



# Bittle Gull

Visit the RBA's website at [www.RochesterBirding.org](http://www.RochesterBirding.org)

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

## September 2021 Birding Field Trips

Please Note: Pre-registration is now required for all field trips (see the COVID-19 field trip guidelines in the revised field trip schedule or on the RBA website). Registrations via Eventbrite open 7 days before the date of the field trip. Bring your own binoculars and scopes if you have them, as there will be no sharing of equipment.

### Sept 4 **BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP** -- CHARLOTTE AND TURNING POINT PARK

Saturday We'll be looking for shorebirds, warblers, and other fall migrants along the river and lakeshore. At Charlotte Beach, we'll look for gulls in many plumages and some shorebirds, too. At Turning Point Park, we will look for the usual suspects and fall migrants. Bring binoculars. The Charlotte Beach area can be wheelchair accessible. Low difficulty—one long steep grade at Turning Point Park. Length about 2.0 miles total. Restrooms are available at Charlotte only. 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. **Bring binoculars and, if you have them, spotting scopes.**

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

### Sept 11 **NEW!! WHITING ROAD NATURE PRESERVE**

Saturday This preserve includes about 240 acres of land that is made up of a variety of birding habitats. This results in decent birding lists throughout the year. The trails are well marked and maintained. However, they do get muddy at times, so appropriate footwear is recommended based on the weather leading up to the trip date. Most of the trails are somewhat flat, but there definitely will be a bit of up and down trail climbing in some sections. Hopefully, our trek will take us on parts of the blue, brown, orange, and red trails. This trip is not handicap accessible. Moderate difficulty in a few spots. Length about 2.5 miles. Restrooms are not available. We will meet at **8:00 a.m.** in the parking lot on Whiting Road in Webster, 0.6 miles south of Lake Road.

**Leaders:** Dick Horsey 585-435-2837 and co-leaders Candace Giles 585-281-1643 and Eunice Thein 585-746-2919

### Sept 12 **DURAND-EASTMAN PARK**

Sunday We'll be looking for thrushes and other migrants. Durand can be surprising this time of year. This will be an easy 2-3 hour walk along paved roads. This trip is wheelchair accessible. Low difficulty—slight grade at one point. Length about 2.5 miles, total. Restroom facilities are not available on this route, but are in other areas of the park. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** in the Lake Shore Blvd. parking lot between Zoo Road and Log Cabin Road (Parking Lot D).

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

**Sept 18 MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

Saturday We'll be looking for waterfowl and migrating shorebirds. Expect to see herons, eagles and possibly falcons. There will be a number of stops during this mostly driving trip. Restrooms may not be available at the Visitor Center. Meet at **10:30 a.m.** at the Montezuma visitor center. Pack a lunch. **Spotting scopes would be very useful.**

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

**Sept 25 GANONDAGAN STATE HISTORIC SITE**

Saturday We will look for sparrows in the brush and other migrating birds near the parking area, and then walk about 2 miles round trip on the wide trails through fields, shrubland and woodlands to beautiful overlooks. This trip is not wheelchair accessible. Moderate difficulty in spots--hills. Restroom facilities are available at the center. We'll meet at **9:00 a.m.** in the main parking lot off County Road 41/ Boughton Hill Road. The parking lot is situated below the new museum at 7000 County Road 41, Victor, NY 14564. (From Route 444 from Victor, turn right at the blinking light onto Boughton Hill Road; the main parking lot will be on your right near the bottom of the hill.)

**Leaders:** *Amy Kahn 585-310-2330 and co-leader June Summers (GVAS)*

**Sept 26 IROQUOIS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

Sunday We'll look for migrant ducks and various passerines in this "get to know Iroquois in autumn" trip. This trip is a combination of driving and walking and includes a boardwalk, forest trail, and dirt road. Not wheelchair accessible in the forest trail. Low difficulty--flat. Length about 3.5 miles total, walking. Port-a-john available about midway through trip. Meet at 11:00 a.m. at the Brockport Wegmans parking lot (restroom). For those traveling from the west, meet at the Upper Stafford Marsh Overlook near 5999 Albion Road, Oakfield, NY at 11:30 a.m. Bring a lunch and beverages as this trip can go until sundown. Spotting scopes would be very useful.

**Leaders:** *Sheryl Gracewski and Tom Nash 585-261-6975 and co-leader Rosemary Reilly 585-748-0802*

**Oct 10 HAMLIN BEACH STATE PARK**

Sunday We'll start off walking flat wooded and brushy areas of the park, looking for thrushes, sparrows, and maybe a half-hardy warbler or two. After that, we'll stop by the lake watch to view ducks on the water and in flight, learning about the lake watch process. Dress appropriately for cooler weather along the lake, and wear comfortable footwear. Restroom facilities are available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** in Hamlin Beach State Park, Parking Lot 1. **Spotting scopes would be very useful.**

**Leader:** *Dominic Sherony 585-223-7353 and co-leaders Sheryl Gracewski and Tom Nash 585-261-6975*

## Welcome to the Flock!



### New members since May 15:

Katie & Matt Comeau  
Cindy Dudak  
Mary Harkola  
Kristine & Steve Herman  
Joanne Joyce  
Wendy Kurlowicz  
Zoe Leader  
Carmel Merrill & Richard Lunt  
Robin Morey  
John & Christine Norris  
Luanne Pignataro  
Emma Rarich  
Michael, Isaac & Rachel Rizzo  
Jeremy & Ashley Sanderson  
Ben Schmitz & Rachel Coons  
Jason Toland  
Valarie Vought & Jock Rotella

### Current RBA Membership as of August 15 is 450:

433 Household memberships  
2 Young Birders  
1 Corporate (The Bird House)  
1 Little Gull membership  
13 Complimentary

Jo Taylor  
Membership Data

Adrianna Anderson  
Membership Outreach



*President's  
Column  
Liz Magnanti*

This summer there have been a lot of articles about a mystery illness that has been deadly to birds in the Mid-Atlantic. The illness was affecting mostly American Robins, European Starlings, Common Grackles and Blue Jays. The symptoms of the illness are crusty eyes, tremors, partial paralysis, and disorientation. It is still not known what the cause of this is. Thankfully, scientists are hard at work to determine the cause.

The illness was first discovered just out of Washington DC, and has also been reported in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, Indiana, Tennessee, Florida, and Ohio. There appears to be a direct overlap of the illness happening where the 17 year periodical cicadas emerged. It is not yet known if or how the cicada emergence may have had a hand in this illness.

Another good piece of news: the illness appears to be on the decline and has not been reported in the state of New York. Because the cause of the illness is unknown, it is not known if it can spread from bird to bird. If it does, it is important to minimize the contact birds have with each other. Bird feeders and bird baths are places where birds congregate closer, and in more numbers than they tend to out in nature. This is why the states that have been reporting the illness have recommended taking down feeders and bird baths.

It is always important to make sure bird feeders and baths are clean for the birds, and now more so than ever. Keeping birdfeeders and baths

clean may sound like a lot of work, but it doesn't have to be! Letting the feeder or bath soak in hot water with dish soap will do most of the work for you! Take your bird feeder apart as much as you can to allow the soap to get into all the nooks and crannies. Make sure to scrub the feeder well using a bottle brush or scrubbing sponge. Next, dip the feeder or bath in a solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water. That will kill off any remaining bacteria. Rinse well, and let the feeder dry completely before putting it back together and filling it with seed.

Although we haven't had any reports of this bird illness locally, it's always important that if you see a sick bird in your yard, that you take down your feeders. There are other illnesses we have locally like finch eye disease that are known to spread at feeders.

As we roll into the fall our monthly membership meetings will begin again. We are in a transition period of figuring out whether or not to continue monthly meetings via Zoom exclusively, have them in person, or a combination of both. Field trips throughout the remainder of 2021 will continue to require signups via Eventbrite. Birds and Brews will also be returning in September. As things change and advance we will keep you posted via The Little Gull and e-mail blasts.

I am also very happy to announce we have a new Little Gull Editing Team! Leah Mould is our new Editor and Zoe Leader is our Copy Editor. I am so excited to have them on board and to see their enthusiasm and great ideas shine as this publication goes on. I hope you all continue to enjoy the summer and I look forward to seeing you both virtually and in-person soon!

## ***Birding the Wildest Islands of the Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago)***

Hello RBAers!

We hope you all have enjoyed your summer. RBA will have our first meeting since May on September 9, 2021 at 7 pm. As of this writing (Aug. 7), we do not know if we will be meeting in person or continue on Zoom (email notification to come later). Either way, our first speaker or two will Zoom in, which has the advantage of allowing us to have speakers from faraway places, in this case, from the Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Tobago.

I met Faraaz Abdool through a wonderful online organization called Learn the Birds. Based in South Africa, Learn the Birds presents free weekly webinars on a wide range of topics related to birds worldwide. It also holds master classes on bird photography, and Faraaz, who is head of programs for the Americas, holds monthly casual chats called The Bird is the Word. Check it out at: [learnthebirds.com](https://learnthebirds.com).

You can see Faraaz's great photography and read his thoughtful blogs at: <https://www.faraazabdool.com> and on <https://www.10000birds.com>. Please join us as we learn about this superb birding destination.

Jeanne Verhulst, Vice President and Program Chair

Trinidad and Tobago boasts the second highest species density of birds per unit area in the world. In this talk, the viewer is whisked along on a tour that goes back in time from the formation of the islands to the present day avian cornucopia. Stunning visuals of T&T's wild spaces and of over 150 species of birds form the backbone of this virtual birding tour of these two continental islands in the Caribbean.



Bio:

Faraaz Abdool is an internationally published freelance conservation and wildlife photographer/writer who specializes in birds and the issues they face worldwide. He graciously serves on the Trinidad and Tobago Bird Status and Distribution Committee (formerly the Trinidad and Tobago Rare Bird Committee), and leads birding trips on both islands. Faraaz also runs yearly birding and wildlife tours to East Africa.

Faraaz is also the author of "*Casual Birding in Trinidad & Tobago*", an extensive volume designed to market T&T as an attractive and easy birding destination as well as to educate the local population about their avian cohabitants. Read a review here: <https://newsday.co.tt/2021/04/11/theres-nothing-casual-about-casual-birding/>

Although he doesn't keep a life list, Faraaz has been a keen birder for many years, separating Black and Turkey Vultures at distance as a little boy, skipping class to gaze at Magnificent Frigatebirds as a teenager and quitting his job as an electrical engineer

to put all his energy into conservation as an adult.

Faraaz cultivates wildlife consciousness via his words and images in a last-ditch attempt to reconnect humans with nature and save the world.

## ***Birds & Brews is Back!***

The Rochester Birding Association is happy to announce Birds & Brews will be returning! Our first event of the year will be **Wednesday, September 22nd from 6-9pm** at Three Heads Brewing.

This is a casual evening for members to get together and share birding stories, compare travel destinations, and catch up all while having a pint of Rochester's finest ale. This month, join us at Three Heads Brewing on Atlantic Ave. Hope to see you there!

**Location: Three Heads Brewing:** 186 Atlantic Ave, Rochester, NY 14607



## ***RBA in the Field***

### **Manitou Beach Preserve May 16, 2021**

On a spectacular Sunday morning fourteen folk and RBA leaders had a stellar day of birding. We had 52 species at the preserve including 16 species of warbler, 3 species of vireo and 2 species of flycatcher. Firsts of the year for most: Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, Yellow-throated Vireo and Kingbird. We then went to the West Spit and had 34 species, including 9 new species for the day including 3 species of sandpiper, 2 species of wren and Prairie Warbler for a total of 17 species of warbler for the day seen by the trip attendees. Missed were reports of Cerulean and Golden winged warblers.

*Amy Kahn and Kevin Farrell*

### **Taylor Road, Headwaters of Irondequoit Creek Field Trip, May 25, 2021**

A sunny, warm, and breezy day greeted the eight birders who arrived at a new field trip location on Taylor Road in Honeoye Falls, the property of trip co-leader, Linda Roca. We heard and saw Chipping Sparrows near the driveway and heard Cardinals calling as we began walking along the wide mowed path bordered by a field and hedgerow. A Song Sparrow hopped in the brush, and we heard a Red-eyed Vireo singing. Working towards the creek, some glimpsed a Common Yellowthroat, we saw a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher attending a nest, and we heard a Red-bellied Woodpecker. As we walked along the creek, we were treated to a hammering Pileated Woodpecker in good view, a Yellow Warbler sang, and four Wood Ducks slipped behind a bend in the creek. Back out in the open, we found Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows at nest boxes. We continued walking along various fields bordered by shady trees where a single Cedar Waxwing perched high in a tree and Field Sparrows sang their bubbly song. We spent some time trying to see a Blue-winged Warbler as it flitted in dense foliage, teasing us with glimpses but not full views. As we made our

way back toward the starting point, a Green Heron flew over, a Swamp Sparrow sang, and a Black-billed Cuckoo called. Thanks to the sharp eyes and ears of all the participants, we had a total of 42 species seen or heard for the morning. A special thank you to our host for opening her beautiful property for an RBA field trip and for all her hard work maintaining the several miles of paths!

*Linda Roca and Jeanne Verhulst*

### **Canadice Lake May 29, 2021**

It was no surprise the nine trip participants arrived at the Rush Town Hall bundled up in winter gear even though it was May. Weather in Rochester has always been known to be quirky, but 40 degrees at the end of May was a bit much.

To our good fortune, though, the birds Lucretia and I scouted out the week before were still singing. Our bird checklist started out at the head of Hemlock Lake where we had the use of restrooms and lots of Canada Geese with their downy young. Warbling Vireo, Cedar Waxwings, and Baltimore Oriole were a few of the species there. Backtracking to East Lake Road along Canadice we immediately found our first Hooded Warbler. Other target warblers along the way included Chestnut-sided, Pine, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow, Blue-winged and American Redstart. But Lucretia and I had a special treat we had discovered on our scouting trip. We didn't want to say anything to the group until we pulled up to the spot and the Mourning Warbler was singing his heart out. It took a good thirty minutes to locate him. We almost walked away with a "heard only" bird when one of the group saw a small bird in a dead tree much higher up than anyone of us had looked. Sure enough it was our Mourning Warbler, a lifer for some!

Other breeding birds such as Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, Dark-eyed Junco and a Broad-winged Hawk showed themselves nicely. A rare treat was seeing three Osprey flying together overhead.

Our total count for the morning was 52 species. Not bad considering how cold and cloudy it was. Thanks to everyone who attended.

*Diane Henderson and Lucretia Grosshans*



### **Ganondagan June 5, 2021**

We had a lovely day walking through meadow, woodland, scrub wetland and stream corridor with 17 attendees including 13 members and 4 non members. In 3 hours we had 39 species, including 27 recorded for the Breeding Bird Atlas. Highlights were 3 species on nests (Towhee, Tree swallow, and Song sparrow), and recently fledged young Belted Kingfisher, American Robins and Eastern Bluebirds. We had both Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Cooper's and Red-tailed Hawk and 6 species of flycatchers (Alder, Willow, Wood Pewee, Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, and Eastern Kingbird).

*Amy Kahn and June Summers*

### **Letchworth State Park June 6, 2021**

The welcome cool of a 5:30 AM start during a heat wave got everyone off to a good start as fourteen gathered at the Mt. Morris Dam Overlook. The usual Turkey Vultures (30!) swooped around, an Indigo Bunting showed nicely, a Baltimore Oriole and Cardinals sang. We racked up 22 species before leaving the parking lot! Moving on to Squawkie Hill Overlook, we heard the lovely Veery singing, got good looks at a Yellow Warbler and Eastern Towhee, and had our first bub-

bly Field Sparrow of the day. At Highbanks Recreation Area overlook we added Cedar Waxwing and Great Crested Flycatcher to the list.

By around 7 AM, we began our first walk down the trail to the former site of Gibsonville, the CCC camp, and then to the banks of a narrow part of the Genesee River. Lots of bird song here: Blue-winged Warbler (seen by a lucky few), Common Yellowthroat, Carolina Wren, Scarlet Tanager, Black-throated Green, Wood Thrush, and Indigo Bunting. At river's edge, we caught a quick look at a Louisiana Waterthrush and everyone got fairly good looks at a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

At Pine Point (also called Smokey Hollow), we had a short walk into a stand of Red Pine for our next target: Acadian Flycatcher. It was heard well and glimpsed a couple of times flitting fairly close over the ravine, but, alas, not good looks. We did hear a Black-and-White Warbler and a Blue-headed Vireo, but missed Pine Warbler.

A quick stop at the first parking lot of St. Helena Picnic area produced an American Redstart and a Yellow Warbler. Parking at the lower lot, we began our walk down to the river. Along the dirt road, Indigo Bunting showed well, as did a Common Yellowthroat sitting out nicely on a close branch. Blue-winged and Hooded Warblers, Ovenbird and Veery were heard, and a Baltimore Oriole was seen on a nest. A surprise was three Spotted Sandpipers chasing each other at the river's edge.

Degolyer Road--about a mile long maintenance road through forest--was a new stop on the trip. Veery, Scarlet Tanager, American Redstart, Hooded Warbler, and Baltimore Oriole serenaded us. After a quick lunch at Wolf Creek, across the road we did find a nesting Chickadee and a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

We spent some time at Great Bend Overlook catching an occasional glimpse of a singing Pine Warbler. Then after a quick stop at Archery Field Overlook for Turkey Vultures and a Red-tailed

Hawk, we made a side trip to the Humphrey Nature Center where Mike Landowski graciously allowed us to watch some great feeder birds: Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Purple Finch, Baltimore Oriole, Brown-headed Cowbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and White-breasted Nuthatch. Mike also showed us an interesting unoccupied nest of a Brown Creeper—bunches of grass stuffed behind the bark of a dead tree.

Now close to 90 degrees and the group dwindling (and wilting!), we opted out of the Council Grounds stop and instead went to the Portageville Train Trestle parking lot to view a not too distant Bald Eagle nest with two perched fledgling eagles on the nest. The trip concluded there at about 3:30. Our total for the trip came to 65 species. Many thanks to all the participants for coming and bringing their sharp ears and eyes to the trip, and especially to Mike Landowski, Humphrey Nature Center Naturalist, for taking the time to lead this trip.

*Mike Landowski, Tom and Jeanne Verhulst*

### **Odonata Sanctuary June 20, 2021**

Fifteen people met us on a beautiful summer-like day at Steve Melcher's property, known as the Odonata Sanctuary. The trip started out with views from the parking lot. We found Chipping Sparrows, Mules, and (of course) a local specialty, a pair of peafowl.

The walk began by viewing activity over a grassy large field. Most participants saw Eastern Bluebirds, Barn Swallows, and Bobolinks. Some individuals also had a flyover view of an Eastern Meadowlark. The trail proceeded down past a stream, where Brown Thrasher, Yellow Warblers, and Cedar Waxwings were residing. After a brief moment savoring the water sounds, we continued into the woods. An Eastern Towhee greeted us with a plea for us to 'drink your tee-e-e'. Also an Eastern Kingbird was calling nearby. Finally we checked out the pond, however no waterfowl were around the pond. After a group picture, we

slowly filtered away from an exciting morning.

*Steve Melcher, Sheryl Gracewski, and Tom Nash*

### **Barnhart's Camp and Keeney Swamp June 27, 2021**

For 21 birding enthusiasts, June 27th turned out to be a fine day. Temperatures ranged from 72 to 89 degrees, but a steady breeze kept it from being uncomfortable.

As we arrived at the Shop'n'Save in Nunda, eyes and ears were always on the alert, even as introductions were made. Of the 12 species seen and heard there, the highlight was the cackle of the Pileated Woodpecker from the buffer woods behind the store.

Our trip through Nunda gave us our first Carolina Wren, heard only, but all were able to see the Main Street Chimney Swifts roaming overhead. When we reached Nunda-Dalton Road we had already tallied 18 species, and by the time we turned onto Allen Road, our number reached 39! The Blue-Winged Warbler gave us a run for our money, but it finally co-operated and gave us a good look.

On to Sand Hill Road, then County Road #7 in Hunt, where our first Yellow-Billed Cuckoo was spotted by Brian and Gayle and seen by some, and the Indigo Bunting was eventually found by all. Next, on Morse Road we had good views of an American Redstart and further on a Bobolink posed for us.

Jeanne Verhulst snapped a super shot of the second Yellow-Billed Cuckoo of the day (again spotted by Brian!) on Plains Road, where we also heard a Dark-eyed Junco and a Scarlet Tanager. The Prairie Warbler was not easy to see this year. He kept playing hide and seek but many of us did get a glimpse of bird #59. In the same area Rich Putrelo was able to coax out a Wild Turkey. At camp many of the group saw our feeder birds: Purple Finch, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and American Goldfinch, and also Tree Swallow. I really enjoyed showing everyone our Beaver Empire out back. That and

**Montezuma NWR August 8, 2021**

the picnic lunch with so many treats are a bonus for me!

After lunch, several people headed home (it was nearly 4PM!) but the rest of us continued south and east to the Keeney Swamp Forest Road and then on to the swamp itself. We missed out on the Mourning Warbler that Jerry and I heard when we scouted on Saturday, but did pick up a female Canada Warbler instead. At least the Osprey and youngster were on their platform nest and Canada Geese and a Swamp Sparrow were in the area (thanks, Rick Stevens). By this time, 21 birders now numbered 6 who continued on Fitch Hill Road where we agreed that both the Wood Thrush and Hermit Thrush were singing. We also added Black-throated Green Warbler and farther along a Red-breasted Nuthatch.

On the way to Klipnocky State Forest we had a Winter Wren and also a Golden-Crowned Kinglet, a first for this trip. Our last stop in Klipnocky gave us bird #80, a beautiful Magnolia Warbler. The last stop by the Keeney Swamp and got our last 2 species, Mallard and Wood Ducks. 82 was a satisfying total at the end of a 14-hour day. Thanks to all who made the trip down. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.

*Jerry and Carolyn Barnhart*

**Conesus Inlet State Wildlife Management Area  
July 31, 2021**

We had about 18 birders on our RBA trip around the Conesus inlet swamp, with an after trip for shorebirds near the Geneseo airfield. It was a beautiful morning and we turned up seventy species in all, a good number for the end of July. The morning was spent in a rather relaxed visit to half a dozen sites around the inlet swamp wildlife management area. The shorebird trip visited a flooded depression in farmland well south of the airfield road.

*Jim Kimball, Nick Kachala, Elijah Kruger*

We three leaders were joined by sixteen others, mostly beginners. That was great since this was a beginner trip, many visiting for the first time. The refuge was very dry and nearby wet areas were very scarce, tough conditions for shorebirds.

Our first of three stops on Wildlife Drive got us a close-by family group Sandhill Cranes with some very nice looks. Sharp eyes in the group also located Bald Eagles perched not too far away. An Osprey family passed overhead, and several Caspian Terns flew by. At our second stop we managed to find some Least and Spotted Sandpipers. Last check was along Wildlife Drive at the kiosk with the adjacent eagle sculpture. Here we found some Lesser Yellowlegs and a nearby pair of parent and young Bald Eagles. The Mays Point platform area had water but few birds. We managed distant looks at Common Gallinule and American Coot.

Our last stop was at Knox-Marsellus Marsh and we quickly found the Wood Stork on the wing, not too far away. Very majestic sight. Soon after this, the Roseate Spoonbill was found and did a bit of flying for us. We were very fortunate to find these two accidentals which had been hanging around the refuge for a few weeks. Many, many Great Egret and Great Blue Heron were on the marsh along with countless shorebirds with distance preventing any attempt at identification. The trip with the total species count being 33.

*Sheryl Gracewski, Tom Nash, John Boettcher*





## Conservation Corner: Clear cutting to resume along Erie Canal corridor

By Jeanne Verhulst

After a three-year hiatus, the New York State Canal Corporation is again proposing to continue clearing trees from canal embankments. The opportunity for people to make their concerns known to the Canal Corporation and to elected representatives with regard to removal of vegetation (trees and brush) along the embankment areas of the entire length of the Erie Canal is fast approaching. The public comment period ends September 5, 2021. The email address is [NYSCC-Embankments@bergmannpc.com](mailto:NYSCC-Embankments@bergmannpc.com). If you are not familiar with this project, please refer to this article in the August 11, 2021, Democrat and Chronicle written by Justin Murphy [here](#)

To view maps of the impacted areas of Monroe County go [here](#) or to see maps of all counties in NY State where clearing will be done [here](#).

You can take a very short survey that will automatically go to the Canal Corporation by scanning the Q code at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/374651252977621/>

You can read the Environmental Impact Statement [here](#).

Embankments are the ground that was built up beside the canal to contain it and can extend out as far as 200 feet from the canal on both sides. While these embankments were originally bare of vegetation following the construction of the canal, after 200 years, trees and brush have grown and now present a forested corridor in some places that provides habitat for birds and animals, shade for people who walk or bike the canal paths, and visual pleasure to everyone and especially folks who live adjacent to the canal. The proposed project would restore the embankments to their original state with gravel and grass (mowed twice a year) replacing the trees and shrubs. Why do this at the cost of \$1 to \$2 million a mile (plus the annual cost of mowing)? According to the statement, trees and shrubs make it less easy to inspect the condition of the embankments. If an embankment should fail, the cost of emergency repairs is predicted to be high. Is the ease of inspection worth the loss of miles of habitat, shade, and visual aesthetics in this age of needing more trees for habitat and to offset carbon dioxide that contribute to global warming? What is the true likelihood of embankment failure and it's cost to repair it on a case-by-case basis versus the cost in dollars for this project, not to mention public dissatisfaction? Would the disruption to the embankments themselves by pulling stumps and brush and resulting exposure to bare ground affect the stability of the embankments after 200 years of stability? Consider the disruption to community life within earshot (a mile or more) of any part of this project: noise and gasoline pollution of heavy equipment, chain saws, trucks carting earth, gravel, trees through neighborhoods, creation of access roads in some places, over a period months to years. Where is all this debris going? Consider the view of what's left behind.

**Please make your voice heard pro or con by September 5, 2021.**



Red-headed Woodpecker  
(Adult/Juv) - Hamlin Beach  
Park - © Alan Bloom -  
Jul 30, 2021



Lupinus perennis, Seneca Trail  
Ganondagon 21-06-05  
Jay Greenberg



**July 2020 Sighting Notes:**

Flip the switch from last July to a cool, wet month this year. Temperatures averaged 69.6°F, 2.7° below normal. There was only one day above 90° and 11 days above 80°, eight days below the average. Temperatures were also variable, with only six days the longest stretch for periods either above or below average. The 5<sup>th</sup> saw the warmest day. Precipitation totaled 7.66", 3.56" above normal, making it the 5<sup>th</sup> wettest July on record. There were 20 days with rainfall, 11 of these heavy, another July record. The longest stretch without measurable rainfall was four days, a record short interval. The 3.03" on 17 July broke the old record of 2.04" set in 1873 and was the 13<sup>th</sup> wettest day in Rochester weather records. Damaging thunder storms occurred on the 20<sup>th</sup>, with the hardest hit areas west of Rochester seeing damage from high winds and hail (to tennis ball size in Lewiston, Region 1!). The month ended with a relatively quiet period from 22-29 July and a cold front pushing south to end that.

Typical of July, there were few waterfowl reports and numbers were low other than for Mute Swan. The most interesting story was the number of puddle duck species lingering around the Braddock Bay barrier-beach island, many all month. Most of these species have been present, at least irregularly, as summer visitors or even as breeding species in the past, but the variety and number of species this year is surprising. In contrast, their presence and numbers reported from the NMWMA this year were way down. The diving ducks very were scarce. Only Ring-necked Duck and Ruddy Duck were reported from the Braddock Bay site and the regularly breeding Hooded and Common Mergansers a bit more widely.

Pied-billed Grebe was still present in fairly good numbers in the NMWMA (Sandhill Crane Unit), but monitoring was made difficult by the current state of the vegetation there. Cuckoo numbers were good in areas with major gypsy moth outbreaks. There were 614 lines in eBird for Ruby-throated Hummingbird, up quite a bit from the usual numbers. Back at the NMWMA (Sandhill Crane Unit), the vegetation status greatly reduced counts of Common Gallinule and American Coot there, and their maxima were at the Guy Baldassarre Marsh not too far away. Sandhill Cranes reports were also low, with the maximum only five birds.

Again, 20 shorebird species reported to start the fall migration. Much of the action was around the barrier beach island off the East Spit of Braddock Bay. Some of the scarcer species included Whimbrel, Marbled Godwit, the

first Long-billed Dowitcher of the year, and Willet. Black-bellied Plover and American Golden-Plover were not reported. Counts remained on the low side.

Bonaparte's Gull was seen through June and into this month in enough numbers to make assignment of departure and arrival dates meaningless. Gull counts were generally low. Rarer species for the month were an Iceland Gull continuing off and on along the lakeshore and several observations of Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Once again, tern counts were generally low, with the peak for Black Tern only five at the NMWMA (Guy Baldassarre Marsh).

No loons were reported; the Double-crested Cormorant peak was only 119 at Point Breeze, likely just outside our region; Great Blue Heron and Great Egret tallies were low; and no rarer large waders were reported in our region. It was a different story only a short distance outside into Region 3, with Wood Stork and Roseate Spoonbill arriving and staying. An unofficial summer hawk watch at Braddock Bay was not really organized and active until just after month's end. There was only one Red-shouldered Hawk report and a few Broad-winged Hawk reports, nearly all from areas south of Rochester. Continuing to follow Red-headed Woodpecker, there were 23 reports of about 16 individuals from nine locations this month. The three regular falcons were recorded in typical numbers, with American Kestrel up a bit. The rfallcon.com website continued to try to keep track of the downtown Peregrine Falcons.

Typical of recent years, essentially all of the regularly reported passerine species were recorded. The "missing" were again just some of the warblers requiring special effort searching in the forests south of Rochester or in other limited habitats – Louisiana Waterthrush, Nashville

Photo caption: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Plains Road, Hunt, NY, RBA Field Trip Barnhart's Camp, ©Jeanne Verhulst, June 27, 2021





Warbler, and Canada Warbler. Sedge Wren, Clay-colored Sparrow, Prothonotary Warbler, and Prairie Warbler each were reported and would fall into a scarcer-species grouping. Pine Siskin showed up in Webster late in the month. Both White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows were reported from sites where usually not seen in the summer. The Noteworthy Records table on the RBA website contains additional illustrations.

Some general observations are almost a bit confusing. The eBird data download for the month at about 41,541, after removal of out-of-region data from an initial download of 52,536, was up almost 15% from last July. This seems surprising with all the rain, but eBird participation continues to increase generally, there was lots of NY BBA work in progress, and increased waterbird activity around the barrier beach island at the mouth of Braddock Bay attracted lots of birder attention. The effects of these seem present in the details. On the downside, this year we lack both banding data and Jim Adams' regular Oatka Creek Park monitoring report.

Please submit reports to eBird, post them on genesee-birds, and/or send by the 5th of the month to Andrea Patterson, 144 Greystone Lane, #24, Rochester, NY 14618.

	2021	2020	10-year Average
Species for July	179	187	176.1
New for the year	1	4	2.7
Total for the year to date	274	273	271.0



Black-crowned Night Heron (Juv) - Braddock Bay East Spit  
- © Eunice Thein - Aug 09, 2021

## Observers:

Jim Adams, Janet Akin, Osvaldo Araya, Kevin Armstrong, Daniel & Eileen Baldassarre, Ted Barnett, Sue Barth, Doug Beattie, Betty Beckham, Don Bemont, Linda Clark Benedict, Steve Benedict, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Shawn Billerman, Alan Bloom, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Toni Bowen, Lynn Brabant, Joe Brin, Erik Brodsky, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Bruce Cady, Brad Carlson, Denis Caysinger, Robert Cicotta, Larry Chen, Kelly Close, Richard Cohen, Jeremy Collison, Andrew Consler, Lydia Culbert, Doug Daniels, Willie D'Anna, Gregg Dashnau, Ian Davies, Gordon Dutter, Diane Egan, Mark Fitzsimmons, Peacock Flower, George Ford, Jim Fry, Andrew Gaerte, Kyle Gage, Andrew Garland, Janis George, Jessica George, Michelle Gianvecchio, Candy Giles, Christopher Goetz, James Goetz, John Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Jane Graves, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Michael Gullo, Ralph & Georgia Guenther, Andrew Guthrie, Chris Guthrie, Bill Haake, Helen & Chris Haller, Julie Hart, Kim Hartquist, August Hazel, Jim & Allison Healy, Scott Hess, Christina Hoh, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Lynn Howes, Marshall Iliff, Pam Inzinna, Carolyn Jacobs, Alyssa Johnson, Nicholas Kachala, Amy Kahn, Laura & Paul Kammermeier, David Kennedy, Jim Kimball, Kathy Kirsch, Renee Kittleman, J. Gary Kohlenberg, Ethan Lai, Michael Laird, Chris Lajewski, Greg Lawrence, Gayle Lazoration, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Pat Martin, Andrew Mason, Donna Mason-Spier, Lauri Mattle, Jacob McCartney, Bill McConnell, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Kaley McHale, Ann McMican, Scott & Sophie Meagher, Kimberly Merchant, Jim Miles, Kent Millham, Phil Mills, Celeste Morien, Jack Morrell, Brian & Brooke Morse, Jim Mott, Linda Mott, Sheila Mumpton, Allen Nash, Ann Nash, Tom Nash, Hollis Noble, Rivka Noll, David Odell, Michael Palermo, Gary Palmer, Andrea Patterson, Norma Platt, Jo Popma, Neal Reilly, Rhonda Roaring, Susan Roberts, Rochester Young Birders Club, Brian Rohrs, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Erin Sandle, Livia Santana, Karl Schmidt, Dominic Sherony, Judy Slein, Roger Smith, Tom & Pat Smith, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Wendy Stevenson, Allan Strong, James Sullivan, June Summers, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Bruce Thompson, Geoff Twardokus, Nathan Ukens, Alison Van Keuren, Jeanne & Tom Verhulst, Matthew Voelker, Jules Wagner, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Kim Weeks, Deb Weltsch, Wyatt Westerkamp, Kinsley Whittum, Sean Williams, Angus Wilson, Joe & Joyce Wing, Glen Wolford, Paul Wolter, Chris Wood, Jim Wood.



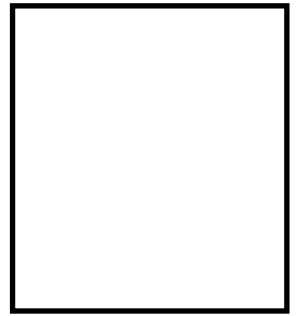
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