



Rochester Birding
Association

Little Gull



*This Horned Lark was spotted in Hamlin
by Richard Horsey last December.*

DEC 2025 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 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!

DEC 6
Saturday

CONESUS LAKE AREA

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

Leaders: Jim Kimball 585-519-9211 and co-leaders Nick Kachala 585-750-5536
and Andrew Consler 585-991-2154

Field Trips continue on [page 4](#)

Snowbird

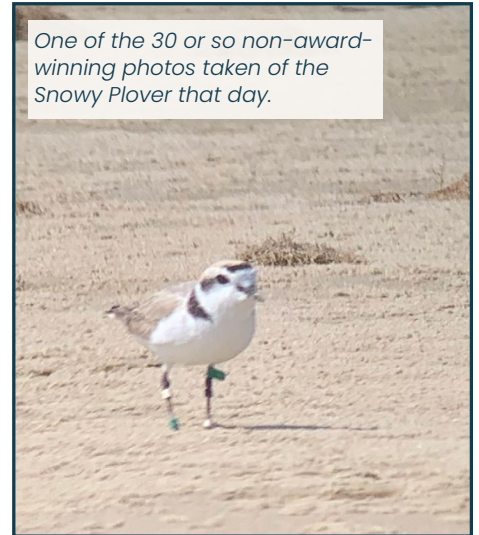
Google Photos regularly sends me a “memory” to my cell phone. It takes my collection of uploaded photos, then using artificial intelligence, pulls together a few related ones and applies a saccharine title to them like “Togetherness” or “Cozy Moments.” (It makes me sort of wonder if the future of AI is not killer robots, but Hallmark.) At any rate, as I was thinking about a subject for this month’s column, up popped “Beautiful Beaches.” One of the pictures was from Texas in April of 2021.



My memories of 2021 are a little vague. We were in the midst of the Covid pandemic and lots of things were shut down. In early April, winter’s final act seemed to be taking forever (kind of like every year) and we were tired of being cooped up. Gayle and I had both gotten vaccinated, and we were ready to bust out of the cold north. We had never been to the Gulf Coast of Texas, so we found a cheap off-season rental online and headed to Crystal Beach on the Bolivar Peninsula.

I like beaches. According to my Google/AI/Hallmark app, I guess I’m supposed to like long walks in the sand and sunsets, but what I really like is birding them. Near the end of the Bolivar Peninsula is the Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary, an important nesting and migration site owned and managed by Houston Audubon. We visited there several times during our stay and spent a lot of time scoping shorebirds and working on our identification skills. We kept joking, “Is it smaller than a Killdeer? How would I know when there are no Killdeer out here for comparison?!” As we scanned the beach, we found some Snowy Plovers. From a long distance we could see one of them had some stuff on its legs, so we crept closer for a better look. It was banded! There were black and white rings plus an unusual green flag on the left leg, and white and green rings on the right leg. I quickly pulled out my cell

One of the 30 or so non-award-winning photos taken of the Snowy Plover that day.



phone and digiscoped some pictures. Getting sharp images was difficult since the little guy kept moving around, it was a long way away, and the bright sun made it hard to see the phone screen, but I kept micro-adjusting the scope focus and snapping photos. None of them are going to win any awards, but out of about 30 pictures, a few were good enough to distinguish the band colors.

We contacted our local banding guru, and she directed us to a Google Group for reporting Snowy Plover bands, where I input our sighting data and uploaded the pics. A few days later, someone from Blue Point Conservation Science in Petaluma, California, sent back a note that it wasn’t one of theirs, but she copied a colleague at Texas Tech. He replied that they don’t use flag bands, so it wasn’t one of theirs. Then the “Recovery Unit 6 Snowy Plover Color Band Coordinator” in California chimed in that the green flag was likely used by Virginia Tech and copied folks there. Virginia Tech replied that, indeed, it was one of theirs, and it was banded as an adult on 7/8/2012 at a site along the Missouri River, specifically at Lewis and Clark Lake near Yankton, South Dakota.

So, what did I learn from this? First, there are folks scattered all over the country involved in banding and tracking Snowy Plovers, a near threatened species. If you ever get a picture of a banded bird, try to find a place to send the information – it can be an important data point to help species conservation. Second, since it was banded as an adult, and assuming a hatch month

PRESIDENT'S CORNER, BRIAN ROHRS

of June, this bird was at least 9 years and 10 months old, pretty close to the longevity record of 11 years and 0 months. Third, the Boliver Peninsula is just over 1000 miles directly south of the banding site, so if this snowbird (pun intended) makes this trek every year, then the little guy has flown, at the very least, over 19,000 miles. Fourth, it's easy to go down rabbit holes with Google. Out of curiosity, I looked up Yankton and found it's derived from a Dakota word meaning "end-village" and it was the original capital of the Dakota Territories. It also apparently has the best pizza in South Dakota, so visit Charlie's Pizza House if you're ever in that neighborhood. Finally, this stuff is way cooler than long walks on the beach, so take THAT, artificial intelligence!

Some RBA highlights for this month:

We have a couple of field trips scheduled for December, one at Conesus Lake and a beginning birder trip to Nations Road. Join your fellow birders in the field!

Our speaker at 7 pm on December 11th is Jennifer Ackerman, talking about the natural history of owls and recent discoveries about their behavior. Please join us in person at Asbury First Methodist Church or on Zoom.

Our December Birds and Brews will be on the 29th from 6-9 at Fifth Frame Brewing. Come out and join us for some lively conversation.

Lastly, please consider helping out with the annual Christmas Bird Count on December 21st. Details are elsewhere in the Little Gull. I hope some of you can make time in your busy holiday schedule for this important annual tradition.

Until next month, Happy Birding!

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2026 RBA BOARD

The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the slate of officers who are nominated and have agreed to serve on the RBA Board for 2026:

President	Brian Rohrs	Director	Neal Reilly
Vice President	Candy Giles	Director	Doug Rabjohns
Secretary	Lisa Talpey	Director	Clyde Comstock
Treasurer	Steve Taylor	Director	Sandra Glantz
	Director	Randi Minetor (<i>past president</i>)	

The election will take place at the **RBA annual winter meeting** on **Saturday, January 10th**. A quorum consisting of at least 10% of current members eligible to vote is required.

The Committee unanimously recommends the election of the entire slate of nominees.

Dominic Sherony, Liz Magnanti, and Lisa Talpey



Mute Swan and Tundra Swan on Irondequoit Bay. Photo by Alan Bloom.

FIELD TRIPS

DEC 7
Sunday

BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP – NATIONS ROAD

Sharpen your skills on wintering hawks and Short-eared Owls. Other wintering birds such as Horned Larks, Snow Buntings, and Lapland Longspurs are often present. This trip is a combination of driving and viewing at stops along roads. Length about .5 mile walking along the road. Restroom facilities are available at Tops. Meet at **2:00 p.m.** at the Tops Plaza in Avon on Routes 5 and 20, 2 miles west of I-390. If possible, carpooling from Tops would be very helpful. Bring binoculars, dress warmly and in layers.

Spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very useful.

Leaders: John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and co-leaders Niki Banke 585-317-3751 and Robert Crandall 585-278-3455



JAN 1
Thursday

IRONDEQUOIT BAY OUTLET AND DURAND-EASTMAN PARK YEAR LIST JUMP-START

Get started on your annual list! We'll look for winter waterfowl on the Bay, then move to Durand-Eastman Park, where we will stroll Log Cabin Road and Zoo Road looking for finches, waxwings, and resident birds. This trip is mostly on paved roads. No restrooms available. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** in the large parking lot next to the Outlet bridge on the west side of Irondequoit Bay Outlet (Irondequoit Bay State Marine Park). **Dress warmly! Spotting scopes would be very useful.**

Leaders: Norma Platt and John Boettcher 585-671-9639

JAN 3
Saturday

WEBSTER PARK – CAMPGROUND AREA

In mature forest and scrubby areas, we'll look for overwintering resident birds, lingering migrants such as Hermit Thrush, and special winter visitors such as Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, White-winged and Red Crossbills, and Bohemian Waxwings. This is a mostly level walk, partly on dirt road, partly on a wooded dirt trail that can be uneven in places. Wear boots with good traction, and dress warmly as we may be outside for 2-3 hours, although you are free to leave at any time. Trip length will depend on trail and weather conditions. No restrooms available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** Enter the park at 999 Lake Road (not the parking lot nearby). Drive the park road about .6 miles, park in the pull-offs before the gate. Don't block the gate.

Leaders: Rosemary Reilly 585-748-0802 and co-leader Pat Martin 585-301-5485

JAN 10
Saturday

BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP – MENDON PONDS PARK SONGBIRD TRAIL

This trip will be a leisurely winter walk along rolling trails (approx. 1.5 miles) featuring some very close looks at our winter passerines! Bring your binoculars, some sunflower seeds, and your camera! This is a family-friendly field trip. Meet at **9:30 a.m.** at the visitor center on Pond Road near Clover Street. Restroom is available at the visitor center, and there is a port-a-john.

Leaders: John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and co-leader Ann McMican 585-533-1222





Birds and Brews

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

Monday, December 29, 2025
6:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Fifth Frame Brewing Co.
5370 St. Paul Blvd, Rochester
(In the building that was the Summerville Grill, just before the Summerville Pier)

It's half-price wings night at Fifth Frame!
Come enjoy the creative menu and a
wide range of beers, as well as a full bar!
fifthframe.co



A Solitary Sandpiper seen at LaSalle's
Landing by Andrew Romanowski.

WELCOME TO THE FLOCK

Please welcome our new members:

Cheryl Arnold	Charles Lawrence	Cynthia Wessels
Laurie Broccolo	Kathryn Markakis	Izabel Wessels
Bonnie Hewett	Raleigh Miller	Jenna Willey
Linda Hossli	Lillie Spackman	

As of November 15, total 2025 membership is 406

Individual Members: 264
Family Members: 97
Supporters: 7
Sponsors: 4
Corporate Sponsors: 1
Complimentary Memberships: 33
Doug Rabjohns, RBA Membership Data



Mallard at Summerville Pier seen by Eunice Thein.



What an Owl Knows

Speaker: Jennifer Ackerman

For millennia, owls have captivated and intrigued us. Our fascination with these mysterious birds was first documented more than 30,000 years ago in the Chauvet Cave paintings in southern France. With their forward gaze and quiet flight, owls are often a symbol of wisdom, knowledge, and foresight. But what does an owl really know? And what do we really know about owls? Scientists have only recently begun to understand in deep detail the complex nature of these extraordinary birds. Some 260 species of owls exist today, and they reside on every continent except Antarctica, but they are far more difficult to find and study than other birds because they are cryptic, camouflaged, and mostly active in the dark of night. Join Jennifer in a multimedia presentation on what we have learned lately about the nature of the world's most enigmatic birds. With remarkable photos, videos, and audio recordings, Jennifer explores the rich biology and natural history of owls and examines remarkable new scientific discoveries about their brains and behavior.



Photo by Sofia Runarsdotter

Award-winning science writer and speaker **Jennifer Ackerman** has been writing about nature and science for more than three decades. She is the author of seven books, including the New York Times bestsellers, *The Genius of Birds* (Penguin Press, 2016) and *What an Owl Knows: The New Science of the World's Most Enigmatic Birds* (Penguin Press, June 2023), which was named a New York Times Notable Book of 2023.

Jennifer's previous books include *The Bird Way* (2020), which won the 2021 Whitley Book Award and was a finalist for the 2021 PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award. It was named a Nature Book of the Year by the London Sunday Times. Her book on bird intelligence, *The Genius of Birds*, was a finalist for the 2017 National Academies Communication Book Award and was named one of the ten best nonfiction books of 2016 by the Wall Street Journal. It has been published in 28 languages.

Jennifer was named a Guggenheim Fellow in 2024. She is also the recipient of a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and fellowships from the National Endowment of the Arts, the Bunting Institute of Radcliffe College (now the Radcliffe Institute), Brown College at the University of Virginia, and the Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University.

Ms. Ackerman will be joining us via Zoom, although we will still gather at Asbury First Methodist for socialization before and after the meeting. If you will be attending by Zoom, look for the Zoom link in your email prior to the meeting. The Zoom Room **will open at 6:45 PM**. Don't wait until the last minute to sign on, you might be left out!

SAVE *the* DATE!

Annual RBA Winter Dinner

Saturday, January 10, 2026, 5 pm to 9 pm
Asbury First United Methodist Church
1050 East Avenue Rochester, NY

Annual elections will be held and member presentations will provide the entertainment.

Reserve your seat for the potluck dinner! Everyone brings a dish to pass. Gluten Free, Vegetarian or Dairy Free dishes are welcomed or bring your favorite!

Main Entrees provided will be Roasted Turkey and Ham.

Contact Niki Banke. **Please include name, number of guests and the dish you plan on bringing.**

Please remember Asbury has a strict **no alcohol** policy.

Many hands make light work – we need volunteers to help set up and clean up!
Contact Niki for details.

Email Niki: jacksons.mama@hotmail.com
or text 585 317-3751



*A gynandromorphic
Northern Cardinal
in Kendall. Photo by
Alan Bloom.*

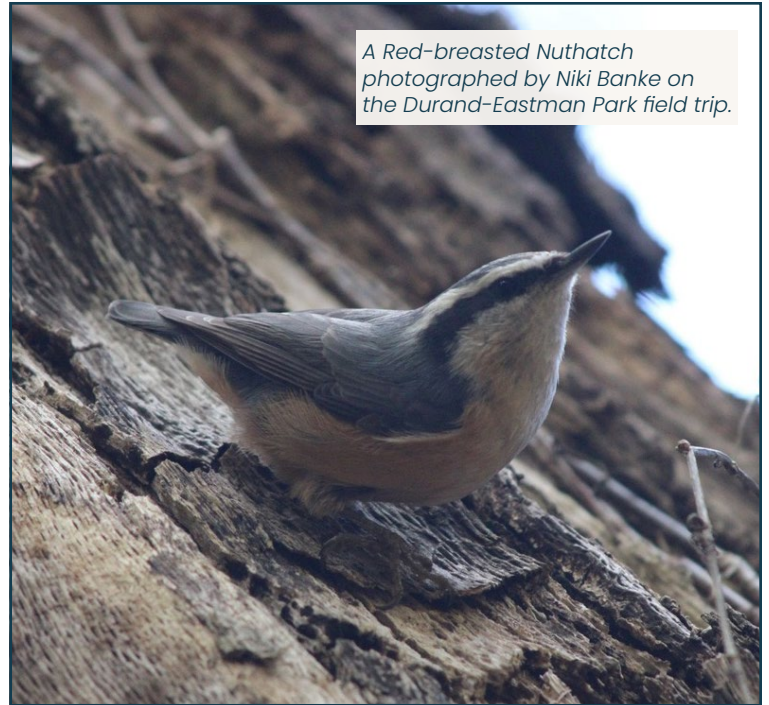
Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant October 18, 2025

Cloudy weather threatening rain turned into a sunny and warm day at the Batavia Wastewater Plant. Seventeen birders explored the roads surrounding the treatment ponds and found 46 species. Duck numbers seemed lower than previous years, but a good variety was present, including Northern Shovelers, American Black Duck, American Wigeon, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, Lesser Scaup, Wood Duck, and Common Merganser. A juvenile Bald Eagle soared over, and a few birders heard an American Pipit calling as it flew over. A nice, uncommon find was a very cooperative Rusty Blackbird that allowed great scope views for the group. Thanks to everyone who participated!

Neal Reilly

Durand-Eastman Park October 26, 2025

Twenty-eight experienced birders, beginners, and travelers gathered at Parking Lot D on a typical fall Rochester morning. A gentle northern breeze and a 41 degree temperature led us over to the Eastman Lake. Initial highlights included American Wigeon, Mallards, Mute Swans, a Double-crested Cormorant showing off his wings, and a Pileated Woodpecker. For our beginners and travelers, we were able to get a scope on most of these. We tallied 13 species at this stop. We then caravaned down to Horseshoe Road where we were greeted by a Red-tailed Hawk perching for a photo op and watching over a flock of Canada Geese. We had 22 species including: Brown Creepers, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, a Winter Wren and Carolina Wren, Cedar Waxwings, and White-throated Sparrows. As we were exploring the grounds, a White-tailed Deer was checking on our progress. After the walk, some of our sport fans departed to watch the Buffalo Bills take apart the Carolina Panthers. Our final stop



*A Red-breasted Nuthatch
photographed by Niki Banke on
the Durand-Eastman Park field trip.*

was Zoo Road to Log Cabin Road to the shortcut back to the parking lot. Moving down Zoo Road we were treated to a Hermit Thrush and a bunch of Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches. The Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmouse and Dark-eyed Juncos all made appearances. Pat Lake and Betty Pond presented 16 Wood Ducks along with Mallards and Canada Geese. We saw or heard most of the woodpeckers including: Northern Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy and Pileated. On the backside of Durand Lake, we had American Black Ducks, Mute Swans and more Mallards. Finally we were treated to a chorus of European Starlings, too many to accurately count, 100+. Our last two species were a wonderful surprise. Two Fox Sparrows and a Brown-headed Cowbird brought this site up to 32 species and gave the trip a full 42 unique species count. Our trip leader Jeanne Verhulst had to leave early due to travel plans, but co-leaders Elizabeth Rabjohns and I, along with a hardy group, finished the trip. You can view the trip report here:

ebird.org/tripreport/426405?view=checklists.

Doug Rabjohns

ROCHESTER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

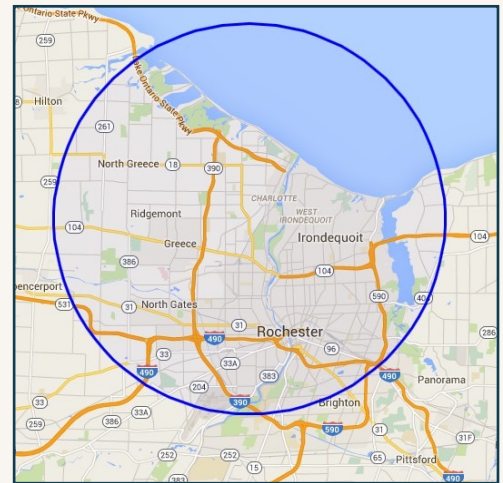
The 122nd Rochester Christmas Bird Count (RCBC) will be held on **Sunday, December 21, 2025**. Please consider contributing to this national birding event, which is a coveted annual RBA tradition.

Participation in the RCBC enables in-field skill development, connections within the birding community, and the ability to contribute to a citizen science project that directly influences National Audubon Society policy.

The location of the tally dinner is in the works! Please reach out to your sector leader as the count date approaches for details on location and time.

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

These sector leaders (below) have agreed to coordinate the field work "boots-on-the-ground" for the count. To participate in the count, contact them or Nick Kachala. Be sure that your sector leader gives you an individual or group assignment.



John Boettcher 298-3404

Braddock Bay to Long Pond Road

Greg Lawrence
glawrence21@yahoo.com

Long Pond Road to Dewey Avenue
Dewey Avenue to Charlotte Harbor

Andy Garland
andrew.garland@yahoo.com
585-329-1577

Summerville to Culver Road
& Seneca Park

Sheryl Gracewski and Tom Nash
sheryl.gracewski@rochester.edu
tnashny@earthlink.net

Culver Road to Baker Road (Webster)

Charlie Plimpton
plimptonc@gmail.com

Parks and neighborhoods
(Highland, Genesee Valley, Mt. Hope Cemetery)

Rosemary Reilly
reilly.rosemary@gmail.com

Maplewood & Turning Point Parks,
Holy Sepulcher and Riverside cemeteries

Brian Morse
brianmorse2000@gmail.com
269-9576

West of airport/south of the canal/
north of the river

Rob Buckert 269-4206

Crow Roost

Nick Kachala, Compiler
nicholaskach@gmail.com or 585-750-5536



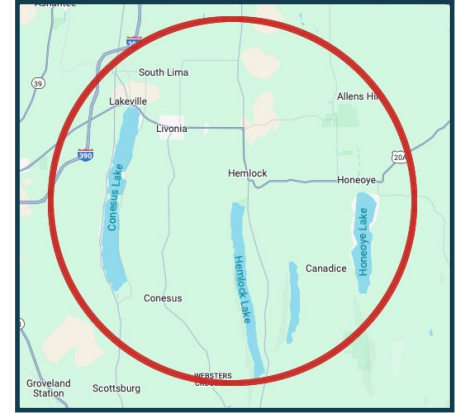
Northern Shoveler at Charlotte Pier.
Photo by Chris Walden.



LITTLE LAKES CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Saturday, December 27, 2025

This year marks the 126th count nationwide and the 74th count for the area. The count date is Saturday, December 27, 2025. Birds seen during the count week of December 24th through December 30th may be called in to the leaders for inclusion in the tally. The center of the 15 mile diameter circle is the outlet of Hemlock Lake, at the north end of the lake. The circle includes all of Conesus, Hemlock, Canadice and Honeoye Lakes and a large area to the north. The dividing line between the areas is the height of land between the lakes. It is important for the coverage in each of the five areas to be as consistent as possible, year to year, for meaningful evaluation of the count area. Your participation in this worthy endeavor would be greatly appreciated. New birders can be paired with experienced birders. If you are interested, please contact one of the leaders



We will be meet at 4:30pm at a new place:

Minnehan's at 5601 Big Tree Rd, Lakeville (585) 346-6167. Menu is available online—click [here](#).

Area	Leader	Phone	email
Conesus Lake	Jim Kimball	519-9211	kimball@geneseo.edu
Hemlock Lake	Kevin Koss Sheila Mumpton	314-8306 346-0292	kkoss@frontiernet.net smumpton@gmail.com
Canadice Lake	Phil Opdycke	259-6932	popdycke@icloud.com
Honeoye Lake	John Boettcher	298-3404	john2w3b@gmail.com
Northern Area	Robert Buckert	269-4206	avbrro@hotmail.com

Pat Martin, Compiler
Cell: (585) 301-5485 emartin139@earthlink.net

LETCHWORTH-SILVER LAKE BIRD COUNT

December 20, 2025

The annual Letchworth-Silver Lake Christmas Bird Count will take place on December 20! Interested birders can help search a fifteen-mile diameter circle centered on Perry Center, NY. The purpose is to locate birds in an area encompassing all of Silver Lake and the northern half of Letchworth State Park. Please contact Matt Nusstein at Matthew.Nusstein@parks.ny.gov if you wish to participate in this community science project. There will be a pot-luck style tally at the end of the day at the Humphrey Nature Center, located in Letchworth State Park.



RBA TIME TO RENEW!

In the November Little Gull, we kicked off our annual renewal activities by asking the following questions:

What is your favorite reason for being part of the RBA Community? Attending field trips? Monthly speakers sharing unique insights into the world of birds? The *Little Gull* newsletter? Knowing you are supporting local conservation efforts?

Whatever the reason, your annual RBA membership makes all this possible.

As described in the November Little Gull, we are moving to an online membership renewal process. For 2026, we are at 95% online renewals! If you are comfortable making an online payment, please go to rochesterbirding.org, and click on the “Join/Renew” button at the top of the home page. If you prefer to mail in your payment, you can print off the renewal form from “Join/Renew” button on the RBA home page. Your membership will be good through December 31, 2026. (New memberships beginning September 1, 2025, carry through 2026.)

Membership levels for 2026:

Individual – *one person* **\$30**

Family* – *two persons and family living at same location* **\$40**

Supporter* – *Higher level of support* **\$75**

Sponsor* – *Greater level of support* **\$150**

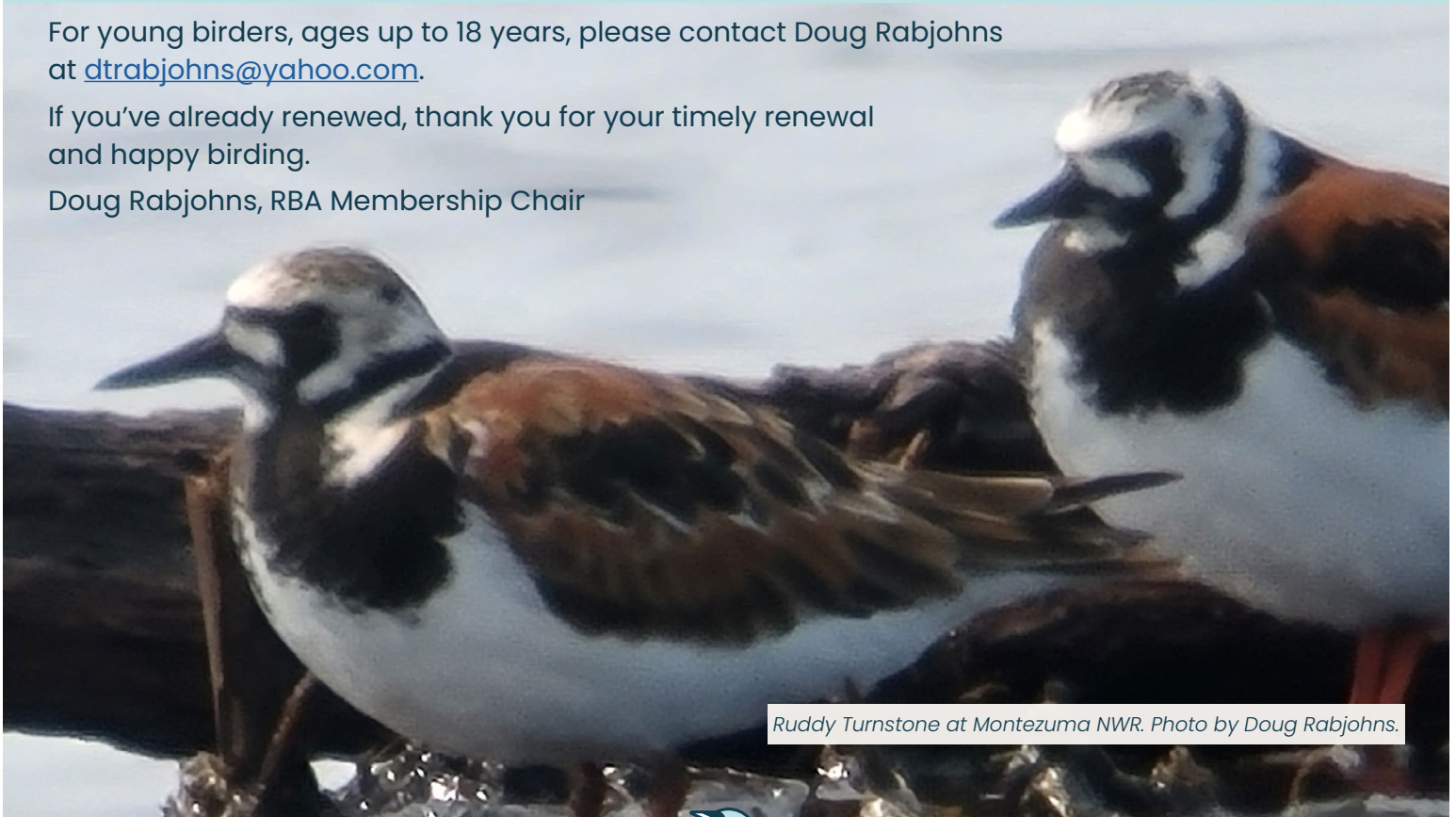
Corporate Member **\$250**

Optional Hardcopy Little Gull newsletter **+\$15**

For young birders, ages up to 18 years, please contact Doug Rabjohns at dtrabjohns@yahoo.com.

If you’ve already renewed, thank you for your timely renewal and happy birding.

Doug Rabjohns, RBA Membership Chair



Ruddy Turnstone at Montezuma NWR. Photo by Doug Rabjohns.

JUNE 2025 RECORDS SUMMARY

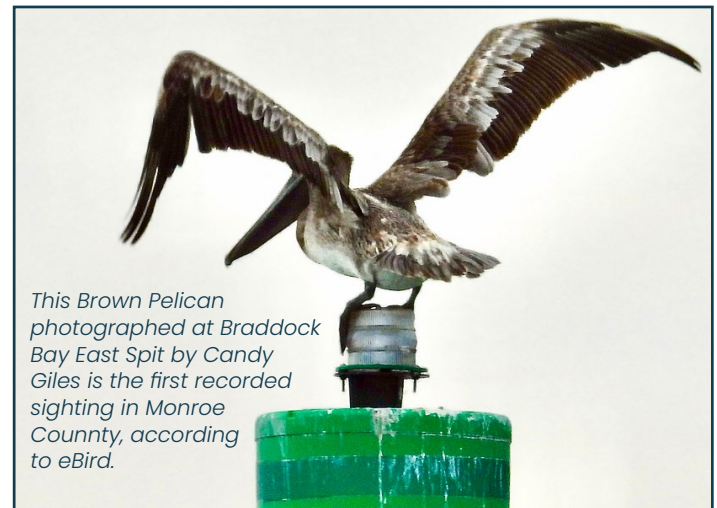
The humidity and wetness from May 2025 continued into June 2025. The cold from May, however, did not. Temperatures averaged 69.7°, 2.1° above average, finishing in the top 16 warmest Junes since records have been kept. Most of the warmer days were concentrated towards the end of the month. There were several record-high overnight lows. Precipitation totaled 5.98" for the month, 2.61" above average. An extremely unstable tropical atmosphere on 18 June contributed 3.15" of the precipitation measured at the Rochester airport, a new daily record. The same series of slow-moving pop-up cells inundated towns south of the airport in as much as 6-7" of rain, which contributed to stranded vehicles, washed out culverts, flooded basements, flooded schools, and caused at least one structural failure. A similar stalled system brought 5" of rain to the mid-Genesee Region of Livingston County on 27 June, causing additional road and basement flooding.

Birding conditions in June varied from location to location. The NMWMA seemed particularly hot, especially with good shorebird habitat and the incredible numbers of shorebirds continuing from May. Effort with passerines seemed significantly down this June. The unideal weekend weather and lack of incentive to seek out breeding birds given that the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas III finished in 2024 may have been contributing factors to explain the reduced effort to specifically seek out breeders.

May's substantial decrease in waterfowl diversity and abundance was met with some stragglers of migrant species lingering, although this June seemed particularly light on lingering diving ducks. This June, neither Long-tailed Duck nor White-winged Scoter were reported, which can sometimes be found in individual to small groups in the first days of the month. Lingering puddle ducks continued to be seen in small groups (Northern Shoveler, high count 6), up to decent accumulations (Green-winged Teal, high count 22) at Railroad Road Marsh in the NMWMA in the first half of June, with smaller numbers continuing throughout June – higher than expected. Other species reported throughout June at Railroad Road Marsh included American Black Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Blue-winged Teal.

The NMWMA, as usual, contained the highest concentrations of marsh birds. Common Gallinule

counts regularly topped 70 from VanDyne Spoor Road. American Coot numbers seemed lower (maximum 6, VanDyne Spoor Road), but adults still on hidden nests were the likely contributor here. A Glossy Ibis continued from May through at least 3 June at Railroad Road Marsh. Mike Tetlow found a Brown Pelican on Braddock Bay on 30 June. The bird was widely seen throughout the afternoon until it flew out of the bay and landed far out on Lake Ontario ahead of a storm in the evening. The bird was not observed the following day. This represents the first record for Monroe County, at least in eBird.



Lake Ontario's water levels measured 246.36 feet on 1 June and finished the month at a reading of 246.33 feet. This is remarkable, given the abundant precipitation, but it also suggests evidence of proactive management. Levels remained 6" above June 2024. Despite this, birders had no issue finding suitable shorebird habitat as many of the hotspots in the NMWMA and Genesee floodplain regions remained flooded with both water and shorebirds alike. Observers reported 20 species. Uncommon species included a Long-billed Dowitcher (uncommon in spring) at Railroad Road Marsh on 1 June, a Wilson's Phalarope at Railroad Road Marsh on 3-4 June, 2 Red Knots at Railroad Road Marsh on 1-2 June, and a Willet at Sodus Point on 24 June. Railroad Road Marsh hosted a shorebird fallout on 1-2 June, with early morning observers reporting a stunning 1,200 Semipalmated Sandpiper (Jay McGowan), a very high 32 White-rumped Sandpiper (Chris Wood, Brian Sullivan), and 500 Dunlin (Jay McGowan). Following suit of the waterfowl at Railroad

JUNE 2025 RECORDS SUMMARY

Road Marsh, shorebirds lingered here as well. While it is not uncommon to have individual shorebirds linger into the third or fourth week of June, these are usually individual cases. A decent collection of shorebirds (Least Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper) continued through the third week of June. The first signs of fall shorebird migration were evident by the last days of June, however, with multiple Lesser Yellowlegs reported from the Lake Ontario shoreline and the NMWMA.

Intriguingly, for the exact opposite of June 2024, gulls were abundant. An incursion of Lesser Black-backed Gulls was noted along the lakeshore, with counts of 26, 21, 17, and many above 10 coming from Ontario Beach throughout the month. Great Black-backed Gulls were also seen in small numbers from Ontario Beach and Sodus Point. There were no reports of Lesser Black-backed Gull and only one report of Great Black Backed Gull in June 2024. Laughing Gull, a nearly annual occurrence in June, was missed. Caspian Terns were reported in expected numbers, with the highest being 50 from Sodus Bay on 19 June. Domenic Sherony and Sheryl Gracewski reported a Forster's Tern from Ontario Beach on 2 June.



Lesser Black-backed Gull at Summerville Pier in June. Photo by Eunice Thein.

Raptor migration, expectedly, continued into June. Volunteers staffed the Braddock Bay Hawk Watch on nine days this month, adding 3,103 raptors to the Spring 2025 total. High counts of note included 1,147 Broad-winged Hawks on 4 June, 44 Bald Eagles on 4 June, and 55 Bald Eagles on 5 June. A single Mississippi Kite passed the hawkwatch on 3 June. Two more Mississippi Kites were observed high over the hawkwatch on 4 June – quite remarkable, even with the ideal winds. Mike Gullo conducted a raptor watch from Beechwood State Park on 3 June and counted 1,150 Broad-winged Hawks and a Mississippi Kite, likely the one from Braddock Bay.

Spring passerine migration continued into the first week or so of June. Singular Olive-sided Flycatchers were observed through 4 June at Durand-Eastman Park, Firehouse Woods, Mendon Ponds Park, and Whiting Road Nature Preserve. The last observed northbound Gray-cheeked Thrush was observed on 3 June, slightly early, or perhaps due to a lack of nocturnal effort (flight call detection). Swainson's Thrush had a similar early spring migration last observation. Jeremy Pete reported a late White-crowned Sparrow on 7 June in Gates. Nothing unusual stood out with the remaining northbound warbler migration. For breeders, Jay McGowan reported a Sedge Wren from Martens Tract in the NMWMA on 15 June, a near-annual location now, which was seen periodically throughout the month. The Cook Road Clay-colored Sparrows were only observed twice (6 and 18 June, Andy Guthrie). Matt Nusstein reported two Yellow-throated Warblers from the Council Grounds plot at Letchworth State Park on 28 June, which were subsequently seen by many. Yellow-throated Warbler has a historical precedence of attempted nesting in Letchworth State Park.

	2025	2024	10-year Average (2015-2024)
Total species for June	206	194	192.9
New species for the year	2	1	2.4
Total for the year to date	272	276	271.7



Caspian Tern at Summerville Pier. Photo by Eunice Thein.

JULY 2025 RECORDS SUMMARY

July 2025 was hot and increasingly dry. The heat from late June continued to make this July in the top 20 warmest Julys ever for Rochester, with temperatures averaging 74.1°, 1.8° above average. No daytime record highs were set, despite the heat; however, a low of 73° on the night of July 13 tied the nightly low high temperature. The abundant precipitation that fell in May and June was almost absent in July, with precipitation totaling 1.86", 1.70" below average. 85% of the precipitation measured at the Rochester airport fell in two short thunderstorms. Abnormally dry conditions, as per the U.S. Drought Monitor, set in by the end of the month in Kingbird Region 2, while a moderate drought set in just west of Rochester in rural Orleans and Niagara Counties.

Waterfowl for July were light, as expected, with some additional diversity essentially limited to the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area (NMWMA). A singular Blue-winged Teal was seen throughout the month at the Railroad Road Marsh within the NMWMA. Gadwall, a rare breeder, were observed in a group of four on 4 July from Railroad Road Marsh, although the breeding status of this group remained unknown. A pair of American Wigeon and a pair of Northern Pintail were also observed at Railroad Road Marsh. Multiple observers reported a group of 28 Common Mergansers (27 immatures being led by an adult female) on Conesus Lake towards the beginning of the month. There were no reports of lingering or unseasonal mid-summer aythya diving ducks.

Waterbirds (Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot, and Common Gallinule) were the most abundant in the NMWMA, particularly at VanDyne Spoor Road and Martens Tract. American Bittern was interestingly missed for the July regional list. Brad Carlson confirmed the presence of a BROWN PELICAN on Conesus Lake on 11 July, following up on a third-hand report from a non-birder. The Brown Pelican was widely observed throughout the rest of the month, often perched on the docks at the north end of the lake, visible from Vitale Park. This represents the first Livingston County record of Brown Pelican, and only one of a handful from the NYSOA Region 2 statistical area at large.

Fall shorebird migration accelerated, growing from the small trickle of Lesser Yellowlegs seen in

the last few days of June to full-speed migration, with 21 species reported throughout the Region by the month's end. Water levels on Lake Ontario remained high, starting at 246.33' but dropped to 245.90' (5.16") by 31 July, which is expected during the summer months. A few shorebirds accumulated on Braddock Bay's East Spit, but Sodus Point, Ontario Beach, and once again the Railroad Road Marsh in the NMWMA were the main shorebird hotspots with significant effort-hours put in. Species of note at Railroad Road Marsh included an American Golden-Plover on 14 July (very early), two Long-billed Dowitchers on 14 July (early), and a Wilson's Phalarope on 13 July, found by Mike Gullo. Expected, but good species of note included a maximum of five Hudsonian Whimbrels ('Hudsonian Whimbrel' is the new name of Whimbrel as of 2025 after a split to create Hudsonian and Eurasian Whimbrels) at Sodus Point on 31 July, a Willet at Summerville Pier on 24 July, another Willet at Sodus Point on 28 July, and three Red Knots at Sodus Point on 31 July.

Gulls continued strong in July. Mike Gullo discovered both an immature Little Gull and photographed an adult Franklin's Gull at Sodus Point the morning of 1 July. The Little Gull was observed by a small handful of others, but the Franklin's Gull was only observed by Mike Gullo. Great Black-backed Gull continued to be found in small numbers. Very interestingly, the flock of Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Ontario Beach from June continued to grow to a maximum of 74, counted by Andy Guthrie, on 1 July. The Lesser Black-backed Gulls were a mix of ages, with several near-adults (no full adults), a majority composition of first summer birds, and many second/third summer types. This represented a remarkable count for both the date and location. Even more interestingly, just as quickly as they accumulated, they left, with what could only be described as the 'baseline' population left by the second week of July (1-2 birds at select lakeshore hotspots seen infrequently throughout the month).

Raptor movements were dismal for July. Although the peak spring raptor migration is all but over by July, Bald Eagles and Broad-winged Hawks can still fly in small numbers, especially towards the beginning of the month. By contrast, the high count for Bald Eagle was five non-migrants over Sodus Bay. The only Broad-winged Hawks of July were breeders found in the high hills of the western Finger Lakes.



JULY 2025 RECORDS SUMMARY

For the passerines, two Sedge Wrens were present throughout the month at Martens Tract in the NMWMA. As many as four Clay-colored Sparrows frequented the shrubby habitat on Sand and Taft Road in West Bloomfield. The two Eurasian Collared-Doves were reported six times along Middle Road in Sodus. The two doves were discovered in May but not seen in June. Chris Wood observed an interesting “winged” warbler in Black Creek Park, which was either a very worn female Blue-winged Warbler (the expected species) or some type



Alan Bloom saw these Eurasian Collared Doves in Sodus.

of hybrid Blue-winged/Golden-winged Warbler. Cliff Dekdebrun found a Dickcissel at Webster Big Field on 2 July, which was seen by many, although only through 3 July. This is the second consecutive year that Dickcissel has been reported from Webster Big Field. The two Yellow-throated Warblers in Letchworth State Park, found in June, continued through at least 16 July. Observers reported a healthy number of breeding warblers, with uncommon species restricted to the hills and valleys south of the Lake Ontario plain. Fall passerine migration was evident by the end of the month, with flocks of nearly 1,000 Bank Swallows and 1,000 Tree Swallows gathering over the NMWMA and smaller, but nonetheless significant flocks of Bank Swallows gathering and moving along the Lake Ontario shoreline. There were no reports of early moving boreal-breeding warblers (Cape May, Tennessee, or Bay-breasted Warblers), which can sometimes be found in extremely early post-breeding dispersal movements in late July.

Please submit reports to eBird, post them on GeneseeBirds, and/or send by the 5th of the month to Nick Kachala, nicholaskach@gmail.com.

Observers: Ryan Ballard, Niki Banke, Timmy Banker, Jessie Barry, Mitchell Barry, Lynn Bergmeyer, Linda Birkel, Robin Blakesley, Alan Bloom & Lisa Bloom, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Scott & Janet Brooks, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Ian Campbell, Brad Carlson, Robert Cicotta, Roger Clark, Sara Close, Lorenzo Colantoni, Robert Crandall, Doug Daniels, Thomas Davis, Cliff Dekdebrun, Peggy Dempsey, Grace Dowdall, Diane Egan, Rob Fergus, George & Katie Ford, Kyle Gage, Andrew Garland, Matthew Gavette, Janis George, Candy Giles, John Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Kevin Griffith, Austin Groff, Michael Gullo, Carmen Gumina, Andrew Guthrie, Bill Haake, Helen Haller, Kim Hartquist, Christina Hoh, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Lynn Howes, Pam Inzinna, Nick Kachala, Amy Kahn, Laura Kammermeier, David Kennedy, James Kimball, Cindy Kindle, Hans Kunze, Greg Lawrence, Joan Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Peggy Macres, Cynthia Marino, Patricia Martin, Judy Massare, Lauri Mattle, Jacob McCartney, Ryan McGinty, Jay McGowan, Ann McMican, Scott Meagher, Jim Miles, Kent Millham, Phil Mills, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Matt Nusstein, Dave Nutter, Luanne Pignataro, Derek Pulhamus, Doug & Elizabeth Rabjohns, Rosemary Reilly, Neal Reilly, Michael Rizzo, Susan Roberts, Chris Rockwell, Brian Rohrs, Andrew Romanowski, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Shawn Ryan, Jennifer Rycenga, Anne Salverda, Greg & Shannon Sanda, Mickey Scilingo, Luke Seitz, Dominic Sherony, Judith Slein, Robert Spahn, Rick Stevens, Reuben Stoltzfus, Stephen Taylor, David Tetlow, Michael Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Nathan Ukens, Tom & Jeanne Verhulst, Brad Walker, Mike Wasilco, Maili Waters, Bridget Watts, Mamie Weed, Kim Weeks, Glenn Wolford, Chris Wood, Jim Wood (all observers could not be listed here).

Willet at Summerville Pier.
Photo by Richard Horsey.

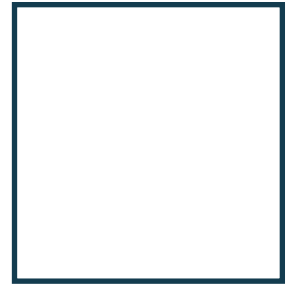


	2025	2024	10-year Average (2015-2024)
Total species for July	183	191	182.3
New species for the year	1	4	2.8
Total for the year to date	273	280	274.5



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