

# the osprey

Monmouth County Audubon Society

www.monmouthaudubon.org

Over 50 Years of Birds and Conservation

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## Your four-season, wildlife-friendly yard

by Dena Temple



Ruby-throated Hummingbird / DE Nature Society

As you stare out your window at the snow, spring gardening is probably the furthest thing from your mind. But there are ways to improve your garden for wildlife in 2018, every season of the year.

To attract wildlife to your yard you need to provide food, a water source, and shelter from predators. This is especially critical in the winter. A few feeders and a birdbath heater can make your yard the "in" place for winter birds, including uncommon visitors like Fox Sparrow, Brown Creeper and Hermit Thrush. A brush pile can be a haven for birds and other small animals, so rather than removing branches in the winter, pile them up until spring.

In the spring, migrating songbirds will be passing through our area. If you can ensure insects in your yard, it will look like a buffet to passing warblers and tanagers as well as our native nesting birds. To increase your insect population, plant native species instead of cultivars and resist the urge to use toxic garden chemicals. Instead of RoundUp, for example, a mixture of 1 gal. white vinegar, 1 cup of salt and 1 tablespoon dish detergent is an effective herbicide (and costs far less). Your

local garden center can advise you on native plants for our area, or you can do the research yourself online.

To host nesting birds in the summer, you'll want to provide suitable habitat. Many backyard birds will nest in native shrubs or trees. Some birds prefer to nest in cavities in dead trees, so if you have one on your property that isn't in danger of falling, consider leaving it. Imagine your delight in finding a nest cavity full of woodpeckers! Feeders should be emptied, cleaned and stored for the summer, as they can attract unwanted guests. The exception is hummingbird feeders, which should be maintained into the fall. It's a delight to watch the hummers' courtship and nest-building (photo), then watch the young battle over the feeders around the yard.

A word of caution: Watch your pets around fledgling birds. Our dog showed no interest in birds until he found just-fledged baby Robins hopping about. The story does not have a happy ending.

Attracting insects is just as important for a successful garden. Bees, in particular, are almost singly responsible for pollinating vegetable gardens, shrubs and fruit trees. Bees aren't impressed by your neatly-manicured lawn and appreciate a lawn that allows some native plants (weeds) to intrude. It definitely requires an attitude adjustment not to get rid of the violet, wild strawberries, ajuga and clover in your lawn, but you will notice an increase in insect activity if you resist the

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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...**

**NJ Bald Eagle report released**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection has released the 2017 Bald Eagle report, and the news is very encouraging.

In 2017 there were 150 pairs of nesting Bald Eagles in the state. This is in stark contrast to 1973, the year that the Endangered Species act was enacted, when there was only one nesting pair in the state. Loss of habitat and use of pesticides brought the mighty eagle to the brink of extinction. Most are in the Delaware Bay counties of Cumberland and Salem, but eagles can now be found statewide, including Monmouth County.

The Bald Eagle remains on the list of New Jersey's Endangered Species due to their sensitivity to environmental contaminants, habitat loss and human disturbance. To read the full 2017 report, go to <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/ensp/pdf/eglrpt17.pdf>.

**Count birds during  
the Great Backyard  
Bird Count**

Audubon and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology will host the annual Great Backyard Bird Count over Presidents Weekend, February 16-19.

Bird watchers count the birds they see for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count. Count birds in your yard or at your favorite park, then enter your checklists at [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org) All the data contribute to a snapshot of bird distribution and help scientists see changes over the past 21 years.

The first year, bird watchers submitted about 13,500 checklists from the United States and Canada. Fast-forward to the most recent event in 2017. Over the four days of the count, an estimated 214,000 bird watchers from more than 100 countries submitted nearly 174,000 bird checklists reporting 5,940 species – more than half the known bird species in the world.

MCAS will be counting birds at the Manasquan Reservoir Environmental Center over the weekend, and we will report our results on our Facebook page and on the website. Visitors are welcome and encouraged! For more information on how to participate in your own back yard, please visit <http://gbbc.birdcount.org>.

**Special thanks**

We are happy to have several generous donors to thank this issue! Special thanks go to Eileen Carton, Leslie Smith and Judy Blair for their donations. As always, we are grateful for your help.

by Harden Fowler

## ➤ 2018 Ted Engberg Conservation Scholarship application available March 15



For 13 years, Monmouth County Audubon Society has awarded scholarships of \$1,500 to qualified Monmouth County high school students continuing their education in a field related to conservation. The Board has approved these scholarships as an important part of our mission, “to promote the awareness, appreciation and conservation of natural resources through educational outreach.” The scholarship is awarded in memory of Ted Engberg, who was on the MCAS Board and a generous donor for decades. Since 2006 we have awarded 24 scholarships totaling \$33,500 to worthy students throughout the county. We are delighted to support their interest in wildlife conservation and the environment, and we are thankful to our members who have supported the scholarship through World Series of Birding donations.

Applications must contain contact information, school grades, acceptance to a college majoring in the field of conservation, and an essay, “Why wildlife conservation is important to me,” highlighting their conservation activities and future goals. The MCAS Scholarship Committee will make all final decisions and award the certificates along with the \$1,500 checks to the winners by June 15, 2018.

Full information on the scholarships and applications will be available after March 15, 2018, through Monmouth County high school guidance offices, on our website: [www.monmouthaudubon.org](http://www.monmouthaudubon.org), or by contacting us at: MCAS, P.O. Box 542, Red Bank, NJ 07701. Completed applications must be mailed to MCAS and postmarked by May 1, 2018.

## ➤ Climate change and the 2017 Paris Climate Summit

In December the Paris Major Climate Summit was attended by 50 world leaders, along with scientists and heads of industry. It was hosted by the United Nations, the World Bank and French President Emmanuel Macron, who stated, “It’s time to act and move faster and join the battle.” The leaders committed \$1 billion investments to reduce the use of oil and coal in favor of cleaner, renewable energy. They disagreed with President Trump’s main assertion that reducing global emissions would hurt the US economy. Addressing the summit via video, California Governor Jerry Brown stated, “We in California and in states all across America believe it’s time to act. It’s time to join together, and that’s why at this Climate Action Summit we’re going to get it done.” Brown then announced that California would host a global summit on climate change in San Francisco in September, 2018.

Here in the United States, many state and local governments, along with industry, are working in support of clean energy and reduction of greenhouse gases. Environmental and conservation groups are contacting Congress, pushing the fight against climate change. We can only hope the leadership in the White House will listen.

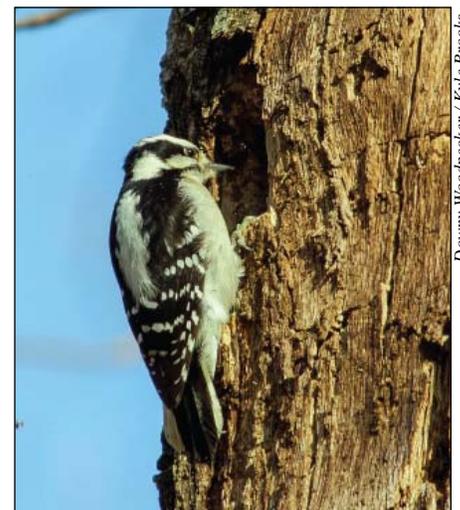
## Gardening (continued)

urge. We scattered clover seed in our lawn; now, many species of bees can be found out there at any given time. We also have lots of shrubs and perennials to attract butterflies, such as hyssop, salvia and butterfly bush, and we added butterfly host plants such as butterfly weed (for monarchs) and parsley (for black swallowtail) and enjoy watching the caterpillars develop into butterflies.

Insects linger in your yard well into fall, so watch for “confusing fall warblers,” especially around your water source. The bright spring breeding plumage is gone, making ID a little more challenging. Resist the urge to cut away all spent flower heads and foliage, as birds may appreciate the seed and nesting material. Your yard should have lots of natural seed in early fall, but by late fall you may want to start setting out seed feeders and suet again.

A wildlife garden develops over time. Try to develop an overall plan first, then implement it over a period of years, if necessary. Study the tags on plants at the garden center, which indicate the proper conditions for each plant. Resist the urge to crowd plants together; plant for their mature size rather than their current size.

As your garden takes shape, keep a “yard list” of the birds and other wildlife you’ve attracted to your yard. You’ll also be able to snap enviable photos of birds and wildlife, without ever leaving home.



Downy Woodpecker / Kyle Brooks



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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 \_\_\_\_\_

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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](mailto:info@monmouthaudubon.org).

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

## ➤ **coming up**

- Sat., Feb. 10 10:00 am  
**Winter birds of Sandy Hook**, meet in old Visitor Center parking lot, 1.8 mi. N of park entrance
- Wed., Feb. 14 8:00 pm  
**American Kestrels**, William Pitts, NJ Fish & Wildlife
- Sat., March 10 5:30 pm  
**"Timberdoodle Walk" (for American Woodcock)** at Big Brook Park, Rte. 520, Marlboro; meet in main parking lot
- Wed., March 14 7:00 pm  
**FAMILY NIGHT: Back Into Nature Wildlife**, Rizzo's Wildlife Discovery (please note early start time)

\* 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.