

Cape May and Delaware, September 16-26th 2010

Participants

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General

This trip report contains the bird observations made during a visit to mainly the Cape May area in New Jersey in September 2010. As we both consider ourselves as regulars at Falsterbo, one of the top sites for watching diurnal migration of raptors and passerines in Europe, we wanted to get the experience of visiting one of the counterpart localities on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. The trip was therefore focused on seeing as many birds as possible, especially wood warblers, during peak migration time.

As heavy migration normally is triggered by certain weather conditions, during autumn normally connected to the passage of cold fronts, we were a bit unlucky as we experienced mainly very warm and stable (and pleasant by all means) conditions most part of our stay, with record temperatures for New Jersey for the month of September exceeding +32° C the last days. Nevertheless we found Cape May to be a very nice and very convenient place to visit, with plenty of accommodation possibilities (see below though) and a variety of restaurants and other places for meals, and of course a lot of interesting birds.

Also, one thing that was evident, was the very relaxed atmosphere among the birders present, were everybody – even the professional migration counters – were very helpful by providing information about recent observations, good spots for interesting species etc.



Left: On Nummy's Island, right: Monarch

Travel

We bought our flights with Delta Airlines from Copenhagen non-stop to JFK Airport in New York from Nätresebyrå in Malmö. The tickets cost 5.070 SEK/person (app. 550 Euro) including taxes and fees.

When travelling to the US, do not forget to get your travel authorization through the ESTA Visa waiver program!

Car rental, roads and traffic

We rented a Class D car from Budget and got a Toyota Camry which cost us 3.485 SEK for 9 days including unlimited mileage, CDW, Liability Insurance, airport fees and taxes. We drove totally 886 miles. The outbound flight was a bit adventurous (see Itinerary below) but the return leg was pleasantly uneventful.

Driving from JFK to Cape May means passing through the southern parts of NYC, including parts of Brooklyn, Staten Island and over the Outer Bridge into New Jersey. Traffic in New York is quite heavy, especially during rush hours, and there are plenty of opportunities to miss a turn-off and go wrong. Therefore to rent a GPS might be a good idea, but we took our chances and actually made it without big problems by only using printed maps from www.maps.google.com. Once you have made it out on the Garden State Parkway it should be no problem, however.

In New York some parts of the road and some bridges are toll roads. The total cost (one-way) was about 20 USD which was divided in payment in several toll stations (0,35-11 USD each) where passing the Verrazano bridge was most expensive with 11 USD. It is therefore a good idea to have some small bills and coins available.

Accommodation

As the Cape May area is a major summer holiday resort there is plenty of accommodation to choose from, in a variety of cost levels. Please note however that during the main birding season, in September, Cape May is still very popular for weekend breaks for the numerous New York inhabitants and that these weekends often are heavily booked. The first weekend of our stay, on top of this, there was also a convention of the firemen of New Jersey held in Wildwood, which gave us some problems when booking quite late (during August), and we therefore had to split up our stay between two different hotels. Both hotels were booked via the web.

Sept 17-19: **Pier 1660 Hotel**, 9701 Atlantic Ave, Wildwood Crest, NJ 8260, www.pier6600motel.com 175 USD per night. Quite basic beach hotel. Very friendly staff though.

Sept 19-24: **The Camelot Motel**, 103 Howard Street, Cape May, NJ 8204, www.capemaycamelot.com 113 USD per night. Nice and comfortable hotel in the center of Cape May. Room equipped with refrigerator and coffee pot. Recommended.

We also had a booking for our first night in New York, at the International JFK Airport Hotel (ex. Holiday Inn JFK) which due to the delay of our flight was not used.

Literature, maps, trip reports and websites

We used the **David Sibley's "The North American Bird Guide"** for identification purposes. Another book that gives good information about birding in New Jersey is **"A Guide to Bird Finding in New Jersey"** by **William J. Boyle**. The only maps that we used actually were the maps that can be downloaded at <http://www.birdcapemay.org/downloads/capemaycountycmbomap.pdf> and <http://www.birdcapemay.org/downloads/capeislandcmbomap2008.pdf> respectively. More detailed maps are easily found e.g. in petrol stations etc.

A good selection of birding trip reports is found at www.travellingbirder.com/tripreports/default.php

Itinerary

Thursday September 16th – Friday September 17th

The start was really bad! When we arrived to Copenhagen Airport, the monitors said that our flight was cancelled due to technical problems of the aircraft and we had to join a long line of people waiting for re-booking. After a some time we were however re-scheduled to travel with SAS to London-Heathrow, where a connecting flight with American Airlines would bring us to JFK six hours later than originally expected – not too bad actually! It all went well until just about 30 minutes before landing in New York when the captain suddenly announced that the JFK airport had to close down due to a heavy storm and that we instead had to go to Boston for re-fuelling and to await further instructions. Once down on the ground in Boston the captain once more had bad news: during landing the aircraft had been hit by the lightning and had to be taken out of service for inspection... After queuing for two more hours (now 2 am local time) we were re-booked a second time, on the first morning flight with JetBlue Airlines at 6 AM. When finally seated on-board and rolling out on the runway, slightly delayed, again an announcement was made, that there were some technical problems also with this aircraft and that the crew had to consult some technicians and shut down the power of the aircraft completely. Now very tired, we hardly could believe our ears as it seemed like we never would get to JFK. But finally everything was ok again and off we went. After landing at 07:30 AM, 14 hours delayed, everything went swiftly and at 09:00 we finally arrived to the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge and could start birding, with a minimum loss of birding time (but with quite some loss of sleep).

We birded the area until lunchtime and birds seen included **American White Pelican**, **American Bittern**, **Stilt Sandpiper** as well as the only **Ruddy Duck** and **Cattle Egrets** of the trip. The afternoon was spent travelling to Wildwoods, just north of Cape May, where we arrived at 18 PM and, after some shopping and a quick meal, we crashed into bed, completely exhausted after more than 40 hours with hardly any sleep.

Saturday September 18th

Started birding at the famous Higbee “Dike” at dawn (06:15). Clear sky, light northerly winds and a bit chilly air resulted in a quite good migration; 31 **Ospreys**, 80 **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, a few flocks of **Cedar Waxwings** and at least 6 **Red-breasted Nuthatches** flew by, as well as a number of wood-warblers. These gave us some identification challenges, as they were mainly seen in flight only. Other passerines included **Brown Creeper** and **Blue Grosbeak**.

Late morning we spent walking the Higbee fields, seeing **White-eyed Vireo**, before continuing to the Hawk watch at Cape May Point and the adjacent area of the Cape May State Park. Quite a few raptors on the move and other highlights were a **Least Bittern**, showing very well in the Lighthouse Pond, a number of **Wood Ducks**, 4 long staying **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks**, 3 **Soras** as well as **Prairie**, **Blackburnian**, **Magnolia**, **Black and White**, **Palm** and **Yellow Warblers**. Very noticeable were also thousands of migrating **Monarch butterflies** flying around everywhere.

Last stop for the day was made at the 2nd Avenue Jetty where a flock of 325 **Black Skimmers** were roosting on the beach.



Sharp-shinned Hawk and Bald Eagle (top), Northern Harrier and Peregrine (below)

Sunday September 19th

Again we started at The Dike where the migration this morning was considerably slower than during the day before. Most evident was again the incredible numbers of migrating **Monarch butterflies**, which during the peak passage were counted at a pace of 350 per minute! After a quick visit to Sunset Beach, where a 2nd year male **King Eider** was present since several months, our next stop was made at Lily Lake where the Cedar trees fringing the lake close to the Cape May Bird Observatory Information Center contained a good variety of wood warblers, among others **Blackpoll** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. Suddenly we were interrupted by the information that a **Hudsonian Godwit** had been found at Bunker Pond at Cape May point, which made us go there promptly to see this local rarity.

After this, the rest of the day was spent at Nummy's Island and Stone Harbor watching shorebirds, where **Tricolored Heron**, **Willet**, **Marbled Godwit** and our target species, **Piping Plover**, were found.

Monday September 20th

Early morning again was spent at The Dike. Quite strong wind made it difficult to get a grip of the birds but a few new species were seen, among other **Purple Finch**. The Higbee fields provided some sheltered areas and birds seen there included **Chestnut-sided Warbler**, **Canada Warbler** and **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**. After a quick stop at Lily Lake, producing a **Solitary Sandpiper**, we again went to Nummy's Island. New birds here were **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** and the only **Little Blue Heron** of the trip. Late afternoon was spent at Lily Lake, with good views of several wood warblers but otherwise nothing special.

Tuesday September 21st

As usual, we started at The Dike and this morning the wind had calmed down again, creating good migration conditions. Numerous wood warblers flew by, with a bulk of **Palm Warblers**, and other species included numerous **Northern Flickers**, **Eastern Wood-Pewee**, **Blue-headed Vireo**, **Black-throated Green Warbler**, **Red-breasted Grosbeak**, **Scarlet Tanager** and **Dark-eyed Junco**. A quick visit was made to the parking lot at Higbee Fields where a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** had been found and later on two **Common Nighthawks** were hunting over the area in broad daylight. After a quick stop at Lily Lake we went looking for saltmarsh sparrows, visiting the grassy marshes around Two Mile Landing and Shell Bay Landing. Though we checked a lot of suitable habitat the result was quite poor; only a single **Seaside Sparrow** was found. Other birds seen in this habitat was a **Clapper Rail** as well as a number of **Boat-tailed Grackles**.

Wednesday September 22nd

As the weather forecast predicted fair southwesterly winds, which normally are not so productive for passerine migration, we instead went to Avalon for a seawatch. Not very much movement this early in the season, but 8 **Black Scoters** and a number of **Gannets** flew by. After this we went to the Belleplain State Forest we stayed until the afternoon. Highlights here were a number of **Pine Warblers** as well as a very nice male **Summer Tanager**. From here we went back south in order to continue our search for saltmarsh sparrows and now our pishing paid off with one each of **Seaside Sparrow** and **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** at Jakes Landing Road and finally also a **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow** at Shell Bay Landing. In the evening we took a walk at the Cape May Meadows where a single **Stilt Sandpiper** was the most interesting bird found.

Thursday September 23rd

This day was devoted to a visit to Delaware and we took the ferry from Cape May to Lewes, leaving at 07:30 (86 USD for a return trip including the car). A few **Gannets** were seen during the 80 minutes long crossing and upon arrival we went directly to the Cape Henlopen State Park close by. After some searching we found our target species, **Brown-headed Nuthatch**, visiting a feeder at the Seaside Nature Centre. Other birds seen included **White-eyed Vireo**, **Pine Warbler** and **Spotted Creeper**.

At noon we drove to Bombay Hook (75 minutes drive), which was a very interesting area with large numbers of shorebirds, e.g. c.800 **American Avocets**, numerous **Semipalmated** and **Western Sandpipers**, 5 **Marbled Godwits**, 4 **Pectoral Sandpipers** as well as a single **Snow Goose**.



On some fields along the entrance road a small flock of **Horned Larks** was found and while driving back to Lewes large numbers of **Brown-headed Cowbirds**, a species which seemed to be absent on the New Jersey side this year, were seen. We took the return ferry at 18:15 and were back in Cape May at 19:40.

Friday September 24th

Our last morning in Cape May of course started at The Dike. The weather was very warm and humid with some mist and rather poor visibility, not the best weather for migration. We soon left for a final walk in the Higbee Fields which paid off with 2 **Bay-breasted Warblers**. After this we drove north and spent a few hours at the extensive wetlands at Brigantine, close to Atlantic City. Large numbers of ducks and shorebirds but also very hot which affected the activity of both the birds and ourselves. Additions to the trip list were a flock of **American Golden Plovers** as well as a few **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** roosting on some dried out mudflats. After this we went to the Atlantic Highlands visiting relatives of Kristian.

Saturday September 25th

The morning was spent at Sandy Hook and though the weather still was very warm, quite a few birds were on the move. We walked the northern parts of this interesting area and added three more species to our trip list; **Black-capped Chickadee**, **Eastern Towhee** and **White-throated Sparrow**.

After lunch we drove to JFK, where everything went smooth and we took off on time, at 19:00 hrs

Sunday September 26th

Landed in Copenhagen half an hour ahead of schedule and were back at home at 10:00 local time.

List of species

Following the ABA Checklist, version 7.0 – 12/08.

1. **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** – *Dendrocygna autumnalis*
4 long staying individuals Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 18.9.
2. **Snow Goose** – *Chen caerulescens*
1 Bombay Hook 23.9, 1 Brigantine 24.9.
3. **Canada Goose** – *Branta canadensis*
Common. Daily observations of 5-200 individuals 17-25.9.
4. **Mute Swan** – *Cygnus olor*
Common. Totally 90 birds recorded during seven days 17-24.9.
5. **Wood Duck** – *Aix sponsa*
3 males, 1 female Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 18.9, 5 males, 1 female Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 20.9, 5 males Lily Lake 21.9.



6. **Gadwall** – *Anas strepera*
9 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 20 Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 18.9, 3 Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 20.9.
7. **American Wigeon** – *Anas americana*
10 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 20 Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 18.9, 5 Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 20.9.
8. **American Black Duck** – *Anas rubripes*
30 Jamaica Bay 17.9, 35 Bombay Hook 23.9, c.700 Brigantine 24.9.
9. **Mallard** – *Anas platyrhynchos*
Common. Recorded daily 17-24.9.
10. **Blue-winged Teal** – *Anas discors*
15 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.7, 30 Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 18.9, 20 Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 20.9, 5 Lily Lake 21.9, 5 The Meadows, Cape May 22.9, 8 Bombay Hook 23.9, 10 Brigantine 24.9.
11. **Northern Shoveler** – *Anas clypeata*
40 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 5 Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 18.9, 2 Bunker Pond, Cape May Point 19.9, 15 The Meadows, Cape May 22.9, 20 Bombay Hook 23.9, 20 Brigantine 24.9.
12. **Northern Pintail** – *Anas acuta*
4 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 10 Avalon 22.9, 20 Bombay Hook 23.9, c.500 Brigantine 24.9.
13. **Green-winged Teal** – *Anas carolinensis*
Common. Daily observations of 10-500 birds 17-24.9. Highest count: c.500 Brigantine 24.9.
14. **King Eider** – *Somateria spectabilis*
1 2nd year male at the Concrete Ship, Cape May Point 19.9. A long staying individual.
15. **Black Scoter** – *Melanitta americana*
4 at sea off Beach Avenue, Cape May 18.9, 1 from The Dike, Higbee 19.9, 8 Avalon 22.9.
16. **Ruddy Duck** – *Oxyura jamaicensis*
1 male Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9 was the only observation.
17. **Great Northern Diver** – *Gavia immer*
1 flying south at The Dike, Higbee 18.9.
18. **Pied-billed Grebe** – *Podilymbus podiceps*
4 Jamaica Bay 17.9, 1 Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 18.9, 1 Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 20.9, 1 The Meadows, Cape May 22.9.
19. **Northern Gannet** – *Morus bassanus*
1 adult Stone Harbor 19.9, 6 Avalon 22.9, 8 during the ferry crossing to Lewes, Delaware 23.9.
20. **American White Pelican** – *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*
1 adult Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9.
21. **Brown Pelican** – *Pelecanus occidentalis*
3 Stone Harbor 19.9, 2 Lewes Harbor, Delaware 23.9.
22. **Double-crested Cormorant** – *Phalacrocorax auritus*
Common. Totally 585 birds recorded 17-25.9. Highest count: 200 Brigantine 24.9.

23. **American Bittern** – *Botaurus lentiginosus*
1 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9. Only seen briefly in flight.
24. **Least Bittern** – *Ixobrychus exilis*
1 juvenile seen very well at the Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 18.9.



25. **Great Blue Heron** – *Ardea herodias*
Rather common. Totally 46 birds recorded 17-24.9.
26. **Great Egret** – *Egretta alba*
Common. Daily numbers varied from 3-75 birds. Highest count: 75 Brigantine 24.9.
27. **Snowy Egret** – *Egretta thula*
Common. Daily numbers varied from 5-100 birds. Highest counts: c.100 Bombay Hook 23.9 and c.100 Brigantine 24.9.
28. **Little Blue Heron** – *Egretta caerulea*
1 Nummy's Island 20.9 was the only observation.
29. **Tricolored Heron** – *Egretta tricolor*
2 Nummy's Island 19.9, 6 Nummy's Island 20.9, 2 Nummy's Island 22.9.
30. **Cattle Egret** – *Bubulcus ibis*
5 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9.
31. **Green Heron** – *Butorides virescens*
1 Lily Lake 20.9, 1 Nummy's Island 20.9, 2 Two Mile Landing 21.9, 1 Nummy's Island 22.9, 1 Two Mile Landing 22.9.
32. **Black-crowned Night-Heron** – *Nycticorax nycticorax*
8 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 1 Nummy's Island 19.9, 9 Nummy's Island 20.9, 3 Nummy's Island 22.9, 3 Brigantine 24.9.
33. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** – *Nyctanassa violacea*
11 Nummy's Island 20.9, 2 Nummy's Island 22.9.
34. **Glossy Ibis** – *Plegadis falcinellus*
21 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 3 Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 18.9.

35. **Black Vulture** – *Coragyps atratus*
Totally 25 birds recorded as follows: 5 Cape May Point Hawk Watch 18.9, 1 Lily Lake 19.9, 4 the Meadows, Cape May 20.9, 5 Higbee Fields 21.9, 10 Delaware 23.9.
36. **Turkey Vulture** – *Cathartes aura*
Common. Totally 290 birds recorded 17-25.9. Highest count c.100 north of Lewes, Delaware 23.9.
37. **Osprey** – *Pandion haliaetus*
Common. Totally 147 birds recorded 17-25.9. Highest count of migrating birds was 31 at The Dike, Higbee 18.9. The official figure from the Cape May Point Hawk Watch that day was 122 birds.
38. **Bald Eagle** – *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
Totally 23 birds recorded as follows: 1 New York 17.9, 3 The Dike, Higbee 18.9, 11 Cape May Point Hawk Watch 18.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 21.9, 2 Higbee Fields 21.9, 1 Jakes Landing 22.9, 1 Shell Bay Landing 22.9, 2 Bombay Hook 23.9, 1 Brigantine 24.9.
39. **Northern Harrier** – *Circus cyaneus hudsonicus*
Rather common. Totally 40 birds recorded 17-24.9, almost entirely 1st year birds. Highest count: 9 Cape May Point Hawk Watch 18.9.
40. **Sharp-shinned Hawk** – *Accipiter striatus*
Common. Totally 275 birds recorded 18-25.9. Highest count: 80 The Dike, Higbee 18.9.
41. **Cooper's Hawk** – *Accipiter cooperii*
Rather common. Totally 20 birds recorded 18-24.9. Probably often overlooked among the Sharp-shinned.
42. **Broad-winged Hawk** – *Buteo platypterus*
c.50 Cape May Point Hawk Watch 18.9, 1 Higbee Fields 20.9, 1 Lily Lake 24.9.
43. **Red-tailed Hawk** – *Buteo jamaicensis*
4 Cape May Point Hawk Watch 18.9, 1 Higbee Fields 20.9, 1 Jakes Landing 22.9.
44. **American Kestrel** – *Falco sparverius*
Rather common. Totally 17 birds recorded 17-21.9.
45. **Merlin** – *Falco columbarius*
Rather common. Totally 27 birds recorded 17-25.9.
46. **Peregrine Falcon** – *Falco peregrinus*
3 Cape May Point Hawk Watch 18.9, 2 first year birds The Dike, Higbee 21.9, 1 first year Higbee Fields 21.9, 1 adult and 2 first year birds Brigantine 24.9.
47. **Clapper Rail** – *Rallus longirostris*
1 Shell Bay Landing 21.9, 2 Two Mile Landing 21.9, 1 Jake's Landing Road 22.9, 1 Shell Bay Landing 22.9, 1 Brigantine 24.9.
48. **Sora** – *Porzana carolina*
1 adult and 2 first year birds Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 18.9.
49. **Black-bellied Plover** – *Pluvialis squatarola*
Common. Totally 415 birds recorded 17-24.9. Highest count: c.100 Nummy's Island 19.9.
50. **American Golden Plover** – *Pluvialis dominica*
11 Brigantine 24.9.

51. **Semipalmated Plover** – *Charadrius semipalmatus*
 17 Stone Harbor 19.9, 5 Nummy’s Island 20.9, 3 Avalon 22.9, 7 Nummy’s Island 22.9,
 2 Bombay Hook 23.9, 5 Brigantine 24.9.
52. **Piping Plover** – *Charadrius melodus*
 14 Stone Harbor 19.9.



53. **Killdeer** – *Charadrius vociferus*
 2 Cape May Point State Park 18.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 19.9, 1 Bunker Pond, Cape May Point
 19.9, 10 The Dike, Higbee 20.9, 5 The Dike, Higbee 21.9, 3 Two Mile Landing 21.9, 6 Lewes
 23.9.
54. **American Oystercatcher** – *Haematopus palliatus*
 35 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 1 Cape May Point 18.9, 112 Nummy’s Island 19.9,
 25 Nummy’s Island 20.9, 158 Nummy’s Island 22.9.
55. **American Avocet** – *Recurvirostra americana*
 c.800 Bombay Hook 23.9.
56. **Spotted Sandpiper** – *Actitis macularius*
 1 Two Mile Landing 21.9, 1 Nummy’s Island 22.9, 1 Bombay Hook 23.9.
57. **Solitary Sandpiper** – *Tringa solitaria*
 1 Lily Lake 19-20.9.
58. **Greater Yellowlegs** – *Tringa melanoleuca*
 Common. Approximately 315 birds recorded 17-24.9. Highest count: 150 Bombay Hook
 23.9.
59. **Willet** – *Tringa semipalmata*
 6 Nummy’s Island 19.9.
60. **Lesser Yellowlegs** – *Tringa flavipes*
 Common but generally seen in lower numbers than Greater Yellowlegs. Totally 59 birds
 recorded 17-24.9. Highest count: c.30 Bombay Hook 23.9.
61. **Whimbrel** – *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*
 1 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 2 Nummy’s Island 9.9.

62. **Hudsonian Godwit** – *Limosa haemastica*
1 Bunker Pond, Cape May Point 19.9, 1 Brigantine 24.9.



63. **Marbled Godwit** – *Limosa fedoa*
3 Nummy's Island 19.9, 4 Bombay Hook 23.9.
64. **Ruddy Turnstone** – *Arenaria interpres*
2 Sunset Beach 19.9, 20 Nummy's Island 19.9, 3 Stone Harbor 19.9, 25 Stone Harbor 20.9,
5 Nummy's Island 20.9, 20 Nummy's Island 22.9.
65. **Red Knot** – *Calidris canutus*
c.300 Nummy's Island 19.9, 16 Nummy's Island 20.9, c.100 Nummy's Island 22.9.
66. **Sanderling** – *Calidris alba*
Common. Highest count: c.1000 Stone Harbor 20.9.
67. **Semipalmated Sandpiper** – *Calidris pusilla*
c. 50 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 1 Bunker Pond, Cape May Point 19.9, c. 800 Bombay
Hook 23.9, c.300 Brigantine 24.9.
68. **Western Sandpiper** – *Calidris mauri*
4 Stone Harbor 19.9, c.50 Stone Harbor 20.9, c.150 Bombay Hook 23.9.
69. **Least Sandpiper** – *Calidris minutilla*
1 Bunker Pond, Cape May Point 19.9, 1 Shell Bay Landing 21.9. A poor result, but probably
overlooked.
70. **Pectoral Sandpiper** – *Calidris melanotos*
4 Bombay Hook 23.9, 1 Brigantine 24.9.
71. **Dunlin** – *Calidris alpina*
4 Stone Harbor 20.9, 4 Bombay Hook 23.9, 2 Brigantine 24.9.
72. **Stilt Sandpiper** – *Calidris himantopus*
2 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 1 Cape May Meadows 22.9.
73. **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** – *Tryngites subruficollis*
4 Brigantine 24.9.

74. **Short-billed Dowitcher** – *Limnodromus griseus*
10 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 5 Nummy’s Island 20.9, c.100 Bombay Hook 23.9, 50 Brigantine 24.9. Also, several unidentified dowitchers were seen too.
75. **Long-billed Dowitcher** – *Limnodromus scolopaceus*
2 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 1 Bunker Pond, Cape May Point 18.9, 10 Bombay Hook 23.9.
76. **Laughing Gull** – *Larus atricilla*
Very common. Recorded daily 17-25.9.
77. **Ring-billed Gull** – *Larus delawarensis*
Recorded in moderate numbers, totally c.100 birds 17-22.9.
78. **Herring Gull** – *Larus argentatus smithsonianus*
Common. Recorded daily 17-25.9.
79. **Great Black-backed Gull** – *Larus marinus*
Common. Recorded daily 17-25.9.
80. **Caspian Tern** – *Hydroprogne caspia*
Rather common. Totally 90 birds recorded 18-24.9. Highest count: 23 Stone Harbor 19.9.
81. **Common Tern** – *Sterna hirundo*
Small numbers along the coast. Totally 17 birds recorded 17-23.9.
82. **Forster’s Tern** – *Sterna forsteri*
Common. Daily numbers varied from 5-120 birds 17-24.9. Highest count: 120 Brigantine 24.9.
83. **Royal Tern** – *Thalasseus maximus*
Common along the coast. Totally 97 birds recorded 18-25.9.
84. **Black Skimmer** – *Rynchops niger*
A flock of c.325 roosting on the beach at 2nd Avenue Jetty, Cape May 18.9. Otherwise only small numbers recorded: 2 Stone Harbor 19.9, 1 Nummy’s Island 22.9, 4 The Meadows, Cape May 24.9.



85. **Feral Pigeon** – *Columba livia (domest.)*
Common. Recorded daily 17-25.9.

86. **Mourning Dove** – *Zenaida macroura*
Common. Daily numbers varied between 10-40 birds 17-25.9.
87. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** – *Coccyzus americanus*
1 Higbee Fields 21.9.
88. **Common Nighthawk** – *Chordeiles minor*
2 Higbee fields 21.9.
89. **Chimney Swift** – *Chaetura pelagica*
Totally 22 birds recorded: 2 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 2 Cape May Point Hawkwatch 18.9, 4 The Dike, Higbee 19.9, 1 Lighthouse Pond, Cape May Point 20.9, 2 Cape May Lewes Ferry Terminal 23.9, 2 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9, 6 Leipsic 23.9, 3 Sandy Hook 25.9.
90. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** – *Archilochus colubris*
1 The Dike, Higbee 18.9 was the only observation.
91. **Belted Kingfisher** – *Megaceryle alcyon*
Rather common. Totally 16 birds recorded 18-24.9.
92. **Red-bellied Woodpecker** – *Melanerpes carolinus*
1 The Dike, Higbee 19.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 21.9, 2 Belleplain State Forest 22.9, 1 Higbee 24.9.
93. **Downy Woodpecker** – *Picoides pubescens*
1 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 1 male The Dike, Higbee 18.9, 1 female The Dike, Higbee 19.9, 2 Higbee Fields 21.9, 1 Belleplain State Forest 22.9, 1 Sandy Hook 25.9.
94. **Northern Flicker** – *Colaptes auratus*
Common. Daily figures of 1-15 birds recorded 17-25.9 with the exception of 21.9 when at least 100 birds flew by at The Dike, Higbee. The official count this morning was 340 birds.
95. **Eastern Wood-Pewee** – *Contopus virens*
2 The Dike, Higbee 18.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 21.9.
96. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** – *Empidonax flaviventris*
1 Higbee Fields 20.9.
97. **Eastern Phoebe** – *Sayornis phoebe*
1 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 21.9, 1 Higbee Fields 24.9.
98. **Eastern Kingbird** – *Tyrannus tyrannus*
1 The Dike, Higbee 18.9 and 19.9, 1 Nummy's Island 20.9 and 22.9.
99. **White-eyed Vireo** – *Vireo griseus*
2 Higbee Fields 18.9, 1 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9, 1 Higbee Fields 24.9.
100. **Blue-headed Vireo** – *Vireo solitarius*
1 The Dike, Higbee 21.9.
101. **Red-eyed Vireo** – *Vireo olivaceus*
Rather common. Totally 30 birds recorded 18-24.9.
102. **Blue Jay** – *Cyanocitta cristata*
Common. Daily numbers varied between 5-20 birds 17-25.9.
103. **American Crow** – *Corvus brachyrhynchos*
Common. Daily numbers varied between 1-25 birds 17-25.9.
104. **Fish Crow** – *Corvus ossifragus*
1 Cape May Point 18.9, 7 Sunset Beach, Cape May 19.9, 3 Bunker Pond, Cape May Point 19.9, 10 Lily Lake 20.9, 5 Cape May 21.9.

105. **Horned Lark** – *Eremophila alpestris*
3 on corn stubble along the entrance road to Bombay Hook 23.9.
106. **Tree Swallow** – *Tachycineta bicolor*
Common. Daily numbers varied between 30-2000 birds 17-25.9.
107. **Carolina Chickadee** – *Poecile carolinensis*
Rather common. Totally 38 birds recorded 18-24.9.
108. **Black-capped Chickadee** – *Poecile atricapillus*
2 Sandy Hook 25.9. According to “*A Guide to Bird Finding in New Jersey*” by William J. Boyle, Jr. “...the resident species at Sandy Hook is the Black-capped Chickadee, while the resident species on the nearby mainland at Highlands is the Carolina Chickadee.”
109. **Tufted Titmouse** – *Baeolophus bicolor*
4 Higbee Fields 20.9, 5 Higbee Fields 21.9, 5 Belleplain State Forest 22.9, 3 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9, 3 Sandy Hook 24.9.
110. **Red-breasted Nuthatch** – *Sitta canadensis*
Totally 28 birds, a good number of this irruptive species, were recorded 18-24.9. Highest count: 8 The Dike, Higbee 21.9.
111. **Brown-headed Nuthatch** – *Sitta pusilla*
3 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9.



112. **Brown Creeper** – *Certhia americana*
1 The Dike, Higbee 18.9, 1 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9.
113. **Carolina Wren** – *Thryothorus ludovicianus*
Rather common. Totally 32 birds recorded 17-25.9.
114. **House Wren** – *Troglodytes aedon*
2 Higbee Fields 20.9, 1 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9, 1 Atlantic Highlands 24.9.
115. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** – *Regulus calendula*
1 Cape May Point State Park 18.9, 1 Lily Lake 20.9 and 21.9, 1 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9.
116. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** – *Poliophtila caerulea*
Rather common. Totally 32 birds recorded 18-22.9.
117. **American Robin** – *Turdus migratorius*
Common. Totally 66 birds recorded 17-25.9. Highest count: c.25 Sandy Hook 24.9.

118. **Grey Catbird** – *Dumetella carolinensis*
Common. Daily numbers varied between 7-15 birds 17-25.9.
119. **Northern Mockingbird** – *Mimus polyglottos*
Common. Daily numbers varied between 2-15 birds 17-25.9.
120. **Brown Thrasher** – *Toxostoma rufum*
1 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 3 Higbee Fields 21.9, 1 Lily Lake 21.9, 3 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 24.9, 4 Higbee Fields 24.9, 4 Sandy Hook 25.9.
121. **Starling** – *Sturnus vulgaris*
Common. Recorded daily.
122. **Cedar Waxwing** – *Bombycilla cedrorum*
Migrating flocks recorded at The Dike, Higbee as follows: 90 18.9, 4 19.9, 140 20.9, 140 21.9.
123. **Northern Parula** – *Parula americana*
Rather common. Totally 27 birds recorded 19-24.9. Highest count: 7 The Dike, Higbee 20.9.
124. **Yellow Warbler** – *Dendroica petechia*
3 Cape May Point State Park 18.9, 2 Lily Lake 19.9, 1 Nummy's Island 20.9, 4 Lily Lake 20.9, 1 Lily Lake 21.9, 1 Two Mile Landing 22.9, 1 Nummy's Island 22.9, 1 Lily Lake 24.9.
125. **Chestnut-sided Warbler** – *Dendroica pensylvanica*
2 Higbee Fields 20.9, 1 Belleplain State Forest 22.9, 1 Higbee Fields 24.9.
126. **Magnolia Warbler** – *Dendroica magnolia*
1 Cape May Point State Park 18.9, 2 Lily Lake 19.9, 3 Lily Lake 20.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 21.9, 1 Higbee Fields 21.9, 3 Lily Lake 21.9, 3 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9, 1 Lily Lake 24.9.
127. **Black-throated Blue Warbler** – *Dendroica caerulescens*
1 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 2 The Dike, Higbee 20.9, 1 Higbee Fields 20.9, 1 Lily Lake 20.9, 6 The Dike, Higbee 21.9, 1 Belleplain State Forest 22.9.
128. **Yellow-rumped Warbler** – *Dendroica coronata*
1 Lily Lake 19.9, 3 Lily Lake 20.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 21.9, 1 Lily Lake 21.9, 2 Lily Lake 24.9.
129. **Black-throated Green Warbler** – *Dendroica virens*
1 Higbee Fields 20.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 21.9, 1 Belleplain State Forest 22.9.
130. **Blackburnian Warbler** – *Dendroica fusca*
1 Cape May Point State Park 18.9.
131. **Pine Warbler** – *Dendroica pinus*
c.10 Belleplain State Forest 22.9, 1 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9
132. **Prairie Warbler** – *Dendroica discolor*
1 Cape May Point State Park 18.9, 1 Cape May 19.9.
133. **Palm Warbler** – *Dendroica palmarum*
Rather common. 32 birds recorded 18-25.9.
134. **Bay-breasted Warbler** – *Dendroica castanea*
2 Higbee Fields 24.9.
135. **Blackpoll Warbler** – *Dendroica striata*
1 Lily Lake 19.9, 1 Lily Lake 20.9, 3 The Dike, Higbee 21.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 24.9.
136. **Black-and-white Warbler** – *Mniotilta varia*
Rather common. Totally 38 birds recorded 17-24.9. Highest count: 7 The Dike, Higbee 20.9.



Wood warblers. From top left; Palm, Magnolia, Black and White, Black-headed Blue, Yellow and Bay-breasted Warblers

- 137. **American Redstart** – *Setophaga ruticilla*
Common. Totally 82 birds recorded 18-25.9.
- 138. **Northern Waterthrush** – *Seiurus noveboracensis*
1 The Dike, Higbee 18.9, 2 The Dike, Higbee 19.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 20.9, 2 The Dike, Higbee 21.9.
- 139. **Common Yellowthroat** – *Geothlypis trichas*
Rather common. Totally 23 birds recorded 18-21.9.
- 140. **Canada Warbler** – *Wilsonia canadensis*
1 Higbee Fields 20.9.
- 141. **Summer Tanager** – *Piranga rubra*
1 male Belleplaine State Forest 22.9.

142. **Scarlet Tanager** – *Piranga olivacea*
1 female The Dike, Higbee 21.9.
143. **Eastern Towhee** – *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*
At least 6 Sandy Hook 25.9.
144. **Chipping Sparrow** – *Spizella passerina*
5 Belleplaine State Forest 22.9, 4 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9.
145. **Savannah Sparrow** – *Passerculus sandwichensis*
1 The Dike Higbee 19.9, 6 Stone Harbor 19.9, 1 Two Mile Landing 21.9, 2 Jakes landing 22.9,
3 The Meadows, Cape May 22.9, c.15 Bombay Hook 23.9, 5 Brigantine 24.9.
146. **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** – *Ammodramus nelsoni*
1 Jakes Landing 22.9.
147. **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow** – *Ammodramus caudacutus*
1 Shell Bay Landing 22.9.



148. **Seaside Sparrow** – *Ammodramus maritimus*
1 Two Mile Landing 21.9, 1 Jakes Landing 22.9.



149. **Song Sparrow** – *Melospiza melodia*
1 The Dike, Higbee 18.9, 1 Nummy's Island 22.9, 2 Brigantine 24.9, 2 Sandy Hook 25.9.
150. **White-throated Sparrow** – *Zonotrichia albicollis*
1 Sandy Hook 25.9.

151. **Dark-eyed Junco** – *Junco hyemalis*
2 The Dike, Higbee 21.9.
152. **Northern Cardinal** – *Cardinalis cardinalis*
Common. Daily numbers varied between 2-10 birds 17-25.9.
153. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** – *Pheucticus ludovicianus*
1 The Dike, Higbee 21.9.
154. **Blue Grosbeak** – *Passerina caerulea*
1 The Dike, Higbee 18.9, 1 Bunker Pond, Cape May Point 18.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 20.9,
5 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9.
155. **Indigo Bunting** – *Passerina cyanea*
2 The Dike, Higbee 19.9, 2 Higbee Fields 20.9, 2 The Dike, Higbee 21.9.
156. **Bobolink** – *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*
1 The Dike, Higbee 21.9, 1 Cape May Lewes Ferry Terminal 23.9, 3 The Dike, Higbee 24.9.
157. **Red-winged Blackbird** – *Agelaius phoeniceus*
Common. Daily numbers varied between 1-75 birds 18-25.9.
158. **Common Grackle** – *Quiscalus quiscula*
c.10 along the road New York-Cape May 17.9, 2 Lily Lake 20.9, 1 Lily Lake 21.9, c.500
Belleplain State Forest 23.9.
159. **Boat-tailed Grackle** – *Quiscalus major*
7 Two Mile landing 21.9, 3 Stone Harbor 22.9, c.50 Brigantine 24.9.
160. **Brown-headed Cowbird** – *Molothrus ater*
Only recorded on the Delaware side of the bay: totally 850 birds in a few big flocks 23.9.
161. **Purple Finch** – *Carpodacus purpureus*
1 The Dike, Higbee 20.9.
162. **House Finch** – *Carpodacus mexicanus*
6 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9, 4 Sandy Hook 25.9.
163. **American Goldfinch** – *Carduelis tristis*
1 The Dike, Higbee 19.9, 1 The Dike, Higbee 20.9, 7 Cape Henlopen State Park 23.9.
164. **House Sparrow** – *Passer domesticus*
Common. Recorded Daily.

Mammals

Eastern Grey Squirrel – *Sciurus carolinensis*

Common. Daily counts of 1-15 individuals 17-25.9.

Eastern Chipmunk – *Tamias striatus*

1 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9.

Rabbit – *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

1 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9, 1 20.9, 1 21.9, 1 23.9

Musk Rat – *Ondatra zibethicus*

1 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 17.9.

Common Bottlenose Dolphin – *Tursiops truncatus*

4 2nd Avenue Jetty, Cape May 18.9, 4 from The Dike, Higbee 19.9, 1 from The Dike, Higbee
21.9, 1 Avalon 22.9, c.25 from The Dike, Higbee 24.9.