

the osprey

Monmouth County Audubon Society

www.monmouthaudubon.org

Over **50 Years** of Birds and Conservation

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In this issue...

A birder's journey with Lyme disease 1

Of note 2
Yard notes; warbler ID; online rare bird reports

Special thanks..... 2

Focus on conservation 3
Creating a backyard wildlife habitat

Coming up 4

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LEFT: The bull's-eye rash often seen in Lyme disease is caused by the dynamics of the struggle between the body's immune cells and the bacteria. (Photo: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) RIGHT: A tiny adult deer tick.

► A birder's journey with Lyme disease and vector-borne illness

by Lisa Ann Fanning

I first contracted Lyme when I lived in Massachusetts in the early 2000s. I volunteered at Boston Light, and for three days at a time, I would stay out on Little Brewster Island and work on projects with active duty Coast Guard around the island. After one stay, I felt a hot bump on my leg which was very itchy and had a strange rash around it. It looked exactly like a bull's-eye. I showed my boss who said, "You need to get to a doctor immediately and find out if you have Lyme Disease." I did just that and was sent home with a course of antibiotics.

Since then, I have had similar experiences three times, and only once did I actually see the tiny deer tick embedded in me. Each time, I sought courses of antibiotics and moved on.

This spring my experience with Lyme changed. Earlier in the year, I struggled with flu-like symptoms that just weren't getting better. Then in May, I discovered a bull's-eye rash on my inner thigh.

How I could have been infected? I will never know. I am a "LunaTICK" when it comes to checking us when we get home. I isolate our clothing, take a shower immediately, even spray our clothing with

Premethrin (consider the risks before using). How did this happen?

What was ahead would become a difficult lesson in vector-borne illnesses.

I immediately sought out the help of a LLMD (Lyme-literate medical doctor). I am a huge fan of my general practitioner, but Lyme is not very well understood, so I felt it an important personal choice to enlist an expert. If you find yourself in this position, know that their treatments are often expensive, but it can be money well spent. You will also want to find the right LLMD for your school of thought. Some utilize traditional medicine; some incorporate alternative methods as well.

After months of changing courses of antibiotics (due to reactions, side effects, etc.) as well as taking multiple supplements and probiotics, I still found myself in a place of painful joints (at times I needed help walking), "Brain Fog" (disorientation or becoming easily confused) and strange sensations in my legs.

After continued visits with my LLMD, I was diagnosed with Babesia, which is one of the many common co-infections which can hinder Lyme treatment. To be able

(continued on Page 3)



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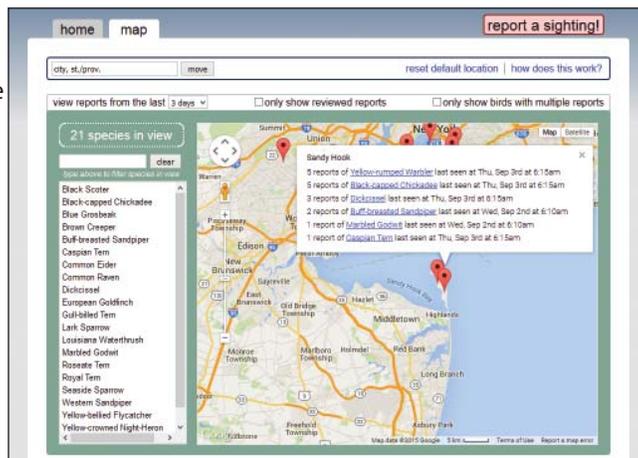
► Items of note - local tidbits of interest

It's time to... get your yard ready for winter! When food becomes harder to find, birds rely more on artificial sources of food, such as your bird feeders. If you feed the birds, keep your feeders clean and full. If you start feeding in the fall, try to keep it up – if birds have come to rely on you, don't let them down.

Confusing fall warblers... If your yard is conducive to wildlife, you can expect to see your share of "confusing fall warblers" this fall. If you are like this writer, by the time you grab your camera, it's gone. If you leave a point-and-shoot camera by the window, you can snap a few quick photos before your visitor moves on, and make mental (or written) notes of field marks. You can then use the photos, your notes and a field guide to help you pin down the ID on your mystery bird. Don't worry; it gets easier!

Fall in the parks... Nature-related programs continue into the fall in Monmouth County's beautiful parks. Kayak tours of the Manasquan Reservoir continue through October. Enjoy a butterfly walk at Seven Presidents Park on October 14. Enjoy the highly popular Thompson Park Day on October 18 with pumpkin painting, wagon rides, arts & crafts, kids races, entertainment and much more. On Sunday, November 22, the roving Park Naturalist will visit Hartshorne Woods Park. Check the Monmouth County Park website for other dates and locations.

JerseyBirds... If you chase birds, you probably already know about the JerseyBirds listserv, but if you are new to the hobby, this is a tremendous resource to keep up with sightings around the state reported by fellow birders. To subscribe to this list, visit lists.princeton.edu, sign up, then search for JerseyBirds. Follow instructions to subscribe to the list. Another valuable resource is **eBird**, a site operated jointly by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon. Users enter their sightings, and the site generates rarity lists from the data. An affiliated site, www.oddfathers.com, will use that data to generate rarity maps showing the location of any rare bird in the area you select. You can check the map on Friday night to decide where to go birding on Saturday! Don't forget to enter your own data when you get home – so Sunday's birders have the most up-to-date data, too.



Above: Oddfathers map of the Monmouth County area pinpoints nearby bird rarities. This map generated on September 3 shows Dickcissel and Buff-breasted Sandpiper reported on Sandy Hook within the last three days.



Special Thanks

Since we did not receive any cash contributions this issue, we wanted to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who keep Monmouth County Audubon Society running. From our board members, to our officers, to our field trip leaders, to the people who volunteer to bring snacks for our programs, this organization would not operate without you. We have no paid staff, so we owe everything to our volunteers!

Lyme (continued)

to arrest the Lyme, the Babesia must be treated. I have since learned that the majority of Lyme patients report having at least one co-infection, while an estimated 30% may have multiple. The most common coinfections were Babesia (32%), Bartonella (28%), Ehrlichia (15%), and Mycoplasma (15%). (www.lymedisease.org)

Lyme basics

The *Borellia* species of spirochetes are a bacteria which penetrate blood vessels and colonize. Once they colonize, they can impact tissue such as the brain and central nervous system, joints, organs, etc. Methods of transmission:

- Deer ticks are tiny and can be easily missed. They can be carried into the

home on our clothing, or carried in from the outside from pets.

- Research is underway to determine whether other vectors may be responsible for transmitting Lyme – biting flies, mosquitos, etc. (The last two times I did not see a tick, yet I remember being bitten by green-headed flies.)
- Research is also being done to determine if Lyme is in the blood supply.
- There is evidence that Lyme can be transmitted *in-utero* to the unborn.
- Other methods of transmission are currently being examined as well.

There is debate over whether the condition can be chronic and if it ever

really goes away.

The CDC recently released a report stating that new Lyme disease cases may be 10 times what was originally projected. They report that the number is closer to 300,000 new cases each year, making it the fastest-growing vector-borne disease in America.

Longer periods of warm weather are blamed for increasing the breeding season of ticks, and a rise in the population of those critters who help to spread the ticks, such as deer, mice and birds.

Today, I am continuing my treatment and implementing changes in lifestyle, pharmacology (I take 20+ pills a day,) diet and lots of rest.

If you find yourself in this situation and want to see an LLMD, contact your insurance company, research other people's experiences in your area or use online resources such as ILADs, which offer online tools for finding a doctor in your area.

focus on conservation

by Harden Fowler

➤ Create your own backyard wildlife habitat

Creating a backyard wildlife habitat is something that has a direct benefit and can give immediate enjoyment. The National Wildlife Federation website (www.nwf.org/backyard) has the step-by-step procedure to create a habitat, along with links to related information on attracting wildlife to your yard.

The requirements for a successful backyard habitat rely on the fact that wildlife needs food, water, cover and space to survive year round. Your yard may already contain some or all of these elements, so with minimal effort you can vary the habitat and food sources, within local restrictions. A bird feeder or native plants that produce berries, seeds, nectar or nuts will supply food for your visiting birds. Water can be a bird bath, a man-made pond or running water. Shrubs, tall grasses, trees or dead branches all can supply cover during feeding or nesting. Creating your habitat away from commotion will give the birds a sense of space and safety. Once your habitat is complete the birds can be viewed from the comfort of your own home, year-round.

When your schedule and the weather conditions permit, enjoy birding throughout Monmouth County... but by creating a "backyard habitat for wildlife" you can enjoy the birds every day from a comfortable chair, regardless of the weather.



Water features like a birdbath or dripper may attract birds that seed feeders might not, such as warblers, thrushes and hummingbirds.



"If you build it, they will come..." Left, a Fox Sparrow takes shelter in a brush pile. These stealthy birds are uncommon in winter. Center, a White-crowned Sparrow pauses for a bath. Right, a mixed-seed feeder will attract a wide variety of birds including cardinals, sparrows and finches.

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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 _____

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Please make checks payable to MCAS and return along with application to: Monmouth County Audubon Society, P.O. Box 542, Red Bank, NJ 07701.

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

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

➤ **coming up**

- Wednesday, Oct. 14 8:00 pm
"Snowy Owls: The Ultimate Nomads,"
Dr. Jean-Francoise Therrien
- Sunday, Oct. 18 10:00 am
Fall birding on Sandy Hook; meet in old Visitor Center parking lot
- Wednesday, Nov. 11 8:00 pm
"The Physics of Flight," Tom Reider
- Saturday, Nov. 14 8:00 am
Bird banding demonstration on Sandy Hook; meet in fisherman's pavilion marking lot (lot M)
- Saturday, Dec. 5 10:00 am
Late fall birding on Sandy Hook; meet in old Visitor Center parking lot
- Wednesday, Dec. 9 8:00 pm
"When Good Birds Go Bad: Human/Bird Conflict in Residential Landscapes," Rob Fergus, Ph.D.

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