

# the osprey

Monmouth County Audubon Society

[www.monmouthaudubon.org](http://www.monmouthaudubon.org)

Over **50 Years** of Birds and Conservation

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## ► *Far Afield: Cornell Lab of Ornithology*

by Lisa Ann Fanning.

Nestled in a cleverly named location called Sapsucker Woods, just outside of Ithaca, NY, is a gem of a place for anyone even remotely interested in birds. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology houses collections of books, artwork, sound clips and other media related to all things avian. This birder recently got to visit the Lab and can't wait until her return.

Many of you have heard of it, or use their Merlin app, are familiar with eBird, or perhaps you've participated in Project FeederWatch or watched one or two of their Nest Cams. But what exactly is the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (CLO)?

The CLO is a non-profit organization which focuses on research, education, citizen science, technology and conservation. They have existed for over 100 years. They staff 250 employees, including 50 scientists and educators, 7 of which have faculty positions at Cornell University. Their mission statement is simple, "To interpret and conserve the earth's biological diversity through research, education, and citizen science focused on birds."

They are most known for their website, eBird ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)). Each day, bird watchers report tens of thousands of bird observations to citizen-science projects at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, contributing to the world's most dynamic and powerful source of information on birds.

The website is interactive, in that not only can birders contribute their own sightings to the database, they can also benefit from being able to query the website. For example, if a birder is interested in learning where in Monmouth County Bobolinks can be seen, they can query the site and learn about locations, with arrival and departure dates. Maps and histograms make the site easy to use to learn about favorite birds.

We visited the CLO on a recent road trip to Upstate New York and really enjoyed our time there. The first thing that stands out about the Lab is its openness. Visitors are greeted by trail signs and a wonderful welcome center, housing their collections. Floor to ceiling windows overlook a great bird feeding station and a pond and swampy area, which is just a fraction of its 230-acre sanctuary. Visitors are encouraged to borrow binoculars, and scopes are provided on wheels for use in the visitor center viewing area. Guided walks are also given on a regular basis.

Housed at the CLO is a library of artifacts that is easy to get lost in. The Macaul-



Entrance to the Imogene Powers Johnson Center for Birds and Biodiversity at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.



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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**

Former MCAS president **Bob Henschel** recently received a ceremonial resolution from the New Jersey State Assembly for his 50 years of dedication to the community as an officer of the Monmouth County Audubon Society. Bob has been president of this organization for countless terms, has led field trips and given programs, and devoted his private and professional life to sharing his folksy sense of humor and love of the outdoors with his neighbors in Monmouth County. Bob, on behalf of the members and officers of the Monmouth County Audubon Society - thank you!

A **Common Raven** spent part of the summer of 2016 at the Atlantic Highlands Municipal Harbor - and the



Two River Times

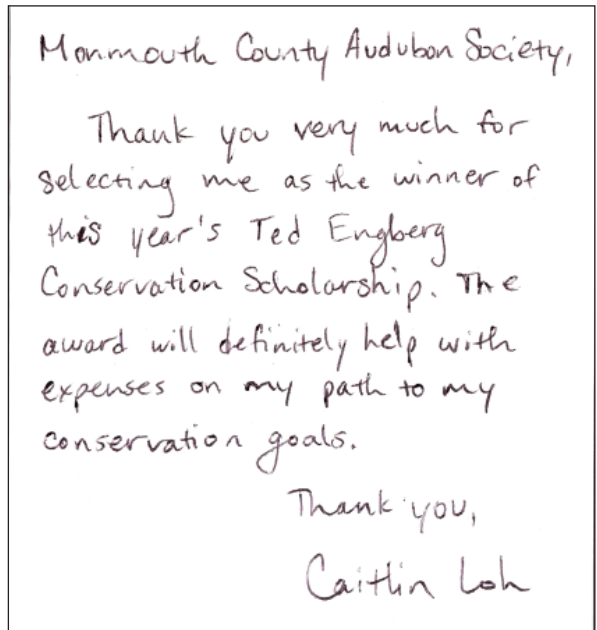
neighbors couldn't be happier about it. The unusual visitor was first reported in late July perched atop a sailboat mast. Locals knew immediately it wasn't a crow because of its much larger size and distinctive squawk. Regulars at the marina came to look for the bird, which was friendly and even took Cheez Doodles from the hand of one of the locals, according to the Two River Times.

Common Ravens are becoming more common in New Jersey and appear to be expanding their range. A pair of ravens was seen on Sandy Hook this spring exhibiting courtship behavior, according to MCAS president Colette Buchanan.

Happy ending... The piping plover pair nesting on the beach in **Island Beach State Park** successfully fledged two chicks. This was the first ocean-side nest in more than 25 years and the first in the park in more than a decade. While we're at it, we have another happy ending to report. A pair of **Mississippi Kites** bred and fledged young from a nest in Waretown. This is the first confirmed breeding in New Jersey for this Southern species. They breed regularly as far north as North Carolina, but rare nests have been found as far north as New Hampshire.



MCAS president Colette Buchanan presents Bob Henschel with an official Resolution from the NJ State Assembly for his service with MCAS.



Another happy winner... Thank you note recently received from 2016 scholarship recipient **Caitlin Loh** of Middletown.

by Harden Fowler

## ➤ Nesting Shorebirds at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park, 2016 Summary

Michael Milicia / Audubon



Hoping for the return of nesting shorebirds at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park, Monmouth County park rangers and volunteer shorebird monitors roped off and marked the expected nesting areas with signs before the end of April. In May Todd Pover, Conserve Wildlife Foundation New Jersey trained the volunteers, and we had our first arrivals... a growing colony of Least Terns, a pair of American Oystercatchers and a pair of Piping Plovers checking for the "perfect" spot for their nest in the south area, a mere scrape in the sand.

With the arrival of Memorial Day, the shorebird monitors started shifts on the beach and began setting up their "educational buffer" to explain to beach users why no one is allowed inside the nesting area. Thanks to their efforts, the simple statement "there are baby birds in that area" was enough to make most visitors cooperative.

By the end of the nesting season in August the dedicated shorebird monitor crew had logged over 950 hours protecting the shorebirds at Seven Presidents Park.

Once established, the shorebirds tended their nests for a month, and chicks began to appear throughout the area. By June a large colony of Least Terns, a pair of Piping Plovers, and a pair of American Oystercatchers had all established nests. The Least Terns ended up with over five dozen chicks fledging, and the Piping Plovers had two chicks fledging. By August the fledges were ready to begin their winter migration to warmer southern areas with their parents. The only disappointment was the Oystercatcher nests were destroyed by night time fox or raccoon predation, so they had no chicks fledge.

Overall, with the help of CWFNJ monitors and park staff, the season was very successful. Monitors were a big part of helping the shorebirds to nest, raise chicks and migrate. Since 2009 I have been letting you know "this is a very rewarding way to spend the summer" and hope you will join us next spring at the training for Seven Presidents shorebird monitors.

## ➤ Cornell Lab (continued)

ay Library houses a collection of over 100,000 audio, video and photographic files. Parts of the Macaulay Library can be accessed online and also utilizes files contributed by citizen scientists like us via the eBird portal. The Adleson Library (open weekdays) has a collection of over 14,000 volumes primarily on ornithology and related subjects such as biology, conservation and wildlife management.

Their astounding collection of art contains over 1,000 pieces, many of which were created by Louis Aggasiz Fuertes, John James Audubon, Alexander Wilson and others. The aim of the collection is to highlight "work by artists who strove to depict birds accurately through scientific observation and illustration, while also conveying the beauty and wonder of birds."

The centerpiece is a 40-foot high, 3,000 square foot volume mural, entitled "From So Simple a Beginning" which aims to convey the evolutionary history of birds and pay homage to the 10,000 species of birds that exist today. The mural, created by artist Jane Kim, depicts notable bird species standing on a world map. Each bird is life-sized. The mural took over a year to complete, and is accompanied by an interactive touch screen where users are invited to click on the image and learn about the species. Visit <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/wallofbirds/> for more information or to explore the interactive feature.

For more information on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology or to learn how you can visit, go to [birds.cornell.edu](http://birds.cornell.edu).



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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.

**C6ZQ040Z**

**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**

- Wednesday, Oct. 12 8:00 pm  
"NJ Bald Eagle Project," Robert  
Somes, NJ Div. of Fish & Wildlife
- Saturday, Oct. 15 10:00 am  
**Fall birding on Sandy Hook;** meet  
in old Visitor Center parking lot
- Wednesday, Nov. 9 8:00 pm  
"Yellowstone: Land of Fire and  
Water," George Nixon
- Saturday, Nov. 12 8:00 am  
**Bird Banding at Sandy Hook;** meet  
at banding station, Lot M
- Saturday, Dec. 10 10:00 am  
**Late fall birding on Sandy Hook;**  
meet in old Visitor Center parking  
lot
- Wednesday, Dec. 14 8:00 pm  
"Birding by Impression," Kevin  
Karlson and Dale Rosselet

\* 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 open to the public, and refreshments are served.