



ROCHESTER BIRDING ASSOCIATION www.rochesterbirding.com

MEMBERSHIP FOR 2019

☐ NEW

☐ RENEWAL

Please complete the following information in the way you would like to have it appear in the 2019 Membership Roster.

You may use a mailing label if you wish.

☐ Please don't publish my name on the list.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____ My information is different from last year! ☐

Alternate Address _____ for use during these dates _____

New members: I found out about RBA from Website _____, Meeting, _____, Field trip _____, Friends _____, Other: _____

2018 Membership Dues are (select):

_____ Household Membership with E-mailed Little Gull newsletter in full color _____ \$25.00

_____ Junior Membership (ages 9-18 years (e-mailed Little Gull)) _____ \$15.00

_____ USPS delivery of B&W copies of the Little Gull add to membership dues _____ \$15.00

I am enclosing \$ _____ for RBA membership and adding a tax deductible donation of \$ _____ to my check

so that RBA can support birding education and local conservation projects, for a total of \$ _____.

Make checks payable to:

Rochester Birding Association

Mail to:

Rochester Birding Association Membership

P.O. Box 92055

1335 Jefferson Road

Rochester, NY 14692-9998

The active members of RBA make the organization work.

Please mark activities that you can contribute and would enjoy. Training provided.

☐ Leadership

☐ Newsletter Distribution

☐ Communications

☐ Finance

☐ Conservation

☐ Membership

☐ Computer/Website

☐ Monthly Program

☐ Field Trip planning/guiding

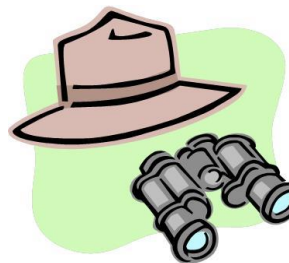
☐ Social

☐ Little Gull (newsletter)

☐ Statistics

☐ Outreach

☐ One-time Activities





Little Gull

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

Rochester Birding Association, 5 Cranswick Lane, Rochester NY 14618

LATE 2018 EVENTS & BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

NOV 8
Thursday

RBA General Meeting, 7:00 p.m., the Baptist Temple, 1101 Clover Street, Rochester NY 14610 (in Brighton). Speaker: Professor Kevin McGowan. Title: *Think Like a Bird: How to Understand Bird Behavior*. See the notice on p.3 for more information.

NOV 11
Sunday

DURAND EASTMAN PARK

Waxwings, winter finches, and lingering migrants are possible as well as Snowy Owls. We may visit Irondequoit Bay to look for waterfowl. Meet in the Lakeshore Blvd. parking lot between Zoo and Log Cabin Roads (Parking Lot D) at 8:00 a.m.

Leaders: Tom & Jeanne Verhulst 585-473-9229

NOV 23
Friday

AFTERNOON OWL TREK—CANCELLED

DEC 2
Sunday

NIAGARA RIVER

We'll be looking for special gulls and waterfowl. The Niagara River area is famous for the variety and number of gulls in winter. Can you pick out the rarities? This is a joint trip with the Buffalo Ornithological Society. Meet in Charlotte's Ontario Beach parking lot at 7:00 a.m. or at the Old Fort Niagara parking lot at 9:00 a.m.. Bring beverages and lunch, for this is an all day trip. There is heightened security at the border. Participants must bring passports or enhanced licenses. **Dress warmly and in layers. Extra spotting scopes would be very helpful.**

Leaders: Rick Stevens 585-689-1882 (RBA) and Tom O'Donnell of the Buffalo Ornithological Society (BOS)

DEC 8
Saturday

CONESUS LAKE AREA

We'll be looking for Tundra Swan, Canvasback, Redhead and other waterfowl. Meet at Vitale Park on Route 20A in Lakeville at 8:00 a.m. The park is between Howard Hanna and the U.S. Post Office on the south (lake side) of 20A. **Extra spotting scopes would be very helpful.**

Leaders: Jim Kimball 585-243-0316 and Andrew Consler

DEC 9
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. Meet at 2:00 p.m. at the Tops Plaza in Avon on Routes 5 and 20, 2 miles west of I-390. **Dress warmly. Extra spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very helpful.**

Leaders: John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and Rick Stevens 585-689-1882

It's time to RENEW your RBA Membership for 2019! See the article on p. 7.

Welcome to the Flock



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

Jim and Sue Kosinski
Steven Melcher
Reuben and Sarah Stoltzfus
Brandon Tate
Mary Taylor
Eileen Wierzbicki

Current RBA Membership is 368.

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

It's time to renew your membership! See the notice on p. 7 for more information.

Jo Taylor
Membership Database

President's Column



Amy Kahn

By the time you read this, you should have received an e-mail or postcard reminder to renew your membership. If you just became a new member after September 1, 2018, your membership is current until January 1, 2020. RBA again thanks John Boettcher for his many years of service as membership and outreach chair and welcomes Jo Taylor as our new membership database manager. RBA now has a new P.O. Box address: P.O. Box 92055, 1335 Jefferson Road Rochester, NY 14692-9998. We will start using this address for all who are sending their membership renewals by mail.

RBA and BANC successfully hosted the 71st NYSOA annual meeting

October 5-7. Many of you participated by attending and/or working behind the scenes. Thank you for helping make it a success. Read the article in this newsletter combining experiences from our delegates, Dave Strong, Wanda Thistle and Cathy Ballard, and from myself and a few others.

We are still searching for members willing to help keep us going forward. We are especially looking for an outreach coordinator to help organize and call other members to events promoting RBA; a field trip coordinator who gets information and equipment to field trip leaders; people to work on several committees; and as of this writing we are still looking for our next president.

Thank you to the ad hoc committee which has been planning 2019 field trips; more about them in the next issue of the *Little Gull*.

Finally, look for the update on wind projects in this issue and information about an exciting alternative which is produced upstate.

Editor's Corner
Jay Greenberg

The Legacy of Frank M. Chapman: Much More Than Christmas Bird Counts



Many birders know that Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) were started by Frank M. Chapman in 1900, but other than that, probably most of us know little about him. With the

local CBCs looming, it seems like a good time to find out more. It seems obvious that not just anyone could create a birding tradition and citizen science project that has lasted so long, and Chapman was not just anyone. Indeed, he was a very distinguished ornithologist and conservationist who lived from 1864-1945, and a towering figure. He was largely self-taught and didn't go to college, but for many years, he was the curator of birds at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. He authored something like 200 technical papers and 20 books. He was a longtime director of the National Audubon Society and was the founding editor of their publication, *Bird Lore*, which was to become *Audubon Magazine*. One of his early works was *Hand-*

book of birds of eastern North America: With introductory chapters on the study of birds in nature. First published in 1895, it was last updated in 1940 and reprinted as recently as this year.

At the time of the first CBC, there was a Christmas tradition among hunters to go out and kill as many birds and animals as possible. The team with the most kills was the winner. Chapman and other conservationists of the time were deeply concerned about the slaughter of birds by hunters for their valuable feathers and just for fun. The CBCs were started as a non-lethal alternative to hunting. Chapman also appreciated the value of bird surveys, having done much survey work himself.

Chapman was an influential friend of Theodore Roosevelt, and, along with others, he was instrumental in getting TR as U.S. President in 1903 to declare Pelican Island in Florida as a federal preserve and appointing a warden to protect its birds from rapacious plume hunters. Happily, hunting birds commercially for their plumes is a thing of the past, but Pelican Island is still a National Wildlife Refuge. Chapman is mentioned numerous times in Douglas Brinkley's fine biography of TR and frequently advised him on creating National Wildlife Refuges and National Forests.

In addition to being an ornithologist and conservationist, Chapman was a pioneer of bird photography and an advocate for hunting birds with a camera, not a gun. In his 1900 book that is still available today, *Bird Studies With a Camera: With Introductory Chapters on the Outfit and Methods of the Bird Photographer*, he states, "Continuing the comparison, from a sportsman's standpoint, hunting with a camera is the highest development of man's inherent love of the chase". This was at a time when photographers were limited to slow black-and-white films and plates. Cameras were much more primitive, bulkier, and heavier than they are today, and completely manual in operation.



Black-legged Kittiwakes at nests.
Photo by Frank M. Chapman, 1895.

November Talk and Speaker

Think Like a Bird: How to Understand Bird Behavior

Birds are fascinating to watch, and not just because they are beautiful. Did you ever see a bird do something funny and ask yourself, "Now why did that bird do that?" Understanding bird behavior can be tricky, but Kevin McGowan will provide us with a framework to help comprehend and appreciate why birds do the things they do. Birds aren't tiny little flying people, and they don't have the same needs and motivations that we do. But, the way they accomplish their own goals can be amazing. Can you think like a bird?

Kevin is a professional ornithologist and avid birder. He is currently the project manager for Distance Learning in Bird Biology in the education program at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. He is the author and instructor for the courses "Ornithology: Comprehensive Bird Biology," "Investigating Behavior: Courtship and Rivalry in Birds," "Think Like a Bird: Understanding Bird Behavior," and the "Be a Better Birder" series of courses and webinars on bird identification, offered through the lab's Bird Academy website.

Kevin was the co-editor and primary author for the book, *The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State*, one of the creators of the Cornell Lab's *All About Birds* website, and the former curator of the bird and mammal collections at the Cornell University Museum of Vertebrates.

Kevin received his Ph.D. in Biology from the University of South Florida, studying the social development of young Florida Scrub-Jays. He has studied the behavior and biology of the American Crow in central New York for 30 years. He has followed the life stories of more

than 2,500 individual crows, some for over 19 years.

Kevin is a Fellow of the American Ornithological Society, a former Secretary of the Ornithological Societies of North America, a past president of the New York State Ornithological Association, and a former member of New York State Avian Records Committee.

Kevin enjoys all aspects of birds (especially crows), from behavior to functional anatomy, and from ecology to evolution. He is interested in spreading the appreciation of birds to all possible audiences, through all possible avenues.



RBA IN THE FIELD

Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge 9/22/2018

A small group of 10 gathered at the Bushnell's Basin park and ride on a 60° cloudy morning to set off for Montezuma. (One less as my co-leader got called to work). Hitting a 2 mile stop-and-go delay on the NYS Thruway, we still managed to get to the refuge close to 11 a.m. where a group of 11 students from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry was waiting.

A large assortment of puddle ducks was gathered at the visitor center pond, and it took some time to get past all the Northern Pintails and Mallards to find a few of each teal species, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, and Black Ducks. Six very vocal Greater Yellowlegs called constantly. Lesser Yellowlegs and Pectoral Sandpipers were common, but spread out and difficult to find

until the Peregrine Falcon, followed by a Merlin, passed through with no success. The Merlin made several more passes and sat down for a drink at one point. Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers appeared on a few occasions before disappearing into the weeds or furrows.

We walked to the south edge of the pond and found the reported White-rumped Sandpipers and Short-billed Dowitcher, but the American Golden-Plover seen earlier was gone. Some were able to get on an American Pipit flying over. All were rewarded with 3 immature Bald Eagles getting up with the increasing sunshine.

The wildlife drive was full of Common Gallinules, Pied-billed Grebes and Wood Ducks. Others away from our group got out of their cars and flushed 2 Black-crowned Night-Herons from the near edge that would otherwise have been missed. A couple of Great Egrets were scattered along the route, and one group had a single Green Heron.

The next highlight was a close Stilt Sandpiper at Benning Marsh along with close looks at Semipalmated Plovers. Farther along, we found the single male Redhead that has been near the eagle sculpture along the thruway for a couple of weeks. One lone Osprey still lingered; most had already left the refuge.

On to East Road overlooking Knox-Marcellus and Puddler Marshes. There, we were able to tally 18 Sandhill Cranes and 2 Trumpeter Swans, but the mostly dry impoundment had no shorebirds. Nine more Sandhill Cranes were found after the trip in a field to the north as they begin to build up before leaving later in the fall.

We enjoyed the group of people that came out, and it was nice to have some eager young students trying out their wings identifying shorebirds and basic plumage waterfowl. Thanks to all.

Mike and Joann Tetlow



A fledgling **Green Heron**. Photo by Jay Greenberg

Ganondagan State Historic Site 9/23/2018

Gorgeous weather greeted 12 of us for a lovely fall walk. It was crisp and clear with the temperature in the upper 60's. We had 10 members and 2 not yet members who met at 8:30 a.m. to walk this still new for the club field trip. We walked the Seneca Trail past shrubland and fields, and along the lovely Trout Brook valley. Birds seen and heard included Song, Vesper, and White-throated Sparrows, goldfinch, and still-nesting flickers. We had 30 species in total with great close views of Eastern Towhee and a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Amy Kahn



A first winter **White-throated Sparrow** preening. Photo by Jay Greenberg.

Highlights of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. (NYSOA) 71st Annual Meeting, October 5-7, 2018

by Cathy Ballard, Wanda Thistle, and Dave Strong

The 71st Annual Meeting of NYSOA was cohosted in Rochester by RBA and Burroughs Audubon (BANC). We had over 180 attendees with additional people who were present only for parts of the weekend. This write-up is combined from the reports of our 3 delegates: Cathy Ballard, Wanda Thistle, and Dave Strong, with additional contributions from members of the planning committee. Bob Spahn and Shirley Shaw were co-chairs of the planning committee, Chita McKinney was the treasurer and registrar, John Boettcher and Wanda Thistle were liaisons with the RIT Inn and Conference Center. Sheryl Gracewski and Tom Nash planned and coordinated the many field trips, Amy Kahn coordinated the vendor exhibit, Norma Platt coordinated the raffle; other committee people included, John Shaw, Kevin Griffith, Greg Lawrence, Dominic Sherony, Jeanne Verhulst, Mary Gordon, Carolyn Ragan, Laura Kammermeier, Julie and Dean Clayton.

Workshops

Two 45 minute workshops were offered. Each was presented twice so that all could attend both.

Workshop #1 – Ian Davies from Cornell led a discussion of the use of eBird as the data input tool and archival database for the Breeding Bird Atlas III. The design and use of eBird will change this in many ways from the previous 2 atlases. Data entry will use eBird with preference for e-mobile input directly from field observations. The definitions of possible, probable and confirmed may change. Blocks may change to using USGS quadrants. Blocks will have targets, so effort can be redirected to other blocks once targets have been achieved. Anyone can input while birding. Many key issues surfaced: Will there be a block coordinator? How do you know what block you are in when entering data? Will entries

be tied to GPS? How will recruitment and training take place?

Workshop #2 – Daena Ford, President of Braddock Bay Raptor Research, provided a fine talk on the highlights of their many research and educational programs. She noted the spring Hawk Watch Coordinator is the only paid position, all other personnel are volunteers.

Field Trips

There were field trips Friday afternoon and Saturday and Sunday mornings. The field trips, which provided varied venues with an emphasis on resident and migrating waterfowl, included: High Acres Nature Area, Ontario Lake Shore, Irondequoit Bay, Conesus Lake, Mendon Ponds Park, and Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. Another field trip to the Odonata Sanctuary and Ganondagan State Historic Site brought participants to grasslands, wetlands and wooded areas where bluebirds, towhees, and many species of sparrows, including Vesper and Lincoln's, were seen.

Shorebirds such as Dunlin, Wilson's Phalarope, Semipalmated Plover, Wilson's Snipe, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Killdeer were seen. Waterfowl including Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Mallard, Red-breasted Merganser, Ring-necked Duck, American Coot, Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Common Loon and Brant were identified.

At the Delegates Meeting: President's Report submitted by Michael Desha

New York State (NYS) will embark on creating a new Breeding Bird Atlas (NYBBA). With this effort, NYS becomes first to initiate a 3rd atlas. For a period of 5 years beginning in 2020, participating birders throughout the state will document evidence of breeding birds by entering all their data in eBird as the official NYBBA portal.

While the previous 2 atlases were directly under the control of NYSOA, this atlas project will be administered by a collection of entities: NYSOA, The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Cornell University Department of Natural Resources, Audubon New York, New

York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). ESF will be operating under the DEC and will receive federal grant money for the NYBBA project.

NYSOA has appointed Kathy Schneider as co-chair of the Atlas Steering Committee. In addition, Bob Spahn, Joan Collins, Greg Lawrence and Michael DeSha are also members of the committee. Applications for a Project Coordinator have been received and are currently being evaluated.

NYSOA Bylaws Committee

The committee, chaired by Bob Spahn and assisted by Shirley Shaw and Tom Baird, produced changes to the NYSOA bylaws in compliance with New York State regulations on conflicts of interests.

Statement of General Operating Fund Activity for Period Ending December 31, 2017 (submitted by Andy Mason)

The Statement reflects \$22,817.19 in income and \$23,660.99 in expenses, resulting in a deficiency of \$843.80. The largest expenses for the period as in previous periods are "Kingbird" at \$14,658.86 and "NY Birders" at \$3,291.19.

2017 DEC Report (submitted by Mike Wasilco, Wildlife Manager, Region 8)

In 2017, Region 8 staff did a nest count of Double-Crested Cormorant (DCCO) in Irondequoit Bay, including Devil's Cove and Held Island. The DEC counted 295 DCCO nests. Aerial surveys by helicopter were conducted statewide to identify Bald Eagle territories. In 2017, approximately 500 territories were identified, up from 442 in 2016. Wildlife staff from Region 8 assisted with the Black Tern survey in addition to installing 6 nesting platforms at Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area.

New York State Young Birders Club (NYSYBC) (submitted by Carena Pooth)

In the nearly 10 years since its inception in 2008, NYSYBC has thrived. For the period ending December 31, 2017, there were 56 youth members, 30 supporting adult members, and 23 partner organizations, including RBA. NYSYBC has awarded more than \$33,000 since the scholarship program began in 2010.

NYSOA Memberships (submitted by Joan Collins)

For the period ending October 2018, NYSOA has 609 individual memberships and 38 club and organizational memberships.

Election of Officers and Directors (submitted by Bob Adamo and Michael DeSha)

Officers elected for a one-year term: President – Michael DeSha, Vice-President – Tim Baird, Treasurer – Andy Mason, Secretary – John Kent. Director elected for a 2-year term: Joseph Brin. Nominating Committee elected for a one year term: Bob Adamo – Chair, Kathryn Schneider and Dominic Sherony. Auditing Committee elected for a one year term: Stephen Chang – Chair, Tom Burke and Peter Capainolo.

Saturday Afternoon Paper Session, (coordinated by Greg Lawrence)

There were 7 papers total. Three of note included: "A King Rail Mystery in Western NY" by Bill Evans, Old Bird, Inc., Ithaca, NY. A study of nocturnal flight calls collected at monitoring stations in the Somerset and Yates area in 2016 and 2017 found King Rail and other rare species among the birds identified in the flyway. This area is where the proposed Lighthouse Wind Project would be located.

"Monitoring Bird Movements Using a Coordinated, Automated Radio

Telemetry Array" by Andrea Patterson, Braddock Bay Bird Observatory, Rochester, NY. Using new technology, Motus, Andrea Patterson explained how we are better able to understand the movements and stopover behavior of both thrushes and warblers to not only find out where these birds are at any given time, but also what they are doing.

"A Survey of Breeding and Migrant Bird Species at High Acres Nature Area (HANA)" by Dominic Sherony, RBA, Rochester, NY. Dominic Sherony told us that HANA has been surveyed for birds by various organizations since 2001. "This data provides basic information on the presence and abundance of breeding and migrant bird species. Comparisons were made between the migration seen at HANA and that along the Lake Ontario shoreline."

Vendor Room

The vendors included Zeiss, books by Nick and Randi Minetor, as well as Alan Singer, artists Dancing Vulture Designs, Cordell Cordaro, Sue Adair and non-profit groups Braddock Bay Raptor Research and Save Ontario Shores. The raffle was well worth the entry tickets, with lots of terrific prizes including ones from Zeiss, The Bird House, Lori's Natural Foods, REI Co-op, and Birds and Beans Coffee. It was a huge success.

Keynote Speaker, Greg Miller

Greg Miller, one of the 3 subjects of the book, *The Big Year* and the movie of the same name, spoke of his experiences as a birding consultant on the movie set. He worked with Jack Black, who portrayed him in the film. Miller's stories were alternately funny, sad, inspirational and poignant. His special interest in young birders was evident, and was reflected in the rapt attention given him by the young people in the audience. Greg Miller received a standing ovation for his talk.



A few photos from the NYSOA meeting. Left: Organizer Shirley Shaw. Center: Organizers Bob Spahn (foreground) and Shirley Shaw (background). Right: Keynote speaker Greg Miller. Photos by Richard Ashworth.

NYSOA Delegate and Volunteer Experience

by Wanda Thistle

What an interesting and informative gathering the NYSOA annual meeting was! I had chosen to become a RBA delegate to the NYSOA business meeting, and also worked as a volunteer to set up menus for the meeting and to head a committee to serve as hospitality and trouble shooting. This was my first time at a NYSOA meeting, and I had a great, if exhausting experience.

Cathy Ballard did a great job writing about most of the activities, and she

also did a great job helping with hospitality so I'll just talk about my activities.

The RIT Conference Center was the perfect spot for this meeting. Friday evening started out with chosen hors d'oeuvres such as mini Ruben's, mini Beef Wellingtons, scallops wrapped in bacon, etc. We continued to a wonderful buffet. Saturday consisted of refreshments selected for the delegate meeting and snacks for the paper sessions, and in the evening a different buffet was provided. For both evenings, the dessert consisted of the MOST delicious cake slices ever served,

and I had to force myself not to go back for thirds and fourths.

Hospitality consisted of taking care of anyone's personal concerns – ushering some to the vendor room to check on the merchandise or the beautiful hawks and owls that Daena was handling, addressing food allergies with the RIT staff, going around to tables to make sure everything was going well, and just smiling at the attendees.

If you missed this event this year, think about attending it some year. A different NYSOA group puts it on each year. This year, I think we were quite successful.

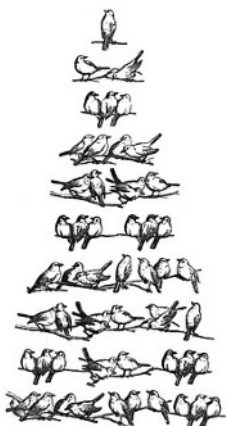
Save the Dates!

*Rochester Christmas Bird Count
Letchworth/Silver Lakes Bird Count
Little Lakes Bird Count*

*Sunday, December 16
Saturday, December 15
Saturday, December 29*

*Join in the tradition of citizen science at its best.
New participants will be paired with experienced birders.
Congenial gatherings to tally species after eating and getting warm.*

Details will appear in the December Little Gull



It's Time to Renew Your RBA Membership!

The renewal campaign runs through December 31. An e-mail notice sent out in mid-October is followed by this reminder. Members not having e-mail will get a postal notice in early November. The folks we don't hear from by mid-December will also get a mailed last chance notice. We don't want to lose you as a member, so please renew early! Your renewal will be good through January 1, 2020.

NOTE: New members joining after September 1 of this year are paid up through January 1 2020.

2018 Dues

Household membership	\$25
Junior membership (9-18)	\$15
(both above with Little Gull via e-mail)	
<i>Little Gull</i> by USPS mail - add to membership dues	\$15

You Can Renew In Several Ways

Renew online using the RBA website (rochesterbirding.com).

Download the renewal form on the website and send it in with payment.

Complete the renewal form in the USPS mailed notice or in this issue, and send it in with payment.

Volunteer Interest

When you are completing the renewal, we would encourage you to sign up for a few of the volunteer categories on the renewal forms. The RBA is a volunteer organization, and help is needed in all of the categories. When you check one of the volunteer interest boxes, we will make sure that the appropriate board member or committee chair is notified, and they will be in touch.

Thanks,

Amy Kahn
President

Jo Taylor
Membership

September 2018 Sightings Report

September was generally warm, with temperatures above average on all but 7 days. The average high temperature was 76 °F, a bit above the average of 71 °F. There was one record high of 92 °F on the 21st. 2.81" of precipitation was slightly below the average of 3.45"

Waterfowl numbers were relatively poor for the month, and the highest numbers were mostly limited to Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area (NMWMA). Almost all regular species were observed plus early reports of Brant, Snow Goose, and Cackling Goose in the 2nd half of the month. Diving ducks started showing up flying past Hamlin Beach State Park, but in small numbers. A peak of 1,100 Double-crested Cormorants went past on the 15th, and a count of 500 Common Gallinules at Van Dyne Spoor Rd. at NMWMA were the only other notable water bird highlights.

No large counts of raptors were observed over Braddock Bay as in August, but more effort in future years may yield more information on this phenomenon. One Northern Goshawk was reported in Wayne County. A single Black Vulture report from the town of Caledonia, Livingston County, was noteworthy. Merlin and Peregrine Falcons were reported from many locations throughout the region.

Shorebird diversity was good, but numbers were generally low. Most reports came from the lakeshore beaches

and piers, including the constructed barrier beach at the East Spit of Braddock Bay. Observers now have to wade out to the barrier beach to properly check all the shorebird spots, but that did not stop them from finding a few good birds, including a Red Phalarope that stayed around for 4 days. There were a few reports of Whimbrel and Red Knot, but not in numbers reported back in August. Lake Ontario water levels were back to "normal" after last year's record highs, exposing some mudflats at Irondequoit Bay and in the Braddock Bay WMA. Besides shorebird sightings, an immature Little Blue Heron was also spotted at the mudflats at Lasalle's Landing Park, at the south end of Irondequoit Bay.

There was a handful of jaeger reports this month, starting with a jaeger species off of Hamlin Beach SP on the 8th followed by a Parasitic Jaeger by the East Spit of Braddock Bay on the 9th. A maximum count of 3 Parasitic Jaegers on the 22nd at Hamlin Beach was nice for the many observers who put in time at the lake watch. Few other noteworthy gulls and terns were reported, and there were no real rarities. Seven Lesser Black-backed Gull reports is about normal for the month. There were a few reports of Black Terns at the beginning of the month, followed by Forster's Terns toward the end of the month, but mostly reports of single birds.

No Eurasian Collared-Doves were reported once again. Common Nighthawk numbers were very poor with no really good counts. A maximum of 480 Chimney Swifts was reported from an annual roosting spot in the town of

York, Livingston County, but many reports of decent numbers have already continued into October. While many Ruby-throated Hummingbirds moved out, there are still some being reported into October.

The best bird of the month was a **Say's Phoebe**, found by Eunice Thein, braving the wind out on the constructed barrier beach at the Braddock Bay East Spit. The bird was cooperative and hung around for an extra day, allowing many birders to see it. All of the expected passerines were reported. There were no reports of any rarer warblers, such as Connecticut Warbler, or species that generally leave early. Noteworthy passerines include Fish Crows in their usual spots in Greece/Charlotte, a flyover Red Crossbill at Webster Park, and a flyover Dickcissel in the town of Hamlin. Many later migrants, such as Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Hermit Thrushes came in this month, but in very small numbers. Please refer to the noteworthy records table that will be posted on the RBA website for an illustration of trends in numbers and species reports. Both a banding table and daily notes are online at the Braddock Bay Bird Observatory website. Fall arrival and departure dates noted this month were all within their known distributions for the region.

Please submit reports to eBird, post them on genesee-birds, and/or send by the 5th of the month to Andrea Patterson, 144 Greystone Lane, #24, Rochester, NY 14618.

	2018	2017	10-year Average (2008-2017)
Total species for September	221	221	215.8
New species for the year	5	5	5.6
Total for the year to date	280	280	280.5

Greg Lawrence, Bob Spahn, and Andrea Patterson

Observers: Jim Adams, Janet Akin, John Ballou, Ted Barnett, Jessie Barry, Sue Barth, Bob Beal, Doug Beatie, Don Bemont, Steven Benedict, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Shawn Billerman, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, Joe Brin, Mark Brown, BBBO, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Bruce Cady, Brad Carlson, Linda Clark-Benedict, Tiffany Clay, Kelly Close, Jeremy Collison, Andrew Consler, Lydia Culbert, Doug Daniels, Willie D'Anna, Susan Danskin, Gregg Dashnau, Ian Davies, Wayne Fidler, Mark Fitzsimmons, George Ford, Kyle Gage, Andy Garland, Candy Giles, Christopher Goetz, John Gordinier, Elizabeth Gordon, Sheryl Gracewski, Derek Green, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Ralph & Georgia Guenther, L. Gullo, Michael Gullo, Andy Guthrie, Richard Guthrie, Helen & Chris Haller, Kim Hartquist, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Nicholas Kachala, Logan Kahle, Ryan Kayhart, Bob Kehoe, Dave Kennedy, Tom Kerr, Jim Kimball, Kathy Kirsch, J. Gary Kohlenberg, Chris Lajewski, Greg Lawrence, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Melissa Mance-Coniglio, Cindy Marino, Pat Martin, Lauri Mattle, Jacob McCartney, Kevin McGann, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Perri McGowan, Bob McGuire, Phil McNeill, Matt Medler, Jim Miles, Leo Miller, Randy Minetor, Sean Minnick, Adrielle Mitchell, Ann Mitchell, Montezuma Audubon Center, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Allen Nash, Ann Nash, Tom Nash, Rivka Noll, Paul Novak, David Odell, Michael Palermo, Andrea Patterson, Norma Platt, Jon Podliak, Jay Powell, Bill Purcell, RBA Field trips, Carolyn Ragan, Rosemary Reilly, Robert Reynolds, Dave Robertson, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Jesse Rubenstein, Robert Ryan, Livia Santana, Michael Schummer, Mickey Scilingo, Luke Seitz, Richard Shaver, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Anthony Shrimpton, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Donna Mason-Spicer, Jodie Stahl, Chris Stanger, Rick Stevens, Joseph Stevenson, Kimberly Sucy, Steve Taylor, David Tetlow, Michael & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Sarah Toner, Edward Trouerbach, John & Bonnie VanDerMeid, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, David Wheeler, Windbirders Muckrace Team (Bill Gillette, Bob Spahn, Allan Strong, & Kinsley Whittum), Alex Wiebe, Joe Wing.

Wind Energy Update and a Home-grown Bird-friendly Wind Energy System

by Amy Kahn, RBA President and Conservation Chair

The POWER coalition met on September 17th with some local western NY politicians and news media in part after a media campaign by Apex which included a considerable amount of misinformation.

Shawn Graff, Vice President, Great Lakes Region of the [American Bird Conservancy](#) has major concerns about Apex's plan to build the Lighthouse Wind Energy Project in Niagara and Orleans Counties. The project proposes to place approximately 47 industrial wind turbines, each about 600 feet tall, along the south shore of Lake Ontario, extending 4.5 miles from the shore along a 12-mile stretch of shoreline.

A postcard sent by Apex over Labor Day weekend suggested that the number of wind-related fatalities is small compared to

the overall number of bird deaths attributed to human activities. In the study they cite, the annual loss of birdlife to wind turbines is "only" 134,000 to 230,000. That study, conducted by Erickson and colleagues, can be seen at <https://awwi.org/resources/small-passerine-fatality-synthesis/>. The data cited by Lighthouse Wind sounds persuasive, but there are a number of serious problems with the conclusions they present. Basically, Apex is cherry-picking data to make its case. They are cloaking much larger losses by just presenting a small and outdated subset.

The study Apex cited is just one of many that estimate bird casualties from wind turbines, and this particular report only looks at wind-related deaths among small passerines (perching birds or songbirds). It does not include raptors, shorebirds, waterfowl, or game birds. The report also relies on information that is extremely outdated, including some statistics that are 18 years old. The wind energy landscape has changed dramatically in that time. In 2000 there were just a handful of utility-scale turbines. That number has since increased to more than 54,000 turbines (according to the American Wind Energy Association). Also the majority of those towers were under 200 feet tall with

blades under 100 feet long. The current plans for Lighthouse call for towers which are 591 foot tall with 246 foot radius blades (so diameter of the rotating blades is like imagining 1.4 football fields rotating).

In addition to the turbines, think about the thousands of miles of transmission lines (another significant source of bird mortality) that were added to connect wind farms to the energy grid. In reality, the number of bird deaths annually from wind turbines is increasing dramatically. American Bird Conservancy estimates the current annual number of bird fatalities at approximately 1 million (based on new, independent studies that use canines for improved carcass detection), and that figure is projected to grow to between 3 and 5 million annually by 2050, based on the expected growth of the wind energy industry.

The fact that there are other causes of bird mortality that kill more birds doesn't mean that we should ignore the problems presented by wind turbines. That's equivalent to saying that, because heart disease is the leading cause of human mortality in the United States, we should ignore the impact of Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, or kidney disease. We must consider the cumulative effects of these different sources of human-caused bird fatalities given the impact that they have individually and cumulatively on the entire bird population in our country. American Bird Conservancy supports a Bird-Smart wind energy policy that is designed to minimize bird fatalities. Bird-Smart wind energy adheres to the following principles:

- Ensures turbines are located away from areas posing a high risk of bird collisions
- Employs effective mitigation to minimize bird fatalities
- Conducts independent, transparent pre- and post-construction monitoring of bird and bat deaths to help inform mitigation
- Calculates compensation for the loss of ecologically important and state- or federally protected birds

You can read more about Bird-Smart wind energy development here: <https://abcbirds.org/program/wind-energy-and-birds/bird-smart-strategies/>.

Wind energy and birds can coexist, but only if turbines are sited properly. From the perspective of wildlife conservation, the Great Lakes are one of the worst possible places to put wind turbines because they comprise a Global Important Bird Area, defined by BirdLife International as a place of international significance for the conservation of *birds* and other biodiversity. During spring and fall, vast numbers of birds and bats, many of which migrate at night, gather along the shorelines and eventually fly along or over the lakes during their annual migration to and from the boreal forests of Canada where they breed. The cumulative impact of the many existing and planned projects in the region is likely to be substantial.

Only through proper risk assessment, siting, and post-construction monitoring can such conflicts with wildlife be avoided or minimized. At present, regulations governing siting are weak at best. Paid consultants to the wind industry conduct the risk assessments and collect and report post-construction mortality data, which is a direct conflict of interest. Some companies have sued to keep their data secret, making public oversight difficult, if not impossible.

Apex Clean Energy states that they anticipate an investment of more than \$500,000 toward conservation at each of the wind projects they are proposing for western New York. Although this

sounds generous, please know that they are required to mitigate for the loss of birds due to their poorly cited towers. All the more reason New York residents should hold Apex Wind and the state accountable when it comes to open, honest, and transparent risk assessments and reports of post-construction mortality data. This is the only way to ensure poorly sited projects do not advance, and that projects that do advance accurately address the true cost of mitigation. In the case of wind energy, careful wind generation siting is crucial in preventing unintended impacts on America's native bird species, and we are concerned that the proposed site for this project poses an unacceptably high risk to protected wildlife species.

Fortunately we have a local homegrown bladeless alternative. KOHILO wind turbines are unique in that they condition the wind through a diffuser system not used in traditional turbines, which in turn harnesses the energy more efficiently and increases power production. This elevates the potential for wind turbines drastically, making the clean energy source a reality even in urban environments. The nucleus of KOHILO is its [unparalleled technology](#) that has "stayed home" in central New York.

The "QUANTUM" is a powerful and complete clean energy system consisting of a 3-kilowatt turbine atop a 12 foot tower. The entire system breaks down into its base, with all electronics pre-installed at KOHILO's manufacturing facility, ensuring the highest standards of quality control. The system includes a battery system which enables it to hold approximately 4 days of reserve energy making it a suitable substitute for back up generators. The system may be grid-tied allowing for net metered applications and because of the exoskeleton encased turbines, cost-effective system expansion may be realized by stacking additional turbines.

The Quantum is one of the signature designs of KOHILO, which captures almost all the wind. Derek Grassman, founder of KOHILO, says traditional models, because of the way they're designed, end up letting nearly 90 percent of the wind pass by. He says the magnetic bearings on the top and bottom make it last longer than common models out there today. This is particularly important for a machine in use almost all the time.

Another goal for the company is to buy local and employ local.



All of its employees live and work in central New York, all of its profits return to and stay in central New York and, with the exception of the magnets, all of the components of its turbines are made in America. Their new bigger facility in Skaneateles Falls allows the company to make its own parts in-house and conduct research and development on site.



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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 15th of the month to Jay Greenberg, Editor, 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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