



Bittle Gull

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

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

SUMMER AND EARLY FALL 2019 EVENTS & BIRDING FIELD TRIPS



There are no RBA meetings in July or August and no field trips in July. The next meeting will be on Sep. 12. Have a nice vacation!

AUG 3
Saturday

CONESUS INLET STATE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Explore this expansive wetland for Virginia Rails and Wood Duck families. We've seen eagles on a reliable basis, Cliff Swallows, and more. We will hope for Red-headed Woodpeckers, but they have not been seen recently. Meet at Vitale Park on Route 20A in Lakeville at **7:30 a.m.** The park entrance is by the Lakeville post office on the south (lake) side of Route 20A and across the street from Smith's Hardware. There's a possibility of a trip extension to the Geneseo Airport area. **Extra spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very helpful.**

Leader: Jim Kimball 585-243-0316 and co-leaders Christina Hoh 973-224-7009 and Nick Kachala 585-750-5536

AUG 11
Sunday

BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP -- MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Learn more about the fall migration of shorebirds in this nearby birding treasure. We'll visit key spots you'll want to revisit again and again! Meet in the Bushnell's Basin Park and Ride lot at **1:00 p.m.** The Park and Ride lot is off Route 96 just south of Exit 27 from I-490. Alternatively, meet up with the group at the first stop, the Montezuma Visitor Center at **2:00 p.m.** **Extra spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very helpful.**

Leader: John Boettcher 585-671-9639 co-leaders Sheryl Gracewski & Tom Nash 585-261-6975

AUG 25
Sunday

MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

We'll be looking for ducks and shorebirds in migration. Expect to see herons, eagles and possibly falcons. Meet at the Montezuma Visitor Center at **10:30 a.m.** **Extra spotting scopes and FRS radios would be helpful.**

Leader: Dominic Sherony 585-223-7353 and co-leader Mike Tetlow 585-425-7849

SEP 7
Saturday

BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP—CHARLOTTE AND BADGEROW PARK

We'll be looking for shorebirds, warblers, and other fall migrants in Greece and environs. We'll look for gulls in many plumages and some shorebirds, too, at Charlotte Beach. George W. Badgerow Park is a small area that offers good vantage points along pleasant trails, with the occasional surprise rarity. Meet at **8:00 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.**

Leader: John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and co-leader Rosemary Reilly 585-748-0802

SEP 8
Sunday

MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

We'll be looking for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. Bald Eagles and other migrants are likely. Meet at the Montezuma Visitor Center at **2:00 p.m.** **Extra spotting scopes and FRS radios would be very helpful.**

Leaders: Mike Tetlow 585-425-7849 and Dominic Sherony 585-223-7353

SEPT 14
Saturday

NEW! EAST SPIT

The newly created island off what is known as the East Spit has become a major attraction for migrating shorebirds. In order to view them, however, we will need to get to the island by wading across a small channel that is knee-deep water. Wear boots or water shoes (not barefoot) and shorts or pants that roll up. Meet at **8:30 a.m.** in the parking lot at the end of East. Manitou Road. Exit the Ontario State Parkway at the East Manitou Road exit, pass Braddock Bay Park, and turn left at the Westpoint Marina (105 East Manitou Road, Rochester, NY 14612). Drive through the marina to get to the parking lot at the end of the lane. **Extra spotting scopes would be helpful.**

Leaders: Greg Lawrence 585-730-2553 and Dick Horsey 585-435-2837

Welcome to the Flock



Join us in welcoming these 11 new members to the RBA.

Barbara Barg
Janice Linehan
Jessica Mantaro
Finn McIntosh (Young Birder)
Karen McKay
Mary Moore
Clinton Swingle
Ginny Tucker
Jenna Welch (Young Birder)
Stephanie Williams
Brenda Williamson

Current RBA membership as of June 14 is 420. The total comprises: household members (387), young birders (10), corporate member (1), *Little Gull* subscribers (3) and *Little Gull* complimentary subscribers (19).

Jo Taylor
Membership Data

Adrianna Anderson
Membership Outreach

President's Column

Andrea Patterson



It may seem like summer has barely begun, but already the RBA Board of Directors is looking towards fall and winter – and even towards 2020. We have some exciting new (or returning) programs in the works, and we need your help. Read on to find your perfect volunteer niche!

Call it Birding Bootcamp, Birding 101, or Birding School . . . We're bringing back this popular intro to birding class in a new format! This

fall, the RBA will be offering a 2-3 hour class aimed at people who have little to no birding experience. The class will cover basic topics like choosing optics, what to wear, and where to go. Our hope is that class participants will be inspired to join some of the fantastic fall field trips, and perhaps eventually join the club as well. We are actively looking for committee members to help plan the event, for presenters to share their birding wisdom, and even for suggestions of what you wish you knew when you first started birding.

The RBA is all about connecting people to birds, and this summer we're collaborating with the City of Rochester to help bring birding to some less traditional communities. Once a month between June and October, the RBA will participate in paddling events on the Genesee River and the Erie Canal, to help point out birds to participants. We are also hoping to schedule birding walks in connection with the Earth Explorers program. We are looking for people to help with both types of events.

For the last two years, the RBA has participated in Halloween at the Market. This event brings together several dozen community organizations on the Sunday preceding Halloween. The trick-or-treaters have to "sing for their supper," as they have to participate in a little game or activity tied to each organization's mission in order to get the goods. The event has been growing every year, and the RBA needs 2 or 3 volunteers who love kids (and who thrive in just a bit of chaos) to help run this year's booth.

Birding Bits is back on the agenda for the fall season, and we need volunteers to put together short presentations for our monthly meetings. You don't have to be an expert! In fact, one of the best ways to learn is to teach! If you are interested in sharing with folks the best way to distinguish a Lesser from a Greater Scaup, or maybe some useful tips on separating confusing fall warblers, then this is for you.

Finally – and here's the big one – the board of directors has started the process of finding our replace-

ments. We'll be reaching out to first find a chair of the nominating committee, and we'll be tasking that committee with finding a new president, a new secretary, and perhaps some new board members as well. I know folks are often reluctant to serve on the board because they aren't sure what the board really does, or what they might have to offer. Let me assure you that enthusiasm and energy are the most prized assets in our board members! If you have ever thought that you might be interested in serving the RBA some day, the board is happy to sit down over coffee and chat about what we do and how you might fit in.

The RBA is really only as strong as its corps of volunteers. Without people to plan and lead field trips, to find speakers for the monthly meeting, to organize our annual dinner and picnic, to piece together noteworthy sightings and records, to maintain our website and social media pages, to deliver a monthly newsletter, and to do dozens of other un-noticed things (like keep the membership records and pay our bills), the RBA would dissolve.

So – here's to all of you who have already pitched in, and here's to hoping we can get more of you involved in the months to come! All it takes is a quick email (to Andrea Patterson at ajpforbusiness@gmail.com) to get started!

Editor's Corner

Jay Greenberg

When it rains, it pours! This issue has a plethora of field trip reports,



more than I can remember from any recent year. I'd like to thank the contributors for leading trips in sometimes lousy weather as well as writing the reports. Keep them coming!

The 2019 RBA Picnic

What a great RBA picnic at the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club facility! Early arrivals managed to see some sunshine, 2 flickers up in a cottonwood tree, and a tulip tree in bloom – not bad for a rainy day.

Thirty-six people showed up with delicious appetizers, main dishes and desserts. And it actually did rain! I'm glad we set up the tables in the lodge. But everyone seemed to have a great time catching up with old friends and making new friends, whether at tables or gathered around the 2 grills as they cooked their food.

I have to thank all for coming and making this such an enjoyable event – even if it rained.

Wanda Thistle, Social Chair



RBA IN THE FIELD

Four Mile Creek Preserve 5/5/2019

Two dozen birders gathered in the parking lot on a cloudy 45 °F morning. Yellow-rumped and Pine Warblers in the close trees provided encouragement, given that the previous day was slow. Groups of warblers at several points on the walk yielded 12 species (Black-and-white, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded, Northern Parula, Magnolia, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue, Palm, Pine, Yellow-

rumped, and Black-throated Green). Most commonly expected species were noted. The walk ended with a Yellow-throated Vireo near the starting point. With the help of many experienced birders, we saw 57 species.

Tom and Nancy Poeth

Cornwall Preserve and Huckleberry Swamp 5/7/2019

As the group gathered at B. Forman Park in Pultneyville, a quick scan of

the lake found Common Loon, Red-breasted Mergansers, and Long-tailed Ducks. Due to the temporary closure of Beechwood State Park, we proceeded to Cornwall Nature Preserve just west of Pultneyville. Light rain and a mid 40s temperature followed our group of 12 for the entire trip. The meadow was quiet, but improved as we reached the shoreline. Groups of warblers and sparrows followed us as we walked along the cliff. The woods at the west end of the preserve were quiet. As we were exiting the woods, a burst of

warblers rewarded us. Nashville, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Black-and-white, Palm, and Black-throated Green Warblers were found in the mix. A quick exit through the Lakeview Cemetery concluded the first part of the trip. A stop at the east entrance parking lot of Beechwood was canceled due to the rain. When we arrived at Huckleberry Swamp, the gate was closed. Not to give up, we walked the boardwalk, adding American Redstart, Blackburnian Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. We found Yellow-throated, Blue-headed and Warbling Vireos. At the southern part of the boardwalk, a Virginia Rail was heard but not seen. On a cold, rainy day, we noted 62 species, including 9 warbler species. Our thanks to Kevin Farrell, our co-leader, and the others who persevered through the cold rain.

Tom and Nancy Poeth

Ontario Pathways 5/8/2019

Ontario Pathways, combined with fabulous weather and a varied array of birds, made for an outstanding day in the field! This is a linear trail (an old rail bed), about one mile in, and then a mile back out. The terrain is level and graded, dropping off on either side to the wooded stretches that border it. Flint Creek winds its way along the route, actually crossing under the trail at 2 different bridges. Our only divergence from the main trail occurred where a power line greenway intersects the path. This particular area is a haven for Yellow Warblers and Common Yellowthroats, Gray Catbird, American Goldfinch and more.

About 50 feet from the parking lot, our group of 13 was greeted by 2 Nashville Warblers, a sign that it was going to be a very good birding day! Soon, we added Palm, Northern Parula, and Black-throated Blue Warblers. A Scarlet Tanager female lingered on a branch overhead. Then, a Black-and-white Warbler appeared, as well as a Black-throated Green! Yellow-rumped Warblers flitted here and there, making themselves difficult to count.

They are happier that way! Our guesstimate is 50 birds. When we made it to the first bridge, we were treated to a Cape May and a Chestnut-sided Warbler putting on a show in the sunlit, flowering trees. Beauty was everywhere!

This trip was a mere month or so ago and at that time we were all still feeling a bit 'bird starved'! Good looks at Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Great Crested Flycatcher, phoebe, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and 3 species of Vireo (Red-eyed, Blue-headed & Warbling) let us know that our 'bird-life' was right again!

Our 2 mile+ walk/adventure took over 4 hours! Fifty bird species were observed. What a great group effort!

Rosemary Reilly

Powder Mills Park and BANC Sanctuary 5/18/2019

As we gathered at the Fish Hatchery in Powder Mills Park, we were already in bonus territory: after several years of cold wet trips, the morning was dry, sunny and warming up quickly. While the cars were still coming, almost our first birds were a male Scarlet Tanager in the sun and a Pileated Woodpecker – a portent of a good morning of birding to come. And still the cars came. And came. And came. We ended up with 35 people, which presented something of a management challenge, but a welcome one.

We birded around the immediate area for about half an hour, interrupting a Great Blue Heron intent on acquiring his trout breakfast, and adding a respectable number of species to our list, although we were disappointed not to see or hear more warblers. Clearly, the front that came through the previous evening had proved the familiar birding saying – "you should have been here yesterday!"

Our next segment covered much of the Daffodil Meadow trail and we inevitably and spontaneously split into 2 main groups during the walk.

Most people got to see Magnolia and Black-throated Blue Warblers, Northern Parula, and Yellow-throated and Red-eyed Vireos. We enjoyed watching Red-bellied and Pileated Woodpeckers at their nest holes and, while we were looking at them, a very young fawn scampered through the woods just feet in front of us.

After returning to our cars, we gathered at the south end of the park, and about half of our original party drove on to the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club (BANC) Sanctuary on Railroad Mills Road. It had turned into a spectacular late spring morning, and we had a delightful hike around the sanctuary, mostly along the banks of Irondequoit Creek. We were rewarded with good views of Great Crested and 'Traill's' Flycatchers, Eastern Bluebird and Chestnut-sided Warbler among others.

As we gathered at the BANC clubhouse to complete our checklist, we all agreed that we had enjoyed a lovely morning experience. We counted 58 species, thanks to those with sharper eyes and ears than mine, and I am particularly grateful to my co-leaders, Tom and Jeanne Verhulst, who helped tremendously with managing the large groups and assisting the many beginning birders in our party.

Richard Ashworth



A Great Blue Heron at the fish hatchery. Photo by Richard Ashworth.

Manitou Beach Preserve 5/19/2019

Amy Kahn and Kevin Ferrell led 18 others on a lovely birdy Sunday morning. A nice mix of experienced and new birders and a few out of

town visitors joined together. We had 71 species which almost everyone got on. In addition, a few got a few additional species. We had 17 species of warblers including early and late season species: Black-and-white, Blackpoll, Nashville and Tennessee. We had 5 species of flycatcher (plus a few had Olive-sided), 2 vireos (plus a few had Yellow-throated), everyone got great looks at Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Many heard and a few saw a Black-billed Cuckoo as well. It remained sunny for most of the trip, but the skies opened into thunderstorms within minutes of us returning to our cars. Thanks to all who braved muddy trails and willingly carpooled. What a great group!

Amy Kahn

Oatka Creek Park 5/21/2019

Every once in awhile in the Rochester area there is a cloudless sky so blue that everyone's spirits are lifted, and people everywhere comment on it. Those special days are made even more breathtaking if there are spring flowering trees lit with warm sunlight. May 21st of this year was one of those days. It was cold early in the morning when 19 birders gathered at 7:30 for a bird hike through the park. Some were showing off the cuffs of their long johns, while others had heads and necks wrapped in something warm under their birding hats.

Not only was the sky a royal blue, but the night before brought in an amazing diversity of late migrants. The birds were in all the sunlit trees feeding and warming up from the cold night. Birders and birds alike enjoyed the sun's warmth. We stood behind the pavilion for a long time, watching everything from a Yellow-billed Cuckoo to a stunning Blackburnian Warbler. As we walked the trail through the woods and along the creek, we heard a Hooded Warbler and saw several other species. As we rounded the bend and walked along the creek towards the bridge, there were too many singing Bay-breasted Warblers to count. Those willing to ex-

perience "warbler neck" got to see several.

At the bridge, there was a Chimney Swift but no swallows. The sun was on all the flowering trees on the north side of the creek, and there, we had eye level spectacular looks at several warblers, Cedar Waxwings and a kingbird.

Heading up to the road that separates the north and south sections of the park, every one was delighted to see 2 male Indigo Buntings swooping low as they chased each other. It was along this trail that Dick Horsey saw a Mourning Warbler. Unfortunately it was too elusive for the rest of us to see. Blue-winged Warblers were heard in a couple of locations, and finally seen in their usual breeding spot past the open field. From there we headed back to the main road to end our day. The trip was so satisfying with its total of 59 species, that it lasted until noon.

Judy Gurley

Thousand Acre Swamp 5/23/2019

Although there were thunderstorms in the forecast, the weather was nearly perfect as 24 participants and the 2 leaders, Richard Ashworth and I, met at the parking lot. It was partly cloudy with the temperature around 60° and little wind. The air was alive with birdsong. With it being so late in the month, I was expecting mostly summer and year around residents as well as a few migrants. This expectation was met. Without even leaving the parking lot, we saw and heard Scarlet Tanager and several other species. During the course of the 3 mile walk, we managed to get most of the expected species, such as Wood Thrush, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore Oriole, Great Crested Flycatcher, bluebirds, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Warbling Vireo, and Red-eyed Vireo. Singing American Redstarts seemed to be everywhere. Herons are usually common at the swamp, but on this trip, we managed to see only one Great Blue and one Green. A Wood Thrush on

a nest was seen by a few. We found only a few migrants, including Blackburnian and Canada Warblers. We also saw one Empidonax flycatcher of unknown species. With it being past the peak of spring migration, we ended up with a mere 39 species.

One unexpected but welcome finding was rails. Most participants saw or at least heard Sora and Virginia Rail at the Duck Pond. Also, a few glimpsed a Virginia in the Boardwalk area.

The rain held off until 11:30, by which time everyone had left or was at least back at the parking lot.

We were actually expecting more participants. In February, I got a call from the Henrietta Senior Center asking if it would be OK to bring a dozen seniors to the field trip. I tentatively said yes and received the blessing of my co-leader and the RBA board. We even added 2 extra leaders as a precaution. However, the Henrietta seniors didn't show up. Also, a woman called on the morning of the trip, saying she planned to join us. However, she apparently got lost, gave up trying to find the location, and went home.

Jay Greenberg

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge 5/25/2019

Twelve birders joined us at the Stafford Marsh overlook. A quick look at the marsh produced several waterfowl species like Wood Duck and Pied-billed Grebes. The intervening field produced Tree Swallows and Bobolink. The martin houses had several Purple Martin adults feeding their young.

We re-grouped at the Swallow Hollow Trail and enjoyed the many birds from the parking lot. After a short walk down the boardwalk, the trip was interrupted by a thunderstorm. We still got looks at Warbling and Yellow-throated Vireos, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and a Hooded Merganser.

We took a short drive across the street to wait out the storm in the pavilion. While there, we had good looks at several Yellow Warblers, Eastern Bluebirds, a White-breasted Nuthatch, and Baltimore Oriole.

After the storm passed, we drove to the Onondaga Trail parking lot and walked Sour Springs Road to the "snow mobile" bridge. We heard Cerulean Warbler, and a few people got brief looks at it high in the tree tops. A visitor from Kentucky got a life bird, a Black-capped Chickadee. Yeah!

We proceeded on to the hunters' station and hiked the Kanyoo Trail. The woods were active with a lot of Yellow and Blackpoll Warblers. Veery and Swainson's Thrush were found along the trail. We enjoyed a good look at a nesting Prothonotary Warbler, but kept it brief so as not to disturb the birds. A look over the water produced a Black Tern, a lifer for more people!

From the hunters' station we walked to the feeder road, where we found a Sandhill Crane colt, Pectoral Sandpipers, and a Dunlin. We walked across the road and saw Least Sandpipers, but the Black-necked Stilt was no longer there.

Ending our day at Cayuga Overlook, we saw 15 Black Terns, Osprey, Ruddy Ducks, and a Trumpeter Swan.

All in all, we saw 94 species, including a Red-tailed Hawk and a Sharp-shinned Hawk seen by a few people on our way to the Log Cabin Restaurant.

Tom Nash

Canadice Lake 6/1/2019

Leaders: Lucretia Grosshans and Diane Henderson

Saturday dawned a gloomy day with promise of rain to come. Lucretia and I expected a fair turnout, but 14 participants showed up. Apparently rain will never stop a dedicated birder! Our first stop is always at the head of Hemlock Lake were

there are restrooms and the bonus of nesting Cliff Swallows. A few birds such as Purple Martin, Eastern Kingbird, and Double-crested Cormorant were also checked off. The drive down the east side of Canadice Lake involves a lot of listening for bird song and some fairly uncooperative birds in very tall trees. Thankfully, with Tom and Jeanne Verhulst, and Tom Penner along (to name just a few of the more experienced birders), our concerns were forgotten as each one of them helped Lucretia and me enormously with the inexperienced, yet very exuberant new birders. Also, thankfully, Mother Nature was on our side, and the rain never came. Almost immediately, we heard a Blue-winged Warbler singing. We found it, and most saw this lovely yellow bird. With other Blue-wings singing along the route we eventually got everyone good looks. Hooded Warblers were singing in many places. A target bird for this trip, we were all happy to locate and see this stunning creature on more than one occasion. Bird's songs can be very difficult to identify at times, and the Magnolia Warbler we found was no exception. Watching him sing was a great way to learn. A Dark-eyed Junco's song also confused us whether we should be looking for a Pine Warbler or the junco. Luckily a pair of juncos appeared and sang for us, answering our question. The final portion of the trip ends along a road where we search for Bobolinks and meadowlarks. Although some of us saw a few, they were not as cooperative as a Bald Eagle flying by with something in its talons and a Common Raven being harassed by an American Crow. Jeanne had her camera at the ready, and we are all waiting to hear if she will be able to ID what the eagle was carrying. In all, we had 56 species either seen or heard, and enjoyed a beautiful day with a fine group of birders.

Diane Henderson

Bergen Swamp 6/2/19

This trip seems to be cursed in that in recent years, it has rained more often than not. Maybe the name of the curse is Climate Change. There

was a light steady rain or drizzle and cool temperatures throughout the nearly 3 hour 2.5 mile hike at the swamp. It started out at about 60°, but the temperature fell into the mid 50s during the trip. Nevertheless, 9 hardy souls, all experienced birders, joined co-leader Rick Stevens and me. Two of them were from the Buffalo Ornithological Society. This trip probably has the most difficult terrain of any RBA field trip. The record high level of Lake Ontario made the miry trails at the swamp even muddier than usual. Also, there were obstacles such as fallen trees that had to be climbed over or detoured around and a broken bridge that had to be detoured around. The boardwalks and corduroy were even more slippery than usual because of the rain. All of this required much more effort than "a walk in the park" for the distance covered. Although we were all splattered with mud, I am happy to say that nobody fell down or got hurt.

The cool temperature and gloom undoubtedly kept the bird activity down, and we managed to eke out only 38 species at the swamp itself. One highlight was hearing a Winter Wren. The lovely musical song is always a treat. This is something of a Bergen Swamp specialty, but I suspect it is becoming scarcer. We also heard at least 3 singing male Acadian Flycatchers (if you can call their 2 note call a song). There were numerous Veeries and Ovenbirds calling or singing around us, although we didn't see them. However, we missed on a lot of common birds.

By the time we got back to the cars, we had all had enough and decided to forego the traditional stop at Torpy Hill where we might have added several more species in the brush-shrub habitat. We found a few more species at the meet-up point the (7-11 store in Bergen), or along the road to the trailhead, including Chimney Swift and Killdeer. However, eBird would require these to be on separate checklists.

Jay Greenberg



One of the numerous **Veeries** at Bergen Swamp. Photo by Jay Greenberg.

Letchworth State Park 6/9/2019

Weather for this year's trip could not have been better. Sun-filled skies and warm temperatures were with us for the entire day—something almost unheard of this year! Our group had several starting out birders, and it was great to see more experienced birders eagerly helping out with identification and other questions.

Eighteen early risers met at the Mt. Morris Dam overlook to start our day, with plans to cover the length

of the park. Typically there are legions of Turkey Vultures sitting on top of the dam with wings spread, eager to catch the warming rays of the morning sun. But it was not to be this year. However, there was no disappointment with vultures, as they would give us a nice show later in the day.

We made stops at several of our traditional places, but mixed it up some, too. The new stop at the St. Helena pullout site was a productive and enjoyable walk to the river. We started at the middle parking area and walked the mile down to the river, picking up several warbler species, the *beeebzzz*'s of the Blue-winged Warbler most prominent (did you know their tail vibrates when they make the *bzzz* sound?). There were Indigo Buntings and an active Baltimore Oriole nest along the trail, and Common Mergansers in the river.

Our search for Acadian Flycatcher and Louisiana Waterthrush did not pan out. However, at 2 known locations where they had been heard earlier in the week, we managed to

come up with some other great species: Winter Wren (a tough one at times), Pine Warbler and a very cooperative Black-throated Green Warbler that gave everyone some spectacular viewing. A trip highlight came at Archery Field with a Peregrine Falcon, always exciting to see, and 2 Black Vultures that flew directly in front of our group side by side for several minutes. We had so many good views of them, especially from above, showing those prominent white windows in the wings and dark head. Finding one Black Vulture in this area is sensation enough, but 2 together is a show stopper.

Our day finished on the Council Grounds with a singing Blackburnian Warbler. We tallied our species, said our goodbyes, and a few remained to take in some beverages at the Glen Iris. In the process we picked up a few more species to bring the total for the day to 76 species.

Rick Stevens and Mike Landowski

Wednesday Warbler Wrap-up

The 5 outings were very well attended with 15 to more than 20 people attending each. I'm not sure what drove this increased attendance relative to the previous 2 years. Maybe the change in location had something to do with this. I moved the location from the Lakeside Community Church on Long Pond Road, mostly to be more convenient to me. Maybe others found it more convenient also. In any event, I enjoyed the outings in Lucien Morin Park. We did not see any abundance of warblers, but with the marsh on the west and the hillside on the east, there were other birds to look at. We used the road into the park, and this allowed everyone to get on a given bird while keeping our feet dry. I would estimate that half the attendees were beginners, which was one of the intentions of the walks. The experienced bird-

ers generously helped the new birders with binocular use and bird identification. I would like to thank the veteran birders who helped with these walks, and especially Cindy Marino who filled in for me when I was away.

Next year? We could do this park again or pick another location. I think it is important that everyone can get at a bird, so narrow paths are not attractive. Proximity to the city is probably a plus. A paved or dry area to walk is good so that special footwear is not needed. I've geared this to the working folks who might not be able to make the weekend trips. Cobbs Hill is a possible location as well as Highland Park, but I do not know these areas. Maybe others will step up to sponsoring this series of walks in the future. I will be glad to help.

John Boettcher

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 2034, The City of Rochester's Comprehensive Plan for the next 15 years

by Amy Kahn, RBA Conservation Chair

Fundamentally, a comprehensive plan is a means to promote and protect the general health, safety, and welfare of the people in a community and to lay out a course of action for the future physical and social development of that community. A comprehensive plan serves as the blueprint for making public and private sector decisions on land use regulation, development, future investment, and the allocation of critical resources. The City of Rochester has announced that their Draft Comprehensive Plan is available for public comment through **August 16, 2019**.

The **Rochester 2034** plan includes 87 goals, 20 action plans, and 473 strategies. A comprehensive plan is meant to be a living document, with room for flexibility and adaptation over the next 15 years. *Rochester 2034* should be revisited at least once during its lifespan for a comprehensive reassessment and update. As conditions change, trends emerge, and priorities shift, plan elements can be revised as needed. The online and PDF versions of Rochester 2034, along with navigational and interactive tools, can be found at www.CityOfRochester.gov/Roc2034 or www.Rochester2034.com.

The Rochester Birding Association was asked over a year ago to be part of an environmental organization stakeholder meeting. The outcome of that meeting went into the **Natural Resources [NR] Action Plan**.

What follows is an excerpt from the NR Plan:

'The natural environment is a fundamental component of a community's health and well-being. Rochester is fortunate to have an abundance of beautiful natural resources, from our waterways that give us miles of coastline, to our urban forest integrated throughout the city landscape, to the clean air that

we breathe, to the diversity of wildlife that contribute to our ecosystem. Recognizing and appreciating Rochester's environmental assets is important not only to create a beautiful city, but to ensure the well-being of the people who work and live here.

Key Takeaways

- Rochester has an abundance of fresh water, which is a unique asset we should build on.
- The City of Rochester has been consistently awarded for having the best tasting drinking water in New York State.
- Stormwater infrastructure and regulations protect water quality and prevent flood damage.
- A healthy urban forest is an important part of the city's infrastructure and essential for the well-being of residents.
- Despite being an urban area, Rochester also provides valuable habitat to many animals, and a portion of the Genesee River in the city has been designated a "coastal fish and wildlife habitat of state-wide significance" by New York State

Goal NR-4 - Promote and protect Rochester's natural resources as assets for attracting residents, businesses, and tourists.

Strategies NR-4d - Explore the opportunity to support bird-friendly development and design guidelines for new development within the city, which could include:

- Install bird-friendly, non-reflective windows
- Use awnings and overhangs to add visual cues to birds and reduce reflection
- Discourage use of angled glass windows
- Use glare-minimizing external lights, and reduce spill light

Partners - City, Rochester Birding Association, Genesee Valley Audubon Society, Developers

May 2019 Sightings Report

May will be remembered as a wet and cool month, and one in which spring phenology was delayed – at least as regards local flora. Trees were late leafing out, lilacs were still blooming at month's end, and many bushes, e.g., honeysuckle, dogwood, etc., at the lakeshore were still waiting to flower. Temperatures in May averaged 56.5°F, 0.5° below normal. There were no record high days, nor were there any record lows. Only 2 days topped 80°, which is 3 days fewer than the average. Precipitation totaled 2.60", 0.27" below normal. Fifteen days saw measurable rain, and 9 of those days were in the first half of the month. The wettest day was May 1st, on which 0.54" of rain fell. The first 2 weeks of May saw alternating warm and cool days, many with passing rain showers. A low-pressure system on the 12th–14th kept temperatures below 50° and brought 0.64" of rain to the area. The second half of the month warmed up and dried out, although thunderstorms passed through on the 23rd and again on the 25th. The latter storms were accompanied by wind speeds of up to 38 mph and gusts of up to 49 mph. A major weather feature of the month affecting migrant arrivals was persistent areas of major storms to our south and west, between us and the origins of most of our later migrants. Many species were relatively late, and numbers of some were low through month's end.

There were no glaring misses among the lingering waterfowl, although both Canvasback and Black Scoter not making it into the month is a bit unusual. Continuing the trend of recent years, numbers of individuals for most species were low, and especially so for diving ducks. Loon and grebe numbers were also poor, although a few individuals pushed the final departures to normal dates. Waterbird rarities included just an American White Pelican wandering about since April and 3 flyover Glossy Ibis. High water levels again greatly impacted both habitat and birder access to many lakeshore sites.

Moving into the new list order, we start with a few reports of Northern Bobwhite in the Webster/Penfield area—likely releases. Again, there were no Eurasian Collared-Dove reports; maybe they are finally gone from our region. Next, there was a good showing of numbers for Common Nighthawk over an extended period. There were comments around missing hummingbirds, but the numbers banded were up from last year, and overall numbers seemed normal by mid-month. There were many Sandhill Cranes reported, both passing the hawk watch and elsewhere around the region, but no reports of young by season's end.

At least off and on, there was shorebird habitat in the fields much of the time, but birds visiting only a few sites or passing along the Lake Ontario shore. Lake Ontario was back to new record high levels, inundating many beaches and piers. Again, 24 species were reported, including the rare-in-spring American Golden-Plover, Piping Plover, and Hudsonian Godwit. Again, on the scarce but annual list were Whimbrel, Sanderling, and Willet. Upland Sandpiper had appeared in April, but none were reported this month. A few good counts were tallied and can be found in the noteworthy table.

The usual gulls and terns were reported in typical to low numbers, with no big gatherings reported. There were no reports for the usual "winter" gulls that often linger into May. Rarer larids included only a single Laughing/Franklin's Gull adult, partially hidden but with head photographed, and a flyby of our first spring occurrence of Least Tern. Black Tern was back in the Van Dyne Spoor marshes in the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area, with a peak count of 80.

Four Black Vultures at the hawk watch on the 20th tied the high day count, and 2 others were reported on the 5th in Rochester. A Mississippi Kite, now almost annual at the hawk watch, topped off the raptor rarities. At the hawk watch, numbers for all species with significant counts were

up over last May by about 15% and over last year's year to date by about 30%. Bald Eagle counts passed the old single day high with 124 on the 6th and then 128 on the 20th. The total for the year passed the old high of 1094 on the 25th and stood at 1194 at month's end. Turkey Vulture and Broad-winged Hawk numbers topped the list, as usual.

Non-passerine land birds were again found mostly as expected. Recall that most of these have moved to early in the list. Owls and woodpeckers are now the bulk of this section. There were no Snowy Owl reports for the month. Five Long-eared Owls and 6 Northern Saw-whet Owls were added to the Owl Woods counts for the season, bringing totals to just below the recent average and to just below the recent high count, respectively. Jim Adams will produce a summary report in the near future. Among the woodpeckers, Red-headed Woodpecker was reported in better numbers and at more locations than in most recent years. Otherwise, there were no exceptional numbers of other woodpecker species noted. Our regular 3 falcon species were reported in good numbers both passing the hawk watch and elsewhere in the region.

Once more, all of the regularly expected passerine species were reported. The only "misses" were relatively rare species: White-eyed Vireo, Worm-eating Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, and Northern Shrike which sometimes lingers into May. As usual, arrival dates were biased toward the 1st quartile relative to the 1985 Monroe County Checklist distributions, though about 25% were in the interquartile range. There were no record early arrivals. The blocking weather patterns to our south and west resulted in some interesting delays in arrival of a few species and in some exciting bursts of birds arriving and producing high counts. It was also interesting that a few species seemed to linger longer than usual and to show some unexpected behaviors, like surprises at jelly feeders. As an example, in our Webster yard we had 3 Black-throated Blue Warblers that seemed to become addicted to jelly and remained for well over a week. Also, we had Ovenbirds that remained around singing for a couple of weeks, when usually they appear only irregularly and pass right through. There were some very large numbers of reports for some commoner species, maybe partially related to the late progress of vegetation or maybe to more observers listing for shorter times at more sites—hard to separate without LOTS of work with the data. A few examples are noted in the Noteworthy Records table as numbers of eBird lines for the species for the month. There were a few really high counts noted, but generally numbers again seemed low. Several of the flycatchers and Red-eyed Vireo were scarce until late in the season, thrushes seemed particularly late and scarce, and warblers a mix. Evening Grosbeak and Common Redpoll were seen to fairly late dates, and Pine Siskins popped up through the month. Rarer reports included: Clay-colored Sparrow; Yellow-breasted Chat; "Lawrence's", Prothonotary, Kentucky, Yellow-throated, and Prairie Warblers; and Summer Tanager. Again, it is interesting to look at data as supplied by the BBBO (Braddock Bay Bird Observatory) banding station. This year's total was about 20% above last year's, with about 5% fewer net hours. The total was <5% above the average for the last 7 years. Comparing species numbers with the prior 7 year averages, last year we had only 2 species higher and 3 species lower by more than two standard deviations. This year there were 9 passerine species higher – Least Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and White-throated Sparrow—and 2 lower: Red-eyed Vireo and Common Yellowthroat. Again, most species' numbers banded fell well within one standard deviation of their average. Once more, we see Black-capped Chickadee sticking with alternate high and low years, this year high (232 vs. last year's 6 for the season) and Winter Wren again alternating high/low years but opposite to the chickadees—always interesting!

Again, there was lots of data to summarize this season. About 104,840 lines of eBird data, BBBO banding records, the hawk count table, gene-seebirds posts, plus personal input from some observers. Again, those interested in more details can go to the table of Noteworthy Records on the RBA website, then dig deeper into the banding tally for the spring season on the BBBO website or the hawk watch data at the hawk count site. There were over 470 unique observers contributing to eBird this month. Numbers keep climbing annually.

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

| | 2019 | 2018 | 10-year Average (2009-2018) |
|------------------------|------|------|--------------------------------|
| Species for May | 244 | 245 | 237.7 |
| New for the year | 61 | 63 | 53.2 |
| Total for year to date | 270 | 265 | 264.2 |

Observers: Jim Adams, Cindy & Scott Ahern, Janet Akin, BBBO (Andrea Patterson, *et al.*), Ted Barnett, Jessie Barry, Jim Barry, Katelyn Barry, Mitchell Barry, Nancy Baudendistel, Bob Beal, Doug Beattie, Betty Beckham, Don Bement, Steve Benedict, Linda Clark-Benedict, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Shawn Billerman, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Jeff Bouton, Janet Bovitz-Sandefur, Catherine Bowne, Lynn Bra-band, Joe Brin, David Brown (official hawk counter), Logan Brunner, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Michael Burdick, Bruce Cady, Tom Cardillo, Brad Carlson, Nancy Casper, Denis Caysinger, Gary Chapin, Robert Cicotta, Tiffany Clay, Andrew Consler, Kelly Close, Lydia Culbert, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Susan Danskin, Gregg Dashnau, Peter Debes, Kim Denise, Michael DeWispelaere, Deborah Dohne, Anna Donato, Crystal Doyle, Andrew Dreelin, Diane Egan, Joe Fell, Mark Fitzsimmons, Tom Flaherty, Daena Ford, George Ford, Jim Fry, Kyle Gage, Andy Garland, Janis George, Jessica George, Candy Giles, Bill Gillette, Chris Goetz, John Gordinier, Karla Gordinier, Shannon Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Jane Graves, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Georgia & Ralph Guenther, Michael Gullo, Judy Gurley, Andrew Guthrie, Chris Guthrie, Rich Guthrie, Anita Gwara, Robert Hagggett, Helen & Chris Haller, David & Vanna Harding, Kim Hartquist, Jim & Allison Healy, Bonnie Hewitt, Christina Hoh, Katlyn Hojnacki, Jennalee Holzschuh, Laura Hooch, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Alec Humann, Carolyn Jacobs, Molly Jacobson, Suzanne James, Alyssa Johnson, Nicholas Kachala, Logan Kahle, Amy Kahn, Laura Kammermeier, Kenneth Kemphues, Tom Kerr, Jim Kimball, Kathy Kirsch, Renee Kittleman, J. Gary Kohlenberg, Elijah Kruger, Chris Lajewski, Tom Lathrop, Leona Lauster, Greg Lawrence, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Robert MacLean, Bill Maier, Melissa Mance-Coniglio, Cindy Marino, Robin Marshall, Pat Martin, Donna Mason-Spier, Lauri Mattle, Chris McCarthy, Kenneth McCarthy, Jacob McCartney, Kevin McGann, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Bob McGuire, Chita McKinney, Matt Medler, Jim Miles, Randi Minetor, Adrielle Mitchell, Ann Mitchell, Mike Morgante, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Jim Mott, Chan Nam, Allen Nash, Ann Nash, Tom Nash, Rivka Noll, Dave Nutter, David Odell, Bill O'Neill, Jay Ovsiovitch, Michael Palermo, David Parr, Bonnie Parton, Andrea Patterson, Emily Patterson, Scott Peterson, Norma Platt, Jo Popma, Jay Powell, Bill Purcell, Nicholas Pusateri, Rich & Judy Putrelo, Doug Rabjohns, Carolyn Ragan, John Ramirez, RBA Field Trips, Rosemary Reilly, Nancy Rice, Michelle Rosenbaum, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Shawn Ryan, Livia Santana, Karl Schmidt, Ed Sheidlower, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Judy Slein, Doug Smith, Robert & Janet Smith, Roger Smith, Tom & Pat Smith, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Chris Stanger, Rick Stevens, Joe Stevenson, Kim Sucey, David Tetlow, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Mary Jane Thomas, John & Bonnie VanDerMeid, Alison Van Keuren, Tom & Jeanne Verhulst, Jeff Ward, Mike Wasilco, Ann Watson, Bridget Watts, Drew Weber, Kim Weeks, David Wheeler, Richard Weilacher, Kinsley Whittum, Joe Wing, Paul Wolter, Chris Wood, Jim Wood, Martha, Zettel. Plus the multitude of other casual eBird observers (472 eBird observers in May).



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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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