



Rochester Birding
Association

Little Gull



This female Ruby-throated Hummingbird was spotted by Alan Bloom at Braddock Bay East Spit last August.

AUG 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!

AUG 1
Saturday

CONESUS INLET STATE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Explore this expansive wetland for Virginia Rails and Wood Duck families. We've seen eagles on a reliable basis, Cliff Swallows and more. This trip is a combination of driving, stopping at overlooks and short walks on dirt trails and dikes. Length is about 1.5 miles of walking. Restrooms are available at the meeting place only. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at Vitale Park on Route 20A in Lakeville. The Park entrance is by the Lakeville post office on the south (lake) side of Route 20A and across the street from Smith's Hardware. There's a possibility of a trip extension to the Geneseo Airport area. **Spotting scopes would be useful.**

Leader: Jim Kimball 585-519-9211 and co-leader Nick Kachala 585-750-5536

Field Trips continue on [page 4](#)

Never Give Up?

Have you ever spent a long time looking for a bird and wondered if you should keep looking or give up and move on? At what point does persistence become stubbornness? I had a recent experience that got me thinking about when to quit.

My spouse and I had finished up a guided birding trip in Spain. Because of our airline flight schedule, we had an afternoon to ourselves. What do you do after birding for a week? Why, more birding of course! We researched area eBird hotspots, then took an Uber from our hotel to the botanical gardens in downtown Madrid. We had a target bird—the Iberian Green Woodpecker.

The Iberian Green Woodpecker is similar to our Northern Flicker. It's fairly common, doesn't mind urban areas, and often feeds on insects on the ground. It is a regional endemic with a range from the Iberian Peninsula stretching into the Pyrenees and extreme Southern France. We had no plans to return to the area in the foreseeable future, and it would be a life bird. We wanted badly to see it.

Gayle and I wandered around the beautiful botanical gardens. We saw lots of great birds over a couple of hours including two lifers: Short-toed Treecreeper and Common Firecrest. But alas, no woodpecker. It was getting late, but we had another spot in mind. Next door to the botanical gardens was the Prado – Spain's world-famous art museum – with about 1/10th mile of lawn and trees out front. Good woodpecker habitat! (Lest you think we are total philistines for ignoring a cultural icon, we had spent an entire afternoon the previous week in the Prado soaking up the exhibits.) We combed that area for another 45 minutes. It was early evening. We were hungry. And now came the decision—do we give up or keep going?

We all tend to be susceptible to the Sunk-Cost Fallacy, the cognitive bias that causes us to continue doing something solely because we have already invested time, money, or effort into it. (Be honest, how many of you have finished a terrible book or movie because you already invested time into it?) Applied to birding, "I've already spent a lot of time and effort, I can't quit now!" This was clearly going through our heads. Plus, the inevitable doomsday thought, "We're here now and who knows if we'll ever be back. If we don't find this bird now, we'll never see it." Admittedly, there was probably some ego involved too: "We're decent birders, and eBird says other people have found this woodpecker here. They can't possibly be better than we are!"

So when does persistence become stubbornness? Persistence is the commitment to the goal; stubbornness is commitment to a particular method or moment. The first mindset allows adaptation, the second traps you.

So how do you decide when to stop? I ascribe to the Stockdale Paradox. In his book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins coined this concept based on his interviews with Admiral James Stockdale, a Vietnam POW camp survivor. It is the psychological concept of dual-focus, having the absolute belief that you will prevail in the end, but confronting the brutal facts of your current reality. It's been applied in business and in personal coaching. While birding doesn't necessarily have the gravitas of these other situations, I think the concept still applies. Reframing the goal it becomes: "I would like to add the Iberian Green Woodpecker to my life list, but it doesn't have to be today." If I confront the brutal facts of my (then) current reality: "It's getting dark; we need to get something to eat;



PRESIDENT'S CORNER, BRIAN ROHRS

my companion is getting antsy; we've spent all afternoon searching to no avail, and if I went out looking for a Flicker at home, do I seriously think I could guarantee we'd find one?"

If you read between the lines here, we reframed ourselves into giving up. We walked up the hill behind the Prado looking for a convenient pickup spot for an Uber to return to our hotel. As we crested the hill, I heard a single loud piercing "kyeer." My brain said, "Ah, that's a Northern Flicker..., HEY, WAIT A SECOND..." Fortunately, there was only one close pine tree to scan. The Iberian Green Woodpecker was at eye level, backlit, of course, but we were able to get a good view for 10-15 seconds before it flew off. Success!

The takeaway lesson? The universe often withholds your target species until the exact moment you put your binoculars away. Our woodpecker was simply honoring a well-established birding tradition!

Some other RBA news for this month:

It was great to see everyone at our annual picnic. The late afternoon rainstorm cooled everything down, then stopped just in time for our picnic. Many thanks to our Social Chair, Niki Banke, for organizing it and to Doug Rabjohns for being grill master again this year.

We have 2 field trips scheduled for August, one to Conesus Inlet State WMA and a beginner birder trip to Montezuma NWR. Get out and join your fellow birders!

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Expires August 31, 2026



FIELD TRIPS

AUG 29
Saturday

BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP – MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Learn more about the fall migration of shorebirds in this nearby birding treasure. We'll visit key spots you'll want to revisit again and again! There will be a number of stops during this mostly driving trip. Restrooms are available at the Visitor Center. Meet at the Montezuma Visitor Center at **1:00 p.m. Bring binoculars and, if you have them, spotting scopes.**

Leader: John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and co-leader Sheryl Nash Gracewski 585-261-6975

Birds and Brews

Join us for craft beers and conversation!

A chance to meet up and socialize with people who love birds.

Wednesday, July 15, 2026

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Three Heads Brewing

186 Atlantic Avenue, Rochester

We'll enjoy sitting outside at this neighborhood favorite brew pub.

Three Heads doesn't serve meals (just some limited snacks), but you are welcome to bring your own takeout. (Old Pueblo Grill is right across the street.)

www.threeheadsbrewing.com



WELCOME TO THE FLOCK

Please welcome our new members:

Sonja Livingston & Jim Mott
Lori Orellana

Christine Wade
Nicole Whittum

As of June 15th, members in good standing: 338

Individual Members: 227

Family Members: 90

Supporters: 17

Sponsors: 3

Corporate Sponsors: 1

Additional Complimentary Memberships: 37

Doug Rabjohns, RBA Membership Data



*Sandhill Cranes at Montezuma NWR.
Photo by Jeffrey Eichner.*



BIRDING CRUISES

Aboard the

RIVERIE

Cruise with birding experts Randi and Nic Minetor and observe some of the 100 species of birds that make their home along the Genesee River. Perfect for every bird watcher from novice to die-hard enthusiast, you'll see local birds in their lush habitat and learn to identify them by sight and sound.

These 75-minute cruises are appropriate for all ages. Participants are encouraged to bring their own binoculars, though binoculars will be available on board for use during the cruise.



All of last year's birding cruises sold out early, so choose your dates and get tickets soon!



For more information and to book your cruise, visit

https://rochesterbywater.org/public_cruises/genesee-river-erie-canal-birding-cruises/

Upcoming dates: All cruises depart from Corn Hill Landing at 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, June 20

Sunday, June 21

Saturday, June 27

Sunday, June 28

Saturday, July 11

Sunday, July 12

Sunday, August 2

Saturday, August 29

Sunday, August 30

Saturday, September 19

Sunday, September 20

Saturday, September 26

Sunday, September 27

Saturday, October 17

Sunday, October 18



Thousand Acre Swamp May 14, 2026

It was a cloudy, chilly (40°) morning, with a threat of rain, as nine of us gathered in the parking lot at the preserve entrance. We're accustomed to recording over a dozen species before starting our tour, but this time there were few to see or hear.

As we headed down for a brief scan of Duck Pond and then progressed down Founders Way trail, it was apparent that the cold morning had delayed the emergence of insects and therefore the activities of the usual birds. The expected songs of the Wood Thrushes, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Northern Yellow Warblers, American Redstarts and Warbling Vireos were scarce or absent.

By the time we had traversed the Swamp Boardwalk, the temperature was improving, although our eBird list was still rather sparse and missing some of the regular residents.

As we made our way up Hermit Walk to the Meadow, we heard more birds, including Ovenbird, Rusty Blackbird and Northern Waterthrush, although we did not see these. At the Meadow, two of the nestboxes were hosting Eastern Bluebirds and, as usual, Tree Swallows were occupying two others. A Common Raven was an unexpected flyover.

At the Way Pond we finally encountered a collection of seven or eight species of warblers, and on our way back along Hermit Walk we found two more pockets for a total of 15 warbler species for the morning. We were also treated to an extended performance by three Scarlet Tanagers.

Fortunately the rain was limited to a five-minute sprinkle, and as we concluded our walk, we agreed that it had eventually been a good morning, with a total of 56 species. I would like to thank all our participants for the contributions of their younger ears, and in particular Doug Rabjohns for compiling and

submitting our eBird list, and John Paalvast for adding photographs to it.

Richard Ashworth and Jay Greenberg

Norway Road May 17, 2026

Fourteen birders joined trip leaders Nick Kachala and Lynn Bergmeyer for what would become one of the most productive Norway Road trips in recent memory. With a strong migration overnight, warblers dripped from the trees immediately upon arriving to Norway Road. The Cerulean Warblers were heard by all in the typical spot, about a half mile north of NY-104, although only a handful of participants got fleeting views. The caravan continued north and had productive stops along the road, adding Bobolink, Savannah Sparrow, and Horned Lark to the list. The group also had great views of three Green Herons, plus a Broad-winged Hawk circling low overhead. The stop at Norway Heights on the shore of Lake Ontario was super productive, with one maple tree alone containing eight species of warbler. There were also both species of loon on the water and a large raft (950+) of Long-tailed Ducks staging for a mass migration. The group continued east into Hamlin and added Vesper Sparrow and Orchard Oriole to the list, ending the morning at 104 species.

Nick Kachala and Lynn Bergmeyer

Oatka Creek Fish and Game Club May 20, 2026

Earlier in the morning of this field trip, the weather was very windy and rainy and threatened a possible cancelation. By 7:30 AM start time, however, all was calm and we had a group of 15 anxious birders ready to enjoy the diversity of birds and habitat on this comfortable mid-May morning. Just birding from the parking area next to the clubhouse and Oatka Creek, we generated a nice listing of birds including many good





Eastern Wood-Pewee seen at Oatka Creek Fish and Game Club by Rebekah Earthwalker.

looks at Orchard Orioles and some warblers—including excellent looks at a Cape May Warbler feeding in a Norway Spruce. As we headed down the creek trail, we immediately found the Acadian Flycatcher which is usually further down the trail on the way to the normal Cerulean Warbler location. As always, the walk along that trail yielded many nice looks at several birds, including Pileated Woodpeckers which seemed to be nesting in the same tree as last year. We always enjoy the Common Mergansers along the creek along with Bald Eagle, Belted Kingfisher, Scarlet Tanager, Great Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, and nesting Downy Woodpeckers feeding young in a nest cavity along the trail. We could only hear the Northern Waterthrush and the Hooded Warblers. Upon our return to the parking area, we worked our way toward the Wilcox Road entrance to the west. At the bridge, a singing male Cerulean Warbler was viewed by all, confirming what had only been heard earlier that morning. We also enjoyed seeing a variety of birds that weren't present along the wooded trail, including Eastern Bluebirds that were nesting. All had a great time and we documented 66 species. Thanks, again, to Mike McMullen for hosting us.

Hans Kunze and Tom and Jeanne Verhulst

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge May 24, 2026

A group of 10 gathered at Oak Orchard WMA at the Goose Pond Overlook. It was a great start with 19 species seen. There was a busy Purple Martin house, active Tree Swallow boxes, and a nesting American Robin in the kiosk. A single Bobolink and an Eastern Kingbird were found in the tall grasses. Down in the marsh and pond we found a Blue-winged Teal, Common Gallinule, a Pied-billed Grebe, and a family of six Wood Ducks swimming along. Also seen, a Great Blue Heron, a Great Egret and some of us were lucky enough to see an American Bittern fly over the marsh! On the opposite hill we spied a Sandhill Crane family with one colt!



This Veery (above) and Yellow-billed Cuckoo were seen on the trip to Iroquois NWR. Photos by Rebekah Earthwalker.

Making the short trip over to the Swallow Hollow Trail, we had a nice stroll around the loop finding 44 species. Highlights in the first section were a Veery and a Yellow-billed Cuckoo! In the marsh section, we found two Soras (life birds for many on our trip) and some got to see a Northern Waterthrush. Entering the forest

FIELD TRIPS REPORTS

section we finally found, not one, but three Yellow-throated Vireo (another life bird for some). Known for warblers, this trail did not disappoint, with 12 species seen including the Cerulean Warbler (an Iroquois specialty).

Next up was Kumpf Marsh. On the way, some also saw Sandhill Cranes. Taking the muddy path to the marsh was worth it, as we came upon more waterfowl and six species of shorebirds: Killdeer, Semi-palmated Plover, Dunlin, Spotted Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, and Semi-palmated Sandpiper. Dunlin, totaling about 40, gave great flight views. There were many Great Egrets, Great Blue Herons, Caspian Terns and one Black Tern. We had great looks at the Bald Eagles in the nest (the refuge has a nest cam and you can follow their story). A Swamp Sparrow posed for a photo shoot, and finally, everyone got great looks at a Willow Flycatcher after hearing them all day.

Just around the corner, we stopped at the Cayuga Overlook where we added Trumpeter Swan, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck and American Coot. A few got glimpses of a Least Bittern flying through the far side of the marsh. We had amazing views of ten Black Terns hunting and some perched up on cattails and Muskrat domes.

A few continued on to see if we could find the Prothonotary Warbler at Tonawanda WMA, Meadville Marsh. All got to hear the bird and a few saw it fly by. We had great looks at Marsh Wrens at this stop. Both birds were life birds for a few on this last stop. The Iroquois trip did not rain, did not disappoint, and totaled 88 species!

Sheryl Nash Graceswki and Niki Banke

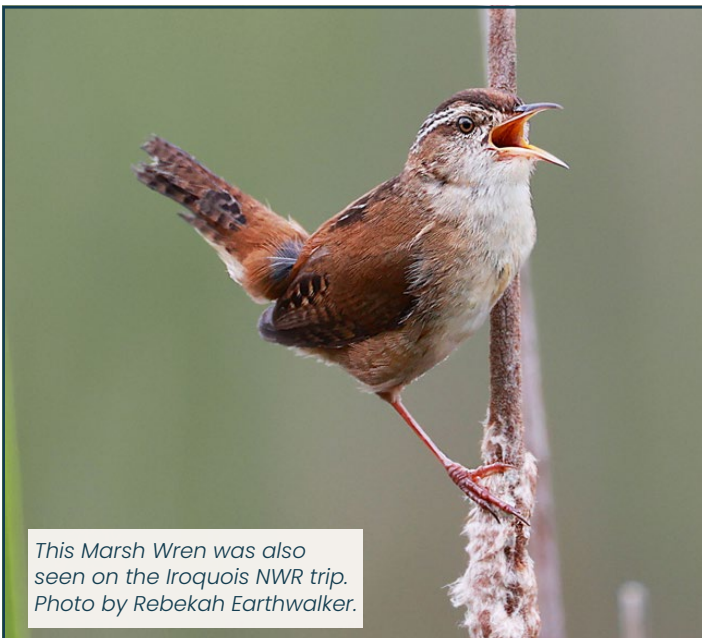
Ganondagan State Historic Site May 30, 2026

We had lovely weather for birding and a friendly, joyful group of 23 participants. The majority of the participants were new to birding and excited by all of the 34 species we found. We walked through shrubland, wetlands, forest, and grassland. We all had great looks at an Eastern Kingbird, an Eastern Bluebird and an Eastern Towhee. One of the highlights at the overlook was first seeing American Crows harassing a Common Raven, and then a male Baltimore Oriole mobbing a crow. Thanks to Sue Robertson for substituting for Neal Reilly.

Amy Kahn and Sue Robertson

Wayne County Fields and Forest New Compehner Farm May 31, 2026

Twenty-five people, including several from Rochester and Erie County, filled our home parking lot on this beautiful late May morning. The birding around the yard, with good views of two different feeding stations, gave several novice birders good looks at a variety of birds—especially Baltimore Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, American Goldfinches, woodpeckers, and Purple Finches. We could hear nearby Orchard Orioles singing along with a distant Tufted Titmouse. From one location, we acknowledged nesting sites for Eastern Bluebirds, Black-capped Chickadees, Eastern Phoebe, Mourning Doves, American Robins, Chipping Sparrows, Song Sparrows, and former Cliff Swallows (which made their first



This Marsh Wren was also seen on the Iroquois NWR trip. Photo by Rebekah Earthwalker.

appearance much later that day!) We then made our way out back to take a hike up to "The Hill," which provides a beautiful view of our farm and part of Wyoming County including the beginning portion of the Oatka Creek Valley. Up there on the hill among several hay fields we enjoyed seeing many Bobolinks and Savannah Sparrows. The Eastern Meadowlark made an appearance flying directly overhead and landing for a great view of its lemon-yellow breast with necklace. After more birding around the yard, we headed one road over to the south (Cowie Road) which has become a reliable location for several species of birds, most notably, Vesper Sparrow, Horned Lark, American Redstart, Indigo Bunting, and several others. We then headed further south to our Silver Lake property where we enjoyed a very active colony of Purple Martins using the gourd rack and a number of other lake birds including Osprey and two lingering Common Loons. We concluded around 12:30 pm. Several birders stayed for a nice lunch at the nearby and very popular Charcoal Corral. We ended with 65 species. Thank you to all for coming and to Niki for her refreshments!!

Hans Kunze and Rick Stevens

Ganondagan State Historic Site Family Trip June 6, 2026

Thanks to Sheryl Nash Gracewski for stepping in to assist. We had a lovely, friendly group of 11 with many new birders and multiple ages. Before we left the parking lot we had great looks at an Eastern Kingbird and Common Yellowthroat. We headed to the pollinator meadow next and had many overhead raptors taking advantage of the warm winds. We had resident birds including Turkey Vultures, adult Bald Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks and a Cooper's Hawk. We had Tree Swallows going in and out of a bird box with food, and a pair of Eastern Bluebirds sitting on the longhouse roof. Also in

the field were multiple looks at Song Sparrows as well as a female Red-winged Blackbird, a female Indigo Bunting and a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak all carrying food to their young. We had a total of 4 species of breeding warblers: Chestnut-sided, Northern Yellow, Common Yellowthroat and Blue-winged. Our brief walk through the woods gave us Grey Catbird, Eastern Towhee, Great Crested Flycatcher and Red-eyed Vireo. Our total number of bird species was 43.

Amy Kahn and Sheryl Nash Gracewski

Letchworth State Park June 7, 2026

Twenty-five birders gathered at the Mount Morris Dam overlook to bird Letchworth State Park. The day was calm and pleasantly warm in the 70s, with river mist in the morning turning to mixed sun and clouds later in the day. A pleasant surprise was an American Bittern flying over before we had even left our meeting place! A Wild Turkey adult with at least 9 young was spotted along the road. At the Gibsonville trail, the group heard Louisiana Waterthrush, Hooded and Blue-winged Warblers, and had good looks at an American Robin on a nest right over the trail. At a bridge along the park's main road, we found an Acadian Flycatcher singing on a wide-open branch in the sun, seeming to pose for photos. The group then walked down to the river at St. Helena and found a Bald Eagle, two Broad-winged Hawks, and a Northern Rough-winged Swallow at its nest hole in the

*Bald Eagle spotted
at Letchworth State
Park by Niki Banke.*



Peregrine Falcon seen on a previous trip to Letchworth State Park by Rebekah Earthwalker.



riverbank. We had good views of Common Mergansers, a Spotted Sandpiper, and singing Yellow-throated Vireos. At Tea Table, just above the Wolf Creek gorge, Matt pointed out an empty Peregrine Falcon nest, so we waited, hoping the bird would show itself. After a brief wait, an adult Peregrine flew up and perched on an open snag, allowing the whole group and some interested bystanders excellent views and photos. During our lunch at Great Bend, we spotted two more young Peregrines across the gorge. At the Humphrey Nature Center we had good looks at Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pine Warbler, and Ruby-throated Hummingbird. We heard signing Yellow-rumped Warbler, Purple Finch, Brown Creeper, and Blue-headed Vireo. Overall, we had an impressive 79 species for the day. Thanks to everyone who participated!

Neal Reilly and Matt Nusstein

Odonata Sanctuary June 21, 2026

We had a perfect day for our trip around this amazing sanctuary, with sun and

cool temperatures. Twenty-three people participated in the trip, making the 0.6-mile loop along the fields, through the woods, and finally arriving at the pond. Before starting the walk, a cooperative Cedar Waxing perched at the top of a leafless tree near the parking lot. A House Wren and then a Carolina Wren serenaded us as the walk began. Along the fields we got excellent looks at a number of Eastern Bluebirds bringing food back to their nest and at a Bobolink sitting on a distant fence post. We also had scope views of an Alder Flycatcher. Flying around us were lots of Tree Swallows, two Killdeer, a Green Heron, and a Turkey Vulture. On the edge of the woods, a Scarlet Tanager was singing and a few people got a look at it. A little further on, everyone got good looks at a singing Eastern Towhee and a family of Blue-winged Warblers. We ended the trip with 38 bird species.

Sheryl Nash Gracewski and Steve Melcher

DECEMBER 2025 RECORDS SUMMARY

RCBC: Rochester Christmas Bird Count

CHCBC: Conesus-Hemlock (Little Lakes)
Christmas Bird Count

LSLCBC: Letchworth-Silver Lake Christmas Bird Count

December 2025 was very cold and snowy. Temperatures averaged 27.2°F, 4.8° below average. This past December was the coldest since 2017 and the first since 2017 to feature a below-average net temperature. Twenty-six days dipped to 25 degrees or less, which is nine days more than the long-term December average. Precipitation totaled 3.12", which is 0.45" above average. Snowfall totaled 37.8", which is 15.15" above average. This December was the tenth snowiest on record for Rochester.

Three Christmas Bird Count (CBC) circles fall entirely within Region 2. The Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC on 20 December recorded 68 species (73 for count week). The Rochester CBC on 20 December recorded 89 species (91 for count week). The Conesus-Hemlock CBC "Little Lakes" on 27 December recorded 77 species (78 for count week). New high counts or ties were: LSLCBC – Bald Eagle (27), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (7), Merlin (2, tie), Common Raven (10), Red-breasted Nuthatch (117), Hermit Thrush (6), Gray Catbird (1, tie), and Eastern Towhee (2); RCBC – Common Raven (15), Winter Wren (5), American Pipit (1, tie), Yellow-rumped Warbler (16), Orange-crowned Warbler (1, new bird for count day, previously only count week), and Baltimore Oriole (1, tie); CHCBC – Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (7), Yellow-rumped Warbler (21), Dark-eyed Junco (527), and Eastern Towhee (1, tie).

Looking at the Region 2 checklist for 2025, some notable misses included Barrow's Goldeneye, Eared Grebe, Upland Sandpiper, and Yellow-breasted Chat. These missed birds are always offset by the truly unexpected. 2025 welcomed a Bullock's Oriole in January, a LeConte's Sparrow in May, a long-staying Brown Pelican from June through October, an unprecedented and first Regional Redwing in November, and a Rufous Hummingbird in December.

Canada Goose numbers decreased slightly from October/November, but flocks nearing 2,000 could still be found throughout the fields, especially towards the beginning of the month. Joe Mitchell reported the only Ross's Goose of the month, along

Brown Pelican at
Braddock Bay East Spit.
Photo by Candy Giles.



Priem Road in Hamlin on 21 December. There were no reports of Greater White-fronted Goose this month. Puddle ducks dipped off even more, with the last Northern Shoveler reported on 19 December, the last Northern Pintail reported on 21 December, and singles of Green-winged Teal and American Wigeon lingering at select locations. Donna Carter reported two male Harlequin Ducks from Sodus Point on 7 December, which were flushed by a walker shortly after they were found. Numbers of Long-tailed Duck seemed low, with a maximum count of 350 coming from Sodus Point on 26 December. Sodus Point had a decent accumulation of Common Goldeneye towards the end of December, reaching 240 by 24 December.

Interestingly, there were no reports of large numbers of migrating Red-necked Grebes along the Lake Ontario shoreline this month. December is typically the month where Red-necked Grebes peak in numbers. Perhaps this was more of an effort issue than an actual lack of birds, though. A Virginia Rail was once again found at the Quaker Pond area of Mendon Ponds Park, which is a well-documented year-after-year overwintering location for the species. Plenty of birders went to observe this Virginia Rail, which was quite cooperative.



This photo of a Ross's
Goose was taken at
Montezuma NWR in 2023
by Anne Pier Salverda.

DECEMBER 2025 RECORDS SUMMARY

Shorebird diversity and abundance also diminished in December, as expected, with Killdeer and Purple Sandpiper being the only two species reported. Observers reported at least three separate Killdeer in the first two weeks of the month. Four Purple Sandpipers, found in late November at Sodus Point, were reported again on 1 December. The group dwindled to a single bird by the end of the week, with the last report of that individual occurring on 6 December.

There were no reports of any jaegers for December, which itself is not unusual, but there are occasionally late stragglers that could be reported in the first few days of the month. Among the gulls, Chris Wood reported a first winter Black-legged Kittiwake flying past Bear Creek Harbor in the Town of Ontario on 24 December. Nothing else was reported in terms of rare or unusual gulls for the month. The highest count for Herring Gull (570 from Braddock Bay on 25 December), was notably low.

Seven to eight individual Rough-legged Hawks (deduced from a quick timing/location/morph comments analysis) were slightly better than December 2024, but are still in the margins of "average." Bald Eagle numbers were the highest from the NMWMA this month, with one count of 15 coming from Armitage Road on 20 December standing out as the highest. The only Northern Saw-whet Owl report came from Owl Woods on 13 December. Despite a few Snowy Owl reports in November that got birders hopeful for a flight year, there were no reputable reports of Snowy Owl in Region 2 for December.

Despite the cold conditions in December, there were still 41 reports of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in December, which reduced to roughly 28 individuals. This is almost aligned with December 2023 and 2024, further evidence that this species continues to have an elevated presence in the Region during winter. Numbers of overwinter field birds (Horned Lark, Snow Bunting, and Lapland Longspur) appeared healthy, likely due to above-average snowfall that made viewing these species along the roadsides easier than during past Decembers. The large incursion of Red-breasted Nuthatches continued strong this month, with elevated numbers reported widely throughout the Region and extremely high single-



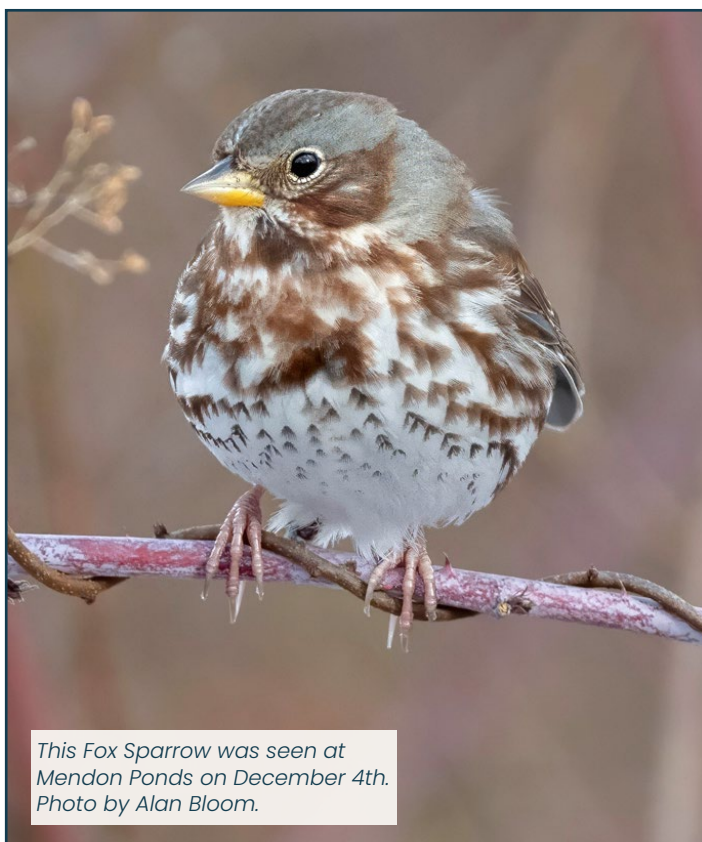
Horned Lark spotted on December 16th by Alan Bloom.

checklist counts in the high teens to as many as 20 regularly appearing in the eBird data. The number of half-hardies like Hermit Thrush and Gray Catbird were lower than past Decembers, almost certainly due to the colder and snowier conditions. Winter finches continued strong this month, a holdover from November. Kyle Gage reported the highest numbers of Evening Grosbeaks, the highest being 40 on 7 December, from his property near Naples. A handful of Pine Grosbeaks continued at Webster Park throughout the month. Redpoll reports were still scarce and random at best. Chris Wood reported the only two Red Crossbills of the month at Beechwood State Park on 21 December. Fox Sparrows, another species with an increasing winter presence in the Region, were scarce (or perhaps back to baseline) this winter, with five individuals Regionwide, none of which were observed by multiple observers or on multiple dates. Blackbird numbers were very low, with a maximum of 42 Red-winged Blackbirds and two Common Grackles reported. Some rare passerines of note for December included a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak at a private feeder near Naples on 28-31 December, a Summer Tanager photographed in Downtown Rochester



Red-breasted Nuthatch at Durand Eastman Park. Photo by Alan Bloom.

DECEMBER 2025 RECORDS SUMMARY



This Fox Sparrow was seen at Mendon Ponds on December 4th. Photo by Alan Bloom.

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).

on 5 December, and an Orange-crowned Warbler, found by Charlie Plimpton, at Highland Park on 21 December during the Rochester Christmas Bird Count. A bird that was technically “out of bounds” for Region 2, yet likely crossed the reporting region boundary line (NY-19, Academy Street), was a Rufous Hummingbird at a private feeder in the village of Wyoming on the west side of the road. A handful of birders observed the Rufous Hummingbird from 1-4 December at the welcome of an enthusiastic homeowner. Further details on this observation will be noted in the Kingbird Region 1 (Niagara Frontier) report for Winter 2025-2026.

Please submit reports to eBird or post them on geneseebirds.

An Orange-crowned Warbler, similar to this one, was spotted at Highland Park. This photo was taken in Salmon Creek Preserve by Alan Bloom in October of last year.

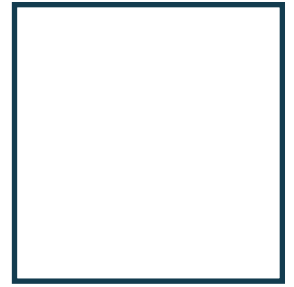


	2025	2024	10-year Average (2015-2024)
Total species for December	128	137	135.4
New species for the year	1	1	1.2
Total for the year to date	294	296	293.7



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