



Little Gull

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

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

APRIL AND EARLY MAY 2019 EVENTS & BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

APR 11
Thursday

RBA General Meeting, 7:00 p.m., the Baptist Temple, 1101 Clover Street, Rochester NY 14610 (in Brighton). Speaker: Luke DeGroot. Title: *Clear and present danger: Bird-window collisions.* See p. 4 for more information.

APRIL IS AN EXCELLENT MONTH TO OBSERVE THE HAWK FLIGHT

Counters gather at the hawk watch platform at Braddock Bay Park (exit at East Manitou Road off the Ontario Parkway). Most of the birds are immature Red-tailed Hawks, but Broad-winged Hawks, Ospreys, Sharp-shinned Hawks, goshawks, kestrels and Peregrine Falcons are also seen.

APR 12
Friday

OWL WOODS ("PEAR ORCHARD") WOODCOCK COURTSHIP FLIGHT

This will be an evening trip for woodcock courtship flight. If you've never seen this spectacle, prepare to be amazed. Birds call noisily from the ground in grassy fields before spiraling rapidly up high, descending back down in a zigzagging noisy frenzy, only to start the cycle anew. An amazing sight! Meet in the parking lot on the east side of Manitou Beach Road just off the Lake Ontario State Parkway and across from the Owl Woods trailhead at **7:00 p.m.** The Owl Woods trails may be wet and muddy in spots.

Boots are STRONGLY recommended. Bring a flashlight or head lamps.

Leader: Lucretia Grosshans 585-467-2474

APR 20
Saturday

HIGH ACRES NATURE AREA

Over 130 bird species have been observed at HANA, including more than 70 that nest in the diverse habitats found there. During this field trip we expect to see at least 40 species returning to nest or on their way to northern nesting grounds. Our approximately 2 mile walk will explore about 250 acres at HANA and include some wet spots requiring ankle-high waterproof shoes or boots. We will meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the parking lot on Perinton Parkway approximately 1/4 mile east of the Waste Management offices. The bridge just west of this parking lot has been closed, so plan your route accordingly. Extra spotting scopes would be very helpful.

Leader: Rosemary Reilly 585-748-0802 and co-leaders Brian Rohrs and Gayle Lazoration

APR 24
Wednesday

HIGHLAND PARK

We'll be looking for spring migrants and lovely flora. This walk would be gorgeous even without the birds, but it does have birds in abundance! Find out where people have spotted the rarities that do pop up in this urban treasure. Meet on Reservoir Avenue at the conservatory at **8:00 a.m.** Dress for the weather.

Leader: Janet Miles 585-787-0507 and co-leader Jeanne Verhulst 585-473-9229

APR 27
Saturday

BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP—LAKESHORE WARBLER HOTSPOTS

The shoreline of Lake Ontario is a haven for migrating warblers and other passerines. We'll look for early warblers, such as Palm and Yellow-rumped Warblers, to whet our appetites for the weeks to come. We will stop at several areas where these birds tend to congregate in spring. Learn the basics of identifying our most colorful migrants on this trip. We'll be looking for color patterns, song, and distinctive behaviors to enhance identification skills with these fast-moving beauties. Several trails may be very muddy, so **boots are STRONGLY recommended!** Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the parking lot behind Lakeview Community Church, 30 Long Pond Road in Greece (near Edgemere Drive).

Leader: John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and co-leader Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422

APR 28
Sunday

BRADDOCK BAY HAWK LOOKOUT

This trip is for the spring hawk flight and migrating songbirds. This is a joint trip with the Buffalo Ornithological Society. Work to identify distant raptors and meet some great new people, too! Meet in the Brad-

dock Bay Park parking lot near the pavilion off East Manitou Road at **9:30 a.m.** or later—coordinate with BOS if time changes.

Leader: *Mike Tetlow 585-425-7849 and Members of the BOS*

MAY 1

Wednesday

COBBS HILL PARK

With spring in full swing, come to one of Rochester's best-kept birding secrets: Cobbs Hill Park's Washington Grove. Colorful warblers and other spring migrants arrive *en masse* at this urban oasis of tall stately trees. We will search for Yellow-rumped Warblers, Black-throated Blue, and Black-throated Green Warblers, Nashville, Black-and-white and Hooded Warblers among others. We will likely hear the flute-like Wood Thrush and see Hermit Thrushes searching the ground for food. Sparrows, orioles, and perhaps a Scarlet Tanager will make an appearance. Washington Grove is one of the best spring birding spots in the area. **Meet at 8:00 a.m.** opposite the reservoir in the grassy area between the road and the woods. Use the Highland Avenue entrance, just east of Monroe Avenue

Leaders: *Tom and Jeanne Verhulst 585-473-9229 and co-leader Sue Robertson*

May 1

Wednesday

Wednesday Evening Warblers

Start of regular Wednesday birding at Lucien Morin Park, 1135 Empire Blvd. Meet in the parking lot. Bring binoculars, sturdy shoes, and bug spray. **6:00 p.m.** until dark.

Leader: John Boettcher 585-671-9639

MAY 4

Saturday

TAYLOR MARSH (Joint trip with the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society)

Taylor Marsh is a preserve owned by the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society and located in Ontario County north of Honeoye Lake. It is best known for marsh birds, including both local bittern species and Virginia Rail. However, the star attraction is the 2-3 Sandhill Cranes that have been present in this area all year around for many years. They are occasionally heard at Taylor, although seldom seen. Taylor also has brush-shrub and wooded upland habitat with a good variety of spring migrants and breeding birds. An adjacent hay field is home to Bobolinks and meadowlarks. It has a checklist of well over 100 species, and we usually rack up 40-50 in just a couple of hours. From Rochester, take I-390 south to the Avon exit. Turn left onto Routes 5 & 20 and go east. In the town of Lima, turn right onto Route 15 A and follow it south. Turn left onto Richmond Mills Road (Livingston County Road 41) east. It becomes Ontario County Road 15. Follow County Road 15 past County Road 37 and turn right at the next stop sign onto Allen's Hill Road. (There is no road sign at the intersection.) Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the Taylor Marsh parking area on the west side of Allen's Hill Road just south of Nighan Hill Road.

Leaders: *Lynn Braband 585-436-9388 and Jay Greenberg 585-256-0485*

MAY 5

Sunday

FOUR MILE CREEK PRESERVE, WEBSTER

We will meet at **8:00 a.m.** in the preserve parking lot at the SE corner of Lake Road and Phillips Road in Webster. We will look for spring migrants along the hiking trails. The trails will most likely be muddy, so appropriate footwear is recommended.

Leaders: *Tom & Nancy Poeth 585-872-5344*

MAY 7

Tuesday

CAMP BEECHWOOD AND OLGA FLEISHER WILDLIFE PRESERVE

This park, which is on the shoreline of Lake Ontario in Wayne County, should attract warblers, vireos, thrushes and other migrants, and it also boasts a robust Bank Swallow colony. Bring beverages, snacks, or lunch if you plan to attend the second part of this trip to the Olga Fleisher Preserve, a bottomland forest and wetland (known locally as Huckleberry Swamp) with an excellent boardwalk and trail. Meet at Webster Park, corner of Lake and Holt Roads at **7:00 a.m.** or at Forman Park in Pultneyville at **7:30 a.m.**

Leaders: *Tom and Nancy Poeth 585-872-5344*

MAY 8

Wednesday

ONTARIO PATHWAYS

We'll look for warblers and other spring migrants along this level, rails-to-trails pathway in Ontario County. This well-maintained trail is an established favorite for wildlife viewing and scenic views. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring some cash for a great brunch at the Blue Ribbon after we walk! At times, the weather can be fickle, but we've seen better warblers in the snow on this trip than many trips get on sunny days. Please join us! Meet in the Bushnell's Basin Park and Ride lot (off NY Route 96 just south of Exit 27 from I-490) at **7:00 a.m.** Carpool arrangements may be made before we commute to the trail area parking.

Leaders: *Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422 and Rosemary Reilly 585-748-0802*

Welcome to the Flock



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

Barbara & Phil Belisle
Nicholas Pusateri
Bill Kingston
Lynn Latone
James Hendrickson
Carol Thompson
Linda Roca
Charlie Cowling

Current RBA membership is 374.

The total comprises household members (342), Young Birders (7), corporate member (1), *Little Gull* subscribers (3) and *Little Gull* complimentary subscribers (21).

Jo Taylor
Membership Data

Adrianna Anderson
Membership Outreach

President's Column

Andrea Patterson



My niece is a pretty typical 4-year old . . . obsessed with Frozen, dinosaurs and Pokemon. She can perform "Let It Go" accompanied by remarkably accurate choreography, list the names of a dozen dinosaurs you've never heard of, and tell you which Pokemon "evolve" into others. Less typically, she also likes birds. Vultures are a favorite. I've told her that birds are really just living dinosaurs, but I don't think she believes me. She does, however, believe that birds are living Pokemon, and she'll happily tell you how they are related to all the pocket monsters she sees on TV.

How many of us, as parents, have raced to keep ahead of our children as they dive headfirst into what experts call "intense interests"? I was happy if I could just keep up, and eventually I learned to just hang on and enjoy the ride. These interests often burn out as quickly as they begin, whether we encourage them or not, as kids turn their attention to school and friends.

But . . . what happens when they don't? What happens when your 2-year old is reading field guides and asking to go birding every day thereafter? What happens when your 10-year old has already outstripped your ability to identify birds in the field? What do you do when your 16-year old wants to do a study on the nest provisioning behavior of Downy Woodpeckers?

You call in the experts!

Eighteen months ago, the Rochester Birding Association officially launched its Young Birders Club. Young Birders ROC! started with a group of 4 enthusiasts, and it's grown to a dozen. Each month from April through November, the group takes a morning field trip to a birding hotspot, and they've logged a total of 185 species including a Eurasian Wigeon and a Northern Gannet. In the winter months, they meet at members' homes for games and trivia, but also for useful lessons in how to count large flocks or how to keep field notes. They've done presentations at Bird of Prey Days and Letchworth State Park, they volunteer at birding events, and they've captured the Montezuma Muckrace recreational category for 2 years running.

Our goals with the program are really threefold: to introduce as many kids as possible to birding, to provide birding mentorship and opportunities to local young birders (providing much needed relief to the parents!), and to connect our young birders with other birders their own age.

Last month, the RBA Board of Directors voted to create a scholarship fund aimed at helping our young birders attend youth birding camps,

take educational seminars or workshops, or even attend professional ornithology meetings. Whether it's a week at Camp Colorado, a weekend at the Cornell Young Ornithologists Workshop, a home-study webinar on identifying waterfowl, or a trip to the NYSOA meeting, the board believes that there is value in helping our kids reach beyond our local opportunities.

The seed money for the fund came from part of the proceeds from the 2018 NYSOA meeting, which we felt was fitting, given that the meeting honored the 10th anniversary of the NYSOA Young Birders program.

For more information on the scholarship program, check out the Young Birders ROC! page on the RBA website. We're excited to get this initiative underway, and we can hardly wait to see where it takes our kids!

Editor's Corner

Jay Greenberg

iNaturalist.org



This issue has an article on the City Nature Challenge (CNC) on p. 4. The idea is to photograph as many organisms as you can during the

allowed time and upload them to iNaturalist.org, an organization with a website dedicated to documenting the world's biodiversity through citizen science. It currently has over 16,000,000 observations and is growing rapidly. The CNC boundaries are within Monroe County. I would like to point out that there is already a Monroe County Biodiversity Project (MCBP), <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/monroe-county-biodiversity>, with 1,170 species to which observations can be added at any time. Although this is a good start, it represents only a small fraction of our local biodiversity.

MCBP was started in 2014 by Jennifer Rycenga, president of the Sequoia Audubon Society in California.

(continued on p. 7)

April Talk and Speaker

Clear and present danger: Bird-window collisions.

Smack! That's the sound of a bird hitting a window—and you've probably heard it often.

Collisions with windows cause millions of bird fatalities every year. But now there's new hope for birds thanks to scientists at Powdermill Nature Reserve. Listen to Luke DeGroote share his findings from testing bird's perception of patterned glass in a flight tunnel to collision monitoring in downtown Pittsburgh. Before the end, you'll learn how to make your own windows safer for birds.

Luke DeGroote received his M.Sc. in Natural Resources from Ohio State and B.S. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Since 2012, DeGroote has overseen Carnegie Museum of Natural History's avian research programs including the operation of Powdermill's Avian Research Center (www.powdermillarc.org) where he studies songbird migration, avian disease, breeding phenology, and avian perception of glass. DeGroote aims to promote avian conservation through research, partnerships, and outreach. DeGroote and his research have been featured on NPR, the Atlantic, Discovery Channel's Daily Planet, and Audubon Magazine.



Bird of Prey Days Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are needed for the upcoming Bird of Prey Days, May 3-5 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If you are interested in volunteering for a shift at our outreach table, please contact Adrianna Anderson at adrianna.m.anderson@gmail.com or (585) 519-3925 to sign up. This is a great opportunity to connect with new birders and support the great work being done at Braddock Bay. Newer members will be paired with more experienced volunteers, so please consider joining us!

Attention Naturalists!

This year Rochester will be part of the City Nature Challenge, a "bioblitz"-style competition between cities around the world to see who can find the most species and engage the most people. Between **Friday, April 26 beginning at 12:00 a.m. and Monday, April 29 at 11:59 p.m** visit any green spaces



around Rochester (including your own backyard) and collect photos of any and all species you encounter.

Observations must be submitted using iNaturalist, an easy-to-use smartphone application that makes it easy to post, share, and identify photos. Not sure what you're taking a photo of? That's OK! iNaturalist experts will identify your photos for you – just take your best guess. We hope you, your family, and friends will contribute to this great citizen science project. For more information and to learn how to use iNaturalist, connect with the event organizers, Seneca Park Zoo, by visiting senecaparkzoo.org/city-nature-challenge/. City Nature Challenge is organized on a global scale by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and the California Academy of Sciences.

For a map of the project area, go to <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2019-rochester-ny>.

April Birds & Brews

What do you do when the birding day is done? You get together and talk about birding!

Join Rochester Birding Association members on **Wednesday, April 25th from 6:30-8:30 p.m.** for Birds and Brews! This is a casual evening for members to get together and share birding stories, compare travel destinations, and catch up, all while having a pint of Rochester's finest ale.

Location: Rohrbach Brewing Company: 97 Railroad St, Rochester, NY 14609

Wednesday Evening Warblers with John Boettcher

The idea is to afford busy people an opportunity to see some of the spring bird migration. We do it on a

weekday when it doesn't compete with all the weekend stuff. Stop by on your way home from work and give it an hour or so. We will do this in street clothes along a road in one of the county parks. Bring binoculars, sturdy shoes and bug spray. *(continued on p. 5)*

(Wed. Evening Warblers, continued)

Starting May 1st at 6:00 p.m., I will be at the parking lot of Lucien Morin Park at 1135 Empire Blvd. in Penfield. This park is at the south end of Irondequoit Bay just east of where the creek enters and only a few minutes from the Empire Blvd. exit of I-590. There is lots of traffic on this road, and people speed, so be careful. We will walk along a road, examining the edges and adjacent wetlands nearby for migrating warblers and other passerines.

RBA IN THE FIELD

Charlotte, Braddock Bay 3/3/2019

We had nice weather for this beginner trip, with temperatures in the upper 20s, clouds but no precipitation, and a light west wind. Fifteen folks joined us with a fair number of new faces. At the Charlotte meeting place, we found lots of Long-tailed Ducks, Greater Scaups, with a few Lesser and some other duck species. Sharp eyes located a Red-throated Loon. We spent a little time looking at gulls on the ice and sorting out the Herring from the Ring-billed. In the parking lot, we heard and later found Fish Crow. After making use of the heated bathrooms in the terminal, we went on to Slater Creek which was very unproductive. Next stop was the Breakers Marina on the west side of Braddock Bay where the only open water patch appeared to have only Canada Geese and a few Mute Swans. However, careful inspection found the ducks tucked close to the obstructing docks. Different view points and elevation provided by some new gravel piles revealed Redhead, Canvasback, Gadwall, and the only Bufflehead of the day. Next stop was the lake shoreline on the west side of Braddock Bay, where we found another good assortment of diving ducks, including White-winged Scoter. A short walk around the grounds of the nearby banding station produced not much in terms of passerine activity. The count for the trip was 27 species. Much thanks to Sheryl Gracewski for entering eBird information for all of the stops.

Cindy Marino and John Boettcher



A non-breeding adult **Red-throated Loon**. Photo by Jay Greenberg.

RBA Young Birders Meeting February 10, 2019

by Daena Ford

The Young Birders Club met in February at the Ford residence for a special program on raptors, getting to meet the captive education birds of Braddock Bay Raptor Research (BBRR). Participants got to learn about 4 different species of raptors native to our area and how the education birds are cared for in captivity. All of the birds are non-releasable due to permanent physical injuries, and therefore rely on humans to care for them now.

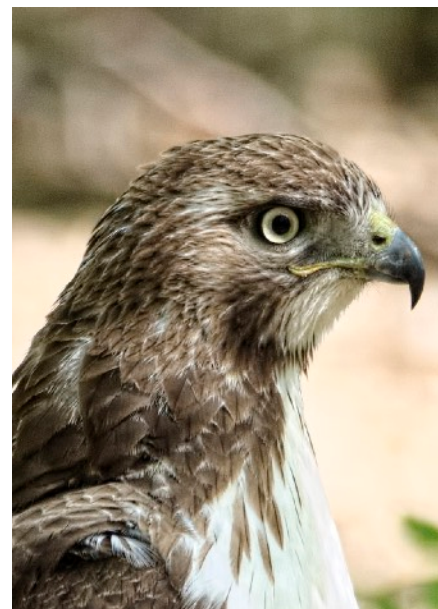
The first bird that the club got to meet was the Broad-winged Hawk. BBRR's Broad-wing is presumably a male due to his smaller size. A medium-sized raptor, when seen up close his smaller size was surprising to many, especially when we are used to seeing them soaring in the sky, looking much larger. Broad-wings are the most common migratory raptor in the east, typically spending their winters in Central and South America. Fortunately, this Broad-wing has an indoor winter enclosure so he does not have to be subject to our wintery weather.

Next, the group was treated to some time with the adult female Merlin. The Merlin had sustained an injury to her left wing, leaving her unable to fly. But that did not stop her from showing off her rapid wing beats and energetic personality, which Merlins are known for. Surprising fact: while the Merlin is easily less than half the size of the Broad-winged Hawk, she eats almost twice as much! That is proof of their high

metabolism due to a much more active lifestyle.

After meeting the Broad-wing and the Merlin, it was time to venture outside to meet the next 2 captive raptors. Keeping with the raptor theme for the day, a few wild birds made an appearance out in the yard, including a few Turkey Vultures that winter in the area, and a Red-tailed Hawk. The group got to see the outdoor enclosures where the education birds reside most of the time, and we had a brief discussion of how the birds are cared for in captivity. Then it was time for introductions to BBRR's Red-tailed Hawk, followed by the Great Horned Owl – 2 common raptor species in our area, but not commonly seen up close and personal!

Meeting the education birds was a good way to preview the upcoming Bird of Prey Days event at Braddock Bay, May 3-5. The Young Birders Club will be participating in a few activities on May 5, including a talk highlighting the club's activities, and helping out with a binocular scavenger hunt. Looking forward to what spring has in store for the club!



A wild immature **Red-tailed Hawk**. Photo by Jay Greenberg.

February 2019 Sightings Report

February was a warm and windy ride. After notching its coldest temperature of 0 °F on the 1st of the month, the mercury rose to 63° on the 4th. Days were evenly split between above and below-average temperatures; the month overall averaged 2.3° above normal at 28.7°, with 2 high temperature and one high-minimum temperature records being set. Precipitation totaled 2.91 inches, 0.96" above normal. Half of the precipitation fell as rain, and several of the larger precipitation events were a wintery mix of rain and sleet. Even with a new snowfall record of 6.5" on the 27th, snowfall of 19.2" ended up 2.3" below normal. Four major wind events swept through the area. A cold front following on the heels of 60° temperatures on the 8th saw winds of 60 mph. Weaker events followed on the 12th-13th, and on the 15th. The most serious storm took place on the 24th-26th, with wind gusts reaching 66 mph. Overall, there were 4 days with wind gusts over 50 mph.

This year there were few hints of early spring movement. Most of the bays, ponds, and even streams remained mostly to totally frozen through month's end. You will see only a couple of FS notations for waterfowl in the noteworthy table. Open patches in the bays were at times covered with the waterfowl remaining for the winter, but they were joined by very few new arrivals. Even Lake Ontario was covered with ice to well offshore any time the wind blew from the north for an extended time. Still, all the expected waterbirds were found, including Barrow's Goldeneye at both Point Breeze and Sodus Bay and a nice flock of Greater White-fronted Geese at Point Breeze just outside our region in the creek channel. Peak counts remained low.

There were no shorebird reports for the season. Even the gull picture was lackluster, with lower than typical numbers of the usual winter gulls reported and no real rarities.

The Braddock Bay Hawk Watch began just after month's end, with David Brown as this year's official counter. There were no official records for this month. Raptor reports remained low for the month, excepting a good number of Bald Eagle reports. A lone Black Vulture over Rochester and a Red-shouldered Hawk in Webster Park were the most noteworthy for the season. Among the owls, the noteworthy were only about 7 Snowy Owls reported; the usual Short-eared Owl surveys were both cancelled by bad weather, though a good peak number of 16 was tallied at Nations Road by birders; and both Long-eared Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl were off to an early start in the Owl Woods area. The regular falcons were all well reported through the season.

Among the other non-passerine land birds, there were no reports of Eurasian Collared-Dove, and the only other items of note were the continuing Red-headed Woodpeckers in Durrant-Eastman Park and at least five Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers surviving the winter.

Given the deep cold snaps and periods of heavy snow, a lack of large counts of passerines is no surprise, but there were a good number of half-hardy species continuing through this month, some in good numbers. Species reported included: Winter Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, surprisingly good numbers of White-crowned and White-throated Spar-

rows, Eastern Meadowlark, and Pine Warbler. Among the usual irruptives, there were decent numbers of reports for Northern Shrike, but little else other than a lone Bohemian Waxwing. Winter finches were represented by a few reports of Evening Grosbeak, a single report for Pine Grosbeak, and some good numbers of Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins. Blackbird numbers were poor.

The Great Backyard Bird Count pushed the number of observers contributing to eBird records to over 300 this month, most typically not reporting otherwise, but the total number of records in the data download for the region was just 20,200, a typical number for this month.

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

	2019	2018	10-year Average (2009-2018)
Species for February	125	128	116
New for the year	<u>7</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>5.7</u>
Total for the year to date	135	140	132

Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee

Observers: Jim Adams, Janet Akin, Mitchell Barry, Doug Beattie, Linda Clark-Benedict, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Shawn Billerman, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Joe Brin, Robert David Brown (BBRR hawkwatcher), Mark Brown, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Bruce Cady, Brad Carlson, Donna Carter, Nancy Casper, Robert Cicotta, Jared Clark, Tiffany Clay, Kelly Close, Andrew Consler, Lydia Culbert, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Willie D'Anna, Gregg Dashnau, Rich DeCoster, Deborah Dohne, Beth Duncan, George Ford, Jim Fry, Kyle Gage, Andy Garland, Candy Giles, Christopher Goetz, Sheryl Gracewski, Jay Greenberg, Janis George, Jessica George, John Karls, & Shannon Gordinier, Kevin Griffith, Ralph & Georgia Guenther, Michael Gullo, Andrew Guthrie, Richard Guthrie, Robert Haggett, Helen & Chris Haller, M. & M. Hanna, Kim Hartquist, L. Hayward, Christina Hoh, Jennalee Holzschuh, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Carolyn Jacobs, Suzanne James, Nicholas Kachala, Logan Kahle, Amy Kahn, Jim Kimball, Kathy Kirsch, Renee Kittleman, Augie Kramer, Tom Lathrop, Greg Lawrence, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Cindy Marino, Pat Martin, Lauri Matile, Kenneth McCarthy, Jacob McCartney, Jay McGowan, Deborah McKaig, Chita McKinney, Jim Miles, Adrielle Mitchell, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Chan Nam, Tom Nash, Dave Nicosia, Rivka Noll, Dave Odell, Jay Ovsiovitch, Andrea Patterson, Jo Popma, Jay Powell, Carolyn Ragan, RBA Field Trips, Sue Rawleigh, Rochester Young Birders Club, Rosemary Reilly, Don Ross, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Kevin Rybczynski, Jackie Salisbury, Livia Santana, Karl Schmidt, Judy Slein, Tom & Pat Smith, Nancy Snyder, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier & Donna Mason-Spier, Chris Stanger, Rick Stevens, Kimberly Sucy, Steve Taylor, Dave Tetlow, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Sarah Toner, John & Bonnie VanDerMeid, Matt Voelker, Brad Walker, Jeff Ward, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, David Wheeler, Richard Weilacher, Joe Wing, Paul Wolter, Jim Wood.

Ten Days of Birding in Cuba: Part 4

by Monika Herrmann

Day 5 - Wednesday. After another great breakfast at the hotel, we traveled to the marshland refuge, La Turba, through another long, muddy, rutted vegetation tunnel. This was the only place on this trip where one really appreciated waterproof hiking shoes, as the grass was long and damp, and the ground a bit soggy. Here, we spotted a Great Lizard Cuckoo (which was eating a frog), Zapata Sparrow, White-crowned Pigeon, Cuban Green Woodpecker, and Common Yellowthroat, among others. Our guide searched valiantly for the Zapata Wren, as this was the only place to see it, but alas, no wren would show itself.

At our next stop, a drier, wooded area, we finally got good looks at a Cuban Pygmy-Owl, which had eluded us previously. Also, we spotted a Crested Caracara. Not far from there was a semi-swampy pasture with cows and horses. We walked along a road and saw several birds already on our list, and added Cuban Crow.



The **Great Lizard Cuckoo**. Photo by Jay Greenberg.

Wednesday's lunch was at a place called Cueva de los Peces – Cave of the Fish. Beside the open-air restaurant was a natural, deep pool, surrounded by steep wooded cliffs - very picturesque - where families were swimming. When we finished our meal, we discovered out on the back patio, a small flock of Blue-headed Quail-Doves pecking nonchalantly at high noon – the same birds we had rushed in the pre-dawn darkness to view in silence behind a bird blind yesterday.

That evening we walked around the Hotel Playa Larga grounds and saw several of our familiar warblers, and added Killdeer to our list.

Day 6 - Thursday. This was mostly a travel day to Camaguey, inland and far to the east. We had a nice breakfast again at the hotel. (I mention this because some days the hotel restaurants were not open before we had to leave. They did prepare “breakfast-to-go” for us, which for this lactose-intolerant vegetarian was ham-and cheese sandwiches. O.K., I will eat chicken and fish, but I draw the line at red meat. Stray dogs benefitted). Lunch was at

a nice restaurant. The itinerary for this day said, “time to explore beautiful, historic Camaguey”. In truth, it was nearly dark when we got there, and we had only a short walk near the hotel. A lot of people were out in the evening. We felt safe. Our hotel in this city was the historic Hotel Colon (as in Cristobal Colon – Christopher Columbus in English, an honorary favorite son). Decor was elegant Spanish colonial style – heavy, dark, carved furniture, antique-looking pictures of Columbus meeting native Americans on the walls, lots of marble and chandeliers. The lobby was dominated by a large

wooden model of the Santa Maria. We seemed to be the only guests there. As we sat among the potted palms in the large, dimly-lit dining room, I half expected to see Stephen King make a cameo appearance. The city of Camaguey has a confusing jumble of narrow, winding streets which, it is said, was a purposeful design to confound pirates, who used to be a problem there.

(Editor's Corner, continued)

Although she doesn't live in this area, she visits periodically. Some of the other major contributors include RBA members Steve Daniel, Greg Lawrence, and myself. I am a relative newcomer to MCBP. However, I have been photographing, birds, bugs, and other organisms in the area for years and have photos of hundreds of species I plan to contribute. Any photos taken for the CNC would also qualify for the MCBP. This is a great opportunity for local citizen scientists and would-be citizen scientists.

The CNC article states that photos must be uploaded via the iNaturalist app. This is not correct. Photos can be uploaded with a web browser on any Internet-connected

device. Indeed, if you use cameras other than cell phone cameras, this is the way to go.

One of the cool things about iNaturalist.org is that it uses artificial intelligence (AI) to attempt identification. This can be very helpful and time-saving. Sometimes, it can identify to species, but mostly, it narrows down the possibilities to a genus or family. It correctly identified to genus a butterfly photo I took in Ecuador in 2006. The identity had eluded me until now in spite of much effort. Of course, sometimes the AI ID is wrong and can be amusing. For example, I submitted a photo of a moss-mimic stick insect, and the AI thought it was a kind of moss!



ROCHESTER BIRDING ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 92055

1335 Jefferson

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