



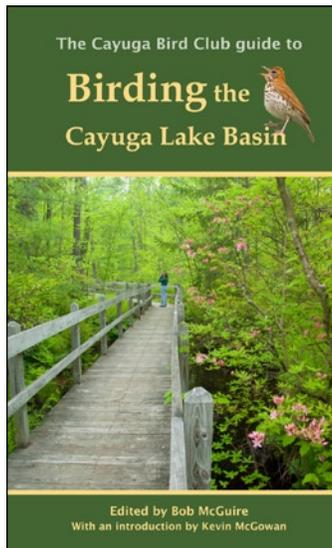
Cayuga Bird Club NEWSLETTER

ESTABLISHED 1914

MAY 2012

BIRD CLUB PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

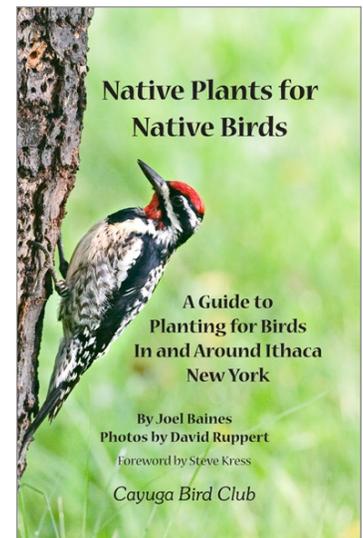
BY SUSAN DANSKIN



I am pleased to report that copies of *Birding the Cayuga Lake Basin* are flying off the shelves. Of the 750 books printed, fewer than 300 remain in inventory. The book is currently available for purchase at 15 different retail outlets throughout the Cayuga Lake Basin, and it is receiving praise from all corners. We are well on our way to recouping the cost of printing.

On a related note, sales of *Birding the Cayuga Lake Basin* have stirred renewed interest in our first publication, *Native Plants for Native Birds*. Close to 1000 copies of that book have been sold, and we have just ordered our third printing.

Thanks to all who contributed to these incredibly informative publications. They have contributed greatly to the local public's awareness and appreciation of birds. 🐦



George Road Pond Drained

BY CARL STECKLER

Many people noticed that the pond on George Road in Dryden has been drained. I talked to Mary Ann Sumner, the Town of Dryden Supervisor, on April 13. The action that resulted in the draining of the pond was taken because the blocked culvert and accompanying backup was threatening the bank of Virgil Creek. The creek is a protected trout stream, and the town was more or less forced to take the action it took. The William George Agency (WGA), the owner of the pasture, has been asking the town to fix the problem since it first occurred and has no plans to keep the pond permanent.

The area is too small to qualify as a protected wetland. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) defines a wetland as having a minimum of 12.7 acres. So as it stands this land will revert to a pond

during the rainy season and a dry pasture the rest of the time. I talked to the CEO of the WGA, and he said that the agency was happy that the problem had been solved. They plan to use the land for pasture.

I then talked to the DEC, and they informed me that the Town of Dryden committed no violation in fixing the threat to Virgil Creek, which resulted in draining the George Road pond. Unless someone has some pull with WGA, it looks like the pond will be but a fond memory.

On another note, The Town of Dryden is planning a recreational park to the north of the Town Hall and would welcome input from the birding community. I will have more information at the May Cayuga Bird Club meeting. 🐦

WATCHING BIRDS IN THE ITHACA AREA FOR NEARLY 100 YEARS

CAYUGA BIRD CLUB

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The Cayuga Bird Club meets on the second Monday of each month, September through June, beginning with refreshments at 7:15 p.m. 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. To join, send a check (made out to "Cayuga Bird Club") to Cayuga Bird Club Treasurer, c/o Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.

Bird club members receive the Cayuga Bird Club Newsletter monthly from September through June. Send newsletter submissions to Anne Marie Johnson, contact information above. Of particular interest are articles about local bird sightings, bird behavior, or birding hot spots, as well as original poetry, art, and photos.

Chickadee illustration in masthead by Karen Confer and duck silhouette by Lena Samsonenko.

Visit the Cayuga Bird Club website at:

WWW.CAYUGABIRDCLUB.ORG

From the President

We have looked at birds all of our years and longed to know what it is like to fly with such ease. How we yearn to leave the boundaries of the earth, heavy and leaden, and take to the air, soaring in three dimensions, picking out airstreams to support our light weight, angling wings back and close to our body to hurtle with total control towards an object—to flip the leading edge of our wing up and land lightly on a branch, to spread broad wings and soar on rising columns of air. Has there ever been a human child who has not looked and wondered, mimicking by running in circles on the solid ground, flapping arms furiously without feeling the slightest sensation of lift? Would we fly in the dark nights of our dreams if birds did not stimulate our imagination? Watching a flying bird casually looking to and fro as it travels an invisible road inspires an epiphany. It is casually doing what it does, not at all impressed with itself. When we wish we could fly, do we know enough about what else birds can do to wish for those skills also?



Do we wish we could see the brilliance of the world, the rainbow of bird colors, the polarized light the way birds can—to combine wavelengths of colors we can see with wavelengths of ultra violet light in intensities and brilliancies we cannot even approximate in our limited sensory world? Do we wish we were able to filter colors through pigmented oils so each hue is more pure and unadulterated than any we would otherwise be able to perceive, to use huge eyes to see from great heights an object a mile away, to process images so quickly that we could speedily fly through a forest of trees without even touching a leaf or branch, angling our bodies at each last moment to avoid contact?

Do we wish we could hear the way birds can, seemingly able to mentally slow the rapid notes of song to hear more detail in and between each note, hearing ten notes where we hear one? Do we wish we were able to recognize the voice of the bird in a cacophonous colony of raucous others numbering in the thousands, to pick out the subtle differences in crow voice so we could recognize each individual, to hear the harmonics divided the way they come from the syrinx, to hear the small scurrings of a mouse in total darkness and know exactly where it is?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Events Calendar

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
MAY 8 Tuesday 7:00 P.M.	Science Cabaret Lot 10 Lounge, 112 S. Cayuga Street Discussion leaders: Bill Evans and Harold Mills	Songbirds give short call notes while they migrate at night to maintain contact with their fellow travellers and to prevent mid-air collisions. Join Bill Evans and Harold Mills for a lively Science Cabaret discussion about this nighttime phenomenon and the possibility of someday watching real-time, continent-wide songbird migration via the internet. Bill Evans is an ornithologist and naturalist who focuses on night migration and ways to mitigate bird collisions with cell towers and wind turbines. Harold Mills is a computer programmer, birder, and musician who has a lifelong fascination with sound.
MAY 12 Saturday 7:30 A.M.– 12:00 P.M.	Field Trip: Spring arrivals Leader: Paul Anderson Meet: Johnson Center*	Paul will lead a half-day trip during this peak weekend of bird migration to search for returning breeders and transient migrants. Contact Paul at 216-5389 or at paul@grammatech.com.
MAY 12 Saturday 10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.	Migration Celebration Johnson Center and Sapsucker Woods	Join in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's annual celebration of the return of the songbirds. See article on page 5 for more information.
MAY 13 Sunday 7:00 A.M.– 4:00 P.M.	Field Trip: Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve Leader: Susan Danskin Meet: The far south end of the Wegmans parking lot (farthest from the store)	Join Susan for this full-day exploration of the world's first temperate-zone biodiversity preserve. The 510-acre Finger Lakes Land Trust preserve in Danby offers a variety of habitats that make it one of our area's best birding sites. <i>Be prepared for ticks!</i> This is a particularly bad year for deer ticks, which carry Lyme Disease. Wear long pants, bring insect repellent, and check for ticks often. Bring food and water. Contact Susan at danskin@twcny.rr.com if you have questions.
MAY 14 Monday 5:30 P.M.	Speaker Dinner Restaurant to be determined	Join club members and friends at a local restaurant for dinner with the evening's speaker before the club meeting. Contact Colleen Richards at clr82@juno.com or at 347-4293 for the dinner location and to get on the reservation list.
MAY 14 Monday 7:30 P.M.	Cayuga Bird Club Meeting Johnson Center Auditorium Speaker: John Cancalosi	The Sonoran Desert offers the eye a visual feast, presenting a wealth of subjects to photograph. In his presentation, "Thornbirds and other Cactus Critters of the Sonoran Desert," educator, wildlife photographer, and nature writer John Cancalosi will share images and adventures from the Sonoran Desert. Some of John's experiences were mundane, while others were full of action and danger, like spending days and nights atop twenty-foot towers deep in the desert, weathering lightning storms and mini, desert tornadoes called dust devils. See speaker profile on page 4 for more information.
MAY 14 Monday	Newsletter deadline	<i>Note the early deadline.</i> Send newsletter submissions to Anne Marie Johnson, contact information on page 2.

Events Calendar continued

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
MAY 19 Saturday 7:30 A.M.– noon or 1:00 P.M.	Field Trip: Dorothy McIlroy Preserve Leader: Carl Steckler Meet: Johnson Center*	Carl will lead this half-day trip to the Finger Lakes Land Trust's McIlroy Preserve in Summerhill, followed by a stop at Bear Creek Swamp. Waterproof shoes are recommended for this trip. Dress for the weather, bring insect repellent for ticks, and be ready for a great morning of birding these unique areas. We expect to see Warbling and Yellow-throated vireos, Canada Warblers, Swamp Sparrows, Hermit Thrushes, Alder Flycatchers, and much more. Contact Carl at cjs9@cornell.edu if you have questions.
MAY 20 Sunday 7:30 A.M.– 1:00 P.M.	Field Trip: Roy H. Park Preserve Leader: Laura Stenzler Meet: Johnson Center*	Laura will lead a trip to this 300-acre, Finger Lakes Land Trust preserve in Dryden. Habitats at the preserve include conifer plantation, hardwood forest, and ravine. Magnolia Warblers, Indigo Buntings, Prairie Warblers, and Louisiana Waterthrushes are just a few of the birds that breed here. Bring insect repellent for ticks. Contact Laura at 539-6893 or at lms9@cornell.edu if you have questions.
MAY 28–30 Saturday– Monday	Spring Bird Quest Finger Lakes Land Trust	Help raise money for the Finger Lakes Land Trust and enjoy spring migration at the same time! See article on page 5 for more information.
JUNE 2 Saturday 7:00 A.M.– 1:00 P.M., with potential for longer trip	Field Trip: Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve Leader: Bill Baker Meet: Kohl's Department Store parking lot (next to Home Depot), off of Route 13, just before Buttermilk Falls State Park	This Finger Lakes Land Trust Preserve in Danby is one of the richest birding areas in the region, with many breeding birds in evidence at the beginning of June. Meet Bill for this half-day trip to find breeding Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Black-billed Cuckoos, Mourning Warblers, Yellow-throated Vireos, Worm-eating Warblers, Prairie Warblers, Blue-winged Warblers, Indigo Buntings, and much more. <i>Be prepared for ticks!</i> This is a particularly bad year for deer ticks, which carry Lyme Disease. Insect repellent and long pants are recommended. Contact Bill if you have questions at 275-0540 or at bilbaker@pop.lightlink.com
JUNE 11 Monday 6:30 P.M.– 8:00 P.M.	Annual Cayuga Bird Club Dish-to-Pass Dinner and bird walk Myers Park in Lansing (off Route 34B)	The annual dish-to-pass dinner will be held at Myers Park in Lansing. Bring a generous dish to share—main dish, appetizer, or dessert. Also bring your own place setting, something to drink, and binoculars. There will be a short bird walk before dinner. Come meet and socialize with your fellow bird club members!

*Meet for field trips in the front parking lot of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Johnson Center.

May Speaker Profile: John Cancialosi

John obtained his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in zoology from Colorado State University. He has worked as a field biologist for various federal, state, and private entities, including the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition, John has produced independent programs on wildlife conservation that he has shared at schools in several western states.

John has won numerous awards for his wildlife photography, including awards in contests

conducted by the BBC, the University of Missouri School of Journalism, the Educational Press Association, and Nature's Best. John's photographs have been featured on the covers of National Wildlife, International Wildlife, Natural History, Newsweek, National Geographic Explorer, Ranger Rick, Arizona Highways, and BBC Wildlife. In addition, many nature organizations have published John's photographs, including the National Geographic Society and the National Wildlife Federation. 🐦

Finger Lakes Land Trust's Annual Spring Bird Quest

The Finger Lakes Land Trust will celebrate birds and bird diversity while raising funds to protect critical bird habitat over the Memorial Day weekend again this year. Mark Chao will lead four guided Bird Quests on Land Trust protected lands. The walks are free but donations are strongly encouraged.

Mark also will be collecting pledges per bird species he finds on Land Trust sites throughout the weekend. You are invited to pledge in support of Mark's efforts or to visit Land Trust sites, count birds, and raise pledges yourself! Contact Emily Eisman, Outreach and Membership Manager at 275-9487 or at Emily@fltl.org, or visit the Finger Lakes Land Trust website at www.fltl.org, for more information. 🐦

SATURDAY, MAY 26, 8:00 A.M.
DOROTHY MCILROY BIRD SANCTUARY

SUNDAY, MAY 27, 8:00 A.M.
LINDSAY-PARSONS BIODIVERSITY PRESERVE

MONDAY, MAY 28, 6:30 A.M.
GOETCHIUS WETLAND PRESERVE

MONDAY, MAY 28, 8:30 A.M.
ROY H. PARK PRESERVE.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Migration Celebration

Celebrate the return of the song-birds! Join the Cornell Lab of Ornithology on Saturday, May 12 from 10 A.M.–3:00 P.M. for a family-friendly event that includes guided bird walks, interactive exhibits,

live birds, games, face-painting, and hands-on activities for children. Learn more about bird migration and conservation, and make your own mobile featuring a migratory bird found in the Ithaca

area. Admission is free. Contact the Cornell Lab at 254-2473 or visit the Migration Celebration website at www.birds.cornell.edu/birdday for more informaton. 🐦

To see the song embodied

By Inta Ezergailis

Lyric as throat and beak —
for those of us who think that
just a metaphor, one way
among so many, it will do
to see a bird — a meadowlark
this time, a tiny sparrow others,
open its bill wide, sure;
the chest — black on yellow,
dots and stripes — expand,
and see the song on its wave
of air, just before it gets
to your ear.

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President's Message

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Do we wish that we could find our way thousands of miles back and forth each year, following some internal guidance that we can guess at and experiment with but never experience? Do we wonder what it feels like to arrive at the one spot in the world we have been traveling to on south winds or north winds and touch down lightly, coming home twice a year on a path that is clear to birds in a way that we can only wonder and marvel at?

We watch birds; we listen to them; we feed them; we make observations, sketches, and recordings. We take gorgeous photographs. We band birds and recapture them. We put data collectors on them. We do DNA, fossil, anatomic, and physiological studies. We write poems and blogs. We surmise and guess and conclude. We learn more and more, all of it amazing. But we will never know what it is like to be them — spectacular birds!



FIELD TRIP REPORT: LOCAL HOTSPOTS, MARCH 24

BY GLADYS BIRDSALL

Seven people met near the tennis courts at Stewart Park to do some local birding. The weather was cooler and more seasonal than it had been, but it was still quite pleasant on the lake for March. I caught up with the group between 9 and 9:30 A.M., late because I had the wrong day stuck in my head!

The group started at Stewart Park. They saw an Osprey when they first arrived, flying towards the west side of the lake. A Blue-winged Teal flew by with a few Mallards. There were many courting Hooded Mergansers and Common Mergansers on the lake. Other birds included Bufflehead, American Wigeon, American Coot, Pied-billed Grebe, and American Black Duck. The group saw several songbirds, including Eastern Phoebe, Fish Crow, Song Sparrow, a pair of nesting Eastern Bluebirds, and a Killdeer, which flew overhead calling. Woodpeckers observed included Downey, Red-bellied, and Northern Flicker. Near the shore, gull species included Ring-billed, Herring, and Great Black-backed.

The group went into Renwick Woods looking for the Great Horned Owl nest tree. They found no owls but did find an owl pellet and saw a Wood Duck pair fly by.

Four of us continued on to Myers Park. We stopped along Drake Road, eventually finding a Northern Mockingbird, as well as chickadees, House Sparrows, and House Finches around a yard with feeders. Upon entering Myers Park, we saw several Northern Flickers on the lawn along with Brown-headed Cowbirds. There was a swallow out over Salmon Creek that we couldn't see well enough to identify, but I leaned towards calling it a Northern Rough-winged. A bit later a Tree Swallow appeared.

On our way out of the park, we stopped by the tall conifers to check for Pine Warblers. We were not there long when two very small birds landed on a nearby deciduous tree. They, of course, no sooner landed when they took off flying away from us. I managed to see the underside of one of the birds: yellow towards the front and white towards the back. We all agreed they were warbler size, but we did not get great looks, nor did we hear any vocalization.

Thanks to Judy Thoroughman for filling me in on some of the sightings that occurred before I arrived and to Kathy Strickland for giving me a call. 🐦

FIELD TRIP REPORT: CAYUGA LAKE AND BEYOND, APRIL 16

BY JOHN CONFER

We had good luck with weather and birds and a very congenial group of 12 people sharing laughs and great views. We went up the east side of the lake, and then went to the auto drive and Tschache Pool at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. We saw lots of waterfowl and three Bald Eagles.

After lunch at the Easy Go (formerly named Nice & Easy), we went to Helmer Marsh and then to the Montezuma Wetland Complex. Observers in my car saw a very pleasing 86 species plus 5 species observed by splinter groups before/after we got together.

We started the trip listening to a Pine Warbler singing at the Cornell Plantations at 7:00 A.M. from the

parking lot near the old Dairy Bar. As we headed north, we had great views of an Eastern Meadowlark on the south end of Lake Road. We observed a Horned Lark doing its sky dance and lots of Savannah Sparrows singing along the eastern end of Center Road.

We found a Lesser Scaup near Harris Park, and we saw *the* pair of Western Grebes from the road/hillside near the park.

At Mud Lock we observed a Greater Scaup on a wooden piling with a broken wing. We watched a pair of Wood Ducks fly and land in the dead elm trees with large cavities near the eagle nest. And we saw a Bald Eagle with two feathered young in the nest.

We had a prolonged, close view at eye level of a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher along the raised trail at Helmer Marsh. We also saw 15 Rusty Blackbirds, which sat in trees long enough for us to observe their bright, yellow eyes in the scope! We found a Chipping Sparrow here as well, for a nice total of 8 Emberizidea for the day (if you cheat and count the Fox Sparrow I found when I got home).

Near the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) headquarters on Morgan Road, we heard a Virginia Rail and southwest of DEC headquarters, we heard a Sandhill Crane. 🐦

High Achieving Young Birders

Update from New York State Young Birders Club

BY CARENA POOTH

The New York State Young Birders Club (NYSYBC) is coming up on its fourth anniversary this year. Two of our original members, Hope Batcheller and Erich Lehner, recently “aged out” (at the ripe old age of 20) and became Supporting Adult Members. By next fall seven of the eight Charter Members will be in college. The kids grow up and leave the nest! But empty nest syndrome will *not* be setting in at NYSYBC because there are still 29 Youth Members and half of them are under 15.

NYSYBC’s young birders are truly exceptional kids, and not just because they’re birders. Every one of them is a delight, and I could tell you great things about all of them, but there’s not enough space here. So I’ll limit this article to some of the most notable achievements.

Hope Batcheller, age 20: Hope is attending Cornell University and has worked in both Canada and Chile on Hudsonian Godwits. She was recently elected president of the Birding Club at Cornell. In March she went on a recording expedition to the Mojave Desert for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Hope will captain the Cornell Redheads team at the World Series of Birding (WSB) this year.

Eamon Corbett, age 16: Eamon was selected last year to be one of the editors of the American Birding Association’s blog for young birders (*The Eyrie*). Also last year Eamon won one of three gold medals in the New York State Science Olympiad, specifically in the ornithology event. He is a finalist for the American Museum of Natural History’s Young Naturalist Award in the 11th grade division for his essay, “The Impact of Invasive Tree Species on Bird Populations in a Northeastern Urban Park.”

Jacob Drucker (age 19) and **Lila Fried** (age 18): Jacob and Lila did a study on primary feather projections in austral migrants, taking measurements of specimens in the American Museum of Natural History’s vast collection of bird skins. Jacob presented the study at the New York State Ornithological Association’s (NYSOA) annual meeting in September 2011.

Alexander Gottdiener, age 15: Alexander is one of eight (out of 1000) 9th grade division finalists for the American Museum of Natural History’s Young Naturalist Awards for his essay, “A

Study of Predator Avoidance Behavior in Birds.”

Nathaniel Hernandez, age 17: Although he lives in New Jersey, Nathaniel is an avid member of NYSYBC. Last year he spearheaded the effort to create a similar statewide YBC in NJ. He is President of NJYBC, maintains its website, and does much of the work to keep the club going with field trips and meetings. Nathaniel is involved in various bird research projects, including banding, grassland bird surveys, and tracking radio-tagged Bald Eagles. He is an enthusiastic writer about birds also, contributing to the Cornell Lab’s Neotropical Birds species accounts at neotropical.birds.cornell.edu.

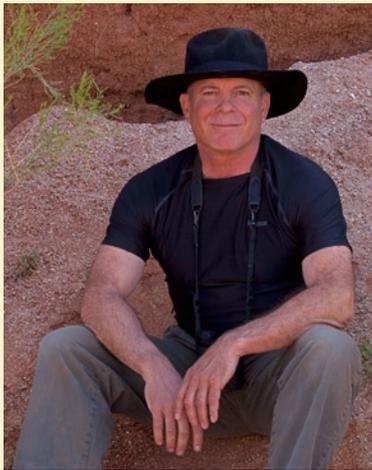
Benjamin Van Doren, age 18: Recently Benjamin took 5th place (winning \$30,000) in Intel’s prestigious national Science Talent Search for the project he presented at the 2011 NYSOA annual meeting. Benjamin investigated a poorly understood behavior of nocturnal migratory birds, called *morning flight*, which has potential implications for the growing wind power industry.

Be sure to check out the NYSYBC website, where you will find a new “Hall of Fame” page showing club officers and holders of other luminary positions since 2009, plus the NYSYBC teams that have competed in the Superbowl of Birding and the WSB. You’ll also find links to several young birders’ websites/blogs, field trip reports, photography, and artwork.

The WSB is on May 12, and the NYSYBC will have two teams in the Youth Division again this year. This event is the club’s biggest fundraising activity and all WSB donations go to the Education/Scholarship Fund. You can donate online at nysyoungbirders.org.

The young birders and their parents are grateful to the generous Supporting Adult Members and Partner Clubs, as well as to the adult advisors who donate their time and work. If you agree that it’s important to encourage youngsters to become life-long birders and conservationists, please consider becoming a Supporting Adult member and seize the opportunity to see our young birders in action on a field trip. 🐦





Provided by John Cancalosi

NEXT MEETING MAY 14

JOHN CANCALOSI, FEATURED SPEAKER

“THORNBIRDS AND OTHER CACTUS CRITTERS
OF THE SONORAN DESERT”

SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS

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