



Rochester Birding
Association

Little Gull



A Blackburnian Warbler seen at Firehouse Woods by Alan Bloom.

MAY 2026 FIELD TRIPS



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 rochesterbirding.org, for updated information prior to departure! All field trips go rain/snow or shine unless there is a travel advisory issued. Trips run approximately 2 to 4 hours. Bring binoculars. Wear weather appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes. Registration is not required, please arrive at the designated meeting location 10 minutes before the start time of the trip. Colds, flu, and COVID are still around—if you're not feeling well, please stay home. Please carpool when possible. Enjoy your trip!

MAY 2
Saturday

BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP – LAKESHORE WARBLER HOTSPOTS

The shoreline of Lake Ontario is a haven for migrating warblers and other passerines. We will stop at several areas where these birds tend to congregate in spring. Learn the basics of identifying our most colorful migrants on this trip. We'll be looking for color patterns, song, and their distinctive behaviors to enhance identification skills with these fast-moving beauties. Though flat, trails may be very muddy. **Waterproof boots are strongly recommended!** Dress for the weather and bring binoculars. No restrooms available. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the parking lot behind Lakeview Community Church, 30 Long Pond Road, Rochester, NY 14612 (near Edgemere Drive).

Leaders: Sheryl Gracewski, Tom Nash 585-261-6975 and co-leader
Ann McMican 585-533-1222, Luanne Pignataro 585-301-2695

Field Trips continue on [page 4](#)



Was It Worth It?

“Hey, is that BLOOD??? EVERYONE, CHECK YOURSELVES FOR LEECHES!”

We were muddy, soaking wet, and tired. We had been up since 4 am trying to find a duck. And now LEECHES?! Sure enough, when we pulled up our pant legs, almost all of us had at least a couple of the two-inch bloodthirsty creatures attached to our ankles.

Gayle and I were in Northeast India in the state of Assam on a birding adventure. That morning, our target was the secretive White-winged Duck. The White-winged Duck is one of the largest living duck species. They inhabit inaccessible swampy areas, rivers, and streams in deep, shaded forests. They are crepuscular so they forage mostly at dawn and dusk then retreat back into the dense forest when not eating. They are usually observed only as individuals or pairs, and they spook easily. The local name is Deo Hanh, meaning “Spirit Duck.”

We were staying at a former tea plantation near the Nameri National Park and Tiger Reserve. A pair of White-winged Ducks had been seen and our guides wanted us to be the first ones into the park, not only to get there while the ducks would still be foraging, but also so that other groups wouldn't inadvertently scare them away before we arrived. We were moving on to a different park the next day, so we had one shot at this.

We were up at 4 am. A quick check of the radar showed storms all around us, but we were in a dry window that might actually hold for a few hours. We raced to the entrance station, but alas, another group had beaten us there and were already being ferried across the Kameng River to the park in a large wooden canoe. Our group needed two ferry trips to get everyone across, then we had a 10 minute walk to a ranger station, our rendezvous point with a local guide. As everyone gathered, flashes of lightning and booming thunder announced a deluge from the sky. We hustled under the thatched shelter of a gazebo, and during the next hour, we heard several times that, “This is the dry season. It's not supposed to be raining.” It was coming down so hard that the earlier group actually abandoned their trek and came back to the shelter. Were we going to give up or go on? The guides conferred. We could wait for a break in the storm, then make a beeline to the spot where we hoped the ducks would be. If we hustled, it would be about a 20-25 minute walk. In the end, the choice was easy. We had come this far; it didn't make sense to turn back!

The deluge lessened to a steady drizzle. We left everything non-essential under the shelter and set off down a muddy trail at a brisk pace, trying to avoid the deeper puddles. Twenty minutes later, the guide stopped our bedraggled group and warned us to be quiet. Our target ducks, if they were around, were about 5 minutes up a narrow offshoot path. Single file, we quietly made our way into the jungle. We crested a small hill and through the trees about 200 feet away, two White-winged Ducks were foraging in a wooded pond. Raindrops pattering on the leaves and splashing in the pond covered our whispers and footsteps as we spread out to get better looks. Although the distant view through the rain muted their colors, we could make out their mottled white heads, red eyes, and yellow bills. One of the ducks began to preen, and we saw a bright white patch on the wing. We continued in murmuring quiet to watch the ducks forage and preen. After about 10-15 minutes, our guide passed the word that we needed to retreat. We returned to the gazebo to pick up our things. That's when the little stealthy vampires were noticed. As we picked off the leeches, it became a good-natured contest as to who had the most. (I had two; the “winner” had eight). No one was unscathed, or, put more positively, it was a fully shared experience.

We were tired. We were wet. We were muddy. We were attacked by leeches. Was it worth it to see a couple of ducks?

Well, because of hunting and habitat loss, the White-winged Duck is critically endangered – the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) estimates there are only 150-450 individuals left. In 2003, Assam declared the White-winged Duck the official state bird to bring attention to its plight. Since then, their estimated numbers have, unfortunately, only continued to decline. We got to see one of the rarest species of duck in the world in its native habitat. Our eco-tourism dollars and park entrance fees boost the local economy, protect and sustain critical habitat and support the idea that wildlife is worth saving. And we had an experience that we'll remember for the rest of our lives. So, was it worth it?

Absolutely!

Some RBA highlights for this month:

We have 23 (yes, 23!) field trips scheduled for May. Check out the offerings elsewhere in the Little Gull or on our website.

Our members' meeting is on May 14th and features Bill Evans presenting on flight calls and nocturnal bird migration. I hope to see you in person or on Zoom.

Until next month, good birding – get out and see those warblers!

RBA Annual Picnic

Join us at



**Thursday, June 11, 2026
Rain or Shine!**

301 Railroad Mills Road
Pittsford, NY 14534

Picnic and an after dinner bird walk
for those interested.

We gather at 5:30, hot dogs ready
by 6:00. Bring your own beverages,
utensils and a dish to pass!

Please RSVP for a head count—
volunteer opportunities available!

Email Niki: jacksons.mama@hotmail.com
or text 585 317-3751

*Eastern Bluebird
by Richard Ashworth*



FIELD TRIPS

MAY 2
Saturday

BRADDOCK BAY HAWK LOOKOUT

This trip is for the spring hawk flight and migrating songbirds. We will be working to identify distant raptors and meet some great new people, too! This requires a short walk across grass to the viewing platform. Port-a-John may be available. Meet at **9:30 a.m.** at the Braddock Bay Park main parking lot. Use the East Manitou Road exit from the Ontario State Parkway. **Spotting scopes would be very useful.**

Leaders: Mike Tetlow 585-748-5838 and Neal Reilly 518-256-9147

MAY 2
Saturday

TAYLOR MARSH (JOINT TRIP WITH THE BERGEN SWAMP PRESERVATION SOCIETY)

Taylor Marsh is a preserve owned by the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society and located in Ontario County, north of Honeoye Lake. It is best known for marsh birds, including both American and Least Bittern and Virginia Rail. However, the star attraction is the Sandhill Cranes that have been present in this area all year round for many years. Breeding has been confirmed. They are occasionally heard at Taylor, although seldom seen. Taylor also has brush-shrub and wooded upland habitat with a good variety of spring migrants and breeding birds. An adjacent hay field is home to Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks. It has a checklist of nearly 145 species that can be downloaded at https://bergenswamp.org/TaylorMarshBirdList_19_03_03.pdf. This is mostly a flat trail, which can be muddy, and has one very small, shallow stream to cross. Waterproof boots are advisable. No restrooms available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the Taylor Marsh parking area on the west side of Allen's Hill Road, just south of Nighan Hill Road. From Rochester, take I-390 south to the Avon exit. Turn left onto Routes 5&20 and go east. In the town of Lima, turn right onto Route 15A and follow it south. Turn left onto Richmond Mills Road (Livingston County Road 41). It becomes Ontario County Road 15. Follow County Road 15 past County Road 37 and turn right at the next stop sign onto Allen's Hill Road. (There is no road sign at the intersection.)

Leaders: Lynn Braband 585-436-9388 and Jay Greenberg 585-256-0485

MAY 3
Sunday

BEECHWOOD STATE PARK AND OLGA FLEISHER WILDLIFE PRESERVE

Beechwood State Park is on the shoreline of Lake Ontario in Wayne County and should attract warblers, vireos, thrushes and other migrants. The Beechwood trip will involve about two miles of walking over mostly level ground (Port-a-john available) and will last until about noon. Bring lunch if you plan to attend the second part of the trip to the Olga Fleisher Preserve (known locally as Huckleberry Swamp), a bottomland forest and wetland. Huckleberry has both boardwalk and flat forest trails. (No restroom.) Meet at **7:00 a.m.** in the Webster Park east parking lot (with Port-a-john and playground) on Holt Road, just before Lake Road, or at **7:30 a.m.** at B. Forman Park, 4507 Lake Road, Pultneyville, 14538 (Port-a-john). We will continue to Beechwood from there. If coming from the east, meet at about **8:00 a.m.** at Beechwood's main parking area (Gates Road on Google maps) on the north side of Lake Road, near Maxwell Road, (not at the Salmon Creek area parking).

Leaders: Jim Wood 585-967-8687 and co-leader Jeanne Verhulst 585-362-0803



Philadelphia Vireo spotted on a previous trip to Beechwood State Park. Photo by Alan Bloom.

FIELD TRIPS

MAY 5
Tuesday

ONTARIO PATHWAYS (FLINT CREEK SECTION)

We'll look for warblers and other spring migrants along this rails-to-trails pathway in Ontario County. This well-maintained trail is an established favorite for wildlife viewing and scenic views. Wear comfortable walking shoes. At times, the weather can be fickle; dress accordingly! This is a level grade, easy-to-walk, linear trail, 1.6 miles in and 1.6 miles back out. No restrooms available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the trailhead. It is on the south side of Rt. 96 just east of the Rt. 488 intersection. For anyone needing a bathroom before heading out on the trail, there is a Byrne Dairy on the corner of Rts. 96 & 488.

Leaders: Rosemary Reilly 585-748-0802 and co-leaders Doug and Elizabeth Rabjohns 585-690-6296

MAY 6
Wednesday

WHITING ROAD NATURE PRESERVE

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 flat, but there definitely will be a bit of up and down trail climbing in some sections. Our trek will take us on parts of the blue, brown, orange, and red trails. Moderate difficulty in a few spots; length about 2.5 miles. **No restrooms.** Meet at **8:00 a.m.** in the parking lot on Whiting Road in Webster, 0.6 miles south of Lake Road.

Leaders: Rosemary Reilly 585-748-0802 and co-leader Robin Morey 973-715-6049

MAY 9
Saturday

MANITOU BEACH PRESERVE

Our trip to this lakeside treasure should rack up good numbers of warblers, flycatchers, and other spring arrivals. Owned by Genesee Land Trust, Manitou Beach Preserve consists of 5 acres of flat, field, forest and hedgerow, shrub, and cattail wetlands extending into Braddock Bay. Wear waterproof, sturdy shoes and don't forget the bug spray! No restrooms available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the entrance to the Preserve. Exit the Ontario State Parkway at Manitou Beach Road (Route 261); turn north. Follow Manitou Beach Road until you see the Reserve sign on the right. Pull off the pavement and park along the road on either side.

Leaders: Amy Kahn 585-310-2330 and co-leader Christina Hoh 973-224-7009

MAY 10
Sunday

AMY'S POND AND WOODSMITH – JOINT GENESEE LAND TRUST / RBA TRIP

This is a field trip to the private property of Amanda Smith-Hatch for spring migrants, early nesters and waterfowl. Two adjacent easements make up 187 acres that include two large ponds, mature woodland, and open fields all within 0.5 miles of Lake Ontario. Past trips have yielded eagles, bitterns, herons, many warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, etc. We'll walk along uneven trails, so bring a walking stick if needed, and prepare for a medium-long hike in an outstanding sanctuary open only by special arrangement--many thanks to Genesee Land Trust! No restrooms available. Meet at **7:00 a.m.** in the Webster Park east parking lot (with Port-a-john and playground) on Holt Road, just before Lake Road, or at **7:30 a.m.** at the parking lot of Genesee Land Trust's Deer Creek Woods Preserve East, 600 Lake Road, Ontario, New York 14519 about a mile east of County Line Road.

Leaders: Sheryl Gracewski and Tom Nash 585-261-6975 and co-leader Kevin Farrell 585-748-6919



FIELD TRIPS

MAY 12
Tuesday

OATKA CREEK PARK

Woods and meadow provide great habitat for nesting species such as Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, Blue-winged Warbler and Field Sparrow. This will cover about 3 miles of mostly flat trails. Port-a-john is available at the trailhead. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the park entrance at the intersection of Quaker Road and Union Street in Garbutt.

Leaders: Nick Kachala 585-750-5536 and co-leader Bill Haake 585-755-8253

MAY 14
Thursday

THOUSAND ACRE SWAMP

Thousand Acre Swamp is a preserve owned by the Nature Conservancy of Western New York. It has a bird checklist of 120 species. This level 2.5-mile walk on uneven, sometimes muddy trails, goes through varied habitats, resulting in a variety of breeding bird species and migrants. The habitats include swampy woods, drier woods, a marshy area, meadows, and a pond. Shorter routes are possible. The entrance and parking lot are on the west side of Jackson Road, opposite Penfield Center Road in Penfield. Boots and mosquito repellent are recommended. No restrooms available. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** in the parking lot. For more information, including photos, go to thegreenjay.jalburn.net/Thousand%20Acre%20Swamp/

Leaders: Jay Greenberg 585-256-0485 and Richard Ashworth 585-381-2189

MAY 15
Friday

SANDRA L. FRANKEL NATURE PARK (BRICKYARD TRAIL)

The wide, flat, multi-use Brickyard Trail winds between Elmwood Avenue and Westfall Road in Brighton. With woods at both ends and ponds and marsh in the middle, it provides a nice variety of bird habitat. We will walk the full length of the trail and back (1.7 miles) to look for Song Sparrows, Swamp Sparrows, Marsh Wrens, Red-eyed Vireo, and warblers. Green Herons, Gray Catbirds, Common Yellowthroat and woodpeckers nest here. Dress for the weather and bring binoculars. Insect repellent may be needed for the wooded sections. No restrooms. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** in the parking area near the entrance to Temple B'rith Kodesh (2131 Elmwood Ave.). The trail entrance is nearby. Wheelchair friendly—please call leaders for accessibility questions.

Leaders: Jeanne and Tom Verhulst 585-362-0803



MAY 16
Saturday

RUSH RIVERSIDE REFUGE/WHITE SPRINGS FARM

The town of Rush acquired acreage containing old-growth woods, farm fields in various stages of succession, and a mile of Genesee River frontage. Join us as we explore this birding spot. Trails may be wet and muddy; waterproof shoes/boots are recommended. No restrooms available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the White Springs Farm, 6565 East River Rd, Rush, New York (43.012578, -77.710672). From East River Road, turn into the tree-lined entrance road (no name on Google Maps), stay straight, park, and meet in front of the large barns.

Leaders: Ann McMican 585-533-1222 and co-leaders Nick Kachala 585-750-5536 and Sue Robertson 585-427-2535



FIELD TRIPS

MAY 17
Sunday

NORWAY ROAD

This unassuming trip usually racks up a long bird list. From nesting Cerulean Warblers to Purple Martins along the lake, this trip showcases roadside birding in spectacular fashion! There are no long walks, no rough terrain, as we walk along a paved country road, making multiple stops to bird along Norway Road. No restrooms except at Wegmans. Meet at **7:00 a.m.** toward the upper end of Wegmans parking lot in Ridgemont Plaza on Route 104 in Greece (opposite Heritage Dr.).

Leaders: Nick Kachala 585-750-5536 and co-leader Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422

MAY 20
Wednesday

OATKA FISH AND GAME CLUB

The Genesee Conservation Foundation owns and conserves 500 acres of mature woodland forest along Oatka Creek and the escarpment tablelands above it. This provides an ideal habitat for migrating and nesting passerines. Thanks to the efforts of Jim Mott and Jim Miles, Cerulean Warblers were documented as nesting there in 2022, and they've been seen each year since. The Oatka Fish and Game Club, who manage the property, generously invited RBA to hold field trips. We will walk on the wide, undulating, forest trail above the creek and possibly up on the escarpment searching for remaining migrants and nesting birds including Pileated Woodpeckers, Scarlet Tanagers, Acadian Flycatchers, Hooded and Mourning Warblers. Sturdy shoes are recommended. Dress for the weather and insects. A bathroom is available on site. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** at the clubhouse parking lot (end of Wilcox Road), 8237 Wilcox Road, LeRoy, NY 14482. **Note:** If high winds are predicted, the trip will be cancelled.

Leaders: Hans Kunze 585-813-2676 and co-leaders Tom and Jeanne Verhulst 585-362-0803, Dave Adams and Mike McMullen, hosts, Oatka Fish and Game Club



Scarlet Tanager at the Oatka Fish and Game Club. Photo by Jeanne Verhulst.

MAY 21
Thursday

YOUNG BIRDER TRIP – FIREHOUSE WOODS/LAKEVIEW COMMUNITY CHURCH TRAIL – 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Firehouse Woods is a small patch of woods in the town of Greece that can have some very interesting birds. Birds possible here include: woodpeckers, ducks, warblers, tanagers, orioles and cardinals. We will meet in the parking lot of Lakeview Community Church at 30 Long Pond Road, Greece. The entrance to Firehouse Woods is unmarked, and is across the street from the parking lot. Depending on the birds and participant interest, we might walk part of the Lakeview Community Church Trail, which starts at the back of the parking lot. Bring bug spray in case of mosquitos. Waterproof shoes or boots are needed, as the trails can be very muddy. Restrooms are not available. **Note:** Trips will go forward rain or shine unless there is a travel advisory; dress for the weather. Bring binoculars. Extra binoculars will be available to borrow. A spotting scope will be available for up-close looks at birds thanks to a very generous donor!

Leaders: Neal Reilly 518-256-9147 or email neal.f.reilly@gmail.com



FIELD TRIPS

MAY 23
Saturday

POWDER MILLS PARK AND BANC SANCTUARY (A JOINT TRIP WITH BURROUGHS AUDUBON NATURE CLUB)

Powder Mills Park is a mature woodland and wetland park that can be productive for many late-migrating or nesting species. In recent years, Baltimore Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Scarlet Tanagers, Pileated Woodpeckers, and Red-tailed Hawks have all nested there. We will spend time around the hatchery, then drive to and walk the Daffodil Meadow trail (less than 2 miles total). The trip will continue with a visit to the BANC Sanctuary on Railroad Mills Road, where we'll walk the trails around the woodland, wetland, and creek habitats. Recent nesting species there include Eastern Bluebirds, House Wrens, Eastern Phoebes, and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. Adjacent tree lines have produced a variety of migrating warblers. Both locations are mostly flat trails; waterproof footwear is advised. Restroom facilities will be available at the Sanctuary. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the Powder Mills Park Fish Hatchery parking lot on Park Road, Pittsford, NY.

Leaders: Derek Pulhamus 585-750-2265 and co-leader Jeanne Verhulst 585-362-0803

MAY 24
Sunday

IROQUOIS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

We will search for Prothonotary Warblers, Yellow-throated Vireos, Cerulean Warblers, and other birds at this local natural treasure. This trip is a combination of driving and walking and includes a boardwalk, forest trail, and dirt road. Length, about 3 miles total, on mostly flat trails. Port-a-john is available about midway through the trip. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the Upper Stafford Marsh Overlook near 5999 Albion Road, Oakfield, NY. Bring a lunch and beverages, as this trip may go into the late afternoon. **Spotting scopes would be useful.**

Leaders: Tom Nash and Sheryl Gracewski 585-261-6975 and co-leader Niki Banke 585-317-3751

MAY 30
Saturday

GANONDAGAN STATE HISTORIC SITE

This trip has generated large species lists due to the many habitat types we will travel through. Ganondagan has miles of trails for the leaders to choose from. We will walk wide mown or packed dirt trails through fields, woods, and shrubland. The round trip is about 2 miles and includes some hills. Wear sturdy shoes. Restroom facilities are available at the Seneca Arts and Culture Center (SACC) at the end of the trip. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** in the main parking lot situated below the SACC, 7000 County Road 41 (Boughton Hill Road), Victor, NY 14564.

Leaders: Amy Kahn 585-310-2330 and Neal Reilly 518-256-9147

MAY 31
Sunday

WYOMING COUNTY FIELDS AND FOREST - NEW COMPEHNER FARM

This is a great opportunity to explore the beautiful upland region of northeastern Wyoming County, including New Compehner Farm, the home and farm of Hans and Leslie Kunze. First, we will look for a variety of native sparrows (Savannah, Vesper), hopefully, returning Cliff Swallows, both oriole species, open country birds, and nesting species in a nice mixture of bird-friendly plantings and open fields. Next, we will head toward Silver Lake with stops along the way at wooded and marshy habitats to look for nesting Veery, Wood Thrush, Hooded Warblers, hopefully a Louisiana Waterthrush, and,



FIELD TRIPS

MAY 31
Sunday

if lucky, a Virginia Rail. We will end the trip at Silver Lake to look for ducks and gulls and to observe a colony of Purple Martins. Easy walking, but will cover a mile or two; wear sturdy shoes. The trip will last at least until noon; bring snacks or lunch, or eat at the Charcoal Corral (a local favorite). A bathroom is available at the home of the leader. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at 6340 LaGrange Road, Wyoming, NY 14591.

Leaders: Hans Kunze 585-813-2676 and Rick Stevens 585-689-1882

JUNE 6
Saturday

GANONDAGAN STATE HISTORIC SITE, A FIELD TRIP FOR ALL AGES

This trip is open to all ages (ages 15 and younger must be accompanied by a responsible adult). This trip has generated large species lists due to the many habitat types we will travel through. Ganondagan has miles of trails for the leaders to choose from. We will walk wide mown or packed dirt trails through fields, woods, and shrubland. The round trip is about 2 miles and includes some hills. Restroom facilities are available at the Seneca Arts and Culture Center (SACC) at the end of the trip. Meet at **10:00 a.m.** in the main parking lot situated below the SACC, 7000 County Road 41 (Boughton Hill Road), Victor, NY 14564.

Leaders: Amy Kahn 585-310-2330 and co-leader Neal Reilly 518-256-9147

JUNE 7
Sunday

LETCHWORTH STATE PARK

This trip frequently garners one of the higher bird lists among RBA field trips. Of course, it gets an early start! We'll look for birds not frequently seen on other trips, such as the Acadian Flycatcher. We'll do a fair amount of walking: one somewhat steep but short forest trail and a dirt road down to the river level, as well as some roadside birding. Restrooms are available at several locations along the way. Meet at **5:30 a.m.** at the Dam Overlook Gifts and Grill parking lot (use the Route 36 entrance to Letchworth State Park). Pack a lunch and snacks, as the trip will likely last well into mid-afternoon. **Spotting scopes would be very useful.**

Leaders: Neal Reilly 518-256-9147 and Matt Nusstein 716-238-3274

WELCOME TO THE FLOCK

Please welcome our new and returning members:

Karen Blodgett	Kathleen Esposito	Sean Lazzo
Melody Bricault	David Gaudioso	Michael McKeon
Chris Brick	Rev. Dr. Tom Jones	Ralph & Diane Powers
MaryBeth Curwin	Marisa Kurmis	Elizabeth Preston

As of March 15, total membership is 338

Individual Members: 213

Family Members: 85

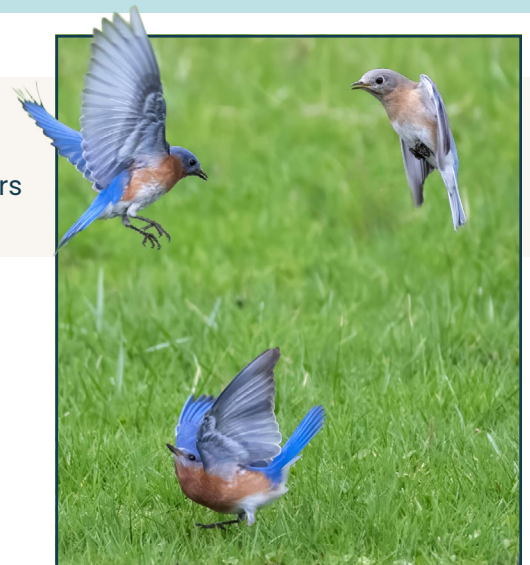
Supporters: 18

Sponsors: 2

Corporate Sponsors: 1

Complimentary Memberships: 36

Doug Rabjohns, RBA Membership Data



Eastern Bluebird at Tinker Nature Park. Photo by Alan Bloom.



Woodcock Courtship Flight at Owl Woods April 4, 2026

A calm, pleasant evening made the annual Woodcock Walk well attended, with a total of 88 birders. After an introduction to our target bird, the American Woodcock, we headed into the woods. A Northern Saw-whet Owl was visible from the display field without getting intrusively close. The group was able to get good looks at the owl through the club scope. The Woodcock display began shortly after 8:00 pm. At least five birds were calling, and at least two were performing their sky dance over the group. Thanks to Sheryl, Tom, Niki, Miranda, and other RBA members for their help in sharing knowledge with the large group!

Neal Reilly and Robert Crandall



Northern Saw-whet Owl
by Richard Horsey.

Wednesday Evening Warblers!



Yellow-rumped Warbler seen at Braddock Bay East Spit by David Laiacona.

This is your chance to follow the spring migration! Just come out on successive Wednesdays to the Lakeview Community Church parking lot in Greece. This is one of the prime birding spots in the area.

Come directly from work. No special footwear needed. We will check out the parking lot, Church Woods Trail, and Firehouse Woods. Trails are flat, but can be muddy. Dress for the weather and bring bug spray. **No restrooms** (port-a-john around the corner on Edgemere Dr.).



Black-throated Blue Warbler at Cobbs Hill. Photo by Alan Bloom.

Meet at **6:00 p.m.** each Wednesday, **May 6, 13, 20, 27**, Lakeview Community Church, 30 Long Pond Road, Rochester, NY 14612. **Leader:** John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and/or others TBD



Monthly **ECO-CHALLENGE**

NATIVE PLANT SPOTLIGHT: COMMON BUTTONBUSH

The attractive, fragrant aroma radiating from the blooms of the Common Buttonbush, *Cephalanthus occidentalis*, shrub is hard to ignore. This large, deciduous perennial produces dense spherical clusters of tubular shaped white blossoms from June through September. The flower's long styles protrude out giving the clusters a pincushion-like appearance. A native inhabitant of Monroe County, buttonbush thrives in moist soils. They have often been spotted living in permanently flooded areas; there's only a few woody natives in our area that can endure such conditions. A happy addition to swamps, marshes, and edges of wetland habitat, buttonbush will not survive in dry soils.



The many branched trunks may reach heights of 6 to 12 feet and spread between 4 to 10 feet wide. Full sun is ideal and preferred for best flower production; however, they can tolerate shaded areas, which will result in reduced blooms. Hummingbirds, along with a variety of insects, including native bee, butterfly, and moth species, are attracted to the shrub for its nectar. During the winter months, the seedheads form round clumps of brown nutlets, which become a vital food resource for waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and songbirds. White-tailed deer will browse the glossy dark green foliage.

If you're looking to add buttonbush, or other native plants, to your yard and don't know where to look, visit a local plant sale. The Color Brighton Green plant sale will be hosted on Saturday, June 6, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 1435 Westfall Road in Brighton, NY. The event will feature 11 growers specializing in seed-grown native plants and offer one of the largest selections in the region.

You can also find buttonbush at nearby native plant nurseries. Amanda's Native Garden in Livingston County and White Oak Nursery in Ontario County both carry a wide array of native species and are well worth the trip. Happy planting!

By Chelsea Plimpton

References

Leopold, D. J. (2005). *Native plants of the northeast: A guide for gardening & conservation*. Timber Press. Pg 156.

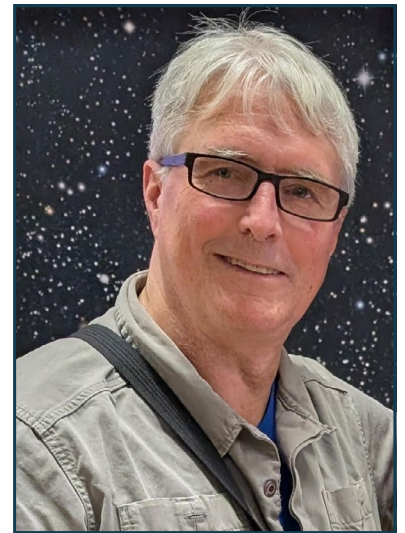
Plant Database. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center - The University of Texas at Austin. (n.d.). https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=ceoc2

Wennerberg, S. (2004, June 25). *Plant Guide: Common Buttonbush*. USDA NRCS. https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/DocumentLibrary/plantguide/pdf/pg_ceoc2.pdf

The Search for Coastal Lake Ontario Megaflights: A tale of wind turbines and concentration dynamics of nocturnal bird migration

Speaker: Bill Evans

Bill Evans began work in 1985 studying the calls birds give in nocturnal migration. By 2000, his expertise was in demand from wind energy developers who were required to do wildlife studies to get their projects approved. His night flight call studies had given him unique insight into what species were present in nocturnal migration and what species might be subject to collisions with behemoth rotors slicing through the night. By 2015, he was also getting a lot of work from towns and citizens groups concerned about the impacts of wind energy in their neighborhoods. In that year a law firm representing the Town of Somerset, NY hired Bill to review the potential avian impacts of the Lighthouse Wind Project, which was on track to be the first US wind project built in the coastal zone of a large body of water. Bill agreed with others involved that large coastal concentrations of migrants would potentially be impacted by the project. He was soon carrying out an avian night flight call study to collect data, which ultimately confirmed the potential elevated avian impact of this project. The study was funded by the citizens group spearheading the opposition to the wind project, Save Ontario Shores, Inc. In the ensuing years, SOS would play a key role in stopping the construction of the Lighthouse Wind Project. And in 2024, with the wind project having folded, SOS asked Bill if his nonprofit had any ideas for further study that might tie into the work he had previously completed. Bill's presentation to the RBA will highlight the exciting development that this funding has catalyzed.



Bill Evans is the founder and director of the nonprofit Old Bird Inc. The organization has been advancing the utility of studying avian nocturnal flight calls since 1998.

Bill will be presenting in person at Asbury First Methodist. If you will be attending by Zoom, look for the Zoom link in your email prior to the meeting. The Zoom Room **will open at 6:45 PM**. Don't wait until the last minute to sign on, you might be left out!



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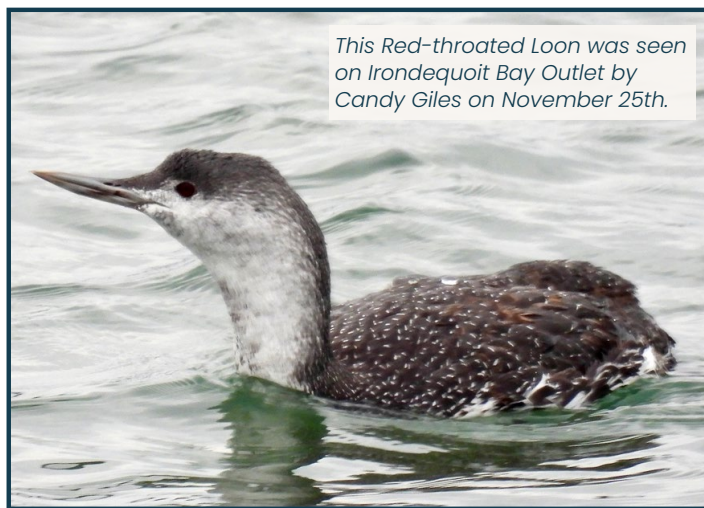


NOVEMBER 2025 RECORDS SUMMARY

Several early cold snaps kept November 2025 cooler than average, with temperatures averaging 39.1°F, 2.6° below normal. The highest temperature this month was 59° on 7 November, the lowest monthly high since 1917. Precipitation totaled 2.76", which is exactly average. Precipitation started off as pure rain for the first week of the month, including strong thunderstorms on 3 November, but transitioned to snow for the remainder of the month. Total snowfall accumulations measured 7.0", or about an inch below average. Several inches of this snowfall accumulated around Rochester near Thanksgiving, with significant lake-effect accumulation east and southwest of the Rochester area. This November was also particularly windy, with several days recording peak wind gusts above 40 miles per hour.

As is typical of November, waterfowl migration continued strongly, with puddle ducks declining in numbers and overwintering diving ducks increasing in numbers. Among the geese, Roger Clark and Linda Birkel reported two Greater White-fronted Geese along Moscow Road in Hamlin on 29 November. Brant continued to move in strong numbers along Lake Ontario for the first week of the month, with several counts over 100 in the first few days, but dropped off precipitously with the last sighting of the species occurring on 7 November. Dabbling ducks such as Wood Duck slowly disappeared throughout the month. Green-winged Teal experienced strong movements during the first few days of the month (several counts above 250), but dropped off into small flocks the second week of the month and then into obscurity of isolated single individuals/pairs by the last week of the month. Luke Seitz and Maili Waters reported a female Harlequin Duck passing Braddock Bay on the morning of 1 November. Several observers at the Hamlin Beach Lakewatch also had a female Harlequin Duck heading west the same morning, which may have been the same individual. Andy Guthrie reported a female King Eider passing Hamlin Beach on 18 November. 1 November appeared to be the largest day for movements of diving ducks this year, with large numbers of scoters moving along the lakeshore. A maximum of 1,359 White-winged Scoters passing Hamlin on that day is noteworthy. Sandhill Cranes continued to build in numbers in the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area,

which has become an annual occurrence now. The number of Sandhill Cranes peaked at 400 on 24 November before dipping slightly in the last few days of the month. Horned Grebe numbers peaked on 4 November with a maximum of 58. Red-necked Grebe numbers remained steady (1-3) until the last week of the month, showing a large incursion with dedicated counts reaching 277 by 30 November. Both Common Loon and Red-throated Loon moved strongly in the first week of the month (maximum 122 and 68, respectively), before dropping off to consistent counts of 10 or less for both species by



This Red-throated Loon was seen on Irondequoit Bay Outlet by Candy Giles on November 25th.

the third week of the month. Luke and Maili spotted a Northern Gannet moving west along Lake Ontario near Braddock Bay on 1 November. Jim Miles picked up the same bird later in the morning, further west in Parma, which landed on the water. Andy Guthrie and Charlie Plimpton spotted, presumably, the same Northern Gannet flying west past the Hamlin Beach lakewatch very early in the morning on 2 November. Phil Mills reported it three hours later from Point Breeze. Joe Wing reported a Northern Gannet from the Bear Creek Harbor in Ontario on 4 November. Mike Gullo photographed presumably that same Northern Gannet an hour later from Sodus Point.

Observers reported 12 species of shorebirds for November, which included a late Spotted Sandpiper on 1 November. Dunlin peaked on 6 November with 102 seen from Sodus Point. Wade and Melissa Rowley reported three Purple Sandpipers at West Port Bay on 3 November. A single Purple Sandpiper was observed on the East Spit on 21 November. Mike Gullo and Joe Wing reported three more Purple Sandpipers at Sodus Point on 30 November.

NOVEMBER 2025 RECORDS SUMMARY

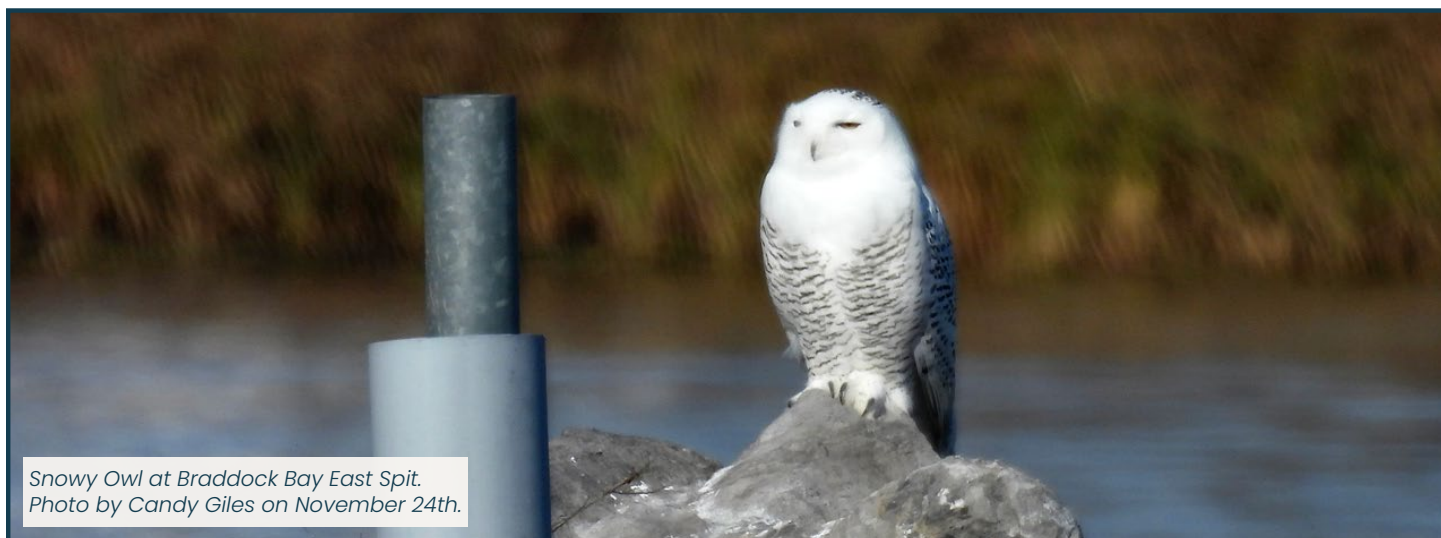
The jaeger season finished with five more Parasitic Jaegers, the last of which was spotted on 7 November at Sodus Point. Greg Lawrence reported an adult Little Gull flying around the west side of Irondequoit Bay on 3 November. Mike Gullo reported an immature Little Gull passing the Sodus Point lakewatch site on 4 November. Bonaparte's Gull numbers peaked at just over 200 in the first 10 days of the month. The first Iceland Gull of the season arrived on 16 November.

There were only six reports of Rough-legged Hawk, which reduced to only two individuals. Jim Miles reported a Northern Saw-whet Owl from Owl Woods on 4 November. Jessie Barry reported the only other Saw-whet of the month from private property in Greece on 22 November. In a pleasant surprise, Andy Guthrie reported the first Snowy Owl of the season on 19 November near Sandy Creek in Hamlin, although it did not stick around long. Candy Giles found another Snowy Owl sitting on the East Spit on 24 November.

Mike Gullo reported a White-eyed Vireo from Owl Woods on 21 November. Charlie and Chelsea Plimpton reported a very late Red-eyed Vireo from Durand-Eastman Park along Zoo Road on 29 November. One of the most exciting spectacles this month was an incursion of Cave Swallows that started on 3 November, with five reported by Mike Gullo at Webster Park. Cave Swallows were seen at lakeshore hotspots from then until 9 November. As many as 15 Cave Swallows spent most of 7 November foraging over the Durand Beach parking lot, allowing dozens of Rochester birders to get up

close and personal with the fearless and curious birds. Perhaps the bird of the month, or maybe the year, for Region 2 was a Redwing, a continental-level rarity, found by Luke Seitz and Maili Waters near Braddock Bay on 19 November. This ephemeral mega-rarity was only briefly relocated by Andy Guthrie, in flight, despite tremendous effort from others. This represents the first Region 2 record of this species, the second New York State record (the first was in 1959 at Jamaica Bay NWR), and the new furthest-west East Coast record. Pat Martin had a brief encounter with a bird in her backyard on 24 November, which she described in detail as a Townsend's Solitaire. The bird did not return after the initial sighting. Pat submitted her observations to NYSARC, but as of the writing of this (April 2026), the record is still before the committee for review.

Winter finches continued to irrupt into the Region. Luke and Maili observed a single Bohemian Waxwing on both 2 and 22 November from their yard near Braddock Bay. Two more Bohemian Waxwings were more widely observed from 12-15 November at Webster Park. Evening Grosbeaks were consistently seen along the lakeshore and also penetrated inland, with widespread reports at feeders throughout the Region. Kyle Gage hosted an impressive flock throughout the month at his feeders near Naples, reporting a maximum of 33 on 25 November. Luke Seitz reported the first Pine Grosbeak of the season near Braddock Bay on 7 November. The irruption of Pine Grosbeaks peaked at 19 individuals on 29 November. Redpolls were also reported in small groups throughout the month,



*Snowy Owl at Braddock Bay East Spit.
Photo by Candy Giles on November 24th.*

NOVEMBER 2025 RECORDS SUMMARY



Evening Grosbeak at Webster Park. Photo by Niki Banke.

Observers: Ryan Ballard, Niki Banke, Timmy Banker, Jessie Barry, Mitchell Barry, Lynn Bergmeyer, Linda Birkel, Robin Blakesley, Alan Bloom & Lisa Bloom, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Noah Brinkman, Scott & Janet Brooks, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Ian Campbell, Brad Carlson, Robert Cicotta, Roger Clark, Sara Close, Lorenzo Colantoni, Robert Crandall, Doug Daniels, Thomas Davis, Cliff Dekdebrun, Peggy Dempsey, Grace Dowdall, Diane Egan, Rob Fergus, George & Katie Ford, Kyle Gage, Andrew Garland, Matthew Gavette, Janis George, Candy Giles, John Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Kevin Griffith, Austin Groff, Michael Gullo, Carmen Gumina, Andrew Guthrie, Bill Haake, Helen Haller, Kim Hartquist, Christina Hoh, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Lynn Howes, Pam Inzinna, Nick Kachala, Amy Kahn, Laura Kammermeier, David Kennedy, James Kimball, Cindy Kindle, Hans Kunze, Greg Lawrence, Joan Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Peggy Macres, Cynthia Marino, Patricia Martin, Judy Massare, Lauri Mattle, Jacob McCartney, Ryan McGinty, Jay McGowan, Ann McMican, Scott Meagher, Jim Miles, Kent Millham, Phil Mills, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Matt Nusstein, Dave Nutter, Luanne Pignataro, Derek Pulhamus, Doug & Elizabeth Rabjohns, Rosemary Reilly, Neal Reilly, Michael Rizzo, Susan Roberts, Chris Rockwell, Brian Rohrs, Andrew Romanowski, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Shawn Ryan, Jennifer Rycenga, Anne Salverda, Greg & Shannon Sanda, Mickey Scilingo, Luke Seitz, Dominic Sherony, Judith Slein, Robert Spahn, Rick Stevens, Reuben Stoltzfus, Stephen Taylor, David Tetlow, Michael Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Nathan Ukens, Tom & Jeanne Verhulst, Brad Walker, Mike Wasilco, Maili Waters, Bridget Watts, Mamie Weed, Kim Weeks, Glenn Wolford, Chris Wood, Jim Wood (all observers could not be listed here).

and one high count of 72 (Luke Seitz, 22 November, Braddock Bay), stood out as noteworthy above the rest. Two (maximum) White-winged Crossbill were reported from Webster Park on 19–21 November in addition to single birds around Braddock Bay on 7 and 19 November. Red Crossbills were reported at Webster Park starting on 14 November, with a maximum of eight seen on 19 November. A count of 21 Fox Sparrows along Zoo Road in Durand-Eastman Park on 1 November stood out as noteworthy. A Victor homeowner photographed a late Baltimore Oriole on 3 November. An RBA field trip found a very late Bay-breasted Warbler along Zoo Road on 8 November. Brad Carlson reported the same bird on 19 November. Andy Guthrie found a Yellow-throated Warbler at Hamlin Beach SP on 4 November.

Please submit reports to eBird, post them on geneseebirds.com, and/or send them by the 5th of the month to Nick Kachala nicholaskach@gmail.com

Bohemian Waxwing spotted by Jeffrey Eichner at Webster Park.



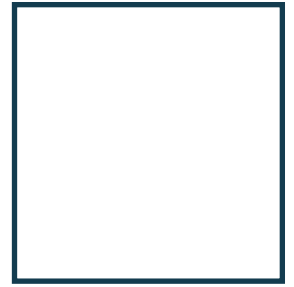
	2025	2024	10-year Average (2015–2024)
Total species for November	162	153	155.9
New species for the year	6	4	3.8
Total for the year to date	294	295	292.5





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