



Birdwatching Popular at the Landfill Facility



Earth Day 2017

As the country celebrates Earth Day on Saturday, April 22nd, the Middlesex County Utilities Authority looks back to its founding mission—to *preserve and protect central New Jersey's environmental resources*—and recognizes how that mission continues to drive so many of its projects today.



Earlier this year, fifteen members of the East Brunswick Environmental Commission participated in what's become a popular annual bird count at the Middlesex County Landfill.

According to Steven Albert, a member of the Commission, the group identified approximately 15 different species as they traveled the Landfill's perimeter road.

The count included many gulls, including sub-species such as the herring, ring-billed, and great black-backed. There was also a sighting of a single Iceland gull, a rare but regular winter visitor to the area.

"The Iceland gull was a nice find," said Albert. "It's more often seen on the Raritan Bay in this area. Given the numbers of gulls, we expect that there are one or more rarities in the mob. The trick is to be able to pick them out."

Solid Waste Division March 2017 Tonnage Figures

	Monthly Tons	Cumulative Tons
2017	41,111	112,708
2016	43,204	114,513

An average of 228 trucks hauled an average of 1,581 tons of waste to the Landfill facility each day.



The group also saw a variety of raptors, including four bald eagles, several red-tail hawks, a peregrine falcon, a kestrel, and two turkey vultures. Several Canada geese were present on the nearby stormwater pond.

“Peregrine falcons are increasing in numbers in the area,” explained Albert. “This was our second of the day. A family is known to nest nearby.”

The Landfill is particularly well-suited for a bird count, according to Albert, owing to its open spaces and abundant food sources. The raptors, especially, enjoy the open space as they are able to roost in the surrounding trees and patrol the open expanses in between. Food sources include some of the organic matter on the Landfill workface as well as the fish and water plants in the ponds and adjacent marshes.

The secured nature of the facility also limits access by people and vehicles in many areas, reducing disturbance to the birds. The East Brunswick Environmental Commission has conducted bird counts at the Middlesex County Landfill dating back to at least 2009.

Above: It typically takes bald eagles four years to develop the signature white head and tail. This is a first or second year bald eagle, as the head has not even begun to turn white.

Wastewater Division

March 2017 Statistics

- Average Influent flow – 107.02 mgd
- Average Effluent TSS – 17 mg/l
- Average Effluent BOD – 11 mg/l
- Biosolids production – 14,255 wet tons. The entire amount was processed through the dryers.

**Rainfall for the month was 3.87 inches as measured at the plant.*