



Little Gull

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

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

JUNE 2019 EVENTS & BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

JUN 1
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 **7:00 a.m.** at the Rush Town Hall parking lot on the southwest corner of East Henrietta Road (Rte. 15 A) and Rush-Mendon Road (Rte. 251)

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

JUN 2
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) on Route 33 and go about one mile to the junction with Route 19. Turn left onto Route 19, then make an immediate left turn into the parking lot.

Leader: *Jay Greenberg 585-256-0485 and co-leader Rick Stevens 585-689-1882*

JUN 8
Saturday

THE FINGER LAKES NATIONAL FOREST

This field trip is mainly a driving, "stop and go" 10 – 20 mile trip through a series of bird-rich habitats between the lower third of Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. We'll be looking for the resident warblers, vireos, flycatchers, sparrows, Upland Sandpipers, etc. Bring a picnic lunch. Meet in the Bushnell's Basin "Park and Ride" at **6:00 a.m.** The meeting site is off Route 96, just south of Exit 27 from I-490. **Extra FRS radios and scopes would be very helpful.**

Leader: *Kevin Griffith 225-7004 and co-leader Greg Lawrence 585-730-2553*

JUN 9
Sunday

LETCHWORTH STATE PARK

This trip frequently boasts more birds than any other RBA field trip. Of course, it gets an early start! We'll look for birds not frequently seen on other trips, such as Acadian Flycatcher and Barred Owl. We'll do a fair amount of walking—one somewhat steep but short forest trail and a dirt road down to the river level, as well as some roadside birding. Meet at the west side (inside the park near the Route 36 entrance) Mt. Morris Dam Overlook parking lot at **5:30 a.m.** Pack a lunch and snacks as the trip will likely last well into mid-afternoon. **Extra spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very helpful.**

Leaders: *Rick Stevens 585-689-1882 and co-leader Mike Landowski 585 493-3600*

JUN 15
Saturday

NATIONS ROAD FIELDS & FARMS

We will look for nesting bluebirds, Grasshopper and Vesper Sparrows as well as meadowlarks, Bobolinks, and woodpeckers. Meet at Tops Plaza in Avon on Routes 5 and 20, 2 miles west of I-390 at **7:00 a.m.** Carpool if possible. **Extra spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very helpful.**

Leader: *Lucretia Grosshans 585-467-2474 and co-leader Rick Stevens 585-689-1882*

JUN 16

Sunday

HIGH ACRES NATURE AREA

Our approximately 2 mile walk will explore about 250 acres at HANA and include some wet spots requiring ankle-high waterproof shoes or boots. We will meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the parking lot on Perinton Parkway approximately 1/4 mile east of the Waste Management offices. The bridge just west of this parking lot has been closed, so plan your route accordingly. Extra spotting scopes would be very helpful.

Leader: *Dominic Sherony 585-223-7353 and co-leader Rosemary Reilly 585-748-0802*

JUN 22

Saturday

GANONDAGAN STATE HISTORIC SITE

This trip has generated large species lists due to the many habitat types we will travel through. We will start near the longhouse and the meadowlark field and then head down a wide trail through woods, shrub land, wetland, and to an overlook in grassland. The round trip is 1.5 miles and is suitable for most, including knobby tire electric wheel chairs. After we reach the overlook, those who wish can continue for another mile or 2 on the narrower Seneca Trail through field and woods across County Rte. 41 and along a wooded stream valley to the Bobolink field. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the lower main parking lot for the Seneca Art & Culture Center at Ganondagan, 7000 County Road 41 (Boughton Hill Road) Victor, NY 14564

Leaders: *Amy Kahn (RBA) 585-310-2330, and June Summers (GVAS)*

JUNE 23

Sunday

ODONATA SANCTUARY

The 100 acre privately owned Odonata Sanctuary, 20 Parrish Road, Honeoye Falls, NY 14472, is the former home of Joseph W. Taylor, who was a founder of the American Birding Association and president of Hawk Mountain Association. The sanctuary participates in the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) that provides nesting acreage for grassland nesting birds such as meadowlarks, Bobolinks, and Dickcissels. The sanctuary is an access point for the observation of migrating birds and monarch butterflies and is also home to one of the largest Eastern Bluebird nest box trails in the USA. There are also streams, a pond and woodlands. **Meet at the Sanctuary at 8:00 a.m.** Enter the sanctuary at 20 Parrish Road. Drive up the long, one-lane driveway until you see a large barn. Please park in the designated area opposite the barn. Following the field trip, there will be an opportunity to meet with Joseph Taylor's daughter, Mary Taylor, who has offered to share stories of her father. Her studio is nearby.

Leaders: *Tom Nash and Sheryl Gracewski 585-261-6975 and co-leader Steve Melcher 585-746-8078*

JUN 30

Sunday

BARNHART'S CAMP AND KEENEY SWAMP

Travel throughout the diverse landscapes of northern Allegany County, 20 minutes south of Letchworth State Park. Grassland, woodland, pond, and swampland species such as Prairie and Mourning Warblers, bluebirds, Pied-billed Grebes, and maybe a bittern or two should be seen. This trip generally goes all day, so we can see as much as possible! Meet at Shop N' Save in Nunda on Route 408 at **7:30 a.m.** Lunch at Barnhart's camp is a trip tradition—they grill the hot dogs! Bring a dish to pass—your choice (but this is optional).

Leaders: *Jerry & Carolyn Barnhart 585-385-4026 and co-leaders Rick Stevens 585-689-1882 and Tom and Jeanne Verhulst 585-473-9229*

There are no field trips in July!



Don't forget to make your reservation for the RBA picnic on June 13! See the notice on P. 9 for more information. Everyone has a good chat at the picnic!

Welcome to the Flock



Join us in welcoming these 16 new members to the RBA.

Catherine Bowne
Carolyn Braddock
Fred Cromey
Trevor Donovan & family
Mary Ann DuPré
Kathy Edelman
Annabelle Foos
Julia Garver
Kate Graham
Sara Jenks
Corinne Lake & family
Lynn Musgraves
Kent & Mia Newell
Michael & Susan Stinson
Jane & Dan Sullivan
Cynthia Welch & Charles Anderson

Current RBA Membership as of May 14 is 409. (Membership at this time last year was 377.) The total comprises: household members (378), young birders (8), 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



In January 2018, I was birding alone along the Log Cabin Road in Durand-Eastman Park. The Coast Guard (I think) was conducting rescue training on Eastman Lake, but

otherwise there was very little activity – avian or human. As I walked along the road, I kept my eyes up

and my ears open, just enjoying the afternoon.

That all changed when I approached the first shelter. Two young women – maybe late high school or early college aged – were sitting on the fence rails near the Acorn Shelter, and 2 young men were back in the trees. The young men had what appeared to be a machete, and they were hacking at trees down in a dell.

I stopped – frozen for a moment – wondering what to do. I weighed my options as I raised my binoculars and pretended to look at a non-existent bird. I felt alone and vulnerable, and 4 high school kids with a machete felt like an unpredictable and potentially threatening situation. On the other hand, why should I let these kids determine where I could go and what I could do?

My decision made, I continued walking up the road. I hadn't gone far before the boys started calling up the hill to me, asking me if I had any drugs or alcohol. This time I didn't freeze or even hesitate. I turned and walked out of the park and back to my car where I shook with fury that my day had been shattered.

I was reminded of this incident last week when I read "When Women Run the Bird World" on the Audubon website. The article profiles women who, in different ways, are working to make birding friendlier for other women. The Phoebes are a women-centric birding group in Florida who embrace a collaborative rather than competitive approach to birding. Molly Adams founded the Feminist Bird Club in NYC to provide a safe birding environment for all, but especially for people from marginalized groups. Judith Mirembeg began the Uganda Women Birders Club to train women to be birders and birding tour guides, and to connect them with job opportunities in the avian tourism industry. More recently she launched Women Adventures Africa — a birding company that employs women from the Uganda Women Birders Club. Kim Kaufman uses her role as Director of Black Swamp Bird Observatory (home of the Biggest Week in American Birding) to advocate for inclusivity at all levels of birding from the

backyard to the festival speaker's circuit to leadership roles in major ornithological organizations.

The article prompted me to think about what barriers to birding exist in Rochester. Is personal safety a concern for many? Are interesting birding locations accessible to all regardless of mobility? Does the RBA offer programming that appeals to people of different genders, economic and social backgrounds, and cultures? Does the local birding community warmly welcome newcomers, or do we treat novices with disdain when they can't identify a goldfinch?

I won't soon forget the cold, hollow feeling in my chest and belly as I sat in my car that January afternoon. It's a bitter thing to be thwarted, and I hope that no other Rochester birders ever have to feel that they can't bird when, or where, or how they like. So I'll leave you with a simple exhortation to reach out to your fellow birders both new and aspiring, and make inclusion in birding a new intention. Share an owl sighting. Take an elderly neighbor (or a young one!) to your favorite accessible hotspot. Join the RBA as we look to partner with groups in the city to bring birding to urban youth. Enjoy the enthusiasm of non-birders who are agog about eagles, and encourage them to keep their eyes on the sky. Birding can be a really big tent, and it can be barrier-free if we work to make it that way.

Editor's Corner
Jay Greenberg

Some Thoughts on the Late Bill Symonds



When I joined the RBA as a beginning birder in 1991, Bill, although younger than me, was already a very accomplished birder who had served the RBA in many capacities,

(continued on the next page)

(Editor's corner, continued)

including president, field trip leader and statistics (records) chair. He quickly became one of my favorite field trip leaders and helped me to get several life birds. In 1995, although I still considered myself to be a beginner, I was tapped to be his co-leader on a field trip. It was the first of many we led together, but I was always in awe of his birding skills and knowledge. I was particularly impressed by his ability to identify birds flying over Lake Ontario that seemed to be mere specks on the horizon.

In addition to being devoted to the RBA, Bill was very devoted to his ailing father who predeceased him, according to Bob Spahn. Bill's birding activities ended almost 10 years ago when he was disabled by a stroke, but I was sad to hear that he passed away this May. For more about him, see the article on p. 6 by Dominic Sherony.

RBA IN THE FIELD

High Acres Nature Area 4/20/2019

For myself, the April trip to High Acres Nature Area is a trip I wait for with much anticipation. It is the first trip in the new year on which we see returning passerines, as well as a mix of migrants. Close-up looks at birds with binoculars seems like quite a treat after so many long views with scopes across snow, ice and water.

April 20th presented a very gray, wet landscape, but fortunately, a calm one with no wind. A light mist greeted 19 birders, 2 of them new to RBA. We made our jokes about conditions, spotted a few parking lot birds, and then we were off.

Sometimes, weather can disappoint, and it did this day, but the birds did not. We heard Virginia Rail calling, saw a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher flitting, and even flushed 3 Wilson's Snipe. At one point, a Barn, a Tree and a Northern Rough-winged Swallow perched on a single tree branch.

The ducks were there, too. Ring-necked, American Wigeon, and

Blue-winged Teal were highlights. Sparrows included Chipping, Swamp, Song, and White-throated. When we located a few warblers, the silent thrill people were feeling was palpable. Those Yellow-rumped and Palms were the first warblers of the spring season for most of us.

Add to that checklist a kingfisher, a medley of woodpeckers, a sitting kestrel, and fly overs by a Cooper's Hawk, a Red-tailed Hawk and an Osprey. I think every birder was glad that they had showed up on such a gray, great day for nice looks at 47 bird species!

Rosemary Reilly, Gayle Lazoration and Brian Rohrs

Highland Park 4/24/2019

Leaders: Janet Miles and Jeanne Verhulst

On a 44°, cloudy, and windy morning, 26 hardy birders assembled opposite the Highland Park Conservatory. Expectations were not high due to the weather, but as we stood there, a Tufted Titmouse was spotted and a Chipping Sparrow was heard. As we walked to the site of the old Children's Pavilion, a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls took off from the reservoir. Then, all had decent looks at a singing Chipping Sparrow and glimpses of Ruby-crowned Kinglets. It was fun to see a Hairy Woodpecker poking its head out of a hole, and then, from a near-by hole, a Northern Flicker also poked its head out so we could enjoy both at the same time! As we strolled along the walks, we admired many flowering trees and daffodils. In areas with leaf litter, a Fox Sparrow, White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, a Hermit Thrush, and an Eastern Towhee were seen. A vocal Brown Thrasher was both seen and heard by all. We caught a quick view of a Broad-winged Hawk, and a little later, a Sharp-shinned Hawk zoomed over us. In all, we tallied 33 species for the morning—not bad for a less than ideal day for birding! Thanks to all who came out for the trip. Lots of good spotters contributed to the tally.

Jeanne Verhulst

Cobbs Hill Park 5/1/2019

Twenty-five people, including 4 from Canada who had previously arranged to join us, showed up at Cobbs Hill Park on a morning that featured cloudy and threatening skies and temperatures in the mid-forties. One group led by Jeanne, with assistance from Tom Nash and Sheryl Gracewski, decided to first walk the perimeter of the reservoir, where they enjoyed moderate success in finding some kinglets and warblers. The other group led by Tom Verhulst and Sue also spent some time birding near the treetop level before making the traditional descent into the Washington Grove proper.

In the end, both groups wound up seeing pretty much the same things, and we ended with a somewhat disappointing total of 34 species, considering that this trip often yields many more than that. Highlights were Yellow-rumped, Black-and-white, and Black-throated Green Warblers, Blue-headed Vireos, an Ovenbird, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a singing Eastern Towhee, and a young Red-tailed Hawk perched low in a tree.

Fans of irony will note that the winds shifted to the southwest later that day, and that the park was full of birds the next morning. Sigh! Such is birding.

Tom Verhulst, Jeanne Verhulst, and Sue Robertson

Braddock Bay and Owl Woods 4/28/2019

On a cold, cloudy 38° morning, 4 Buffalo Ornithological Society members (1 of whom is an RBA member also) made the trip to Braddock Bay and joined me and ONE other RBA member for a shot at a few migrants. We also picked up 2 observers who meant to join an owl prowl, but found us instead. At least, it wasn't snowing like the morning before, but locals knew

conditions weren't favorable for migrants.

We started at the hawk lookout and found the bay to have lingering Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Lesser Scaup, Redhead and American Coot. Date-appropriate species included Common Loon, Wood Duck, Common Gallinule, and calling American Bittern. Marsh Wren sang constantly and finally showed off for everyone.

Raptors are the main hope on this field trip, and the lack of precipitation allowed 2 Bald Eagles, 2 Ospreys, 2 Northern Harriers and 1 each Sharp-shinned, Red-tailed and Broad-winged Hawk to get up and pass.

We quickly got out of the cold breeze and went to the owl woods at Manitou Beach Road. A couple of White-throated Sparrows, Palm and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Hermit Thrush, plus overhead Purple Finch and Pine Siskin were reminders that it was really spring. The highlight came when we were shown where a Saw-whet Owl was roosting, and everyone got to see it resting comfortably. I suggested we work a little harder and walk the pines along the parkway to look for others, but only came out with muddy feet.

In all we found 63 species on the day. I give David Gordon credit for bringing his friendly group along despite the forecast and proving that, yes Rochester birders, birds can be found on less than perfect days.

Mike Tetlow

Taylor Marsh 5/4/2019

The weather wasn't very May-like, but cloudy skies with a temperature in the upper 40s did not prevent a big turnout for this, the 3rd annual RBA field trip at Taylor Marsh. (At least, there were no rough winds to shake the darling buds, and it didn't rain. As it turned out, this was one of the few rain-free days in the first half of the month.) It was also a joint event with the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society (BSPS). The 30+ participants also included bird-

ers from the Mendon Foundation and a group from Finger Lakes Community College consisting of Professor Maura Sullivan and 9 of her students. The smallish off-road Taylor Marsh parking area was soon filled to capacity, and many cars were parked on the shoulder of Allens Hill Road. The trip was led by Lynn Braband and Jay Greenberg for both RBA and BSPS.

Because of the large size of the group, we split into 2 subgroups with Lynn and Jay each leading one. When the 2.5 hour trip was over, pooling 3 individual checklists resulted in a total of 60 species. To be sure, probably nobody heard or saw all of them, and some only saw or heard a fraction of this number. It is hard to say what were the highlights, but probably everyone got to see a distant perched Bald Eagle and most at least heard Bobolinks and meadowlarks. Some participants were excited about hearing an American Bittern booming in the marsh, but not everyone was able to hear the faint distant calls. The iconic Sandhill Cranes of Taylor Marsh were on only one of the checklists. Presumably, they were heard only, and we don't know how many heard them.

In any case, the trip made it clear that Taylor Marsh is a very birdy location.

Jay Greenberg and Lynn Braband

Amy's Ponds 5/12/2019

Light rain didn't stop a group of 10 birders from a great morning walk at Amy's Ponds, a conservation easement held by Genesee Land Trust, along the lake in Ontario. A special thanks goes to landowners Janet and Bob Smith for allowing access to their private property and Amanda and Keith Hatch for guiding us around their trails.

The field trip got off to a great start with a variety of birds, including Black-throated Blue Warblers, Black-and-white Warblers, American Redstarts, Yellow Warblers, and more. As we worked our way around the first pond we got some

great views of other warblers, including Nashville, Cape May, Magnolia, Palm, Northern Parula, and Chestnut-sided.

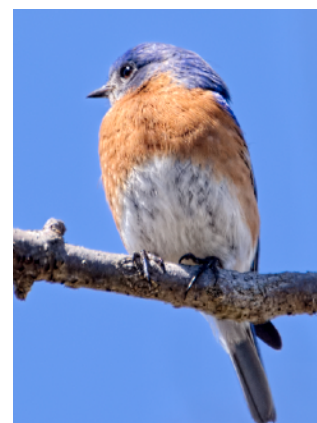
As we approached the second pond we saw an immature Black-crowned Night-Heron that sat above the trail, allowing participants to get good looks and photos of this gorgeous bird. The second pond provided us with sights of Wood Ducks, Green Herons, and more warblers, including Common Yellowthroats, and Northern Waterthrushes; also, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers.

The second half of the walk took us through the woods and along a medium-sized field where we heard calls from Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, and Black-throated Green Warblers, and got to see multiple Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, bluebirds, and White-throated Sparrows.

Kevin Farrell and Tom Nash



A male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**.



A male **Eastern Bluebird**. Photos by Jay Greenberg.

In Memoriam

Bill Symonds

Bill Symonds, who passed away this May at the age of 62, was an active birder for many years and participated in the RBA in many different ways. Bill spent most of his life in Brockport. He attended SUNY Brockport and there, he met Chip Perrigo and Roger Clark. Until these 2 close friends moved away from the Rochester area, they shared a passion for finding birds for many years. Chip later became a professor of biology. For the years I knew Bill, he worked for a vegetable grower in Elba, NY. He did plantings at their greenhouse and made deliveries in the Rochester area. After his friends left, he focused his leisure time on birding at Hamlin Beach State Park.

Bill was very active throughout his birding career in the RBA. He joined the RBA in December of 1975, but his first noteworthy record appeared in November of that year with 150 Evening Grosbeaks seen at Hamlin Beach. He led his first field trip at the age of 19 in 1976. The following year he was a sector leader for the Letchworth-Silver Lake Christmas Bird Count. For many years, he was leader or co-leader of the Bergen Swamp field trip. He continued to lead at least one field trip annually until 2009.

Bill was an active member of the RBA for 34 years and held many offices over that time. In 1980, he was a member of the nominating committee, and he served as RBA president in 1983, 1984, and 1993. He was a director in 1985 and 1986. In 1984, he was field trip chairman and received the Little Gull award for service in 1988. He served 2 long terms as chairman of the statistics committee, from 1985 to 1989 and 1994 to 2008. Starting in 1987, he participated in banding and also worked on the first NYS Breeding Bird Atlas.

But Hamlin Beach was his favorite place. He went there often, whenever he had free time. He would sit on the bench in front of the lodge at Parking Lot 4 and record all the birds he saw. He kept records through the year. Although water birds were his first interest, he recorded any species he considered noteworthy. Bill was always helpful to anyone who wanted more information or to discuss the passing birds. His easy-going manners and kind personality made him very approachable, and he was always forthcoming about sharing his knowledge. When Bret Ewald started the Hamlin Beach Lake Watch study in 1993, Bill was an important participant because he was a principal observer for all 7 years, since he covered the fall lake watch for at least one day a week. Bill

provided all the data for winter records, from December until the end of March, for the 7 years of this survey. We were fortunate to obtain his winter data but it is truly unfortunate that his original data sheets were discarded.

The Rochester birding community missed Bill when he became unable to continue birding because of a debilitating stroke. Nevertheless, he will always be remembered as a kind person who was amazingly generous with his time for Rochester birders.

I would like to thank those who provided some background into Bill's life: Dave and Mike Tetlow, Jeanne Skelly, and Jay Greenberg.

Dominic Sherony



Bill in a characteristic pose at Hamlin Beach State Park in August, 2009. Photo by Dominic Sherony.

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

Ten Days of Birding in Cuba: Part 6

by Monika Herrmann

Day 9 - Sunday. We did some intense birding at Cayo Paredón Grande with the same guide as yesterday, searching for the Thick-billed Vireo, which we finally found. We were told there are only 4 or 5 individuals left on the key since the hurricane. Our guide also tried in vain to find a Bahama Mockingbird. We did see a white morph Reddish Egret, along with Semi-palmated Plover, Osprey, and Cape May and Prairie Warblers. From the causeway, as we headed back to the mainland, our guide spotted Sandwich and Royal Terns, on some far-off rocks. (I could barely see the rocks). We all got out and looked at them through the scope.

Our next stop was at Santa Clara. Once again our itinerary said, "time to explore this beautiful city", but we arrived after dark. I didn't actually see any signs of a city. Hotel Caneyes, a series of cabins, appeared to be out in the country. This was my favorite overnight accommodation. It was scenic and quiet, with faux-thatched roof buildings, beautifully landscaped grounds with walking paths, and charming statues, fountains, and carvings dedicated to the Native Americans who were, sadly, all killed by the Spanish, because they refused to become slaves. And it also had a modest, but well-stocked cafeteria.

Day 10 - Monday. This was really the only day we had time to explore on our own around a hotel before breakfast. As daylight crept up on the morning mists, we walked the beautiful grounds and saw a few birds which had already become familiar to us.



A Thick-billed Vireo. Photo by Jay Greenberg

Havana was about a 4-hour drive, and we arrived just in time for lunch at a very classy restaurant, Cafe del Oriente. After that, Susanna took us on a walking tour of Old Havana, covering the 4 town squares and the history of each. There were little parks here and there, where we saw our last new bird of the trip, the European Collared-Dove. In one park, I recognized a bust of Abraham Lincoln, which surprised me. Susanna said Cuba honors him, among other foreigners who were heroes to human

rights. Our last dinner there was at a place called Atelier, another lovely rooftop restaurant with wonderful food.

After one more uneventful night (and a super breakfast) at the Hotel Sevilla, we were on our way home. Speaking for myself, I was 2 pounds heavier and a lot smarter about Cuba. I never needed to use my emergency antibiotic or even bug repellent; bottled water was plentiful; old classic cars are everywhere and lovingly cared for,

and there are lots of new cars of Asian and European origin; plumbing at times

was a little odd, but it worked, (although there were a couple of times when there should have been hot water, but wasn't); armed militia were not evident; and if Big Brother was watching, I'm sure we bored him to death. That thing about BYOTP - true. Hotels and some restaurants had it. Most restaurants and park loos don't - practical, in a way, I guess. Facilities were generally very clean.

I hope the citizens of Cuba realize what a gem they have for eco-tourism, and that their government will make some wise decisions for the people and the Earth. Someone has to.

Birding in the City of Rochester- Volunteer Opportunities

Are you passionate about connecting people of all ages with birding? Have a few hours to spare this summer as a volunteer for RBA? Then this may be the opportunity for you! This summer, the City of Rochester will be hosting a series of paddling events on two local waterways—the Genesee River and the Erie Canal. RBA has been invited by the city to join in on these paddling events to help point out birds to other participants. These events will take place once a month between June and October. In addition to the paddles, RBA and the City of Rochester are looking at other opportunities to collaborate this summer on events that connect wider audiences to birds, birding, and the outdoors. To get involved with this volunteer opportunity and future opportunities with the City of Rochester, e-mail Kevin Farrell at kmfarrell18@gmail.com.

April 2019 Sightings Report

This April provided a very typical spring-like month, with a bit of snow at the beginning and end, and periods of cool interspersed with spikes of warmth through the month. The more severe storms passed to the south of the region. Temperatures averaged 46.9 °F, 0.6° above normal. Precipitation totaled 2.74", just 0.01" above normal. Snowfall, at 2.2", was 1.7" below normal, but kept the trend of all but one year seeing some snowfall since record keeping began in 1884. Lake Ontario remained cool, and persistent winds from the north, especially late in the month, kept leaf-out near the lakeshore delayed and many arrivals seeming a bit late.

Again, all the expected waterfowl were recorded, and by later in the month the numbers of lingering birds continued the trend to very low numbers. Peak numbers for most species were also low, as illustrated in the maxima in the Noteworthy Records table. Nothing stood out as an especially good count. This continued for the grebes and, now later in the list, the loons. Highlights included 2 male Eurasian Wigeons and a young male Barrow's Goldeneye.

Sandhill Crane numbers passing the hawk watch and also at other expected locations were good. With relatively high water levels, shorebird numbers were low other than a few counts at the Carncross Road area in the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area (NMW-MA). Still, there were some good finds, with American Avocet at Sodus Point, a rare and record early spring Sanderling photographed at Irondequoit Bay outlet, 5 Willets at Irondequoit Bay outlet and later 6 passing off the Town of Greece, and Ruff (female = reeve) and relatively rare spring American Golden-Plovers at Carncross Road.

The gulls and terns were back to more normal numbers after the big counts of last spring. Little Gull was the only scarcer species reported, with one at Sodus Bay and 2 passing Hamlin Beach State Park. Peak counts were all modest, and the numbers of winter species lingering were all low. Arriving terns were at typical to slightly later dates relative to recent springs.

The grouping from loons to vultures under the new list order is often lackluster, but this year we start with a regional first **Magnificent Frigatebird** passing Hamlin Beach on the 27th, seen and photographed by Andy Guthrie and Brian Morse. Continuing, there were many reports of American White Pelican, a record early Least Bittern, Glossy Ibis for a week at Carncross Road, and another passing Black Vulture over Owl Woods. Eleven species were continuing or at typical arrival dates.

At the hawk watch, numbers were pretty good, though a bit slow due to weather in the last week of the month. Over 37,000 is a good total count. Turkey Vultures still outnumbered Broad-winged Hawks for the month. Nearly all species totals for the month and year to date are above last year's totals. There were 11 days with totals over 1,000 birds. Details are presented in the hawk count site online. A lone adult, light morph Swainson's Hawk

was the only real rarity reported. The DEC owl surveys on the 9th and 23rd continued to turn up Short-eared Owls late in the season. Jim Adams again summarized the owl counting at the Owl Woods area on Manitou Beach Road. By month's end another 31 Northern Saw-whet Owls had been added, bringing the season's total to 91, just 10 below the previous record for this tally. Eighteen more Long-eared Owls brought that species' total to 25 for the season. Again, an excellent Northern Flicker movement was noted at several points on the lakeshore at about mid-month.

The Braddock Bay Bird Observatory (BBBO) banding effort was again off to a fairly slow start due to the cool last week of the month, with only 684 new bands. The drop in kinglets and rise in chickadees from 0 to 107 just about accounts for the difference from last year's April total. The Black-capped Chickadee seesaw is just as expected. Many of the late April passerines either just made it in the last few days of the month or slipped into May. Only 4 species of warblers were banded, and only 12 species were reported by month's end. Five passerine species arrived at dates early by the old (1984) summary, but all having been reported earlier yet in the intervening years. The species that often pass in large numbers, such as Blue Jays, American Crows, and American Robins, were not tallied in any really sizable numbers this month, but that will change next month. There were no outstanding counts for especially rare passerine species, Bohemian Waxwing and Evening Grosbeak being the most notable for this month. Once again, Jim Adams supplied detailed commentary of his regular surveys at Oatka Creek Park. His summary for April mirrors the general feelings from others, but with interesting details for the interested reader.

This month there were about 56,542 eBird records submitted and 5% or so additional records from other sources.

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

	2019	2018	10-year Average (2009-2018)
Total species for April	199	193	195.8
New species for the year	52	51	58.6
Total for the year to date	208	202	209.9

Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee

Observers: Jim Adams, Janet Akin, BBBO (Andrea Patterson, *et al.*), John Ballou, Ted Barnett, Jessie Barry, Jim Barry, Mitchell Barry, Doug Beattie, Don Bemont, Linda Clark Benedict, Steven Benedict, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Linda Boutwell, James & Janet Bovitz-Sandefur, Lynn Braband, Joe Brin, Kyle Brock, Beverly Brown, Bob Brown, David Brown (official hawk counter), Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Ken Burdick, Bruce Cady, Brad Carlson, Donna Carter, Kelly Close, Andrew Consler,

Zekiel Cornell, Lydia Culbert, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Gregg Dashnau, Willie D'Anna, Lisa De-Francesco, Kim Denise, Michael DeWispelaere, Deborah Dohne, Steve Donohue, Bill Ebersbach, Diane Egan, George Ford, James Fry, Kyle Gage, Nathan Garber, Andrew Garland, Janis George, Candy Giles, Christopher Goetz, John Gordinier, Karla Gordinier, Shannon Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Ralph & Georgia Guenther, Michael Gullo, Andrew Guthrie, Richard Guthrie, Anita Gwara, Helen & Chris Haller, David & Vanna Harding, Meena Haribal, Kim Hartquist, Christina Hoh, Katlyn Hojnacki, Jennalee Holzschuh, Dick Horsey, Bill & Mari Howe, Alec Humann, Carolyn Jacobs, Molly Jacobson, Alyssa Johnson, Nicholas Kachala, Logan Kahle, Amy Kahn, Tom Kerr, Jim Kimball, Kathy Kirsch, Renee Kittleman, J. Gary Kohlenberg, Chris Lajewski, Mike Lanzone, Tom Lathrop, Leona Lauster, Greg Lawrence, Gayle Lazoration, Tim Lenz, Joan Lindberg, Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Melissa Mance-Coniglio, Cynthia Marino, Patricia Martin, Lauri Mattle, Kenneth McCarthy, Jacob McCartney, Kevin McGann, Jay McGowan, Bob McGuire, Jim Miles, Mark

Miller, Adrielle Mitchell, Ann Mitchell, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Linda Mott, Chan Nam, Allen Nash, Ann Nash, Tom Nash, Hollis Noble, Rivka Noll, Matt Nusstein, Dave Nutter, Dave Odell, Jay Ovsiovitch, Michael Palermo, Bonnie Parton, Andrea Patterson, Mary Ann Perks, Scott Peterson, Norma Platt, Jo Popma, Jay Powell, Mike Powers, Bill Purcell, Nicholas Pusateri, Carolyn Ragan, Rosemary Reilly, Thomas Riley, Dave Robertson, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Kevin Rybczynski, Robin Salisbury, Livia Santana, Michael Scheibel, Karl Schmidt, Mickey Scilingo, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Judy Slein, Pat & Tom Smith, Roger Smith, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Donna Mason-Spier, Chris Stanger, Rick Stevens, Rebecca Suomala, Steve Taylor, Michael & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Sarah Toner, John & Bonnie VanDerMeid, Alison Van Keuren, Jeanne Verhulst, Jeff Ward, Laura Ward, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, David Wheeler, Alex Wiebe, Joe Wing, Paul Wolter, Jim Wood, Martha Zettel, Ken Zidell. There were about 369 eBird observers for the month, only some of whom are included here.

Don't Miss the RBA Annual Picnic

Thursday, June 13, 2019, 6:00 p.m.

Rain or Shine!

Burroughs Audubon Nature Club

Railroad Mills Rd., Victor

(directions below)

A grill and charcoal and ice will be provided. You bring:

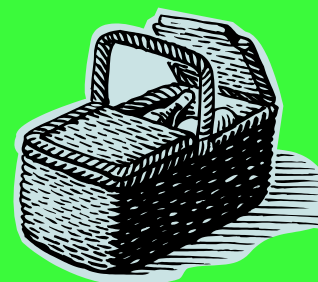
- your own meat to grill
- a dish to pass
- your place setting
- your beverage
- your binoculars!

To make reservations, contact

Wanda Thistle by phone (585-236-1834) or

e-mail (thistlew@yahoo.com)

Directions: From Route 96 turn onto Fishers Road, go 1.3 miles. Turn right onto Railroad Mills Road, go 0.2 miles. BANC parking is on the right.



Plants for a Bird-Friendly Garden

by Amy Kahn, RBA Conservation Chair

Part Two, Shrubs and Trees

By incorporating native plants into your landscape, you're creating a sanctuary that benefits wildlife, especially birds. Last month covered perennials and vines to plant. This month covers shrubs and trees.

Native Shrubs:



Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

Showy flowers and fruit make buttonbush a popular choice in native gardens and along pond shores. Buttonbush is native to the wetlands of the eastern half of the United States, easily grown in moist, organic soils in

full sun to part shade. Buttonbush grows very well in wet soils, including flood conditions and shallow standing water. It adapts to a wide range of soils except droughty dry ones.

Birds that love them: In addition to beautifying a pond, they also provide seeds for seed eaters including ducks and other waterfowl. Their magnificent flowers also attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and other pollinators.



Elderberry (*Sambucus* spp.)

Elderberry is a versatile plant that has been used to make dye and medicine by indigenous people across the United States, as well as being a showy shrub for the land-

scape. *Sambucus canadensis* is native to most of the eastern United States, while red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*) is found in most states. The fragrant white flowers and dark purple to black fruit are valued by many bird species. Elderberry helps our native bees and other beneficial insects as well. It tolerates a wide variety of wet to dry soils, but prefers rich, moist, slightly acid soil.

Birds that love them: Its bright dark blue fruits (which we use for jam) provide food for many birds within its range, including the Brown Thrasher and Red-eyed Vireo, and dozens of other birds.

Dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.)



Nothing says spring quite like a dogwood full of newly-bloomed flowers. Choose any of the *Cornus* including *Cornus stolonifera*, *Cornus sericea*, *Cornus alternifolia*, or *Cornus florida*. You can find native species for any soil condition. Dogwoods do best in part to full sun. Birds love to nectar at the flowers and eat the fruits.

Birds that love them: Cardinals, titmice, and bluebirds all dine on the fleshy fruit of dogwood shrubs.



Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)

Chokecherry is a shrub or small tree which prefers full sun to light shade and moist to dry-mesic conditions. Many kinds of soil are tolerated, including those that contain sand, silt, loam, glacial till, clay, or rocky material. This woody plant also tolerates soil with varying pH (from acidic to alkaline). Chokecherries are also important sources of food to many

vertebrate animals, including birds and mammals.

Birds that love them: The fruit is consumed by many songbirds, and woodpeckers. Examples of such birds include cardinal, Blue Jay, Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Wood Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Red-headed Woodpecker.

Native Trees:



Oak (*Quercus* spp.)

These large, beautiful trees are a favorite for people and wildlife, not to mention the great summer shade they provide. These trees are also an integral part of the food chain, so planting just one really helps your yard's diversity. If you want to plant an oak, be sure to plant one native to our area, such as the majestic red oak, white or burr oak.

Birds that love them: Similarly, many species of birds use the cavities and crooks of these trees for nesting and shelter. Birds are also drawn to the abundance of insects and acorns that are found on oaks. To learn more, check out Doug Tallamy's work.



Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*)

Wild black cherry is fast-growing and adaptable. It prefers full sun to light shade,

moist to slightly dry conditions, and fertile soil containing loam, sand, clay-loam, or some rocky material. Too much shade from larger canopy trees will stunt growth. The nectar and pollen of the flowers attract many pollinators, including bees, hummingbirds and butterflies.

Birds that love them: The fruit of wild black cherry is an important



source of food to many upland game birds and songbirds including turkey, orioles, woodpeckers, thrushes, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and goldfinch.



Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)

White pine prefers full to partial sunlight, well-drained conditions (moist to dry-mesic), and a rather loose soil that lacks clay. It adapts particularly well to soil containing sand or sandy loam with a pH of 4.0–7.0.

The seeds are eaten by red squirrels and such birds as crossbills and Pine Siskins. Since white pine provides dense cover, some birds like to nest in pine trees.

Birds that love them: These species include the Blue-headed Vireo, Pine Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Bald Eagle, and several hawks. For the same reason, some birds prefer to roost in pines; this includes the Evening Grosbeak and owls.

American Crabapple (*Malus coronaria*)

American crabapple is very adaptable to a wide variety of environmental conditions, including soils that are rich, average, poor, or rocky, and of acidic, neutral, or alkaline pH. This species likes moist, well-drained soils, tolerates drier soils. It does best in full sun but will tolerate shade.

American crabapple has flowers that are the last of the crabapples to bloom in mid-spring, being pink in bud, and



white to white-pink when fully open. They are noted as being extremely fragrant, and have longer pedicels than most other members of the genus *Malus*. The flowers clothe the nearly bare branches of this native tree in mid-spring, just as the vegetative buds are beginning to break

with small green foliage. The native species has small fruits that are very bitter to the taste. Birds tend to ignore the fruit in favor of others through the fall, but rely on it as a food source in late winter and early spring when little else is available.

Birds that love them: In the spring, the early flowers attract migrating warblers and hummingbirds. Some years, I've had Chipping Sparrow or Blue-winged Warblers nest in it. I have had flocks of Cedar Waxwings or over 50 robins feeding in late February until the tree is denuded. Same philosophy as ice wine—the freezing softens and sweetens the fruit. Birds associated with American crabapple are American Robin, Baltimore Oriole, Blue Jay, Cedar Waxwing, Eastern Towhee, Gray Catbird, House Finch, Northern Cardinal, Northern Mockingbird, Pileated Woodpecker, Purple Finch, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue winged Warbler, and Ruby-throated Hummingbird.



A Milbert's tortoiseshell butterfly on a buttonbush flower. Photo by Jay Greenberg.



ROCHESTER BIRDING ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 92055
1335 Jefferson Road
Rochester, NY 14692-9998

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, 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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E-mail

ajpforbusiness@gmail.com
tnjverhulst@rochester.rr.com
brohrs@rochester.rr.com
kimlw@earthlink.net
rbaconservation@gmail.com
kmfarrell18@gmail.com
tigerlily681236@gmail.com
lizmagnanti@gmail.com
thistlew@yahoo.com

RBA Committee Chairs

Circulation	Sheryl Gracewski	287 Willowen Drive, Rochester NY 14609	grace@me.rochester.edu
Communication	Liz Magnanti	63 Hamilton Street, Rochester, NY 14620	lizmagnanti@gmail.com
Conservation	Amy Kahn	5 Cranswick Lane, Rochester NY 14618	rbaconservation@gmail.com
Editor	Jay Greenberg	15 Neville Lane, Rochester NY 14618	LittleGullEditor@gmail.com
Field Trips	Catherine Ballard	140 Eastwood Trail, Rochester NY 14622	cballard@rochester.rr.com
Historian	Jeanne Skelly	420 Chili-Scottsville Road, Churchville NY 14428	
Membership Outreach	Adrianna Anderson	68 Del Rio Lane, Rochester NY 14622	adrianna.m.anderson@gmail.com
Member Data	Jo Taylor	967 Meigs Street, Rochester NY 14620	jhtaylor@frontiernet.net
Nominating	Catherine Ballard	140 Eastwood Trail, Rochester NY 14622	cballard@rochester.rr.com
Item Sales	Nancy Poeth	1158 Lake Road, Webster NY 14580	ngpoeth@yahoo.com
Records	Andrea Patterson	144 Greystone Lane #24, Rochester, NY 14618	ajpforbusiness@gmail.com
Social	Wanda Thistle	116 Deerhurst Lane Apt. 3, Webster, NY 14580	thistlew@yahoo.com
Young Birders	Andrea Patterson	144 Greystone Lane #24, Rochester, NY 14618	ajpforbusiness@gmail.com
Young Birder Liaison	Nick Kachala		nicholaskach@gmail.com
Webmaster	Laura Kammermeier	55 Ontario Street, Honeoye Falls NY 14472	lmk88@rochester.rr.com
Web Content Manager	Shelley Patterson	7 Falling Brook Road, Fairport NY 14450	shelpat22@gmail.com