



Bittle Gull

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

Rochester Birding Association, 144 Greystone Lane #24, Rochester, NY 14618

EARLY 2019 EVENTS & BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

FEB 10

Sunday

NEW! WINTER WATERFOWL AND OTHER POSSIBILITIES

We will meet at Irondequoit Bay outlet at **8:30 a.m.** to look for Long-tailed Ducks, mergansers, scaups, and others that may be present. We will then drive over to Summerville and Charlotte to see what is in the river. If crossbills and redpolls are being seen, we may stop at Durand-Eastman Park on the way. Dress for the weather. **Spotting scopes would be very helpful.**

Leader: Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422 and co-leader Robert Buckert

FEB 14

Thursday

RBA General Meeting, 7:00 p.m., the Baptist Temple, 1101 Clover Street, Rochester NY 14610 (in Brighton). Speaker: Charlie Cowling. Title: Early 20th Century Upstate New York Photographers Lead the Way in a New Method of 'Collecting' Birds in the Field. See the notice on p. 3 for more information.

MAR 3

Sunday

BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP—CHARLOTTE, BRADDOCK BAY, LAKESHORE FIELDS

Warmer weather is on its way and with it, bird activity picks up. We'll check water for ducks, fields for inland birds, and watch the skies for raptors as well. Meet at **8:30 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.**

Leader: John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and co-leader Cindy Marino 585-454-8051

MAR 9

Saturday

HAMLIN BEACH STATE PARK

We will gather at Braddock Bay Park and drive to Hamlin Beach State Park where we will be looking for migrating waterfowl as we work our way back east. We will stop at the Owl Woods in search of migrating owls. We will end at the Braddock Bay Hawk Watch in hopes of spotting Rough-legged and Red-shouldered Hawks and eagles. Dress warmly as the lakeshore can be cold this time of year. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** at the Braddock Bay Park main parking lot off East Manitou Road from the Ontario State Parkway.

Leader: Mike Tetlow 585-425-7849 and co-leader Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422

MAR 16

Saturday

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. Bring a snack to munch on to keep your energy up, and dress for the weather! Meet in Webster Plaza at the junction of Route 404 and Hard Road near Starbucks at **7:30 a.m.** **Extra spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very helpful.**

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

MAR 24

Sunday

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 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! Meet in the parking lot on the right side of Manitou Beach Road across from the Owl Woods trailhead at **7:30 a.m.** The Owl Woods trails may be wet and muddy in spots. **Boots are STRONGLY recommended. They're almost mandatory!**

Leader: John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and co-leader Greg Lawrence 585-730-2553

Welcome to the Flock



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

Kathleen Borden
Kim Goppert
Ann Marie Messner
Joseph Missler
Julie Mohanlall
Thomas Riley
Kim Sherwood
Peggy Zukaitis

Current RBA membership is 344. The total is comprised of household members (313), young birders (7), corporate member (1), *Little Gull* subscribers (2) and *Little Gull* complimentary subscribers (21).

Membership Status

I have refreshed the database, omitting members who have not renewed for 2019. As in years past, we lost a bunch of people. This year it was 85. We will get some of these folks back as late renewals. With this *Little Gull* you will also be getting the current roster of members which can also be found in the member's area of the website.

Jo Taylor
Membership Data

President's Column

Andrea Patterson



Well, this is a surprise! I certainly never expected to be elected president of the RBA, but I'm just a girl who can't say no, and so here we are! Thank you so much to all of you

who have reached out with congratulations and encourage-

ment. I'm looking forward to serving all of you as we work to make the RBA even better.

I believe that you plan forward by looking backward. If I imagine myself a year or 2 hence, what would I like to say that I've accomplished during my tenure as RBA president? There are so many things that the RBA does quite well. Our field trip schedule is remarkable for an organization of our size, and our speaker series is fantastic. Our young birder program is growing, and we've recently launched the Birds-and-Brews events to help connect young and old birders in a casual setting. All of this is great! So . . . what is there to do besides maintain the status quo?

In addition to maintaining and strengthening the core programs of the RBA, I'd like to be able to look back and say that 2 really great things happened this year: that we've established a strong educational program, and that we've begun to build the bench.

The RBA has done educational programs in the past. We've run workshops on warblers and shorebirds, and I hear there was even a Birding 101 that drew rave reviews. I'd love for the RBA to develop a series of short workshops that can be run on a rotating schedule, with each workshop being run every 3 or 4 years. Waterfowl on the wing, confusing fall warblers, maybe even photography! I'd also love to bring back the ever popular "Birding Bits" as part of our monthly meetings.

Building the bench is a tougher job, but it's arguably more important to the continued success of the RBA. As an all volunteer organization, we can't do it without you! We need members who are willing to step up and take leadership roles on the board or as committee chairs, or who are willing to commit to a few hours each month to compile records or lead field trips. We haven't always done a great job of harnessing the power and knowledge of our awesome members, but it's never too late to start.

These are my priorities – but I'd love to hear yours. Why is being a member of the RBA important to you? What programs or initiatives keep you coming back? Are there things we can do better? E-mail me, corner me at a meeting, chat me up on a field trip – I want to hear what you have to say.

Happy birding!

Editor's Corner
Jay Greenberg

The Mysteries of Birds in Winter



Brr! As I write this, it is the aftermath of Winter Storm Harper. There are 18 inches of new snow on the ground. The night

after the storm, the temperature plunged to -2° F with a wind chill of about 40 below. When I got up, to my wonderment, I saw a pair of American Robins in my yard. Of course, I know that some robins winter in this often frigid, very snowy area, even though they are considered to be harbingers of spring in folklore. But why are they showing up now when I haven't seen them in my yard in months? I am told that the availability of food in the form of berries is a more important determinant of where they winter than temperatures. However, they'll find no berries in my townhouse yard, and they don't come to feeders.

Another mystery is why some birds insist on bathing when the air temperature is well below freezing. A friend reported seeing House Sparrows bathing in her heated bird bath in zero degree weather. Why do they do this, and how do they survive it? They must dry their feathers quickly lest they become coated with ice and unable to fly. One would think the cold water combined with freezing air would quickly make them succumb to hypothermia or use up an unacceptable amount of metabolic energy to stay alive.

Perhaps I will write more on this topic later, but I am out of space.

February Talk and Speaker

Speaker: Charlie Cowling

Title: Early 20th Century Upstate New York Photographers Lead the Way in a New Method of 'Collecting' Birds in the Field

Featuring recently salvaged and digitized images from rare glass lantern slides, Charlie Cowling, archivist at SUNY Brockport, will present images of New York birds taken by regional birders in the early 20th century. Our area was an important center in the development of modern birding and ornithology, and the photographers that will be featured played a part in that history. Some, like Arthur Allen of Cornell, are remembered to this day. Others, like Verdi Burtch of Penn Yan, or Guy Bailey of Geneseo, were prominent amateur naturalists and birders a century ago, but are little remembered now. Any birder will enjoy both the images, and hearing about the history of that era when birding transitioned from collecting skins with shotguns to using cameras and field glasses.



RBA IN THE FIELD

New Year's Day 1/1/2019

It was 40° F, overcast with no rain or snow. Not bad for January 1st. Believe me, we've seen much

worse! Thirteen birders joined us to start their 2019 birding.

We started at the Irondequoit Bay outlet and were largely disappointed owing to the ever-present duck hunters and big wind-induced waves on the lake. The bay yielded views of Mute Swans and skittish Long-tailed Ducks. Far-seeing Dominic Sherony picked out a Red-necked Grebe to the west near Point Pleasant.

We adjourned to Zoo Road in Durand-Eastman Park where we found some of the usual suspects and a flyby Merlin. The marsh areas of Log Cabin Road produced more common birds and a Northern Mockingbird. By far, the most exciting stop for the trip was in the big oaks just east of Kings Highway above the Horseshoe Road loop where we got excellent looks at 3 Red-headed Woodpeckers! A small contingent continued on to the Genesee River where Rosemary Reilly located a Glaucous Gull on the beach.

The trip ended up with a respectable 29 species. And we had what seems to us to be a unique experience: meeting up with 2 other groups out doing their January 1st "birding" thing.

Norma Platt and John Boettcher

Beginner Birding Trip from the Irondequoit Bay Outlet 1/5/2019

Nineteen people joined us for a morning of birding. The weather was cloudy and cool, but much milder and less snowy than in years past.

As we were gathering at the bay's boat launch, so were the hunters and their boats. It turned out that this was the last full weekend of the split duck hunting season.

We did scan the bay and lake, picking up several of the typical wintering species like Long-tailed Duck and Hooded Merganser, but due to the hunters, the numbers were low.

We then moved to Durand-Eastman Park where we were able to locate 2 of the Red-headed Woodpeckers. One of them was very cooperative, so that everyone had an opportunity to see the bird through the several spotting scopes on scene. The Red-headed Woodpecker was a lifer for many of the participants and was probably everyone's highlight bird of the trip. We then scanned the lake, finding a mixed flock of waterfowl: Redhead, scaup, and Canvasback. The latter was also a lifer for some of the new birders.

After everyone got views of the flock, we moved to the Charlotte pier. A Glaucous Gull was easily located on our side of the flock of gulls, so again, everyone (that is those that had not gotten frozen and had to leave) got great views.

Finally we stopped at LaSalle's Landing Park where we picked up the 3 local merganser species: Hooded, Common, and Red-breasted. Also, we added 2 Bald Eagles and a female American Wigeon, thanks to Mike Gullo.

This was a beginner trip, so the plan was to study a few birds well, rather than rack up a large number of species. Even so, we did see a respectable 17 species on this cold hunter-laden winter's day.

Tom Nash and Sheryl Gracewski

Lakeshore Plains West 1/13/2019

At 9 a.m., 15 hearty participants met at the Braddock Bay Park lot to brave the frigid temperatures and attend the RBA's Lakeshore Plains West field trip. We were greeted by Herring and Ring-billed Gulls flying overhead and robins and starlings circling the lot as we discussed the day and passed out radios.

From here, we moved to Burger Park for a quick check on the grasslands there for any presence of winter raptors. The only raptor to speak of was one Red-tailed Hawk, but we had many regular feeder-birds along Hogan Point Road.

It was on to the fields of Hamlin to begin our search for larks, buntings, and longspurs. Just as we entered viable territory, we were on a large group of Horned Larks (Curtis Road, Hamlin). The group pulled over, and we were treated to wonderful views of the birds, as they were very close to the road. We could not pick out anything other than larks, so we moved on. We continued criss-crossing the Hamlin fields with no luck. Not many birds other than Mourning Doves and Canada Geese were found in the fields, and we were treated to occasional groups of passerines moving through the hedgerows, some highlights being Northern Mockingbird, Northern Flicker, Cedar Waxwing, and Eastern Bluebird. We came across a small group of Wild Turkeys in this portion as well. A call came in reporting the presence of 40 Common Redpolls, somewhat of a target species, along a road in Appleton.

Shortly after, while combing the fields, about half of the participants separated from the group as they had afternoon plans and could not continue on to Appleton. With our close proximity to Hamlin Beach State Park, they decided to stop there on the way home. There were now 7 of us left. The participants agreed that we would get to the redpolls as fast as we could and work our way back. As we moved west, sticking to farm roads, with no success in the realm of buntings and longspurs, we made the decision to check out the Cook Road feeders, which never disappoint. Here we had the best diversity in terms of winter passerines of the day. Four species of woodpecker were present as well as 5 species of sparrow (including White-crowned, American Tree, and White-throated). Both nuthatches

were seen in addition to many other expected birds like House Finch and Blue Jay.

It was time to continue west! From this point, we spent most of our time toggling between Lakeshore Road and Route 18 (Roosevelt Highway) to make it out to those redpolls. In this time, no buntings or longspurs were spotted in the usual locations, and much of this may be due to the low level of snow cover. The highlight of the drive to Appleton was most likely the one Snow Goose spotted in a flock of about 2,500 Canada Geese along Lakeshore Road.

As we passed through Lyndonville, we deviated from our route to check out a historically fruitful area overflowing with European alder and pine stands, making this prime for redpolls and crossbills – Oak Orchard River Road. Somewhat surprisingly, this area was void of birds, and we continued on.

We finally arrived at Hess Road in Appleton around 1 p.m. We scoured the stretch of road where the redpolls had been seen reliably. We were excited when a rather large flock of American Goldfinches flew in, but they were nothing more than that. With the abundance of alder, it was obvious why the redpolls had been seen here consistently, but none were detected.

Now, 4 participants departed and there were 3 left. This included the 2 leaders and one more. It was time to head back east, homeward! On our way back, we scanned many areas along Lakeshore Road that had recently held shrike, Rough-legged Hawk, and Northern Harrier, but to no avail! It was time for the (arguably) most productive stop of

the trip – Point Breeze. It had been bypassed on the ride out in order to increase our chances of viewing the redpolls, but it was now time. The 3 of us scanned the waterfowl, seeing many species seen nowhere else in the day. Common Goldeneye, Mallard, American Black Duck, Bufflehead, Long-tailed Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, and White-winged Scoter were all visible with a quick scan. Just before we were ready to depart, I decided to scan the water to the west of the outlet. There was a small diving group of ducks, holding Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, and the highlight of the trip: Barrow's Goldeneye! This male gave beautiful views for the 3 of us left to enjoy and great comparative views with nearby Common Goldeneye. It was nice to see this species return to this location after several years of absence.

As daylight diminished, we made a few quick stops to try to pick up birds others had observed in the day. We stopped at Hamlin Beach State Park where the same party that left our group earlier had pulled out some Common Redpolls, but we could not relocate them. The irony!

We stopped in Hamlin at a spot where Lapland Longspur had been reported that day, but we were not able to locate the flock of Horned Larks it was present in and concluded they had moved. The trip ended back at Burger Park where we waited for any dusk views of winter raptors, of which none were had – again. All in all, a long day full of failure and sporadic success. A big thanks to Bob Ryan for sticking around 'til the last minute!

Robert Buckert

Birders Exchange

Birders' Exchange collects and redistributes new and used binoculars, spotting scopes, digital camera equipment, old and new field guides, and other relevant material. Sponsored by the American Birding Association, it supports critical research and conservation programs in the Caribbean, Central and South America. Won't you help? Please bring your donations to the RBA monthly meetings or contact Lucretia at 671-1310 or lucretia@frontiernet.net for alternate arrangements. Remember to include a list of the items and your name and address with your donation.

Lucretia Grosshans

Rochester Christmas Bird Count 12/16/2018

We came so achingly close to the magic 100-number with.....**97 species**.

This year was the 115th Rochester Christmas Bird Count. Sixty-eight participants worked throughout the day to count the birds in the traditional count area (the 15-mile diameter circle centered at Dewey Avenue and Stone Road shown in the map). We devoted almost 120 hours to the enterprise. Temperatures were moderate, moving from the low- to mid-30's. Intermittent showers developed into afternoon rain.

During the day observers found 97 species and 65,280 individual birds. Here are some observations of note. Cindy Marino and Chita McKinney found the first **Green Heron** ever!!! Several rarely-occurring species turned up: **Fox Sparrow** (only 5 times during the whole 115 years), **Northern Goshawk** (13 times), **Chipping Sparrow** (9 times), **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (11 times), and **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** (15 times). The 4 **Red-headed Woodpeckers** matched the record high from 23 years ago and were especially noteworthy since they've only been seen 9 times in the RCBC. We counted record numbers of **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** (196 vs. the previous 170), **Hermit Thrush** (8 vs. 7), **Red-necked Grebe** (8 vs. 5) and **raven** (2 vs. 1). Three **Gray Catbirds** matched a previous high.

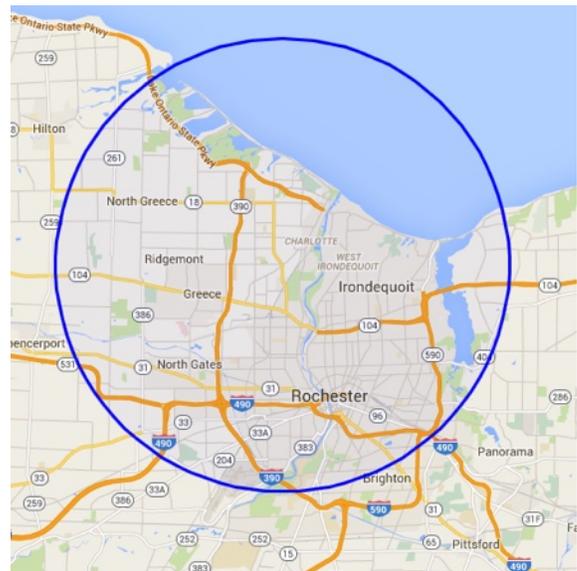
The **American Crow** story continues to be very interesting! Recall that, prior to last year, we had been seeing thousands of birds as they flew in to roost at Washington Square Park. Apparently, the efforts of the city to remove the roost were effective since they did not appear last year! Scouting by Doug Bassett indicated that the roost had relocated to the area where the canal meets Chili Avenue. A team led by Rob Buckert deployed in this area and estimated the crow-count to be 24,500!

I need to acknowledge and thank Jack Hartwig, Kim Hartquist, and Kimberly Sucey, who retired as sector leaders for the RCBC after lending us their excellent birding and organizational skills. We are fortunate to have found new leaders who also embody these attributes: Rosemary Reilly, John Boettcher and Jay Greenberg. The count relies on and is fortunate to have these and the other sector leaders: Shirley Shaw, Tom and Nancy Poeth, Robert Spahn, Dominic Sherony, Greg Lawrence, and Andrea Patterson for the Young Birders.

Later in the day, we met at the Newport Yacht Club for after-count activities: warming, dining on pizza, salad and pot-luck dishes, relating experiences and tallying the day's bird observations. This year there were more than 20 people, so I'm taking it to mean that the count is growing in popularity!

Those who participated have my praise and gratitude. This year new participants were Lidia Culbert, Jack Eisenschmidt, Nancy Fella, Cindy Frisch, Ann Nash, Rivka Noll, Elizabeth Rabjohns, Dave Rabjohns, Kevin Spears and Trevor Spears. The 'choir' or long-time and returning participants were Doug Bassett, Carolyn Barnhardt, Jerry Barnhardt, Lynn Bergmeyer, Lynn Braband, Don Bemont, Robert Buckert, Jill Church, Barbara Cote, Cherie Conrad, Peter Debes, Jon Dombrowski, Sharon Galbraith, Andy Garland, Janis George, Mary Gordon, Cheryl Graczewski, Andy Guthrie, Alan Handelman, Bill Howe, Monika Herrmann, Nicholas Kachala, Holly Lawrence, Ben Levy, David Levy, Carol Loveland, Jim Loveland, Randi Minetor, Tom Nash, Bill Maier, Cindy Marino, Chita McKinney, Jim Miles, Brian Morse, Brooke Morse, Ann Parks, Jay Powell, Judy Stein, Susan Spahn, Rick Stevens, Jerry Sullivan, Michael Tetlow, Jeanne Verhulst, Bridget Watts, Beth Wheeler, Kinsley Wittum and Drew Yampanis.

Norma Platt, Compiler



Little Lakes CBC Summary 2018

An overcast sky greeted the 47 field observers for the 67th Little Lakes CBC on December 29th. A complete lack of snow, open water and the duck hunting season all contributed to a rather slow day for most. Highlights were a high count for Sandhill Crane (14) and Common Raven (28). A drake Tufted Duck found on Conesus Lake by Jim Kimball and Rick Stevens was a new species for the count. The bird was flushed by hunters

on count day but stayed in the area for several days, to the delight of many of us. Thanks to participants Carolyn and Jerry Barnhart, Douglas Bassett, Matt Baker, Brad Bandemer, Doug Beattie, Lynn Bergmeyer, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, Robert Buckert, Elaine Dart, Peter Debes, Candy Giles, Jay Greenberg, Lucretia Grosshans, Kim Hartquist, Diane Henderson, Monika Herrmann, William Howe, Nick and Jeff Kachala, Jim Kimball, Kathy Kirsch, Kevin Koss, Pat Luke, Peggy

Macre, Cindy Marino, Chita McKinney, Sheila Mumpton,
Phil Opdycke, Norma Platt, Al Price, Carolyn Ragan,
Jennifer Rycenga, Shirley Shaw, Hugh Shipley, Judy
Slein, Robert and Susan Spahn, Rick Stevens, Wendy

Stevenson, Jerry Sullivan, Bill Welcher, Kinsley Whittum
and Jim Wood.

Pat Martin, Compiler

Rochester, NY Area Christmas Bird Count Summary 2018

(compiled by Bob Spahn)

	Letchworth- Silver Lake	Rochester	Conesus- Hemlock	
	Dec. 15, 2018	Dec. 16, 2018	Dec. 29, 2018	Total
Snow Goose			cw	cw
Greater White-fronted Goose	1			1
Cackling Goose	4			4
Canada Goose	8,095	3,524	2,624	14,243
Mute Swan		299	1	300
Tundra Swan	37	1	cw	38
Wood Duck		1		1
Gadwall		26	cw	26
American Wigeon	1	2	cw	3
American Black Duck	75	58	26	159
Mallard	406	1,672	157	2,235
Northern Pintail		1		1
Canvasback		30	160	190
Redhead	390	603	5,125	6,118
Ring-necked Duck	8	2	221	231
Tufted Duck			1	1
Greater Scaup		110	68	178
Lesser Scaup	22	32	276	330
Surf Scoter			cw	cw
White-winged Scoter		15		15
Black Scoter		3		3
Long-tailed Duck	3	1,035	2	1,040
Bufflehead	150	13	96	259
Common Goldeneye	100	117	251	468
Hooded Merganser	11	31	28	70
Common Merganser	342	83	40	465
Red-breasted Merganser		647		647
Ruddy Duck	1	1	4	6
Ring-necked Pheasant		2	2	4
Ruffed Grouse			6	6
Wild Turkey	3	8	56	67
Red-throated Loon		14		14
Common Loon	1	2	2	5
Horned Grebe		9	1	10
Red-necked Grebe		8		8
Double-crested Cormorant		51		51
Great Blue Heron	5	29	3	37
Green Heron		1		1
Bald Eagle	10	2	16	28
Northern Harrier	3		4	7
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	7		8
Cooper's Hawk	3	10	10	23
Northern Goshawk		1		1
Red-tailed Hawk	42	32	56	130

	Letchworth- Silver Lake Dec. 15, 2018	Rochester Dec. 16, 2018	Conesus- Hemlock Dec. 29, 2018	Total
Rough-legged Hawk	2		1	3
American Coot			1	1
Sandhill Crane			14	14
Bonaparte's Gull		128		128
Ring-billed Gull	60	12,372	1,248	13,680
Herring Gull	4	4,547	403	4,954
Iceland Gull		1	1	2
Lesser Black-backed Gull		1	2	3
Great Black-backed Gull		62	4	66
Rock Pigeon	598	1,109	329	2,036
Mourning Dove	191	540	111	842
Eastern Screech-Owl	6	75	49	130
Great Horned Owl	1	1	3	5
Short-eared Owl			1	1
N. Saw-whet Owl			1	1
Belted Kingfisher	6	7	3	16
Red-headed Woodpecker		4		4
Red-bellied Woodpecker	58	196	88	342
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1			1
Downy Woodpecker	77	132	105	314
Hairy Woodpecker	17	44	29	90
Northern Flicker	26	35	34	95
Pileated Woodpecker	5	28	18	51
American Kestrel	2	1	3	6
Merlin	1	1		2
Peregrine Falcon		4		4
Northern Shrike	2		1	3
Blue Jay	193	381	234	808
American Crow	339	24,997	690	26,026
Common Raven	7	2	28	37
Horned Lark	5		1	6
Black-capped Chickadee	236	338	629	1,203
Tufted Titmouse	35	54	71	160
Red-breasted Nuthatch	8	15	19	42
White-breasted Nuthatch	79	115	163	357
Brown Creeper	11	11	7	29
Winter Wren		13	3	16
Marsh Wren		2		2
Carolina Wren	6	10	18	34
Golden-crowned Kinglet	9	15	3	27
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		1	2	3
Eastern Bluebird	32	32	62	126
Hermit Thrush		8		8
American Robin	5	2,252	30	2,287
Gray Catbird		3		3
Northern Mockingbird	1	8	4	13
European Starling	6047	5,693	2,831	14,571
Cedar Waxwing	19	304	236	559
Snow Bunting			276	276
Yellow-rumped Warbler	2	5		7
Common Yellowthroat	1			1
Orange-crowned Warbler	1			1

	Letchworth- Silver Lake	Rochester	Conesus- Hemlock	
	Dec. 15, 2018	Dec. 16, 2018	Dec. 29, 2018	Total
American Tree Sparrow	34	71	105	210
Chipping Sparrow		1		1
Field Sparrow	1	1		2
Fox Sparrow		1		1
Song Sparrow	7	27	28	62
Swamp Sparrow		7	6	13
White-throated Sparrow	48	101	28	177
White-crowned Sparrow	2			2
Dark-eyed (S-c) Junco	75	179	221	475
Dark-eyed ("Oregon") Junco		"1"		"1"
Northern Cardinal	80	294	159	533
Red-winged Blackbird		48	6	54
Common Grackle		1		1
Brown-headed Cowbird	72		59	131
Pine Grosbeak			5	5
House Finch	18	208	76	302
Purple Finch		13	2	15
Red Crossbill		1		1
Common Redpoll		1		1
Pine Siskin	1	8	cw	9
American Goldfinch	145	272	388	805
House Sparrow	229	2,013	201	2,443
Total Individuals (count day)	18,519	65,276	18,276	102,071
Total species (count day)	72	96	80	115
Total species (incl. count week)	72	96	86	117

Bold number indicates new high or low count

January Birds & Brews Event

Attention BrewBirds! We are excited to announce the first Birds & Brews event of 2019! January's event will be held at Iron Tug Brewing on Thursday, January 31st. This is a casual evening for members and non-members, experienced or brand new, to get together to talk birds, the outdoors, and more! We hope to see you there!

Date: Thursday, January 31st

Time: 6 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.

Location: Iron Tug Brewing, 360 West Ridge Road, Rochester, NY 14615

The RBA Annual Dinner 1/12/2019

How nice that the weather cooperated with us and that over 70 individuals showed up at the Summerville Presbyterian Church for the annual RBA dinner! The food tables simply teemed with dishes. Along with the turkeys Jeanne Verhulst and Nancy Poeth cooked and the hams Brian Rohrs and I cooked, there was RBA punch from Mary Gordon, appetizers, casseroles, side dishes, dessert, even baba ganoush and Moroccan stew. Whew, how perfect!

What can I say about Marilyn Schindler, other than the fact that the Summerville Presbyterian Church is HER church and that she shares this treasure with us. She has the janitor set up tables and chairs, has some of her church friends help with coffee and cleanup, has beautiful bird figures that she puts on each table, etc, etc. Thank you Marilyn.

Again Cathy Ballard, our Nominating Committee Chair, did us proud by providing us with the perfect slate of candidates for the RBA Board of Directors which was unanimously elected. Little Gull Awards were presented to both Richard Ashworth and Laura Kammermeier (who wasn't able to attend).

Andrea Patterson again led us through a deviously constructed quiz that had most of us scratching our heads. Nice work Andrea! Even our winner, Robert Buckert, was stumped on one or two. Nice work, Robert.

Richard Ashworth, our superb host, led us through member presentations that included: Candy Giles, "Sandhill Cranes in Nebraska"; Jay Greenberg, "Birds of Cayo Coco, Cuba and Vicinity (Plus a Few Butterflies)"; Marilyn Schindler, "Framed Nature Photography Photos"; Dick Horsey, "30-day Gallery of Less Common Bird Photos 2018"; Dominic Sherony, "Birds of Tanzania"; Diane Henderson, "Scuba Diving near Raja Ampat Indonesia" (Diane told us about fascinating sea creature facts!); Amy Kahn, "Cuba and Baja California". Thank you all for sharing. Unfortunately, there is always a limited time for presentations; so next year, if you want to present, please get your request in early.

Again, a big shoutout to Shirley Shaw for filling almost every space on the RBA refreshment sign-up sheet!

I'm again grateful to all that participated and helped make this event successful. Thank you.

Wanda Thistle, Social Chair



Richard Ashworth receives his Little Gull Award from outgoing President Amy Kahn at the RBA Annual Dinner on Jan. 12, 2019.

December 2018 Sightings Report

The official weather summary for this month will be delayed, as the source is down due to the government shutdown. Clearly, from memory, it was one of the warmer and least snowy Decembers on record for this area. The Christmas Bird Counts were all affected by combinations of cold and/or rain plus the lingering effects of the very cold and snowy November having pushed out many of the typical lingering birds, especially waterfowl. Winter food for passerines was generally only fair to poor, and many observers commented on low numbers of many of the regularly expected species. Most of the lakes, bays, and ponds were largely ice-free for most of the month. However they had mostly frozen in November, and cold snaps in December would lock up at least the ponds for short periods off and on through December.

This year, the Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC got the weather a bit better on the 15th, with the Rochester CBC on the next day seeing intermittent showers in the morning and a bit steadier rain in the afternoon. Most water was only partially frozen at most for all of the counts, an improvement over last year, but tempered by the effects of the freezes earlier. Species counts were back up to average and above, with 72 for Letchworth-Silver Lake and 96 for Rochester. The Little Lakes (Conesus-Hemlock) CBC began with intermittent variable rain through the morning, decreasing but with dropping temperatures in the afternoon, with brisk SW to W and then NW winds all day. Birds were hard to find, but 80 species plus 6 count week, mostly waterfowl pushed off Conesus Lake by hunters, was a good tally, and Tufted Duck was new for the count. Sandhill Crane and Common Raven reached new highs. Backing up to the earlier counts, Letchworth-Silver Lake added Greater White-fronted Goose and Orange-crowned Warbler as new species and recorded new highs for Redhead, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, and Bald Eagle. For the Rochester CBC, Green Heron was a new species, Red-headed Woodpecker and Gray Catbird tied record highs, and Red-necked Grebe, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Common Raven, and Hermit Thrush set new highs. This year the total number of individual birds for each count jumped up due to the better weather, with the Letchworth-Silver Lake and Little Lakes counts up by about 50% and Rochester about tripled. However, for Rochester, over half the increase came from finding the crow roost again, and jumps in just gulls, starlings, Mallards, and robins made up the rest with all the other species just fluctuating about normal numbers.

Waterbird numbers were generally low, as can be seen in the maxima in the Noteworthy table posted on the RBA website. There were some good numbers reported for Redhead from Conesus Lake and for Red-breasted Merganser. The Tufted Duck was the only real rarity. Large numbers of Snow Geese were late arriving this winter, and the species was missed on all 3 count days. This year American Coot numbers were low through the season. But once again Sandhill Cranes lingered in the Honeoye/Livonia area, setting a new high for this time of year at 14.

As usual, shorebirds were scarce, with the expected Purple Sandpiper missed again and the one potential reported species with not quite enough detail to accept. Among the gulls, there were some large gatherings on the ponds and bays, Bonaparte's Gulls were few, and there were modest numbers of the usual winter gulls – Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous at a few locations. Loons and grebes were generally scarce, but there were some big counts for Red-necked Grebe off Hamlin Beach and nearby and more than usual present to month's end. Double-crested Cormorants lingered again in Irondequoit Bay through year's end. The Green Heron on the Rochester CBC was a complete surprise.

We had the usual known roosts of wintering Turkey Vultures and good numbers of wintering Bald Eagles, with Irondequoit Bay again a prime viewing area. There was a surprising total of 4 immature Northern Goshawks reported through the month. Rough-legged Hawk reports were few. Among the owls, we had the usual numbers for Eastern Screech-Owl during the CBCs, about 11 Snowy Owls scattered about through the month, and a good start to the Short-eared Owl surveys out of the Avon DEC office. Northern Saw-whet Owls in the Owl Woods area, at Torpy Hill in Bergen Swamp, and on the Little Lakes CBC is unusual for December. Sticking with the new checklist order, we next have 3-4 Red-headed Woodpeckers in Durand–Eastman Park, found on December 14 and seen by many through the rest of the month. A dozen Yellow-bellied Sapsucker reports for the month was also good. Finally, numbers of birds and different locations were good this month for all 3 of our regular falcon species.

On now to the passerines. We can look for the numbers lingering with the warm December, but also affected by the cold November. Overall, the picture is interesting. We have 4 Eastern Phoebes, about 35 Winter Wrens, a Marsh Wren, 3 total Ruby-crowned Kinglets on the CBCs, many Eastern Bluebirds, 16 Hermit Thrushes, 5 Gray Catbirds, 4 Eastern Towhees, 2 Chipping Sparrows, 4 Field Sparrows, a Fox Sparrow, many White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows, few blackbirds, and finally Orange-crowned Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and several Yellow-rumped Warblers—certainly a good list of half-hardy lingerers. Through the fall we had tantalizing reports of winter finches scattered about the area and hopes for more. But December just continued the hit and miss reports, with a dozen reports of Evening Grosbeak, though none on the CBCs, a lone Pine Grosbeak, some good flocks of Common Redpoll, a lone flyover Red Crossbill, and modest numbers of Pine Siskins. Lapland Longspur was very scarce, and Snow Bunting reports included a couple with decent numbers, the maximum 1000 in Lima.

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

	2018	2017	10-year Average (2008-2017)
Species for December	132	136	131.3
New for the year	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1.3</u>
Total for the year	288	289	291.6

Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee

Observers: Jim Adams, Janet Akin, Carolyn & Jerry Barnhart, Jessie Barry, Jim Barry, Mitchell Barry, Sue Barth, Douglas Bassett, Doug Beattie, Don Bemont, Steven Benedict, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, Joe Brin, Mark Brown, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Bruce Cady, Brad Carlson, Nancy Casper, Jill Church, Linda Clark-Benedict, Kelly Close, Lydia Culbert, Doug Daniels, Peter Debes, Donald Dixon, Deborah Dohne, Steve Donohue, Kevin Ebert, Mark Fitzsimmons, George Ford, Jim Fry, Kyle Gage, Andy Garland, Candy Giles, Bill Gillette, Christopher Goetz, John Gordinier, Karla Gordinier, Shannon Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Jane Graves, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Michael Gullo, Andrew Guthrie, Ethan Gyllenhaal, Helen & Chris Haller, Kim Hartquist, Christina Hoh, Alec Hopping, Dick Horsey, Bill & Mari Howe, Carolyn Jacobs, Nicholas Kachala, Logan Kahle, Laura Kammermeier, Tom Kerr, Jim Kimball, Cindy Kindle, Kathy Kirsch, Renee Kittleman, Leona

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Ten Days of Birding in Cuba: Part 2

by Monika Herrmann

Day 2 – Sunday (continued). After all that, we were more than ready for lunch, which was at Finca Paraiso, an open-air restaurant high on a hill, with a breathtaking view. Food was abundant, served family-style, delicious, and all grown right there on the farm. It was a forerunner of meals to come.

Our hotel that night in Viñales, La Ermita, was a sprawling, modern complex up on a hill, with a gorgeous view across the valley. As we sat out on the patio at dusk, we watched as a huge flock of Tree Swallows began pouring in to roost in the thatched roof of the snack bar.

Day 3 – Monday. This morning we made a short stop at a community farm, to see Cuban Grassquits eating grain on top of a wall, along with domestic Guinea Fowl and chickens. From there, it was on to Las Terrazas, where a hilly, wooded park area surrounds the remains of an abandoned coffee plantation. Low stone walls of coffee bean drying areas and a roofed grinding apparatus still stand. Susanna provided us with a history of the area, proudly pointing out that the terraces that gave the place its name, were initiated by Fidel Castro to alleviate the soil erosion brought on by the original farming practices at the plantation. She also pointed out neat-looking apartment buildings, a community bakery, and a childcare center, improvements for the citizens since the revolution. In this area we added Antillean Palm-Swift, Tawny-shouldered Blackbird, Yellow-headed Warbler and Yellow-faced Grassquit to our list of new birds.



An immature male **Bee Hummingbird**. Photo by Jay Greenberg.

Later, we headed for the Zapata Peninsula, on the southern shore – a 5-hour drive. When we were nearly there, we made a stop at an unassuming house on a narrow, residential dirt road, where the owner had painted a sign, “Casa Zunzun”. Zunzun is the nickname for the Bee Hummingbird, the world’s smallest bird, found only in certain areas of Cuba; the other areas are more remote and difficult to reach. The homeowner here loves hummingbirds, and has planted flowering shrubs and put out feeders especially to attract them. In a large shrub I believe to be a fuchsia species, I spotted them, the birds I had most wanted to see in Cuba. In addition, there were Cuban Emerald and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds; a Black-throated Blue Warbler seemed to be trying to drink from a Hummingbird feeder. Among the other birds seen in the yard were a Louisiana Waterthrush, and Red-shouldered Blackbirds. The owner proudly showed us the rest of his property, which extended quite far behind the narrow-fronted house. There were pigs, tree rats, which were about the size of our opossums, and turtles in pens. As we were leaving, a big bus full of tourists had just arrived. I hope everyone on it gave the homeowner a well-deserved tip. I call this grass-roots ecotourism.

Our accommodation for the next 3 nights would be at the Playa Larga, a series of faux-thatched roof cabins with a nice restaurant, beach, and noisy pool, on the Bay of Pigs, a name that struck terror in me as a child. I finally conquered that fear, as I waded along the serene, scenic beach. The cabins were large, clean, and modern, with hot water on one night, and the air conditioner from Hell. But the quaintness of having lizards and a frog in the cabin, along with a pony grazing outside the door one misty morning, made up for that.



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