma rufum*—A nice look at one perched in early morning sun at Higbee Beach; also one was spotted and heard at the Garrett Family Preserve

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*—Seen often at multiple locations, including the Sea Crest Inn

THRUSHES: Turdidae (4)

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*—A small flock of 4 flew overhead at the Garrett Family Preserve

Gray-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*—Two birds together in the CMBO gardens

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus*—A quick look at a single bird in the CMBO gardens

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*—Seen several times during the week in small numbers

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (1)

House Sparrow (1) *Passer domesticus*—Seen often at various locations

FINCHES: Fringillidae (2)

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus*—Observed at the Sea Crest Inn and Garrett Family Preserve

American Goldfinch *Spinus tristis*—Spotted and heard at Higbee Beach and Coral Ave.

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae (8)

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*—An adult and a few immatures at the Hawkwatch

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*—Seen best from the Hawkwatch Platform, CMPSP

Nelson's Sparrow *Ammospiza nelsoni*—Nice looks at a male at Forsythe NWR

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*—At least one observed at Forsythe NWR

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolnii*—Two observed near the marsh trail at the Wetlands Institute

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

Swamp Sparrow *Melospiza georgiana*—Single birds seen at Higbee Beach and Garrett Family Preserve

Eastern Towhee *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* (HO)—Despite our best efforts we only heard a few of them but not never got a clean look

NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae (6)

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*—A bird in flight spotted at the TNC Garrett Family Preserve

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*—Flocks of around 20 observed at several locations that we visited

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*—A large flock was observed near the Cape May Ferry road side

Rusty Blackbird *Euphagus Carolinus* (HO)—Heard by Dan at Prime Hook NWR

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula*—Spotted at Forsythe NWR

Boat-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus major*—Several seen at Forsythe NWR and the Wetlands Institute

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae (7)

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*—Spotted along the boardwalk dunes near the hotel and along the edges of the Hawkwatch platform; also at Higbee Beach in the fields

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*—A female was observed in the CMBO gardens

Magnolia Warbler *Setophaga magnolia*—Quick looks in the CMBO gardens and 2 were migrating over the bay on our ferry ride

Black-throated Blue Warbler *Setophaga caerulea*—A female was observed in the CMBO gardens

Palm Warbler *Setophaga palmarum*—Several observed on 3 separate days on the ground pumping their tails

Pine Warbler *Setophaga pinus*—Beautiful full sun looks at a single bird at Cape Henlopen SP

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata*—The 2nd most common bird, seen every day in large numbers

CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS, AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae (2)

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*—A few looks at several birds during the week

Dickcissel *Spiza americana*—One was heard calling overhead by NJ Audubon leader Brett Ewald during our fall festival trip to the Coral Ave. viewing platform on Delaware Bay

MAMMALS (7)

Eastern Cottontail *Sylvilagus floridanus*—Seen on the side of Sunset Blvd.

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

Eastern Chipmunk *Tamias striatus*—Spotted at Cape Henlopen

Woodchuck *Marmota monax*—Observed on the side of the Garden State Parkway

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

Forsythe NWR

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*—Nice looks at several during the pelagic trip and our morning beach walks

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae*—Two (including Mojo who was known by the boat crew) were very near our boat on the pelagic trip and we watched them surface and descend for at least ½ hour

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (3)

Common Box Turtle *Terrapene carolina*—Dan spotted an adult crossing the road in downtown Stone Harbor and rescued it.

Painted Turtle *Chrysemys picta*—Seen sunning on logs in ponds along the CMPSP boardwalk trail

Eastern Garter Snake *Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis*—A quick glimpse of one slithering under the boardwalk at CMPSP.