



# Fyke Nature Association

## Spring Newsletter

Vol. 71 — No. 1 — 2024

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

### 2024 Celery Farm Calendar Now Available

The 2024 Fyke Celery Farm Calendar is now available for purchase at the Lee Memorial Library, 500 W. Crescent Avenue, Allendale, NJ 07401. Your \$20 donation helps to support the Celery Farm maintenance work done by our volunteers.

### Calendar of Events\*

Since mid-2015 Fyke's monthly speaker costs have been funded by a generous grant from the Winifred M. and George P. Pitkin Foundation.

*Friday, February 23, 2024- Monthly Meeting, 8:00 p.m. via Zoom*

**Spring Migration at Teaneck Creek Conservancy, Executive Director Kathleen Farley**



Teaneck Creek Conservancy stewards 46 acres of a restored wetland with 1.3 miles of trails for outdoor enjoyment. Join Kathleen Farley, its executive director since July 2022, who will discuss migration at the park. In addition to other migrants, the park is woodcock stopover habitat. You may remember she gave a well-received Fyke presentation this time last year on her research on the American woodcock. Farley earned her doctorate in biology at Rutgers University-Newark where she focused on ornithology and community ecology in the urban environment.

**Teaneck Creek Conservancy**  
*(photo credit Monica Cardoza)*

*Friday- March 29, 2024- Monthly Meeting, 8:00 p.m. via Zoom*

**Garret Mountain Reservation: A Migration Hotspot, Carole Hughes**



**Wood Thrush**

Garret Mountain has a well-deserved reputation as one of the premiere spring migrant traps in New Jersey. This program will discuss the geography and the micro-habitats that make Garret unique. Learn about the expected species, the timeline of spring migration at Garret, and tips to get the most out of your birding day at this special place.

Carole Hughes has been an avid birder for 30-plus years in Texas and New Jersey. She volunteered for the Houston Zoo, working with a Crested Caracara. For the past 15 years, she has led adult and

\* Information is accurate at the time of printing. Please check [The Fyke Nature Association Home](http://The Fyke Nature Association Home) for any updates.

youth birding field trips for NJ Audubon and served on the Board of Directors. She is a past member of the NJ Bird Records Committee. She has traveled extensively for birding across the U.S., Central and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa.

## Field Trips

Please register with the leader to facilitate planning and to enable last-minute communication about any changes or cancellation on account of the weather. Beginners are welcome.

### ***Saturday, February 24, 2024, 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM- Winter Tree Identification***



**Sycamore Bark**

Join us for a winter walk at the Celery Farm. Meet at the end of Green Way. Mike Lefebvre will talk about tree identification in the winter. We may even see some Skunk Cabbage starting to come up!

Mike Lefebvre is a naturalist who has led Plant ID Walks and Talks for the FYKE Nature Association, Friends of the Bonsal Preserve (Montclair) the Friends of the NJ School of Conservation (Stokes State Forest) and Bergen County Audubon Society. He is the Publicity Chairperson for the FYKE Nature Association and currently working as a teacher naturalist for NJ Audubon's Lorrimer Sanctuary. He kept a nature blog (now retired) which documented local hikes along with flora and fauna for many years. Mike's hobby is documenting the flora of local nature preserves including DeKorte Park.

Sponsored by [The Native Plant Society of New Jersey](#).

### ***Saturday, March 9, 2024- Woodcocks at Dusk, Halifax Road, Mahwah***

Meet at the end of [Halifax Road in Mahwah](#) for a chance to see the dramatic courtship display of these otherwise reclusive birds. What we hope to witness goes something like this:

First, male woodcocks utter a distinctive one-note peent call with a buzzy, nasal quality. They then flutter high into the air and circle repeatedly, allowing the rushing air to rise in a winnowing whistle as it passes over their wings. To finish off, they acrobatically descend back to the very same spot they took off from and repeat the process in the hopes of attracting a female.

There are no guarantees in birding, but with luck you will have a memorable experience. Contact Mike Limatola ([mike.limatola@gmail.com](mailto:mike.limatola@gmail.com)) to let him know to expect you. Rain date March 16<sup>th</sup>.



**Woodcock**

### ***Saturday June 29, 2024, 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM- Discover the Plants of the Celery Farm***

Enjoy finding early summer wildflowers and other plants. Meet at the end of [Green Way](#).

Contact Mike LeFebvre [njurbanforest@hotmail.com](mailto:njurbanforest@hotmail.com) to let him know to expect you. Rain date July 6

**Check for updates on Fyke field trips here: <https://www.fykenature.org/trips.php>**

## ***Every Sunday 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM at the Celery Farm- Hour on the Tower***

Usually on the Pirie-Mayhood Tower platform



Everyone is invited to join with the group of regulars who keep a list of every species of bird they can identify over the course of one hour. It's a good way to improve your birding skills and catch up on Celery Farm news. The location may shift between the Pirie-Mayhood Tower platform on the east side of Lake Appert and the Warden's Watch platform near the Franklin Turnpike parking area. [Contact Gaby Schmitt](#) to find out where to meet up.

## **Self-Directed Exploration Open to Fyke Members**

### **North Harpersfield Property**

George Rand and Pamela Ryder invite Fyke members to visit 135 acres of forest, field, stream, and pond in upstate NY. Please see the website to download and print [essential information](#) you must read before your visit, including directions, contact numbers, release and waiver document, lodging, and area attractions, as well as a [map of the property](#).

## **Ramsey Christmas Bird Count**

### **By Rob Fanning**

The 72nd Ramsey Christmas Bird Count (CBC) took place on Saturday, December 16th, 2023. The weather for count day was fantastic, with temps in the 40s to low 50s, mostly sunny skies, and very little wind. A far cry from past counts of dealing with ice and snowpacks. The mild weather meant more open water than usual, so waterfowl was more spread out, not appearing at some traditional locations but appearing at some others that are normally frozen.

Eight teams comprising a total of over 25 participants scoured the fields, woodlands, ponds, and marshes. A total of 81 species were detected on count day, a respectable total and about average, with another three species detected for count week (defined as the 3 days before or after count day) The three-count week only birds were: Great Horned owl (Team C), American Pipit, (Team D), and Red-breasted Merganser (Team G).

Some of the highlights include good showings of Redhead (likely a new CBC high), Pintail, Common Merganser, Ravens, Black Vultures, Fish Crows, and Catbirds. Team A may have scored the “best” bird/ biggest surprise of the day with 2 American Woodcock. This was only the 4th year for this species in CBC history, and the first ones recorded since the winter of ‘90-91! Some lowlights include decreasing numbers of Wild Turkeys, no Rusty Blackbirds, and for the first time in the 72-year history of the count, zero American Tree Sparrows. This species has been on the decline in recent counts. A big difference from the peak of 990 on the CBC in the winter of ‘68-69!

Though there was no official “best team” award this year, the teams who rallied the most species were Team A (Carola) with 55 species, and teams C (Fanning) and E (West) with 53. The COVETED Blue Jay award went to Team A (Carola) with 77 jays tallied, while the House Sparrow Award was a TIE between team C (Fanning) and Team E (West) with 120 sparrows tallied.

Finally, a huge THANK YOU! to the dedicated teams who volunteer for this important citizen science project, many of whom are veterans of 10, 20, 30, or even 40+ years! Thus, long-standing tradition wouldn't be possible without all your efforts!

With that said, mark your calendars for the 73rd CBC, to be held on Sat. Dec. 14th, 2024!  
The complete final count for the Ramsey CBC '23 is found at the end of the newsletter.



## **First Bird Of The Year 2024**

**By Carol Flanagan**

A wonderful way to start the year, watching for the first bird you see!

My first predawn bird of the year was a Female Northern Cardinal. She was eating peanuts on my deck. I also saw my parakeet “Mr. Bird”.



A total of 25 species were seen. Plus 2 species of pet birds were reported. Mourning Dove was the most frequently seen.

Furthest away report, **Enid Hayflick a.k.a. SoCalE:** Anna’s Hummingbird

### **Reports listed in no particular order:**

**Bill Drummond:** Pair of Great Horned Owls calling. Dreams come true!

**Janet Tedesco:** My first bird was a female cardinal at 7:15 a.m. on my platform feeder in Oakland.

**Charles West:** Carolina Wren

**Ann Plaisted:** Downy woodpecker. First heard the chickadee. Since I was putting birdseed out, I was watched by several squirrels!

**Crista Murphy:** Dark-eyed Junco at 8:14 a.m., in the bushes next to our deck (Ramsey).

**Deedee Burnside:** Blue Jay

**Holly Cowen:** Morning Dove

**Dick and Penny Whitlock:** Downy Woodpecker on suet and Red-bellied Woodpecker on seeds. Then saw a Hairy Woodpecker, three woodpeckers in a row!

**Maryann and Bill Fahey:** Hairy Woodpecker at our peanut feeder

**Lisa Potash:** Yellow-rumped Warbler (Holgate, LBI)

**Monica Cardoza:** Black-capped Chickadee at my feeder

**Loren Anderson:** Singing Carolina wren, always welcome here!

**Mimi Brauch:** House Finch

**Gaby Schmitt:** Went out walking with Miss Daisy early this morning; too grey to actually see the birds, but lots of chatter from our local Robins, House Sparrows, Blue Jays, American & Fish Crows, and Carolina Wren. The first seen was a Mourning Dove that we accidentally flushed while walking past the ball fields on Hickory. Not my first bird of the year but my first Yellow-bellied Sapsucker of the year busy drilling little holes into one of the Sugar Maples. YAY!

**Stephanie Seymour:** My first bird heard, American Crow, my first bird seen, Dark-eyed Junco

**Mark Kantowitz:** First heard, Red-bellied Woodpecker First seen, Common Raven

**Hugh Carola:** Well, try as I might to do otherwise, my first bird was a House Sparrow.

(author note: That's OK Hughie, House Sparrows are fun birds too!)

**Ruth Friedkin:** A Wild Male Turkey sitting on my back step every morning and leaving me a "deposit". He is terrorizing my neighborhood.

**Jim Wright:** Dark-eyed Juncos, seven simultaneous juncos, all outdoors and alive.

**Amy Griffin:** White-breasted Nuthatch on the suet

**Darlene Lembo:** Downy Woodpecker

**Kevin Watson:** Red-bellied Woodpecker

**Alan Pomerantz:** Black-capped Chickadee

**Patti Vernon:** Happy New Year from Maine! Our first bird was a Hairy Woodpecker

**Rob Fanning:** First heard Carolina Wren, first seen Song Sparrow

**Daniel Carola:** Blue Jay, fourth was Brown Creeper

**Mike Lefebvre:** Dark-eyed Junco

**Molly Gardiner:** At 4:35am I woke up, grabbed the Merlin sound ID on my phone, just to be sure, and heard two Great Horned Owls "Hooting" in the woods. They conversed for about 15 minutes.

Patricia Finn: Downy Woodpecker

**Robert Thurston:** Cockatiel, Dawn saw a Blue Jay.



**Lynn McKenzie:** Mourning Dove sitting on the deck

**Karen Chatten:** My first bird (besides the Downy Woodpeckers on my socks) was a male Red-bellied Woodpecker on my tube feeder.

**Alice Leurck:** My first bird was a Blue Jay followed closely by a Mourning Dove.

**John Marsh:** Finches at feeder

**Tom Jaeger:** male Northern Cardinal!



**Margery Cleveland:** Black-capped Chickadee

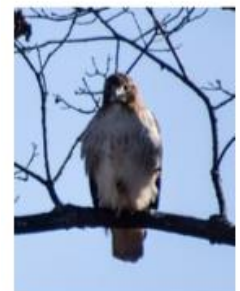
**Lisa Ann Fanning:** First bird of 2024 was a heard only flock of Canada Geese overhead. First seen were our neighborhood Mourning Doves. Best bird was a pair of Common Ravens at Sandy Hook.

**Gail Williams:** Many Canada Geese on golf course

**Ivan Kossak:** Great Black-Backed Gull on a light post along the Garden State Parkway

**Laura Lander:** a pair of Mourning Doves

**Barbara Sapanara:** Red-tailed Hawk



And last but not least, best wishes for health and happiness in 2024 to **John Workman**: I did not go out and bird today. I'm in quarantine due to a Holiday Gathering Covid exposure (still testing negative, luckily). Perhaps for this reason, my first bird(s) of the new year were seen while looking DOWN instead of up! Species unknown to me. They are perhaps among Roger T. Peterson's "confusing fall warblers"? The only problem is that they don't behave like warblers: they are preternaturally still, not hyper-active. A friend of mine, well read in ornithology, suggests that they are escapees from some Persian aviary. But this sounds unlikely.



## Field and Feeder Notes

### By Judith Cinquina

The Pink-footed Goose that was discovered in Washington Township on March 7 (2011) was last seen on March 17. Our own Doug Morel first discovered the goose, a species never before seen in our state. If the New Jersey Bird Record Committee accepts the sighting as a genuine wild bird, it will be added to our state list. (And it was!)

“Pink-footed Goose Revisited” Summer 2011 Fyke Newsletter

Given the nickname “Pinkfoot” in Britain where it spends the winter, Bergen County’s fifth Pink-footed Goose was discovered by Brian Kenney at the Rockleigh Golf Course, January 4 and enjoyed by other Fyke members and friends. Brown-necked with a pale gray back, it was a challenge to find among the hundreds of gray-brown Canada Geese in its company. “It’s where’s Waldo,” Brian wrote. Fortunately, its short pink legs and smaller size eventually gave it away. One of the smaller geese, it sports a short neck, rounded head, bright pink legs and a band of pink on its small, dark bill. It breeds on the tundra in Greenland and Iceland and migrates across the north Atlantic to spend winters in Britain and northwestern Europe. In the last couple of decades, some have made wrong turns into Canada and the U.S. probably a result of a boom in their population. Given protection from shooting on their British wintering grounds, their numbers increased dramatically from 30,000 in 1950 to 292,000 in 2004. Almost entirely vegetarian, they graze on our golf courses, ball fields and wherever Canada Geese find food. Doug’s 2011 Pinkfoot turned up at Schegel Lake and stayed for 10 days. Other singles were discovered at Overpeck County Park in 2013, ’20 and ’21. They return north in April.

Another small goose, a Greater White-fronted was reported from Overpeck at the Henry Hoebel Area this winter. John Coyle described it as a “Small goose with short neck and stubby bill...” which could apply to the Pinkfoot, but John noted, unlike the Pinkfoot, it has a “steep forehead.” It also has a white band or frontal at the base of its pinkish bill, and it has orange, not pink, legs. Winter reports of it have become so common that it was removed from NJ’s Review List in 1999. Also at the Henry Hoebel Area, John had a Snow Goose, December 15. Stephanie Seymour counted six over her Ringwood yard, December 5. All three goose species are small, their populations are thriving, and they’re more apt to winter here among the large flocks of Canadas, so more local birders can experience the “Where’s Waldo” challenge.



**Pink-footed Goose.** *Photo credit John Coyle.*

A variety of birds defied expectations this winter. A prime example is the defiant Yellow Warbler that has been hanging on at DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst through January 15. One birder commented on its “astounding hardiness.” They’re one of our earliest fall migrants, starting in July and peaking in mid-August. Boyle, in his *Birds of NJ* (2011), writes that there is one December 20, 1987 record from DeKorte Park, but no other winter records. A Prairie Warbler is also surviving at DeKorte. Neil MacLennan found it low in shrubs in the Nature Center, December 16 where John Coyle also found it, January 7. This dazzling yellow bird has a “black semi-circle under its eye and black streaks on its sides” John wrote. Boyle states that it has turned up on four different Christmas Birds Counts (CBC’s). A birder reported it still there on the 15<sup>th</sup>, well past CBC time.

And it wasn’t just warblers pushing the envelope. John spotted a Snowy Egret at DeKorte, November 20. Traditionally, they migrate south in October. The Snowy is one of the species almost wiped out in the late 1800’s because of plume hunting for fashionable lady’s hats. The plumes were valued at \$32 per ounce, twice the price of gold at the time. After laws were enacted, their numbers bounced back to a peak of 3,000 in NJ, but their numbers have declined along with their wetland habitat in the last two decades. A Lesser Yellowlegs lingered even longer at DeKorte. A medium-size shorebird, who feeds primarily on insects and small fish, this Yellowlegs finds most of its food by pecking at the water surface or mud. They’re usually gone by early August, according to Boyle. He further reports that a few dozen are found on Christmas Bird Counts in December, but “are scarce thereafter.” The DeKorte Lesser Yellowlegs lingered at least through January 14, according to John Coyle.

A Snow Bunting flew over the Celery Farm (CF) on December 16, according to Rob Fanning. He heard its familiar “tew and rattle call” and added it to his list of birds seen on the Ramsey CBC that day. Pough in his *Audubon Guide Eastern Land Birds* (1946) described that flight call as a “purring note with a curious trembling quality.” Snow Buntings breed in Arctic and sub-Arctic areas world-wide. Their nests are often made in a crevice or ledge, so perhaps their choice of habitat at DeKorte for some weeks in December reminded them of home. From at least December 4 through the 12<sup>th</sup>, about a dozen Snow Buntings fed, sunned themselves and disappeared from sight among the cement blocks lining the berm along DeKorte’s Transco Trail. Fourteen were noted in flight on the 4<sup>th</sup> and later, up to eight were reported feeding on grass seed along the Trail. On the 5<sup>th</sup>, a young man was looking for them and said about a dozen had been seen there for a week or more. He called me when he found them. So tame and pretty, their winter white plumage was infused with bits of pale orange. They were invisible unless they moved among the rocks and cement slabs. I counted five and managed a close photo with my phone before they disappeared into crevices. Boyle considers the Snow Bunting as “unpredictable and nomadic.” It’s usually encountered along our coast among the sand dunes in winter.

Janet Tercheck’s CBC team was surprised by a Peregrine Falcon that flew past them at the Ramsey Municipal Pool, December 16. It was close enough to see its wide black cheek bar or “mustache.” Doug Morel found another Peregrine at Halifax, in Mahwah that same morning along with a Red-breasted Nuthatch, the only one reported this fall in our area. In spite of snow falling and a 32 F temperature, Julie McCall’s Hour on the Tower crew scored 21 species, January 7, including a Brown Creeper and a Golden-crowned Kinglet. That same day, Neil MacLennan spotted a Virginia Rail from the Boy Scout Platform at the CF. Hopefully before our deep freeze and snowstorm in mid-January, Am. Woodcocks were safely south of us. On December 19, one flew by

John Coyle at DeKorte Park. It was thirty minutes after sunset, and the “bird was coming from the retaining pond area,” John wrote, and it “proceeded to fly east down Disposal Road along the edge of the landfill, making the distinctive twittering sound with its wings.” They’re vulnerable to heavy freezes and snowstorms which limit their ability to probe for worms and insects.

Living up to its name, the Winter Wren was all over the place in January. Boyle called it an “uncommon” winter resident but that wasn’t true this winter. He also noted that CBC numbers have been increasing. Pough furnishes a perfect description of this shy wren in his Audubon Guide. “The very short tail and dark barred belly of this tiny wren are distinctive, as are its continuous nervous babbling and its habit of cocking its tail over its back.” Smaller than a Chickadee, it prefers swampy woods where it wanders among fallen trees, branches and logs hunting insects. Occasionally I attempt to follow one, but like an apparition, it appears and disappears as if it were a mere figment of my imagination. One was spotted at Halifax, others at Closter Nature Center, Mary Patrick Park and Westwood, and many Fyke members enjoyed one at the CF from the 5<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup>. Fingers crossed that they all survive this weather.

A Red-tailed Hawk became Barbara Sapanara’s first bird of 2024. She found it perched in her Ramsey yard and managed a photo. Our eastern subspecies of Red-tail has so much white under its wings and on its chest and belly that in flight, it is sometimes mistaken for a Snowy Owl, especially when its underparts reflect winter snow. But usually its belly band and/or red tail gives it away. It is the only hawk that you might find in your yard that has so much white on its underparts. Whether it’s in flight or perched, train your eye to find the light streaking across its belly. From my experience, young Red-tails have darker belly bands than adults, and older adults seem to have lighter belly bands or none at all. If one is hanging around your feeders, it’s not after your birds. Red-tails aren’t designed to chase birds. More than likely, it has an eye on a fat squirrel or chipmunk.



**Red-tailed Hawk.** *Photo credit Barbara Sapanara.*

Since New Year’s Day, a Screech Owl has been occupying a box in Betty McDonnell’s Mahwah yard. A male Eastern Towhee also showed up under her feeders on the 16<sup>th</sup>. A young Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was busy drilling little holes into a Sugar Maple in Gaby Schmitt’s Bergenfield yard, January 2. The holes or “wells” provide the sapsucker and other birds with sugary tree sap for quick energy. Unlike most of our woodpeckers, this sapsucker doesn’t nest in the Fyke area, but the males may spend winter with us. Their females migrate further south, and like female Red-winged Blackbirds, they delay returning to their breeding grounds until the males have reestablished territories. If males are present in your winter haunts, you’re likely to hear their plaintive, cat-like mewling before you spot them. They’re well camouflaged against the trunks and branches of trees in spite of their scarlet adornments.

An adult Bald Eagle dined on a road-kill deer in a suburban development in Oakland, November 19. Janet Tedesco managed to take its picture. It was on the side of a road next to a sidewalk, mailboxes and driveways containing parked cars. This is an amazing photo. To think that this photo would have been impossible in the 1960’s when the Bald Eagle population was devastated by DDT and its by-products. In those days, Fyke members were lucky to count one over Mount Peter in the fall. It took until 1988 for the watch to get their first double digit



count (12) and another 24 years to reach triple digits (130). And now they're even settling comfortably into our suburbs.

In the '60's, it was also frowned upon to describe birds as human-like. After all, they were hatched with built-in instructions on how to behave. That has now been disproven. Birds do make decisions, tackle problems, and have different personalities. Julie McCall wrote a very charming, human-like description of Gadwall flying into the CF during the Hour on the Tower, December 24. Lake Appert was frozen. Julie wrote, "Perhaps the birds of the day were the Gadwall who flew in, and despite a warning from one of our Towerites to be careful...slid in for their landing but still managed to maintain some dignity. Later a few could be seen lounging on the ice, their orange legs and feet plainly displayed and slightly askew." Whether at your feeder or out in the field, please share what you find with all of us at [fykenature@groups.io](mailto:fykenature@groups.io) where many of the reports for this column originated, or send your observations to me at [judycing@optonline.net](mailto:judycing@optonline.net).

## **Mt. Peter Hawkwatch Report for 2023**

**By Ken Witkowski**

Before getting to the report for this season, I just wanted to extend sincere thanks and gratitude to Judy Cinquina on behalf of all of our volunteers over the years for the 44 years that she served as coordinator of the watch before retiring this year. The amount of data collected over the years serves as a wonderful legacy for Judy. Thank you again.

The 66th year of the Mt. Peter hawkwatch ran from September 5 through November 15 and with the exception of Turkey Vultures, almost all species were well below our ten-year average. Seven volunteers manned the watch for 299 hours and recorded 3,732 migrants which is the lowest total since 2004. This can be partially explained by the fact that our volunteer base has dropped off in recent years and not all days can be covered in full. Weather patterns can also be a significant factor in shifting migration movements from one year to the next. This seemed to be particularly obvious this season as some of the watches east of Mt. Peter recorded some incredible numbers. It remains to be seen if this is a short- or long-term change.

Mid-September is the time that hawk watchers look forward to as the Broad-winged hawk migration peaks, but that was not to be the case this year. Our best day was tallied by Denise Farrell on 9/22 with a mere 438 Broad-wings and a season total of only 1,477. That day was also the best day for Osprey with 12 counted. The overall total of Osprey was 42 which is the lowest since 1967. We also encountered six rain-out days in September which did not help. Bald Eagle numbers were only slightly below the ten-year average as 107 were counted. It seems to be a rare day when Bald Eagles are not seen and that is encouraging. Only one Golden Eagle was seen on 10/31 – an immature bird and fortunately this was one of the days that Judy was visiting. There was a slight increase in Northern Harrier numbers from last year with 26 counted but still far below the ten-year average. Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks were also disappointing with 135 and 63 respectively.

Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks continue to show a decline. The 444 Sharp-shins is the lowest total since 1973. Our best day for Sharp-shins was 72 on 10/15 tallied by Ken Witkowski and Tom Millard. The 38 Cooper's hawks is the lowest total since 1984, but again the shift of migrants to the east was significant for these birds as well. Once again, the newly renamed American Goshawk was a no show. This always rare migrant was last seen in 2018.

Falcon migration is always more of a coastal phenomenon, but the steady decline of American Kestrels at Mt. Peter continues with only 45 counted. Merlins were conspicuously absent with only four counted. The 14 Peregrine Falcons was only slightly less than the ten-year average.

The one highlight for the season was the Turkey Vulture migration and this is a pattern that seems to be shifting our way in recent years. The 1,282 tallied is the second highest season total for Mt. Peter. The best day

was on 10/15 when 636 were counted by Ken Witkowski and Tom Millard. Rick Hansen had another good day on 11/1 when he counted 234.

In addition to raptors, many other migrant birds stop by or pass over Mt. Peter. It is always enjoyable to see low flying Ruby-throated Hummingbirds move over the watch and they were seen on several days in September with a high of 4 on 9/12. Elisabeth McGrath had around 100 Chimney Swifts on 9/10. A single Common Nighthawk went through on 9/15, Cape May warbler on 9/15 and 9/16, 126 Blue Jays on 9/27, Belted Kingfisher on 9/28. Palm warbler was seen on multiple days, Tennessee warbler on 10/9, Nashville warbler on 10/13 and Yellow-bellied sapsucker was seen on multiple days in October and November. Matt Zeitler had 450 Atlantic Brant on 10/28 and Rick Hansen had a flock of 1000+ blackbirds flyby on 11/1.

A big thank you to our volunteers: Jeanne Cimorelli, Denise Farrell, Rick Hansen, Elisabeth McGrath, Tom Millard, Ken Witkowski, and Matt Zeitler. New leaders are always welcome as Mt. Peter continues to be the oldest all volunteer hawkwatch in the country. For more information about Mt Peter and all other hawkwatches reporting data visit: [hawkcout.org](http://hawkcout.org).



**Three adult Bald eagles, a kettle of Turkey vultures and an Osprey. Photo credit Matt Zeitler.**

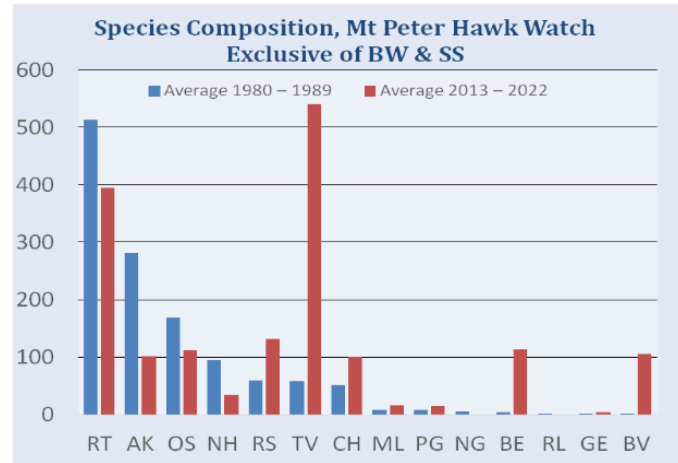
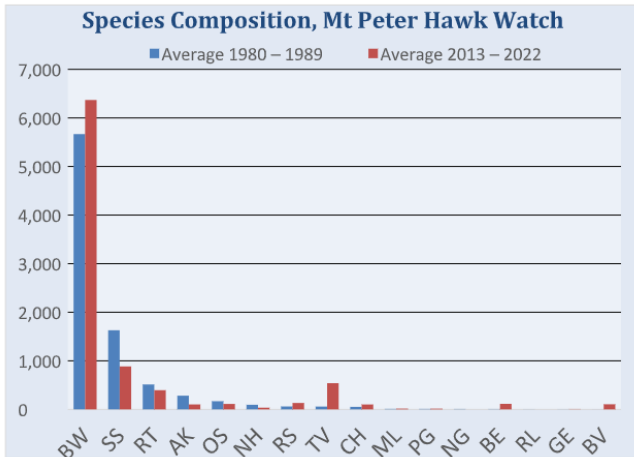
2023 Fall Totals for Mount Peter

<u>Species</u>	<u>2023 Fall Total</u>
BV - Black Vulture	42
TV - Turkey Vulture	1,282
OS - Osprey	42
BE - Bald Eagle	107
NH - Northern Harrier	26
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk	444
CH - Cooper's Hawk	38
AG - American Goshawk	0

<u>Species</u>	<u>2023 Fall Total</u>
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk	63
BW- Broad-winged Hawk	1,477
RT - Red-tailed Hawk	135
RL - Rough-legged Hawk	0
GE - Golden Eagle	1
AK - American Kestrel	45
ML - Merlin	4
PG - Peregrine Falcon	14
UR - Unidentified Raptor	12

**Grand Total: 3,732      Hours: 527**

**Please Note:** The following charts show two 10-year averages and how the raptor composition has changed between 1980 and 2022 at Mount Peter. Although Broad-wings have remained our most prevalent migrant, note the decreases in Sharp-shinned, Red-tailed Hawk, Kestrel, and N. Harrier. At the same time, increases included Red-shouldered, Cooper's, Bald Eagle and both vultures. JC



Charts by Rick Hansen, Mount Peter volunteer, with credit to Trudy Battaly for the idea.

## Website Notes

By Tom Mitchell

### Celery Farm Habitat Restoration

Even though the Celery Farm is a Nature Preserve, that doesn't mean we don't need to do anything to maintain the habitat. It takes a lot of active "gardening" to remove non-native plants and encourage the native plants that are the key to providing habitat for the wildlife. That work is done by our dedicated volunteers. If you have visited the Celery Farm recently, I'm sure you have noticed the huge amount of work that has been done in that regard. A new website page [Celery Farm Habitat Restoration](#) with information about the current rehabilitation projects has been added with a link to it on the Celery Farm page. There's also a link to it on the [Volunteer Opportunities](#) page.

Fyke President Mike Limatola reports to Allendale every month on the work done by Fyke volunteers, ensuring that the borough is aware of the extent of Fyke's ongoing maintenance of the Celery Farm. To facilitate that reporting task a secure internal section of our website has been developed that interfaces with our online hosted database to keep track of the volunteers, projects and hours.

### Guide to Ethical Nature Preserve Behavior

Inspired by a talk Jim Wright gave to Bergen Audubon about his book [The Screech Owl Companion](#), a new page [Guide to Ethical Nature Preserve Behavior](#) has been added to the Celery Farm page. It lists Dos and Don'ts for photographers in particular, birdwatchers in general, and all visitors. Hopefully it will be seen and followed since the Celery Farm page is the most-visited page on our website by far, sought out by people looking for directions and other information.

### Annual Bird List Report Enhancements

The 2023 Celery Farm Bird Checklist to record first-of-year sightings that has been available since last May ended the year with 161 species total, a nice group effort for a partial year. Fred Weber had the individual high

count with 138. If you were faithfully present every Sunday morning with the Hour-On-The-Tower observers, you would have seen 106.

The [2023 report](#) can be viewed along with the current year-to-date totals by changing the selected year on the report page. And if you view the report for a single person, you can select the year and you can select the report order, whether by first seen, most recent, or alphabetically by species.


January, 2024 has seen several new participants reporting their sightings. 58 species were reported in the first half of January.

The option for an [All Locations Checklist](#) lets you provide a free-form location, allowing everyone to compile their individual first-of-year sightings list from any location, not just the Celery Farm.

### **Smartphone Navigation improvement**

Those who view the Fyke website on a smartphone typically amount to nearly two-thirds of our visitors. Making our website “friendly” is essential. Some of our website pages have a lot of text and images, which requires smartphone users to scroll and scroll some more to see all of it. And then they used to have to scroll all the way back up in order to navigate to another page. No more. Now the menu icon stays pinned to the top of the screen and if the menu is opened, the navigation bar stays pinned to the top of the page.

The [2024 Celery Farm Calendar](#) images are now available on our website.

	<b>Welcome New Members</b>
	Jim Newell, Allendale
	Diana Richard, Allendale

**Fyke Board of Trustees:**

President: Mike Limatola  
 First Vice President: Gabriele Schmitt  
 Second Vice President: Sue Dougherty  
 Treasurer: Kurt Muenz  
 Recording Secretary: Gloria Antaramian  
 Corresponding Secretary: Mimi Brauch  
 Trustees: Darlene Lembo  
 Doug Moral  
 Jim Wright

**Chairpersons:**

Celery Farm: Mike Limatola  
 Gabriele Schmitt  
 Jim Wright  
 Conservation: Gabriele Schmitt  
 Programs: Monica Cardoza  
 Newsletter: Crista Trippodi Murphy  
 Publicity: Mike Lefebvre  
 Webmasters: Kevin Watson  
 Tom Mitchell  
 Hawk Watch: Ken Witkowski

**The Fyke Nature Association**, a 501 (c) (3) organization, meets eight times a year.

These are the meeting dates for 2024. All meetings are on Fridays.

January 26, 2024	July – no meeting
February 23, 2024	August – no meeting
March 22, 2024	September 27, 2024
April 26, 2024	October 25, 2024
May 17, 2024	November – no meeting
June – no meeting	December 6, 2024

Meetings and membership are open to all. Annual dues: \$20 for an individual and \$25 for a family. For further information, write to Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446, visit our website [www.fykenature.org](http://www.fykenature.org), or contact Mike Limatola, President, [mike.limatola@gmail.com](mailto:mike.limatola@gmail.com).

The Fyke Nature Association Newsletter is published four times a year and manuscripts, artwork, news, features, articles on wildlife observation, conservation issues, book reviews, field notes, and humorous first-person bird/nature related stories are welcome. All submissions will be gratefully appreciated!



**The deadline for the Summer 2024 issue is March 18, 2023.** Send material via e-mail to [crista430@gmail.com](mailto:crista430@gmail.com) or Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446

Ramsey CBC 2023

	A Carola	B Terchek	C Fanning	D Kantrowitz	E West	F Schmitt	G Poalillo	H Schwenker	Species Total
Snow Goose									0
Canada Goose	242	215	247	141	660	32	111	105	1753
Mute Swan		5	3	12	24		5	31	80
Wood Duck									0
Shoveler			5		6				11
Gadwall		30	33	5	37	5			110
American Wigeon		3			2				5
Black Duck	7		29	6	6		1		49
Northern Pintail			9						9
Canvasback									0
Mallard	28	31	39	48	50	3	40	76	315
Green-winged Teal			1						1
Redhead					55				55
Ring-necked Duck	55		9	2	223		14		303
Lesser Scaup				12	1				13
Bufflehead	14		2	12	59	16	8	48	159
Com. Goldeneye	2								2
Hooded Merganser	54	17		30	147	9	64	21	342
Com. Merganser	46			4	2100	81	59	85	2375
Red-breasted Merganser							(CW5)		CW-5
Ruddy Duck	11					6	5	12	34
Wild Turkey							4		4
Common Loon								1	1
Pied-billed Grebe			2	1	1				4
Great Blue Heron		3	4	6	7		4	1	25
Black Vulture	1	1		8	38	8	8	5	69
Turkey Vulture	5	18	6	20	15	8	11	10	93
Golden Eagle									0
Bald Eagle	7		1	3	1	1	3	1	17
Sharp-shinned Hawk			1			1	1	2	5
Cooper's Hawk	1		2		1	1	1	2	8
Red-shouldered Hawk		1				1	2		4
Red-tailed Hawk	5	1	1	1	2	1	4	4	19
Am. Kestrel									0
Merlin									0
Virginia Rail									0
Am. Coot					75			1	76
Ring-billed Gull	2		13	7	300	22	11	374	729
Herring Gull					1			13	14
Iceland Gull									0
Rock Pigeon	7	4	33	2	56			10	112
Mourning Dove	29	43	31	9	36	21	7	18	194
E. Screech-Owl			1						1
Great Horned Owl			CW						CW
Barred Owl									0
Belted Kingfisher	8	3	1	3	2		2		19
Red-bellied Wood.	4	6	10	16	15	6	6	3	66
Yellow-bellied Sap.	4	1	2			2		5	14

	A Carola	B Terchek	C Fanning	D Kantrowitz	E West	F Schmitt	G Poalillo	H Schwenker	Species Total
Downy Woodpecker	6	4	8	8	7	5	8	16	62
Hairy Woodpecker	8	6	5	3	2		2	1	27
N. (Yel.-sh.) Flicker	6	1	2	6	2	2		5	24
Pileated Woodpecker	4	1		2	1		3	4	15
Peregrine Falcon		1		1					2
Blue Jay	77	24	31	24	58	36	20	57	327
Am. Crow	12	13	19	3	68	21	2	19	157
Fish Crow	cw	2	1	1	14	6			24
Com. Raven	55	1	1	5		2	4	7	75
Black-capped Chick.	26	5	12	24	7	9	15	17	115
Tufted Titmouse	32	6	4	14	13	22	15	23	129
Red-breasted Nut.				1					1
White-breasted Nut.	15	4	11	7	8	14	11	16	86
Brown Creeper			2	1					3
Marsh Wren									0
Carolina Wren	12	5	4	10	8	9	6	3	57
Winter Wren	2		3	1	1		1		8
Golden-crowned King.	4		1	4	2		1	1	13
Ruby-crowned King.				2	1			1	4
E. Bluebird	4			cw		3	9	6	22
Hermit Thrush								1	1
Am. Robin	303	6	18	98	4	56	62	14	561
Gray Catbird	5								5
N. Mockingbird	1	1		2	2	1			7
Eur. Starling	186	63	21	56	102	501	15	79	1023
American Pipit				CW					CW
Cedar Waxwing	55		1	40		45	1	10	152
Yellow-rumped Warb.				cw				5	5
Am. Tree Sparrow									0
Field Sparrow	2			1					3
Fox Sparrow	1			2			2		5
Song Sparrow	32	11	7	11	5	2	5	4	77
Swamp Sparrow	4		4				1		9
White-throated Sp.	95	10	11	92	75	20	9	54	366
Dark-eyed Junco	60	47	34	13	68	17	29	83	351
Eastern Towhee	8				1	1		1	11
N. Cardinal	15	6	16	14	11	12	13	14	101
Red-winged Blackbird	3	2	25						30
Rusty Blackbird									0
Com. Grackle	3		30		3	1	16		53
Purple Finch	22								22
Pine Siskin	2								2
House Finch	4 cw		8	14	10	4	7		47
Red Crossbill									0
Am. Goldfinch	18		6	10	14	3	7	18	76
House Sparrow	10	45	120	16	120	1	13	63	388
Killdeer			2						2
American Woodcock	2								2
Snow Bunting			1						1

	A Carola	B Terchek	C Fanning	D Kantrowitz	E West	F Schmitt	G Poalillo	H Schwenker	Species Total
<b>COUNT OF SPECIES</b>	55	38	53	52	53	42	48	48	<b>81</b>

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Ruddy Duck	11					6	5	12	34
Wild Turkey							4		4
Common Loon								1	1
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Great Blue Heron		3	4	6	7		4	1	25
Black Vulture	1	1		8	38	8	8	5	69
Turkey Vulture	5	18	6	20	15	8	11	10	93
Golden Eagle									0
Bald Eagle	7		1	3	1	1	3	1	17
Sharp-shinned Hawk			1			1	1	2	5
Cooper's Hawk	1		2		1	1	1	2	8
Red-shouldered Hawk		1				1	2		4
Red-tailed Hawk	5	1	1	1	2	1	4	4	19
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