



Rochester Birding  
Association

# Little Gull



*Belted Kingfisher at Irondequoit  
Bay Park West. Photo by Alan  
Bloom in March of 2024.*

## MAR 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](http://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!

MAR 15  
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. On the way there, we will look through fields for migrant waterfowl (Snow, or other rarely seen geese) and lingering winter field birds (Horned Larks, Snow Buntings or Lapland Longspurs). We may stop at Owl Woods in search of migrating owls, if they have been reported that morning. We will end back at the Braddock Bay Park Hawk Watch in hopes of spotting Rough-legged or 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 are 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. **Bring your own FRS radios and spotting scopes, if you have them.**

**Leaders:** Mike Tetlow 585-748-5838 and co-leader Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422

*Field Trips continue on [page 4](#)*



## Planting a Seed

I recently had the pleasure of escaping our Rochester winter weather with my spouse Gayle for a week in St John, US Virgin Islands. Two-thirds of the island is designated as a National Park, and it's a haven to birds, bats, sea turtles, fish, and other wildlife. We camped in the park on the north coast of the island, went to sleep each night with the sound of waves crashing on the beach and were awakened each morning by the whistles and squawks of Pearly-eyed Thrashers scouring our campsite for any food items we may have inadvertently left unprotected. Each morning as we ate our breakfast and drank our coffee in the open air, we put in an eBird list. These included the aforementioned thrashers, Zenaida Doves, European Collared Doves, Green-throated Caribs, American Kestrels, the occasional Smooth-billed Ani and of course, the Bananaquit.

The Bananaquit is the official bird of the US Virgin Islands and is even featured on the 2009 US quarter honoring the Territory. It's a small, colorful, talkative warbler-like bird with a bright yellow breast, white throat and distinctive white Groucho-Marx-like eyebrows. It feeds on fruit and nectar, and its island nickname is the sugar bird. Locals make birdfeeders out of coconut husks and twine, and attract flocks of Bananaquits by putting out raw sugar. We've had an ongoing feud with some birding friends about the pronunciation of Bananaquit, so I asked an island naturalist how he pronounces it. He said, diplomatically, it depends on where you are from. Mainlanders pronounce the last syllable as 'QUIT', while the islanders pronounce it as 'KEET'. Apparently, 'Bananaquit' is one of the 'tomato/to-mah-toes' of the birding world.

On one of our hikes up the steep forested hills of St John, I heard Gayle yell, "STOP YOUR FEET!" (Note: this is our household code for, "Psst, sweetheart, there's a bird very close by that you might want to have a look at.") Overhead in the canopy, not fifteen feet away, was a Mangrove Cuckoo. Its buffy breast and long black/white patterned tail were partially visible through the branches. As we shuffled up and down the trail trying to get better views with our binoculars, a young couple came walking by and asked, "What are you looking at?" As a birder, I love this question because it's an invitation to introduce someone to the hobby I love. We loaned them our bins, got them on the cuckoo, and heard their deeply satisfying exclamation, "Wow!" Then came the delicate balance of giving them an interesting tidbit or two about the bird without fire-hosing them with information. I've found that less is usually more, as people will remember seeing a cool bird and if they're lucky, its name. We showed them some photos from the Merlin App so they could see what the bird looks like without interfering vegetation, and after a short enthusiastic conversation we parted ways. I thought, how gratifying is it to connect fellow nature lovers to something beautiful they didn't even know existed? And maybe 40 years from now, they will be the ones introducing a young couple to this wonderful pastime.

### Some highlights for this month:

I was delighted to see so many of you at our 50th anniversary dinner in February. What a fantastic event! Thanks to all who helped with the planning and execution!

Our speaker this month is Nathan Senner, talking about following shorebirds on their long-distance migration. He will be speaking in person, and I hope to see many of you Thursday, March 13th at 7:00 pm at Asbury First United Methodist Church or via Zoom.

Check out the upcoming March field trips, including one for young birders!

We continue to ask for your support towards our \$8500 1:1 match goal for our Access to Birds and Birding Fund. An update on progress is provided below this article. We use this fund to support projects in our community.

And speaking of projects in our community, in February your RBA donated \$10K to the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club to support their much larger effort to improve their trails and make them more accessible. Our members' picnic in June will be at BANC, and it will be a great opportunity for you to see what they've accomplished.

Finally, we have a new Volunteer Coordinator! Thanks to Clyde Comstock for stepping up to take on the role! The RBA receives requests to participate in community events, which usually means setting up a table and sharing information about the RBA with people. As Clyde looks for volunteers to staff these events, I hope you will consider sharing a little bit of your time to help.

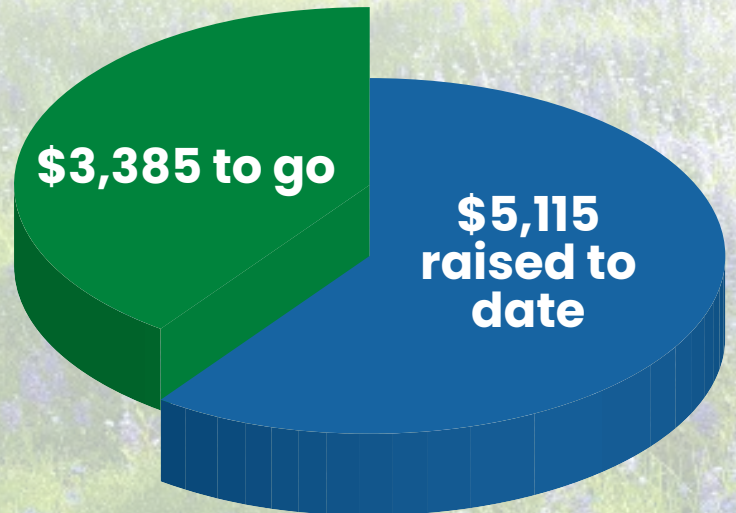
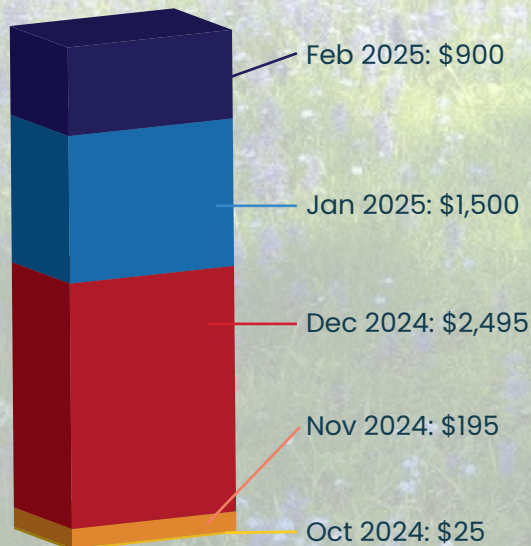
Until next month, Happy Birding!

## MATCHING GRANT UPDATE

**Give to the Rochester Birding Association's Access to Birds and Birding Fund before May 1, 2025, and your gift will be doubled!**

As announced in the February Little Gull, we have an anonymous donor who will match every dollar RBA raises until May 1, 2025, up to \$8500. This includes donations given during our 2025 membership drive. Funds are used to support projects that improve access to birds and birding in the Greater Rochester area.

**As of February 27, we have raised \$5,115 or 60% of our \$8500 match target.**



Please consider a donation and help us reach our goal. Visit [rochesterbirding.org/access-to-birds-and-birding-fund/](https://rochesterbirding.org/access-to-birds-and-birding-fund/)

Background image from [bancny.org](https://bancny.org)



# FIELD TRIPS

**MAR 22**  
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 Braddock Bay Park 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 trailhead.

**Leaders:** Liz Magnanti 585-748-0309 and co-leaders Doug and Elizabeth Rabjohns 585-690-6296

**MAR 23**  
Sunday

## **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 are 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.**

**Leaders:** Kinsley Whittum 585-872-7334 and co-leader Christina Hoh 973-224-7009

**SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 9:00 AM**

## **YOUNG BIRDERS WALK**

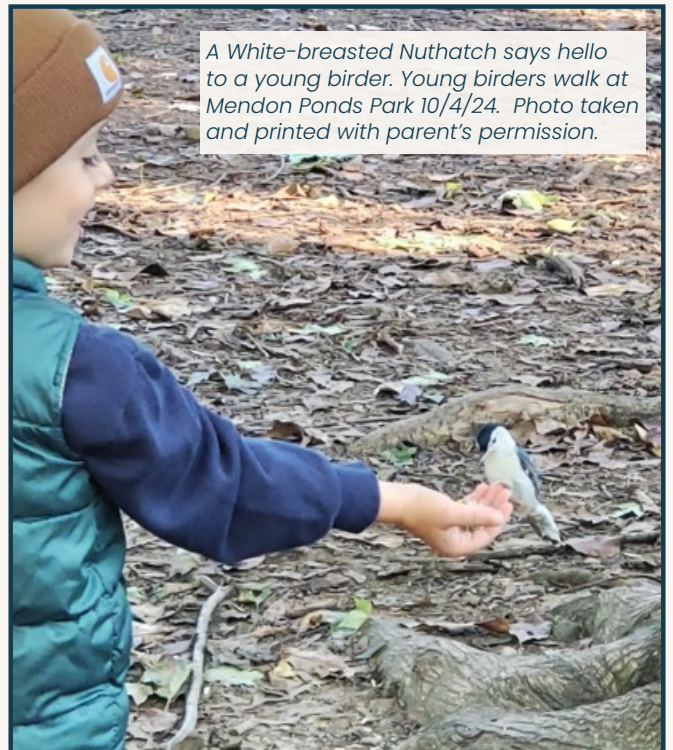
**Tinker Nature Park, Calkins Road, Henrietta**

Neal Reilly of the Rochester Birding Association will lead a bird walk for young birders at Tinker Nature Park on Saturday March 8.

We will meet in the parking lot at 9:00 a.m. and explore Tinker looking for migrant and resident birds. The walk will be on a level, gravel-paved, loop trail and last 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on what birds we find.

All young birders must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Extra binoculars will be available.



*A White-breasted Nuthatch says hello to a young birder. Young birders walk at Mendon Ponds Park 10/4/24. Photo taken and printed with parent's permission.*



# Birds and Brews

Join us for craft beers and conversation!

A chance to meet up and socialize with people who love birds.

Monday, March 24, 2025

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Three Heads Brewing

186 Atlantic Avenue, Rochester



We'll enjoy sitting outside, weather permitting, at this neighborhood favorite brew pub. Three Heads doesn't serve meals (just some limited snacks), but you are welcome to bring your own takeout. (Old Pueblo Grill and Le Petit Poutine are right across the street.)

[www.threeheadsbrewing.com](http://www.threeheadsbrewing.com)

## 2025 Winter Birding Challenge

December 14<sup>th</sup> through March 21<sup>st</sup>



Complete fun birding tasks!

Earn your patch and a chance to win a pair of Vortex Viper HD Binoculars!

Use our new app!



Scan to register or Visit [bird-wny.com](http://bird-wny.com)

BUFFALO AUDUBON SOCIETY



Outside  
Chronicles

VORTEX OPTICS

For more information click here: <https://outsidechronicles.com/winterbird/>



## A Year in the Life of a Long-Distance Migratory Shorebird

*Speaker: Nathan Senner*

**Nathan Senner** started studying birds at the age of 14. After earning a B.A. from Carleton College, he was awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship to follow Hudsonian Godwits on their annual migration from the Arctic to the southern tip of South America and back. He continued this research while pursuing his PhD at Cornell University with Dr. John Fitzpatrick. From there, he traveled across the Atlantic for a postdoc with Dr. Theunis Piersma at the University of Groningen, studying the flexibility of Black-tailed Godwit annual cycles. Following that, he was a postdoc at the University of Montana with Dr. Zachary Cheviron, investigating the population dynamics of high-elevation deer mice. He has been an assistant professor since 2019 and in the Department of Environmental Conservation at the University of Massachusetts Amherst since 2022, where his lab mostly focuses on the population and movement ecology of long-distance migratory birds.



*Nathan will be joining us in person. 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!*

## WELCOME TO THE FLOCK

### **Please welcome our new members:**

Elizabeth Daugherty  
Juli & Jimmy de Grummond  
Judith Kay  
Melanie & Gene Mancuso

Randy & Charlie & Chelsea Plimpton  
Philip Pruna  
Chris Walden  
Chris Wood & Jessie Barry

### **As of February 15, total 2025 membership is 339**

Individual Members: 216  
Family Members: 88  
Supporters: 2  
Sponsors: 3  
Corporate Sponsors: 1 (The Bird House)  
Complimentary Memberships: 29

*Doug Rabjohns, RBA Membership Data*



*Redhead seen at Bird Island Pier, in Buffalo, by Alan Bloom*

*Editor's Note: Due to an error, these trips were accidentally left out of last issue.*

## Irondequoit Bay Outlet and Durand-Eastman Park January 1, 2025

The rain and wind really put a damper on this trip, but twenty folks showed up. The Bay area and channel were largely empty of birds, maybe due to the duck hunters. Relocating to the Zoo Road area of the park was more fruitful but still pretty thin in terms of bird numbers. Sharp eyes and ears among the participants accounted for most of the expected species. We finished the day early with 24 species.

**John Boettcher and Norma Platt**

## Mendon Ponds Park Birdsong Trail January 11, 2025

In years past this trip has usually consisted of a few parents with young children. It is always neat to see the wonder on the kids' faces when a bird lands in their hand to get a sunflower



*A large group showed up this year to enjoy the Birdsong Trail at Mendon Ponds.*



*An Eastern Towhee photographed by Niki Banke at Mendon Ponds.*

seed. Last year it was very cold, and no one showed up.

Imagine our surprise this year when 30+ people (no children) joined us. We attribute the attendance to the nice conditions and cabin fever due to the previous five days of low temperatures and 30 mph wind. About a third of the group were experienced birders, but there were many excited newbies who got a lot of attention.

The usual spot along the north side of the trail produced an abundance of birds, many readily coming to the hand to fetch seed. On the ground and in the shrubs were the usual suspects complimented by at least 10 White-throated Sparrows, two unusual Fox Sparrows and a very unusual Eastern Towhee. The experienced birders in the group pitched in to help the novices with bird identification and get views.

The crowd thinned and the remainder of us strolled around the loop back to the visitor center, catching both a Pileated Woodpecker and Brown Creeper to complete the list (thanks Bill) of 22 species identified.

**John Boettcher and Ann McMican**

# RBA CONSERVATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

## Charlie Plimpton, Conservation Committee Chair

I am new to the RBA and recently took over as chair of the Conservation Committee. One of our goals is to engage more members of the RBA in conservation through action, outreach, and awareness. We wanted to share some of the topics we are discussing moving forward.

Our committee is working on increasing native planting initiatives, advocacy for environmentally friendly policies, and exploring ways to involve RBA members in hands-on conservation efforts, such as habitat restoration projects. One key discussion has been about Monroe County parks and the potential expansion of mountain biking in county parks adjacent to Irondequoit Bay. While we support responsible recreation, we want to ensure that bird conservation and habitat protection are considered in any land-use decisions. RBA members can play a role by staying informed and advocating for conservation-friendly policies in our local parks.

Additionally, we plan to feature regular conservation updates in The Little Gull to keep members informed and engaged. If you're interested in getting involved or have ideas to share, we'd love to hear from you! Please reach out to me at [plimptonc@gmail.com](mailto:plimptonc@gmail.com).



# NYSOA 2025

## Hosted by the Cayuga Bird Club

New York State Ornithological Association Conference ~ Ithaca, New York 2025



September 19-21, 2025 • Ithaca Downtown Conference Center

- **Keynote Speaker:** Peter Kaestner, *In Search of the Orange-tufted Spiderhunter*
- **Friday Night Speaker:** Adriaan Dokter, on *Birdcast*
- Field Trips to Area Hotspots
- Afternoon Papers Session and more!

[www.nysoa2025.org](http://www.nysoa2025.org)





# Monthly **ECO-CHALLENGE**

## REDUCING PLASTIC WASTE

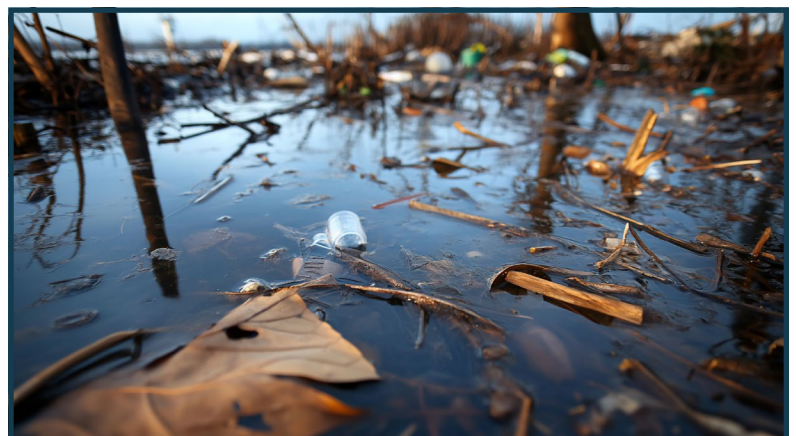
Last year, we introduced an article that we hoped would become a monthly feature in this newsletter. However, as life unfolded, we didn't have the chance to follow through—until now! One of the Conservation Committee's key goals is to revive our Monthly Eco-Challenge to highlight important conservation issues that impact both our daily lives and the health of birds and their ecosystems.

To start, we're tackling one of the most pressing environmental problems: plastic pollution. With such an overwhelming issue, where do we even begin? For this challenge, we're keeping it simple—avoid single-use plastics. These are everyday items designed for one-time use before being discarded, often without consideration of their long-term consequences. Plastic bags, utensils, food containers, straws, and countless other disposables frequently end up as litter, polluting habitats and endangering wildlife. Since plastic is not biodegradable, it lingers for hundreds of years, and the chemicals used in its production can be harmful if ingested by animals, or even humans (more on that in future articles).

So, what can you do? Awareness is the first step, and small changes can make a big difference. Many of us already bring reusable grocery bags, but what about purchasing reusable cotton produce bags to replace the single-use plastic bags offered at the store? Next time you dine out, try requesting "no straw" in your drink, or bring your own reusable container for leftovers. If you're only purchasing a few items at a store, let the cashier know you don't need a plastic bag. Take the time to politely educate others in these moments, as small conversations can help spread awareness and encourage change. These small actions may seem minor, but they help shift habits, inspire others to rethink their plastic use, and are just scratching the surface of what we can do to reduce plastic waste.

This is just the beginning! Plastic is everywhere, and reducing our reliance on it isn't always easy, but it's absolutely necessary. Future articles will dive deeper into the staggering environmental and health impacts of plastic pollution, along with more practical solutions. If you have any ideas or strategies for reducing plastic use, we'd love to hear from you! Email us at [info@rochesterbirding.org](mailto:info@rochesterbirding.org) with your favorite ways to cut down on plastic in everyday life. We'll feature your ideas in future issues of The Little Gull to help inspire our members to take action. Stay tuned, and let's take on this challenge together!

By Charlie Plimpton



# NOVEMBER 2024 RECORDS SUMMARY

November 2024 saw a continuation of the above-average trend that has been present the entire year. Temperatures averaged 44.8°F, 3.3° above normal. A temperature reading of 81° on 5 November tied 1 November 1950 as the highest temperature recorded in Rochester in the month of November. The nightly temperature of 57° early on 6 November broke the warmest minimum temperature record for Rochester, which was previously 54°, set in 2022. Eighteen days were above 50°. Precipitation totaled 2.81", 0.05" above average. The wettest period was 20-22 November, when a low-pressure system brought over an inch and a half of rain to the Rochester airport. This was the first November on record for Rochester without a measurable snowfall. The areas east of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario received several feet of snowfall in a lake effect event towards the end of the month, but Rochester did not see any flakes. The eBird download came out to around 28,100 lines, representing a 0.7% decrease from 2023.

Mike Wasilco found a Ross's Goose at Twin Cedars Environmental Area in Avon on 7-8 November. Brad Carlson reported another Ross's Goose on Hemlock Lake on 11-19 November, seen by others periodically. 2 November was noted as a good day for migrating waterfowl along the Lake Ontario shoreline, with the last major flight of Brant (72) occurring at the Sodus site. Tundra Swans gathered throughout the month in the NMWMA and at Braddock Bay, with counts over 80 on Braddock Bay near the end of the month standing out. Waterfowl migration coverage continued strong at the two area lakewatches (Hamlin Beach SP and the Sodus Point Lighthouse Museum). The seasonal changeover from majority dabbling ducks to majority diving ducks along the lakeshore was evident with the decrease in Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, and Northern Pintail and the increase in Long-tailed Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Bufflehead, and Common Goldeneye. Days of good movement (and/or good coverage) included 2, 9, 10, 12, and 23 November. A high count of 414 Ruddy Duck by Chris Wood on Buck Pond on 3 November stood out as impressive. There were no rare ducks reported this month.

Sandhill Cranes appeared hit-or-miss in Region 2 this month. There were only four reports of this species Regionwide, all from the NMWMA, with the highest count being 300 on 28 November. It

appeared that large flocks of Sandhill Cranes, once again, spent most of their time in the Region 3 portion of Montezuma this fall (Knox-Marcellus Marsh). Red-throated Loon numbers were lower than in past years, with a maximum of 72 passing the HBSP Lakewatch on 10 November. Joe Wing spotted an immature NORTHERN GANNET migrating along the lakeshore from Bear Creek Harbor in the Town of Ontario on 16 November. Kim Hartquist picked up on the same individual passing the Irondequoit Bay Outlet a short time later. There were no reports of Western Cattle Egret for the month, a month where they have historically been reported.

Shorebird diversity decreased substantially as the month progressed. Semipalmated Plover and White-rumped Sandpiper departed in the first few days of the month. Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling, Pectoral Sandpiper, and Greater Yellowlegs departed by the third week of the month. Andy Guthrie and Jim Miles found a Hudsonian Godwit on 4-10 November at Braddock Bay, which was seen by many others. Mike Tetlow reported a late Willet on 5 November at Sodus Point, which continued through the end of the month. A single Purple Sandpiper inhabited the East Spit island from 5-9 November. Two Purple Sandpipers were then found on the East Spit island from 12-14 November. Whether one of these was the bird from 5-9 November is unknown or perhaps unimportant.

The disappointing jaeger season along the Lake Ontario shoreline dwindled with only one confirmed Parasitic Jaeger sighting (2 November from the Sodus Point lakewatch site). Andy Guthrie reported another jaeger (Parasitic/Pomarine) from the HBSP Lakewatch on 9 November, which remained unidentified to species. Chris Wood reported another late jaeger, as "jaeger sp." on 16 November, with the comments that it likely was a Parasitic Jaeger. An incursion of Black-legged Kittiwakes was noted on 12 November, with reports from multiple locations. Jim Miles reported an immature passing his lakeshore home in Hamlin. Andy Guthrie reported three individuals passing the HBSP lakewatch (one bird likely overlapping with Jim's report). Nate Ukens reported two passing Charlotte Pier (adults). Mike Gullo reported a juvenile passing the Sodus Point Lighthouse lakewatch. The first, and only, report of Iceland Gull occurred on 29 November from Point Breeze. There were four reports of Glaucous Gull.



# NOVEMBER 2024 RECORDS SUMMARY

Among the raptors, there were no reports of migrating Golden Eagles. Dick Horsey photographed an American Goshawk migrating past the the HBSP lakewatch on 5 November. Mike Gullo reported a Black Vulture in Fairport on 18 November. Andy Guthrie and Dave Tetlow reported another Black Vulture roosting in a barn window in Kent on 28 November. There were only four Rough-legged Hawks present regionwide this month. Three reports of Northern Saw-whet Owl showed up in the data download, two from Owl Woods (5 and 11 November) and one from the town of Williamson (25 November). Much to everyone's delight, the winter of 2024-2025 turned out to be a flight year for Snowy Owls. Chris Wood reported the first, a heavily marked bird, from Braddock Bay on 14 November. Wade and Melissa Rowley reported another on 18-19 November, seen by a few other birders.

Northern Shrike reports were about average with 12 birds present regionwide, deduced from distance, location, and timing between sightings. The Red-headed Woodpeckers continued at Durand Eastman Park all month. Andy Guthrie found a late Blue-headed Vireo at HBSP on 3 November. The excitement of this month was an influx of Cave Swallows that started on 5 November. Observers

reported as many as 29 from various lakeshore locations in Wayne, Monroe, and Orleans Counties. Several of these birds from the initial movement lingered for a few days at lakeshore hotspots. A second incursion occurred from 21-24 November, this time with a maximum of 25 observed at Irondequoit Bay Outlet. Chris Wood reported a late Blue-gray Gnatcatcher from the Town of Hamlin on 29 November. Another nice surprise this month was a small flight of winter finches. Redpolls (max 12, 14 November), White-winged Crossbills (max 12, 6 November), Evening Grosbeaks (two reports of single birds), and Red Crossbills (max 2, 16 November) treated observers throughout the month. Janis George had a male White-winged Crossbill visiting her feeders in Mumford for six days. Field birds were difficult to encounter with the lack of snow and likewise counts remained lower. Bill Haake had large blackbird flocks visit his property in Wheatland throughout the month. Larger overwintering flocks of blackbirds have historically frequented the southern towns of Monroe County.

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](mailto:nicholaskach@gmail.com) or 1141 Rush-Scottsville Rd. Rush, NY 14543

	2024	2023	10-year Average (2014-2023)
Total species for November	153	164	156.1
New species for the year	4	3	3.9
Total for the year to date	295	296	292.0



# DECEMBER 2024 RECORDS SUMMARY

- RCBC:** Rochester Christmas Bird Count
- CHCBC:** Conesus-Hemlock (Little Lakes) Christmas Bird Count
- LSLCBC:** Letchworth-Silver Lake Christmas Bird Count

December 2024 was generally cold and snowy. Temperatures averaged 32.8°F, which is 0.8° above normal. The first four weeks of the month were mostly below average, with a few mild days in the last that tipped the average temperature for the month to above average. 29 December

tied the daily record of 63° previously set in 1984. Precipitation totaled 2.48", which is 0.19" below average. Precipitation consisted of a half inch to an inch of rainfall on 9-10 December plus 21.2" of snowfall, which fell in lake effect snow events that periodically blanketed the Rochester airport. The first major snowfall was a carryover from late November when a lake effect band that had been pummeling Buffalo drifted northward with a change in the winds. The second major lake effect snow event occurred on 5-8 December and dropped as much as a foot



# DECEMBER 2024 RECORDS SUMMARY

and a half of snow, mainly south and west of the Rochester airport. The third event occurred on 11-13 December as a Lake Erie band provided several more inches, mostly south and west of downtown Rochester. Another event on 20-21 December blanketed the Lake Ontario shoreline with a half foot.

December's eBird download totaled to just under 32,500 lines, up 24.3% compared to December 2023, perhaps a factor of good field birding and excellent Christmas Bird Count effort. Three Christmas Bird Count (CBC) circles fall entirely within Region 2. The Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC on 21 December recorded 68 species (82 for count week). The Rochester CBC on 15 December recorded 95 species (96 for count week). The Conesus-Hemlock CBC "Little Lakes" on 29 December recorded 81 species (88 for count week). New high counts or ties were: **LSLCBC** – Merlin (2), Hermit Thrush (4), Savannah Sparrow (3), and Dark-eyed Junco (788); **RCBC** – Bald Eagle (33), Cooper's Hawk (16), Iceland Gull (4), Rock Pigeon (2,366), Eastern Screech-Owl (103), Red-bellied Woodpecker (275), Fish Crow (20), Winter Wren (27), Carolina Wren (48) and Eastern Bluebird (51); **CHCBC** – Cackling Goose (9), Bald Eagle (19), Iceland Gull (1, tie), Carolina Wren (122), and Northern Mockingbird (24).

Looking at the Region 2 checklist for 2024, some notable misses include Eared Grebe, Wilson's Phalarope, Great Cormorant, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. However, the unexpected rarities always offset those that were missed. This year, Region 2 had two reports of Black-billed Magpie, the first regional Golden-crowned Sparrow, the first Blue Grosbeak since 1991, a chasable King Rail, an incredible Long-billed Curlew, many Wood Storks, and the first good flight of Cave Swallows in several years.

Starting with the waterfowl, Andy Guthrie reported two Greater White-fronted Geese from Jacobs Road in Hamlin on 18 December. Chris Wood then reported two Greater White-fronted Geese from North Hamlin Road on 24 December. Tundra Swans built in numbers on Braddock Bay, Conesus Lake, and the NMWMA. Numbers of dabbling ducks decreased throughout the month until only remnant flocks and individuals were present at various sites. Redhead numbers grew throughout the month, culminating in a maximum of 4,400 counted on Conesus Lake

during the **CHCBC**. Greg Sanda reported an adult male Barrow's Goldeneye on a large quarry pond in Penfield on 8-10 December. Restricted access made viewing the bird difficult for others. Effort dipped off at the area lakewatches as waterfowl migration slowed down. Andy Guthrie did still report some decent movement from the Hamlin Beach State Park lakewatch through the end of the month however.

Among the other waterbirds, Andy Guthrie noted two days of good movements of Red-necked Grebes on 10 December (count 129) and 16 December (count 312), right during peak movement for this species. Common Loon and Red-throated Loon numbers were lower than expected, with maximum counts of five and 18, respectively. Dan Gallagher reported the first of several overwintering Virginia Rails from High Acres Nature Area on 24 December. Nick Kachala reported an overwintering Virginia Rail from the Deep Pond overlook in Mendon Ponds Park on 26 December. Neal Reilly reported another Virginia Rail the next day at the Quaker Pond Trail at Mendon Ponds Park. A surprise came on 28 December when Mark Druziak reported a Sora from High Acres Nature Area, which continued through the end of the month. Carmen Gumina observed a maximum of 300 Sandhill Cranes from the NMWMA on 14 December.



*A Fish Crow photographed by Richard Horsey at Ontario Beach in December.*

Shorebirds slowed down considerably in December, as expected. The last two Killdeer of the year were reported from the Durand Eastman Park golf course on 14 December. The last Wilson's Snipe was reported on 19 December. Remarkably, the Sodus Point Willet continued through 14 December, getting daily attention from observers interested in observing this species so far out of season. Chris Wood observed a Purple Sandpiper from Sandbar Park in Webster on 1 December. Mike Gullo found the month's second Purple Sandpiper on Sodus Point on 13-14 December, which was fortunately observed by many others.

# DECEMBER 2024 RECORDS SUMMARY

Joe Wing reported a late Parasitic Jaeger passing by Bear Creek Harbor in the Town of Ontario on 10 December. Gull numbers generally seemed down, with only two large accumulations of American Herring Gulls noted throughout the month – 750 on Buck Pond on 15 December and 1,540 on Braddock Bay on 28 December. Estimating the number of Iceland Gulls by location, timing, and age comments left in eBird descriptions deduced a maximum of 12 individuals present regionwide in December. There was only one report of Glaucous Gull from Irondequoit Bay Outlet on 10 December, marking the second season in a row of below-average Glaucous Gull reports.



*Short-eared Owls spotted in Avon by Niki Banke.*

Rough-legged Hawks remained even scarcer than last year, with only six individuals present regionwide deduced from timing and location analysis. Observers reported six different Snowy Owls, a welcomed continuation from the irruption that started in late November. An individual sitting on the ice on Buck Pond in Greece on 23 December was widely seen by the community at large. High numbers of Short-eared Owls were found in the Nations Road IBA in Avon, with a maximum count of 17 standing out.

There were 47 reports of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker this month, which reduced to around 31 individuals. Observers reported Northern Shrike 40 times, which consisted of around 12 individuals (some uncertainty is present about whether there were multiple birds around Braddock Bay). There were plenty of half-hardy passerines reported throughout December. Half-hardy numbers are as follows: Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4 reports), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (1, Hamlin, a holdover from November, more of a

very late bird as opposed to a half-hardy), Marsh Wren (7), Gray Catbird (5), Hermit Thrush (80 lines, number of individuals hard to assess), Chipping Sparrow (2), Fox Sparrow (3), Savannah Sparrow (3), Eastern Towhee (2), Common Yellowthroat (1), and Pine Warbler (1). The trickle of winter finches also continued this month, with three Evening Grosbeaks observed by Mike Gullo at Webster Park on 10 December. Charlie Plimpton also observed a flyover Evening Grosbeak from Buckland Park on 3 December. Chris Wood had a flyover White-winged Crossbill at Webster Park on 1 December. Redpolls were occasionally found as individuals or very small flocks. Large Snow Bunting flocks (maximum 800, North Hamlin Road, 8 December) were found throughout the open snow-covered fields on the lakeshore plain and open farm country to the south and west of Rochester. A maximum of 44 Lapland Longspurs from the town of Kent on 22 December stands out. Overall, December made for an excellent conclusion to the year bird-wise.

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](mailto:nicholaskach@gmail.com) or 1141 Rush-Scottsville Rd. Rush, NY 14543

**Observers (for Nov & Dec):** Ryan Ballard, Niki Banke, Timmy Banker, Jessie Barry, Mitchell Barry, Frederic Beaudry, Betty Beckham, Don Bemont, Dave Bennett, David Benvent, Mike Bergin, 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, 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



# DECEMBER 2024 RECORDS SUMMARY

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,

Dominic Sherony, Judith Slein, Robert Spahn, Rick Stevens, Reuben Stoltzfus, Stephen Taylor, David Tetlow, Michael Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Nathan Ukens, Tom & Jeanne Verhulst, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Mamie Weed, Kim Weeks, Chris Wood, Jim Wood, & Ryan Zucker (366 individuals submitted records to eBird for December 2024, down 3.8% from December 2023, all of which cannot be listed here).

	2024	2023	10-year Average (2014-2023)
Total species for December	137	135	134.7
New species for the year	1	0	1.4
Total for the year to date	296	297	293.4



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### REGISTRATION & INFORMATION:

[www.cayugabirdclub.org/spring-ornithology](http://www.cayugabirdclub.org/spring-ornithology)

### QUESTIONS? CONTACT:

[cbc.ornithology@gmail.com](mailto:cbc.ornithology@gmail.com)

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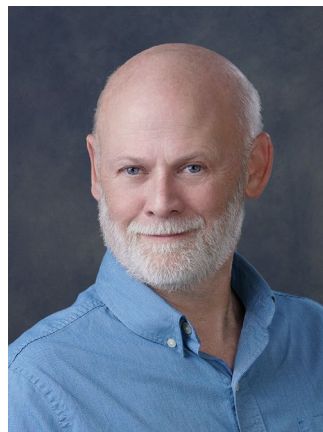
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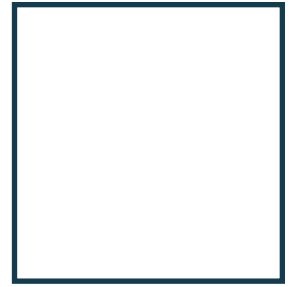
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