



Little Gull

Visit the RBA's website at www.RochesterBirding.org

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

February 2022 Events and 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). Registrations via Eventbrite open 7 days before the date of the field trip. Bring your own binoculars and scopes if available, as there is limited sharing of equipment

- Feb 13**
Sunday
Winter Waterfowl and Other Possibilities
Starting at Irondequoit Bay Outlet, we will look for beautiful Long-tailed Ducks, mergansers, scaup and other ducks. We will also concentrate on locating wintering gulls like the occasional Lesser Black Backed, Iceland and Glaucous gulls. We will then drive over to Summerville and Charlotte to see what might be in the Genesee River. If redpolls or winter finches are being seen, we will stop at Durand-Eastman Park along the way. Flat walking on pavement. Restrooms are available in the Charlotte area. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** in the large parking lot on the west side of Irondequoit Bay Outlet. **Dress for the weather. Spotting scopes would be useful.**
Leader: Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422 and co-leader Robert Buckert 585-269-4206
- Feb 17**
Thursday
February Birds & Brews 6-9 pm at Strangebird Brewery
Birds & Brews is a casual evening for members to get together and share birding stories, compare travel destinations, and catch up all while having a pint of Rochester's finest ale. Our February get together will be on Thursday, February 19th from 6-9pm at Strangebird Brewery. This brewery not only has a wide variety on tap but has a full menu of food as well. Strangebird is located at 62 Marshall St, Rochester, NY 14607. Contact Liz Magnanti with questions.
- Mar 12**
Saturday
Lake Shore Marshes East Wildlife Management Area
This extensive driving tour of the large natural area to our northeast always turns up some great birds! We'll look for unusual ducks, late winter birds, and interesting migrants like Fox Sparrows. One portion of the trip is walking on a wide, mainly flat, sometimes muddy, trail. Bring a snack to munch on to keep your energy up, and dress for the weather! Restrooms available at Sodus Point Park and Chimney Bluffs State Park. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** in Webster Plaza at the junction of Route 404 and Hard Road near Starbucks. **Spotting scopes would be very useful.**
Leader: Kinsley Whittum 585-872-7334 and co-leader Christina Hoh 973-224-7009
- Mar 19**
Saturday
Hamlin Beach State Park
We will gather at Braddock Bay Park and drive to Hamlin Beach State Park where we will look for waterfowl. Driving back east, we will look through fields for migrant waterfowl and lingering winter field birds. We will stop at Owl Woods in search of migrating owls. We will end at the Braddock Bay Hawk Watch in hopes of spotting Rough-legged, Red-shouldered Hawks, and Bald Eagles. **Dress warmly** as we will be out of the cars often at multiple locations--the lakeshore can be cold this time of year. Trails are flat but can be muddy/snowy. **Waterproof boots strongly recommended.** Restrooms available at Hamlin Beach only. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** at the Braddock Bay Park main parking lot. Use the East Manitou Road exit from the Ontario State Parkway. **Spotting scopes would be very useful. Radios would be useful.**
Leader: Mike Tetlow 585-748-5838 and co-leader Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422

Mar 26
Saturday

Beginner Birder Trip – Owl Woods and Hawk Watch Site

We'll look primarily for our smallest visiting owl, the Northern Saw-whet, which returns to this spot on a yearly basis. Long-eared Owls generally put in an appearance, too, although they're quite shy and great at hiding. After the owl walk, we'll head to the Hawk Watch site to learn how to identify raptors on the wing. At this time of year, we might witness spectacular flights of thousands of raptors! The Owl Woods trails are flat and likely will be wet and muddy. **Boots are strongly recommended – they're almost mandatory!** No restrooms available. **Bring binoculars and, if you have them, spotting scopes.** Meet at **8:30 a.m.** in the parking lot on the right side of Manitou Beach Road across from the Owl Woods trail head

Leader: Liz Magnanti 585-748-0309 and co-leaders Dick Horsey 585-435-2837, Daena Ford 585-321-1616 and 2 TBA

Welcome to the Flock!



Join us in welcoming these 15 new and returning members (10 memberships) who joined in the last month:

Christopher Brandt
Janet & Scott Brooks
Lorenzo Colantoni (Young Birder)
Margaret Donahue
Kathy Henrie
Peggy Meeker & Marie Gibson
James Park
John Reef
Joe & Laura Rotolo
Randi Winterman & Daniel and Lauren Moscoe

Current RBA Membership as of January 15 is 361:

347 Household memberships
2 Young Birders
12 Complimentary

Membership Status

I have refreshed the database, omitting members who have not renewed for 2022. The current membership numbers are about the same as at this point last year. As in years past, we lost a bunch of people, but we will get some of these folks back as late renewals. We've ended each of the last three years with over 450 members. With this *Little Gull*, members (except Complimentary) will also be getting the current roster of members. The roster excludes Junior and Complimentary members, as well as those who have asked not to be listed. The roster is intended for the personal use of members.

Jo Taylor
Membership Data
Adrianna Anderson
Membership Outreach



President's Corner, Randi Minetor—

Well, hi! It's my great honor to serve the Rochester Birding Association as its new president. I am looking forward to meeting many of you on field trips, in Zoom meetings, and at Birds and Brews in the coming months. If I don't introduce myself immediately, please tap me on the shoulder and say hello—I love meeting fellow birders!

It's time for me to give back to the organization that has meant so much to me and to all birders in the greater Rochester community. Back when I first started birding, the RBA opened doors for me that I had no idea were even there. When I left an early career at Geva Theatre in the mid-1980s for a job in the corporate world, I suddenly found myself with evenings and weekends free for the first time in my life. My husband, Nic Minetor, said to me, "I bet you'd like birdwatching."

Nic grew up with a mother who loved all things outdoors—birds, butterflies, animals, flowers—so he already had an appreciation for nature. I did not have that experience; in fact, my parents feared the outdoors and actively discouraged me from playing outside. Luckily, they had the good sense to send me to summer camp and enroll me in Girl Scouts, so I learned a great deal about the natural world in spite of their aversion to it. How wonderful it was in the 1980s to come out of the darkened theatre and into the sunlight. My first birding field trip with RBA was a revelation, a spring trip with good looks at more than 30 bright, colorful, wonderful species, and I was hooked.

As the board transitions this month, I want to express my gratitude to Liz Magnanti, who has served as the Board President for the last two years. Liz took over just as the world plunged into the pandemic, and she has led the organization through a difficult period with great skill and a distinctive lack of drama. Today we have monthly meetings with greater attendance than ever before in our history, in part because of Liz's comfort with trying new things and her easy mastery of technology. She will remain on the Board as immediate Past President, so we will work together to keep the organization on track.

I also want to commend Jeanne Verhulst, who has served as Vice President and Program Chair for

the last five years, and has been on the board for a staggering eleven years! We all owe Jeanne a debt of gratitude for the wonderful programs she has offered us every month, recruiting speakers from as far away as Trinidad and the west coast to speak to us over Zoom. I know that Jules Wagner, who takes over this post as Jeanne leaves the board, will have Jeanne's guidance in the coming months. Jeanne will now chair the Field Trips Committee, as Catherine Ballard is stepping down after several years of able and commendable leadership—so we are delighted to have her continued participation going forward.

Finally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Andrea Patterson, who has served as immediate Past President on the board for the last two years. Our resident font of parliamentary knowledge, Andrea's mastery of bylaws and procedure will be greatly missed by the board. She is also stepping back from her responsibilities as chair of two committees: Records and Young Birders. We will be looking for new leadership of the Young Birders group—so if you have a passion for leading field trips of birders ages 11 to 18, please get in touch with me.

In addition to Jules coming onto the Board, Lynn Bergmeyer is returning as a Director At Large. Lynn has served as president in the past, so we feel particularly fortunate that she is willing to join us once again.

My goals as your new president are simple: Connect more people with birds, no matter what their knowledge, ability, or familiarity with the natural world may be. In particular, I hope to help make birding more accessible to people with disabilities, and to introduce more young people to the world of birds. If more folks see the value of having these creatures as part of our world, it might lead us to more successes in protecting the birds and their habitats for the long term.

I look forward to seeing you out there. Bird hard!

—Randi Minetor

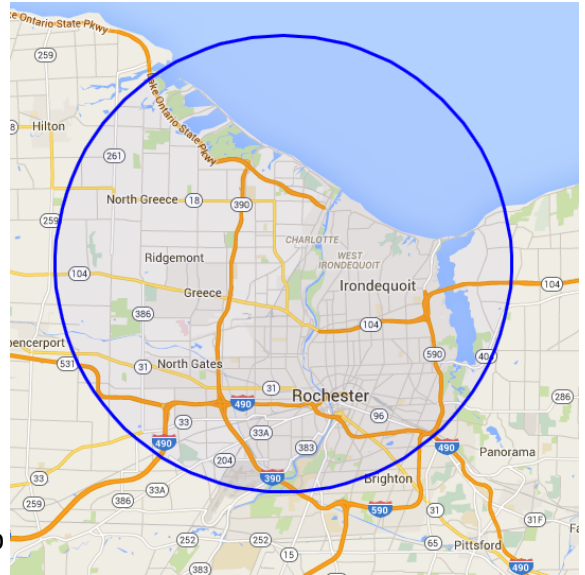
Rochester Christmas Bird Count Review – December 19, 2021

Part I: Birds, conditions and numbers

We held the 118th Rochester Christmas Bird Count in yet another year of the 'Age of Covid'. Sixty-seven participants worked throughout the day to count the birds in the 15-mile diameter circle centered at Dewey Avenue and Stone Road. We spent 204 hours on foot and in cars.

Temperatures were moderate, moving from low 20's to upper 30's as the day progressed. Skies were cloudy and the breeze was north westerly. Once again, duck hunters were out there stirring things up.

On the day of the count, we found **97** species accounting for 57,945 individual birds. Adding in the 5 unusual 'count week' birds, the number of species in the area was an impressive **102**. For a full listing of bird species and numbers, check with Bob Spahn's Little Gull summary of the three local counts (Rochester, Little Lakes and Silver Lake).



Great Cormorant and Sanderling were new to the count. Some species were seen in record high numbers or numbers that matched historic highs: Ruddy Duck (32/12) (this year /previous high), Red-bellied Woodpecker (197/196), Cackling Goose (5/5), American Crow (35,471/33,443), American Pipit (1/1) and Harlequin Duck (2/2).

Other species showed up that hadn't been seen in years: Brant (36 yrs.), Virginia Rail (23), Short-eared Owl (7), American Pipit (24), Rusty Blackbird (20), Purple Sandpiper (13) and Ring-necked Pheasant (2).

As with last year, owing to COVID, we could not meet for the traditional tally and dinner. All data was collected and collated electronically. We plan to 'gather' to review the count results via Zoom.

Part II: The amazing leaders and participants

I continue to be awed at the undertaking that we call the RCBC..... leaders and participants contributing to this worthy effort.

The bird-count circle is divided up into nine sectors. Each sector has a leader responsible for recruiting/deploying observers and gathering observations. We are fortunate to have these sector leaders: Robert Spahn, Greg Lawrence, Jay Greenburg, Sheryl Gracewski and Tom Nash, Rosemary Reilly, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Brian Morse and Andrea Patterson. This year Andy Garland and John Boettcher trained to be stand-ins for sector leaders Dominic and Bob.

In addition to the sector leaders, the following people were field observers or feeder watchers: Kent Avian, Sue Avian, Jessie Barry, Doug Bassett, Bob Bemont, Lynn Bergmeyer, Allen Bloom, John Boettcher, Lynn Braband, Robert Buckert, Doug Carpenter, Carolyn Cass, Jill Church Heimrich, Jared Clark, Jessica Clark, Barbara Cote, Bob Cumrine, Peter Debes, George Ford, Andrew Garland, Matthew Gavotte, Andrew Guthrie, Bill Haake, Allen Handelman, Monika Herrmann, Christina Hoh, Bill Howe, Nicholas Kachala, Kevin Kurtz, Ben Levy, David Levy, Bill Maier, Ginny Maier, Chita McKinney, Randi Minetor, Brooke Morse, Donna Morse, Ann Nash, Ann Parks, Luannne Pignataro, Nancy Poeth, Tom Poeth, Jay Powell, Derek Pulhamus, Elizabeth Rabjohns, Doug Rabjohns, Carolyn Reagan, Robert Ryan, Judy Slein, Susan Spahn, Jerry Sullivan, Nate Ukens, Jeanne Verhulst, Jules Wagner, Bridget Watts, Kinsley Wittum, Chris Wood and Jim Wood.

This year everyone contributed mightily. Thank you all!

-- Norma Platt, compiler

RBA in the Field

Nations Road, December 5, 2021

We were a dozen folks on this trip with cloudy skies, mild (40s) temperature and light winds. The one important factor was no snow cover at all. Starting in the south we worked our way north stopping occasionally for passerine activity. It was mostly very quiet. A small group of Eastern Bluebirds was spotted on Roots Tavern Road and a big bunch of American Robins on Houston Road. Both had some other passerines associated. The find of the day was a Northern Shrike on Houston Road near the intersection with Nations Road. The shrike sat in the top of a tree and posed for our group for at least 5 minutes before flying off. The spotting scope at hand was cranked up so that the bird filled $\frac{1}{4}$ of the field of view and allowed multiple viewing opportunities by all. From this stop, the trip traveled north on Nations Road and circled Hogmire and Little Road area where Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers had been seen in the past. Well after sunset and in fading light, we were able to see several harriers and owls in the distance in the field at the NE corner of Hogmire and Nations Road. Total species for the trip was fourteen.

Judy Gurley, John Boettcher

Cedar Waxwing - Webster - © Suzie Webster - Jan 11, 2022



Irondequoit Bay and Durand-Eastman Park,
January 1, 2022

We had unusually mild condition for this first trip of the year with light winds and 42 F temperature. Seventeen folks joined us for the outing. Ducks were

practically non-existent due to the extended hunting season. We added Newport Yacht Club as a comfort stop and a chance to find some puddle ducks. There was a considerable raft of American Coot but the Mallards turned out to be decoys (some of them convincingly animated). The disappointment continued into Durand-Eastman Park with the Zoo Road portion being very quiet. Once on the Log Cabin Road, things picked up with a nice assortment birds found. Some (Piliated Woodpecker, Belted Kingfisher and Great Blue Heron) stuck around long enough to provide scope viewing for all. We finished the day with 34 species and had a nice walk.

Norma Platt, John Boettcher



Fox Sparrow—Erik Nelson

Mendon Ponds Songbird Trail, January 15, 2022

It was COLD (5F). Although the trip was fully subscribed, only three folks elected to show up. No little people, just adults. We regarded the Common Raven in a tall pine near the parking lot as we gathered, to be a good omen. A photographer was lingering a short distance away and we decided to check that location first. We found the usual suspects along with White-Throated and American Tree Sparrows, but the big surprise was two Fox Sparrows. After an hour or so of relishing the close views with some limited hand feeding, we walked the rest of the Songbird Trail turning up a few more common birds along with a Hermit Thrush and Eastern Bluebirds feeding on Bittersweet berries. The trip list included 19 species with many quality views and some surprising birds.

John Boettcher, Jeanne Verhulst

Records Report

1. December 2021 was a warm, quiet month. Temperatures averaged 36.7°F, 4.7° above normal for the 5th warmest December on record. Only seven days averaged below normal. Record highs were set on the 11th and 16th, and a record high low on the 16th. Precipitation totaled 2.02", 0.65" below normal, with 16 days with measurable precipitation. Snowfall totaled 10.1", 12.2" below normal; it seemed even less than that in most places. Fronts were scattered through the month, accompanied by strong gusty winds on the 2nd, 6th, 8th, 16th, and 22nd. Gusts to 75 mph with the event on the 16th caused some wind damage in western parts of the region. Lake effect snow provided some snow cover on the 8th and 16th, neither lasting long. Messy weather, with rain, freezing rain, and snow hit in areas in the SW part of the region on the 18th, impacting the Letchworth-Silver Lake Christmas Bird Count once again. The other two local Christmas Bird Counts saw decent, relatively warm conditions.

2. The species count for the Letchworth-Silver Lake Christmas Bird Count observed 66 species (+7 more in the count week), where the Rochester and Conesus-Hemlock counts were above average at 97 (102) and 87 (89) species, respectively. New highs or ties reported were: Letchworth-Silver Lake – Snow Goose (68); Rochester - Cackling Goose (5), Harlequin Duck (2), Ruddy Duck (32), Red-bellied Woodpecker (197), American Crow (35,471), and American Pipit (1) plus two new species for the count – Sanderling and Great Cormorant; and Conesus-Hemlock (Little Lakes) – Wild Turkey (126), Northern Harrier (35), Lesser Black-backed Gull (3), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (4), Tufted Titmouse (190), Marsh Wren (1), Carolina Wren (49), Eastern Bluebird (131), and Yellow-rumped Warbler (19) plus Golden Eagle new for the count. Overall a very good count season!

3. All normally occurring waterfowl species were reported but generally in low to modest numbers, continuing a trend of recent years. There were no really outstanding counts. As usual, a selection will appear in the Noteworthy Records table on the RBA website. Rarer waterfowl found were: Greater White-fronted Goose, King Eider, and Harlequin Duck. Mute Swan numbers remain high, as indicated by the 378 tallied on the Rochester CBC. Once more, Long-tailed Duck

flocks were noted on Lake Ontario off Greece but in numbers lower than in some recent years. Redhead were still numerous on Conesus and Honeoye Lakes and Ring-necked Duck on Hemlock Lake. Merganser numbers were relatively low. Grebes were generally scarce, but Andy Guthrie noted a high count of 826 Red-necked Grebes at Hamlin Beach SP on the 14th, and Chris Wood found an immature Eared Grebe there on the 26th. A lone Virginia Rail was heard in the Beatty Point marshes on the RCBC. Late Sandhill Cranes continue to amaze, with 300-307 tallied by observers in the NMWMA (Armitage Rd.) area in Wayne County from 1-10 December and 10 individuals seen flying out of the Honeoye WMA early on the 26th and returning near sunset.

4. As usual, shorebird reports were scarce, with only two, then one Sanderling along the Greece shore of Lake Ontario, a few Purple Sandpipers, and a Red Phalarope at Sodus Point. Visiting birders taking a look at the lake near Round Pond spotted a passing **Razorbill** on the 12th, likely hanging on from the fall incursion of that species. Black-legged Kittiwake was seen passing Hamlin Beach on the 3rd and then very late at Ontario Beach on the 30th. The usual winter visitor gulls were relatively scarce otherwise. Loon counts were low. The bird of the CBCs was an immature **Great Cormorant** seen by a few and photographed off the Greece shore on the RCBC. Lingering Double-crested Cormorant counts ranged to 20 at the Newport marina and to 41 at Sodus Point. A Great Egret tied regional record late for the species at the south end of Conesus Lake on 4 December.

5. Turkey Vulture and diurnal raptor records were generally the same to a bit better than last year. Again, a rare-in-winter Golden Eagle was reported, this time from the Conesus-Honeoye CBC. Among the other species, Bald Eagle reports were about double, Cooper's Hawk reports again outnumbered Sharp-shinned Hawk by more than 5:1, though were both down a bit, there were no Northern Goshawk reports, and only one Red-shouldered Hawk report. Rough-legged Hawk can be used as a general illustration for these summaries. The number of different eBird reports tripled, but the estimated number of different individuals only changed from about 11 to about 14. Nearly 2/3 of the reports this month likely involved the same few individuals in the Braddock Bay area

from 18-31 December. What appears as noteworthy depends on what the committee or author of this report thinks might be of interest, and how it is covered depends on the time and interest spent in looking at the original set of reports in detail and trying to analyze them. If you have comments or suggestions, please send them to any on the committee. Among the owls, conditions were good for searching for both the RCBC & C-HCBCs, and those out searching tallied good numbers of E. Screech-Owls and at least some other species. Three Snowy Owls were reported from the Braddock Bay area. Interestingly, two of those (8:25 AM and 3:20 PM) were spotted by Bob Spahn from the East Manitou overlook and were about a mile offshore and appeared to be actively hunting over the open water. Over the month, about 15 Snowy Owls were reported across the region. The annual, DEC Short-eared Owl surveys were off to a relatively slow start, but as many as seven owls were spotted in the Nations Road IBA on the 20th. There were no Red-headed Woodpecker reports, but ~35 reports for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, close to last year's large numbers. Finally, numbers of individuals and different locations were good for all three of our regular falcon species.

6. Among the passerines, essentially all expected species and even half-hardy lingering species were located, many in good numbers. All of interest cannot be noted in these short notes, but the Noteworthy Records table has a good sampling with numbers. Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Pipit, and Fox Sparrow are rarely reported in winter. Numbers of reports for

Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows, and Yellow-rumped Warbler were high. Marsh Wren, Gray Catbird, Chipping and Field Sparrows, Rusty Blackbird, and Common Yellowthroat are often missing. Winter finches were represented only by modest numbers of Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin and singles of Red and White-winged Crossbills. Once again, blackbird numbers

	2021	2020	10-year Average
Species for Nov.	142	147	132.8
New for the year	3	2	1.2
Total for the year to date	299	297	292.0

were generally low, especially for Common Grackle. Rarities for the season included a second December and second latest Black-&-white Warbler, a record late Yellow Warbler, and the bird of the month, the region's second **Painted Bunting**, this time a male at a feeder seen and photographed by many over several days.

7. The month's eBird download at 27,407 was up about 10% over last year, probably reflecting the warm and mostly snow-free conditions. Certainly a very interesting winter month for birding.

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

Observers:

Janet Akin, Osvaldo Araya, Ted Barnett, Carolyn & Jerry Barnhart, Jessie Barry, Katelyn Barry, Mitchell Barry, Sue Barth, Douglas Bassett, BBBO (Andrea Patterson), Doug Beattie, Betty Beckham, Don Bemont, Tom Bemont, Linda Clark Benedict, David Benvent, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Alan Bloom, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Justin Bower, Lynn Braband, Christopher Brandt, Kyle Brock, Janet Brooks, Mark Brown, Logan Brunner, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Brad Carlson, Douglas Carpenter, Robert Cicotta, Kelly Close, Jeremy Colli-son, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Willie D'Anna, Gregg Dashnau, Peter Debes, Peggy Dempsey, Deborah Dohne, Gordon Dutter, Diane Egan, Kevin Etter, Joe Fell, Debra Florio, George Ford, Jim Fry, Andrew Gaerte, Kyle Gage, Andy Garland, Matthew Gavette, Janis George, Jessica George, Michelle Gianvecchio,



Winter Wren - Irondequoit Bay Park West - © Candace Giles - Jan 08, 2022

Candy Giles, Bill Gillette, Christopher Goetz, James Goetz, John & Karla Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Jane Graves, Jay Greenberg, Michael Gullo, Carmen Gumina, Ralph & Georgia Gunther, Andrew Guthrie, Chris Guthrie, Richard Guthrie, Bill Haake, Benjamin Hack, Mary Hadley, Helen & Chris Haller, Kim Hartquist, Jim & Allison Healy, Christy Hibisch, Christina Hoh, Debi Holt, Saralinda Hooker, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Alec Humann, IBA Monitoring, Pam Inzinna, Carolyn Jacobs, Alyssa Johnson, Nicholas Kachala, Laura & Paul Kammermeier, Tom Kerr, Bernie Kester, Josh Ketry, Jim Kimball, Cindy Kindle, Kathy Kirsch, Karl Kunze, Michael Laird, Chris Lajewski, Tom Lathrop, Leona Lauster, Greg Lawrence, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Bill Maier, Pat Martin, Donna Mason-Spier, Lauri Mattle, Kenneth McCarthy, Jacob McCartney, Daniel McDermott, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Ann McMican, Scott Meagher, Jim Miles, Mark Miller, Kent Millham, Phil Mills, Adrielle Mitchell, Justin Montemarano, Mike Morgante, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Leah Mould, Allen Nash, Ann Nash, Tom Nash, Hollis Noble, Raphael Nussbaumer, Dave Odell, Jay Ovsiovitch, Gary Palmer, Lisa Pancho, Erma Perkins, Norma Platt, Sandy Podulka, Jo Popma, Jay Powell, Doug & Elizabeth Rabjohns, RBA Field Trips, Noah Reid, Neal Reilly, Rosemary Reilly, Susan Roberts, Brian Rohrs, John Roosenberg, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Kevin Rybczynski, Jackie Salsbury, Livia Santana, Pete Saracino, Michael Scheibel, Karl Schmidt, Erin Shannon, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Rob Sielaff, Judy Slein, Roger Smith, Tom & Pat Smith, Cathy Spahn, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Dave Starrett, Wendy Stevenson, David Strong, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Brian Tuttle, Geoff Twardokus, Nathan Ukens, Alison Van Keuren, Jeanne & Tom Verhulst, Jules Wagner, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Drew Weber, David Wheeler, Kinsley Whittum, Joe Wing, Paul Wolter, Chris Wood, Jim Wood, Rochester Young Birders, Ryan Zucker. (370 eBird observers, many not cited.)

A note from Bob Spahn -

Thank you to all who played a role in the Little Gull Award at the RBA meeting on January 13. It was a wonderful surprise and I truly appreciate it. I will cherish the beautiful framed photo of the Little Gull in flight. It has been a favorite species since the days when numbers showed up here off Durand-Eastman each early winter, and we could show them to visiting birders. Several years we had the highest CBC counts for the species for North America.

Still a mystery where such numbers of adults went when they left here abruptly each mid-January.

Bald Eagle & Mute Swan - Irondequoit Bay Outlet - © Dick Horsey - Jan 13, 2022



Conservation Corner—Amy Kahn

Heritage Wind Decision and the Heritage Wind Siting Permit

DPS Matter Number: [21-00026](#) for the full documents and for further information.

On January 13, 2022 Apex received a final siting permit for the Heritage Wind Project from The Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES) for a 184.8 megawatt (MW) wind energy facility consisting of up to 33 wind turbines in the Town of Barre, Orleans County. The final siting permit, was granted as modified.

It was gratifying to be acknowledged by ORES Director Moaveni for the science we brought to the table. We citizens made a difference! ORES went against the Administrative Law Judges (ALJ's) and sided with the biologists from NYSDEC, ORES, USFWS and us - especially Amy Kahn, Shawn Smallwood, June Summers and Joel Merriman. The lawyers on the citizen team included Kate Kremer and Ben Wisniewski. We helped make this project safer for birds by bringing attention to the proximity of this project to the Iroquois Complex Wildlife Management Areas and to the importance of post construction monitoring and adaptive management decisions based on those results.

In the final permit ORES now recommends against turbines (currently 6) within 2 miles of the Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area but will allow them with stipulations if Apex insists the project is not financially viable without them. However the expense of added and extended post construction monitoring including radar now required for all 33 turbines if those 6 turbines remain may get Apex to reconsider building them in the first place. Especially if that includes likely seasonal shut downs.

Key site specific permit requirements include an avian and bat post-construction monitoring plan and adaptive management program to address potential significant impacts to migratory birds due to proximity to the Iroquois WMA Complex, and nearby bald eagle nests.

'The Permittee shall develop the post-construction monitoring plan and adaptive management program with the Office, in consultation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The post-construction monitoring plan and adaptive management program shall be consistent with NYSDEC Guidelines for Conducting Bird and Bat Studies at Commercial Wind Projects (2016) (NYSDEC Guidelines) and USFWS Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines (March 2012) (USFWS Guidelines).

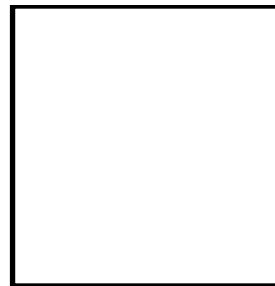
The adaptive management program, at a minimum, shall include measures such as shutting down turbines during conditions when mortality events have been documented (e.g., curtailments during certain times of year, times of day, weather events) or the implementation of technologies that can otherwise reduce the likelihood of bird strikes, or some combination of the two.'

ORES agreed with the recommended decision that the parties (Apex, NYSDEC, USFWS) should consider CSAB's recommendations in finalizing the post-construction monitoring plan and adaptive management program. Those recommendations from Shawn Smallwood include surveying for post construction mortality with trained dogs and expanding the survey area in accordance to the significantly larger size of these turbines over earlier designs.

Now we have to see how hard the ACOE hits Apex in their federal wetland permit.



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Young Birders	Vacant	

Did you know?

Ruffed Grouse are another hardy winter bird. In morning, grouse will fly up into trees and forage the buds from trees like aspen, birch and poplar.

Birds have a special pouch in their throats called a crop to save food for later. Grouse then spend the cold days burrowed under snow, snacking on the saved food!

Adapted from "How Do Birds Survive The Winter?"
The Cornell Lab, Allaboutbirds.org

