



Bittle Gull

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

Rochester Birding Association, 5 Cranswick Lane, Rochester NY 14618

EARLY 2018 EVENTS & BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

THERE ARE NO FIELD TRIPS IN FEBRUARY

- FEB 8**
Thursday
RBA Records Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m., the Clover Center for Arts and Spirituality at the Baptist Temple, 1101 Clover Street, Rochester, NY 14610 (in Brighton). See the announcement on p. 3 for more information.
- FEB 8**
Thursday
RBA General Meeting, 7:00 p.m., the Baptist Temple, 1101 Clover Street, Rochester NY 14610 (in Brighton). **Speaker: Andrea Patterson.** Title: *What's in a Name?* See the article on p. 3 for more information.
- MAR 4**
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.**
Leaders: *Cindy Marino 585-454-8051 and Norma Platt and John Boettcher 585-671-9639*
- MAR 10**
Saturday
HAMLIN BEACH STATE PARK
Starting at Hamlin Beach State Park, we will be looking for migrating waterfowl. We will move to the Braddock Bay Hawk Watch in hopes of spotting Rough-legged and Red-shouldered Hawks and eagles. We will stop at the Owl Woods in search of migrating owls. Dress warmly as the lakeshore can be cold this time of year. Meet at Parking Lot 1 at 9:00 a.m.
Leaders: *Kimberly Sucy 585-503-2534 and Co-leaders TBA*
- MAR 17**
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.**
Leaders: *Kinsley Whittum 585-872-7334 and co-leaders TBA*
- MAR 25**
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 trail head at 7:30 a.m. The Owl Woods trails may be wet and muddy in spots. **Boots are STRONGLY recommended – they're almost mandatory!**
Leaders: *Jim Adams 585-594-2366 & Kimberly Sucy 585-503-2534*

Welcome to the Flock



Join me in welcoming these 5 new members to the RBA.

William Ebersbach
Kim LaCelle
Kathleen McDonough
Lisa O'Brien
Elizabeth Wheeler

Current RBA membership is 395.

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

Membership Campaign is Over.

The 3 month membership renewal campaign will come to an end at the end of January. The mailing of 12/13 was a big success with a 37% return. At present (1/14), 75% of our membership has renewed for 2018. At the end of January, I will refresh the database and issue a new roster which you can expect with your March *Little Gull*.

John Boettcher
Membership Chairman

President's Column

Amy Kahn



As I write my column, we have just had a week of truly split personality weather: subzero temperatures followed by a January thaw that saw 60° and inches of rain followed by a flash freeze and over a foot of snow. Wow, and yet the birding has been stellar with visitors from afar like the Great Cormorant and the Golden Eagle, and 26 Bald Eagles, all on Irondequoit

Bay. By the time you read this newsletter I will be traveling and birding in Cuba, I'll write about the trip in an upcoming newsletter.

Little Gull Award Winners. At the January 13th dinner meeting, we honored Lynn Bergmeyer and Marilyn Schindler with the Little Gull Award. I suspect we could not have found two ladies who were more surprised and touched. Both are so deserving of this award! Marilyn Schindler has been a long time RBA member, has shared her photographs with all of us, and has been instrumental in providing the use of the Summerville Presbyterian Church for our Annual Winter Dinner for many years. Members who proposed Marilyn for this award shared: "Marilyn is one of those people that you can count on to help out in a very practical way with a smile. She is friendly to everyone and always makes people feel like they're important. She is full of energy and positivity."

Lynn Bergmeyer is being recognized for her past RBA service on the board, including being president in 2013 and 2014. Actually Lynn has served in one RBA role or another consistently since 2009. She has been a steadfast mentor for our Young Birders, and is a frequent chaperone. She loves helping our kids get excited about birding.

Nick Kachala was sorry he couldn't be at the dinner to thank Lynn for all she has done for the Young Birders (he was making a presentation at the New York State Young Birder annual dinner near NYC). Several other young birders, including Robert Buckert, came with their families to cheer Lynn on.

The 2018 RBA Board of Directors was unanimously elected January 13th. Returning are Amy Kahn, President; Jeanne Verhulst, Vice-president; Laura Kammermeier, Past President; Andrea Patterson, Director. New to the board are Brian Rohrs, Treasurer; Kim Weeks, Secretary; Liz Magnanti, Director; Wanda Thistle, Director; Kevin Farrell, Director. Also appointed to the

board as a non-voting Young Birder Liaison is Nick Kachala.

The RBA Annual Dinner. Andrea Patterson created a delightful quiz for us which was won by Robert Buckert. This marks the third year in a row that Robert has won the quiz! Great going, Robert, for keeping us on our toes. Thanks also to the 7 members who delighted us with their slides and to Judy Gurley, Monika Herrmann, and Tom Nash for their artwork. Thanks to Wanda Thistle, Marilyn Schindler, and Richard Ashworth for their organizational skills. RBA raised \$15 from the White Albatross table too, thanks to all who donated. Books left by donors and not bought were donated to the Webster library by John Boettcher.

POWER Coalition

A motion to vote was made by Jeanne Verhulst and seconded by Chita McKinney. There was a majority of 'yes' votes, no 'nay' votes and, one abstention. So RBA is now a member of the POWER (Protecting {Lake} Ontario's Waterfront, Environment, and Resources) to highlight the broad opposition to site up to seventy 620+ foot tall industrial wind turbines along the Lake Ontario shoreline.

Feeding Birds and Spring Garden Planning.

Keep your feeders full and start planning for planting gardens to attract birds if you have a yard. Be well and see you soon!

Editor's Corner

Jay Greenberg



Birds, Climate Change, and Citizen Science

A Danish dairy farmer, Peder V. Thellesen, with no particular scientific training has published 45 years worth of his data on the breeding of European Starlings in nest boxes on his farm from 1971 to 2015. He showed that the mean annual date for laying the first clutch of eggs advanced 1 day per 5.0 years during this period and

(continued on p.7)

February Talk and Speaker

In 2017, the AOU Committee on Classification and Nomenclature considered a proposal to split Nashville Warblers into two separate species; our familiar eastern birds would be renamed "Rusty-capped Warbler", and the western group would be called the "Calaveras Warbler." All three names should inspire confusion. Why is the bird currently named after a place it only visits on migration? If it splits, why would the western group be given a dramatic name that recalls jumping frogs and the Day of the Dead, while the eastern group be named after a feature only rarely seen in the field?

In fact, bird names in general are often perplexing. Does Wilson really need to have 5 North American species bear his name? Wouldn't the Ring-necked Duck be better named the Ring-billed Duck, and the Red-bellied Woodpecker be better named the Red-capped Woodpecker? Are there Southern Cardinals, Uncommon Mergansers, and Catbirds of any color but Gray? And to top it off, American Redstarts aren't red, Scarlet Tanagers aren't tanagers, and Olive Warblers are neither olive nor warblers!

Join us for an evening of fun to hear why the Red Knot was named for an ancient Danish king, why the Green Heron got—and lost—its green back, and why you occasionally get armchair ticks to your bird list. In this informative talk, we'll tell the stories behind the common and scientific names of some of our favorite birds and we'll learn about how those naming decisions are made.

Andrea Patterson has a deep curiosity about many aspects of birds, their life cycles, and habits. A recent question posed to her—how do birds get their names—launched her into researching the interesting topic of bird nomenclature. Why is an Orange-crowned Warbler called by this name when only a tiny bit of orange—rarely seen—exists on its head? Why is a robin called a robin when it is in the thrush family? Come find out, when Andrea presents results of her research at

the February 8, 2018, Rochester Birding Association monthly meeting.

Patterson wears many hats. She currently supervises bander training and education at the Braddock Bay Bird Observatory in Greece, NY, and she helps to oversee the banding of nearly 10,000 birds annually. She also serves on the boards of North American Banding Council, Eastern Bird Banding Association, Braddock Bay Bird Observatory, and our own Rochester Birding Association. She attends conferences on bird issues and has been sought after as a speaker on bird molt patterns.



Announcement: RBA Records Committee Meetings

Every month, the RBA Records Committee publishes a list of notable sightings for the Rochester area, accompanied by a narrative detailing bird activity compared to past years. The committee is about much more than keeping a list of arrival dates and high counts; we are really interested in understanding the patterns of bird movements and abundances over time. Starting in February, we'll be hosting a monthly discussion immediately preceding the RBA meeting. We'll chat about what we did—and didn't—see the month prior. We'll discuss interesting sightings and debate dubious records, and we'll attempt to synthesize our observations into an even better narrative for the *Little Gull*. If you are interested in participating, meet us at 5:30 p.m. at the Clover Center for Arts and Spirituality at the Baptist Temple, 1101 Clover Street, Rochester, NY.

RBA IN THE FIELD

New Year's Day 1/1/2018

Eight birders joined me on a very cold (8 °F) but clear morning at the Irondequoit Bay outlet. The cold spell of late had locked all the bay in ice except for a distant dock with a bubbler going. The lake was no better. Not doing so well with waterfowl, the group moved on to Durand-Eastman Park to try for some passerines. Field Trip Chair Kim Suzy suggested we enter the park off Wisner Road. This spared us a long walk on this cold morning and quickly got us close to the most historically productive area of this trip. We were met with a beautiful, but pretty quiet landscape. Patience resulted in the hearing and/or seeing of a number of common species, all of which were new birds for 2018. A considerable flock of robins was interspersed with jays, starlings, cardinals and woodpecker species. A walk up to the orchard area resulted in chickadees and nuthatches, but the count was low. From Durand, the group moved on to the river outlet at Charlotte where we were surprised at the amount of open water and the abundance of waterfowl which included a very close Ruddy Duck. We finished the day with 24 species.

John Boettcher



A female **Ruddy Duck**. Photo by Jay Greenberg

Beginner Birders Trip 1/13/2018

The day started with the leaders driving around the Irondequoit Bay Marine Park, looking for a parking spot clear of the overnight snow. A city plow came through at the appropriate moment, clearing a part

of the lot and signaling us where to park.

Soon after that, an Irondequoit Police car stopped by to check out our condition, (stuck or insane?).

As our birding began, a Bald Eagle flew over us, causing many of the gulls to lift off around us. Snow was

still falling, so the distant waterways were difficult to scope. Two other birders joined us at this point.

There was some open water in the bay, so we did get several of the expected species. The special birds were: Canvasback, Bufflehead, and Redhead.

We then traveled to Charlotte, hoping to see a Snowy Owl, but one did not show itself. After getting stuck in the parking lot snow, we decided to call it a day.

The 4 of us had 16 species for the day.

Tom Nash and Sheryl Gracewski

**The Annual RBA Dinner
1/13/2018**

In spite of the snowy and icy streets and frigid temperatures, over 45 incredible hardy individuals showed up at the Summerville Presbyterian Church for the annual RBA dinner. The dinner consisted of 2 turkeys prepared by Jeanne Verhulst and Chita McKinney, 2 hams prepared by Lynn Bergmeyer and Wanda Thistle, Mary Gordon's yummy punch, and an array of tasty appetizers, casseroles, side dishes and desserts prepared by our fellow birders.

We have to thank Cathy Ballard, our Nominating Committee Chair, for finding a slate of candidates for the

RBA board of directors for this year. They were unanimously elected.

Lynn Bergmeyer and Marilyn Schindler were each presented with a Little Gull Award for their outstanding contributions, showing how grateful we are to have them as members.

Richard Ashworth hosted the member presentations that included: Jay Greenberg, "Creatures of Costa Rica 2016"; Pat Lovello, "Birds from Australia and New Zealand" (including a helicopter rescue); Dick Horsey, "Bird Photos from 2017" from the "Last 30 Days" gallery; Candy Giles, "Birds of Spain"; Eunice Thein, "Birds of Magee Marsh"; Diane Henderson, "Bird Trip to Colombia";

and Dominic Sherony, "What Is That Bird Eating?". Thank you one and all for sharing.

Andrea Patterson presented a wonderful quiz again this year. (I could hear both the laughter and groans while I was in the kitchen). Surprise, Robert Buckert won once again this year and everyone had fun!

A big shout out to Shirley Shaw who managed to almost fill every space on the RBA refreshment sign-up sheet!

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

Wanda Thistle, Social Chair



Some members of the 2018 RBA board. From left to right: Wanda Thistle, Director; Andrea Patterson, Director; Kevin Farrell, Director; Amy Kahn, President; Brian Rohrs, Treasurer; Jeanne Verhulst, Vice-president. Not shown: Kim Weeks, Secretary; Liz Magnanti, Director; Laura Kammermeier, Past President. Photo by Richard Ashworth.



Left: Lynn Bergmeyer receives her Little Gull Award from RBA President Amy Kahn. Right: Marilyn Schindler receives her award. Photos by Richard Ashworth.

Rochester Christmas Bird Count 12/17/2017

Area birders participated in the traditional Rochester Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 17, 2017. Seventy field observers and four feeder watchers worked throughout the day to count the birds in the area defined by the 15-mile diameter circle centered at Dewey Avenue and Stone Road. All told, we devoted 163 hours to the enterprise.

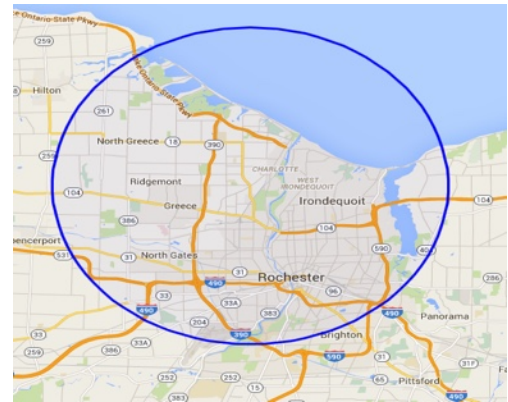
The day started out in the teens, but moderated to reach the mid-20's. Early light clouds increased during the day, and a frisky breeze developed. Still waters were mostly frozen, and moving waters could have some open spots.

During the day observers catalogued 91 species and 23,687 individual birds. Two additional species were seen during the 'count week'. The number of individual birds was substantially reduced from previous years, in large part due to the absence of crows flying up the river to roost in the Washington Square Park area. (This is a new and unexpected phenomenon. Please contact Shirley Shaw if you know of a new roost location.)

The count yielded new high numbers for several species: Red-breasted Merganser (new/old; 2,165/2,013), Red-necked Grebe (10/5), Red-bellied Woodpecker (192/170), Common Raven (4/1) and Yellow-rumped Warbler (28/13.). Numbers of 3 species tied former years: King Eider (2), Snowy Owl (5) and Osprey (1). Seeing an Osprey this time of year is highly unusual: only one had been previously reported in 1974.

Other unusual things characterized the count. Species variety and number of ducks fell well below observations in the weeks preceding the count. Only one Bonaparte's Gull was observed.

We met at the Newport Yacht Club for after-count activities: warming, dining on pizza, salad and pot-luck dishes, and tallying the day's bird observations. Andrea Patterson's substantial keyboard skills greatly facilitated



our second electronic tally.

The count can occur as a result of the dedication and efforts of the sector leaders Bob Spahn, Greg Lawrence, Kimberly Sucey, Dominic Sherony, Tom Poeth, Nancy Poeth, Shirley Shaw, Andrea Patterson, Kim Hartquist, and John Boettcher.

Our skilled observers/citizen scientists included Adan Alzoubi, Mayda Alzoubi, Sari Alzoubi, Doug Bassett, Cathy Ballard, Lynn Bergmeyer, Lynn Braband, Robert Buckert, Marsha Carey, Ty Carey, Barbra Cole, Cherie Conrad, Peter Debes, Jon Dombrowski, Sharon Galbraith, Andy Garland, Candy Giles, Mary Gordon, Sheryl Gracewski, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Gary Herbert, Monika Herrmann-Kokis, Bill Howe, Nicholas Kachala, Jan Kaufman, Laurie Konte, Holly Lawrence, Mike Klimeczko, Kevin Kurtz, Ben Levy, David Levy, Bill Loveland, Carol Loveland, Bill Maier, Cindy Marino, Pat Martin, Brian Morse, Brooke Morse, Tom Nash, Ann Parks, Rosemary Reilly, Judy Putrelo, Judy Slein, Susan Spahn, Kevin Spears, Travis Spears, Rick Stevens, Dave Strong, Jerry Sullivan, Dave Tetlow, Michael Tetlow, Jeanne Verhulst, Bridget Watts, Kinsley Whittum and Drew Yampanis.

Norma Platt, Compiler

Little Lakes Christmas Bird Count 12/23/2017

Despite steady rain and freezing rain all morning and equally steady snow all afternoon, we tallied a respectable 87 species, with Great Black-backed Gull, Short-eared Owl, Red-breasted Nuthatch, American Pipit(!), and Pine Siskin added during count week. We had a new high of 5 Wood Ducks (previously 3), 9 Sandhill Cranes (previously 7) and tied the high for Northern Shovelers (3). New to the count was a well-described House Wren at Fred and Eleanor Jordan's feeder. Great job, guys! We managed single individuals of 11 other species: Cackling Goose, Green-winged Teal, White-winged Scoter, Ruddy Duck, Ruffed Grouse, Cooper's Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Yellow-bellied

Sapsucker, Common Raven, Carolina Wren and Yellow-rumped Warbler, a tribute to the hard (and wet!) work of our volunteers. Many thanks to the following participants: Carolyn and Jerry Barnhart, Douglas Bassett, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, Andrew Consler, Elaine Dart, Jim Edwards, Lucretia Groshans, Diane Henderson, William Howe, Fred and Eleanor Jordan, Jim Kimball, Kathy Kirsch, Kevin Koss, Greg Lawrence, Patrick Luke, Pat Martin, Sheila Mumpton, Marcia Mundirk, Phillip Opdycke, Norma Platt, Shirley Shaw, Hugh Shipley, Cathy and Bob Spahn, Wendy Stevenson, Jerry Sullivan, Bill Welcher and Kinsley Whittum. Special thanks to Bob Spahn for pinch-hitting for me at the tally.

Pat Martin, Compiler

Rochester, NY Area Christmas Bird Count Summary 2017 (compiled by Bob Spahn)

	Rochester		Conesus-Hemlock		Rochester		Conesus-Hemlock	
	Dec. 17, 2017	Dec. 23, 2017	Total		Dec. 17, 2017	Dec. 23, 2017	Total	
Snow Goose		45	45	Eastern Screech-Owl	86	26	112	
Cackling Goose		1	1	Great Horned Owl	12	7	19	
Canada Goose	4,321	2634	6,955	Snowy Owl	5		5	
Mute Swan	229	2	231	Short-eared Owl		cw	0	
Trumpeter Swan			0	Belted Kingfisher	3	3	6	
Tundra Swan	33	112	145	Red-bellied Woodpecker	192	29	221	
Wood Duck		5	5	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	1	2	
Gadwall	2	15	17	Downy Woodpecker	166	58	224	
American Wigeon	cw	3	3	Hairy Woodpecker	43	11	54	
American Black Duck	16	116	132	Northern Flicker	34	14	48	
Mallard	1157	1136	2,293	Pileated Woodpecker	20	6	26	
Northern Shoveler		3	3	American Kestrel		3	3	
Northern Pintail	cw	25	25	Merlin	1		1	
Green-winged Teal		1	1	Peregrine Falcon	4		4	
Canvasback		25	25	Northern Shrike	1	1	2	
Redhead	38	2512	2,550	Blue Jay	382	230	612	
Ring-necked Duck	1	89	90	American Crow	180	250	430	
Greater Scaup	126	2	128	Fish Crow	1		1	
Lesser Scaup	51	101	152	Common Raven	4	1	5	
King Eider	2		2	Horned Lark	6	5	11	
Harlequin Duck	1		1	Black-capped Chickadee	517	318	835	
Surf Scoter	2		2	Tufted Titmouse	56	36	92	
White-winged Scoter	192	1	193	Red-breasted Nuthatch	34	cw	34	
Black Scoter	7		7	White-breasted Nuthatch	137	48	185	
Long-tailed Duck	1365		1,365	Brown Creeper	6	1	7	
Bufflehead	23	62	85	House Wren		1	1	
Common Goldeneye	608	455	1,063	Winter Wren	12	3	15	
Hooded Merganser	32	238	270	Carolina Wren	9	9	18	
Common Merganser	145	97	242	Golden-crowned Kinglet	17	4	21	
Red-breasted Merganser	2165	6	2,171	Eastern Bluebird	6	43	49	
Ruddy Duck		1	1	Hermit Thrush	5		5	
Ring-necked Pheasant		2	2	American Robin	700	4	704	
Ruffed Grouse		1	1	Gray Catbird			0	
Wild Turkey	7	17	24	Northern Mockingbird	14	3	17	

Rochester, NY Area Christmas Bird Count Summary 2017 (continued)							
	Rochester	Conesus-Hemlock		Rochester	Conesus-Hemlock		
	Dec. 17, 2017	Dec. 23, 2017	Total	Dec. 17, 2017	Dec. 23, 2017	Total	
Red-throated Loon	15		15	European Starling	2,236	897	3,133
Common Loon	2	3	5	American Pipit		cw	0
Pied-billed Grebe	3	6	9	Cedar Waxwing	36	25	61
Horned Grebe	2	6	8	Lapland Longspur	12	7	19
Red-necked Grebe	10		10	Snow Bunting	32	302	334
Double-crested Cormorant	8		8	Yellow-rumped Warbler	28	1	29
Great Blue Heron	12	5	17	American Tree Sparrow	139	184	323
Turkey Vulture		2	2	Song Sparrow	29	15	44
Osprey	1		1	Swamp Sparrow	7	3	10
Bald Eagle	7	3	10	White-throated Sparrow	52	8	60
Northern Harrier		5	5	White-crowned Sparrow		2	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6		6	Dark-eyed (S-c) Junco	214	223	437
Cooper's Hawk	9	1	10	Northern Cardinal	325	162	487
Red-shouldered Hawk			0	Red-winged Blackbird	93	2	95
Red-tailed Hawk	33	30	63	Common Grackle	1		1
Rough-legged Hawk		1	1	Brown-headed Cowbird		8	8
American Coot	130	100	230	House Finch	151	36	187
Sandhill Crane		9	9	Purple Finch			0
Bonaparte's Gull	1		1	Pine Siskin	15	cw	15
Ring-billed Gull	2960	77	3,037	American Goldfinch	233	355	588
Herring Gull	1032	74	1,106	House Sparrow	1360	370	1,730
Iceland Gull	1		1	Total Individuals (count day)	23,687	12,075	35,762
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1		1	Total species (count day)	91	87	116
Glaucous Gull	1		1	Total species (including count week)	93	92	119
Great Black-backed Gull	76	cw	76				
Rock Pigeon	837	100	937	Bold number indicates new high or low count			
Mourning Dove	400	231	631				

Editor's Note: The Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC data were not available by press time.

(Editor's Corner, continued)

1 day per 4.7 years for the second clutch. These changes are significantly correlated with local temperature increases during this period. He had 27 nest boxes that were fully occupied until 2004, after which the occupancy rate fell to 60%. It is thought that the decline in occupancy was due to feral cat and stone marten predation, not climate change. His work was published in the *Danish Ornithological Society Journal* ([P. V. Thellessen Dansk Ornitol. Foren. Tidsskr. 111, 87–95: 2017](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11272-017-0711-1)). The article is in Danish, but, fortunately, it has a summary in English and figure and table legends in English as well as Danish. The work came to my attention via an online article in the British journal, *Nature* (<https://www.nature.com/articles/550333b>).

Thellessen's work could be a model and an inspiration for other would-be citizen scientists and nature lovers.

Bluebirds, anyone? It is likely that one can more easily see the effects of climate change on bird and other animal breeding behavior at more northerly latitudes, since the temperature changes are greater. Thellessen's farm is at about 55° N vs. about 43° N in the Rochester area. However, the more northerly latitude of Denmark is offset by warming due to the Gulf Stream.

Of course, other local citizen science projects such as eBird, Christmas Bird Counts, January Waterfowl Counts, Project Feederwatch, the Great Backyard Bird Count, federal Breeding Bird Surveys, and the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas can also contribute to knowledge about birds, although it may be difficult to separate the effects of climate change from other factors affecting birds. Bird banding, such as that done at the Braddock Bay Bird Observatory, is also a kind of citizen science that contributes to knowledge about birds.

December 2017 Sightings Report

This month provided many interesting weather events with lake effect snows and multiple surges of arctic air masses. Temperatures averaged 26.0 ° F, 4.0° below normal and the coldest December since 2000. The month breaks into 4 parts. We started with 6 days above normal. Then an arctic surge dropped temperatures below freezing every night through mid-month. By the Rochester CBC time on the 17th, most of the bays and ponds were totally frozen. There was a brief thaw from the 18th-23rd, then arctic air poured in again, dropping us to where highs barely reached double digits. Precipitation totaled 2.24", 0.39" below normal. There were rain events on the 5th-6th and ending with freezing rain on the 23rd, but snowfall predominated, adding up to 34.7", 12.9" above normal. There were 11 days with snowfall of 1" or more, a number surpassed only three times in previous records. There were 6 lake effect snow events, with points east and southeast of Lake Ontario receiving far above the official/airport snow totals. Snow from December 23-25 produced a white Christmas.

Again, snowfall in the hills south of Rochester on the 16th hampered the Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC (Christmas Bird Count); some observers did not even make it out. The Rochester CBC had decent weather but with mostly frozen water holding down waterfowl numbers. Still, the species count was about average at 91, with 2 more count week species. The Little Lakes (Conesus-Hemlock) CBC began with light rain increasing through the morning and changing to freezing rain just after noon, then to snow for the rest of the day. Some observers stopped early as visibility dropped, and turnout at the countdown was light, but the tally of 87 species was good, and some of the numbers surprising. Five more species were added in the count week. Most of the waterfowl were on Conesus Lake, with Honeoye Lake totally frozen. A House Wren at the Jordan's feeders just north of Honeoye was new for the count. (Remember the Lewis's Woodpecker there a few years back?) Record highs were few, but included: King Eider (tie), Red-breasted Merganser, Red-necked Grebe, Osprey (tie), Snowy Owl (tie), Red-bellied Woodpecker, Common Raven, and Yellow-rumped Warbler for Rochester and Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler (tie), and Sandhill Crane for Little Lakes. New species for the counts were Green-winged Teal for Letchworth-Silver Lake and the House Wren for Little Lakes. This year the total number of individual birds for Rochester plummeted when the usual flight to a crow roost was not located.

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 Long-tailed Duck and for Red-breasted Merganser. Several King Eiders lingered in the area, and a female Harlequin Duck was seen at Irondequoit Bay outlet and a couple of males at West Port Bay. Again, the large numbers of Snow Geese of recent early winters did not appear. Loons and grebes were generally scarce, but there were some big counts for Red-necked Grebe off Hamlin Beach. Double-crested Cormorants lingered, and

late in the month an immature Great Cormorant, approximately the 21st local record, appeared with them at the area near the old Newport House on Irondequoit Bay. Another interesting observation was of a group of 46 Great Blue Herons in the edge of a field near Caledonia on the 9th.

An Osprey on the Rochester CBC is very rare for winter. Bald Eagle reports were high, with again many congregating on Irondequoit Bay and joined at times by a rare immature Golden Eagle. Again jumping ahead to the falcons, we find American Kestrel scarce and Merlin and Peregrine Falcon typical for winter. Rough-legged Hawks were relatively scarce. Snowy Owls continued to be reported in good numbers from around the region, with at least 43 different birds reported. The DEC's Short-eared Owl surveys were plagued by bad weather on Tuesdays, but still some good numbers were tallied. A surprising number of Northern Saw-whet Owls for this time of year was found in the usual Owl Woods area this month.

The expected Purple Sandpiper was missed, but lone Killdeer and Wilson's Snipe provided at least 2 shorebird records. Among the gulls, the highlight was a long-staying immature Black-legged Kittiwake at Sodus Point. Bonaparte's Gulls were few. There were good numbers of the usual winter gulls: Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous at a few locations.

Among the non-passerine land birds, the Eurasian Collared-Dove was spotted a couple of times at the Greenwell farm, and there were good numbers of reports for Red-headed Woodpecker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

Maybe to be expected after the warm fall into early this month, the list and numbers of reports for many of the potential half-hardy lingerers was high. These are summarized in the Noteworthy table. Rarer half-hardy passerines included: Eastern Phoebe, Tree Swallow, House, Winter, and Marsh Wrens, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, American Pipit, Orange-crowned Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, lots of Yellow-rumped Warblers, Eastern Towhee, Chipping, Savannah, and many White-crowned Sparrows, and Rusty Blackbirds. Again, there were no reports of large blackbird flocks. The expected irruption of winter finches was represented by only a few reports of small numbers of Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins. There are large quantities of spruce cones here if the irruption continues this way.

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

	2017	2016	10-year Average (2007-2016)
Species for December	136	131	130.5
New for the year	1	0	1.4
Total for the year	289	291	292.3

Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee

Observers: Jim Adams, Janet Akin, Carolyn & Jerry Barnhart, Jessie Barry, Jim Barry, Sue Barth, Douglas Bassett, Doug Beattie, Don Bemont, Tom Bemont, Steven Benedict, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Shawn Billerman, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Justin Bower, Lynn Braband, Rachel Bricks, Mark Brown, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Bruce Cady, Brad Carlson, Sean Carroll, Jill Church, Linda Clark-Benedict, Kelly Close, Andrew Consler, Jonathan Dachenhaus, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Peter Debes, Mark Deutschlander, Bob Dobson, Steve Donohue, George Ford, Kyle Gage, Andy Garland, Candy Giles, Bill Gillette, Christopher & James Goetz, Sheryl Gracewski, Hannah Greenberg, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Bill Gruenbaum, Michael Gullo, Andrew Guthrie, Danny Guthrie, Richard Guthrie, Anita Gwara, Ryan Hall, Helen & Chris Haller, Kim Hartquist, Christina Hoh, Bruce Hoover, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Carolyn Jacobs, Fred & Eleanor Jordan, Nicholas Kachala, Logan Kahle, Tom Kerr, Jim Kimball, Kathy Kirsch, J. Gary Kohlenberg, Augie Kramer, Elijah Kruger, Tom Lathrop, Leona Lauster,

Gayle Lazoration, Greg Lawrence, James Lee, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Steve Maley, Cindy Marino, Pat Martin, Donna Mason-Spier, Lauri Mattle, Jacob McCartney, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Bob McGuire, Chita McKinney, Matt Medler, Jim Miles, Adrielle Mitchell, Ann Mitchell, Mike Morgante, Lauren Morgens, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Marcia Mundrick, Chan Nam, Tom Nash, Kelley Nunn, Dave Nutter, Joe Oddi, Dave Odell, Bill Ostrander, Veronica Palmer, Neil Paprocki, Tom Parks, Andrea Patterson, Norma Platt, Jay Powell, Bill Purcell, RBA Field Trips, Gregg Racer, Carolyn Ragan, Rosemary Reilly, Ken Rosenberg, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Jesse Rubenstein, Livia Santana, Matthew Sarver, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Cathy Spahn, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Chris Stanger, Rick Stevens, Joe Stevenson, Wendy Stevenson, Kim Sucey, Steve Taylor, David Tetlow, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Wanda Thistle, Sarah Toner, John & Bonnie VanDerMeid, Brad Walker, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Drew Weber, Joe Wing, Chris Wood.



The immature **Great Cormorant** at Irondequoit Bay. Photo by Jay Greenberg Jan. 10, 2018.

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 BIRDING ASSOCIATION

John Boettcher
510 Lake Rd.
Webster, NY 14580



Address Service Requested

We're on the Web
www.RochesterBirding.com

The *Little Gull* is published monthly at the beginning of the month, except that the July and August issues are combined and published at the beginning of July. RBA members are encouraged to contribute. Please send contributions by the 15th of the month to Jay Greenberg, Editor, conservationist@earthlink.net. 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.

2018 RBA Board of Directors

		Address	Phone	E-mail
President	Amy Kahn	5 Cranswick Lane, Rochester NY 14618	310-2330	rbaconservation@gmail.com
Vice President	Jeanne Verhulst	203 Dartmouth Street, Rochester NY 14607	473-9229	tnjverhulst@rochester.rr.com
Treasurer	Brian Rohrs	104 East Pointe, Fairport NY 14450	281-9534	brohrs@rochester.rr.com
Secretary	Kim Weeks	104 Council Rock Avenue, Rochester, NY 14610	746-1206	kimlw@earthlink.net
Past President	Laura Kammermeier	55 Ontario Street, Honeoye Falls NY 14472	730-9279	laurakamms@gmail.com
Director	Kevin Farrell	104 Dartmouth Street, Apt. 2, Rochester, NY 14607	748-6919	kmfarrell18@gmail.com
Director	Liz Magnanti	63 Hamilton Street, Rochester, NY 14620	748-0309	lizmagnanti@gmail.com
Director	Andrea Patterson	144 Greystone Lane #24, Rochester, NY 14618	490-5361	ajpforbusiness@gmail.com
Director	Wanda Thistle	116 Deerpark Lane Apt. 3, Webster, NY 14580	236-1834	thistlew@yahoo.com

RBA Committee Chairs

Circulation	Sheryl Gracewski	287 Willowen Drive, Rochester NY 14609	360-4537	grace@me.rochester.edu
Communication	Vacant			
Conservation	Amy Kahn	5 Cranswick Lane, Rochester NY 14618	310-2330	rbaconservation@gmail.com
Editor	Jay Greenberg	15 Neville Lane, Rochester NY 14618	256-0485	conservationist@earthlink.net
Field Trips	Kimberly Sucky	216 Sandalwood Drive, Rochester NY 14616	503-2534	ksucky@eznet.net
Historian	Jeanne Skelly	420 Chili-Scottsville Rd., Churchville NY 14428	889-2557	
Membership and Member Data	John Boettcher	510 Lake Road, Webster NY 14580	671-9639	johnwb2@rochester.rr.com
Name Tags	Judy Gurley	1071 Honeoye Falls Five Points Rd. Honeoye Falls, NY 14472	582-2349	judygurley@hotmail.com
Nominating	Catherine Ballard	140 Eastwood Trail, Rochester NY 14622	322-2621	cballard@rochester.rr.com
Item Sales	Nancy Poeth	1158 Lake Road, Webster NY 14580	872-5344	ngpoeth@yahoo.com
Records	Andrea Patterson	144 Greystone Lane #24, Rochester, NY 14618	490-5361	ajpforbusiness@gmail.com
Social	Wanda Thistle	116 Deerpark Lane Apt. 3, Webster, NY 14580	236-1834	thistlew@yahoo.com
Young Birders	Andrea Patterson	144 Greystone Lane #24, Rochester, NY 14618	490-5361	ajpforbusiness@gmail.com
Young Birder Liaison	Nick Kachala			nicholaskach@gmail.com
Webmaster	Laura Kammermeier	55 Ontario Street, Honeoye Falls NY 14472	730-9279	lmk88@rochester.rr.com
Web Content Manager	Shelley Patterson	7 Falling Brook Road, Fairport NY 14450	425-2355	shelpat22@gmail.com