



# The Osprey

Our 44th Year!

Newsletter of the Monmouth County

Audubon Society

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## Message from the President

by Bob Henschel

I admire people who can get ideas across in just a few words. History provides many fine examples: "Give me liberty or give me death." "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

This last one, by Walt Kelly, creator of the Pogo comic strip, has long been an environmental rallying cry and one of those insightful, sometimes prophetic and often amusing statements.

Here, thanks to compilations provided by the Internet, are a few of my favorites.

- "The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard."  
*Gaylord Nelson, former governor of Wisconsin, co-founder of Earth Day*
- "A society is defined not only by what it creates, but by what it refuses to destroy."  
*John Sawhill, former president and CEO of The Nature Conservancy*
- "What's the use of a fine house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?" *Henry David Thoreau*
- "It's hard for the modern generation to understand Thoreau, who lived beside a pond but didn't own water-skis or a snorkel."  
*Loudon Wainwright*
- "Only when the last tree has been cut down, only when the last river has

been poisoned, only when the last fish has been caught - only then will you find that money cannot be eaten." *Cree Indian prophecy*

- "Nature has been for me, as long as I remember, a source of solace, inspiration, adventure, and delight; a home, a teacher, a companion."  
*Lorraine Anderson*

- "A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people."  
*Franklin Delano Roosevelt*

- "Perhaps reluctantly we come to acknowledge that there are also scars which mark the surface of our Earth - erosion, deforestation, the squandering of the world's mineral and ocean resources in order to fuel an insatiable consumption."  
*Pope Benedict, from a 2008 speech*

- "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."  
*Dr. Seuss, from The Lorax*

- "The use of solar energy has not been opened up because the oil industry does not own the sun."  
*Ralph Nader*

- "I ask people why they have deer heads on their walls. They always say because it's such a beautiful animal... I think my mother is attractive, but I have photographs of her."  
*Ellen DeGeneres*

- "I think the environment should be

put in the category of our national security. Defense of our resources is just as important as defense abroad. Otherwise, what is there to defend?"

- "Eventually we'll realize that if we destroy the ecosystem, we destroy ourselves."  
*Robert Redford, actor*
- "In a way, global climate change is for the birds. On one side of the aviary we have Chicken Little, telling us the sky is falling; on the other side the ostrich, his head deep in the sand."  
*Consumer Reports, September 2003*

- "To waste, to destroy, our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them."  
*Theodore Roosevelt*

Many great quotes were edited out due to space limitations; but this is a good, thought-provoking start.

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*The Osprey* is published bi-monthly 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. Inquiries concerning the organization, the newsletter, letters to the editor or material submitted for consideration are encouraged and may be sent to:

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Least Terns

Sandy Hook nesting rates, 2008

2008 was a fairly successful year for nesting shorebirds and terns at Sandy Hook. 32 nesting pairs of Piping Plovers nested on The Hook, producing a total of 177 eggs. Of these only 40 eggs, or 23%, hatched. The rest were lost to flooding and predation by fox or other birds, like gulls. Of the 40 surviving eggs, 34 resulted in a fledgling Piping Plover, an 85% success rate. Much of this success can be attributed to the use of exclosures to protect the nests and nestlings, and the vigilance of shorebird wardens on the beaches, who help educate the public about the



Piping Plover

nesting birds and protect the nests from damage by humans and dogs.

The Piping Plover fledge rate for 2008 was 1.06, slightly under the 10-year average of 1.27 but still better than 2007. Nests that are exclosed have twice the success rate of un-exclosed nests.

The Least Tern population shows signs of slight recovery after four years of no production of young. In 2008, 69 pairs of Least Terns fledged a total of 14 young. This sounds insignificant, but it is more than the last five years combined. Compare this to the number of fledglings in 1999 - 124 - and the picture is bleak indeed. Are 2008 fledgling numbers the start of an upward trend, or just the last gasp of a failing system? Will the current fox trapping program improve Least Tern nesting statistics in the future? Only time will tell.

**2008 Nesting Statistics, Gateway NRA/Sandy Hook Division**

Species	Adults	Fledglings
Least Tern	138	14
Oystercatcher	20	4
Common Tern	2	0
Piping Plover	64	34
	<b>224</b>	<b>52</b>

(Photos courtesy Scott Elowitz photography)

Ted Engberg Conservation Scholarship

MCAS is pleased to offer three \$1,500 conservation scholarships in 2009. Monmouth County high school graduates who will continue their education at college and will major in a conservation-related field may apply. Scholarship information and the application will be available in our April/May newsletter and on our website.



by Harden Fowler

## Contributing time when money is tight

As the economy continues its downward spiral, conservation and environmental stewardship may suffer. During these times, each of us has several things that we can do. Yes, our time is valuable to us, but it is also valuable to public parks and environmental organizations. Any work done by a volunteer is less work that needs to be done by the paid staff, suffering from reduction in budgets and manpower.

Monmouth County Parks System has a very active "Volunteers in Parks" program, where volunteers perform many duties throughout the park system. A program that has provided great satisfaction for me over the last decade is the "Volunteer Trail Crew" program. After safety and construction training on March 14, the new Trail Crew volunteers can work on any of the monthly work sessions that fit into their schedule. To find out more about opportunities in the Monmouth County Park System visit their website, [www.monmouthcountyparks.com](http://www.monmouthcountyparks.com), and click on "About Us," or contact the volunteer coordinator, Karen Livingstone, at [volunteer@monmouthcountyparks.com](mailto:volunteer@monmouthcountyparks.com) (732-842-4000 ext. 4283).

Another great opportunity to volunteer is at Sandy Hook, where naturalist ranger Jeanne McArthur-Heuser relies heavily on the volunteer shorebird wardens to protect the nesting birds from throngs of beach users. The Piping Plovers and Least Terns that nest and breed along the beach from March to September need an intruder-free area in order to raise their chicks. Fencing for the nesting areas is done in early March, with monitoring done until September. Contact Jeanne at 732-872-5936 for details on becoming a shorebird warden.

Sandy Hook is also the location of New Jersey Audubon Society's Sandy Hook Bird Observatory. It is a great place to learn about birding and volunteer to help their staff at the center. For information on volunteering, call 732-872-2500.

Another way to support conservation is to contact your elected officials in support of open space funding, public parks and environmentally correct policies. Become involved in your local government by contacting the various leaders of the environmental or recreational commission and the governing body to express the importance of conservation in your community. You can also let your State legislators know that you support conservation and a healthy environment. If you visit our website at [www.monmouthaudubon.org](http://www.monmouthaudubon.org) and click on the "conservation articles" link we have information on how to work within the system, along with links to environmental groups and the NJ Legislature.

On the national level, something as simple as an email to your Congressman or state Representative will let them know how you feel on conservation in general or specific environmental issues.

Your investment of a little time can work for conservation, even in hard times.

### A sincere thanks

We would like to acknowledge and thank **Nina Geist and Nina Merciadetz** for their gifts in memory of Larry Shields, longtime MCAS board member. Thanks also to **David Nelson, Jr.** for his gift in memory of another board member, Ted Engberg.

We would also like to acknowledge **Nano Mardones**, who has been vigilantly monitoring the USA-BIRD hotline for the past several months. MCAS relies on volunteers, and we thank Nano for the important contribution.

## Winter field trips and programs with MCAS

The good thing about winter birding is that you're not trying to spot tiny little warblers flitting around a tree; ducks are big, easy to see and tend to stay in one place long enough to enjoy them! First, on **Saturday, February 7** we'll visit Sandy Hook for winter waterfowl, raptors, and maybe a Snowy Owl! (10:00 am, Visitors Center.) Then, on **Saturday, March 28** we will offer a special workshop for beginners at Turkey Swamp Park. Learn a little about bird families, common Monmouth area birds, choosing the right binoculars, and have fun looking for birds! Check the website for exact directions. (9:00 am, meet at ranger's station, Georgia Road)

If your idea of the great outdoors is parking more than three rows from the mall entrance, consider attending one of our programs. First, on **Wednesday, February 11**, we welcome Patrick Scheuer from NJ Audubon's Lorrimer Sanctuary for "Mammals' Tracks and Signs." Learn about the telltale clues that animals leave behind. Then, on **Wednesday, March 11** we welcome The Lizard Guys for our annual "Family Night" program. You all know what that means: live critters! Note the special family-friendly start time of 7:00 pm. *Trinity Episcopal Church, Red Bank*



### Join the MCAS eGroup!

An eGroup is a bulletin board just for MCAS members. You will receive information on upcoming trips, local conservation news, bird sightings, etc. We also use this system to announce the availability of the newsletter online.

To subscribe, send an e-mail to [mcas\\_newslet-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:mcas_newslet-subscribe@yahoo.com).



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## 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
- \$20 Chapter **Sustaining** member - all funds stay in our area, helping us to support local efforts and provide services here in Monmouth County.
- \$20 **National Audubon Society** member - includes Chapter membership (rate for new members only; renewable at \$35)
- 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 make checks payable to MCAS and return along with application to:  
 Monmouth County Audubon Society, P.O. Box 542, Red Bank, NJ 07701.

*Membership questions? Call us at 732-USA-BIRD.*

7XCH8 / Q04

**coming up**

Sat., Feb. 7 . . . . 10:00 am - noon  
**Winter Birds of Sandy Hook;**  
 meet in parking area by Visitor Center

Wed., Feb. 11 . . . . . 8:00 - 9:30 pm  
**"Mammals' Tracks and Signs,"**  
 Patrick Scheuer

Wed., Mar. 11 . . . . . 7:00 - 8:30 pm  
**Family Night: "The Lizard Guys"**  
*(please note early start time)*

Sat., Mar. 28 . . . . . 9:00 - 11:00 am  
**Beginners' Birding;** Turkey Swamp Park, Freehold; meet at rangers' station, off Georgia Road  
*(All ending times are approximate.)*

\* Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month Sept.- May at Trinity Episcopal Church, White Street, Red Bank. Meetings are open to the public, and refreshments are served.

Call (732) USA-BIRD for details on field trips, activities or cancellations due to weather. This is a 24-hour message line.