Monthly publication—Volume XLVIII, Number 2, February 2023



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

February 2023 Events and Birding Field Trips

Please note: Leaders and trip details are subject to change. Please check the most recent issue of the Little Gull, or the online schedule at the RBA website https://rochesterbirding.org/, for updated information prior to departure! Trips run approximately 2 to 4 hours! Bring binoculars. All field trips will go rain/snow or shine unless there is a travel advisory issued. Online registration https://rochesterbirding.org/ for each trip is required and opens at 7:30 PM, 7 days before the trip date and ends at 1 PM the day before the trip. When COVID guidelines allow, if at all possible, please carpool!

Feb 9 February Monthly Meeting, 7:00 pm, Asbury First Methodist, see page 2

Thursday **Feb 12**

Winter Waterfowl and Other Possibilities

Sunday

Starting at Irondequoit Bay Outlet, we will look for beautiful Long-tailed Ducks, mergansers, scaup and other ducks. We will also concentrate on locating wintering gulls like the occasional Lesser Black Backed, Iceland and Glaucous gulls. We will then drive over to Summerville and Charlotte to see what might be in the Genesee River. If redpolls or winter finches are being seen, we will stop at Durand-Eastman Park along the way. Flat walking on pavement. Restrooms are available in the Charlotte area. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the large parking lot next to the Outlet bridge on the west side of Irondequoit Bay Outlet (Irondequoit Bay State Marine Park). Dress for the weather. Spotting scopes would be useful.

Leader: Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422 and co-leader Robert Buckert 585-269-4206

Birds & Brews, 6:00 pm at Irondequoit Beer Company, see page 2

Feb 15 Wednesday

Lake Shore Marshes East Wildlife Management Area

Mar 11 Saturday

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. One portion of the trip is walking on a wide, mainly flat, sometimes muddy, trail. Bring a snack to munch on to keep your energy up, and dress for the weather! Restrooms available at Sodus Point Park and Chimney Bluffs State Park. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** in Webster Plaza at the junction of Route 404 and Hard Road near Starbucks. **Spotting scopes would be very useful.**

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

Mar 18 Saturday

Hamlin Beach State Park

We will gather at Braddock Bay Park and drive to Hamlin Beach State Park where we will look for waterfowl. On the way there, we will look through fields for migrant waterfowl (Snow or other rarely seen geese) and lingering winter field birds (Horned Larks, Snow Buntings or Lapland Longspurs). We may stop at Owl Woods in search of migrating owls if they have been reported that morning. We will end at the Braddock Bay Hawk Watch in hopes of spotting Rough-legged, Red-shouldered Hawks, and Bald Eagles. Dress warmly as we will be out of the cars often at multiple locations--the lakeshore can be cold this time of year. Trails are flat but can be muddy/snowy. Waterproof boots strongly recommended. Restrooms available at Hamlin Beach only. 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. Bring your own FRS radios and spotting scopes, if you have them.

Leader: Mike Tetlow 585-748-5838 and co-leader Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422

February Monthly Meeting: Capturing the Spirit of Birds with Marie Read Thursday, February 9, 7:00 p.m.

Asbury First United Methodist Church, 1050 East Avenue

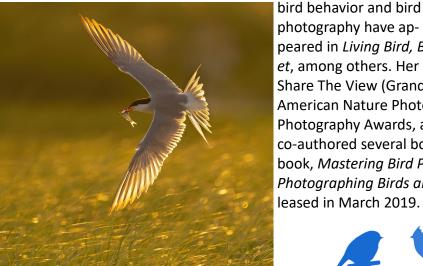
What does it take to create photographs that reveal the essential spirit of birds? For wildlife photographer

Marie Read, it means understanding and then capturing their behavior, and in this presentation she'll show you how it's done. Marie will share the backstories to her compelling images of birds, many of which appear in her best-selling book Mastering Bird Photography, published by Rocky Nook in 2019. Whether you're a bird watcher or an experienced photographer, you'll gain a wealth of tips to help you improve your own images. And you'll learn that being observant, understanding birds' body language and taking your time contribute far more to getting great bird shots than having the newest camera and the biggest lens.

Wildlife photographer and author Marie Read has forged a career out of capturing special moments in birds' lives, creating images that combine beauty with impactful storytelling. Marie's awardwinning images are featured nationally and internationally in magazines, books, and calendars. Her articles and photo essays about



Common Tern and Eastern Bluebird by Marie Read



photography have appeared in Living Bird, Bird Watching, Nature's Best, and Wild Planet, among others. Her images have won awards in contests such as Share The View (Grand Prize Winner 2017), Nature's Best, North American Nature Photography Association Showcase, Audubon Photography Awards, and Festival de L'Oiseau. She has authored or co-authored several books about birds and their lives. Her latest book, Mastering Bird Photography: the Art, Craft and Technique of Photographing Birds and Their Behavior (Rocky Nook), was released in March 2019.











BIRDS AND BREWS

Join us for craft beers and conversation! A chance to meet up and socialize with people who love birds.

> Wednesday, February 15, 2023 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. **Irondequoit Beer Company** 765 Titus Avenue, Rochester

Irondequoit Beer Company has a wide range of beers, ciders, wines, and selected cocktails, and a menu of small plates, large plates, burgers, wings, and more.

Check it out at https://irondequoitbeercompany.com/



President's Corner, Randi Minetor—Back to the Basics

There's been a lot of talk lately on the Rochester Birding Community Group Facebook page and on the Geneseebirds listserv about how birding has changed since the onset of instant communication about sightings. Now that we can post the exact locations of birds on eBird and on text messaging services—often right from the field, while we are still looking at the bird—our manner of birding has shifted significantly. Some birders make chasing rarities the focus of their birding activity. Some do this exclusively, and quite aggressively.

Photo by Richard Ashworth Whether you're a birder who goes out only to find vagrants, one who simply enjoys all birds, or if you fall somewhere between these two options, the same basic rules of birding must apply. A recent violation of these rules in January led some people to trespass on a private homeowner's land in Canandaigua, which in turn led to a confrontation—and termination of access to the Evening Grosbeaks frequenting the homeowner's feeders.

Let's review one of the tenets of the American Birding Association's Code of Birding Ethics (https://www.aba.org/aba-code-of-birding-ethics/), especially item 3a: "Never enter private property without the landowner's permission. Respect the interests of and interact positively with people living in the area where you are birding."

This homeowner had asked that people contact her in advance before visiting her property, but some of the people who went to her home simply drove or strode onto her property unidentified and unannounced. This is a direct violation of the Code of Birding Ethics—and while there are no Birding Police to issue tickets for this behavior, it did spoil the opportunity for anyone else who hoped to see these birds.

This "whatever it takes" attitude does not reflect well on the birding community. In my own experience, both here in our area and across the country, birders are some of the best people I have ever met—excited about nature and its creatures, fascinated by bird behavior, pleased to share what they know, and more than willing to help others "get on the bird" in the field. Birders know to observe birds from a respectful distance, even if it means that we don't get that perfect profile photo. We know not to leave established paths to get closer to a bird, making certain that sensitive habitat remains intact. We rejoice in our own and others' sightings, and we share observations and information to help less experienced birders learn. And we don't trespass on private land, no matter how wondrous the sightings might be there.

In this age of instant access to detailed information about bird locations, it's critically important that we remember who we are and why we're so enthusiastic about birds and birding. If someone does find a rare bird on private property, let's be very clear about what the rules are for this specific sighting—and then, let's follow those rules to the letter, so that as many people as possible can share in the excitement of seeing this bird. Equally important, let's make certain that a homeowner or landowner understands why this visiting species is attracting so much attention. Let's give the owners the best possible experience with birders who visit their property, so they will tell others about the fun they had when a rare bird showed up in their own yard.



RBA Annual
Dinner Photos provided
by Richard
Ashworth



RBA in the Field Little Lakes CBC 12/31/22

This year's Little Lakes CBC was conducted on a cloudy, calm day with temperatures well above freezing and no snow on the ground. There were two record highs: Bonaparte's Gull (from four in 1983 to eight) and Carolina Wren (up to 62 from last year's record high of 49). Highlight of the count was the Yellow-throated Warbler seen at a suet feeder, photographed and documented by Doug Beattie. Other species that showed up in only one sector were Snow Goose (1), Cackling Goose (1), Wood Duck (1), Northern Pintail (3), Lesser Scaup (81), Long-tailed Duck (11), Common Loon (1), Pied Billed Grebe (cw), Horned Grebe (7), Red-necked Grebe (2), Doublecrested Cormorant (1), Rough-legged Hawk (1), Sandhill Crane (2), American Kestrel (2), Great Blackbacked Gull (1), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1), Cedar Waxwing (52), Yellow-rumped Warbler (2), Yellowthroated Warbler (1, and seen only once before, in 1988), Field Sparrow (1), White-crowned Sparrow (2), Red-winged Blackbird (1) and Brown-headed Cowbird (1).

Many thanks to all 35 participants, especially my sector leaders, who managed to pull together at least skeleton crews to cover most areas on New Year's Eveday.

Irondequoit Bay Outlet and Durand Eastman Park 1/1/2023

On New Year's Day, we prepared for a wintery character-building experience, only to be pleasantly surprised with mild conditions: temperature in the 40s with light wind.

Irondequoit Bay was pretty empty except for swans, gulls and four Bald Eagles. The Outlet channel was very productive with good looks at 6 Horned Grebe, and more distant views of a Common Loon, Golden-

eye, Greater Scaup, and a raft of Long-tailed Ducks. The beach to the west had a few Herring and Greater Black-backed Gulls. On Zoo Road in Durand Eastman Park, we were greeted with silence for a good part of our walk. Then came the miracle —an overhead flight of 600 Snow Goose. After we recovered from this sighting, we resumed our scarce birding except for the welcome sights and sounds of Red-breasted Nuthatch. Very late in our travels, we found a pocket of bird activity providing us with a good number of the usual suspects. We finished the trip with a species total of 31. Much thanks to Jeanne Verhulst for keeping and sharing eBird lists of the stops.

Norma Platt, John Boettcher Webster Park—1/7/23

Twenty-one people joined Rosemary and me on a calm, cloudy, seasonally warm morning at Webster Park. Birds were mostly quiet but we did manage to spot four of the species that are on our target list here in winter, namely Golden-crowned Kinglet, Redbreasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper and Hermit Thrush. Canada Geese, Ring-billed Gulls and American Robins were flyovers. We saw four of the five common woodpeckers: Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy and Pileated, missing only Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. We lingered twice at the crab apple trees currently favored by the three Pine Grosbeaks that have been reported, but they did not grace us with their presence. Consolation prize for some of us was a close Evening Grosbeak calling "cheer." Unfortunately it did not show itself, and with such a large group of participants, not everyone heard it or was close enough for us to point it out. We walked the campground loop, which was mostly quiet, and did a loop through the woods south of the campground. Some of us finished with the brush loop on the west side of the road. Thanks to all for coming.

Pat Martin and Rosemary Reilly

February 2023

A New Volunteer Opportunity

Are you technology-savvy? Would you be willing to come to eight RBA general membership meetings per year at Asbury First United Methodist Church (1050 East Avenue) to be sure that our members at home can enjoy the presentation as much as the people in the room?

We are looking for a **Meeting Technology Manager** who will do the following for each meeting:

- Create a Zoom link and send it out to the members the day before the meeting, using our MailChimp account.
- On the evening of the meeting, arrive at 6:30 p.m. and connect the speaker's laptop to the projector, and test that the presentation can run smoothly.
- Open the Zoom link and set up the presenter to share his/her screen properly.
- Set up the OWL device in the room to track the speaker's face and voice.
- Admit viewers into the Zoom room as they arrive.
- Mute everyone online except for the speaker.
- Record the meeting via Zoom.
- After the meeting, send the recording to Liz Magnanti for editing and posting to Youtube.

To become our Meeting Technology Manager, contact Randi Minetor at info@rochesterbirding.org

Welcome to the Flock

Nancy Gombery Michael & Heidy May Benjamin Schmitz
Cami Konecky Kimberly Merchant Terri & Jeff Schumacher

Joseph Laskowski Cindy & Pheobe Petti Erika Venniro

Sandra Martini Christie Rochester & Michele Miner

Join us in welcoming these 15 new or returning members who joined in the last month (11 new memberships).

Current RBA Membership as of January 15 is 316

303 Household memberships

1 Young Birder (other young birders are included in Household memberships)

12 Complimentary

I have refreshed the database, omitting members who have not renewed for 2023. The current membership numbers are about the same as at this point last year. As in years past, we lost a bunch of people, but we will get some of these folks back as late renewals. We've ended each of the last three years with over 450 members. With this *Little Gull*, members (except Complimentary) will also be getting the current roster of members. The roster excludes Junior and Complimentary members, as well as those who have asked not to be listed. The roster is intended for the personal use of members.

Jo Taylor Membership Data

December 2022 Records Report

- 1. December 2022 was a variable month for weather, as usual with a late transitional month. Temperatures averaged 32.0°F, exactly average. 17 days throughout the month had below-average temperatures. This was offset by an intense warming period at the month's end. For temperature range, the mercury hit a high of 62° on the 30th and a low of 5° on the 23rd. There were no new record highs or record lows this December, but a low of 48° on the 30th tied the 1884 record for daily high low. The Rochester airport recorded a dismal 4.8" of snow, which is the 10th lowest December snowfall recorded. The 2022-2023 snowfall season was sitting at the 12th lowest total by month-end. An intense winter storm the 23rd-25th, reaching blizzard status in Buffalo but not in Rochester, brought wind gusts up to 68 mph and intense cold.
- 2. The month's eBird download came in at 28,009 lines, +1.0% over last year. Overall, December was a decent month for waterfowl birding and a poor month for passerine birding. Ice remaining on the lakes and ponds from the freeze at the end of November helped concentrate ducks and gulls in the first part of the month. However, at the same time, warmer temperatures in the beginning of the month meant no snowfall. No snow cover meant passerines like sparrows and larks had no reason to concentrate along roadsides to look for food. The CBCs in Region 2 were conducted towards the end of the month. The Rochester CBC had a total of 94 species (95 for count week) and the Conesus-Hemlock CBC had a total of 82 species (85 for count week). New high counts or ties were: RCBC - Cackling Goose (12), Bald Eagle (24), Purple Sandpiper (1), Common Raven (9), Carolina Wren (36), Eastern Bluebird (40); CHCBC - Carolina Wren (62), Yellow-throated Warbler (1).
- 3. All of the normally expected waterfowl were reported with the only miss being the less-than-annual Greater White-fronted Goose. No exceptional high counts stood out. The Hamlin Beach State Park lakewatch had consistent coverage and decent movements of diving ducks were noted on the 9th. Good numbers of concentrated Trumpeter Swan (60) were reported from the fields north of Armitage Road in Savannah. The NMWMA held the highest numbers of dabbling ducks in the region, with a count of 1,100 Mallard standing out. Among the diving ducks, numbers remained lower than recent years with the highest concentrations of Redhead on Conesus Lake (1100, low) being the highest for that species. Other species like Canvasback had lower high counts as well. Brad Carlson found a **Tufted Duck** on

- Conesus Lake. The adult male stayed around for three days. Linda Birkel and Roger Clark found the region's only Harlequin Duck at Point Breeze on the 25th.
- 4. Among the grebes, Andy Guthrie reported a maximum of 102 Red-necked Grebes from the Hamlin Beach SP lakewatch on the 6th. Numbers of Horned Grebe remained low, with a maximum of 20 coming from Bear Creek Harbor on the 2nd. Jay McGowan reported an impressive 360 Sandhill Cranes from the impoundment on the north side of Armitage Road west of NY 89. The region's only report of Virginia Rail came from Alder Beach in Parma on the 27th from Jim Miles. A lone Sanderling was found at Braddock Bay's East Spit on the 28th and stayed through the 29th. The region only had two reports of Purple Sandpiper. Mike Gullo reported a Purple Sandpiper from Sodus Point on the 13th. Robert Buckert and Nick Kachala reported another Purple Sandpiper from the East Spit on the 18th during the RCBC. Observers also reported a late Killdeer on the mudflats on the south end of Irondequoit Bay from the 25th through the 30th.
- 5. A group of three observers reported the region's lone jaeger on the 1st. The bird was not identified to species, but consensus leaned towards Pomarine Jaeger. Michelle Gianvecchio reported the highest number of Bonaparte's Gull (120) from LaSalle's Landing Park on the south end of Irondequoit Bay. Decent numbers of Herring Gull continued to be found around the Braddock Bay and Greece ponds region of Monroe County. There were 25 reports of Iceland Gull, which roughly corresponded to 10 individuals, all along the Lake Ontario shoreline. Similarly, there were 18 lines of Glaucous Gull representing four to five individuals. As with any estimation of unique individuals from eBird lines, conservatism must be applied, especially when lack of details (1st cycle, 2nd cycle, adult, etc.) are provided in many eBird reports. The number of unique individuals for gulls, falcons, and others noted in the Noteworthy Table is almost certainly an under estimate. Among the loons, Andy Guthrie reported a maximum of 21 moving past Hamlin Beach SP on the 21st. The Great Egret on the south side of Irondequoit Bay from November continued until the 13th.
- 6. Dave Tetlow had the region's only Northern Goshawk coming to his feeders in early December. Good numbers of Bald Eagles were reported from Irondequoit Bay. Mike Tetlow and Wade and Melissa Rowley each had Red-shouldered Hawks, the only reports for December. It remained an non-irruption year for Rough-legged Hawk, with only six eBird lines representing three indi-

viduals. This is stark contrast to 2021, where there were as many as 14 Rough-legged Hawks were seen consistently all month. All three falcons were reported in average numbers, with estimates of American Kestrel individuals (21), Merlin (26), and Peregrine Falcon (7) coming in about average for December.

7. Passerines were scarce, likely due to warmer temperatures and lack of snowfall for most of the month. One long-time local birder claimed half hardies and general concentrations of groups like sparrows were some of the worst he as ever seen. However, an exception, Yellowbellied Sapsucker, continued to have an increased presence in the region into this year's winter months. This is a growing trend, especially in recent years. There were 35 lines of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in the eBird download, representing about 21 individuals. One Bohemian Waxwing was found at Hamlin Beach State Park on the 7th. One or two Bohemian Waxwings continued to be seen at Webster Park up until the 11th. The Evening Grosbeak irruption also continued, but now with the biggest concentrations and highest counts coming out of the Bristol Hills region instead of the Lake Ontario shoreline, with as many as 30 being reported daily from a private residence. The three Pine Grosbeaks continued at Webster Park, drawing much attention from birders and photographers. The first hints of Common Redpoll movement showed up as well, with occasional reports from the lakeshore. Sparrow numbers remained generally low. Late/overwintering Fox Sparrows were observed at Webster Park and Mendon Ponds Park. Blackbird numbers remained low as well, especially for those who remember the winter roosts in times past, although perhaps more of a lack-of-coverage in the usual locations for large icterid flocks in southern Monroe County. There was one report of Common Yellowthroat from Durand-Eastman Park on the RCBC. Overwintering Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers were also very low, with two being the highest count. Finally, a Yellow-throated Warbler was reported at a private residence in the village of Conesus on the 15th. It continued to come to a feeder through the end of the month and was recorded on the CHCBC.

8. Please submit reports to eBird, post them on geneseebirds, and/or send them by the 5th of the month to Nick Kachala <u>nicholaskach@gmail.com</u> or 1141 Rush-Scottsville Rd. Rush, NY 14543

Observers: Jim Adams, Janet Akin, Osvaldo Araya, Ted Barnett, Mitchell Barry, BBBO (Andrea Patterson), Doug Beattie, Don Bemont, Linda Clark Benedict & Steve Benedict, David Benvent, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Linda Birkel, Nancy Bloechl, Allan Bloom, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Bra-

band, George Briggs, Joe Brin, Kyle Brock, David Brown, Mark Brown, Logan Brunner, Bob Buckert, Sara Burch, Ken Burdick, Bruce Cady, Brad Carlson, Keigan Case, Nancy Casper, Denis & Judy Caysinger, Chris Chappell, Robert Cicotta, Richard Clark, Kelly Close, Jeremy Collison, Andrew Consler, Kathleen Dalton, Willie D'Anna, Doug Daniels, Gregg Dashnau, Jayne Dean, Peggy Dempsey, Steve Donohue, Ted Drozdowski, Gordon Dutter, Diane Egan, Joe Fell, Debra Florio, George Ford, Jim Fry, Kyle Gage, Andrew Garland, Janis George, Jessica George, Michelle Gianvecchio, Candy Giles, Christopher Goetz, James Goetz, Kimber Godfrey, John Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Kate Graham, Jane Graves, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Ralph & Georgia Guenther, Michael Gullo, Carmen Gumina, Andrew Guthrie, Bill Haake, Helen & Chris Haller, Kim Hartquist, Christina Hoh, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Linda Howes, Pam Inzinna, Carolyn Jacobs, Blaise Jenner, Alyssa Johnson, Nick Kachala, Amy Kahn, Laura & Paul Kammermeier, Annette Kalinoski, Jacob Kearney, Jim Kimball, Cindy Kindle, Evelyn Kirkwood, Kathy Kirsch, Renee Kittleman, Hans Kunze, Griffin & Michael Kutny, Michael Laird, Chris Lajewski, Tom Lathrop, Leona Lauster, Greg Lawrence, Gayle Lazoration, Tim Lenz, Joan Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Melissa Mance-Coniglio, Peggy Marces, Cindy Marino, Pat Martin, Donna Mason-Spier, Lauri Mattle, Kenneth McCarthy, Jacob McCartney, Jay McGowan, Mary McGreal, Ann McMican, Scott & Sophie Meagher, Steve Melcher, Jim Miles, Mark Miller, Megan Miller, Kent Millham, Phil Mills, Randi Minetor, Adrielle Mitchell, Ann Mitchell, Mary Moore, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Linda Mott, Leah Mould, Sheila Mumpton, Kevin Murphy, Allen Nash, Ann Nash, Tom Nash, Rivka Noll, David Odell, Michael Palermo, Gary Palmer, Andrea Patterson, Michael Peter, Joseph Petre, Steven Pitt, Norma Platt, Sandy Podulka, Jo Popma, Malise Prieto, Bill Purcell, Doug & Elizabeth Rabjohns, Carolyn Ragan, RBA Field Trips, Neal Reilly, Rosemary Reilly, Susan Roberts, Brian Rohrs, Victoria Rothman, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Thomas Ryan, Kevin Rybczynski, Jennifer Rycenga, Jackie Salsbury, Michael Scheibel, Karl Schmidt, Mickey Scilingo, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Rob Sielaff, Judy Slein, Dee Smith, Roger Smith, Tom & Pat Smith, Cathy Spahn, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Kimberly Sucy, June Summers, Holley Sweeney, Stephen Taylor, Annette Teng, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Thaddeus Trzeciak, Nathan Ukens, Alison Van Keuren, Jeanne & Tom Verhulst, Matthew Voelker, Jules Wagner, Davey Walters, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Joe Wing, Jim Wood, Cecile & Morris Yarrow, Ryan Zucker. (There were 327 observers in the eBird download, which was nearly the same as 2021).

	2022	2021	10-year
			Average
Species for Dec	137	142	133.3
New for the year	1	3	4.4
Total for the year to	298	299	292.1
date			



ROCHESTER BIRDING ASSOCIATION

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