

the osprey

Monmouth County Audubon Society

www.monmouthaudubon.org

Over 50 Years of Birds and Conservation

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Monmouth County's "Big Sit" a big success

by Lisa Ann Fanning



Lisa Ann Fanning

The Sandy Hook Half Mooners at day's end (L-R): Jason Sigismondi, Lisa Fanning, Rob Fanning and David Bernstein.

On Saturday, October 7, 2017, ten members of the Sandy Hook Half Mooners participated in an international competition called the "Big Sit!", sponsored by Birdwatchers Digest. Birders are encouraged to sit in a fixed location for up to 24 hours and see how many bird species they can identify. In 2017, 142 "circles" registered, representing 37 states and 3 international countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia and Italy).

The Half Mooners (named for Henry Hudson's ship, which sailed into New York Harbor) tallied 62 species in a little over ten hours. Despite less than ideal winds (northwest winds are best during fall migration), this was the highest total the Half Mooners have compiled in the three years they have competed in the event.

Team captains Rob and Lisa Fanning heard the first bird of the day, a Great Horned Owl, calling from the hawkwatch platform. A young Peregrine Falcon perched in a tree with "lunch" intrigued many who stopped by. A young male Baltimore Oriole briefly perched atop a cedar tree. Lots of Yellow-rumps and Golden-crowned Kinglets kept us company all around the platform. A small acrobatic flight of accipiters delighted observers.

One funny anecdote of the day came when the team heard reports of a White-crowned Sparrow "right around the bend." Unfortunately, rules of the count say that the team cannot leave their perches to count the bird for the Big Sit! So we waited, and waited, and "pushed"... until...

(continued on Page 3)



Monmouth County Audubon Society

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Colette Buchanan

First Vice President

Stuart Malmid

Second Vice President

Robert Henschel

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Recording Secretary

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Harden Fowler, Chairman

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Lisa Fanning, Chairman

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(vacant)

Publicity

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Hospitality

(vacant)

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Lisa Fanning, Chairman

Website

Dena Temple, Chairman

**Elected Directors /
Directors at Large**

Scott Barnes, Rob Fanning, Robert Henschel, Linda Mack, Stuart Malmid, Wendy Malmid, Janice Mason, Debra Stewart, John Temple, Dena Temple, Ken Thoman

Newsletter Staff

EditorDena Temple

The Osprey is published 5x per year 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: info@monmouthaudubon.org

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➤ **In The News...**

Board of Directors vacancies

Would you like the opportunity to help set the direction of Monmouth County Audubon Society? Join our Board and you will have a voice in planning programs, activities and policy of a conservation organization with fifty years of experience spreading the joy of birds and nature to the Monmouth County community and our neighbors. MCAS has several open positions on the Board and we are also looking for new at-large Board members.

PROGRAM CHAIR - If you enjoy our programs, Program Chair may be for you. As Program Chair you will have the opportunity to select, book and schedule programs for presentation at our monthly meetings in the months September through May. This position would start in April, 2018. Our longtime chair Wendy Malmid is stepping down but can provide you with guidance and assistance in getting started.

HOSPITALITY CHAIR – This person is responsible for the refreshments we enjoy at MCAS meetings. The Hospitality Chair recruits and schedules volunteers to bring refreshments for the monthly meetings and provides the plates, napkins and other supplies necessary. Volunteers who bring refreshments are reimbursed for the cost. This position is currently vacant.

EDUCATION CHAIR – The Education Chair promotes and oversees the Audubon Adventures Program, which is designed for use in classrooms by teachers of lower grades. This position has been vacant for some time. The new Chair would have the opportunity to reach out and develop relationships with grammar school teachers within Monmouth County.

If you are interested in learning more about these positions or the Board in general, please contact Colette Buchanan at info@monmouthaudubon.org.

Participate in a Christmas Bird Count this year

A fun way to shake off the winter blues while helping to document winter birds in our area is by participating in one of Monmouth County’s three **Christmas Bird Counts**. The counts are held between December 14 and January 5 and cover count circles centered on Sandy Hook, Long Branch and Assunpink. Count circles are 15 miles in diameter and are broken up into territories, which are scoured by volunteers to document every bird in their section of the circle.

Participating in a count is relatively easy. If you’re a first-timer, you will be assigned to a section and (usually) paired with another person who is familiar with that area. Your goal is to document all the birds in that territory. By varying the types of habitat you search, you are likely to see many different species of birds, even in the dead of winter. Once you are familiar with the area you’ll know where birds congregate, and that’s where you will spend much of your time. Teams usually meet up afterward to compare notes and claim bragging rights to rare or unusual finds.

If you’d like more information on any of our area’s counts, please contact that circle’s compiler:

Sandy Hook: Dec. 17 (no openings). Scott Barnes, scott.barnes@njudubon.org

Long Branch: Dec. 30. Tom Brown, tshrike19@gmail.com

Assunpink: Dec. 17. Dan Brill, DBrill@ecolsciences.com

Special thanks

We are delighted to have a number of generous donors to thank this issue! Special thanks go to David Saidnaway of Wild Birds Unlimited, Don Rothman, Claudette Lupton, Debra Stewart, Jane Eigenrauch, Joan & John Drager, and Robert Weigand for their donations. As always, we are grateful for your help!

by Harden Fowler

► **Our organization is only as strong as our volunteers**

John Temple



Dena Temple



The Monmouth County Audubon Society does many things throughout the year, led by our dedicated volunteers. Our accomplishments include: offering guidance, writing letters and attending meetings with input on conservation concerns at Sandy Hook and throughout the area; monthly field trips and presentations at our meetings; participating in area Christmas Bird Counts; setting up an observation area in February's Great Backyard Bird Count and a display on Earth Day at the Manasquan Reservoir; fielding a World Series of Birding team in May to support of our scholarship; monitoring endangered shorebirds in the county each summer; awarding a total of \$33,500 in conservation scholarships since 2006; organizing our yearly activities; offering Audubon Adventures to elementary school classrooms each school year; sponsoring and erecting Osprey platforms, along with funding shorebird information cards and roping for Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey; preparing *The Osprey* newsletter five times a year; providing information on our website and responding to e-mails throughout the year... all to provide our members with benefits and to

offer outreach to the community.

We appreciate the support of our membership and ask you all to consider joining us at our board meetings prior to each monthly program to see if you would like to volunteer to become more active in our Audubon efforts. Several of our committee chairpersons have moved out of the area and we need new volunteers. Contact any board member at a monthly meeting or through our website or Facebook page to learn how your skills can help us to succeed.

Our leadership in Washington is working to weaken environmental protections. Now more than ever, our membership should support conservation by getting involved! Contact your elected officials in support of protection of wildlife and the environment. If you visit our website at www.monmouthaudubon.org and click "Conservation" we have information about how to work within the system, along with links to environmental groups and government officials. Your investment of a little time will help MCAS continue promoting our conservation efforts.

finally, a few hours later an immature White-Crowned Sparrow perched up on the fence in plain view. Little moments like that add excitement to the day.

During an event like this, the people are just as important as the birds. Team captain Rob Fanning shares, "I'm not sure what was more entertaining – the birds or the company."

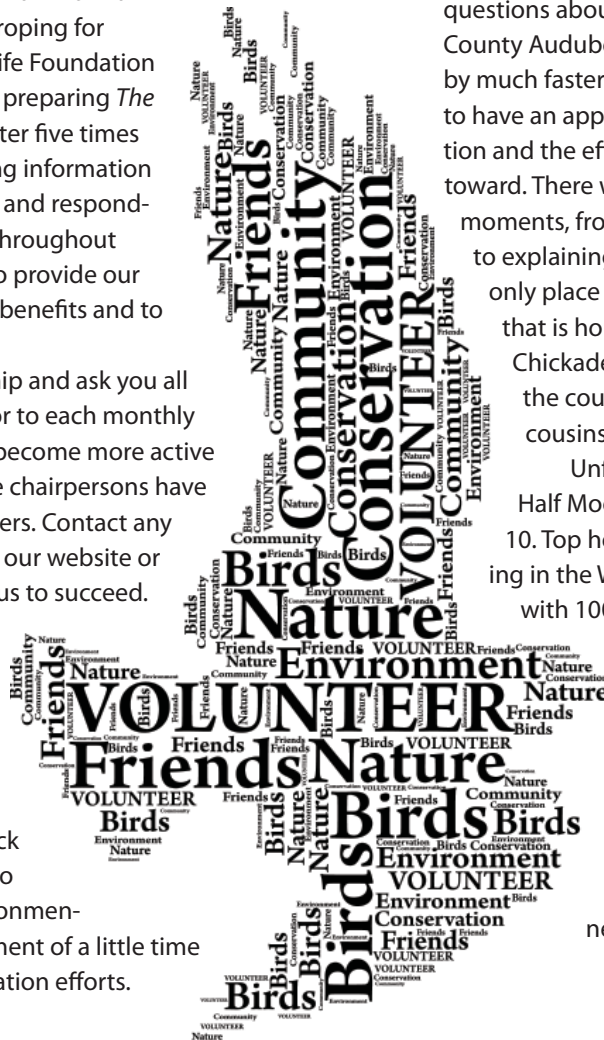
Team members were invited to come and go throughout the day and stay for as long as they liked. Team captains Rob and Lisa Fanning were the anchors who stayed for the whole day. The endurance award goes to team members David Bernstein, Jason Sigismondi, Todd Frantz, Bill Dalton and Tom Justesen, who put in multiple hours each on their shifts.

Casual observers visiting the platform curiously asked the team about the day's mission. That prompted many questions about birds and Monmouth County Audubon. That made the day go by much faster. People really seemed to have an appreciation for conservation and the efforts the Society works toward. There were plenty of teaching moments, from talking about Ospreys to explaining how Sandy Hook is the only place in Monmouth County that is home to Black-capped Chickadees, while the rest of the county has their Carolina cousins.

Unfortunately, with 62, the Half Mooners just missed the top 10. Top honors went to team "Pishing in the Wind" from Los Osos, CA, with 100 species. The top team

from New Jersey was Cape May's "Exit Hero" with 86, which finished 4th overall.

It was a great day. Thank you to those of you who came out to cheer us on! See you next year.





**Monmouth County
Audubon Society**
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CURRENT RESIDENT OR

➤ **Membership Application**

Please enroll me as a member of the Monmouth County Audubon Society (Q04) and/or the National Audubon Society. My check is enclosed for:

- \$10 **Regular Chapter member** (*payable to MCAS*)
- \$20 **Chapter Sustaining member** - all funds stay in our area, helping us to support local efforts and provide services here in Monmouth County. (*payable to MCAS*)
- \$20 **National Audubon Society member** - includes Chapter membership (rate for new members only; renewable at \$35; *check payable to National Audubon Society*)
- Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities.
- Do not add my name to the mailing list; I will read the newsletter online.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

E-mail _____

Please return your check (see above) along with application to: Monmouth County Audubon Society, P.O. Box 542, Red Bank, NJ 07701.

Q04

Membership questions? Email us at info@monmouthaudubon.org.

Please check our website for updates on possible program cancellations due to weather.

➤ **coming up**

- Sat., Dec. 9 10:00 am
Late fall birds of Sandy Hook, meet in old Visitor Center lot, 1.8 miles N of entrance
- Wed., Dec. 13 8:00 pm
Avian Rehabilitation, or How to Live with a Loon in Your Bathtub, Giselle Smisko
- Wed., Jan. 10 8:00 pm
Travels in Peru, Kevin Watson
- Sat., Feb. 10 10:00 am
Winter birds of Sandy Hook, meet in old Visitor Center parking lot, 1.8 miles north of park entrance
- Wed., Feb. 14 8:00 pm
American Kestrels, William Pitts, NJ Fish & Wildlife

* Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month Sept.-May at the Knights of Columbus hall, 200 Fair Haven Road, Fair Haven. Meetings are always open to the public, and refreshments are served.

Check our website for updates on field trips, activities or cancellations due to weather.