



# Bittle Gull

Visit the RBA's website at [www.RochesterBirding.org](http://www.RochesterBirding.org)

Rochester Birding Association, P.O. Box 92055, 1335 Jefferson Road, Rochester, NY 14692-9998

## MAY AND EARLY JUNE 2021 EVENTS & BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

**Please Note:** Pre-registration is now required for all field trips (see the COVID-19 field trip guidelines in the revised field trip schedule or on the [RBA website](http://www.RochesterBirding.org)). Bring your own binoculars and scopes if you have them, as there will be no sharing of equipment. Social distancing will be practiced, and masks will be required.

**May 1**  
Saturday

### **TAYLOR MARSH (Joint trip with the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society)**

Taylor Marsh is a preserve owned by the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society and located in Ontario County north of Honeoye Lake. It is best known for marsh birds, including both American and Least Bittern and Virginia Rail. However, the star attraction is the 2-3 Sandhill Cranes that have been present in this area all year around for many years. They are occasionally heard at Taylor, although seldom seen. Taylor also has brush-shrub and wooded upland habitat with a good variety of spring migrants and breeding birds. An adjacent hay field is home to Bobolinks and meadowlarks. It has a checklist of well over 100 species, and we usually rack up 40-50 in just a couple of hours. This is mostly flat trail walking, which can be muddy. No restrooms are available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the Taylor Marsh parking area on the west side of Allen's Hill Road just south of Nighan Hill Road. From Rochester, take I-390 south to the Avon exit. Turn left onto Routes 5&20 and go east. In the town of Lima, turn right onto Route 15 A and follow it south. Turn left onto Richmond Mills Road (Livingston County Road 41). It becomes Ontario County Road 15. Follow County Road 15 past County Road 37 and turn right at the next stop sign onto Allen's Hill Road. (There is no road sign at the intersection.)

**Leaders:** Lynn Braband 585-436-9388 and Jay Greenberg 585-256-0485

**May 2**  
Sunday

### **FOUR MILE CREEK PRESERVE, WEBSTER**

We will look for spring migrants along the approximately 2 to 3 miles of gently rolling hiking trails. The trails will most likely be muddy, so appropriate footwear is recommended. No restrooms are available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** in the preserve parking lot at the SE corner of Lake Road and Phillips Road in Webster.

**Leader:** Christina Hoh 973-224-7009 and co-leaders Sheryl Gracewski & Tom Nash 585-261-6975

**May 4**  
Tuesday

### **CAMP BEECHWOOD AND OLGA FLEISHER WILDLIFE PRESERVE**

Camp Beechwood is on the shoreline of Lake Ontario in Wayne County and should attract warblers, vireos, thrushes and other migrants. It also boasts a robust Bank Swallow colony. Bring beverages, snacks or lunch if you plan to attend the second part of this trip to the Olga Fleisher Preserve (known locally as Huckleberry Swamp), a bottomland forest and wetland with an excellent boardwalk and trail. Beechwood is mostly flat, wide trail walking; Huckleberry has a wheelchair-accessible boardwalk except for a short dirt road back to the parking area. A port-a-john is available. Meet at **7:00 a.m.** at Webster Park, corner of Lake and Holt Roads, or at **7:30 a.m.** at B. Forman Park, 4507 Lake Road, Pultneyville, 14538. We will continue to Beechwood from there.

**Leader:** Doug Daniels 585-394-9274 and co-leader Jeanne Verhulst 585-473-9229

**May 5**  
Wednesday

### **COBBS HILL PARK**

With spring in full swing, come to one of Rochester's best-kept birding secrets: Cobbs Hill Park's Washington Grove. Colorful warblers and other spring migrants arrive *en masse* at this urban oasis of tall stately trees. Pat will demonstrate birding by ear as we search for Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Blue, and Black-throated Green, Nashville, Black-and-white and Hooded Warblers among others. We will likely hear the flute-like Wood Thrush and see Hermit Thrushes searching the ground for food. Sparrows, orioles, and perhaps a Scarlet Tanager will make an appearance. Washington Grove is one of the best spring birding spots in the area. The entrances to the grove have 2 short, steep trails; the main trails are gentle hills. No restrooms are available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** opposite the reservoir in the grassy area between the road and the woods. Use the entrance off Highland Avenue, just east of Monroe Avenue.

**Leaders:** Tom and Jeanne Verhulst 585-473-9229, Sue Robertson 585-427-2535 and Pat Martin 585-301-5485

**May 8**  
Saturday

### **BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP - LAKESHORE WARBLER HOTSPOTS**

The shoreline of Lake Ontario is a haven for migrating warblers and other passerines. We will stop at several areas where these birds tend to congregate in spring. Learn the basics of identifying our most colorful migrants on this trip. We'll be looking for color patterns, song, and the distinctive behaviors, to enhance identification skills with these fast-moving beauties. Though flat, several trails may be very muddy. **Waterproof boots are STRONGLY**

**recommended!** Dress for the weather and bring binoculars. No restrooms are available. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the parking lot behind Lakeview Community Church, 30 Long Pond Road in Greece (near Edgemere Drive.).

**Leaders:** *John Boettcher 585-671-9639, Greg Lawrence 585-730-2553, and Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422*

**May 9**  
Sunday

**AMY'S POND AND WOODSMITH -- GENESEE LAND TRUST / RBA JOINT TRIP**

This is a field trip to the private property of Janet Smith for spring migrants, early nesters and waterfowl. Two adjacent easements make up 187 acres that include two large ponds, mature woodland, and open fields all within 0.5 mile of Lake Ontario. Past trips have yielded eagles, bitterns, herons, many warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, etc. We'll walk along uneven trails, so bring a walking stick if needed, and prepare for a medium-long hike in an outstanding sanctuary open only by special arrangement, many thanks to Genesee Land Trust! No restrooms are available.

Meet at **7:00 a.m.** at Webster Park on the west corner of Holt and Lake Roads, or at Amy's Pond at **7:30 a.m.** To get to Amy's Pond, take Route 104 east to County Line Road. Drive north until it ends at Lake Road. Turn right and travel approximately one mile to 484 Lake Road, Ontario, NY and turn down the long gravel driveway (on the south side of Lake Road) until you reach the marked parking area.

**Leaders:** *Sheryl Gracewski and Tom Nash 585-261-6975 and co-leader Kevin Farrell 585-748-6919*

**May 11**  
Tuesday

**ONTARIO PATHWAYS**

We'll look for warblers and other spring migrants along this level, rails-to-trails pathway in Ontario County. This well-maintained trail is an established favorite for wildlife viewing and scenic views. Wear comfortable walking shoes. At times, the weather can be fickle, but we've seen better warblers in the snow on this trip than many trips get on sunny days. Dress accordingly! No restrooms are available. This trip is wheelchair accessible. Meet at **7:00 a.m.** in the Bushnell's Basin Park and Ride lot (off NY Route 96 just south of Exit 27 from I-490). If COVID guidelines allow, carpool arrangements may be made before we commute to the trail area parking.

**Leaders:** *Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422 and Rosemary Reilly 585-748-0802*

**May 13**  
Thursday

**NEW!! RUSH RIVERSIDE REFUGE** (in association with Rush Recreation and Parks Association)

The town of Rush has recently acquired a new patch of land containing old-growth woods, farm fields in various stages of succession, and a mile of Genesee River frontage. Join us as we explore this "new" birding spot. Trails may be wet and muddy, so waterproof shoes/boots are recommended. No restrooms are available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at Rush Riverside Refuge on Rush-Scottsville Road (Route 251), west of the intersection with East River Road, on the north side of 251. Either park on Route 251 or in the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum parking lot.

**Leader:** *Nick Kachala 585-750-5536 and co-leader Ann McMican 585-533-1222*

**May 13**  
Thursday

**RBA Virtual Meeting, 7:00 p.m. Speaker: Nathan Pieplow. Title: Hearing Evolution.** See the article on p.4 for more information.

**May 15**  
Saturday

**POWDER MILLS PARK AND BANC SANCTUARY (Joint trip with Burroughs Audubon Nature Club)**

On the east side, Powder Mills Park is a mature woodland and wetland park that can be productive for many late-migrating or nesting species. In recent years, Baltimore Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Scarlet Tanagers, Pileated Woodpeckers, Red-tailed Hawks, American Woodcocks and Blue-winged Warblers have all nested there. The trip will continue with a visit to the BANC Sanctuary on Railroad Mills Road, where we'll walk the trails around the woodland, wetland and creek habitats. Nesting species there include Eastern Bluebirds, House Wrens, Eastern Phoebe and Eastern Screech-Owl, and adjacent tree lines have produced a variety of migrating warblers. Both locations are mostly flat trail-walking but waterproof footwear is advised. Please note that no restroom facilities will be available at the sanctuary. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the Powder Mills Park Fish Hatchery parking lot on Park Road.

**Leader:** *Richard Ashworth 585-381-2189 and co-leaders Tom and Jeanne Verhulst 585-473-9229*

**May 16**  
Sunday

**MANITOU BEACH PRESERVE**

Our trip to this lakeside treasure should rack up good numbers of warblers, flycatchers, and other spring arrivals. Owned by the Genesee Land Trust, the Manitou Beach Preserve consists of 5 acres of flat field, forest, and hedgerow, shrub, and cattail wetlands extending into Braddock Bay. Wear waterproof, sturdy shoes and don't forget the bug spray! No restrooms are available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** in the Owl Woods parking lot on Manitou Beach Road (Route 261) at the Lake Ontario State Parkway. If COVID guidelines allow, we will shuttle to the preserve, as parking space is limited.

**Leader:** *Amy Kahn 585-310-2330 and co-leader Kevin Farrell 585-748-6919*

**May 18**  
Tuesday

**OATKA CREEK PARK**

Woods and meadow provide great habitat for nesting species such as Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, Blue-winged Warbler and Field Sparrow. This will cover about 3 miles of mostly flat trails. A port-a-john is available at the trailhead. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the park entrance at the intersection of Quaker Road and Union Street in Garbutt. Take Route 383 (Scottsville-Mumford Road) west 1.5 to 2 miles from its intersection with Route 386 in Scottsville and turn south on Union Street for about 0.5 miles.

**Leader:** *Judy Gurley 585-582-2349 and co-leader Nick Kachala 585-750-5536*

**May 20**  
Thursday

**THOUSAND ACRE SWAMP**

Thousand Acre Swamp is a preserve owned by the Nature Conservancy of Western New York. It has a bird checklist of 120 species. This level 2.5-mile walk goes through varied habitats, resulting in a variety of breeding bird species

(continued on p. 6)

## Welcome to the Flock



**Join us in welcoming these 22 new members (12 memberships) who joined in the last month.**

Linn Lee  
 Ann Graham & Robert O'Brien,  
 Paul Mason, Ginger Cobb  
 Eric Emrich  
 Gina & Steve Clough  
 Karen Stanhope  
 Kelly Nagle & Tom, Scott, Jimmy  
 Gilman  
 Kathy Jo Connors & Wayne T.  
 Michaels  
 David Hagmier  
 Fred & Kathi Lieb  
 Kathleen Almeter  
 Linda Schriever & Jean Oswald  
 Phil Irons

**Current RBA Membership as of April 15 is 417:**

401 household memberships  
 2 young birders  
 1 *Little Gull* membership  
 13 complimentary

*Jo Taylor*  
 Membership Data

*Adrianna Anderson*  
 Membership Outreach

## President's Column

Liz Magnanti



The sounds of spring are in the air! Birds begin their chorus in the early hours of the morning, and spring peepers round out the reverie at night. Early migrants are rolling in, and soon, we will be in the full swing of spring migration! This is the time of year I always find myself scrambling to

learn more bird ID's, both by sight and sound, so I can bring my A game come peak migration. I usually end up bringing my C game at best, but every year I learn more and more, and I am progressively becoming a better birder.

Over the next month the RBA has a long list of field trips. These field trips will continue to be by registration only. The good news is, the RBA Field Trip Committee proposed to increase the number of participants per field trip up to 20, and the board voted in agreement. Registration begins a week before each trip date. The registrations are through Eventbrite, and the link to register can be found in the description of the field trip on [rochesterbirding.org](http://rochesterbirding.org). There has been a very large demand for field trips, so I apologize to those who may have missed out on a trip they were looking forward to. We hope to continue to relax the maximum trip capacity rules as the year progresses.

The birding hotspot map and Last 30 Days Gallery on the RBA website are great resources if you are looking for places to bird. They will help direct you on where to go, when and what you can expect to see. If you snap photos, make sure to send them in to the gallery! There are a lot of amazing photos on there from our talented membership.

May's monthly meeting will be virtual, and will be the last membership meeting until after our usual summer break. We will keep you posted about the September meeting, and if it will be in-person or virtual, as we get closer to that date. Unfortunately, our usual June potluck picnic has been cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns.

The biggest change the RBA is about to experience is the loss of our amazing editor, Jay Greenberg. After 11 plus, (yes almost 12!) years, Jay will be stepping down from the role. I would like to thank Jay for all of his hard work in putting

together this newsletter for those years. His absence will leave a big void to be filled! That being said, we are on the lookout for a new editor of the *Little Gull*. If you are interested in the role, please reach out to myself, or The Board as a whole by contacting [rba-board@googlegroups.com](mailto:rba-board@googlegroups.com).

I hope you get some time over the next month to relax, get some fresh air, and enjoy the birds!

### Editor's Corner

Jay Greenberg

### Moving On



I am now in my 12<sup>th</sup> year as *Little Gull* editor, and this is supposed to be my last issue. I have produced 135 issues as well as writing numerous articles, large and small, and contributing countless photos.

When I started this job, I didn't know I would be doing it for so long, or that it would become such a big part of my life. But obviously, I can't do it forever, and I have been thinking of stepping down for a while, now. The RBA might also benefit from a fresh take on its newsletter.

For the most part, it has gone smoothly. I have enjoyed interacting with a bunch of RBA presidents and numerous other contributors. Sometimes, it was a challenge to find content.

I had hoped to find a successor before stepping down, but this hasn't happened, so it will be up to the RBA Board of Directors to find a replacement. I don't want there to be a gap in publication, so I am willing to help my replacement get started. The RBA is still very important to me, and I would like to remain useful to it in some capacity.

I am now in my 31<sup>st</sup> year of RBA membership, but it doesn't seem that long, and sometimes, I still feel like a newcomer. At other times, I

*(continued on p. 6)*

## May Talk and Speaker

### Hearing Evolution

Over the past two decades, DNA studies have radically restructured the bird family tree. Now ducks and chickens are together at the front of the field guide; falcons have landed next to parrots; our tanagers are grosbeaks; our seedeater is a tanager! But some of these taxonomic “surprises” wouldn’t have been so surprising, if we had just been listening. This talk will show how the vocal repertoires of birds can reveal deep evolutionary relationships. Among other topics, prepare to learn why warblers and sparrows are much more similar than you think; why the name of the Upland Sandpiper (once called Upland Plover) is still wrong; and what the heck a Yellow-breasted Chat really is.

Growing up in South Dakota, Nathan Pieplow got started identifying bird songs by studying the classic “Birding By Ear” field guides in the Peterson series. It wasn’t until 2003, when he faced the frustrations of studying sounds for his first trips to Mexico and Costa Rica, that he became dedicated to finding new and better ways to learn, describe, and catalog bird sounds. Along the way he became a sound recordist and an amateur ethologist (a student of animal behavior).

Nathan is not one of those superhuman beings who can identify every singing bird, or discern the nocturnal flight call of a Blackpoll Warbler as it passes overhead in the dark. His high-frequency hearing is getting worse every year, and he doesn’t have a great auditory memory. To learn bird sounds, he wanted more resources: more recordings, better glossaries, deeper discussions. So he

set out to create his own resources. The pages at [www.earbirding.com](http://www.earbirding.com) are part of the result. The *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds* is another part.

He lives in Boulder, Colorado, where he teaches writing and rhetoric at the University of Colorado. He is a former editor of the quarterly journal, *Colorado Birds* and one of the developers of the [Colorado County Birding Website](http://ColoradoCountyBirdingWebsite.com) and the [Colorado Birding Trail](http://ColoradoBirdingTrail.com). He regularly give [talks about bird sounds](http://talks.aboutbirdsounds.com) to bird clubs and ornithological societies. Watch one of his presentations here:

<https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/live-event/bird-sounds-decoded/> Contact him at [npieplow@gmail.com](mailto:npieplow@gmail.com).



## RBA IN THE FIELD

### Braddock Bay to Hamlin Beach State Park 3/20/21

On a brisk, clear winter morning, our COVID-limited group of 8 members met at Braddock Bay Park to work our way to Hamlin Beach and back. A quick scan over the bay produced the usual Mute Swans and Canada Geese plus a nice group of American Coots and a pair of Buffleheads. A pair of Hooded Mergansers flew over the woods. A singing cardinal and Red-winged Blackbird plus drumming Red-bellied Woodpecker gave a spring feel to the chilly air.

We moved west to our first stop at North Hamlin Road where, just west of Townline Road, a large well-known Bald Eagle’s nest had a barely visible head down on the nest. The 8 Song

Sparrows that flushed from the roadside were some of the only migrants for the day.

Farther down North Hamlin Road, the large open fields near Westphal Road had some Canada Geese and Ring-billed Gulls, but far fewer than just a week before. Without shared scopes, it was a bit of work for most to get on the few Horned Larks that were scattered around.

On to Moscow Road where Lynn spotted Snow Geese overhead, so we went back to Redman Road and found some that landed. A Northern Mockingbird and 12 Common Redpolls were bonus birds for that stop.

At the entrance to Hamlin Beach State Park, we encountered Eastern Bluebird which we also had at the lakeshore. The water off of Lot #1

and Yanty Creek held a couple of Long-tailed Ducks, Common Goldeneye and 30 Red-breasted Mergansers.

The trail at Yanty Creek produced both nuthatch species. Tufted Titmouse and chickadees plus 2 White-throated Sparrows were using a well-hidden bird feeder. The beautiful marsh overlook there gave us 2 Common Mergansers, and 3 Wood Ducks flushed out of the marsh.

Next to the Owl Woods at Manitou Beach Road; there a staked-out Northern Saw-whet Owl was a lifer for several. Otherwise, the woods were very quiet. Finishing at the hawk watch, the wind had gone to northwest and limited the raptors to single Red-tailed and Red-shouldered

*(continued on the following page)*

*(RBA in the field, continued)*

Hawks. An American Kestrel and 2 Immature Bald Eagles flew over to round out the day. A total of 41 species was tallied on this relatively nice late winter day.

Special thanks to my co-leader Lynn Bergmeyer for keeping eBird checklists for the day!!!!

*Mike Tetlow*

**Braddock Bay Owl Woods  
03/27/2021**

A group of 20 birders, some brand new, congregated for the Owl Woods trip on March 27<sup>th</sup>. The group was split among 4 leaders in order to spread out among the trails. There was one Northern Saw-whet Owl spotted that morning that the groups were able to see. For many, it was their first one, For others, it was their first owl all together! Other highlights of the trip included a flyover of 2 Bald Eagles, a Blue Jay mimicking the call of a Red-tailed Hawk, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Golden Crowned

Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Flicker, Black-capped Chickadees and very vocal Northern Cardinals. After the walk through the woods most of the group moved to the hawk watch platform, where the raptor movement was minimal due to poor weather conditions. A Cooper's Hawk and Northern Harrier made appearances as well as Turkey Vulture. Overall it was a successful, fun and muddy trip!

*Liz Magnanti and Daena Ford*

**Last Opportunity to Give Feedback on the  
Heritage Wind Project**

**ORES DRAFT PERMIT FOR A MAJOR RENEWABLE  
ENERGY FACILITY**

**ORES DOCKET NO. 21-00026, Town of Barre,  
Orleans County**

ORES issued a draft permit to Heritage Wind, LLC (Apex) on March 15, 2021. Apex applied in January to the New York State Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES) for a permit pursuant to Executive Law § 94-c to construct and operate a 184.8 megawatt (MW) wind energy facility located in the Town of Barre, Orleans County.

Now is the last time to comment and express your concern for the proximity of this project to Iroquois and Oak Orchard Wildlife Refuges. The birding community can have a substantial role in highlighting wildlife concerns for large projects such as this.

Oversight for permit compliance on this project will be by a third party consultant hired by Apex, not by a state agency. Three turbines (T 1 – 3) will be 2.6 miles from Iroquois National Wildlife Management Area and along with turbines T 4 – 6; all 6 are 0.75 miles from the northern boundary of Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area. These have been designated as [Important Bird Areas](#). The towers will be 675 feet high with a 531 feet blade rotation area. Blades moving at 210 mph are going to be a challenge for birds trying to land in these 2 wildlife management areas. The tower manufacturer only recommends a setback of 1.1 x blade tip height (600 feet or 0.1 mile) as the distance to a park, so they think their distance of 3/4 mile is generous. The

state doesn't have a recommended setback distance to state land.

The Permit can be found under Sr. No. 17. <https://ores.ny.gov/permit-applications> Click on Project DMM Matter Number 21-00026. All the other information that is publicly available on the project is also available on this website.

The public hearing is May 20, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. through Webex and by phone. Written comments can be received by ORES until 5:00 p.m. May 21 2021. ORES has to reply to comments by 4:00 p.m. June 4, 2021.

Persons filing written comments are strongly encouraged to post their comments on the Department of Public Service's (DPS's) Document and Matter Management (DMM) system. To post a comment, go to <https://ores.ny.gov/permit-applications>, click on Project DMM Matter Number 21-00026, and click on "Post Comments" in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.

Written comments may also be emailed to ORES at [general@ores.ny.gov](mailto:general@ores.ny.gov) or mailed to the Office of Renewable Energy Siting, Empire State Plaza, 240 State Street, P-1 South, J Dock, Albany, NY 12242. Written comments will be considered equally with oral statements delivered at the public comment hearing, provided they are postmarked by **May 21, 2021**, or e-mailed or posted on DMM by 5:00 p.m. on that date.

A map showing the location of the proposed turbines in relation to the nearby conservation lands can be seen at <https://rochesterbirding.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Heritage-Tower-locations-and-WMAs2.jpg>.

*Amy Kahn, RBA Conservation Chair*

(Field Trips, continued from p. 2)

and migrants. The habitats include swampy woods, drier woods, a marshy area, meadows, and a pond. Shorter routes are possible. The entrance and parking lot are on the west side of Jackson Road opposite Penfield Center Road in Penfield. Boots and mosquito repellent are recommended. No restrooms are available. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** in the parking lot. For more information, including photos, go to <https://thegreenjay.com/Thousand%20Acre%20Swamp/>.

**Leaders:** Jay Greenberg 585-256-0485 and Richard Ashworth 585-381-2189

**May 22 IROQUOIS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

Saturday

We will search for Prothonotary Warblers, Yellow-throated Vireos, Cerulean Warblers, and other nesting birds at this local natural treasure. We'll drive to various spots in the refuge and take an easy walk along one of the very scenic trails. This trip is a combination of driving and walking and includes a boardwalk, forest trail, and dirt road. It is not wheelchair-accessible in the forest trail. It is flat and low difficulty. The length is about 3.5 miles total walking. A port-a-john is available about midway through the trip. Meet at **7:00 a.m.** at the Brockport Wegman's parking lot (restrooms are available). For those traveling from the west, meet at the Upper Stafford Marsh Overlook near 5999 Albion Road, Oakfield, NY at **7:30 a.m.** It is advisable to bring water and snacks or a picnic lunch since there may be no local resources and the trip may last into the afternoon.

**Spotting scopes would be very useful.**

**Leaders:** Tom Nash and Sheryl Gracewski 585-261-6975 and co-leader Cathy Ballard 585-322-2621

**May 23 NORWAY ROAD**

Sunday

This unassuming trip usually racks up one of the longest bird lists of the year. From nesting Cerulean Warblers to Purple Martins along the lake, this trip showcases roadside birding in spectacular fashion! There are no long walks, no rough terrain, and it is handicapped-accessible as we make multiple stops to bird along Norway Road. No restrooms are available except at Wegmans. Meet at **7:00 a.m.** toward the upper end of Wegman's parking lot in Ridgemont Plaza off Route 104 in Greece (opposite Heritage Drive).

**Leader:** Nick Kachala 585-750-5536 and co-leader Cathy Ballard 585-322-2621

**May 25 NEW!! TAYLOR ROAD – HEADWATERS OF IRONDEQUOIT CREEK**

Tuesday

We will walk the mowed grassy trails of the 65-acre property of RBA member Linda Roca. Hedgerows, fields, Irondequoit Creek, brushy habitat, and woods should be productive for thrushes, late warblers, and woodpeckers among others. No restroom is available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at 66 Taylor Road, Honeoye Falls, NY 14472. Park in the wide driveway or on Taylor Road.

**Leader:** Jeanne Verhulst 585-473-9229 and co-leader Linda Roca 585-624-2697

**May 29 CANADICE LAKE**

Saturday

We'll go down the east side of the lake for a variety of nesting passerines, especially warblers and vireos. We will make multiple stops as we drive along the road. Meet at **7:00 a.m.** at the Rush Town Hall parking lot on the southwest corner of East Henrietta Road (Route 15A) and Rush-Mendon Road (Route 251). A restroom may be available at the town hall park.

**Leaders:** Lucretia Grosshans 585-467-2474 and Diane Henderson 585-334-9400

**Jun 5 GANONDAGAN STATE HISTORIC SITE STATE PARK**

Saturday

This trip has generated large species lists due to the many habitat types we will travel through. We will start from the parking lot, go to the longhouse and the meadowlark field, and then head down a wide trail through woods, shrubland, and wetland to an overlook in grassland. The round trip is 1.5 miles and is suitable for most. There are hills of moderate difficulty. Restroom facilities are available at the museum center at the end of trip. After we reach the overlook, those who wish can continue for another 2 miles on the narrower Seneca Trail through fields and woods, across County Route 41, and along a wooded stream valley to the Bobolink field. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** in the main parking lot off County Road 41/Boughton Hill Road. The parking lot is situated below the new museum at 7000 County Road 41, Victor, NY 14564. (From Route 444 from Victor, turn right onto Boughton Hill Road and go down the hill. The main parking lot will be on your right at the bottom of the hill.)

**Leaders:** Amy Kahn (RBA) 585-310-2330 and June Summers (GVAS)

<p>(Editor's Corner, continued)</p> <p>feel like a dinosaur.</p> <p>Sadly, many long time members I have known are no longer with us. Some of them were the backbone of the RBA. On the bright side, there are many new names</p>	<p>and faces. I don't know some of the current board members as well as I would like to, or should, but the current board has done a magnificent job of responding to the unprecedented challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. I think the RBA is in very good hands.</p>
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## March 2021 Sightings Report

It was another nice, quiet March, in and out like a lion, but only briefly at either end, and with long stretches of quiet with lots of sunshine between. It was a mild month, with little snow and again only one wind event, on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Temperatures averaged 39.3 °F, 5.0° above normal, while precipitation totaled 1.02", 1.48" below normal. Snowfall at 1.4" was 14.9" below normal. It was the 11<sup>th</sup> warmest March on record. Record highs occurred on the 10<sup>th</sup> at 68° and 11<sup>th</sup> at 71°, with a record high low of 50° on the 25<sup>th</sup>. With the precipitation, it was the 8<sup>th</sup> driest March, and the 6<sup>th</sup> least snowy.

Generally, the month continued the good start for the year, with a record high species count for the month (149 vs. 148 prior) and one of the highest year-to-date totals. Ten species arrived at dates earlier than our 1985 Monroe County Checklist earliest, and Chimney Swift, Least Bittern, and Yellow-rumped Warbler added new record early dates, and Caspian Tern tied its earliest. Most of the typical March arrivals were reported. Also, most of the lingering half-hardies made it into March, though in reduced numbers, and the various irruptive species and winter finches present this winter continued on into this month. The eBird data download for the region was ~ 53,759 lines of reports, up nearly 20 % from last March. Again, we may attribute this to a combination of the general trend of increasing reports to eBird, NY Breeding Bird Atlas III, and COVID-19 limiting the alternative outdoor activities for many people. Also, once more, we have David Brown back as the official hawk counter at Braddock Bay, with an interest in recording all birds passing as well as possible.

Waterfowl begin the usual litany of essentially all expected species reported, but with peak counts for most species low, especially for the diving ducks. Water levels on Lake Ontario and many other bodies of water were on the low side, with little rain or snow melt to raise them through month's end. There were some good Snow Goose and Canada Goose counts. Small numbers of Ross's and Greater White-fronted and good numbers of Cackling Goose were found. Male Eurasian Wigeons appeared at 6 sites. A Harlequin Duck lingered, but no eiders were reported. No Barrow's Goldeneye were found at the usual Point Breeze site, but 2 immature males continued from February in the Genesee River in Charlotte, and one was spotted on the 28<sup>th</sup> on Irondequoit Bay. Grebes were generally poor, though there were a couple of double-digit Red-necked Grebe counts; hopefully there will be more in April. Sandhill Cranes numbers passing the hawk watch, as well as from other sites, were good this month though down a bit from last year.

Again, good numbers of Killdeer were noted passing the hawk watch, and by month's end very early Dunlin, Pectoral Sandpiper, American Woodcock, Wilson's Snipe, and both yellowlegs had been added. The first spring Bonaparte's Gull was seen on March 5<sup>th</sup>, but numbers remained low through the month. Overall, gull numbers were relatively low, possibly due to early ice-out for most

water bodies, where they would normally gather on ice sheet edges. The 3 usual winter gulls (Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous), continued to be reported through the month in low numbers. Caspian Tern arrived on the 28<sup>th</sup>, tying a record early date.

The start of the spring loon movement was very slow, with no noteworthy numbers reported. Double-Crested Cormorant numbers increased after essentially disappearing with the February cold, but numbers remained low. There was an intriguing audio recording submitted of what sounded like a Least Bittern at what would be a record early date on March 27<sup>th</sup> from the marshes south of Irondequoit Bay. There were early reports for arriving Great Egret and Green Heron near month's end. The hawk count was off to a good start, with 8,506 by month's end, down about 1/3 from last year at this time, but typical of annual variability. As usual, Turkey Vultures accounted for a high, about 77%, of the total. Typical of recent years, no Northern Goshawks were reported. Golden Eagle numbers were good, and the Rough-legged Hawk count was decent. There were no great surprises. A table with all the details and daily notes can be found on the Hawkcount website.

Only 2 Snowy Owls were reported, one on the 9<sup>th</sup> at the Genesee County Airport and the second on the 23<sup>rd</sup> along the Lake Ontario Parkway west of Braddock Bay. The DEC Short-eared Owl surveys out of the Avon office continued, with good numbers for this month's counts but with weather problems on the Tuesday survey dates. Jim Adams reported good numbers from the usual Owl Woods counts, adding 40 more Northern Saw-whet Owls, bringing the spring count to 50. Eleven Long-eared Owls were found, bringing that total to 12 for the season to date. About 30 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported, far above last year's more typical 7. With so many overwintering this year, it will be hard to distinguish a spring arrival date. No Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported. The 3 regular falcons were all reported in good numbers at the hawk watch and elsewhere.

The expected passerines were found. New arrivals were as expected for a warm, open March, with a few early, even record early, as noted earlier. Most of our lingering, (overwintering?), half-hardies were still reported, though at fewer sites and in lower numbers after the cold, snowy February. There were no outstanding rarities. Among this winter's finch cohort, Evening Grosbeak, Hoary Redpoll, and White-winged Crossbill were not reported. Some of these may be seen again later in an extended return movement north. The table of noteworthy records to be posted on the RBA website will provide more details and illustrations.

Please send your reports by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month to Andrea Patterson, 144 Greystone Lane, #24, Rochester, NY 14618.

*Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee*

	2021	2020	10-year Average (2011-2020)
Species for March	149	147	141.3
New for the year	19	24	17.4
Total for the year to date	163	153	151.3

**Observers:** Jim Adams, Janet Akin, Osvaldo Araya, Karl Bardon, Ted Barnett, Mitchell Barry, Sue Barth, Doug Beattie, Don Bemont, Steven Benedict, Linda Clark Benedict, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Shawn Billerman, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Linda Boutwell, Lynn Braband, Joe Brin, Kyle Brock, David Brown (official BB hawk counter), Mark Brown, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Bruce Cady, Brad Carlson, Nancy Casper, Larry Chen, Chris Choate, Robert Cicotta, Kelly Close, Jeremy Collison, Andrew Consler, Lydia Culbert, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Gregg Dashnau, Pete Debes, Michael DeWispelaere, Deborah Dohne, Gordon Dutter, Diane Eagan, Daniel Emlin, Mark Fitzsimmons, Debra Florio, Daena Ford, George Ford, Bryan Franz, Joyce Freitas, Jim Fry, Andrew Gaerte, Kyle Gage, Andy Garland, Janis George, Jessica George, Candy Giles, Bill Gillette, John & Karla Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Kate Graham, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Bill Gruenbaum, Ralph & Georgia Guenther, Michael Gullo, Andrew Guthrie, Chris Guthrie, Danny Guthrie, Bill Haake, Ryan Hall, Helen & Chris Haller, Mike & Hazel Hanna, Kim Hartquist, Christina Hoh, Debi Holt, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Pam Inzinna, Carolyn Jacobs, John Jaenike, Alyssa Johnson, Amy Kahn, Laura & Paul Kammermeier, Sanjay Karanth,

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A dark morph **Snow Goose**. Photo by Jay Greenberg.

## Clearing up Confusion on What is a Native Plant

by Amy Kahn, RBA Conservation Chair

We've been encouraged to plant native vegetation to be more environmentally sustainable and to encourage pollinators and our favorite birds. So what exactly is a native species? First of all every plant is native to some place, and some nurseries confuse the situation to sell product. I have seen wild seed packets given away that contain 50% Eurasian seed including invasives. It is best to educate yourself.

When botanists refer to native vegetation, they mean from our own ecoregion. Most of us are in the Eastern Great Lakes Lowland with the most southern of us in the Northern Allegheny Plateau.

Then there is native to New York, New England, the northeast, North America and so on. So how do you find out what is native to our region? If you are planting in your yard this isn't as important as if you are doing a restoration of a natural area.

Ganondagan and the New York Parks Department Central Region have been wild-collecting local native seed and growing plants at Sonnenberg Gardens for restoration projects. It is an impressive operation.

It is always a good idea to ask where the plants or seeds you buy are collected from.

The NY Flora Atlas has plants listed by county as well as a great deal of information and often photographs of the plants. You can look plants up by scientific or common name. They only include plants which have been documented by voucher specimens in herbaria or documented in the field. [www.newyork.plantatlas.usf.edu/](http://www.newyork.plantatlas.usf.edu/)

Other sources with great information include:

<https://www.hgcny.org/projects/birds/> The local central New York chapter of Wild Ones is in Syracuse. We had Janet Allen speak at RBA 2 years ago. They have a lovely guide and a great deal of information on their website.

[Town of Brighton NY  
Landscaping-with-New-York-State-Native-Plants](http://www.townofbrightonny.com/landscaping-with-new-york-state-native-plants)

<https://bnwaterkeeper.org/projects/nativeplantguide/>

[https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands\\_forests\\_pdf/factnative\\_s.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/factnative_s.pdf)

These sources will get you started on the way to a truly beneficial garden for birds and pollinators.



The **Long-eared Owl** at the left was one of 2 seen in the same tree at the Braddock Bay Owl Woods on March 23, 2021. Photo by Jay Greenberg.

### Help Wanted!

A new editor for the Little Gull is needed. If interested, please contact the RBA Board of Directors at [rba-board@googlegroups.com](mailto:rba-board@googlegroups.com). Help with getting started is available.



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### Address Service Requested

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The *Little Gull* is published monthly at the beginning of the month, except that the July and August issues are combined and published at the beginning of July. RBA members are encouraged to contribute. Please send contributions by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to Jay Greenberg, Editor, [LittleGullEditor@gmail.com](mailto:LittleGullEditor@gmail.com). Contributions can consist of original birding-related nonfiction and fiction articles, poems, photos, and artwork. Humor is welcome. If you have any questions, please contact the editor.

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