



**Rochester Birding
Association**

P.O. Box 92055, 1335 Jefferson Road, Rochester, NY 14692

Little Gull

November 2023 Events and Birding Field Trips

Leaders and trip details are subject to change. Please check the most recent issue of the Little Gull, or the online schedule at the RBA website <https://rochesterbirding.org/>, for updated information prior to departure! All field trips go rain/snow or shine unless there is a travel advisory issued. Trips run approximately 2 to 4 hours. Bring binoculars. Wear weather appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes. Registration is not required, please arrive at the designated meeting location 10 minutes before the start time of the trip. Colds, flu, and COVID are still around--if you're not feeling well, please stay home. Please carpool when possible. Enjoy your trip!

[October and November are Excellent Months to Observe the Parade of Waterbirds on Lake Ontario.](#)
Several experienced birders are active at the lake watch beside the Lakeshore Pavilion at Parking Lot 4 of Hamlin Beach State Park many mornings during these months. Visitors are welcome!

Nov 26
Sunday

Niagara River (Joint trip with the Buffalo Ornithological Society)

The Niagara River area is famous for the variety and number of gulls in winter. Join us on our birding venture along the Niagara River in both the US and Canada. We will start at Lake Ontario and work our way south to the Falls. Our focus will be on waterfowl and gulls, including Bonaparte's Gull and Little Gull, with possible late migrating Common Tern, with additional stops for Red-headed Woodpecker, Black Vulture and late migrating passerines. This is a joint trip with the Buffalo Ornithological Society. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the large parking lot next to the swimming pool of Fort Niagara State Park Beach, 1 Scott Avenue, Rt. 18F, Youngstown, NY. Bring beverages and lunch for this is an all day trip. We will be crossing into Canada, carpooling would be very helpful. Participants MUST bring passports or Enhanced Driver's licenses. Dress warmly and in layers. Spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very helpful.

Leaders: *Tom O'Donnell of the Buffalo Ornithological Society (BOS) 716-622 - 5185 or tmodonnell@roadrunner.com and Neal Reilly 518-256-9147, co-leader Cathy Ballard 585-322-2621*

Dec 2
Saturday

Conesus Lake Area

We'll be looking for Tundra Swans, Canvasback, Redhead and other waterfowl. This trip is a combination of driving, stopping at overlooks and short walks on mostly level dirt trails and dikes. Length is about 1.5 mile walking. Dress warmly and in layers. Restrooms are available at Vitale Park only. Meet **at 8:00 a.m.** at Vitale Park on Route 20A in Lakeville. The park entrance is by the Lakeville post office on the south (lake) side of 20A and across the street from Smith's Hardware. **Spotting scopes would be very useful.**

Leader: *Jim Kimball 585-519-9211 and co-leader Nick Kachala 585-750-5536*

Dec 10
Sunday

Beginner Birder Trip – Nations Road

Sharpen your skills on wintering hawks and Short-eared Owls. Other wintering birds such as Horned Larks, Snow Buntings, and Lapland Longspurs are often present. This trip is a combination of driving and viewing at stops along roads. Length about .5 mile walking along the road. Restroom facilities are not available except at Tops. Bring binoculars. Meet at 2:00 p.m. at the Tops Plaza in Avon on Routes 5 and 20, 2 miles west of I-390. If possible, carpooling strongly advised. **Dress warmly and in layers. Spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very useful.**

Leader: *John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and co-leader Judy Gurley 585-582-2349*

Rochester Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 17, 2023

Sunday Dec. 17, 2023 is the day of the 120th Rochester Christmas Bird Count. With this traditional activity we will renew our commitment to science and birding.

This is a significant opportunity:

- to develop your birding skills in the field
- to make connections in the birding community
- to contribute to Citizen Science
- to attend the tally dinner, exchange stories, enjoy pizza and make birdy friends.

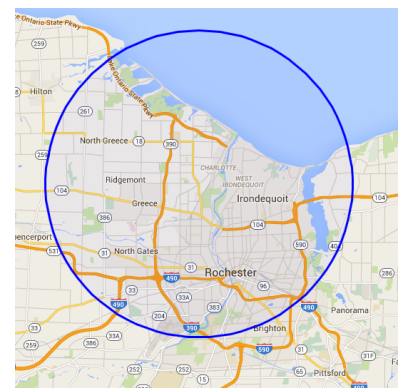
We need your help and welcome all skill levels. Please join us!!!

These sector leaders for the RCBC have consented to coordinate the field work for the count of our winter birds. To participate in the count, contact them or Norma Platt. Be sure to ask your leader for details.

John Boettcher 585-298-3404	Braddock Bay to Long Pond Road
Greg Lawrence glawrence21@yahoo.com	Long Pond Road to Dewey Avenue Dewey Avenue to Charlotte Harbor
Andy Garland 585-329-1577 andrew.garland@yahoo.com	Summerville to Culver Road & Seneca Park
Sheryl Gracewski and Tom Nash sheryl.gracewski@rochester.edu tnashny@earthlink.net	Culver Road to Baker Road (Webster)
Shirley Shaw 585-385-3907 shirley@jashaw.com	Parks and neighborhoods (Highland, Genesee Valley, Mt. Hope Cemetery)
Rosemary Reilly reilly.rosemary@gmail.com	Maplewood & Turning Point Parks, Holy Sepulcher and Riverside cemeteries
Brian Morse 585-269-9576 brianmorse2000@gmail.com	West of airport/south of the canal/north of the river
Rob Buckert 585-269-4206	Crow Roost

Norma Platt, Compiler 585-260-5221

normap1@rochester.rr.com





President's Corner, Randi Minetor

With fall well upon us and winter only a month away, it can be easy to assume that birding is, for the most part, over until next spring. Nothing could be further from the truth, however, especially given that we are here in the northeastern United States and just across a Great Lake from Canada, where boreal species gather throughout the spring and summer.

Fall means that the waterfowl that spend the summer breeding up in the Canadian Maritimes and around the Arctic Circle are making their way down to us, where there's plenty of ice-free water on Lake Ontario and the Finger Lakes.

Photo by Richard Ashworth

Ducks like Common Goldeneye, Ring-necked Duck, and huge rafts of Redhead, Canvasback, Bufflehead, and Red-breasted Merganser arrive and settle on Canandaigua, Seneca, and Cayuga Lake, where they are easy to view from parking lots at state parks. At the end of the month, Snow Geese arrive in massive flocks, extending their stay into December, when they can number in the tens of thousands in the Montezuma Mucklands. Again, they are usually visible from your car—so you can pull up alongside a plowed field and enjoy the National Geographic moments when thousands of geese take wing at the same time.

In December, birders pour out of their homes to take part in the Christmas Bird Count, scheduled this year for Sunday, December 17. For 120 years, this citizen science event has provided data to ornithologists about the rise and fall of bird species populations across the continent. You don't need any special skills—just an ability to recognize common resident birds that spend the winter in our area. See the information on page 2 about where the sectors are and whom to contact to be part of it.

As the winter progresses, flocks of Horned Larks and Snow Buntings and an occasional Lapland Longspur begin to collect along roadsides and in plowed fields, especially in the open lands around Seneca and Cayuga Lakes, on the west side of Rochester in Hamlin and Hilton, and in Avon on and around Nations Road. Common Redpolls often descend on feeders in these areas as well, and in backyards close to Lake Ontario. It becomes great winter sport to try to tease out a Hoary Redpoll among the Commons.

Of course, everyone's favorite winter birding event is the arrival of Short-Eared Owls, especially on Nations Road, where as many as half a dozen owls have spent the winter for quite some time. Here they put on quite a show just before dusk, joining the year-round Northern Harriers that scan the open fields for small rodents to devour. RBA always holds a January field trip to the Nations Road area to watch this display, Sunday, January 21, 2024. (You can go there yourself as well, with the understanding that you will be courteous to the residents of this Important Bird Area and pull all the way off the road onto the shoulder to view the owls.)

Two more birds of prey also frequent our open spaces in winter: Snowy Owls, often showing up at the Finger Lakes Regional Airport in Seneca Falls, the Batavia Airport, and along the Lake Ontario shoreline at places like Summerville Pier; and Rough-legged Hawks, most often seen circling the fields and forests at Burger Park and Hogan Point.

So there's no need to feel like birding is over! Winter birding makes the snowy season go by in a blink. Get yourself some fleece-lined pants and some really well-insulated gloves, and join us as we brave the cold to see some terrific birds.



Welcome to the Flock

Join us in welcoming these 3 new or returning members who joined in the last month.

Susan Hicks
Leslie Mock
Tim VanderBerg

Current RBA Membership as of October 14 is 405:

383 Household memberships
2 Young Birder (other young birders are included in Household memberships)
1 Corporate (The Bird House)
19 Complimentary



Snow Geese, Hamlin
© Alan Bloom 2/20/23

Jo Taylor, Membership Data

Time to Renew

Renew Online and Help the RBA

What's your favorite part of being part of the RBA community? Attending field trips? Monthly speakers sharing unique insights into the world of birds? The Little Gull newsletter? Whatever the reason, your annual RBA membership makes all of this possible. This year RBA has been able to start returning to pre-pandemic normalcy and has been able to drop the requirement for preregistration for field trips and to bring you a full schedule of in-person monthly meetings while still providing a Zoom option.

As the year end approaches, it's time for you to renew your RBA membership, which will help set RBA up for another rewarding year come 2024.

Three years ago we started transitioning to **all-online membership renewal**. You responded! Over that time the percentage of all renewals that were made online has gone from 45% to nearly 75%. Let's continue that trend. When you renew your membership online at rochesterbirding.org you're making even more of an impact with your contribution. Renewing online reduces paperwork and saves our membership chair and treasurer multiple trips to the post office and bank. In addition to helping RBA, renewing online also helps lower your carbon footprint—which we can all agree is a good thing.

Renewing in November saves RBA the printing and mailing costs and volunteer time needed for sending out membership reminder letters.

To renew online, just go to the RBA website at rochesterbirding.com, and click on the "Renew" button at the top of the home page. This will take you directly to the membership renewal form.

2024 Dues

Household membership	\$25
Junior membership (9-18)	\$15
(both above with Little Gull via e-mail)	
Little Gull by USPS mail - add to membership dues	\$15

If you prefer not to renew online, please contact Jo at jhtaylor@frontiernet.net, and she will email you the renewal form that you can print out and mail in with your check, or, if necessary, mail you a paper renewal form. We don't want to lose you as a member! We'll do our best to accommodate your needs.

Your renewal will be good until January 1, 2025, and bring you and the RBA community another great year of birds.

Thank you,
Jo Taylor
Membership Data

NOTE: New members joining after September 1 of this year are paid up through all of 2024.

Field Reports

Braddock Bay East Spit—8/26/2023

Nine birders and three leaders gathered at the East Spit on a sunny, slightly breezy morning. 2 Mink hunting in the rocks at the beach at the base of the spit were a nice sighting. The local Ospreys were very visible including one bird carrying a fish close over the group and another bird eating a fish as we gathered. An adult Bald Eagle was spotted and gave good views as well as a juvenile bird. Other birds included Yellow and Black-and-White Warblers, a Semipalmated Plover, and several Caspian Terns. The group split up after leaving the Spit. Three birders and one leader headed to Charlotte Pier and found a Black-bellied Plover and three Common Terns among other birds. The other group headed to the Braddock Bay Bird Observatory to observe the banding, who followed the banding of a Rose-breasted Grosbeak from capture, measuring, banding, and release.

Thanks to everyone who came out!

Neal Reilly, Sheryl Gracewski, Tom Nash

Durand Eastman Park—9/10/2023

Heavy overcast, a bit of drizzle, and temps in the 60s did not deter six birders from joining the leaders for a stroll on Zoo Road in search of migrating and resident birds. An Osprey, Kingfisher, and Red-bellied Woodpecker got us off to a good start right from Parking Lot D and across the road at Eastman Lake. Next, a quick stop around King's Highway for Red-headed Woodpeckers netted only a distant Red-bellied Woodpecker. On Zoo Road, birds were quiet, no expected Cedar Waxwings in the various fruiting trees near the parking area, but a Common Yellowthroat was glimpsed in the valley. Further on, we finally hit a pocket of bird activity. A number of American Robins, Northern Flickers, and a Swainson's Thrush, were quite active high in the bare branches of several conifers. What was attracting them we could not make out. A Black-throated Blue Warbler was glimpsed and a White-breasted Nuthatch was seen. Turning onto Log Cabin Road, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak seen, but otherwise things were quiet again. No Wood Ducks were on Pat or Trott Lakes, but a young Green Heron was spotted and seen well on Trott as we were heading back. We decided to explore a short distance along Pine Valley Road, it was quiet, but as we turned to go back to Zoo Rd, an eagle-eyed newcomer to birding spotted a large shape in the dark underbrush—a low roosting Barred Owl! A trip highlight—thanks, Jamie! Back along Zoo Rd, we located a Magnolia Warbler with Chickadees. We had a total of 32 species for the day. Thanks to all who came and contributed sharp eyes and hearing! Trip Report: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/156728>

Jeanne and Tom Verhulst

Sandra L. Frankel Nature Park (Brickyard Trail) - 9/13/2023

On a cloudy and humid 65 degree morning, and with high hopes but modest expectations, our group of fifteen birders set out to explore the charms of Brighton's lovely Brickyard Trail. We mainly found the usual woodpeckers, chickadees, nuthatches, catbirds, robins, sparrows, cardinals, and goldfinches, but a Cooper's Hawk was a nice addition, as was a Philadelphia Vireo, and a Bald Eagle cruising high over the marsh was a very welcome surprise. As for the hoped-for warblers that were our main target, we did with some difficulty find two pockets of activity that produced Wilson's, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, and Blackpoll. In all we observed 28 species of birds and had a very pleasant walk.

Tom and Jeanne Verhulst

Ganondagan Birding Field Trip—9/23/23

Wow changing up the trails we walked really paid off although we also lucked out with perfect weather and a storm south of us. We traveled about 2.5 miles through many habitat types including a recently restored meadow area. We walked wide, mowed and packed dirt trails through grasslands, shrub land, across streams and wetlands to travel back up the hill in hardwood forest. The hedgerows yielded sparrows, finches and a surprising number of fall warblers. We had a total of 48 species including Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Raven, four sparrow species including Lincoln's, Eastern Towhee, Swainson's Thrush, Scarlet Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. We also had a lovely flock of warblers which stayed in the same area for 3 hours as we had them at the beginning and end of the trip - Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and Black-throated Green Warbler.

Amy Kahn and Neal Reilly



Dunlin, Braddock Bay East Spit © Candace Giles October 25, 2023

Records Report September

September 2023 was a month of exceptional weather. Temperatures averaged 64.7°F, 1.1° above average. A heatwave the week of Labor Day produced two days in the low 90°s (5-6 Sep). After the first week of the month, a stationary high pressure near James Bay kept daytime highs in the 70°s, humidity low, and delivered plenty of sunshine for the remainder of the month. Precipitation averaged 1.37", 1.81" below average – a relief from the extremely wet summer Rochester had been experiencing. Most of this precipitation fell at night in two major rain events.

Migration continued strong this month. The progression of migration was quite noticeable. The diversity of warblers slowly decreased as the month went on and Yellow-rumped Warblers started to dominate flocks. Sparrow flock size and diversity increased throughout the month. Diving ducks arrived as well along the Lake Ontario shoreline. The bird of the month goes to a Sabine's Gull found by Mike Gullo on 19 Sep at the Sodus Lighthouse Lakewatch. While another Sabine's Gull was observed in Monroe County by a pair of birders, the Sodus Point gull stuck around long enough for six others to observe this very uncommon species in Region 2. The eBird download came in just over 38,200 lines after filtering, up 0.8% from 2022.

As with a typical September, waterfall numbers and diversity increased as the month progressed. Snow Goose (count 1) and Cackling Goose (1) arrived on 29 Sep. Puddle ducks increased in numbers on the ponds and bays on the Lake Ontario shoreline. Migratory species like Northern Pintail and Green-winged Teal were tallied from traditional lakewatch spots like Hamlin Beach SP and the newly-popular Sodus Lighthouse Lakewatch alike. Aythya arrived consistently (as opposed to early individuals or incidental summer birds) by the middle of the month. Surf Scoter and Black Scoter also arrived in the last half of the month.

Waterbirds (rails, coots, gallinules, and grebes) started to move as well. Jim Miles found an Eared Grebe on Braddock Bay on 15 Sep. The one-day-wonder was observed by a handful of birders. The high count of Pied-billed Grebe (25), Common Gallinule (39), and American Coot (65) once again came out of the Sandhill Crane Unit/VanDyne Spoor Road in the NMWMA, as typical of summer months. Sandhill Cranes were reported in small numbers within the NMWMA.

The water level drop on Lake Ontario accelerated this month, dropping 0.72' (8.6") from 246.00' to 245.24' by the end of the month. Lake Ontario's water is the primary water source for commercial shipping in the St. Lawrence Seaway. A need to increase water levels on the St. Lawrence River to avoid grounding any more ships on the dan-

gerous shoals gave the governing body an opportunity to catch up on the annual lowering of the lake levels that the overly wet summer had thwarted. What resulted in the local birding scene was a repeat of the mudflat conditions at Braddock Bay, only delayed a month compared to 2022. Diversity and numbers of shorebirds did not match 2022, but observers reported most of the expected species. Pat Martin and Jeremy Pete reported a Whimbrel on 17 Sep from the West Spit then the East Spit. A Red Knot delighted many observers from 2-13 Sep at the East Spit. Other birds of interest at the East Spit included a maximum of eight Stilt Sandpiper on 9 Sep, as many as three Baird's Sandpipers on various days of the month, and at least 15 White-rumped Sandpipers on 29 Sep. Interestingly, there was only one report of Short-billed Dowitcher, which came from the Montezuma Audubon Center during the Montezuma Muckrace on 8 Sep. Observers tallied 21 species of shorebirds.

The first full month of Jaeger season produced at least 34 Parasitic Jaegers along the Lake Ontario shoreline. Mike Gullo and Jay McGowan reported a Long-tailed Jaeger from the Sodus Lighthouse Lakewatch on 19 Sep. Mike Gullo and Brad Carlson reported another Parasitic/Long-tailed Jaeger, also from the Sodus Lighthouse Lakewatch, on 20 Sep. Among the gulls, Chris Wood and Jessie Barry picked out a Sabine's Gull heading east with Bonaparte's Gulls along the lake on 4 Sep from Edgemere Drive. Mike Gullo found another Sabine's Gull off the Sodus Lighthouse Lakewatch on 19 Sep that six other observers witnessed. Rounding out the gulls, there were about nine Lesser Black-backed Gulls in Region 2 this month. A single Forester's Terns was noted on Braddock Bay on 9 Sep and 30 Sep. While September was a great month for watching the lake, it was a disappointing month for watching the skies for raptors. Nothing significant stood out at all in the data among this group, where all counts were low, likely due to many days with southerly winds.

Finishing with the passerines, a typical September played out: high diversity at the beginning of the month and ending with departures for some species. Warbler diversity was gradually replaced with sparrow diversity. Swallows like Purple Martins, Barn Swallows, Bank Swallows, and Cliff Swallows slowly disappeared, leaving only Tree Swallows and the occasional Northern-rough Winged Swallows. Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets arrived by the second week of the month and increased in abundance as the month went by. Thrush migration picked up, with several nocturnal migration enthusiasts noting high numbers of Swainson's Thrush (max 150 individuals) and Gray-cheeked Thrush (max 23 individuals) nocturnal flight calls (NFCs) in the dawn descent phase, about 45 minutes before sunrise, especially on the last few mornings of the

September Reports continued

month. One record of interest was that the Acadian Flycatcher summering at Hamlin Beach SP stayed until at least 2 Sep. An Olive-sided Flycatcher was reported from Quaker Pond Trail at Mendon Ponds Park through 29 Sep, one of the latest records for Region 2. An early Lapland Longspur was photographed at the East Spit on 25 Sep. Among the warblers, Chris Wood and Jessie Barry reported a Connecticut Warbler from Firehouse Woods on 3 Sep. Andy Guthrie reported another Connecticut Warbler from the Brickyard Trail on 9 Sep. There were 27 species of warblers reported, a good month overall.

Please submit reports to eBird, post them on genesee-birds, and/or send by the 5th of the month to Nick Kachala, nicholaskach@gmail.com. 1141 Rush-Scottsville Rd., Rush, NY 14543

Observers: Janet Akin, Richard Ashworth, BBBO (Andrea Patterson, et al.), BBRR (Braddock Bay Raptor Research), Joshua Bacon, Diane Baillargeon, Colby Baker, Ted Barnett, Jessie Barry, Jim Barry, Liz Barry, Mitchell Barry, Sue Barth, Betty Beckham, Don Bemont, Steve Benedict, Linda Clark Benedict, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Shawn Billerman, Linda Bitkel, Johnathon Blades, Robin Blakesley, Alan & Lisa Bloom, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, Joe Brin, Janet & Scott Brooks, Mark Brown, J. D. Brummer, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Bruce Cady, Brad Carlson, Posemary Catlin, Denis & Judy Caysinger, Robert Cicotta, Jeanne Cimorelli, Roger Clark, Kelly Close, Jeremy Collison, Andrew Consler, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Willie D'Anna, Ian Davies, Peter Debes, Jim Dehnert, Sam Denenberg, Deborah Dohne, Steve Donohue, Grace Dowdall, Gordon Dutter, Diane Egan, Eaton Birding Society, Alexander Feinberg, Joe Fell, George Ford, Katie Ford, Tony Ford, Kyle Gage, Andy Garland, John Garrett, Matthew Gavette, Janis George, Jessica George, Michelle Gianvecchio, Candy Giles, Chris Goetz, Janes Goetz, John Gordinier, Karla Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Jane Graves, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Austin Groff, Lucretia Grosshans, Georgia & Ralph Guenther, Michael Gullo, Carmen Gumina, Andrew Guthrie, Chris Guthrie, Danny Guthrie, Richard Guthrie, Bill Haake, Benjamin Hack, Ryan Hall, Helen & Chris Haller, Kim Hartquist, Jim & Allison Healy, Maisie Hebrank, Christina Hoh, Debi Holt, Gabrielle Hood, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Lynn Howes, Pat Inzinna, Carolyn Jacobs, Nancy Jameson, Nick Kachala, Amy Kahn, Laura & Paul Kammermeier, Ryan Kayhart, Jacob Kearney, David Kennedy, Darlene Kershner, Josh Ketry, Alexander Keyel, Ted Keyel, Jim Kimball, Mark Kimble, Cindy Kindle, Kathy Kirsch, Renee Kittleman, Gary Klue, Abigail Kress, Hans Kunze, Karl Kunze, Michael Laird, Chris Lajewski, Jennifer Lang, Tom Lathrop, Greg Lawrence, Schyler

Lawson, Gayle Lazoration, Celia Lewis, Joan Lindberg, Lee Ling, Peggy Mabb, Peggy Marces, Liz Magnanti, Melissa Mance-Coniglio, Pat Martin, Judy Massare, Lauri Mattle, Martha Mayo, Jacob McCartney, Daniel McDermott, Kevin McGann, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Bob McQuire, Ann McMican, Scott Meagher, Jim Miles, Mark Miller, Kent Millham, Phil Mills, Adrielle Mitchell, Ann Mitchell, Brian & Brooke Morse, Whitney Mortimer, Linda Mott, Leah Mould, Sheila Mumpton, Kevin Murphy, Allen Nash, Ann Nash, Tom Nash, Hollis Noble, Matt Nusstein, David Odell, Andrea Patterson, Shelly Patterson, Doug Perryman, Jeremy Pete, Norma Platt, Jay Powell, Derek Pulhamus, Doug & Elizabeth Rabjohns, Carolyn Ragan, E. Rapchick, Rfalconcam.com, RBA Field Trips, Neal Reilly, Rosemary Reilly, Isaac Rizzo, Michael Rizzo, Susan Roberts, Susan Robertson, Brian Rohrs, Claudia Rosen, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Shawn Ryan, Kevin Rybczinski, Jennifer Rycenga, Jackie Salsbury, Greg Sanda, Karl Schmidt, James Sharpless, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Judy Slein, Roger Smith, Tom & Pat Smith, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Chris Stanger, Goran Stankovic, Rick Stevens, Wendy Stevenson, Reuben Stoltzfus, Allan Strong, Joel Strong, Kimberly Sucey, Steve Taylor, Annette Teng, Joyce Testa, David Tetlow, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Mary Jane Thomas, John H. Thomas, Brian Tuttle, Geoff Twardokus, Nathan Ukens, Bonnie VanDerMeid, Alison Van Keuren, Tom & Jeanne Verhulst, Matthew Voelker, Brad Walker, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Drew Weber, Kim Weeks, Richard Weilacher, Kinsley Whittum, Joe Wing, Glen Wolford, Paul Wolter, Chris Wood, Jim Wood, WNY Young Birders, Ken Zidell + others (there were 416 observers who submitted to eBird).



	2023	2022	10-year Average
Species for Sept.	209	225	219.7
New for the year	3	5	4.8
Total for the year to date	286	291	282.4

A fragile foothold:

Maintaining a recently-colonized piping plover population on Lake Ontario

Dr. Jonathan Cohen and Dr. Alison Koczek
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry

The federally endangered piping plover became extirpated from the eastern Great Lakes as of the early 1980s. At that time, the Great Lakes population had dropped to 17 nesting pairs due to habitat loss, human disturbance, and human-subsidized predators. The species is highly vulnerable to these threats because it nests on the ground, relying on camouflage to avoid losing its nest to predators. Additionally, after hatching, young are flightless for their first month, depending on their parents for protection, thermoregulation, and to find food.

Three decades of conservation efforts for the remnant population pulled the species from the brink of extinction and has led to re-colonization of some areas, including a single nesting pair on eastern Lake Ontario in 2015, followed by an increase to two pairs in 2016 and three pairs as of 2021. A working group of federal, state, NGO, and personnel from SUNY ESF has formed for the purpose of management and monitoring of piping plovers on the U.S. side of Lake Ontario.

Since 2015, piping plovers have successfully nested at eastern Lake Ontario sites in most years. Management activities include:

"Symbolic" fencing around nesting areas to reduce human disturbance. This consists of strands of string connecting adjacent fence posts, some of which have informative signs.

Nest enclosures. These are circular wire cages with a bird-netting roof placed around nests that allow plovers to enter and leave, but prevent most predators from accessing the eggs.

Daily monitoring. Personnel from Sandy Island Beach State Park, the New York State DEC, Onondaga Audubon, and SUNY ESF check on each nest or brood every day as conditions allow, to make sure they are safe.

Outreach and Advocacy. At Sandy Island Beach State Park, staff talk to the public and hand out materials that provide information on the species. We have worked with partners to produce outreach documents and start initiatives, such as Share the Shore, related to protection of local piping plovers and their nesting sites. Fact sheets for partners to share were created, including one on Dredging and Plovers.

Habitat enhancement. At Lakeview Wildlife Management Area, we have reduced vegetation encroachment on nesting areas and have scattered small shells on the sand, which attracts plovers because it provides some camouflage for their eggs.

Thanks to these activities, we have been thrilled to see our population grow. However, the fragile foothold of piping plovers on Lake Ontario is far from secure. In 2023, we lost two of our three breeding males to unknown predators, likely birds of prey. Their mates then left our site and were seen re-pairing outside of New York. We hope that new pairs will find our sites on Lake Ontario in 2024 and decide to nest there. But because males and females migrate independently of each other, in a small population like ours, the timing must be perfect for two birds to arrive at the same nesting location, meet, and decide to form a pair.

Now Showing at the Image City Gallery

Through November 26

"Wings and Wanderlust"

Photography by Marie Costanza

Featuring photography of the birds of
Central Florida

Image City Gallery

722 University Avenue, Rochester

Tues-Sat 12pm to 6:00pm

Sunday 12pm to 4:00 pm

Free admission



Bylaws Change: Vote at December 14 Meeting

The RBA Board of Directors has identified a need for a change to the Bylaws, specifically in Section 30: Term of Office, and the President's term limit.

Our Nominating Committee has contacted dozens of members to try to find someone to take over the position of President as Randi Minetor's two-year term of office comes to an end. **No one has stepped up to take this over, either from inside the Board or from the general membership.**

After months of attempting to fill this position, the Board has determined that the best course of action is to provide an option in the Bylaws for the current President to continue in that position under certain specific conditions. We also must address the continuation of the Immediate Past President's term, as this person also will not be replaced by an outgoing President.

We will vote on this change to the Bylaws at our December membership meeting on Thursday, December 14. **This meeting was originally planned to be Zoom only, because the speaker will be coming to us on Zoom. However, to attract as many people as possible so that we have at least 10 percent of our membership voting, we will hold the meeting in-person as well as on Zoom.**

Here is the current Bylaw regarding the President's term:

Section 30. Term of Office

Each Director elected at the first regular membership meeting of the fiscal year shall assume the duties of the position immediately upon election, and shall hold office for one year, or until a successor has been duly elected and taken office. The President shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. There shall be no restriction on the re-election of other Directors for additional terms. Additional officers appointed by the Board of Directors, shall hold office for such period as the Board of Directors may, from time to time, determine.

Here are the Additional Paragraphs proposed by the 2023 Board of Directors:

If a successor to President cannot be found among the membership, the President may serve more than two consecutive terms under the following conditions: (1) the acting President agrees to serve the additional term, (2) there is unanimous agreement from the Board of Directors, and (3) the President is re-elected by the membership during the election of Directors at the first annual membership meeting of the fiscal year.

In the event that a President serving more than two years does occur, the acting Past President may also stay to serve on the Board of Directors under the conditions: (1) the acting Past President agrees to serve the additional term, (2) there is unanimous agreement from the Board of Directors. If the acting Past President does not choose to stay on the Board, their role will be filled by a past Board member with at least one year of experience. This member would be chosen by the current acting Board and needs to achieve a majority vote in favor by the Board.

BIRDS AND BREWS

*Join us for craft beers and conversation!
A chance to meet up and socialize with people who love birds.*

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

**Knucklehead Craft Brewing
426 Ridge Road, Webster**

With lots of craft brews and a great menu of shareable appetizers, pizzas, and sandwiches, Knucklehead gives us great hospitality. We'll be in the front room, so look for our sign!

<https://knuckleheadcraftbrewing.com/>



Brant, Summerville Pier © Alan Bloom October 12, 2023

Field Reports Continued

Hamlin Beach State Park—10/8/2023

The trip to Hamlin Beach State Park was met with cold temperatures, strong west winds, and occasional rain squalls. The conditions did not deter twelve participants to meet at the park, among which were seven University of Rochester students from Dr. Michael Rizzo's Environmental Economics class. We did a brief walk at the west side of parking lot 1, then another at the Lakewatch site, and finally walked Devil's Nose trail. The high winds made viewing passerines very difficult at best, and ducks at the lakewatch were far too distant. Almost everyone got to see Brown Creeper and White-throated Sparrows on the Devil's Nose trail.

In mid-morning, the trip traveled east to the North Marina on Braddock Bay off Manitou Beach Rd. Here we had some protection from the winds and enjoyed viewing waterfowl. Fourteen species of waterfowl were tallied. Although there were large gatherings of ducks, a few species were present only as singletons: Northern Pintail, Redhead, and Northern Shoveler. There were three small terns visible from the marina, one of which was a Common Tern, and a Bonaparte's Gull were seen over the bay.

Our last stop was a walk to the mudflats at the East Spit of Braddock Bay. Along the half-mile walk to the end, we encountered a very large flock of Yellow-rumped Warblers and some White-throated Sparrows. The warblers were difficult to see because they moved so frequently in the high winds but we also found two Palm Warblers. A few other passerines were found near the end of this trail. Two Black-bellied Plovers and a single Dunlin were the only shorebirds found on the mudflats along with local gulls.

One of the students, Sangs Subba, took a group photo of the field trip. It was a long day and one of the few times we have tried to birdwatch in strong winds accompanied with rain squalls.

Dominic Sherony & Rick Stevens



Photo credit: Sangs Subba

SAVE THE DATE!
Annual RBA Winter Dinner
Saturday, January 20, 2023
5:00pm - 9:00 pm
Asbury First United Methodist Church
1050 East Avenue Rochester, NY
 Reserve your seat:
Wanda Thistle
585-281-0956
thistlew@yahoo.com

Please include: your name, the number of people attending, and the side dish you will be bringing.

Come hungry! Everyone brings a dish to pass (gluten free and vegetarian dishes are gladly welcomed, as are your usual favorites). The main entrees are Roasted Turkey and Honey Basted Ham.

No Alcohol: The church requests that no alcoholic beverages be consumed on the premises.

The White Albatross table returns! Sell or trade artwork, field guides, and other gently used items. If you bring something for the Table, be sure to price it, and let us know if you want the sale price to go as a donation to RBA or back to you.

Member presentations: Our evening entertainment will be presentations by members of photos from their travels or from local birding adventures, as well as artwork or carvings. If you plan to give a presentation, please let us know and how long it will take. Info about whom to contact will be in the December newsletter.

Please email or call Richard Ashworth, who will be coordinating this segment, at ashworth@rochester.rr.com, or (585) 381-2189

Many hands make light work. If you can help with this event, please contact Wanda Thistle at 585-281-0956.

November Monthly Meeting: Thursday, November 9, 7:00 p.m.

Asbury First United Methodist Church, 1050 East Ave., Rochester

Zoom: Link will be distributed two days prior to the meeting

Speaker: Jean-Francois Therrien, Ph.D., Senior Scientist and Graduate Study Director, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary



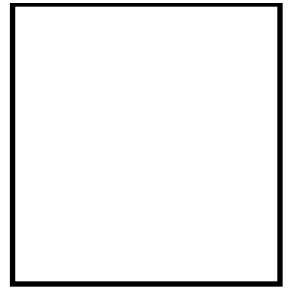
After completing an academic internship with Hawk Mountain in the fall of 2002, Jean-Francois Therrien returned nine years later as a biologist. He now leads the Sanctuary's research projects in the Arctic and is involved in several studies, including the movement ecology of New World vultures and peregrine falcons across the Americas. He also oversees all of the associated graduate students studying raptor ecology worldwide.

When he's not monitoring the long-term American kestrel nest-box program or helping with the migration counts from the Sanctuary's lookout, JF can be found teaching statistics to Sanctuary trainees and enjoying life with his wife and two children.





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