



Little Gull

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

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

FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2020 EVENTS & BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

Feb 2
Sunday

LAKESHORE PLAINS WEST

A driving tour of the farm fields and open lands to the west of Rochester, this trip will search for Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, Northern Shrikes, and hawks in the plains and country roads of western Monroe and Orleans Counties. If the weather cooperates, we may venture as far as Golden Hill State Park for a look at the lake and a short walk. Dress warmly in layers; bring a snack and a thermos filled with cocoa. We will drive along backcountry roads for a few hours, stopping where we see bird activity. Barring the possible walk at Golden Hill, this trip should be handicapped-accessible. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** at the Braddock Bay Park main parking lot. Use the East Manitou Road exit from the Ontario State Parkway. **Extra FRS radios and scopes would be very helpful.**

Leader: Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422 and co-leader Robert Buckert

Feb 13
Thursday

RBA General Meeting, 7:00 p.m., the Baptist Temple, 1101 Clover Street, Rochester NY 14610 (in Brighton). Members' Night. See the notice on p. 3 for more information.

Feb 16
Sunday

WINTER WATERFOWL AND OTHER POSSIBILITIES

We will look for Long-tailed Ducks, mergansers, scaup and others that may be present. We will then drive over to Summerville and Charlotte to see what is in the river. If crossbills and redpolls are being seen, we may stop at Durand-Eastman Park on the way. Meet at **8:30 a.m.** in the large parking lot on the west side of Irondequoit Bay outlet. **Dress for the weather. Extra spotting scopes would be very helpful.**

Leader: Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422 and co-leader Robert Buckert

Mar 14
Saturday

LAKE SHORE MARSHES EAST WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

This extensive driving tour of the large natural area to our northeast always turns up some great birds! We'll look for unusual ducks, late winter birds, and interesting migrants like Fox Sparrows. Bring a snack to munch on to keep your energy up, and dress for the weather! Meet at **7:30 a.m.** in Webster Plaza at the junction of Route 404 and Hard Road near Starbucks. **Extra spotting scopes would be very helpful.**

Leader: Kinsley Whittum 585-872-7334 and co-leader Christina Hoh 973-224-7009

Mar 21
Saturday

HAMLIN BEACH STATE PARK

We will gather at Braddock Bay Park and drive to Hamlin Beach State Park where we will be looking for migrating waterfowl as we work our way back east. We will stop at Owl Woods in search of migrating owls. We will end at the Braddock Bay Hawk Watch in hopes of spotting Rough-legged and Red-shouldered Hawks and Bald Eagles. Dress warmly as the lakeshore can be cold this time of year. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** at the Braddock Bay Park main parking lot. Use the East Manitou Road exit from the Ontario State Parkway. **Extra spotting scopes would be very helpful.**

Leader: Mike Tetlow 585-425-7849 and co-leader Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422

In Memoriam Betty Powell

Longtime RBA member Betty Powell passed away in December 2019 at the age of 91. She is survived by her husband, Bill, who was a longtime RBA treasurer. Her obituary can be seen online at <https://www.crawfordfuneralhome.com/notices/Elizabeth-W-Powell>.

Welcome to the Flock and Renewal Status



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

Audrey Cullum, Young Birder
Ella Cullum, Young Birder
Joseph Woody
Rosalind Valeria
Judy Dobles & Barry S. Akin
Angelique Armstrong
Scott Tudman
James & Chris Quackenbush
Wisarut Jantong, Young Birder
Renate & Don Powers

Current RBA Membership as of January 14 is 328:

- 303 household memberships
- 6 young birders
- 1 corporate member (The Bird House)
- 1 *Little Gull* membership
- 17 complimentary

Of these, 34 are new or returning members (joined since September 1, 2019).

Membership Status

I have refreshed the database, omitting members who have not renewed for 2020. As in years past, we lost a bunch of people. This year it is 135. We will get some of these folks back as late renewals. With this *Little Gull* you will also be getting the current roster of members, which can also be found in the members' area of the website.

We'd like to recognize the strong support of the amazing 73 members who included donations with their renewal or new membership.

Thank you to Sheryl Gracewski, Tom Nash, Mary Gordon, Norma Platt, John Boettcher, and Dave Strong who along with me

prepared the special mailing of 231 renewal reminders in mid-December. Special thanks to those members who had already renewed by that point. The mailed reminders cost the RBA about \$1 each.

Jo Taylor
Membership Data

Adrianna Anderson
Membership Outreach

President's Column

Liz Magnanti



Hello Rochester Birding Association! I am very excited to be writing to you as the new president of the RBA. Over the past 2 years of being on the board, I have learned so much and met so many new people. One thing that consistently inspires me is how many dedicated members this organization has, and how many of them unselfishly offer their time, knowledge and resources in a diverse number of ways to serve the birding community. The current RBA board members and committee chairs have a lot of great ideas for this coming year, and my goal as president is to hit the ground running, so we can get it all done! Last year, we heard the devastating news: Since 1970 we have lost nearly 3 billion (that is 1 out of every 4) breeding birds throughout the US and Canada. That number is so staggering, it's hard for me to even contemplate. Hearing a statistic like that can be so depressing, it's hard to keep a positive attitude about the state of the environment, and the future of wildlife in this country and the rest of the world. The bright side, however, is there are things that each of us can do to make the world (even if it's just our little patch of it) a better place. And individual choices make a huge impact! Never underestimate the difference you make as an individual to make a change. Sure, you may just be one person, but if you make a few small changes to your routine, and then a few of your friends see them and follow suit, and then a family member or 2, and then a neighbor... It

just keeps going! Leading by example is a powerful tool in conservation, and there are some simple things each of us can do! This year I want to focus on those small changes we can all make that collectively make a big difference.

This month, in timely fashion, let's talk about plastics, especially single-use plastics. We rely on plastics a lot, and will continue to do so, but there are some plastics that you can easily cut out of your life that will make a huge impact for birds and other wildlife! Using reusable shopping bags, for example, is a change many of us have already made, but let's look at some other things each of us can do to help reduce our dependency on plastics.

Every day, Americans use 100 MILLION plastic utensils! This can be avoided by asking any takeout or delivery places you order from to skip the utensils. Not only are you saving the waste of the plasticware, but that plasticware usually comes wrapped in even more plastic! Does your break room rely on plastic utensils for employees? Bring in your own set of silverware from home to use or, even better, bring in extra silverware you have for your co-workers! Keep it at the workplace so others have the option of using something else.

Buying foods in bulk also helps cut out plastic waste. Do you go through a lot of mayonnaise? Perhaps grape jelly in the spring? Consider buying these items in bulk to reduce the number of plastic containers being produced.

Re-usable straws are all the rage now, and you can easily find them at your local supermarket! They make a great alternative to the one-time use straws that Americans consume 500 million of each day!

Being aware of my plastic consumption is something I strive to do better this year. Making sure I always have a reusable water bottle, bag, straw and cutlery wasn't always something I had as a priority,

(President's column, continued)

but it will be this year and years forward!

Thank you all for your continued support of the RBA, and I look forward to seeing you at meetings, on the trails, and at Birds & Brews! Don't hesitate to reach out to introduce yourself or to let me know how the RBA can better serve you.

Happy birding!

February RBA Meeting

We had some amazing presentations at the annual dinner last month, but a few could not present at that time. Come to the February meeting to enjoy presentations of bird images by your fellow birders. The 3 20 minute presentations will be:

Dick Horsey – Selections from the 'Last 30 Days' gallery

Robert Buckert – Youth Birding Camps

Jeanne Verhulst – Weird and Wonderful Birds

RBA IN THE FIELD

**Irondequoit Bay Outlet,
Durand-Eastman Park, Charlotte
1/1/2020**

Nineteen people attended the first RBA field trip in the 2020 New Year. It was the kind of day that 'tries the souls' of bird trip leaders. The weather would have been reasonable: 35 °F and dry, except for the 20+ mph west wind.

Irondequoit Bay was empty except for a few lone and distant ducks. Six not too distant Bald Eagles were looping and interacting, so that we wondered if we were seeing courting behavior.

Rosemary Reilly had gone on to the river outlet to scout for the Western Grebe that had been sighted there during the previous days. She

reported that it might be seen from the Summerville pier, so we drove there to try to find it. Between the strong wind, waves and distant location, we gave up and moved on. (Several hearty souls stayed and were able to see the bird from the very end of the pier). We made a brief comfort stop at the ferry terminal in Charlotte and, while picking out the Herring Gulls from the many Ring-billed Gulls, managed to find a Glaucous Gull.

Our next location, looking onto the lake from the Durand-Eastman beach also frustrated our efforts to find

ducks. So we moved on to Zoo Road in the park. Birds were again scarce, but we managed to find a good selection of birds in the low spot at the intersection with Log Cabin Road. Dominic Sherony joined us and shared some his favorite spots.

In retrospect, we can say that birding was tough, but not disappointing for a New Year. Every one of the 33 species we found was new for the 2020 list—roughly one in every 4 birds!

John Boettcher and Norma Platt

The 2020 Annual Dinner

The RBA dinner on the evening of January 11 was a wonderful party. Getting to the Summerville Presbyterian Church was a little difficult, as fog from the lake and the bay surrounded some of the roads. (I found it eerily interesting.) The dinner was attended by over 57 individuals, including many young birders and their families – what a great and talented group of birders. I also love the fact that when people arrive, they mingle and catch up before they find seats. Thanks to Norma Platt for working on and bringing to the dinner the beautiful exhibit of birds that stunned us all. Jeanne Verhulst started the meeting by welcoming attendees, thanking Marilyn Schindler and the Summerville Presbyterian Church and those who supplied the hams (Wanda and Rosemary Reilly), and turkeys/chickens (Jeanne and Liz Magnanti).

Brian Rohrs presented the current state of RBA finances, including conservation funds donated to help the Genesee Land Trust save 2.7 acres in Pultneyville along the lake. Brian also presented Robert Buckert with a check for the Young Birders Scholarship which partially covered his attendance at camp in Delaware last year. (The scholarship helps RBA foster the next generation of birders).

Jeanne presented the status on membership. We ended 2019 with 461 memberships. She also

presented two bylaw changes – Issue 1 allows us to use a USPS post office box in the County of Monroe as a principal office to receive RBA mail, and Issue 2 allows the board of directors to appoint the chairs of all committees. These bylaw changes were voted on and passed.

Tom Verhulst, as the chair of the nominating committee, was then introduced to conduct the election. (Gayle Lazoration and Christina Hoh also served on the committee). New board members are Greg Lawrence, Randi Minetor, and Rosemary Reilly. Continuing members are Liz Magnanti (now president), Brian Rohrs, Kevin Ferrell, Wanda Thistle, Andrea Patterson, and Jeanne Verhulst. Amy Kahn, Kim Weeks and Monika Herrmann were thanked for their service.

Jeanne presented the Little Gull Award to Sheryl Gracewski and Tom Nash for all their many contributions to the RBA. Tom and Sheryl were unable to attend, but they sent an e-mail saying that they were honored to be considered and thanked the board.

Richard Ashworth was MC for the member presentations: Dominic Sherony – Recent Bird Sightings, Jay Greenberg – Birds, Other Creatures, and Sights of Cuba 2018; Diane Henderson – 2019 Travels: Adirondacks, Trinidad & Tobago, Cayman Islands and Bonaire; John Boettcher – Follow the Crows and

(The 2020 Annual Dinner, continued)

Rochester Bird Count; Carolyn Ragan – Aruba 2019.

Eunice Thein and Candy Giles put together the perfect quiz with a young bird theme. I can still picture that photo of a baby Bald Eagle – I

swear that it was staring right at me – what a cute little bird. Lydia Culbert won first prize with 17 correctly identified, second prize went to Robert Buckert and third prize to Nick Kachala. Thank you, thank you Eunice and Candy!! Everyone pitched in to cleanup. I personally thank one and all for the delicious food, conversation, and

endeavors that made this another beautiful dinner. And a special thanks to the invaluable Marilyn Schindler and her group of church helpers.

Wanda Thistle, Social Chair



Robert Buckert (right) receives a Young Birders Scholarship check from RBA Treasurer Brian Rohrs at the RBA Annual Dinner on January 11, 2020. Photo by Richard Ashworth.

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 Christmas Bird Count December 15, 2019

This was the 116th Rochester Christmas Bird Count. Seventy-one participants worked throughout the day to count the birds in the 15 mile diameter circle centered at Dewey Avenue and Stone Road. We spent 110 hours on foot and in cars.

Temperatures were moderate, moving from early-morning 30s to 40 °F as the day progressed. The skies were overcast and delivered a bit of pellet-like snow.

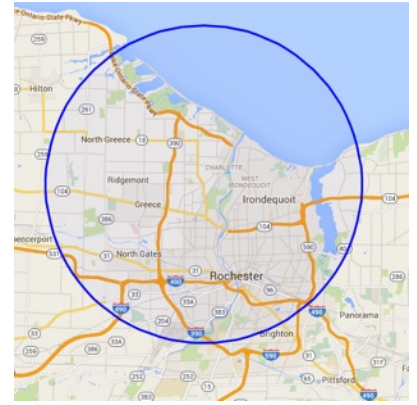
Everyone agreed that the strong west wind (up to 30 mph) adversely affected numbers of birds. Waves on Lake Ontario made it difficult to see waterfowl, and land birds were 'hunkered down'.

This year, observers found 78 species and 46,730 individual birds. We saw a record number of Bald Eagles (17). The 5 Peregrine Falcons tied a 2016 high. You will find a full listing of bird species and numbers in Bob Spahn's summary of the local counts (Rochester, Little Lakes and Silver Lake), starting on p. 6.

The total number of birds is so high because it includes the American Crows that roost somewhere in downtown Rochester. After the city hazed the roost in Washington Square Park some years ago, the locations of the crow roost and pre-roosts have been extremely fluid. Last year on the day of the count, they roosted in Gates where Chili Avenue crosses the Erie Canal — but they were gone a week later. This year, several of us followed incoming crows, finding concentrations in the area of the Bausch Street Bridge, which moved to the pines along the railroad track between State and Plymouth, just north of the Inner Loop. Several teams in key locations estimated the number of crows to be around 23,000!

The bird count circle is divided up into 9 sectors. Each sector has a leader responsible for recruiting/deploying

observers and gathering observations. We were fortunate to have these sector leaders: John Boettcher, Greg Lawrence, Jay Greenberg, Tom and Nancy Poeth, Rosemary Reilly, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Andrea Patterson, and Robert and Susan Spahn.



I should note that the Young Birders (led by Andrea Patterson) assumed responsibility for the Seneca Park sector for the second year.

In addition to the sector leaders, the following people were field observers or feeder watchers: Doug Bassett, Carolyn Barnhardt, Jerry Barnhardt, Jessie Barry, Mitchell Barry, Ivy Bergin, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Don Bemont, Robert Buckert, Doug Carpenter, Lynn Caulkin, Jill Church, Lidia Culbert, Peter Debes, Jon Dombrowski, Jack Eisenschmidt, Nancy Fella, Janis George, Mary Gordon, Sheryl Gracewski, Andy Guthrie, Bill Howe, Monika Herrmann, Nicholas Kachala, Holly Lawrence, Ben Levy, David Levy, Carol Loveland, Jim Loveland, Randi Minetor, Bill Maier, Cindy Marino, Chita McKinney, Brian Morse, Brooke Morse, Ann Nash, Tom Nash, Rivka Noll, Ann Parks, Jay Powell, Elizabeth Rabjohns, Dave Rabjohns, Judy Slein, Kevin Spears, Trevor Spears, Rick Stevens, Jerry Sullivan, Michael Tetlow, Jeanne Verhulst, Jules Wagner, Bridget Watts, Beth Wheeler, Kinsley Wittum, Chris Wood and Drew Yampanis.

Thanks, everyone!

Norma Platt, Compiler

Little Lakes Christmas Bird Count Summary December 28, 2019

The day of the count was cloudy to partly cloudy with temperatures in the thirties and light winds. Unfortunately, despite many mild days previous to the count, the lakes were still frozen or mostly so from frigid conditions in November and early December. Hence, waterfowl numbers were low across the board. On the other hand, with essentially no snow on the ground, it was a wonderful day to be out walking. Highlights were high counts for Red-bellied Woodpecker (94), Blue Jay (593) and Carolina Wren (43). Nice birds for the count were Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Rough-legged Hawk, Barred and Short-eared Owls,

Yellow-rumped Warbler, Eastern Towhee and 6 Sandhill Cranes. Thanks to Matt Baker, Brad Bandemer, Carolyn and Jerry Barnhart, Douglas Bassett, Doug Beattie, Lynn Bergmeyer, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, Robert Buckert, Elaine Dart, Peter Debes, Annabelle Foos, Jay Greenberg, Diane Henderson, Monika Herrmann, William Howe, Nick Kachala, Jim Kimball, Kathy Kirsch, Kevin Koss, Pat Luke, Chita McKinney, Ann McMican, Leah Mould, Sheila Mumpton, Phil Opdycke, Norma Platt, Al Price, Rick Prino, Carolyn Ragan, Rosemary Reilly, Jennifer Rycenga, Shirley Shaw, Hugh Shipley, Judy Slein, Rick Stevens, Wendy Stevensen, Robert and Sue Spahn, Bill Welcher, Kinsley and Cory Whittum.

Pat Martin, Compiler

<u>Rochester, NY Area Christmas Bird Count Summary 2019</u>				
	Letchworth-Silver Lake	Rochester	Conesus-Hemlock	
	Dec.14, 2019	Dec. 15, 2019	Dec. 28, 2019	Total
Snow Goose			cw	cw
Cackling Goose	11			11
Canada Goose	6,790	2,116	2,191	11,097
Mute Swan		356	1	357
Tundra Swan	8		15	23
Wood Duck		2		2
Gadwall	8	11		19
American Black Duck	21	15	23	59
Mallard	820	1,082	233	2,135
Northern Pintail	1			1
Canvasback		cw	2	2
Redhead	240	876	410	1,526
Ring-necked Duck	180	14	593	787
Greater Scaup		470	1	471
Lesser Scaup		31	21	52
Surf Scoter		1		1
White-winged Scoter		57		57
Black Scoter		3		3
Long-tailed Duck		2,150	4	2,154
Bufflehead	68	21	24	113
Common Goldeneye	100	215	70	385
Hooded Merganser	10	42	29	81
Common Merganser	126	82	2	210
Red-breasted Merganser		407		407
Ruddy Duck		2	2	4
Ring-necked Pheasant	2		1	3
Ruffed Grouse			2	2
Wild Turkey	6	30	20	56
Red-throated Loon		5		5
Common Loon		cw	2	2
Pied-billed Grebe			1	1
Red-necked Grebe		cw		cw
Double-crested Cormorant		20	1	21
Great Blue Heron	4	15	2	21
Bald Eagle	6	17	8	31
Northern Harrier	3	cw	7	10
Sharp-shinned Hawk	cw	3	2	5
Cooper's Hawk	2	5	4	11
accipiter sp.		2		2
Red-tailed Hawk	10	59	82	151
Rough-legged Hawk			1	1
American Coot		cw		cw
Sandhill Crane			6	6
Bonaparte's Gull		96		96
Ring-billed Gull	80	3,399	92	3,571
Herring Gull	8	1,036	85	1,129
Iceland Gull		1		1
Lesser Black-backed Gull		1	1	2
Glaucous Gull		1		1
Great Black-backed Gull	1	38	2	41

Rochester, NY Area Christmas Bird Count Summary 2019 (continued)				
	Letchworth-Silver Lake	Rochester	Conesus-Hemlock	
	Dec. 14, 2019	Dec. 15, 2019	Dec. 28, 2019	Total
Rock Pigeon	473	888	239	1,600
Mourning Dove	116	184	339	639
Eastern Screech-Owl	2	33	30	65
Great Horned Owl	1	3	14	18
Barred Owl	cw		1	1
Short-eared Owl	1		1	2
Belted Kingfisher	1	3	4	8
Red-bellied Woodpecker	25	149	94	268
Downy Woodpecker	37	89	124	250
Hairy Woodpecker	16	42	27	85
Northern Flicker	7	32	45	84
Pileated Woodpecker	9	9	17	35
American Kestrel			3	3
Merlin		5		5
Peregrine Falcon	cw	5		5
Northern Shrike			1	1
Blue Jay	184	240	593	1,017
American Crow	337	22,387	679	23,403
Fish Crow		1		1
Common Raven	1	1	20	22
Horned Lark	5		3	8
Tree Swallow		cw		cw
Black-capped Chickadee	221	337	537	1,095
Tufted Titmouse	36	64	86	186
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4	12	11	27
White-breasted Nuthatch	48	71	179	298
Brown Creeper	5	23	2	30
Winter Wren		12	3	15
Carolina Wren	2	11	43	56
Golden-crowned Kinglet	8	13	7	28
Eastern Bluebird	3	1	90	94
American Robin	7	410	99	516
Gray Catbird		1		1
Northern Mockingbird	2	7	9	18
European Starling	856	6,420	2,676	9,952
Cedar Waxwing	1	55	127	183
Yellow-rumped Warbler		3	1	4
Eastern Towhee			1	1
American Tree Sparrow	61	32	167	260
Song Sparrow	24	24	37	85
Swamp Sparrow		5	13	18
White-throated Sparrow	29	8	23	60
White-crowned Sparrow	3		5	8
Dark-eyed (S-c) Junco	123	85	139	347
Northern Cardinal	75	225	132	432
Red-winged Blackbird		2	116	118
Common Grackle		1		1
Brown-headed Cowbird	cw		1	1
House Finch	61	137	35	233
Purple Finch	1	1		2

Rochester, NY Area Christmas Bird Count Summary 2019 (continued)

	Letchworth-Silver Lake Dec. 14, 2019	Rochester Dec. 15, 2019	Conesus-Hemlock Dec. 28, 2019	Total
American Goldfinch	97	199	219	515
House Sparrow	269	1821	406	2,496
Total Individuals (count day)	11,656	46,732	11,338	69,726
Total species (count day)	60	78	79	98
Total species (incl. count week)	66	84	80	102
A bold number indicates new high or low count.				
The Rochester total was reduced by 1, as accipiter sp. is not an added species.				

December 2019 Sightings Report

Relative to birds and birding, the weather this month was important in the details, not the averages. Temperatures averaged 31.5 °F, 1.5° above normal. But the details show the first 3 weeks with only 5 days above normal and some cold spells, then the last 10 days averaging 12° above normal. Precipitation totaled 3.90", 1.27" above normal, with 3 events of just above 0.7", and the precipitation well spread through the month. Snowfall totaled 22.4", only 0.6" above normal, again spread out, with the largest event only 3.9" on the 2nd. The largest synoptic snow event was from December 12-14, but mainly south of Rochester in the hills. The Christmas Bird Counts were again all affected by weather issues: Letchworth-Silver Lake (snow), Rochester (some snowy periods and brisk winds), and Conesus-Hemlock was again breezy. Much of the still water on ponds and smaller lakes was still frozen from earlier cold snaps. Adding these effects on top of the cold and snow back in November made lingering waterbirds scarce and passerines either scarce or hard to find.

Species counts for these Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) were below average, with 60 for Letchworth-Silver Lake and 78 for Rochester, but 6 count week species added in each case during better conditions. The Little Lakes (Conesus-Hemlock) CBC began dark and windy, with the breeze dropping and skies breaking as the day progressed. In the end, 79 species were tallied, and one more was added in the count week. Low numbers were the story for all the counts, and missing waterbird species were a major part of this. A significant factor was that the waterfowl hunting season was now open through all of December. For a first time in my memory, there were more decoys than ducks on Braddock Bay on the Rochester CBC day. There were no new high counts for Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC, a new high for Bald Eagle and a tie high for Peregrine Falcon on the Rochester CBC, and new highs for Red-bellied Woodpecker. Blue Jay, and Carolina Wren were new highs for the Little Lakes CBC. For the Rochester CBC, the crow roost was again tallied and the 22,000 crows accounted for nearly half the total individuals counted.

Again, all the expected waterfowl for the season were reported, but in generally low numbers, as can be seen in the Noteworthy Records table on the RBA website. There was only one record for Snow Goose, and a Harlequin Duck early in the month and 2 King Eider reports, and a Barrow's Goldeneye later, were the only rarer ducks. There were a few good counts for each of the 3 swan species. A large flock of Long-tailed Ducks on Lake Ontario off Greece, a good flock of mainly Redheads and scaup moving between off Greece and off Irondequoit, and large flocks of Redheads on Conesus Lake and Ring-necked Ducks on Hemlock Lake were the only large congregations. Merganser numbers were poor, other than 2 reports of good numbers of Red-breasted Merganser in Port Bay. Grebes were scarce, but Andy Guthrie caught 408 Red-necked Grebes off Hamlin Beach State Park on the 8th, and an Eared Grebe on the 13th and a Western Grebe found on the 28th and present into the new year were surprise rarities. Sandhill Crane numbers as high as 42 were reported in the region through the Montezuma CBC on the 16th, and 6 were sighted at Taylor Marsh on the 28th. American Coot was almost missed.

The only shorebird reports were a couple of Purple Sandpipers, irregular but sort of expected at this time of year. Gulls generally were relatively scarce for this time of year, with only low numbers of the usual winter gulls - Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous - at a few locations. Loons, too, were generally scarce, though there were a couple of decent Red-throated Loon counts later in the month. Double-crested Cormorants lingered again in Braddock Bay and Irondequoit Bay in small numbers.

Turkey Vultures and raptor records were also on the low side with no real surprises. Winter Bald Eagle numbers were good, Cooper's Hawk reports outnumbered Sharp-shinned Hawk by more than 5:1, lone Northern Goshawk and Red-shouldered Hawk reports were received, and Rough-legged Hawks were scarce. Among the owls, counts for Eastern Screech-Owl during the CBCs were depressed by a combination of windy nights and low effort, only about three Snowy Owls were reported, and there was no local Short-eared Owl survey reported this month. Short-eared Owls were found in small numbers by birders in usual Nations Road and

Lima sites plus one near Cuylerville. There were no Red-headed Woodpecker reports and only 2 reports for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Finally, numbers of individuals and different locations were down a bit for all 3 of our regular falcon species.

Among the passerines, a decent number of species was reported, but variety and especially numbers of individuals, were mostly down. It is likely a combination of many factors – a poor breeding season in the north; the cold and snow in mid-November and then early December; messy December weather, especially on the CBCs; and a lack of irruptive species, e.g. essentially no winter finches. The warm end to the month could not bring out birds that had left way earlier or maybe had not even passed through. Still, there were reports of quite a few lingering half-hardies, mostly in only in small numbers or as single reports. These included: 2 reports of continuing Tree Swallow near Buck Pond, at least 30 Winter Wrens, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 2 Hermit Thrushes, 6 Gray Catbirds, 2 Eastern Towhees, Savannah and Field Sparrows, a Fox Sparrow, relatively small numbers of White-crowned and White-throated sparrows, and some Yellow-rumped Warblers, including a maximum count of 14. On the brighter side, Blue Jays were everywhere, American Crows were doing well, Carolina Wren numbers were good, and Eastern Bluebirds were plentiful on sunny days. Back to the downside, American Robin numbers very spotty; Cedar Waxwings few; Horned Larks, longspurs, and Snow Buntings generally hard to find; and blackbirds scarce.

The scarcity also showed or maybe related in a “chicken and egg” fashion to an eBird download of just 13,756 lines of records after out-of-region lines were deleted. This is down about 1/3 from 19,838 in December 2018, one of the few times when numbers of eBird reports for a month have dropped significantly year to year.

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)
Species for December	125	132	131.8
New for the year	3	1	1.1
Total for the year	294	288	291.4

Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee

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February 2020 Birds & Brews

February's Birds & Brews will take place after the Winter Waterfowl Tour on Sunday, February 16th. Meet at 12 noon at at Bill Gray's Tap Room. All are welcome!

Location: Bill Gray's Tap Room: 4870 Culver Road, Rochester, NY 14622

Time: 12 Noon- 2:30 p.m.

Birds & Brews is a casual occasion for members to get together and share birding stories, compare travel destinations, and catch up, all while having a pint of Rochester's finest beer or ale.



ROCHESTER BIRDING ASSOCIATION

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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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