



**Rochester Birding
Association**

Little Gull

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

April 2024 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!

[April is an Excellent Month to Observe the Hawk Flight.](#) Counters gather at the Hawk Watch platform at Braddock Bay Park (exit at East Manitou Road from the Ontario State Parkway). Most of the birds are Broad-winged and Red-tailed Hawks, but other buteos, accipiters, falcons and eagles are also seen.

Apr 6 Woodcock Courtship Flight at Owl Woods

Saturday This will be an evening trip for woodcock courtship flight. If you've never seen this spectacle, prepare to be amazed: birds call noisily (peenting) from the ground in grassy fields before spiraling rapidly up high, making twittering, kissing-like sounds at the apex of their ascent and descending silently back down, only to start the cycle anew. An amazing sight! Fields may be wet and muddy. **Boots are strongly recommended. Bring a flashlight or headlamp.** Meet at **7:00 p.m.** in the parking lot across from Owl Woods. Take the Manitou Beach Road exit from Ontario State Parkway. Turn north then right into the large parking lot.

Leader: Neal Reilly 518-256-9147 and co-leader Robert Buckert 585-269-4206

Apr 11 RBA Monthly Meeting 7 pm—see details below

Thursday Asbury Methodist Church and Zoom

Apr 20 High Acres Nature Area

Saturday Over 130 bird species have been observed at HANA including more than 70 that nest in the diverse habitats found there. During this field trip we expect to see at least 40 species returning to nest or on their way to northern nesting grounds. Our approximately two-mile walk over mostly flat trails will explore about 250 acres at HANA and include some wet spots requiring at least ankle-high waterproof shoes or boots. No restrooms available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the parking lot on Perinton Parkway approximately 1/4 mile east of the Waste Management offices.

Leader: Rosemary Reilly 585-748-0802 and co-leaders Brian Rohrs and Gayle Lazoration 585-281-9534

Apr 24 Highland Park

Wed We'll be looking for spring migrants while enjoying lovely flora. This walk would be gorgeous even without the birds, but it does have birds in abundance! Find out where people have spotted the rarities that pop up in this urban treasure. Dress for the weather. Paved walkways, gentle hills. Walking in grass a possibility, if you chose to. No restrooms available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** on Reservoir Avenue in front of the Conservatory building.

Leader: Jeanne Verhulst 585-362-0803 and co-leader Amy Kahn 585-310-2330

[**April 26-28, 2024 Bird of Prey Days at Braddock Bay Park**](#)

- April 27** **NEW! Braddock Bay Hotspots—Braddock Bay Park, East Spit, Burger Park, West Spit, Owl Woods**
 Saturday Locations to be determined based on where the birds are at the time. The trip will end at the Braddock Bay Park where Bird of Prey Days will be in full swing. Carpooling is encouraged. Dress for the weather and muddy trails. Meet at **8:30 a.m.** at the Braddock Bay Park main parking lot.
 Leader: *Neal Reilly 518-256-9147 and co-leader Robert Crandall 585-278-3455*
- April 28** **Four Mile Creek Preserve, Webster**
 Sunday 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 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 and Tom Nash 585-261-6975*
- Wednesday Evening Warblers!**
 Evenings can be a great time to bird and the trees surrounding the Lakeview Community Church parking lot in Greece can hold a surprising number of warblers in Spring. Come directly from work. No special footwear needed. This is casual birding on Wednesday evenings. Bring binoculars. We might also check out Church Woods Trail or go across the street to Firehouse Woods. Rain or shine. Trails are flat, but can be muddy. Dress for the weather and bring bug spray. No restrooms (port-a-john around the corner on Edgemere Dr.). **6:00 p.m.** each Wednesday, May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 through June 5, Lakeview Community Church, 30 Long Pond Road, Rochester, NY 14612.
 Leader: *John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and co-leader Lisa Talpey, and others TBD.*
- May 1** **Cobb's Hill Park-Washington Grove**
 Wed With spring in full swing, come to one of Rochester's best-kept birding secrets: Cobb's Hill Park's Washington Grove. Colorful warblers and other spring migrants arrive *en masse* at this urban oasis of tall stately trees. We will search for Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Blue, and Black-throated Green, Nashville, and Black-and-white 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. The entrances into the grove have two short steep trails, the main trails are gentle hills. No restrooms 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 (NOT the Nunda Blvd. entrance).
 Leaders: *Tom and Jeanne Verhulst 585-362-0803, Sue Robertson 585-427-2535 and Pat Martin 585-301-5485*
- May 4** **Beginner Birder Trip – Lakeshore Warbler Hotspots**
 Saturday 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, trails may be very muddy. **Waterproof boots are strongly recommended!** Dress for the weather and bring binoculars. No restrooms available. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the parking lot behind Lakeview Community Church, 30 Long Pond Road, Rochester, NY 14612 (near Edgemere Drive).
 Leaders: *Greg Lawrence 585-730-2553, Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422 and one other TBD*
- May 4** **Braddock Bay Hawk Lookout**
 Saturday This trip is for the spring hawk flight and migrating songbirds. We will be working to identify distant raptors and meet some great new people, too! This requires a short walk across grass to the viewing platform. Port-a-John may be available. Meet at **9:30 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.**
 Leader: *Mike Tetlow 585-748-5838 and Neal Reilly 518-256-9147*

President's Corner, Randi Minetor

"I found birds," my eleven-year-old great-niece Olivia texted to me this morning. Olivia lives in Texas, and her family chose Big Bend National Park for their spring break trip.

Olivia had never mentioned an interest in birds before, so I sat up straight when I got the text. This is a teachable moment, I thought, so do this right.

"Ooh, what did you find?" I wrote back.

"I don't know," she responded. "Mom and Dad forgot the bird book at home."

That might be just as well. Olivia's father once taught the family's children, "Leaves of three—let's make tea." So their legit outdoor skills will have to come from their aging aunt and uncle.

"Big birds or small birds?" I asked.

"Small," she said.

"What color?" I asked. This could be tricky; how would she tell me about a sparrow's cryptic plumage or a painted bunting's many colors?

But she did me one better. "I took pictures," she said. "Wait."

Photos came through in a moment, and even with their soft focus I could see the field marks for a Black-throated Sparrow and a Western Wood-Pewee. I identified them for her.

"I just heard pee-wee!" she texted back.

"YAY!" I said.

Is it possible that these will turn out to be Olivia's "spark birds," the birds that kindle the passion that my husband and I have for birding? Only time will tell. But in hopes that one day our family's next generation might fall in love with birds, last year Nic and I talked our publisher into giving us a contract for a bird-finding guide titled *Birding Texas*, which will arrive in bookstores this September. When our great-nieces and nephews get this book for Christmas this year, we may have a fighting chance of lighting that spark.

Have you introduced the younger people in your family to birding? Some children find their way to it on their own, but most take an interest because someone in their family set the example. Many children show curiosity at an early age, wanting to know the names of everything they see. The array of birds, plants, and animals in a local woods or wetland can keep kids busy watching and exploring for hours on end, with very little awareness that they are also learning.

In past decades, Rochester Birding Association had a thriving Young Birders group, with enthusiastic leadership who helped guide birders ages 12 through 18 to develop the skills they needed to bird well. Some of our "graduates" of this program have gone on to careers in environmentalism and natural sciences. A series of challenges have made it difficult to keep this program running in recent years, but that doesn't mean that we can't continue to inspire our young people to love birds and birding. Don't wait for us to do it—you are the role model your family's young people need.

If you're attending a field trip, think about bringing a child who is old enough for binoculars and bird IDs to enjoy the songbirds with you. If it's their first time out, a wetland visit might be the best choice, where they can see ducks, geese, and long-legged waders—easy birds to see and identify.

If we are to ensure that birds remain on Earth after we are gone, we need to engage the next generation in protecting them and preserving their habitat. That starts with one bird in one place, and a child's eyes widening in wonder. Let's all work to make that happen.



Photo by Richard Ashworth

Welcome to the Flock

Join us in welcoming these 10 new or returning members who joined in the last month.

Timothy Banker
Bethany Brinson
William Chamberlain
Mary Dannhauser
Diane Grimm

Christine Hibschi
Jay Morse
Elaine Rubal
Lori Seely
Jaman Welch



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

Current RBA Membership as of March 15 is 345:

323 Household memberships
1 Junior member
21 Complimentary

Jo Taylor, Membership Data

Genesee Valley Woodcarvers 37th Annual Show and Competition

Saturday, April 13, 2024 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Rochester Museum and Science Center, Eisenhart Auditorium

657 East Avenue Rochester, New York 14626

Free Admission

Birds, caricatures, animals, relief carvings, "People's Choice," demonstrations, and much more.

Raffle of carvings and related items.

For information about the show and raffle go to: www.gvwoodcarvers.com



A New Discussion for the RBA: Plastics Use and Pollution

A Message From Your New Conservation Committee

RBA's newly formulated Conservation Committee is deeply committed to making the world a better place for birds *and* people. We want to encourage discussions among RBA members about what we, as individuals and as an organization, can do to make real improvements in our daily lives.

With that in mind, we would like to announce the start of a new regular feature in the Little Gull about a common issue in our civilization: **plastics**. Bottles, bags, and other containers use petroleum in their manufacture, and they accumulate in landfills, in the ocean, and in the bodies of living creatures (including us).

Please **email us at info@rochesterbirding.org** with your favorite way to reduce plastic use in our everyday life lives. Stay tuned as we share these important ideas with you, our members.

We'll collect your ideas and publish them in future issues of the Little Gull.

Here's a start:

Replace liquid laundry detergent with powder or sheets.

Use a shampoo that comes in a bar rather than a plastic bottle

If you must use a plastic bottle, buy as large as possible to maximize product/packaging.

Birding Field Trips Continued

May 5 **Beechwood State Park and Olga Fleisher Wildlife Preserve**

Sunday Beechwood State Park is on the shoreline of Lake Ontario in Wayne County and should attract warblers, vireos, thrushes and other migrants. The Beechwood trip will involve about two miles of walking over mostly level ground (Port-a-john available) and will last until about noon. Bring lunch if you plan to attend the second part of the trip to the Olga Fleisher Preserve (known locally as Huckleberry Swamp), a bottomland forest and wetland. Huckleberry has both boardwalk and flat forest trails. (No restroom.) 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 (Port-a-john). We will continue to Beechwood from there. If meeting at Beechwood, meet at the main parking area off Lake Road, (**not** at the stream area parking) at about **8:00 a.m.**

Leader: *Jim Wood 585-967-8687 and co-leader Jeanne Verhulst 585-362-0803*

May 7 **Ontario Pathways (Flint Creek section)**

Tuesday We'll look for warblers and other spring migrants along this 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, dress accordingly! This is a level grade, easy-to-walk, linear trail, 1.6 miles in and 1.6 miles back out. No restrooms available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the trailhead. It is on the south side of Rt. 96 just east of the Rt. 488 intersection. For anyone needing a bathroom before heading out on the trail, there is a Byrne Dairy on the corner of Rts. 96 & 488.

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

May 9 **Rush Riverside Refuge (in association with Rush Recreation and Parks Association)**

Thursday 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, waterproof shoes/boots are recommended. No restrooms available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the former Monroe County Fair Site, 6565 East River Rd, Rush, NY. Park and meet in front of the large barn straight in and just to the left of the entrance road.

Leader: *Ann McMican 585-533-1222 and co-leaders Sue Robertson 585-427-2535, Nick Kachala 585-750-5536*

RBA Monthly Meeting—Thursday, April 11th, 2024 @ 7 pm

Asbury First United Methodist Church, 1050 East Avenue, Rochester NY

Birdcast

Dr. Andrew Farnsworth, Senior Research Associate, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Andrew Farnsworth is a Senior Research Associate in the Center for Avian Population Studies at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Andrew began birding at age 5 and quickly developed his longstanding fascination with bird migration. His current research efforts advance the use and application of rapidly expanding technologies to study bird movements across scales including weather surveillance radar, audio and video recording and monitoring tools, citizen science datasets, and machine learning techniques. Andrew received his BS in Natural Resources from Cornell, MS in Zoology from Clemson University, and PhD in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Cornell University.

Field Reports

Lake Shore Plains West—1/28/24

Thirteen total people including the leaders met at 9 a.m. at Braddock Bay Park. We were delighted to have Dave and Dawn Bennett from the greater Buffalo area join us along with family and friends. Several of our loyal winter trip birders joined us as well. After introductions, and a flyover flock of Robins and a few Common Mergansers, we headed off.

We moved on to Burger Park hoping for a Northern Shrike, a species which frequents the park each winter, or a winter raptor. The Shrike did not show for us, but some time scanning from the platform was fruitful. We had great views of a pair of Northern Harriers hunting low over the grassland; a female/immature type and a stunning male, “gray ghost.” As we returned to our cars, a group of four Tundra Swans flew over low.

Next stop was the ‘North Marina’ off Manitou Rd. on Braddock Bay. This is typically a lake plains inland trip but in years with little snow cover, thus the absence of certain species and the difficulty locating desired birds, we often make a stop here. When there is snow covering the fields we have the advantage of seeing birds feeding on seeds blown onto the open areas along roadways and gritting, using small gravel and salt to help them digest their meals. We were able to see a healthy total of 14 species of ducks including Gadwall, Ruddy Duck, a few Bufflehead and Hooded Mergansers, high numbers of Common Goldeneye, and all the Aythya species except for Ring-necked Duck. Other highlights included Tundra Swans spread across the bay and a first-cycle Glaucous Gull in the gull flock on the ice across the bay!

After this, we hit the ‘lakeshore plains’ portion of the trip! We snaked around the roads of Hamlin hoping to flush field birds such as Horned Lark, Snow Bunting, and Lapland Longspur. With a complete lack of snow cover, no such luck was to be had. After a brief stop at Hamlin Beach State Park for a bathroom break and a scan of the churning lake, we took a second lap of some Hamlin fields. We stopped and all got out along Church Rd. just west of Lake Rd. East Fork and were able to hear Horned Larks, but never got a satisfying visual for all. We were delighted by about 1000 Snow Geese flying over in skeins.

Having been skunked by the field birds in Monroe County, we pushed on west into Orleans along Lakeshore Rd. and a few off-shoots. We had great looks at two Common Ravens flying low over a field. We stopped at a flooded field on Peter Smith Rd. to scan the ducks and Canada Geese. Here, a pair of Wood Ducks were seen briefly before flushing off, regionally rare in winter! Thanks Dave Bennett for the eagle eye on the Wood Ducks! Still without luck on field birds, we wrapped up the trip with a quick scan of the lake at Point Breeze. Blistering winds were coming out of the northeast off the lake and the usual suspects were to be seen. Many Common Goldeneye were sheltering upriver on the Oak Orchard. Just as we were heading back to the cars, a first-year Glaucous Gull appeared in view working the beach edge with a flock of Herrings. We all had brief but exciting views and ended our day with a satisfying 44 species. eBird Report: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/199402>

Co-leaders: Robert Buckert and Lynn Bergmeyer

Winter Waterfowl and other possibilities— 02/11/24

On February 11th, Superbowl Sunday of all days, 16 participants met at the Irondequoit Bay Outlet for a morning of waterfowl study. A complete lack of snow and ice meant that ducks were not concentrated at the outlet and in the bay, but there was still plenty to view. Fish Crows honked their nasal calls from the parking lots as we began scanning the bay. Hundreds of Ring-billed Gulls alongside some Herring Gulls on the docks kept us occupied at first, with a few Great Black-backed Gulls mixed in. A small flock of Long-tailed Ducks feeding just south of the bridge gave good, close views. Several eagles were seen circling over the east side of the bay and several eventually flew over, flushing the gulls. A mass exodus of 500 Red-breasted Mergansers that were somewhere out of view south on the bay flew over and out towards the lake, giving an impressive spectacle. We could just barely make out a flock of Double-crested Cormorants at their usual overwintering location on the Newport Marina docks south of the Rte. 104 Bridge. Onto the lakeside, choppy water prevented viewing of anything on the lake itself, but a nice group of ~75 Long-tailed Ducks had gathered at the outlet, with a few White-winged Scoters mixed in.

We then headed west, breaking up the drive to Braddock Bay with a quick stop at Ontario Beach Park—Charlotte Pier. Again, without ice or snow, the river itself was virtually empty. Three silent crows gave us suspense to their ID as they perched in a nearby tree, which was never resolved. Here we had more looks at Great Black-backed Gulls mixed in with Herring and Ring-billed on Summerville Pier.

Onto Braddock Bay, we went to the ‘North Marina’ off Manitou Rd. and the group spent over an hour scanning through hundreds of waterfowl gathered and foraging on the bay. For the past couple weeks, a very rare male Tufted Duck has been intermittently pleasing crowds of birders. We were no exception. The bird showed well in the closest flock of Aythya just off the docks, giving spectacular views of the bird preening, resting, and diving to feed amongst its close Scaup, Redhead, and Ring-necked Duck relatives. Additionally, an adult pair of Bald Eagles were perched on ‘the Eagle Tree’ at the center of the bay. A massive flock of 500+ Aythya at the center of the bay produced Canvasback for the day’s list. Other ducks spread across our view included Gadwall, Mallard, Ruddy Duck, Common Goldeneye (pleasing many with their delightful courtship!), Bufflehead, Long-tailed Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, and Common Merganser along with a group of 30+ American Coots. A Horned Grebe kept many of us busy as it actively foraged and popped up unpredictably far from its last diving location. Small groups of American Tree Sparrows passed through the dead cattails below us. Mute Swans were spread across the bay and a couple noisy flocks of Tundra Swans descended to join them.

To end the trip, a small group of participants went to the other side of the bay, to the ‘South Marina’ (officially Westpoint Marina) to view ducks tucked into the cove of the East Spit. Here, we added a pair each of Northern Shoveler and Northern Pintail to the day’s list. We also were afforded close views of a couple family groups of Tundra Swans mixed into 80+ Mute Swans. eBird Trip Report: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/203591>

Co-leaders: Robert Buckert and Lynn Bergmeyer



welcomes
STAN TEKIELA

FRIDAY, APRIL 12TH, 2024

Owls: The Majestic Hunters Presentation. Nocturnal birds and animals have intrigued people since the dawn of time. This presentation is filled with eye-popping images of every owl species found in the United States. For over 20 years Stan has traveled across the US to study and photograph owls. In this presentation Stan will explain the many intriguing aspects of these nocturnal birds in plain and simple terminology. You will learn just how well owls see in the dark along with their amazing hearing abilities. If you are fascinated with owls then this presentation is sure to delight!

7pm, FREE

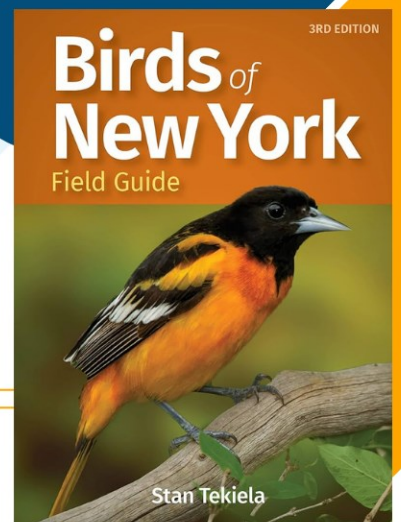
Location: All Seasons Chapel at **White Haven Memorial Park**. 210 Marsh Rd, Pittsford, NY 14534

SATURDAY, APRIL 13TH, 2024

Stan Tekiela book signing & Meet and Greet.

10am-1pm

Location: The Bird House. 3035 Monroe Ave, Rochester, NY 14618



Records Report February

The meteorological winter of 2023-2024 (December through February) was officially the warmest on record for Rochester, surpassing that of 1931-1932 by 0.4°. This February was the second warmest ever, only beating out that of 2017. Temperatures averaged 34.7°, 7.3° above average. The thermometer peaked at 73° on 27 February, tying the highest temperature ever recorded for February in Rochester (21 February 1997). The lowest temperature was 14°, which was the second warmest February monthly minimum ever, with only 1927 having a higher monthly minimum (16°). Four record highs were set this month. Besides being exceptionally warm, February was also a dry month. The Rochester airport recorded a measly 0.68" of precipitation. In fact, February 2024 was the driest month since May 2007. 18 days were completely precipitation free. Snowfall measured 8.1", most of which fell in the middle of the month with the highest being 2.2" on 15 February.

Birds were impacted by the abnormal February weather. February's species count (134) is tied for highest ever with 2021 (monthly totals start in 1974). The second highest is 2017 (131) – both mild years. Open country field birds were incredibly scarce without snowfall. Birders reported a decent scatter of other half hardies, although nothing strikingly above the baseline of birds already around from earlier this winter. The total number of records in the data download for the region was roughly 37,800, up 16.8% from last year. The number of observers contributing to eBird records was 590 this month up 3.0% from last February.

Despite a lack of ice, waterfowl numbers were decent, although not impressive, between the large bays and lesser Finger Lakes. Starting with the geese, Snow Geese numbers continued high from January into Monroe and Livingston Counties, with several mobile flocks ranging from 2000-5000 wandering around the agricultural areas. Cackling Geese were remarkably scarce, with only 20 reports and a maximum count of one on all 20 reports. Canada Geese numbers seemed down. There were occasional counts over 1,000 and one estimate of 2,000, but for the most part, flock sizes remained lower. That might explain the lower Cackling Goose numbers as well. Warmer temperatures and southerly winds brought an elevated number of dabblers to the region by the middle of the month slightly early, with numbers of American Wigeon and Northern Pintail increasing, especially in the Northern Montezuma WMA. Both Braddock Bay and Sodus Bay held good numbers of diving ducks for most of the month. Ryan McGinty found an adult male Tufted Duck mixed with other aythya species on Braddock Bay on 2 February. 90 reports showed the bird around through at least 20 Febru-

ary. Lauri VanKirk reported an adult female King Eider at Sodus Point on 3 February. 60 reports showed this bird present through at least 25 February. West Port Bay in Wayne County held a male Harlequin Duck on 12-13 February.

The Region had multiple reports of single Pied-billed Grebes, another factor of the warmth, perhaps. Horned Grebe and Red-necked Grebe numbers were average. Red-throated Loons and Common Loons seemed slightly scarcer than normal. A surprise came with a Black-crowned Night-Heron photographed at LaSalle's Landing Park on 23-24 February.

Killdeer arrived consistently on 22 February. There were no "pioneer" Killdeer this month, which are always hard to determine from a records perspective if they are true arrivals or overwintering individuals. Pat Martin had the privilege of reporting the first – and early – American Woodcock of the year on 27 February. One to two Purple Sandpipers (the vast majority of reports were of a single bird) continued from January at Sodus Point through 21 February.

Gull numbers were dismal. Ring-billed Gull and Herring Gull numbers were generally unimpressive with the exception of occasional gatherings on Braddock Bay and Irondequoit Bay. The more uncommon species were very scarce. There were only seven reports of Glaucous Gull for the entire month, all from the Greece lakeshore, all of an adult, all likely the same individual. 25 reports of Iceland Gull reduced to four to five individuals by using locations, timing, and observer comments regarding aging. Species comments regarding the ages of Iceland, Glaucous, and Lesser-blackbacked Gull are always appreciated from a records perspective.

Raptors made up for disappointing gulls with outstanding counts of Bald Eagles (maximum 36) overwintering around Irondequoit Bay. Volunteers staffed the hawk watch platform on 9, 23, and 27-29 February and tallied 158 raptors between the days. Notable for the month were the 25 Bald Eagles counted from the hawk watch on 9 February and a Golden Eagle on 29 February. Three more migrant Golden Eagles were observed starting from 18 February. 23 reports of Rough-legged Hawk reduced to about 14 individuals, four of which were migrants counted at the hawk watch. Overwintering Rough-legged Hawks continued slightly more abundant than last winter, but right on line with numbers from earlier this winter. Northern Saw-whet Owls were once again reported outside of Owl Woods. Calling Northern Saw-whet Owls were observed from Porter Road in Naples and the south end of Hemlock Lake. Other reporting Regions such as The Niagara Frontier (Region 1, Buffalo) and the Finger Lakes (Region 3, Ithaca/

Records Report continued

Cayuga Basin) also had many reports as well. Whether it was a good winter for the species or more effort on behalf of birders should be discussed.

Despite the warmer conditions, the 17 lines of Yellow-billed Sapsucker is actually lower than recent past winters. At least 10 Northern Shrikes were present this month, a second saving grace for February. Field birds such as Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur were exceptionally scarce. A lack of snow cover meant these species were not restricted to foraging alongside plowed roads – the bias of road birding. However, the fact that there were no reports of large (100+) flyover flocks of Snow Buntings indicates there very well might have been less present. Most field bird observations occurred from 16-19 February, when there was snow cover. Mild conditions allowed many of the half hardies from January to continue. Counts of half hardies were: Ruby-crowned Kinglet (3), Marsh Wren (1), Gray Catbird (5), Hermit Thrush (13), American Pipit (2), Chipping Sparrow (1), Fox Sparrow (1), Field Sparrow (9), Savannah Sparrow (2), Eastern Towhee (1), and Yellow-rumped Warbler (~24). Five Common Redpolls, photographed, were a surprise at Owl Woods on 3 February as well as two Red Crossbills at Letchworth State Park on 13 February. This partially made up for the winter finch deficit. We can only hope that the winter of 2024-2025 is a winter finch flight year with plenty of snow and more normal weather. It is frightening if this is the new normal.

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

Observers:

Oswaldo Araya, Gloria Bailey, Diane Baillargeon, Ryan Ballard, Nicki Banke, Jessie Barry & Chris Wood, Steven & Linda Benedict, Lynn Bergmeyer, Linda Birkel, Robin Blakesley, Alan & Lisa Bloom, John Boettcher & Norma Platt, Terry Bohling, Christopher Brandt, Joseph Brin, Janet & Scott Brooks, David Brown, Robert G. Buckert, Sara Burch & Jacob McCarthy, Ian Campbell, Brad Carlson, Robert Cicotta, Roger Clark, Kelly Close, Lorenzo Colantoni, Robert Crandall, Lydia Culbert, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Katelyn Davis, Cliff Dekdebrun, Peggy Dempsey, Jim Eckler, Diane Egan, Rob Fergus, George & Katie Ford, Kyle Gage, Andrew Garland, Matthew Gavette, Janis George, Candy Giles, James Goetz, John & Karla Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski & Tom Nash, Kevin Griffith, Austin Groff,

Lucretia Grosshans, Michael Gullo, Carmen Gumina, Andrew Guthrie, Bill Haake, Kim Hartquist, Andrea Heine, Christina Hoh, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Lynn Howes, Pam Inzinna, Carolyn Jacobs, Jill Johnson, Colleen Josh, Nick Kachala, Laura & Paul Kammermeier, David Kennedy, James Kimball, Cindy Kindle, Kathleen Kirsch, Hans Kunze, Michael Laird, Chris Lajewski, Jennifer Lang, Greg Lawrence, Joan Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Peggy Macres & Jennifer Rycenga, Melissa Mance-Coniglio, Cynthia Marino, Patricia Martin, Lauri Mattle & Jim Miles, Ryan McGinty, Jay McGowan, Chita McKinney, Ann McMican, Scott Meagher, Mark Miller, Kent Millham & Susan Roberts, Phil Mills, Mike Morgante, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Jonathan Mott, Leah Mould, Matt Nusstein & Claudia Rosen, David Odell, Andrea Patterson, Doug Perryman, Jeremy Pete, Michael Peter, Luanne Pignataro, Jay Powell, Derek Pulhamus, Doug & Elizabeth Rabjohns, Carolyn Ragan, Rosemary Reilly, Neal Reilly, Micheal Rizzo, Brian Rohrs, Andrew Romanowski, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Anne Salverda, Greg & Shannon Sanda, Karl Schmidt, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Brian Sullivan, Michael & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Nathan Ukens, Lori VanKirk, Tom & Jeanne Verhulst, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Joe Wing, Jim Wood (all 590 observers cannot be listed here).

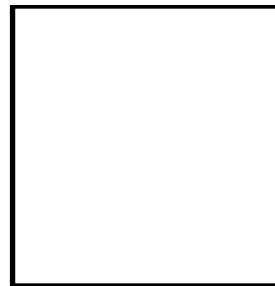
Trumpeter Swan, Lasalle Landing Park
© Jeffrey Eichner February 15, 2024



	2024	2023	10-year Average
Species for Feb.	134	124	122.5
New for the year	6	8	7.3
Total for the year to	143	140	135.8



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Common Raven, Lehigh Valley Trail
 © Judith Slein February 23, 2024

