



# Little Gull

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

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

## OCTOBER AND EARLY NOVEMBER 2019 EVENTS & BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

### OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER ARE EXCELLENT MONTHS TO OBSERVE THE PARADE OF WATER-BIRDS ON LAKE ONTARIO.

Several experienced birders man the lake watch beside the pavilion at Parking Lot 4 of Hamlin Beach State Park virtually every morning during these months. Visitors are welcome!

OCT 5 Saturday	<b>IROQUOIS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE</b> We'll look for migrant ducks, owls, and various passerines in this "get to know Iroquois in autumn" trip. Meet at the Brockport Park and Ride on Route 31 (west of Route 19 and Wegmans) at <b>11:00 a.m.</b> For those traveling from the west: meet at the Upper Stafford Marsh Overlook near 5999 Albion Road, Oakfield, N.Y. at <b>11:30 a.m.</b> Bring a lunch and beverages as needed. <b>Leaders:</b> Sheryl Gracewski & Tom Nash 585-261-6975 and co-leader Rosemary Reilly 585-748-0802
OCT 6 Sunday	<b>DURAND-EASTMAN PARK</b> We'll be looking for thrushes and other migrants. Durand can be surprising this time of year. This will be an easy 2 hour walk along paved roads. Meet in the Lake Shore Blvd. parking lot between Zoo Road and Log Cabin Road (Parking Lot D) at <b>8:00 a.m.</b> Dress for the weather. <b>Leader:</b> Shirley Shaw 585-385-3907 co-leaders Tom and Jeanne Verhulst 585-473-9229
OCT 10 Thursday	<b>RBA General Meeting, 7:00 p.m., the Baptist Temple, 1101 Clover Street, Rochester NY 14610 (in Brighton). Speaker: Julie Hart. Title: NY Breeding Bird Atlas III: Engaging all birders from 2020-2024.</b> See the notice on p. 3 for more information.
OCT 13 Sunday	<b>HAMLIN BEACH STATE PARK</b> We'll start off walking wooded and brushy areas of the park, looking for thrushes, sparrows, and maybe a half-hardy warbler or 2. After that, we'll stop by the lake watch to view ducks on the water and in flight, learning about the lake watch process as we share scopes. Dress appropriately for cooler weather along the lake, and wear comfortable footwear. Meet at <b>8:00 a.m.</b> in Hamlin Beach State Park Parking Lot 1. Bring a snack or have lunch at Drifters on Manitou Beach Road and support a local business that lets us use his dock for viewing. <b>Leader:</b> Dominic Sherony 585-223-7353 and co-leaders Sheryl Gracewski & Tom Nash 585-261-6975
OCT 19 Saturday	<b>BATAVIA WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT</b> Why a wastewater treatment plant? Open water and a great location mean that this spot appears regularly on the fall birding lists. We will drive on the banks of the ponds, getting out wherever the birds are congregating. Discover the great opportunity this spot (and its helpful staff) offers. Meet at <b>9:00 a.m.</b> at the Wastewater Treatment Plant at the end of Industrial Blvd., which is off Pearl Street (Route 33) at the western edge of the city of Batavia. From the NYS Thruway I-90 at Batavia, exit 48, go south on Route 98 into the city of Batavia. At the second light (candy store), make a right turn onto Pearl Street (or Genesee Street), which is Route 33. Go west approximately 0.5 mile to Industrial Blvd. and make a left. Proceed south past the railroad tracks and straight up the hill and through the open gates to the entrance building of the treatment plant (first building on your left). Or, from Rochester, take I-490 west to Exit 2 (Route 33 west). Follow Route 33 west through Batavia; turn left onto Pearl Street (Route 33), stay right at roundabout, continue on Route 33, 0.5 mile to Industrial Blvd., turn left. We will carpool from the plant offices. <b>Leader:</b> Rick Stevens 585-689-1882 and co-leader Cathy Ballard 585-322-2621

**NOV 2**

Saturday

**DURAND EASTMAN PARK**

Waxwings, winter finches, and lingering migrants are possible. 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. Please dress for the weather.

**Welcome to the Flock**

**Join me in welcoming these 10 new members to the RBA.**

Lisa Harasimowitz  
Dawn Moore  
Nancy & Paul Murty  
Sue Nickoley  
Sharon Pelow  
Neal Reilly  
Katherine Storms  
Alice Tariot & Steve Schwartz  
Stephen & Ashley Todd  
Terry Woods

**Current RBA Membership as of September 15 is 440.** The total comprises household members (407), young birders (10), corporate member (1), *Little Gull* subscribers (3) and *Little Gull* complimentary subscribers (19).

*Jo Taylor*  
*Membership Data*

*Adrianna Anderson*  
*Membership Outreach*

**President's Column**

Andrea Patterson



If you asked me how many bird species were on my life list, I wouldn't be able to tell you. Some birders can rattle off their ABA area, country, state, county, and yard totals. I am not one of them. Some birders know exactly which birds they've seen this year, and which

they can expect to find before the year is out. I am not one of them, either. I know some birders who keep lists for everything – birds seen from McDonald's parking lots, birds heard from a favorite porta-potty, birds first seen while it's snowing, birds seen or heard in movies or on television, birds heard mimicked by mockingbirds. I am really not one of them . . . although I will admit that I have thought about compiling a list of things I thought were birds but turned out to be something inanimate, like a buoy or a pine cone.

Having said all that, I also have to say that I use and love eBird.

Although I've never really been interested in keeping career-long lists, I have always found it motivating to keep track of what birds I'm seeing at each site on birding excursions. Writing down what I see encourages me to pay attention and to better diagnose what I see. eBird makes that kind of record-keeping easy and fun, and I think it's made me a better, more engaged birder.

eBird is incredibly easy to use, and every sighting contributes to an ever-growing database of citizen science that can be used to answer questions about bird distribution, abundance, migration timing, habitat use, and population trends over time. Starting in 2020, the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas III will also be using eBird as a data entry portal.

But – and here's the rub – in order to be maximally useful, eBirders need to follow some best-practice rules. For example:

- Birders should take care to select a birding protocol that actually reflects they way they birded. Did you walk some distance, counting everything you saw and heard? Then you were doing a Traveling count. Did you just notice an Osprey while

driving down the highway? Then your count was Incidental.

- Day-long trip lists are not as useful as more localized site-specific lists. Try to keep traveling counts under 5 miles, and try to start a new list when there is a sharp change in habitat.

- When you get a little flag that tells you something is rare and requires extra documentation, don't decide to erase the bird from your list. Instead, take a moment and describe the bird and its behavior . . . and do it without referring to your guidebook! Phrases like "continuing" or "seen by many" doesn't help eBird decide if you've actually seen the bird, but a short description does.

- When your eBird reviewers send you an e-mail asking you for some details of a sighting, don't be offended! Remember that they are volunteers who are doing their best to make the database as accurate as possible.

If you haven't started with eBird yet, there are tutorials online at <<https://ebird.org/atlasny/about>>, and there are also RBA members who would be happy to help you get started. Experienced eBirders are always encouraged to review the "Help" topics to ensure they are using best practices.

Whether you keep a lot of lists, or one, or none . . . eBird is a fabulous tool that can make your birding easier and more enjoyable!

**eBird**

## October Talk and Speaker

It has been 20 years since the last breeding bird atlas in New York State, and a lot has changed! The third atlas will take place from 2020-2024 and involve thousands of volunteers from across the state. This talk will cover the history of the atlas, the importance of atlas data, and how you can get involved.

Learn how the third atlas will differ from previous atlases, including how we will be using eBird for data entry. eBird will make it easier to track progress and allow anyone to enter data anywhere. Atlasing is a great excuse to explore new areas and provides an intimate look into the daily lives of birds. Whether you are a beginner or advanced birder, this unique opportunity will strengthen your birdwatching skills while contributing valuable data to a large conservation-oriented project.

Julie Hart is a native Vermonter who started birding while working as a bird conservation intern with National Audubon, Audubon New York, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. She traveled for several years doing field work around the globe before returning to Vermont to serve as the coordinator for Mountain Birdwatch with the Vermont Center for Ecostudies. She spent several years chasing Bicknell's Thrush around the mountains of the Northeast and Hispaniola before moving to Wyoming to continue her education. She received her Master's degree studying the impacts of climate change on Cassia Crossbill in southern Idaho. She is now settled in the Albany area where she is the project coordinator for the third Breeding Bird Atlas in New York under SUNY ESF, New York Natural Heritage Program. In her travels, she has participated in 2 bird atlases and considers atlasing her favorite type of birding.



## RBA IN THE FIELD

### Barnhart Camp 6/30/2019

Twenty-six of us (our biggest turnout to date) greeted each other at the Shop'n'Save in Nunda and headed south for a wonderful day of birding. The temperature never got above 72°, and it was fairly breezy at first, but the weather cooperated and did not deter us at all.

Before we left the parking lot, a good find was a mockingbird, and while not exotic, there were 2 kettles of Turkey Vultures numbering more than 20. At our first stop on Nunda-Dalton Road, we added 22 more species, including Blue-winged Warbler, American Redstart, Hooded Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Chestnut-sided and Yellow Warblers, some of which were seen by only a few of us. Farther up this road our species number rose to 43. The Common Raven gave Logan Brunner his first lifer of the day. As we drove along, various participants saw or heard Alder, Willow and Least Flycatchers, a Green Heron, and a bluebird. At our stop in Hunt, we picked up Rough-winged Swallow, Indigo Bunting and a White-throated Sparrow. (Thanks, Rosemary!)

By the time we arrived at our Prairie Warbler stop, we had tallied 66 species. #67 was Logan's second lifer of the day. At least 2 and possibly 3 Prairie Warblers had us moving up and down the road and back and forth, which gave us all good looks at our target bird. Our stop at camp gave us a chance to decompress, eat our fill, and spot Purple and House Finches, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Black-billed Cuckoo, and Swamp Sparrow. Some of us were even lucky enough to see "Busy Bob the Builder", one of our resident beavers.

Onward to the Keeney Swamp and State Forest, where those of us still birding all had good looks at 4 Mourning Warblers and a Black-throated Blue. We also heard a shy Pine Warbler, and a Canada Warbler sighting was confirmed by Rick Stevens and Jayne Woodruff. A Ruffed Grouse was meditating on the side of the road, and a few of

those behind our truck were also able to see it before it took flight. Down in the swamp, the nesting Osprey were feeding their 3 chicks, and a Wood Duck, a Mallard family, and Great Blue and Green Herons were also noted. As we drove out of the swamp on Fitch Hill Road, we heard at least 2 Hermit Thrushes and a Veery competing for our attention. Then, farther along this road, we summoned a Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Our jaunt to Gas Springs State Forest yielded only a Magnolia Warbler, a bird not seen too often on our trip. Rough roads(!) and waning daylight prevented us from getting to Klip-nocky State Forest, so we opted to go back to camp and try for a Barred Owl. We made several stops where we had had 2 just the night before, but to no avail. The only owls we had all day were the ones on Jerry's t-shirt.

Our final tally was 89 species, thanks to Drew Yamanis who saw our only Killdeer, and to George and Margaret Sichak, our neighbors, who had a turkey fly across the road as they were on their way to camp to help set up the food for the picnic.

Many thanks to all who came and especially to the Rabjohns (parents of a former student of mine), Rosemary Reilly (a former colleague of mine), Jayne and Charlie Woodruff, Janet Tice, and co-leaders Rick Stevens and Tom and Jeanne Verhulst for valiantly hanging on until 10:30 p.m. (another trip record!).

*Carolyn Barnhart*



**A Prairie Warbler.** Photo by Jay Greenberg.

## Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge 8/25/2019

The RBA group met at the Montezuma Visitor Center at 10:30 a.m., and joined 3 other groups on the sanctioned wildlife center hike at Knox-Marsellus Marsh. This is the only place on the refuge with any significant collection of waterbirds.

This year there are no concentrations of waterbirds anywhere in the central region of western New York State except at this marsh. The high water levels on Lake Ontario have eliminated shorebird habitats across the entire region. A total of 21 participants joined the RBA hike among the over 80 people visiting Knox this morning. It was a benefit to cover the habitat over the entire morning period because some rare species appeared either early or much later. Dave Nicosia was the principal leader of the refuge outing and we joined him mid-morning.

There were many new birders on this trip, and we originally focused on separating Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Least and Semi-palmated Sandpipers. For the morning, we found 12 species of shorebirds. We missed a Baird's reported earlier, but had good views of Pectoral and Stilt Sandpipers as well as one Black-bellied and 2 golden plovers. There were over a dozen dowitchers, but only about 4 were close enough for us to identify as immature Short-billed Dowitchers.

There has been a very large influx of migrant Great Egrets, and a Snowy Egret showed up, but no one found this bird on Sunday; it was seen on Saturday. We saw 2 Trumpeter Swans and the Sandhill Cranes that have been present for some time.

Ducks were plentiful, but in eclipse or basic plumage, when the males look more like females. Duck identification is always a challenge at this time of year. Over the course of the morning, we saw 10 species of ducks, including Redhead, Canvasback, and Ruddy Duck. These 3 species were present as singles except for 3 Redheads.

No doubt, the highlight of the day was an immature Laughing Gull that flew into Knox from Puddler's Marsh at about 1 p.m. We had scope views of this bird when it was roosting with Caspian Terns. Later, it was briefly attacked by a young Peregrine Falcon. As we were leaving, we saw 2 Peregrines in the air at the same time.

*Dominic Sherony & Mike Tetlow*



A juvenile **Black-bellied Plover**.  
Photo by Jay Greenberg

## Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge 9/8/19

On this cool, comfortable, and partly sunny day, 22 RBA birders gathered at the visitor center, sadly missing Dominic and forcing Joann and me to "work" twice as hard. The main habitat for birding was Knox-Marsellus Marsh, so, earlier in the week we asked the refuge to allow us on the dike there. They agreed, as long as we allowed the refuge to promote it as open to the public. We added 5 more people from that source. While we were there, both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs were found close by, and a Peregrine Falcon made an appearance overhead.

Moving north to East Road, we began our hike down the dike to Knox-Marsellus and Puddler's Marshes. Before starting down, 4 adult Bald Eagles joined together circling above us, followed shortly by a low adult Broad-winged Hawk, quickly gaining altitude and disappearing to the south. The persisting White Pelican, 2 Sandhill Cranes, and 33 Great Egrets were tallied from there.

On to the shorebirds. We tallied 12 species, with the less common being 3 Stilt Sandpipers and at least 6 Long-billed Dowitchers, lifers for several people. We struggled and failed to find the one Baird's Sandpiper seen earlier, but found 3 White-rumped Sandpipers just as they arrived. Two Black-crowned Night Herons made brief appearances over Puddler's Marsh and were seen by most. As we worked our way back, a single calling American Golden Plover circled and landed next to one that was likely there the whole time. Studying them, we found a third, proving just how much can be missed in such a large habitat.

We want to thank the refuge for allowing access to the dike. It allowed for great birding and a lot more good conversation than we would have in a 20 car caravan around the wildlife drive. Thanks to the eager hard working observers constantly finding birds and making this a great trip.

*Mike and Joann Tetlow*

## RBA Beginner Field Trip to Charlotte and Turning Point Park 9/8/2019

Eleven people turned out for this trip on a beautiful late summer day. Most were self-proclaimed beginning birders. It was great to see so many new faces, help people with binoculars and answer a multitude of questions. Their appreciation for new information was genuine and their enthusiasm was infectious!

The parking lot meeting spot had many ages of Ring-billed Gulls. So we began there, spending some time pointing out their differences. Later, some of that information would translate to the other gull species we encountered on the beach. The view on the beach was superb. Great Black-backed, Herring, and Bonaparte's were found among the Ring-billed Gulls, along with a few lingering Caspian Terns.

Our premier photographer, Dick Horsey, made a couple of welcome contributions to the trip. First he ushered some Sanderlings along

the beach to our viewing area. A little later, Dick located a Least Sandpiper along the rocks in the channel. All participants had good looks at this bird. Then the group was treated to a Merlin perched in a tree in the parking lot area. This nicely complimented the Peregrine Falcon we had found earlier.

Moving on to Turning Point Park, we took a walk on a wooded trail adjacent to the parking lot. The trees in this area were impressive, but bird sound was scarce. We played the mobbing tape at two locations and managed to bring out the usual suspects and 4 species of warblers: Nashville, Magnolia, Redstart and Black-throated Green. This route joined the path at the river's edge, and from there we walked south. A mature eagle carrying a fish put on a splendid show. Adding a few more birds to our list, we finished the day with a respectable 47 species.

*John Boettcher and Rosemary Reilly*



The Charlotte **Merlin**. Photo by Eu-nice Thein.

## NYBBA!!! Seeking Regional Coordinators

Are you familiar with New York's breeding birds and habitats? Are you an avid eBird user? Do you enjoy interacting with the public? If this sounds like you, consider joining the Atlas Team!

The third New York Breeding Bird Atlas begins January 1, 2020, and we are seeking enthusiastic regional coordinators to serve as the first point of contact for Atlas participants. You will play a key role in recruiting and training volunteers, monitoring block coverage, working with the birding community to fill in coverage gaps, and reviewing data to uphold rigorous atlas data standards. We are currently seeking Regional Coordinators for the Rochester and Syracuse areas.



A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** on a nest. Photo by Jay Greenberg.

If you are interested in taking on this exciting role, please write to Julie Hart, Project Coordinator, at [julie.hart@dec.ny.gov](mailto:julie.hart@dec.ny.gov) or fill out the [online form](#). For more information about the Atlas, visit <https://ebird.org/atlasny/>. We look forward to hearing from you!

- • • • • Join Rochester Birding Association members on **Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>** 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. This month, join us at Three Heads Brewing on Atlantic Avenue
- • • • • **Location: Three Heads Brewing:** 186 Atlantic Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607

## 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](mailto:lucretia@frontiernet.net) for alternate arrangements. Remember to include a list of the items and your name and address with your donation.

Lucretia Grosshans

## August 2019 Sightings Report

It was a typical, pleasant mid-summer month, a bit on the dry side. There were no temperature extremes, and periodic warm and cool spells. Precipitation was about half normal, with almost a third of that falling on the 17<sup>th</sup>. There were 2 periods of severe thunderstorms accompanied by some local wind damage and heavy rains on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>. Temperatures averaged 70.1 °F, 0.8° above normal. There was only one day that just reached 90° on the 6<sup>th</sup>, a major contrast with last summer. Precipitation totaled 1.74", 1.73" below normal.

The total number of species reported approached record high, driven by 26 species of shorebirds, 27 species of warblers, and a number of rarities, plus good coverage of most of the checklist. The only slightly surprising "misses" to me were Stilt Sandpiper and Wilson's Phalarope, both seen less than a mile out of our region, where a few other species not reported here were also found. A total of 329 new bands at the Braddock Bay Bird Observatory (BBBO) banding station is a slow start, but again the official start was later, on the 15<sup>th</sup>. About 26,450 eBird records were downloaded, up just over 10% from last year. It is good to see more records continuing to be submitted to this database!

A good selection of waterfowl was reported, with some good counts, mainly in the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area (NMWMA) in the Van Dyne Spoor Road or Sandhill Crane Unit area (often used interchangeably), with a few good counts from areas along the south shore of Lake Ontario. Diving ducks were scarce, especially along Lake Ontario. Observations often fell in the judgment-call date range between summer visitors and early fall arrivals. Horned Grebe arrived at the month's end, and small numbers of Red-necked Grebe were seen passing on multiple dates. Common Nighthawk arrived in small numbers on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and a hint of the annual Chimney Swift show at York Central School was 110 birds seen there on the 11<sup>th</sup>. The 419 lines of Ruby-throated Hummingbird records in eBird can again be used to illustrate the value of that tool for gathering and archiving records.

With most of the Van Dyne Spoor Road area in the NMWMA with limited vegetation, we had the good waterfowl counts and other observations from there. But another result was Common Gallinule and American Coot peak numbers back to more normal levels. Again this year, sightings of Sandhill Crane families were down, but total numbers were still good, and the birds near Taylor Marsh in Ontario County north of Honeoye were also reported.

Lake Ontario water levels remained high, although dropping from earlier summer record highs. Low rainfall in late July and this month left almost no wet spots in fields. The major shorebird areas were the beaches and piers along the Lake Ontario shore and the wet areas in the NMWMA, with the barrier beach constructed off the East Spit of Braddock Bay a prime site. Rarer visitors included American Avocet and Marbled Godwit at the Braddock

Bay site and a Western Sandpiper photographed on the piers at Sodus Point. Other now-scarcer species included: Upland Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Red Knot, and Long-billed Dowitcher. There were no really large shorebird counts in our region this month.

The gulls and terns were again lackluster. A single passing Parasitic Jaeger was noted at month's end, and a lone Little Gull was photographed on the East Spit on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Only 2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported. Peak counts for the rest of the gulls and terns were relatively low.

Red-throated Loon was missed, although August is early for its arrival, and Common Loons were few, other than 6 passing Hamlin Beach on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Double-crested Cormorant numbers were good at the usual Lake Ontario shore and bay sites and somewhat lower elsewhere across the region. American White Pelican was reported at LaSalle's Landing Park on Irondequoit Bay on the 17<sup>th</sup> and at the Van Dyne Spoor area on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and also for much of the month in the Knox-Marsellus area just outside our region. Timing suggested at least two individuals. Great Egrets were again scattered about, but there were no really high counts. Once again, there were no reports of rarer, wandering, post-breeding herons.

Black Vulture was reported only from Letchworth State Park, with 2 on the 4<sup>th</sup>. The bird of the month was a **Swallow-tailed Kite** spotted by Dave Tetlow over the parking area for Owl Woods on the 6<sup>th</sup>, the 5<sup>th</sup> record for the region totaling 6 individuals. There was a formal, volunteer hawk watch this summer at Braddock Bay, with some good numbers reported. A sample of some counts can be found in the Noteworthy Records table and the daily details at [hawkcount.org](http://hawkcount.org). Merlin and Peregrine Falcon sightings were again typical of recent years. This year the only likely Merlin nesting success in the region came from Fairport. The Rochester Peregrine Falcon story can be followed on [rfalconcam.com](http://rfalconcam.com).

Again, all of the really expected passerine species were reported. There were no outstanding rarities, but some of the scarcer or more interesting species included: many Olive-sided Flycatcher reports, Clay-colored Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Prothonotary Warbler at Braddock Bay, and Connecticut Warbler in Webster. There were only a few really good counts, and banding at BBBO was off to a slow start for most species.

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

	10-year Average		
	2019	2018	(2009-2018)
Total species for August	209	196	196.3
New species for the year	6	2	5.3
Total for the year to date	280	273	274.8

## *Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee*

**Observers:** Jim Adams, Janet Akin, Ted Barnett, Jessie Barry, Jim Barry, Liz Barry, Mitchell Barry, BBB (Andrea Patterson), Sue Barth, Doug Beattie, Betty Beckham, Don Bemont, Linda Clark-Benedict, Steven Benedict, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Shawn Billerman, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, Joe Brin, Taylor Brooks, David Brown, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Bruce Cady, Brad Carlson, Denis & Judy Caysinger, Robert Cicotta, Kelly Close, Jeremy Collison, Lydia Culbert, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Rod Davis, Deborah Dohne, Andrew Dreelin, Sarah Dzielski, Diane Egan, Mark Fitzsimmons, Daena Ford, George Ford, Jim Fry, Kyle Gage, Andrew Garland, Janis George, Jessica George, Bill Gillette, Candy Giles, Christopher Goetz, James Goetz, John Gordinier, Karla Gordinier, Shannon Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Mike Gullo, Andy Guthrie, Chris Guthrie, Danny Guthrie, Richard Guthrie, Robert Haggett, Chris & Helen Haller, Kim Hartquist, Jim Heimrich, Christina Hoh, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Alec Humann, Carolyn Jacobs, Suzanne

James, Nicholas Kachala, Logan Kahle, Amy Kahn, Dave Kennedy, Tom Kerr, Jim Kimball, Renee Kittleman, Mike Laird, Chris Lajewski, Greg Lawrence, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Pat Martin, Donna Mason-Spieler, Lauri Mattle, Jacob McCartney, Jay McGowan, Matt Medler, Jim Miles, Kent Millham, Adrielle Mitchell, Ann Mitchell, Brian & Brooke Morse, Chan Nam, Allen Nash, Ann Nash, Tom Nash, Dan Niven, Rivka Noll, David Odell, Michael Ortega, Andrea Patterson, Norma Platt, Jo Popma, Jay Powell, Nick Pusateri, Carolyn Ragan, RBA Field Trips, Rosemary Reilly, Rhonda Roaring, Dave Robertson, Ken Rosenberg, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Ed Sailer, Jacki Salsbury, Livia Santana, Karl Schmidt, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Judy Stein, Roger Smith, Tom Smith, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Rick Stevens, Allan Strong, Dave Tetlow, Mike Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Mary Jane Thomas, John & Bonnie VanDerMeid, Jeanne & Thomas Verhulst, Brad Walker, Mike Wasilco, Ann Watson, Bridget Watts, David Wheeler, Joe Wing, Paul Wolter, Chris Wood, Jim Wood. Plus many eBird observers.

## **News from NYSOA: Records, Regional Reports, and You**

*By Robert Spahn, NYSOA Regional Reports Editor*

One of the major functions of NYSOA (formerly The Federation of New York State Birds Clubs) has been the gathering and publication of bird records with some analysis and commentary. Early on, 10 reporting Regions were identified centered on major bird clubs and taking into account historical birding areas related to these. Regional Editors (REs) were identified with the aid of the interested clubs, and records and other inputs were solicited and initially sent to these editors, who would then identify interesting records and write quarterly reports summarizing the picture of birds and birding in their Region for the quarter/season. The reports were based on the records and other information sent by observers and were also related to historical information and the experience of the RE.

This approach has continued for over 70 years, with only minor changes to Regional boundaries along the way. From the beginning, the details of record submission have varied a bit by Region. Some Regions have clubs with active records committees, which first receive and screen local records, provide these to their local clubs, and send summaries to the RE. More recently, with the inception and growth of eBird, more and more of the observation data, records, have been submitted to eBird, with the eBird database accessed by the REs quarterly or now monthly. A common element has remained: the REs gathering the records and studying them to obtain a picture of what happened in their part of the birding world for the quarter/season, then writing a meaningful summary based on the data. Masses of data in a database are really of little personal interest to most birders and even less to others with a more casual interest in birds. The analysis and stories that are captured in a good Regional

Report are more accessible and of more general interest. While eBird has brought a huge improvement in the gathering of data easily accessible to the REs in a common format, a major loss has been that few observers now submit their personal comments and stories to the REs, so preparation of interesting summaries is more difficult.

As an active birder, you can contribute to Regional Reports – and to citizen science – simply by submitting your observations and checklists, and at least occasionally your thoughts and comments on what you see or think is happening, to your local Regional Editor. For the name and contact information of your RE, visit <https://nybird-s.org/RecordsEditors.htm>

A great positive for birding as a “hobby” is that anyone can take part in it in any way that appeals to them with whatever time they wish to spend; no approach is really “right” or “wrong.” Your choice. However, volumes of data are needed and useful for many studies in ornithology, and you can contribute to the science with any observations that provide a correctly identified species, location, and date, and, better too, some idea of numbers. The more details you are willing to provide, the more useful the observation. Observations over relatively short time periods and smaller geographic areas with counts or reasonable estimates of numbers are most useful, as these can later be added together to cover longer times and larger areas. But even observations with just very basic information are useful. This kind of information is needed in order for others to assemble the bird guides we all use for identification and the bird finding guides we use locally or on travels to decide where to go to find birds of interest.



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

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