



Field Guides Tour Report

Cape May Megan's Way 2014

Sep 28, 2014 to Oct 4, 2014
Megan Edwards Crewe & Tom Johnson

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



Seeing ONE "salty sparrow" in a week can be an accomplishment, so seeing three different species -- thanks in good part to Tom's expert "sparrow wrangling" -- was real treat. Photo by guide Tom Johnson.

Cape May's fall migration is all about the weather. What we hope for are fast-moving cold fronts with roaring northwest winds sweeping thousands of birds in their wake. What we got for most of this week was settled (though cloudy) weather and gentle southerly breezes. That meant we had fewer individual birds than we might have liked -- and we had to work harder to find them -- but there was still plenty to look at.

Tops in the rarities department was a Common Raven -- only the 6th modern record for the county -- that circled around the Cape May Light during lunch one afternoon. But there were other less-expected species as well. A spangled American Golden-Plover picked its way along a sandy beach among a host of Black-bellied Plovers (and a snoozing female Red-breasted Merganser). An early White-winged Scoter zoomed by with a group of Black Scoters off the seawatch point in Avalon, and early Surf Scoters bobbed in the surf off several Cape May beaches. A Clay-colored Sparrow popped up in a grassy fringe at Forsythe NWR, and a Vesper Sparrow rummaged along the edge of a path at the Meadows. Two Nelson's Sparrows nibbled seeds in waving Spartina grasses along a salt marsh channel.

Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks circled overhead in conveniently mixed thermals. An American Bittern stood frozen along the edge of the salt marsh. A Clapper Rail crept along a muddy bank -- and then swam the channel. A dark Parasitic Jaeger powered past just offshore on our first afternoon. A half dozen Red Knots mingled with a mob of Dunlins, Sanderlings and peeps on Stone Harbor's beachfront, giving us leisurely opportunity to practice our "winter-plumaged shorebird" identifications. A dozen Lesser Black-backed Gulls snoozed among their more regular cousins. Hundreds of Black Skimmers thronged on the sands across from our hotel. A big mixed flock swirled through the trees of Cox Hall Creek WMA: spotty young Eastern Bluebirds, colorful Black-throated Green and Blackburnian warblers, Blackpoll and Pine warblers (and an excellent learning opportunity to see them side by side), multiple trunk-creeping Black-and-white Warblers, feisty Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and more Chipping Sparrows than we could shake sticks at. And even the butterflies got into the act, as our impromptu program with the Monarch Monitoring Project's local director showed us.

Thanks for joining Tom and me in this famous migration hotspot. It was fun sharing some adventures with you all!

-- Megan

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) – Daily, either flying over Cape Island, nibbling grass in various fields or floating on ponds and lakes around the county. We even saw a dozen or so lounging on the lawn beside the toll booth for the Walt Whitman bridge on our way back to the airport.

MUTE SWAN (*Cygnus olor*) – Unfortunately, these big waterbirds are far too common around Cape May, with dozens on Bunker Pond and pairs on most of the other freshwater ponds we passed. Though beautiful, this introduced species is beginning to have a pretty big negative impact on the ecology of local waterways. [I]

WOOD DUCK (*Aix sponsa*) – Lovely views of several -- including a couple of handsome males -- among the lily pads on two ponds at Forsythe NWR with others flying over Higbee Beach WMA.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*)

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Anas americana*)

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK (*Anas rubripes*) – Most common at Brigantine NWR, where scores floated on the impoundments. The refuge was initially created to help protect one of the prime breeding areas for this species.

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*)

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*)

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*) – Small numbers on several days, with particularly nice views of a trio of eclipse males floating near a mob of Northern Shovelers at The Meadows one morning.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (*Anas crecca*)

SURF SCOTER (*Melanitta perspicillata*)

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER (*Melanitta fusca*) – One flew past the Avalon seawatch with a big line of Black Scoters, its namesake white wing patches flashing.

BLACK SCOTER (*Melanitta americana*)

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*) – A female rested on a stony beach among a mob of Black-bellied Plover, standing and stretching as we pulled closer to check out the American Golden-Plover.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – One chugged back and forth across one of the plover ponds at The Meadows, occasionally disappearing below the surface for a few seconds.

Gaviidae (Loons)

COMMON LOON (*Gavia immer*) – Two flew past over Higbee's on our last full day, trailing their huge feet behind them.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

NORTHERN GANNET (*Morus bassanus*)

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

GREAT CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – A youngster rested among a trio of Double-crested Cormorants on the rocky jetty east of Cape May Harbor, seen from our back bay boat.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

AMERICAN BITTERN (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) – Wow! One did its best "don't mind me, I'm just a reed" imitation along the edge of a small channel in the Wildwood back bays, pointing its beak toward the sky. Bob got us on another one lifting off from the marsh right beside us as we walked the trails at CMPSP on our soggy final morning.

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*)

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*)

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*)

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*)

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – One crouched among the ducks on the mud at the edge of Bunker Pond one morning, waiting for an unwary fish.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – Including a youngster on a pole at the Wetlands Institute, conveniently close to a youngster of the next species for good comparison.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*)

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Daily, often in good numbers, as the local flock was bolstered from migrants from further north. The resulting big flock certainly showed where any thermals were developing!

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Daily, including many carrying their fish snacks away from the coast and one sitting with a big Menhaden in a tree in the Stone Harbor bird sanctuary.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*)

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – Dozens spiraled over the Cape May Point SP parking lot on several days, including some in fine comparison with the next species.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*)

BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*Buteo lineatus*)

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*) – A handful of young birds mingled with other raptors in some of the kettles over Cape May Point SP -- including one that made a pass overhead right behind a young Red-shouldered Hawk.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Daily, including one hunting over the highway on our drive down from Philadelphia, and a handsome adult stomping around on the ground under the cedars at Cape May Point SP on our final soggy morning.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

CLAPPER RAIL (*Rallus longirostris*) – One preened on the muddy edge of a channel at Two Mile Landing, then swam across to check the opposite shoreline for tasty morsels. We had others from The Osprey on our back bay boat trip.

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus palliatus*) – Scattered birds on beaches across the county, with particularly nice studies of a good-sized group on the south jetty of the Cape May harbor.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Small groups in wetlands throughout, including some snoozing along the edge of salt marsh at Two Mile Landing (seen particularly well on our boat trip) and others pattering along the tide line at Stone Harbor. A few still sported traces of their snazzy breeding plumage.

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis dominica*) – A single basic-plumaged bird among the Black-bellied Plovers at Two Mile Beach was relatively easy to spot as it poked around in the mud. Compared to this previous species, this one is smaller and finer-billed, and has more gold tones in the speckling on its back.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Two flew in, calling loudly, at the Meadows, and we had others over Higbee's one morning.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

WILLET (*Tringa semipalmata*) – Dozens of "Western Willets" -- the distinctively long-legged, pale-backed birds that breed in the western half of the continent -- rested in the shallow pans near the Wetlands Institute, allowing great scope studies. We saw others on our back bay boat trip.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT (*Limosa haemastica*)

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – A few on the jetties near Coral Avenue, but our best views came on our boat trip, where we found dozens loafing on the breakwaters outside one of the marinas.

RED KNOT (*Calidris canutus*) – A half dozen or so -- in their dove-gray winter plumage rather than striking breeding colors -- foraged around a shallow tidal pool on the Stone Harbor beach, giving us a good chance to practice picking them out from the various other nearby shorebirds.

STILT SANDPIPER (*Calidris himantopus*)

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*)

DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*) – Especially common on Stone Harbor beach, where they mingled with the Sanderlings, looking darker and longer-billed. This is a regular overwintering species in Cape May.

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*)

PECTORAL SANDPIPER (*Calidris melanotos*)

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*)

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – A few, looking rather like miniature Dunlins, with the mixed shorebird flock along Stone Harbor beach.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus griseus*) – A few dozen foraged methodically in the shallow waters of the salt marsh pan near the Wetlands Institute or snoozed along its fringes.

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago delicata*)

Stercorariidae (Skuas and Jaegers)

PARASITIC JAEGER (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) – One powered past as we checked out the gull, tern and skimmer roost across from our hotel the first evening, and we saw others harrying the gulls and terns fishing in The Rips offshore from Coral Avenue. This is the most commonly seen jaeger in southern New Jersey.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – Abundant throughout. Tens of thousands breed in Cape May county each summer, making it the largest Laughing Gull colony in the world!

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – A few of these winter visitors were scattered among the gull flocks resting on the beaches of Cape May. This species breeds further north.

HERRING GULL (AMERICAN) (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*)

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus fuscus*) – Scattered individuals, including an impressive 12 on Stone Harbor beach. This is an Old World species that appears to be expanding its range; we're seeing bigger numbers along the east coast each year.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus marinus*) – Abundant throughout. It's hard to believe that 100 years ago, this was a rare bird in Cape May!

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – Small numbers on most days. Those hunting along the shoreline at the Avalon sea watch (and the big gang lounging on the mudflats at Forsythe NWR) gave us our best views.

COMMON TERN (*Sterna hirundo*) – Small numbers on several days, with particularly good looks at a couple of youngsters resting among a big group of Forster's Terns on the beach across the street from our hotel the first afternoon. The black carpal bar on sitting birds is distinctive.

FORSTER'S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*) – Abundant throughout, including scores on the beach across from our hotel and dozens flapping over (or flinging themselves into) the impoundments at Forsythe NWR. The dark eye patch of nonbreeding birds helps to quickly separate them from the previous

species.

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*) – Fairly common along the county's southern coasts, with especially good studies of those among the big mixed gull and tern flock across the road from our hotel. We saw numbers of yellow-billed youngsters (including some still sporting their scalloped plumage) still food begging as they trailed along behind their parents.

BLACK SKIMMER (*Rynchops niger*) – A big flock of several hundred rested on the sandy beach across the road from our hotel on our first afternoon -- at least, they rested when they weren't being chased around by various small (and not so small) children.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [H]

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – Daily, including some gritting on the sandy path along Bunker Pond one morning in Cape May Point SP.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

COMMON NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles minor*) – We watched two flying back and forth above the forest canopy at Higbee Beach WMA, from our perch atop the morning flight platform.

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*) – One fluttered over the parking lot at Cape May Point SP on morning, mingling with the nearby Tree Swallows.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*)

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megasceryle alcyon*) – Including one that sat on the white poles in the middle of Bunker Pond a couple of mornings, and one in a tree along the Cape May canal, seen from our boat.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) – Bob spotted one sitting atop a tree across Bunker Pond from where we were standing; unfortunately, it dropped off its perch before we could get a scope on it.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes carolinus*)

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus varius*)

DOWNY WOODPECKER (*Picoides pubescens*)

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Picoides villosus*) – One flew past us at Higbee Beach WMA on the morning of our last full day, making its distinctively loud, high-pitched call.

NORTHERN FLICKER (*Colaptes auratus*)

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*)

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*)

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*)

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus virens*)

EASTERN PHOEBE (*Sayornis phoebe*) – Easily the most common flycatcher of the trip, with small numbers hunting from fence posts and dead branches on several days. This is generally the last of the flycatchers to migrate through Cape May each fall.

EASTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) – One hunted from the top of several trees along the road out to the Gull Pond tower at Forsythe NWR.

Vireonidae (Vireos)

BLUE-HEADED VIREO (*Vireo solitarius*)

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*)

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

BLUE JAY (*Cyanocitta cristata*)

AMERICAN CROW (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)

FISH CROW (*Corvus ossifragus*)

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – One soaring around over Cape May Point (and the lighthouse) one lunchtime was an extraordinary find. This species is exceptionally rare in the southern end of the state; this is only the sixth record for the county since 1900!

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – A trio -- two adults and a youngster in formative plumage -- rummaged along the edge of a runway at the Cape May County airport, and another adult stood on a directional sign further out into the airfield.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – Daily, with spectacularly large numbers swirling in the sky near our hotel the final morning of the tour. Most years, this species stages in vast numbers in Cape May.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – A few of these smaller swallows zipped low over the platform at the Coral Avenue dune crossing one morning, mingling with the more numerous Tree Swallows.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – A single bird circled with the big swallow flock over the Coral Avenue dune crossing one morning. Most Barn Swallows are well south of Cape May by the time of our tours.

Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

CAROLINA CHICKADEE (*Poecile carolinensis*)

TUFTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus bicolor*) – Best seen at Cox Hall Creek WMA, where a handful accompanied the big mixed flock we found not far from the parking lot.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*)

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*)

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – Easily the most common wren of the trip, seen on most days, including a pair in the bushes along the edge of Bunker Pond.

Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

Regulidae (Kinglets)

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus satrapa*)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – A handful, including some still spotty youngsters, swirled through the trees at Cox Hall Creek WMA, giving us fine views.

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – Common, particularly in the berrying bushes at Higbee's.

BROWN THRASHER (*Toxostoma rufum*) – Also regular at Higbee's, though in much smaller numbers than the previous species. We saw a few sitting up in the multiflora rose and juniper bushes, showing their spotty breasts.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) **[I]**

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*)

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – Including one at Cox Hall Creek WMA, creeping around in one of the trees with all the young Eastern Bluebirds.

TENNESSEE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – At least two flitted in a treetop along the edge of one of the fields at Higbee's one morning.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*)

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*)

CAPE MAY WARBLER (*Setophaga tigrina*) – Two in a treetop in a Cape May Point front yard were disappointingly uncooperative, disappearing into the distance shortly after we piled out of the van.

NORTHERN PARULA (*Setophaga americana*)

MAGNOLIA WARBLER (*Setophaga magnolia*)

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER (*Setophaga fusca*) – A bright male, his bold white wing panels and orange throat helping to distinguish him, moved through a big oak at Cox Hall Creek WMA, part of a nice mixed flock.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*) – A fairly drab little female flicked through some bayberry bushes along the trail edging Bunker Pond on our last drippy morning, a small prize for those who braved the showers.

BLACKPOLL WARBLER (*Setophaga striata*)

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER (*Setophaga caeruleascens*)

PALM WARBLER (*Setophaga palmarum*)

PINE WARBLER (*Setophaga pinus*) – A handful of birds -- at least two bright yellowish males and a few drabber females -- swirled through some of the big pines at Cox Hall Creek WMA.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (*Setophaga coronata*)

PRAIRIE WARBLER (*Setophaga discolor*) – A couple of late males flicked through the trees at Higbee's on the morning of our last full day.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (*Setophaga virens*)

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

EASTERN TOWHEE (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*)

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) – Our best views came at Cox Hall Creek WMA, where a mix of adult and youngsters flicked through the pines, part of a big mixed flock. We saw others near the picnic grove at Forsythe NWR.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW (*Spizella pallida*)

FIELD SPARROW (*Spizella pusilla*)

VESPER SPARROW (*Pooecetes gramineus*) – One nibbled seeds with a couple of Savannah Sparrows along the edge of the east path at The Meadows. The bold white eye ring of this species is distinctive.

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)

NELSON'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus nelsoni*) – We spotted two from The Osprey, feeding in the tall reed grasses along the edge of one the channels. This population breeds along the North Atlantic coast and overwinters in New Jersey.

SALTMARSH SPARROW (*Ammodramus caudatus*) – Especially nice views of several along the edges of the road on Nummy Island -- seen thanks to Tom's expert sparrow wrangling! We had others scurrying along the beachfront along the wildlife loop at Forsythe NWR.

SEASIDE SPARROW (*Ammodramus maritimus*)

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*)

SWAMP SPARROW (*Melospiza georgiana*) – Passing through in reasonably good numbers during the week, with nice views of many in the fields at Higbee's.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) – A few under the bushes along the edge of one of the fields at Higbee's; this species overwinters in big numbers in southern New Jersey.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

SCARLET TANAGER (*Piranga olivacea*) – One, already in its drab winter plumage, in Cape May Point SP toward the end of the week.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – Common, particularly in the wooded areas of Higbee's and Cox Hall Creek WMAs, and in the neighborhoods of Cape May Point.

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*)

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – Small numbers -- most looking pretty drab -- along the edges of the fields at Higbee's most mornings.

DICKCISSEL (*Spiza americana*) [*]

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

BOBOLINK (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) – Seen nearly every day, typically as bounding flocks passing high overhead, their distinctive "link link" calls drifting down to us.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Another common diurnal migrant, with flocks passing southwards most mornings and restless groups shifting through the reedbeds at Forsythe NWR.

COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*) – This common species can be surprisingly hard to find at this time of year, but we did see a few dozen at Cox Hall Creek WMA and a handful of others during various drives.

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*)

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)

Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) [I]

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (*Spinus tristis*)

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Very common around Cape May, including a big mob feeding in the grass in front of the hawk watch most mornings. [I]

MAMMALS

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – One scampered along the side of the road as we headed towards Higbee Beach WMA one morning, its powderpuff tail flashing in the early morning gloom.

PLAIN EASTERN CHIPMUNK (*Tamias striatus*) – A pint-sized youngster scurried across the wildlife drive in Forsythe NWR, then raced back again as our van approached.

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus carolinensis*) – Ubiquitous, including those gathering nuts at Higbee Beach and the state park.

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN (*Tursiops truncatus*) – We saw the backs and fins of many of these graceful animals in the sea off Cape May Point SP and the Coral Avenue dune crossing.

NORTHERN RACCOON (*Procyon lotor*) – Two on a log in the salt marsh, seen from The Osprey on our back bay boat trip, were a surprise.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The herps we identified on the tour included:

Northern Red-bellied Turtle (*Pseudemys rubriventris*)

Diamondback Terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*)

Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*)

Southern Gray Tree Frog (*Hyla chrysoscelis*)

American Bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*)

Fowler's Toad (*Anaxyrus fowleri*)

Totals for the tour: 157 bird taxa and 5 mammal taxa