



# Little Gull

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

Rochester Birding Association, 5 Cranswick Lane, Rochester NY 14618

## SUMMER AND EARLY FALL 2018 EVENTS & BIRDING FIELD TRIPS



**There are no RBA meetings in July or August and no field trips in July. The next meeting will be on Sep. 13. Have a nice vacation!**

### AUGUST IS AN EXCELLENT MONTH TO OBSERVE THE HAWK FLIGHT

Counters gather under the trees at Braddock Bay Park (bring your own chair). Most of the birds are immature Red-tailed Hawks, but Ospreys, Sharp-shinned Hawks, goshawks, Broad-winged Hawks, kestrels and Peregrine Falcons are also seen. Southwest winds are the best conditions for watching.

**AUG 4**  
Saturday

#### **CONESUS INLET STATE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA**

Explore this expansive wetland for Virginia Rails and Wood Duck families. We've seen eagles on a reliable basis, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Cliff Swallows and more. Meet at Vitale Park on Route 20A in Lakeville at 7:30 a.m. The park is between Nothnagle's and the U.S. Post Office on the south (lake side) of 20A. There's a possibility of a trip extension to the Geneseo Airport area. **Extra spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very helpful.**  
**Leaders:** Jim Kimball 585-243-0316 and Andrew Consler

**AUG 12**  
Sunday

#### **BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP -- MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

Learn more about the fall migration of shorebirds in this nearby birding treasure. We'll visit key spots you'll want to revisit again and again! Meet in the Bushnell's Basin Park and Ride lot at **2:00 p.m.** The meeting site is off Route 96 just south of Exit 27 from I-490. **Extra spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very helpful.**  
**Leader:** Kimberly Sucy 585-503-2534

**AUG 26**  
Sunday

#### **MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

We'll be looking for ducks and shorebirds in migration. Expect to see herons, eagles and possibly falcons. Meet in the Bushnell's Basin Park and Ride at 10:00 a.m. Pack a lunch. The meeting site is off Route 96 just south of Exit 27 from I-490. **Extra spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very helpful.**  
**Leaders:** Dominic Sherony 585-223-7353 and Mike Tetlow 585-425-7849

**SEP 1**  
Saturday

#### **DURAND EASTMAN PARK**

We'll be looking for thrushes and other migrants. Durand can be surprising this time of year. Just when you thought the birding was quieting down, you run into a pocket of birds here that boggle the mind. Meet in the Lake Shore Blvd. parking lot between Zoo Road and Log Cabin Road (Parking Lot D) at 8:00 a.m.  
**Leaders:** Shirley Shaw 585-385-3907 and co-leader TBA

**SEP 8**  
Saturday

#### **BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP -- CHARLOTTE AND BADGEROW PARK**

We'll be looking for shorebirds, warblers, and other fall migrants in Greece and environs. George W. Badgerow Park is a small area that offers good vantage points along pleasant trails, with the occasional surprise rarity. We'll look for gulls in many plumages and some shorebirds, too. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Ontario Beach Park in Charlotte in the northeast corner of the parking lot, beside the Genesee River outlet. **Extra spotting scopes would be very helpful.**  
**Leaders:** Kimberly Sucy 585-503-2534 and co-leader TBA

**SEP 9**  
Sunday

#### **MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

We'll be looking for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. Bald eagles and other migrants are likely. Meet in the Bushnell's Basin Park and Ride lot at 1:00 p.m. The meeting site is off Route 96 just south of Exit 27 from I-490. **Extra spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very helpful.**  
**Leaders:** Kimberly Sucy 585-503-2534 and co-leader TBA

## Welcome to the Flock



Join me in welcoming these 8 new members to the RBA.

Sarah Baldof  
Yvonne Bee  
Sanjay Chellappa  
Connie Hennessy  
John Jurkowski  
Laura Loomis  
Mary Shady  
Ann Wells

**Current RBA Membership is 352.**

We also have young birders (6), one corporate member, *Little Gull* subscribers (4) and *Little Gull* complimentary subscribers (22).

John Boettcher

## President's Column

Amy Kahn



Those few moments I have to sit and watch my bird feeders have been a delight as many of the birds nesting in my or my neighbor's yard bring their young to the feeders. Over the

last 9 years I have been adding many NY native shrub and tree species which provide berries and nuts, and many native flower varieties which bloom and provide nectar to birds and butterflies from May to late fall. That and having some simple water features seems to have made a difference. Not bad for a half acre suburban yard. Feel free to ask for suggestions in turning your own space into a more bird-friendly home. Many of you have expressed interest in conservation and for those of you who have a yard this is one simple but effective way to do conservation on a daily basis. My garden will be on the

Genesee Land Trust backyard garden tour this July 21<sup>st</sup>; tickets are available through GLT or Wegman's.

Consider taking a more active role in the work of RBA. If you are interested in serving on the board of directors next year, let me or the nominating chair, Cathy Ballard know.

Our next general meeting is September 13 at 7:00 p.m.: Janet Allen – "Creating a Bird-Friendly Yard". I look forward to seeing many of you then.

Mark your calendar because this October 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> RBA is cohosting the New York State Ornithological Association Annual Meeting along with Burroughs Audubon Nature Club. Registration is open and available on our website. It is a great way to meet birders from across New York State. We will need volunteer help that weekend as well.

Enjoy your summer, and I hope to see you out and about birding.

## Editor's Corner

Jay Greenberg

## The Bug Shortage: Why Birders Should Care and What They Can Do to Help



Most birders are aware of the well-publicized declines in migrating monarch butterflies and honeybees. People find butterflies appealing, and honeybees (introduced from Europe long ago) are important pollinators of food crops. These 2 well-known species are bellwethers for a much broader general decline in insects and other invertebrates. These comprise a huge diversity of species that are little known and little thought about by most people, but they are extremely important to ecosystems and their food chains. A widely cited 2014 study in the journal *Science*<sup>1</sup> estimated that 67% of monitored invertebrate populations show a global 45% mean abundance decline in recent decades. In case you are inclined to dismiss this conclusion as alarmist and contrary to common sense, some careful stud-

ies in limited areas have revealed even more dire declines. A yearly study in 63 protected areas in Germany found an astounding 80% decline in the mass of insects caught in traps between 1989 and 2014<sup>2</sup>.

Some of the reasons for this decline are similar to the reasons for the declines in vertebrate species. They include loss of habitat, invasive species, and climate change. It is likely that the widespread use of pesticides for agricultural and public health purposes is also an important factor. Light pollution may also have a role.

So why should birders care? Isn't it good riddance to a bunch of pests? Quite simply, most bird species depend on invertebrates for food at some stage of their lives. Some are obligate insect eaters at all stages of their lives. It is inevitable that decreases in the availability of invertebrate food will result in decreases in bird populations and extinction of some species. Pesticides are a double whammy for birds. Not only do they reduce the availability of food, but they are also toxic to birds.

So what can we, as individuals, do to help ameliorate this situation in our own homes and on our own land? Here are some suggestions:

- Avoid the use of pesticides. These tend to be very nonspecific, killing good bugs as well as pests, and they are harmful to birds.
- Plant native plants and get rid of non-native invasives. Native plants attract native insects. Non-native plants tend to have few natural enemies and take away habitat from native plants and the insects that go with them. There is abundant information online about native plantings. The May 2018 issue of the *Little Gull* has an article on native berries that can provide food for birds. Also, the speaker at the September RBA meeting, Janet Allen, will be speaking about creating bird-friendly yards. The Genesee Land Trust has an annual native plant sale in May at Brighton Town Hall.

(continued on p. 4)

## RBA IN THE FIELD

### Lucien Morin Park 5/17/2018

The beautiful morning brought a large group (over 20 people) to join in the walk and packed the parking lot. Yellow Warblers and Red-winged Blackbirds greeted us as we started down the road. Since the facility at the end of the road was not in use, the road was closed, making the walk enjoyable. Heading down the trail to the old rifle range, a Blue-headed Vireo was found overhead. Once we arrived at the open area, another couple shared the location of a Baltimore Oriole nest. As we discussed if the nest was new or old, the orioles answered the question by continuing to bring in nesting material. At the same time a male Scarlet Tanager flew over the group, followed by a female with nesting material. Although the nest was not visible, the pair returned to the same spot numerous times. At the gazebo, we noted an Empidonax flycatcher, and finally saw a Great Crested Flycatcher after hearing several. Besides the Yellow Warbler, we only found American Redstart and Common Yellowthroat. This seems to be the trend over the last few years.

After returning to the parking lot, several members continued across Empire Blvd. to the Oak Orchard store to find a Bald Eagle perched in a tree top. The nest could not be seen due to the leaf density. An unidentified gull (at least by those of us present) was all white except for a small smudge behind the eye and had a black bill. Finally, a Spotted Sandpiper in breeding plumage was spotted on the boat ramp. It was a nice way to end the morning with 40 species.

*Tom Poeth*

### Powder Mills Park, BANC Sanctuary 5/19/2018 (Joint RBA/Burroughs Audubon Nature Club Field Trip)

The weather forecast called for showers. The good news—we only had one. The bad news—it lasted from 7:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. We

were also competing for attention with the royal wedding: Prince Harry and Meghan Markle were exchanging vows just as 8 of us met at the Fish Hatchery. In spite of all this, we had a good morning.

Around the Fish Hatchery it was pretty quiet, with no warblers to be seen or heard (who could blame them?) other than a distant Tennessee song, so we said farewell to a rather bedraggled Great Blue Heron and headed off to the 'Dafodil' trail, where we soon hit a hot-spot in the willows at the edge of the wetland. Bay-breasted, Black-and-white, Yellow and Black-throated Green Warblers, American Redstart and Scarlet Tanager all made an appearance, albeit as partial 'silhouette birds'.

At the swamp farther down the trail we picked up Downy, Hairy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Northern Flicker, all within a few minutes, and good views of a Swainson's Thrush completed our return to the cars. A brief stop halfway down the park added Common Yellowthroat, Swamp Sparrow and Red-tailed Hawk.

As the rain finally eased off, we drove over to the BANC Sanctuary on Railroad Mills Road. Here we were pleased to see Indigo Bunting, nesting Eastern Bluebirds, Eastern Wood-Pewee and a Yellow-throated Vireo. However, the consensus 'bird of the day' was a beautiful male Canada Warbler foraging in the creekside undergrowth and posing nicely on an exposed log by the water. A little farther upstream, we watched a deer assisting an almost newborn fawn to cross the creek.

At the road, before we returned to the clubhouse, we heard a Mourning Warbler by the creek and saw a Pileated Woodpecker to complete our sweep of the woodpeckers, other than Red-headed. The latter part of the morning had been enhanced by the ubiquitous background chorus of orioles, catbirds and Great Crested Flycatchers. We finally paused on the clubhouse porch to watch the birds at the feeder and to tally the morning's list—52 species. I would like to thank all our partici-

pants, whose sharper eyes and younger ears made for an enjoyable, if damp, outing.

*Richard Ashworth*

### Bergen Swamp 6/3/2018

It was a pleasantly cool, partly cloudy day when our largish group of 21 participants plus the 2 leaders, Kimberly Sucy and I, met for the trip. There was rain in the forecast, but nobody seemed worried about it. One of the participants was a visitor from Buffalo Ornithological Society.

The swamp was much as expected, with rough corduroy trails and some squishy spots. The birding was also more or less as expected. There was a seemingly incessant din of Ovenbirds. We must have heard at least a dozen, although we never saw any. Indeed, most of the trip was birding by ear with only a few sightings. The latter included Hermit Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, and a male Scarlet Tanager. The Swainson's was unexpected, as it is not a usual breeding bird at Bergen Swamp. I suspect it was a late migrant.

One of our target birds was Acadian Flycatcher, and we were not disappointed hearing-wise, although we never saw any. Estimates ranged from 3 to 6. This is quite notable, and I'm wondering if this is a record high number for the swamp, and indeed, for any RBA field trip. However, I suspect this information is not readily available.

After traversing the main and loop trails, we made a stop at Torpy Hill in the hope of adding a few more species. However, Torpy Hill was somewhat disappointing. We added only Northern Flicker and Field Sparrow, but had decent looks at a persistently singing Indigo Bunting. Even Kimberly's recording of a screech owl being mobbed by chickadees didn't stir up the birds. We ended up with a decent 53 species, but missed on a number of target birds, including Winter Wren, Blue-headed Vireo, Black-and-white, Canada, and Magnolia Warblers, and Northern Waterthrush. These birds may be becoming



scarcer at the swamp, in contrast to Acadian Flycatchers, which may be increasing.

Just as we ended the trip, it started to rain. However, the weather this year was a big improvement over last year, when it rained from start to finish.

Jay Greenberg



An **Acadian Flycatcher** at Bergen Swamp. Photo by Jay Greenberg.

## The 2018 RBA Picnic

It was a perfect evening for a picnic as almost 30 of us gathered at the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club Sanctuary to enjoy this event. Everyone pitched in to set up the tables outside for dining as we filled the tables inside with all sorts of delicious appetizers, side dishes, and desserts. We grilled, ate, watched the flashes of blue as bluebirds flitted among the trees in the sun, and enjoyed the evening. It was also great to have many new members show up and to get a chance to talk to them.

Eighteen species of birds were discovered on our yearly trek around BANC's unique combination of terrains. What beautiful grounds and structure that this venue affords us!

Thanks to all who came, the delicious dishes they brought, the weather, the birds, and all the work that

everyone did to make this picnic a success. See you all next year!

Wanda Thistle



The 2018 RBA Picnic. Photo by Richard Ashworth.

## A Story of Bird Aggression

by Dominic Sherony

On Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup> I was doing a morning walk at High Acres Nature Area (HANA), which is close to my home and provides easy access to a diversity of birds. I was on a trail on the west side of the complex in an area of scrub and trees, when suddenly 2 dark birds, one in close pursuit of the other, flashed by me and dropped onto the ground under a grove of sumac trees. They were entangled, flopping around on the ground and obviously fighting. Both were males, one a Brown-headed Cowbird and the other a Red-winged Blackbird. The cowbird had the upper hand because it was covering the blackbird which was pinned with its belly on the ground.

The birds never noticed me, I was very close, watching from the side. I could see that the cowbird had its bill around the back of the neck of the blackbird. It was holding on very firmly because the struggling blackbird was unable to shake loose in spite of many attempts with its wings fluttering and body moving. I watched this scene for well over one minute, perhaps as long as 2 minutes. I was pretty sure the cowbird would kill the blackbird. But that didn't happen. All of a sudden, on its last attempt, the blackbird shook free and immediately took flight with the cowbird in pursuit. And that was the last I saw of them. According to published data, Red-winged Blackbird males are slightly heavier than male Brown-headed Cowbirds so it is surprising that the cowbird had the upper hand.

(Editor's Corner, continued)

- Save bugs one at a time. If you find an unwanted bug in the house, consider catching it and putting it outside, rather than killing it. I do this even with wasps, and I've never been stung.
- Consider driving less in warm months. Motor vehicles take a terrible toll on flying insects, just as they do on other wildlife.
- Try to learn more about bugs. One way is to join one of the local nature clubs, such as the Rochester Butterfly Club and Burroughs Audubon Nature Club. The butterfly club is most-

ly limited to butterflies, but there are people at BANC interested in bugs, and they sponsor a biennial moth night, together with the butterfly club.

<sup>1</sup>*Defaunation in the Anthropocene*. Rodolfo Dirzo, Hillary S. Young, Mauro Galetti *et al.*, *Science* (2014) **345**: 401-406.

<sup>2</sup>*More than 75 percent decline over 27 years in total flying insect biomass in protected areas*. Caspar A. Hallmann, Martin Sorg, Eelke Jongejans *et al.* *PLoS ONE* (2017) **12**: e0185809. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0185809>.

## **NYSOA Is Coming to Rochester in October**

by Shirley Shaw

You will absolutely not want to miss the New York State Ornithological Association's annual conference, October 5-7, 2018, at the RIT Inn and Conference Center, 5257 West Henrietta Road, in Henrietta. Burroughs Audubon Nature Club and the Rochester Birding Association are the meeting's co-sponsors.

It's a great opportunity to meet birders from across the state—forming and renewing friendships and learning about the many clubs in our state that are devoted to nature study and conservation. There will be many field trips: Friday afternoon plus Saturday and Sunday mornings. Friday evening's activities are workshops on Snowy Owls and eBird and a buffet dinner. Saturday

features an afternoon paper session, where you can hear about the latest research in ornithology, and a second buffet dinner followed by a the keynote address by Greg Miller, a birding tour guide, whose "Big Year" of birding was featured in a book and subsequent movie.

To learn more about the meeting and to register, visit the RBA web site or see the June issue of the *Little Gull*. On-line registration can be found at <https://rochesterbirding.com/nysoa-reg/>

Thank you to everyone who volunteered to help with this meeting. We'll need field trip leaders, people to help with the registration table, people to help with the raffle, and other tasks. In August or September, committee chairs will be contacting people who already volunteered. If you would still like to volunteer, please e-mail me at [shirley@jashaw.com](mailto:shirley@jashaw.com).

## **Wednesday Evening Warblers Summary**

by John Boettcher

These evening walks afford members an opportunity to see some of the warbler migration without having to compete with weekend activities. They ran from May 9 through June 13<sup>th</sup>, meeting at 6:00 p.m. at the Lakeview Community Church parking lot on Long Pond Road near Edgemere Drive.

May 9 – It was a beautiful evening with very light wind and 70's temperature, 12 people attending. Five warblers cooperated: Yellow-rumped, Yellow, Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian, and redstart.

May 16 – Even nicer weather than the previous week. Many more people (19) and warblers (12)—Palm, Chestnut-sided, Yellow, Magnolia, Wilson's, Black-throated Blue, Bay-breasted, Black-and-white, and Yellow-rumped along with Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, and Northern Parula. The capper for the evening was a fly-by of some Common Nighthawks.

May 23 – The weather continued to cooperate with 70 °F and moderate wind. The wind and the emerging leaves made finding the birds more difficult. Eight folks showed up for the evening, and we found 9 species of warblers – Palm, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Bay-breasted, Black-throated Green (h), Blackpoll (h), Northern Parula, Common Yellowthroat, and American Redstart. In addition to the warblers, we had species of vireo and flycatcher calling.

May 30 – Hot (90 °F) with strong SE wind and lots of leaves. There were only 3 of us and even fewer species of warblers. Only Yellow Warbler was confirmed, and these acted like nesting birds.

June 6 – Tom Nash and Sheryl Gracewski subbed for me, and they had one other person show up. The only warblers were Yellow and Common Yellowthroat. Things seem to be winding down.

June 13 - It was hot, windy, and threatening, but no rain for me and one other. Nesting Yellow Warblers provided some nice looks, but required patience. We also found a pair of obliging Great Crested Flycatchers. Flybys of 2 species of swallow and a few Chimney Swifts finished off the evening.

I would like to thank Tom Nash, Sheryl Gracewski, Dick Horsey, and Amy Kahn for helping to find birds and put people on them during these walks. The choice of location was inspired by Greg Lawrence, who frequently reported evening walks in this area a number of years ago. For the future, other locations, perhaps downtown (Cobbs Hill, Highland Park) might be considered instead of or in addition to this location, but this would require volunteers to lead them.



**A Chestnut-sided Warbler** at the Lakeview Community Church Trail. Photo by Jay Greenberg



## RBA at ADK Expo 6/9/18

by John Boettcher

The ADK (Adirondack Mountain Club) sponsors this event at Mendon Ponds Park every year. It draws people interested in the outdoors, and the RBA should be represented. I'm not sure of the attendance this year but I gave away every brochure that I came with. I find it very interesting to talk with visitors about birds and get them interested in the RBA. I also gave a workshop which was attended by 18 people. It would be good to have some others in the RBA interested in reaching out to the community through events like this. Let me know if this appeals to you.



## May 2018 Sightings Report

After a cold March-April period, May jumped right to a warm 80 °F on the 1<sup>st</sup>. All but 3 days, May 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, averaged above normal, and the month ended the warmest May on record. Temperatures averaged 64.4 °F, 7.6° above normal. Still, there were only 2 records for the month, with a tie record high on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and a new record high low on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Precipitation totaled 1.70 inches, which is 1.17 inches below normal. Most of the rainfall occurred in the latter half of the month, with 0.52 inches on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Also, most fell at night, so days were pleasant for outdoor activities including birding.

Again, nearly all expected lingering species of waterfowl were reported, but numbers generally were low and peak counts few and low. Among the missing species sometimes lingering into May were Tundra Swan and Canvasback. A Harlequin Duck was a bit late, but within historical dates. Loon and grebe numbers were again poor. Double-crested Cormorant numbers continued high, though the peak counts did not seem to reflect the large flock in Irondequoit Bay, and were not from there. The only real waterbird rarity was a Cattle Egret near Sodus, though there was a good number of other rarities just outside the region in the Montezuma complex.

The only two Black Vulture reports came from High Acres Nature Area and near Walworth. A Mississippi Kite was seen from the Braddock Bay hawk watch Frisbee Hill site on May 14<sup>th</sup>. There were no Northern Goshawk reports from the hawk watch and only one elsewhere. A special treat was a dark morph Broad-winged Hawk passing right overhead on the 21<sup>st</sup>. An immature light morph Swainson's Hawk was seen at the hawk watch on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The hawk watch count for the month was plagued by NE winds and lake breezes, and there were only two 1,000-bird days after the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Still, 19,363 birds for the month was good and very close to last year's total. Turkey Vulture and Broad-winged Hawk numbers also fell close to last year's tallies. Bald Eagle was off a bit at 586 counted, but 115 on May 31<sup>st</sup> was a new record day-high.

Sandhill Crane numbers passing and at scattered sites were typical for recent years, but again there were no reports of pairs with young. Breeding has been confirmed in at least 3 areas in the past.

Shorebird habitat was again minimal in our region. While Lake Ontario was not as high as last year, the level remained nearly a foot above the recent "long-term" average and the lack of rainfall meant essentially no field puddles. Still, birders searching for birds added to those passing along the lakeshore or stopping on piers and beaches, produced a respectable 24 species, including the rare-in-spring American Golden-Plover, Piping Plover, and American Avocet. Also on the scarce but annual list were Willet and Whimbrel. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, a record high flock of 27 Willets dropped onto logs on Salmon Creek behind the old Docksiders. Upland Sandpiper and Wilson's Phalarope, formerly regular but now sometimes missed, were also reported.

The usual gulls and terns were reported, with numbers back to more normal after the big gathering on Irondequoit Bay earlier. The usual "winter" gulls lingered to typical late May dates. Rarer gulls included only a single Little Gull at Chimney Bluffs and an adult Laughing Gull at the East Spit of Braddock Bay. The usual terns were all noted with typical high counts. The local stronghold for Black Tern remains the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area, with a peak count of 38 in the Van Dyne Spoor marshes.

Non-passerine land birds were again found as expected, with no really noteworthy records. There were no reports Eurasian Collared-Dove, cuckoo numbers were good, the Common Nighthawk maximum was only 42, and Eastern Whip-poor-will was reported in the Owl Woods area to mid-month. The last Snowy Owl for the season was found just south of Ridge Road in the Town of Gaines on May 12<sup>th</sup>.

Typical of recent years, many eyes looking located all of the really expected passerine species. The only "misses" were relatively rare species—White-eyed Vireo, Connecticut Warbler, and Yellow-throated Warbler, and a few that sometimes linger or continue migrating into May—Northern Shrike, Lapland Longspur, and Fox Sparrow. As usual, arrival dates

were biased toward the 1<sup>st</sup> quartile relative to the 1985 Monroe County Checklist distributions, though there was a higher percentage in the interquartile range. There were no record early arrivals. Numbers again seemed generally poor, with a few notable bursts tallied. From personal observation and comments of others, there were too many very quiet times birding. Scanning through the eBird records, there are relatively few sizable counts. This is hard to interpret, as people are urged to report for the smallest areas and shortest time periods they are willing to list, with the idea one can aggregate up. However, that makes the individual numbers low relative to past day-lists, and how to aggregate becomes a subjective guess. Thrushes seemed particularly late and scarce, warblers a mix, and winter finches missing other than some Pine Siskins. Rarer reports included: Worm-eating, "Lawrence's", Prothonotary, Kentucky, and Prairie Warblers; Yellow-breasted Chat; Clay-colored Sparrow; and the first Western Meadowlark in many years. The Braddock Bay Bird Observatory banding station total was the lowest of the past 7 years, though only slightly below 2 years ago. However, comparing this year with the prior 6-year averages, most species numbers banded fell well within one standard deviation of the average and only 5 species were significantly different at more than two standard deviations—House Wren and Ruby-crowned Kinglet were up and Least Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, and Yellow-rumped Warbler were down. A few other interesting notes include Blue Jay back to normal after last year's record high; Black-capped Chickadee sticking with alternate high and low years, this year low (6 vs. last year's 593 for the season); Winter Wren again alternating high/low years but opposite to the chickadees; Ruby-crowned Kinglet higher yet compared with last year; and sparrow species again mostly at the lower ends of their typical banding totals for the month.

Reminding again, those interested in more details can go to the table of Noteworthy Records on the RBA website then dig deeper into the banding tally for the spring season on the BBBO website or the hawk watch data at the Hawkcount site. The table and these notes are summaries of the month's data, which included over 89,512 eBird records, about 60 Geneseebirds posts other than those entered in eBird, the banding and hawk watch tallies, and other records submitted to the records committee. There were over 400 unique observers contributing to eBird this month, with much of the increase related to Global Big Day participants.

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

	2018	2017	10-year Average (2008-2017)
Species for May	245	248	236.2
New for the year	63	53	52.1
Total for year to date	265	268	263.7

*Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee*

**Observers:** Jim Adams, Janet Akin, BBBO (Andrea Patterson, *et al.*), John Ballou, Ted Barnett, Jessie Barry, Jim Barry, Mitchell Barry, Doug Beattie, Don Bemont, Steve Benedict, Linda Clark-Benedict, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry

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**A Turkey Vulture** at the East Spit of Braddock Bay. Photo by Jay Greenberg.



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

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