



Bittle Gull

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

Rochester Birding Association, 5 Cranswick Lane, Rochester NY 14618

MAY AND EARLY JUNE 2018 EVENTS & BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

MAY 1
Tuesday

CAMP BEECHWOOD AND OLGA FLEISHER WILDLIFE PRESERVE

This park 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: *Kimberly Sucy 585-503-2534 and co-leader TBA*

MAY 2
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 in masses at this urban oasis of tall stately trees. Pat Martin will demonstrate birding by ear as we stroll the quiet paths in search of Yellow-rumped Warblers, Black-throated Blue, and Black-throated Green Warblers, Nashville, Black-and-white, and Hooded Warblers, and, if we are lucky, the elusive Cerulean Warbler, 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 and a Barred Owl will make an appearance. Washington Grove is one of the best spring birding spots in the area. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the grassy area between the road and the woods near the reservoir, up the road from the entrance off Highland Avenue just east of Monroe.

Leaders: *Tom and Jeanne Verhulst 585-473-9229*

MAY 3
Thursday

THOUSAND ACRE SWAMP

Thousand Acre Swamp is a preserve owned by the Nature Conservancy. It has a bird checklist of 120 species that can be downloaded at <http://thegreenjay.jalbum.net/thegreenjay.com/TASChecklist.pdf>. This easy 2.5 mile walk goes through a variety of habitats, resulting in a variety of breeding bird species and migrants. The habitats include swampy woods, drier woods, a marshy area, meadows, and a pond.

Shorter routes are possible. The entrance and parking lot are on the west side of Jackson Road opposite Penfield Center Road in Penfield. Boots are recommended. Meet in the parking lot at 7:30 a.m. **Leaders:** *Jay Greenberg 585-256-0485 and Richard Ashworth 585-381-2189*

MAY 5
Saturday

TAYLOR MARSH

Taylor Marsh is a preserve owned by the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society, in Ontario County north of Honeoye Lake. It is best known for marsh birds, including both local bittern and both local rail species. 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 15A and follow it south. Turn left and follow Richmond Mills Road (Livingston County Road 41) east. It becomes Ontario County Road 15. Follow the latter 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 the Taylor Marsh parking area on the west side of Allen's Hill Road just south of Nighan Hill Road at 8:00 a.m.

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

MAY 6

Sunday

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 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: *Kimberly Sucy 585-503-2534 and co-leader TBA*

May 9

Wednesday

Wednesday Evening Warblers

This is the start of regular Wednesday birding at the Lakeview Community Church parking lot and environs, 6:00 p.m. until dark.

Leader: John Boettcher 585-671-9639

May 10

Thursday

RBA General Meeting, 7:00 p.m., the Baptist Temple, 1101 Clover Street, Rochester NY 14610 (in Brighton). Speaker: Suan Hsi Yong. Title: Who goes there? Birding with Infrared Thermography. See the notice on p. 3 for more information.

MAY 12

Saturday

MANITOU BEACH PRESERVE

Our trip to this lakeside treasure should rack up good numbers of warblers, flycatchers, and other spring arrivals. Owned by the Genesee Land Trust, the Manitou Beach Preserve consists of 5 acres of field and hedgerow, shrub, and cattail wetlands extending into Braddock Bay. Wear waterproof, sturdy shoes and don't forget the bug spray! Meet in the Owl Woods parking lot on Manitou Beach Road (Rt. 261) at the Lake Ontario State Parkway at 8:00 a.m. We will shuttle to the preserve as parking space is limited.

Leaders: *Kimberly Sucy 585-503-2534 & Co-leader TBA*

MAY 13

Sunday

AMY'S POND AND WOODSMITH—GENESEE LAND TRUST CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

This is a field trip to the private property of Janet Smith for spring migrants, early nesters and waterfowl. Two adjacent easements make up 187 acres that include 2 large ponds, mature woodland, and open fields all within 0.5 mi. of Lake Ontario. Past trips have yielded eagles, bitterns, Sora rails, many warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, etc. etc. etc. We'll walk along uneven trails, so bring a walking stick if needed and prepare for a medium-long hike. Excellent trails in an outstanding sanctuary open only by special arrangement—many thanks to GLT! Meet at Webster Park on the west corner of Holt and Lake Roads at 7:00 a.m., or at Amy's Pond at 7:30 a.m. To get to Amy's Pond, take Route 104 east to County Line Road. Drive north until it ends at Lake Road. Turn right and travel approximately one mile to 484 Lake Road, Ontario, N.Y. and turn down the long gravel driveway (on the south side of Lake Road) until you reach the marked parking area.

Leader: *Kimberly Sucy 585-503-2534*

MAY 15

Tuesday

OATKA CREEK PARK

Woods and meadow provide great habitat for nesting species such as Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, Blue-winged Warbler and Field Sparrow. Meet at the park entrance at the intersection of Quaker Road and Union Street in Garbutt at 7:30 a.m. Take Route 383 (Scottsville—Mumford Road) west 1.5 to 2 miles from its intersection with Route 386 in Scottsville and turn south onto Union Street and go about 0.5 miles.

Leader: *Jim Adams 585-594-2366*

MAY 17

Thursday

LUCIEN MORIN PARK (formerly Ellison Park Wetlands)

We will meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Lucien Morin parking lot off Empire Blvd. in Penfield. The parking lot is on the south side of Empire Blvd. just east of the bridge over Irondequoit Creek at the south end of Irondequoit Bay. MacGregor's Bar (1129 Empire Blvd.) is just west of the parking lot. The park has trails through a mixture of habitats attractive to spring migrants. At the end to the trip, we will look for the Bald Eagle nest on the bay.

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

MAY 19

Saturday

POWDER MILLS PARK AND BANC SANCTUARY (Joint trip with Burroughs Audubon Nature Club)

On the east side, Powder Mills Park is a mature woodland park that can be productive for many species of late migrating or nesting warblers and other songbirds. Blue-winged Warblers, Baltimore Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Scarlet Tanagers, Pileated Woodpeckers and Red-tailed Hawks have all nested there in the past couple years. The trip will continue with a visit to the BANC Sanctuary on

(continued on p. 11)

Welcome to the Flock



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

Liz Gartland
Carol Gaul
Rebecca Haskins
Lisa Hupf
Gina Kreutter
Jaclyn Moll
Timothy Morral
Richard Ponticello
Lois Van Tol
Susan Westlake

Current RBA Membership is 336.

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

Membership Tidbits

Even though one can renew via our website, the majority of our members (57%) renew via checks or cash. These nearly two hundred checks give me and Treasurer Brian Rohrs a lot to do during renewal time, but this is why we get the big bucks. Not!

John Boettcher

President's Column

Amy Kahn



Although I am writing this as we are having a late-season ice storm, I am looking forward to May. May is one of the very best times of year to bird in Rochester as we welcome migrant and resident birds back to the area. RBA has 13 field trips scheduled this month; I hope to see you out on at least a few. Also planned are Wednesday drop-ins at 6 p.m. at the Lakeview Community Church park-

ing lot on Long Pond Road, Greece starting on the 9th. John Boettcher would love to have some experienced birders join him in this opportunity for birders hoping for more one-on-one help identifying warblers and other migrants. Kevin Farrell will meet beginning birders on Thursday, May 3^d at 7 a.m. on the Erie Canal, behind REI City Gate.

You have until May 9th to voice your concerns about the siting of the Lighthouse Wind Farm along the Lake Ontario migration route. See our website and past issues of the *Little Gull* for more information about this project and the proposed Heritage project adjacent to Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area in Barre.

ROC the Riverfront is another project RBA members may want to learn more about. If birders get involved, the project can have benefits for both the natural world and humans. Jim Howe from The Nature Conservancy is on the advisory committee for the city. <http://www.cityofrochester.gov/roctheriverway/>.

Thanks to member Kate Kremer for agreeing to represent RBA at the Federation of Monroe County Environmentalists.

Editor's Corner

Jay Greenberg



RBA and Federation of Monroe County Environmentalists (FMCE)

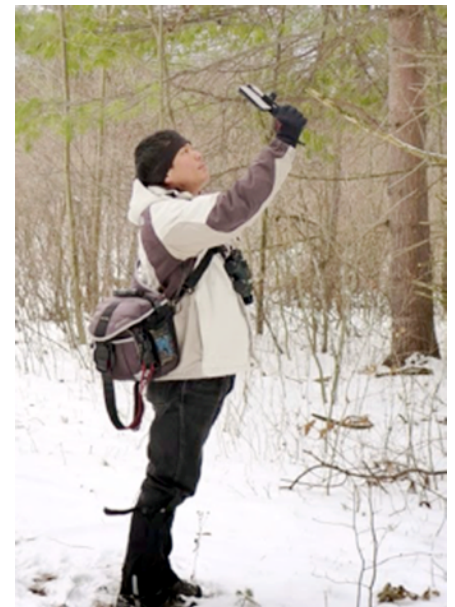
FMCE is an informal group with representatives from several local environment-minded organizations such as RBA, Burroughs Audubon Nature Club, People for Parks, and the local chapters of the Sierra Club, Adirondack Mountain Club, and Trout Unlimited. FMCE has meetings 9 months of the year to discuss local environmental issues. Sometimes, FMCE takes actions such as writing letters to government officials. However, only organizations supporting the action are listed in the letter. Therefore, the actions require approval by the governing bodies of the

(continued on p. 11)

March Talk and Speaker

Infrared thermography allows one to see the temperature of everyday objects. It can highlight warm objects against a cooler background, making it a great tool for finding birds and other warm-blooded animals. A few years ago, when affordable thermal cameras appeared on the market, Suan decided to try using them to see if he could find owls in the night or bitterns in the marsh. He has done both, as well as follow a woodcock sky dance, count migrants in the night sky, and track a grouse through thick brush. Suan will share his experiences with this technology.

Suan Yong is a software scientist at GrammaTech in Ithaca. His interest in the natural world began as a boy growing up in Malaysia collecting butterflies, and shifted to birding in 2007 after moving to Ithaca. He regularly leads bird walks for the Cayuga Bird Club, Spring Field Ornithology, and other events at the Lab of Ornithology. Follow his blog at: <http://infrared-birding.blogspot.com/p/about-therm-app.html>.



Suan Yong uses infrared thermography to locate birds.

RBA IN THE FIELD

Lake Shore Marshes East Wildlife Management Area 3/17/2018

Nine hardy souls plus yours truly met at the parking lot at Webster Plaza near Starbucks. In Webster, the temperature was 25 °F with a light breeze (16 mph) out of the west-northwest, and it was mostly clear.

Sodus Point State Park was our first stop after meeting in Webster. A steady breeze out of the west made it feel colder. The lake, channel and bay were mostly clear of ice. We had a small assortment of ducks which included White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, and a Red-breasted Merganser.

Our next stop was along Red Mill/Shaker Tract Road where we had an excellent view of open water in the bay. This turned out to be a great spot, as this was the largest assortment and quantity of ducks that we would encounter on this trip. In this area of the bay, we were able to get good looks at Canada Geese, Mute Swan, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, White-winged Scoter, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls. The most numerous were the Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks, Greater and Lesser Scaups.

On the marsh side, we had Song Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, and a White-breasted Nuthatch. Most of these birds were ID'd by ear.

Our stop at the bait shop by the bridge was fairly productive. The bay at this spot was also mostly clear of ice. There were several Mute Swans, many Hooded and Common Mergansers, and a couple of Red-breasted Mergansers. There was a fairly large group of Herring Gulls on the ice. The area of the bay south of the bridge was fairly non-productive with all of the water-

fowl at the very back of the bay making observation and identification very difficult.

Along the road to Chimney Bluffs were Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Rock Pigeon and House Sparrow.

At our stop at Chimney Bluffs State Park on the lake there were Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded, Common and Red-breasted Merganser. On our walk to the lake and back we only heard Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, and a cardinal, and this was made more difficult by the loud sounds of the wind and the pounding surf.

All were able to observe a Blue Heron rookery with a fair amount of activity at our first marsh overlook. At this spot on a little patch of open water, we had Canada Goose, Wood Duck, and Ring-necked Duck. At the next marsh overlook the parking area was blocked with snow so we parked along the road. We got some good looks at American Wigeon, and a few of the group were able to get good looks at a good number of Ring-necked Ducks just before they took flight.

Our stop on Slaughter Road didn't turn up much. We thought we might have had a large raptor in a distant tree, but a spotting scope view revealed it to be just a broken branch. From the Slaughter Road stop, we passed up a couple of our usual stops due to snowed-in parking areas and a lack of birds. We did make a stop at the end of Larkin Road (Red Creek Unit) and took a short walk to see if we could sneak up on some Wood Ducks, but all we were able to find were 2 Canada Geese at the far north end of the pond. We proceeded to Fields Hill Road and parked at the Black Creek Unit. We ended the trip with a few of us taking a walk through the woods. On the walk we had Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, Red-tailed Hawk and cardinal.

The trip species count was 41, which was 9 less than last year. For me, and I hope for the rest of the participants, it was great company, great birds, sunny, and there was lots of open water.

Bob Haggett and Kinsley Whittum

Braddock Bay Owl Woods 3/25/2018

Twenty-four eager owl spotters showed up, some from long distances away, in the hopes of getting their first owls for the season, if not for their life lists. However, Mother Nature has been in a cold mood this spring and continued the complete shut-out of owls since the brief warm-up during the last week of February. Disappointed, we scouted the saw-whet and long-ear hotspots, visited the banding station field, (there was no hawk banding going on due the cold weather) and the woodcock field, the latter in anticipation of the RBA woodcock courtship field trip in April. Back to waiting for winter's claw to relax!

Jim Adams

Wednesday Evening Warblers

by 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 in a parking lot. There is no need for boots and bug spray. Bring binoculars. We will examine the shrubby edges of the lot for migrating warblers near one of the Rochester birding hot spots.

Starting May 9th at 6:00 p.m., I will be at the parking lot of Lakeview Community Church on Long Pond Road near Edgemere Drive. We will walk around the parking area and nearby paved areas. Although early morning is the best time for warbler watching, the evenings can be quite good also. My plan is to have these outings through mid-June.

Rochester Young Birder Winter Round Up

by Andrea Patterson

The winter months are always unpredictable in Rochester, and so the Young Birders take the wise precaution of holding our monthly events indoors. We chat and play birding games, and if the weather cooperates we venture outside. We got lucky this year, and managed to get outside every month!

In January, we gathered at the home of one local young birder whose backyard slopes down to a fantastic woodlot along Ganargua Creek in Farmington. Nine young birders and their adults took a 45-minute walk along the creek, and saw 14 species along the way including 4 woodpecker species (Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy and Pileated). After our walk, we settled in for snacks and games, including one board game created by our host! In the meantime, we set up a mist-net near a bird feeder in hope of seeing one of our winter birds up close. The goldfinches were especially adept at avoiding the net, but we eventually captured a single White-breasted Nuthatch. We banded him quickly, and let him go after everyone had a good look.

February saw us gathered at the home of one of our newest young birders where we were treated to 3 kinds of

home-baked cookies and a slideshow of the Birds of Texas. We all had fun arguing about sparrow ID (I was usually wrong!), and I'm pretty certain we were all mentally making plans for our own Texas trip. The weather wasn't as soggy as the forecast had predicted, so we decided to check out Irondequoit Bay. We managed 19 species, including a highlight 1st cycle Iceland Gull amid thousands of Herring and Ring-billed Gulls.

March brought us to the lakeshore home of a young birder's grandparents. We all spent time peering out the windows for flyby ducks and gulls, and snacking on home-made cornbread pudding. After we chatted and socialized, we all learned how to count and estimate flocks of birds. We talked about how to count single and mixed species flocks, whether stationary or in flight, and then we practiced our counting on handfuls of beans spread out on the dining room table. Since the weather was warm, we headed to the hawk watch platform to practice counting the flocks of ducks peppering the bay. We tallied more than 20 species, and thoroughly enjoyed the sunny afternoon.

Our club is growing – more kids, more events, more fun – and we'd love to get even more young birders involved! Keep an eye on the RBA website for our youth events, and spread the word to everyone you know!

RBA BANC Picnic on June 14, 2018 at 6 p.m. Save the Date!!

I hope to see many of you at our June picnic. Last year's entertainment included an Indigo Bunting (in the sun!) and a hilarious Pileated Woodpecker. Let's hope they remember to show up this year.

The picnic is a time when you can meet old friends and make new ones. On bird trips we have tended to listen for the birds, but at the picnic we get to socialize.

Come rain or shine. Bring food to grill (there will be 2 grills) or, like me, just stop at the store for a sub. And don't forget to bring a dish to share with others (appetizer, salad or dessert).

Give me a call @ 585-236-1834 or e-mail me thistlew@yahoo.com to indicate what type of dish you would like to bring. See the notice on the next page for more info.

Wanda Thistle, Social Chair



A male **Indigo Bunting**. Photo by Jay Greenberg

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 and 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

RBA ANNUAL PICNIC

Thursday, June 14, 2018 6 p.m.

Rain or Shine

Burroughs Audubon Nature Club

on Railroad Mills Road in Victor



Photo by Richard Ashworth.

THIS EVENT IS A POTLUCK - BYO PLACE SETTINGS
RBA will provide ice and charcoal if you would like to grill

Sign up by calling Wanda Thistle @ 585-236-1834 or e-mail at thistlew@yahoo.com

Indicate a dish to pass (appetizer, salad or dessert) and if you are a BANC member.

The picnic is always informal and fun. The BANC facility is located in an ideal location to see birds. If you haven't been to the picnic, then you haven't had the opportunity to enjoy this lovely spot.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Top Five Great Native Berries for the Backyard Birds of the Rochester NY Region

Adapted from the Habitat Network (Cornell Lab of Ornithology and The Nature Conservancy) by Amy Kahn



Common Elderberry, *Sambucus nigra ssp. Canadensis*

Fruits are favored by many birds and are rich in carbohydrates and protein, which is important for migrating songbirds. Provides cover habitat for birds and other wildlife.

When Does It Have Berries & Flowers?



JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Some birds that will eat its berries: Cedar Waxwing, Eastern Bluebird, Pileated Woodpecker, Brown Thrasher

Some pollinators this berry helps attract: Native Bees, Butterflies

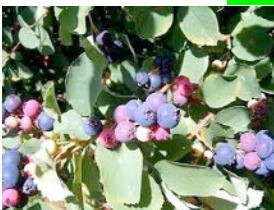
A caterpillar that is known to use this species as a host plant: [Henry's Elfin -](#)

[Hodges#4326 \(*Callophrys henrici*\)](#)

Common Serviceberry, *Amelanchier arborea*

Produces berries early in the growing season when fruit availability is scarce. Berries are high in carbohydrates and protein. Fruits are usually eaten as soon as they ripen by dozens of bird species.

When Does It Have Berries & Flowers?



JAN FEB MAR APR MAY MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Some birds that will eat its berries: Cedar Waxwing, Eastern Bluebird, Pileated Woodpecker, Gray Catbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Some pollinators this berry helps attract: Native Bees, Butterflies, Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Caterpillars that utilize this plant: Striped Hairstreak, Red-spotted Purple

Silky Dogwood, *Cornus amomum*

High-fat berries are an important food source for migratory and wintering birds.

When Does It Have Berries & Flowers?



JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Some birds that will eat its berries: Hermit Thrush, Eastern Bluebird, Gray Catbird, Ruffed Grouse, Pileated Woodpecker

Some pollinators this berry helps attract: Native Bees, Butterflies, Ruby-throated Hummingbird

bird

Caterpillars that are known to use this species as a host plant: Spring Azure, Summer Azure

Southern Arrowwood

Viburnum dentatum



Fruits have a high fat, carbohydrate, and protein content, making them very valuable to migratory songbirds that need sustenance to complete their long journey, as well as to birds overwintering in areas where insects are not available.

When Does It Have Berries & Flowers?

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Some birds that will eat its berries: American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Mockingbird, Eastern Bluebird, Gray Catbird

Some pollinators this berry helps attract: Native Bees, Bumble Bees, Butterflies, Moths, Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Caterpillars that are known to use this species as a host plant: Spring Azure, Henry's Elfin, Baltimore Checkerspot

Spicebush

Lindera benzoin



Berries are packed with protein and fat. These nutritious fruits are consumed by many birds, and are especially important for migratory birds.

When Does It Have Berries & Flowers?

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Some birds that will eat its berries: American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, Gray Catbird, Great Crested Flycatcher

Some pollinators this berry helps attract: Native Bees, Butterflies, Moths, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Spicebush Swallowtail, Promethea Silkmoth

Caterpillars that are known to use this species as a host plant: Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Spicebush Swallowtail, Promethea Silkmoth

Nesting Birds

by Liz Magnanti

The days are growing longer, and warmer weather is on its way. This means one thing: love is in the air, for birds at least! Spring means it's nesting time for the majority of birds in our area. Birds are actively seeking out nesting sites to build nests, lay eggs and raise their young.

Some of the most common songbirds nest in bird houses. Bluebirds, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, Tree Swallows, House Sparrows, House Finches and wrens all look for the safety of an enclosed house to raise their young. Woodpeckers, screech owls and Wood Ducks will also nest in houses, if they are big enough!

When selecting a bird house, it is important to look for specific features. First, and most importantly, make sure the bird house has a way to be cleaned out. Most of the time, there is a small door in the back of the house that can be opened. This feature is made to clean out the old nest. Once the young have fledged, or "flown the coop",

the nest can be removed. Some birds will have more than one brood a year, and if they do, they will build a new nest. Cleaning out the bird house is important because it reduces the amount of mold and parasites that may accumulate in and under the nest. Also, check your bird house for ventilation. Usually, there are small spaces in the upper or lower corners of the house that are cut out for air to flow. Having ventilation lowers the risk of mold building up in the house.

The size of the entrance hole will dictate who can nest in it. The smaller the size of the hole, the more limited you are in what type of birds can fit in it. Wrens, for example, only need a house with an entrance hole of 1" diameter. Chickadees only need a hole 1 1/8" diameter to fit inside. This size is also small enough to keep house sparrows out. Anything larger than 1 1/8" is big enough for them to fit through. If bluebirds are what you are after, get a nest box with a 1 1/2" opening. Many people have luck with attracting screech owls to their yards with a screech owl nesting box. These houses have a 2" entrance hole diameter and should be placed at least 10 feet high.

When mounting a bird house, remember that most birds like their house to be secure. If it is moving around in the wind, many birds will not nest in it. Wrens, House Sparrows, and chickadees will nest in houses that are hanging, but many other species will not. Bird houses should be mounted 5 feet off the ground in order to keep them protected from predators like cats that can catch birds mid-air. Baffles can be mounted on a bird house pole to keep squirrels and raccoons from climbing up the pole to raid the box of the eggs or young inside it. Bird house "guardians" are another item that will keep squirrels and raccoons from reaching inside the nest box.

Not all birds will nest in a house. Robins, cardinals, Mourning Doves and Barn Swallows will nest on nesting perches, a semi-enclosed platform that shields them from the elements and provides protection. Hummingbirds, orioles and goldfinches build their nests in trees and can be enticed to nest in your yard by offering a nesting ball full of natural cotton and string. Scraps of yarn, pet hair, and feathers can be left outside for birds to use as nesting material. Remember not to use dryer lint. The chemicals in it that are used to launder clothes can be harmful to birds.

Now is the perfect time to put out your bird houses, clean out your old ones, and be on the lookout for the newest inhabitants that will call them home.



Tree Swallow nestlings in a nest box intended for Wood Ducks. Photo by Jay Greenberg

March 2018 Sightings Report

It was another cold March. Temperatures averaged 32.2 °F, 2.1° below normal; the 10th time a March average has been lower than February's and for a second year in a row. A persistent storm track mostly to our south and east left us in cold air most of the month until a warm front lifted in on the 26th and stalled for the rest of the month, leaving us finally in the 40's but with light rain each day. There were 15 days of light snowfall and 4 days with heavy snow dropping 29.4", 13.1" above normal, mostly in the first half of the month. Precipitation totaled 3.02", 0.52" above normal. But we were lucky; 4 nor'easters tracked south of us and up the coast this month, and we were only on the fringes.

Over most of the month, conditions were not conducive to migration and often not to birders getting out. Reports were slow across families of birds, yet there were still a number of arrivals. Reports to eBird totaled 24,240 lines, a decent number for March. Species seen and totals for the year to date were very close to their 10-year averages. This year's weather illustrates for us that a primary determiner of new arrivals here is the weather between us and points south and west. This year, essentially all month, we had a broad stripe of heavy weather right across the country south and west of us, and few migrants.

Among the waterfowl, Snow Geese persisted in high numbers both in our region and nearby. The rarer but now regular geese, Greater White-fronted, Ross's, and Cackling were found in good numbers. Again, Eurasian Wigeon appeared early but only in the Northern Mon-

tezuma Wildlife Management Area in our region. No really rare species were noted. Peak numbers for most species were relatively low, other than good counts for Northern Pintail and Redhead. There were no significant counts of either loon or any of the regular grebes. Great Blue Heron numbers picked up late in the month, and Great Egrets were found near month's end. It was back again to no Black Vultures for the month.

The ugly weather in the first half of the month held back the hawk count; the total didn't pass February's 2 days until the 19th. The official counter this year is Greg Lawrence, with Mike Tetlow providing assistance and relief. The month's total of 3,028 birds is relatively low, and over half of that passed in the last 2 days of the month. As usual, 2,390 Turkey Vultures was 79% of the total. Osprey arrived on the 31st, and again no Northern Goshawks were tallied at the hawk watch and only 2 elsewhere. At least 23 Sandhill Cranes were noted from the watch.

Good numbers of Killdeer were noted across the region, but the only other shorebirds were single Greater Yellowlegs and Wilson's Snipe, and a few American Woodcocks. The first spring Bonaparte's Gull was seen on March 1st, but the first from the hawk watch was not until the 27th, and the peak number reported was only 7. One of the events of the month was a massive gull buildup in Irondequoit Bay due to a major fish die-off from a combination of winter stress and a fish-specific virus. Large numbers of the larger species were tallied, including our winter-gull species – Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous.

About 13 Snowy Owls were reported from 10 locations. The DEC Short-eared Owl surveys out of the Avon office continued with good numbers for this month's counts, and visitors to the Nations Road area tallied as many as 27 Short-eared Owls there in an evening. Jim Adams reported that counts of roosting migrant owls, Long-eared and Northern Saw-whet, in the "Owl Woods" area on Manitou Beach Road found none until 3 and 2, respectively, in the last 4 days of the month. Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported only from Hamlin Beach State Park. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers dropped off to reports of singles from only 2 locations. The 3 regular falcons were all reported in typical numbers at the hawk watch and elsewhere.

Passerine arrivals were slow through the month, with only about 6 new arrivals, and some of those judgment calls around arrival vs. left from wintering. None were at really exceptionally early dates. The most interesting were Eastern Phoebe, Barn Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Pipit, Field Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark. Others with quite a few winter reports were Winter Wren, Eastern Towhee, and Savannah and Fox Sparrows. The Starvation Moon seems to have adversely impacted many of the lingering half hardies. The surprise of the month was a well-described male Scarlet Tanager seen in a private location in Wayne County on the 17th. Again this season, the only "winter finches" reported were small numbers of Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins.

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

Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>10-year Average (2008-2017)</u>
Species for March	138	147	140.2
New for the year	<u>10</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>18.5</u>
Total for the year to date	150	154	150.5

Observers: Jim Adams, Janet Akin, Ted Barnett, Jessie Barry, Mitchell Barry, Doug Beattie, Steven Benedict, Linda Clark-Benedict, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Shawn Billerman, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Dave Bonter, Lynn Braband, Joe Brin, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Bruce Cady, Brad Carlson, Donna Carter, Nancy Chen, Kelly Close, Andrew Consler, Jonathan Dachenhaus, Kathleen Dalton, Willie D'Anna, Gregg Dashnau, Michael DeWispelaere, Bob Dobson, Deborah Dohne, Daena Ford, George Ford, Kenny Frisch, Kyle Gage, Andy Garland, Candy Giles, Christopher Goetz, John, Karle, Shannon, & Tessa Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Bill Gruenbaum, Ralph & Georgia Guenther, Michael Gullo, Andrew Guthrie, Helen & Chris Haller, Meena Haribal, Kim Hartquist, Ian/William Hearn, Christina Hoh, Dick Horsey, Bill & Mari Howe, Carolyn Jacobs, Nicholas Kachala, Laura Kammermeier, Jim Kimball, Mike Laird, Chris Lajewski, Tom Lathrop, Leona Lauster, Greg Lawrence, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Mary Magistro, Cindy Marino, Pat Martin, Lauri Mattle, Jacob McCartney, Jay McGowan, Bob McGuire, Chita McKinney, Jim Miles, Adrielle Mitchell, Ann Mitchell, Celeste Morien, Jim & Patti Morris, Brian & Brooke Morse, Rivka Noll, David Odell, Joe Ovsiovitch, Andrea Patterson, Norma Platt, Jay Powell, Carolyn Ragan, RBA Field Trips, Rosemary Reilly, Dave Robertson, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Kevin Rybczynski, Janet & Jim Sandefur, Livia Santana, Shirley Shaw, Tom Smith, Tom & Laura Somerville, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Donna Mason-Spier, Chris Stanger, Rick Stevens, Kimberly Sucy, Jim Tarolli, Steve Taylor, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Sarah Toner, John & Bonnie VanDerMeid, Brad Walker, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Dave Wheeler, Joe Wing, Paul Wolter, Chris Wood, Jim Wood, Martha Zettel.



An **Eastern Phoebe** that was carrying insect food to a nearby nest. Photo by Jay Greenberg.

(Event Calendar, continued)

Railroad Mills Road, where we'll walk the trails round the woodland, wetland and creek habitats. Nesting species there include Eastern Bluebirds, House Wrens, Eastern Phoebe and Eastern Screech-Owl, and adjacent tree lines have produced a variety of migrating warblers. Meet at the Powder Mills Park Fish Hatchery parking lot on Park Road at 7:30 a.m.

Leaders: Richard Ashworth 585-381-2189 and Tom and Jeanne Verhulst 585-473-9229

MAY 26
Saturday

NORWAY ROAD

This unassuming trip usually racks up one of the longest bird lists of the year. From nesting Cerulean Warblers to Purple Martins along the lake, this trip showcases roadside birding in spectacular fashion! There are no long walks, no rough terrain, and it is totally handicapped accessible. Meet in Ridgmont Plaza in front of Best Buy on Route 104 in Greece (opposite Heritage Drive) at 7:00 a.m.

Leaders: Kimberly Sucy 585-503-2534 & Cathy Ballard 585-322-2621

MAY 27
Sunday

IROQUOIS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

We will search for Prothonotary Warblers, Yellow-throated Vireos, Cerulean Warblers, and other nesting birds at this local natural treasure. We'll drive to various spots in the refuge and take an easy walk along one of the very scenic trails. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Sweden Corners Plaza in Brockport at the junction of Routes 31 and 19. It is advisable to bring water and snacks or a picnic lunch since there may be no local resources, and the trip may last into the afternoon.

Leaders: Kimberly Sucy 585-503-2534 and Cathy Ballard 585-322-2621

JUN 2
Saturday

CANADICE LAKE

We'll go down the east side of the lake for a variety of nesting passerines, especially warblers and vireos. There will be a short walk at the south end of the lake, but mostly we'll drive and park along the shore. Meet at the Rush Town Hall parking lot on the southwest corner of East Henrietta Road (Rt. 15A) and Rush-Mendon Road (Rt. 251) at 7:00 a.m.

Leaders: Lucretia Grosshans 585-467-2474 & Diane Henderson 585-334-9400

JUN 3
Sunday

BERGEN SWAMP

A trip to this unique place is by special permit from the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society and will feature nesting birds. The mix of vegetation zones provides secluded nesting habitat for the usual western N.Y. species as well as those more characteristic of the Canadian zone such as Blue-headed Vireo, Hermit Thrush, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Black-and-white, Canada, and Nashville Warblers. This is a walking trip of 3–5 miles on variably wet and slippery corduroy trails that must be followed closely for safety reasons and because of the fragile habitat. Sturdy boots (rather than sneakers) are STRONGLY recommended, and hiking or ski poles may be useful. Massasauga rattlesnakes are VERY rarely encountered. Parking at the trailhead is limited, so we will meet in the parking lot of the 7-11 gas station at the junction of Routes 33 and 19 at 7:30 a.m. Drive about 20 miles west of Rochester on I-490 to exit 2. Turn right (west) onto Route 33 and go about one mile to the junction with Route 19. Turn left onto Route 19, then immediately turn left into the parking lot.

Leaders: Jay Greenberg 585-256-0485 and Kimberly Sucy 585-503-2534.

(Editor's Corner, continued)

organizations. FMCE has also sponsored a number of informative and well-attended public fora on timely subjects such as invasive species and hydrofracking. For more information on FMCE, including a complete list of member organizations and meeting information, go to their website at <http://fmce.org>.

The RBA has long been a member of FMCE, and I represented the RBA at FMCE meetings for over 20 years. Also, I have been a webmaster for FMCE for several years. However, I have decided it is time to move on, at least with regard to attending meetings regularly. I am

pleased to say that RBA member Kate Kremer has agreed to represent the RBA at FMCE meetings. Kate is a smart, energetic, committed environmentalist who is an attorney by profession. She serves as vice-president of the organization, Save Ontario Shores (<http://lakeontario-turbines.com/about-save-ontario-shores.html>), which formed to fight the Lighthouse Wind project in Orleans County. She joined the RBA recently and is eager to learn more about birds. I feel confident that she will serve both RBA and FMCE well.

FMCE meetings are generally open to the public, and other RBA members are welcome to participate.



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.

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