

Cayuga Bird Club Newsletter - April 2019

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Cayuga Bird Club

April 2019

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Calendar

Cayuga Bird Club Meeting April 8, 2019

Title: Mistakes Happen! Hybridization in Wood Warblers

Speaker: David Toews, Ph.D., Dept of Biology, Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA



Dr. David Toews has worked on studying hybrid zones in wood warblers for over ten years. He will discuss what he has learned about avian evolution by studying these hybrid zones, as well some notable rare, unusual and initially mysterious hybridization events that he has discovered by using new genetic methods.

Cayuga Bird Club meetings start at 7:30pm, the second Monday of every month September - June. Doors open at 7:00pm and all meetings are open to the public.

From the President

Diane Morton

It's spring! Each day is bringing new avian arrivals - some birds stopping for a short time on their way further north, others settling in to begin courtship and nesting. The thousands of Snow Geese and Northern Pintails that have been frequenting the north end of the lake are beginning to move on, but other waterfowl, such as Northern Shovelers, Wood Ducks, and teal are growing

**April 8, CBC Meeting at Lab of O,
7:30pm**

David Toews, *Mistakes Happen!*
Hybridization in Wood Warblers

**May 13, CBC Meeting at Lab of O,
7:30pm**

Meg Richardson and Carl Steckler, *Birding
the Caldera of a Supervolcano in Arizona*

A calendar of CBC field trips is listed below. Check our [Web Calendar](#) for more detailed information about upcoming events and field trips.

Upcoming Field Trips

**Sunday, April 7 - Dryden Lake, led by
Suan Yong**

7:30am – 12:00pm

Suan Yong will lead a half-day trip to Dryden Lake, one of our area's birding hotspots. This is a good spot for ducks and other water birds as well as a variety of sparrows and songbirds. Dress warmly according to the weather. Bring a snack and something to drink and a spotting scope if you have one. Meet at Cornell Lab of Ornithology for carpooling.

**Friday, April 12 - Woodcocks and Owls,
led by Bob McGuire and Suan Yong**

7:15pm – 9:00pm

Pre-registration is required for this trip.

Email bmcguire@clarityconnect.com by noon, April 11 to register.

Join Bob McGuire and Suan Yong on an evening field trip to look for displaying American Woodcock in local fields and also to look for owls. The spring display flight or "skydance" of the American Woodcock is a real treat. We'll listen for the distinctive "peent" of the bird while it is on the ground, before it launches into its amazing upward flight and twittering descent. Owls are also active at this time of year, and we will listen for several different species on our evening outing.

Meet at 7:15 pm at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology parking lot for carpooling. This trip is limited to 40 participants. Rain date: April 14.



in number. American Woodcocks have returned locally, performing their evening sky dances, and Ospreys are back, selecting nest sites.

We have many new field trips planned throughout the spring to make the most of this migration season; the full schedule is listed in the article below. These field trips provide a great opportunity to explore both new and familiar birding hotspots to see the great variety of birds that come through our area. We'll also have public bird walks at Stewart Park on Saturdays in April and May to help the local community learn more about the birds there. The club recently purchased five pairs of Celestron binoculars for people to borrow on those walks to enhance their experience with birds.

One migratory bird species that we hope to entice to stick around Stewart Park for the nesting season is Purple Martin. Each spring we see Purple Martins pass by the south end of the lake. Purple Martin nest boxes have been very successful up in the Montezuma area. With advice from Chuck Gibson and Marcia Phillips of the Friends of Montezuma as well as from the Purple Martin Conservation Association, the club has purchased a Purple Martin house to install in Stewart Park along Fall Creek. This weekend a number of Cayuga Bird Club conservation action committee members painted our martin house to ready it for installation and the City of Ithaca and Stewart Park staff have put in the ground stake for the pole. In a week or two you should be able to see Cayuga Bird Club's Purple Martin house when you go down to Stewart Park. We hope Purple Martins will soon be checking it out as well!

We had a fantastic first Community Nest Box Build at Stewart Park on March 30. Community members put together nest boxes (using lumber pre-cut and pre-drilled by Wes Blauvelt) to take home for chickadees, nuthatches, wrens, and other small cavity-nesting birds. People also learned about Cayuga Bird Club's initiative to put up nest boxes in Stewart Park and Lighthouse

Sunday, April 14 - East side of Cayuga Lake, led by Gladys Birdsall

7:30am – 12:30pm

Meet Gladys at the east end of Stewart Park for a half day trip. We will check the waterfront and then carpool up the east side of the lake. We will make a few stops along the lake and also check fields for migrants. (American Pipits, Horned Larks and others). Dress warmly and bring a drink and snacks. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. We will plan to return by 12:30.

Saturday, April 20 - Monkey Run South, led by Liisa Mobley

7:30am – 10:00am

Liisa Mobley will lead a walk through the trails of Monkey Run South. Habitat is variable - from wooded, riparian, or brushy areas to agricultural fields, and edge habitat. We'll be on the lookout for all kinds of birds, including the early warblers and thrushes, swallows, grouse, and more. Be prepared for mud and irregular footing on trails. Meet at the parking area at the end of Monkey Run Road at 7:30 am.

Saturday, April 27 - Montezuma NWR and Cayuga Lake

7am – 4pm

Pre-registration is required for this trip.

Email Cayugabirdclub.president@gmail.com by noon, April 24 to register.

This trip will be focused on Spring migrants and waterfowl. Meet at the east end of Stewart Park, 7:00 am. We will organize groups of up to 10 participants with each experienced leader to go up the east side of Cayuga Lake to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. Trip leaders will take you to the best hotspots for waterfowl viewing and will provide tips to help you learn how to identify different species. We'll also be looking for shorebirds and migrant songbirds on this trip. Our return will be along the west side of Cayuga Lake, with stops at other hotspots.

Point/Jetty Woods and about our Purple Martin house. Thanks to everyone who helped at our event, especially Jody Enck and Wes Blauvelt.

Many others were cleaning up Stewart Park on Saturday. With the water level low, people walked out into the mud to haul out all sorts of accumulated trash. Thanks to the Friends of Stewart Park for organizing the cleanup, keeping the park beautiful for everyone to enjoy.

It has been wonderful to see many people participating in the activities of the Conservation Action Committee. If you'd like to learn more about these projects and how to get involved, see [Jody Enck's column in this newsletter](#).

Good birding,

Diane

Spring Field Trip Schedule

Because Cornell's popular Spring Field Ornithology (SFO) course with local field trips is not being offered this year, Cayuga Bird Club has planned extra opportunities for CBC members and the public to get out to enjoy and learn to identify birds this spring. Trip leaders will focus on helping participants learn field identification skills using visual clues as well as sound, behavior, and habitat. **Preregistration is necessary for some trips (see below).** Email cayugabirdclub.president@gmail.com to register or for more information.

Of particular note, **Steve Kress**, Audubon VP for Bird Conservation and SFO course instructor for more than 40 years, will be a leader for two of our trips (April 27 and May 11). Those trips will be led in the style of SFO, with small groups of up to 10 participants per leader.

Details for field trips, including where to meet, can be found on our club calendar at cayugabirdclub.org. Updates, including any date or time changes, will be posted there. A complete description of the April trips can be found in the column below.

Sun. April 7, 7:30am - noon, Dryden Lake

Bring snacks, something to drink, and lunch if you like. We will also make a stop to purchase food along the way. Dress for the weather, in layers. Bring a scope if you have one, but beginner birders are welcome. This trip is limited to 40 participants.

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Sun. April 14, 7:30am - 12:30pm, East side of Cayuga Lake

Sat. April 20, 7:30am - 10:00am, Monkey Run South

Sat. April 27, 7:30am - 4:00pm, Montezuma NWR and Cayuga Lake (pre-registration required)

Sat. May 4, 7:30am - 4:30pm, Finger Lakes National Forest

Sat. May 11, 7:30am - 12:30pm, Greensprings Natural Cemetery and Arnot Forest (pre-registration required)

Sun. May 12, 8:00am - 11:00am, Hawthorn Orchard (pre-registration required)

Sat. May 18, 5:15am, Braddock Bay Bird Observatory (pre-registration required)

Sat., June 1, 7:00am - noon, Danby Hotspots

Sun. June 2, 7:00am - noon, Park Preserve

Sun. June 9, 7:30am - noon, Connecticut Hill

In addition to weekly field trips to different area hotspots, Cayuga Bird Club members lead beginner birds walks for the public every Saturday and Sunday, year round, at Sapsucker Woods, beginning at 8:30 am. These walks are especially fun during the spring migration. We will also be offering bird walks at Stewart Park on Saturday mornings at 9:00 am in April and May, meeting near the boat house at the west end of the park.

News from the Conservation Action Committee

Jody Enck

Lots of laughter, whirring drills, and swishing paint brushes permeated the city-owned building in the middle of Stewart Park on Saturday March 30th during our fun event to engage community members in bird conservation. Families made 19 boxes to take home to try to attract Black-capped Chickadees, House Wrens, White-breasted Nuthatches and other small cavity

Park for a half day trip. We will check the waterfront and then carpool up the east side of the lake. We will make a few stops along the lake and also check fields for migrants. (American Pipits, Horned Larks and others). Dress warmly and bring a drink and snacks. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. We will plan to return by 12:30.

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Bring snacks, something to drink, and lunch if you like. We will also make a stop to purchase food along the way. Dress for the weather, in layers. Bring a scope if you have one, but beginner birders are

nesters. Plus, we put the finishing touches on nine nest boxes the Club is putting up in Lighthouse Point/Jetty Woods and Renwick Woods to try to attract Prothonotary Warblers.



Club members Magnus Fiskesjo, Wes Balubelt and Deb Fyler helping with nest box assembly

The swishing paint brushes were wielded by several Club members putting a second coat of paint on our Purple Martin apartment complex – a painting job we started the day before.



Ann Mitchell and Jody Enck painting Purple Martin houses

Our Purple Martin complex and Prothonotary Warbler boxes will be put up in the next week, just in time for migrating birds to find them! The City of Ithaca already has the ground stake cemented in place for the martin complex. Look for it along Fall Creek on the west side of the park. The warbler boxes will go on poles driven into the standing water of the wetter parts of the woods later this week.

We have also started removing privet and other

welcome. This trip is limited to 40 participants.

Salt Point News

Candace Cornell

The Osprey nest camera [is now online](#).

The enormous dredge piles in the meadow at Salt Point during March could be a shock if you hadn't been there in a while, but they are down to a small pile now. The Town of Lansing periodically dredges Salmon Creek to prevent flooding of near by homes and property, which has not been done in 20 years. Flooding along Salmon Creek has been an ongoing concern ever since the disastrous flood of 1935.

The dirt and gravel will be removed completely by May and the Salt Point meadow restored with native grasses and wildflowers designed to attract a diversity of insects, birds, and other wildlife. By the end of summer, the meadow will be an array of colors and graceful grasses.

Field Trip Report - Around the Lake - March 3

Suan Yong

Thirteen people gathered at Stewart Park in the morning lake-effect flurry to begin a full-day around-the-lake birding trip. Those who arrived early saw a Glaucous Gull fly towards Cornell, perhaps for breakfast at the compost piles. On the ice shelf was a sleeping Lesser Black-Backed Gull among the usual Ring-Billed, Herring, and Great Black-backed Gulls.

At Ladoga Point in the shadow of the light north wind, the calm water hosted a good variety of waterfowl, including Redhead, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, many Common Goldeneyes, two Northern Pintails, Bufflehead, Common and Red-Breasted Mergansers, and a White-Winged Scoter. At Myers a maturing Bald Eagle sat

invasive, non-native species from patches in both woods. We are sprouting and rooting several species of native plants, and are in the process of trying to secure up to a dozen additional species to put into the patches we are getting ready. This part of our habitat improvement project is a longer-term effort to provide food and cover for migrating and breeding birds in particular.

We are far from done with the fun for this spring and summer. Contact Jody Enck (jodyenck@gmail.com) if you want to help with (1) nest box monitoring, (2) bird surveying, (3) removing invasive plants and/or growing or planting native plants in our cleared patches. Special thanks to the City of Ithaca for letting us use their building and for helping us with the Purple Martin complex. Thanks to the Cornell Botanic Gardens for providing guidance and tools for our habitat work.

Thanks to the Friends of Stewart Park for organizing a park-wide clean-up effort. And, a hearty thanks to all the Club members who came out to help with our conservation actions and community engagement.

Book Review: Marie Read - Mastering Bird Photography

Muhammad Arif

Wildlife photographer Marie Read takes us on an incredible journey to showcase stunning images of beautiful birds through the pages of her new book titled "Mastering Bird Photography". Along the way, she describes everything the reader needs to know to become a master of the art of avian photography.

I ordered both the print and electronic versions of the book as soon as it became available. In the very first chapter, the author sets the stage for building a solid foundation for photographing



near the spit as we drove in, and soon took off to the north escorted by some of the stirred-up gulls, later returning to circle over us. Among the scattered waterfowl north of Salt Point was a Long-Tailed Duck adding to our day's species tally.



Bald Eagle by Suan Yong

A brief stop at Sweazey Road found the decaying tree cavity devoid of our hoped-for screech owl, as a nearby Northern Mockingbird kept us entertained. We then zigzagged our way towards Long Point, seeing some Horned Larks along the way.

Long Point had a good scattering of goldeneyes and mergansers, among which was a distant Common Loon, a Horned Grebe that never stayed up for long, and around 3000 Snow Geese murmuring before settling into their floating island. To the south we were intrigued by a female Common Merganser who was trailing a male with its body stretched out horizontally almost flush to the water surface. There was a momentary distraction as two adult Bald Eagles engaged in a chase. From the bluffs we got a slightly better look at the Snow Geese, and down the hill we pulled over to look at one Bald Eagle in the nest while the other flew off to a nearby perch chirping its not-too-majestic vocalization.

In Union Springs, the Factory Street Pond

birds with the four "Be's" and progresses through a natural, logical flow of materials from choosing and using equipment, to light and exposure, to finding and attracting birds, to improving the images using better artistic and creative techniques. For any craft, it is crucial to have the right tools and Marie explains the intimidating task of selecting the right camera gear and how to use them with simple and easy to understand language without diving deep into technical jargon, yet never losing sight of the important details. Just mastering the use of tool is not enough for an art form and here she provides us with ample tips, tricks and techniques to improve the pictures such as framing and composition, head angles, background, different light situations, low angle, capturing behavior (feeding, preening, courtship and mating, migration, aggression just to highlight a few). She takes us further into creativity with explanations on using low shutter speeds, bokeh, high key, back and side lighting, use of natural settings and patterns, environmental elements such as water, rain, snow, frost, fog and mist, or even breaking the rules. As a final touch, the book includes concepts on basic image editing as well as bird photography hotspots like Bosque Del Apache, Nickerson Beach Park, and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge.

The book shows that one doesn't need a huge budget and a long travel itinerary to make beautiful pictures when one is familiar with common and local birds. I particularly like the emphasis placed on attracting birds to one's own backyard along with the many tricks to photographing them. Making images of birds in flight is most challenging even for seasoned photographers and I am glad to see a full chapter dedicated to this special genre of bird photography where fine-tuned camera settings are explained along with numerous tips like "rotate from the waist" to help make sharp flight photos. I also like the "stress" given to the ethics of bird photography throughout the book including the use of food, bait or sound to attract (stress?) the birds and on nest photography. No stone of this craft is left unturned and the book really should be called "The COMPLETE Guide to Mastering Bird Photography".

As a newcomer to the world of birding and photography, when I first learned that Marie was working on a bird

had many Gadwalls and some Green-Winged Teals, a chattering Belted Kingfisher, and some American Tree Sparrows. The small pools of open water on the frozen lake had American Wigeons and a couple Northern Pintails among the Mallards and Canada Geese. The Mill Pond gave good looks at Redhead, Bufflehead, American Wigeon, and a lone American Coot.

Mud Lock had Canvasbacks and Redheads up close, and three Trumpeter Swans hanging out across the channel. Looking south were several hundred Tundra swans, mostly sleeping. At least four Bald Eagles made appearances during our time there, as did a Great Blue Heron, and three Mute Swans flying in to find their place among the scattered waterfowl.

After a late lunch break, we went to the north end of the Finger Lakes Airport, finding no snowy owls but a couple of Northern Harriers. Down by the quarry there was no gyrfalcon, and down along Ridge Road we again struck out on snowy owls. When we pulled over to investigate a falcon that turned out to be an American Kestrel, we were accosted by about a dozen domesticated turkeys who emerged from the house by where we parked.

Our final stop at Sheldrake Point, damaged from recent floods, found three Greater White-Fronted Geese who presently took off to fly south. In the distant sky were skeins of Snow Geese. It was a great end to a fun day of birding.

Field Trip Report - West Side of the Lake - March 9

Ken Haas

The nice weather was a welcome guest that stayed with our group all morning. Fourteen birders started out at the Ithaca Children's Garden at 8am and yes, it was cold – mid twenties –but calm winds and

photography book, I was thrilled, and the book surpassed my expectations. Whether you are just considering getting into this exciting field or are a long-time veteran, there is information for every level. I am very inspired and feel empowered to continue to improve my skills as a photographer using the wealth of knowledge in this book. Even if you are not a birder, the book is teeming with brilliant photos on every page that would be enjoyable to birders and non-birders alike and exciting to share with family and friends. I urge you to pick up a copy – you won't be disappointed.

Gardening for Birds - Choosing Plants

Tracy McLellan and Ann Manzano

Spring is starting, and, as plants start growing, it feels like it's time to plant in the garden. If you want to improve your garden to provide good homes for birds, just think about what is needed for a home: food, shelter and water. Birds eat the fruits of many plants as well as insects that are specific to native plants. Caterpillars of moths and butterflies provide excellent nutrition for growing birds, and native plants are the best hosts for caterpillars.



Yellow Warbler by Marie Read

Provide shelter by using a variety of different plant groups. The greatest benefit can be derived from planting a variety of vegetative groups including both evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs, vines, grasses, wildflowers and ferns. Within each group be sure to select plants of various sizes, to create a layering effect. Use a variety of species within each

late winter sunshine made it feel warmer than that. A brief check for birds in that area gave us a Carolina Wren among some other usual co-habitants. Then we were off to Taughannock Falls State Park. Not much in the way of land birds there, but we did see American Wigeon, a few Red-breasted Mergansers, 10 Common Mergansers, about 20 Redheads and a Kingfisher made itself known. On to the parking lot at Sheldrake Winery. Most of the group got there before my passengers and I did (long story) and were amazed to see about 400 Canvasbacks right there in the cove! Some said it was the largest gathering of Canvasbacks seen on the lake, other than at Montezuma NWR. This was quite a gathering of waterfowl. All five species in the genus *Aythya* were present – Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup and Greater Scaup. Now, add to that 15 Common Goldeneyes displaying courting behavior, throw in a few Common and Red-breasted Mergansers and you've got a regular Diving Duck Happening! Just before we were ready to move on to our next spot, some of us turned around 180 degrees and found a distant, brief look at about 40 Redpolls up in the trees by the vineyard.



Photo by Ken Haas

The construction/landscaping happening at Sheldrake Point, our next stop, prevented us from getting as close to the water as we typically can. But we still could easily see the three Greater White-fronted Geese mixed in with the Canada Geese. A single Tundra Swan was hiding in plain sight amongst the Ring-billed and Herring Gulls on the spit across the cove looking North. Again, as we were preparing to move on to

plant group to provide year-round food for wildlife.

Develop a water garden or miniature wetland/aquatic habitat. You will not only attract a wider assortment of birds, you will also attract frogs, dragonflies and other water lovers. This source of water would also attract insects and insect-eating birds and bats.

There is a large number of native plants we can use in our gardens, and many sources of information are easy to access. The Cayuga Bird Club's Book, "Native Plants for Native Birds" is a good place to start with recommendations appropriate for this area. "The Bird Garden" by Steve Kress gives a background on designing a garden with birds in mind, and recommendations for with an emphasis on plants that produce fruits for. Audubon has a [website](#) with recommendations for plants and the birds they will attract, as well as some excellent articles on garden planning. Another interesting resource is that developed by Doug Tallamy, where he considers the number of species of caterpillars that live on many types of native plants in his [PlantFinder website](#). It's no secret that oaks are the winners with over 500 species of caterpillars found on them.

Narrow down your plant choices by considering the conditions in you garden—sunny, shady, wet, dry. Your choices may get narrowed for you by what is available. We have a great local native plant nursery, the Plantsmen. Many other nurseries sell natives. The annual plant sale run by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, this year on Saturday, May 18th at Ithaca High School, has plants for sale from commercial vendors as well as the Master Gardeners and Finger Lakes Native Plant Society.

Cayuga Bird Club Meeting May 13

May 13, 7:30pm, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Title: Birding the Caldera of a Supervolcano in Arizona

Speakers: Meg Richardson and Carl Steckler

Meg Richardson and Carl Steckler traveled to Tucson in September 2018 to find birds, and birds they found. Southeast Arizona is truly a birder's and photographer's

our next stop, about 40 Snow Geese touched down on the lake not too far from us. We still had time for a short drive up to Dean's Cove where we saw more Common Goldeneyes, Redheads, Lesser Scaup and American Wigeon. Some got a glimpse of distant Long-tailed Ducks. Added to our list were some common woodland birds: American Goldfinch, Carolina Wren, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers as well as a flyby Red-tailed Hawk.

Field Trip Report - Around the Lake - March 24

Meena Haribal

I was supposed to lead a trip on 3/23, but the snow forecast for that day made me decide to postpone it. The morning of Sunday, March 24th was bright and crisp with temperature in low 20s. Seven of us started from Stewart Park and two more joined in King Ferry.

From Stewart Park, we saw Ring-necked Ducks, American Wigeons, Buffleheads, Common and Hooded Mergansers. We discussed plans for the day, everyone voted to go straight to the Montezuma Wildlife Center, so we headed straight to Center Road.

On Center Road, we found a couple of Horned Larks and further down at the junction of Route 90 and 34B we found nice hot coffee and cookies at the King Ferry bakery. From the Aurora Boat House we saw a flock of Red-breasted Mergansers, Common Goldeneyes and several Horned Grebes with some in beautiful breeding plumage. We also spotted four Long-tailed Ducks far out in the middle of the lake. A Pileated Woodpecker drummed close to us in the trees. There were small rafts of Snow Geese on the other side of the lake. Later at Factory St. Pond in Union Springs, we found Ring-necked Ducks and Buffleheads.

We also had four species of woodpeckers – Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied and Northern

paradise. Arizona is a vast landscape of bold color, formations and piercing beauty. Isolated mountains in the southeastern corner of Arizona called "Sky Islands," the remnants of a supervolcano, rise abruptly from the arid desert highlands and harbor a tremendous variety of plant and animal life.

Minutes

of the March 11, 2019 Cayuga Bird Club meeting are available on the Cayuga Bird Club [website](#).

Cayuga Bird Club

Educating and inspiring the birding community of the Cayuga Lake Basin and Central New York since 1914

The Cayuga Bird Club meets on the second Monday of each month, September through June, beginning with refreshments at 7:15pm in the Auditorium of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Johnson Center on Sapsucker Woods Road. All meetings and most field trips are free and open to the public. Membership costs \$15 annually per household, \$10 for students, payable in September. Payment may be made via Paypal at cayugabirdclub.org or by mailing a check to: Cayuga Bird Club, c/o Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca NY 14850. Please include your email address (or addresses for family memberships) with your membership application to receive the club newsletter. Members receive the monthly Cayuga Bird Club eNewsletter, from September through June. To make sure you don't miss an issue, add newsletter@cayugabirdclub.org to your email contacts.

Newsletter submissions may be sent to [Tracy McLellan](#). Of particular interest are articles about local bird sightings, bird behavior, birding hot spots, book reviews, bird conservation news and original poetry, art, and photos.

Cayuga Bird Club Officer Contact Information is available on the [Cayuga Bird Club website](#).

Chickadee illustration in masthead by Karen Allaben-Confer

Flickers.

We stopped at Harris's Park and Mud Lock on the way where we saw an Osprey, a large flock of Snow Geese on the west side of the lake, and a beautiful pair of Wood Ducks at Mud Lock.

The only bird of note at MNWR visitor center was a single flying Sandhill Crane. We piled into the cars, planning to head straight to Muckland, but as usual we made a turn on East Road and stopped at Knox-Marcellus area. Here we saw another flock of Snow Geese of about 7000 birds. We scanned and scanned for Ross's but failed until we were about to go and Molly found one, which was a new bird to her! Great identification Molly! There were more swans, ducks and geese here. Plus, we also had a lone Sandhill Crane.



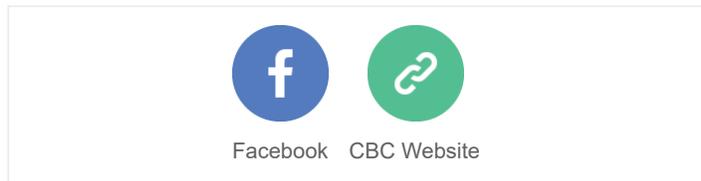
Photo by Diane Morton

Finally, we arrived at the parking area at the remains of old Potato Building on the north east side of the Mucklands. We did see a lot of Pintails and other ducks, but not as many I had seen on Wednesday evening when it was filled with ducks.

After quick lunch, we headed towards Carncross Road, where we saw more Pintails, swans including two Trumpeters, and lots of Ring-billed Gulls. We also spotted four Greater Yellowlegs (actually eight yellow legs)!

We proceeded to Morgan Road, where there were more ducks and geese. We were ready to pack up when Suzanne called out an osprey, which morphed into a beautiful Peregrine Falcon when we looked through the scope! Nice find Suzanne!

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We headed to west side of the lake. The first stop was Cayuga Lake State Park. We estimated some 20,000 snow geese on the water that were murmuring on and off. There were lots and lots of Canvasbacks, Ringed-necked Ducks, Redheads, Scaups, and others scattered all over north end of the lake as if they wanted to give some space to each other. That made viewing easier and we could compare how the Redheads differed from Canvasbacks and Scaups. Finally, we made a last stop at Sheldrake Point. We were lucky to watch Red-breasted Mergansers display to females and two males fight with each other. There was also a pair of Lesser Black-backed Gulls, that were shy of showing off their legs, but finally they did.

Overall, it was a nice day and everyone contributed in spotting and identifying birds. We ended up seeing/hearing over 60 species of birds on a cold spring day, as well as one lovely fox in the fields below Bill and Shirley McAneny's house.

First-of-Year Birds Reported for the Cayuga Lake Basin

Cayuga Lake Basin birds reported in March are listed below.

Sandhill Crane
Ross's Goose
Red-shouldered Hawk
Rusty Blackbird
Eurasian Wigeon
American Woodcock
Osprey
Tree Swallow
American Pipit
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Blue-winged Teal
Wilson's Snipe
Bonaparte's Gull
Vesper Sparrow
Greater Yellowlegs
Eastern Towhee
Pine Warbler
Great Egret
Common Tern

**2019 year count so far:
146 species**

Details of the species listed can be found on the [CBC website](#).

Thanks to Dave Nutter for compiling these records for the club.



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