



Cayuga Bird Club

December 2019

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Calendar

Dec 7 (Sat), 8am-4:30pm: Field Trip Up the Lake with Ken Kemphues and Diane Morton. Meet at Stewart Park (east end).

Dec 9 (Mon), 7:30pm: CBC meeting. Speaker: Jody Enck, "What Makes a Birder a Birder?". Lab of O.

Dec 15 (Sun), 1-6pm: Field Trip West Side of the Lake with Josh Snotgrass. Meet at Taughannock Falls State Park, North Point parking lot.

Dec 16 (Mon): Montezuma Christmas Bird Count. Contact Chris Lajewski (clajewski@audubon.org).

Jan 1 (Wed): Ithaca Christmas Bird Count

Jan 12 (Sun), 8am-4:30pm: Field Trip Around the Lake with Bob McGuire. Meet at Stewart Park (east end).

Jan 13 (Mon), 7:30pm: CBC meeting, "Share Your Photos Night", hosted by Kevin McGowan. Lab of O.

Feb 14-23: CBC Trip to Costa Rica.

Cayuga Bird Club Meeting

What Makes a Birder a Birder?



**Speaker: Jody Enck,
Conservation Social Scientist, and
Founder of the Sister Bird Club Network
Monday, December 9, 2019
7:30pm, Cornell Lab of Ornithology**

Ever wonder why you seem to fit in with some birders but scratch your head at the actions of others? Turns out that birders are as diverse in their identities as the birds are. But it's more about 'who you are' rather than 'what you do' that separates the different birder identities. Jody will share fascinating facts about some of the 14 types of birders he uncovered while conducting research on birders a few years ago. Which type are you? Come listen and find out.

About the Speaker: Jody Enck started birding as a small boy growing up on a farm in Pennsylvania. Since then, he has continued to learn more and more about birds and the people who enjoy them. Jody especially loves bird-watching in his back yard to find out what the local residents are up to. He is also a closet lister, with more than 500 species seen in the U.S. and more than 1,150 seen worldwide. He

Nov 2020: CBC Trip to Colombia

Please check our web calendar for up-to-date field trip information, including schedule changes, at cayugabirdclub.org.

December Field Trips

Cayuga Bird Club field trips are open to all.



Up the Lake, with Ken Kemphues and Diane Morton

Saturday, Dec. 7, 8am-4:30pm

Join Ken and Diane for a full day trip around the lake. We'll look for a variety of wintering waterfowl and raptors. Meet at the east end of Stewart Park at 8:00 am for carpooling. Dress very warmly and bring a scope if you have one. Bring a lunch and/or snacks and a beverage. We'll make a stop to purchase food as well. We plan to be back 4-5 pm.



West Side of the Lake: Waterfowl and Short-eared Owls, with Josh Snodgrass

Sunday, December 15, 1-6pm.

Josh Snodgrass will lead an afternoon to sunset trip on the west side of Cayuga Lake. Meet at Taughannock Falls State Park, North Point parking lot. We'll look for overwintering waterfowl along the lake shore, grassland birds (snow buntings, etc.), and try for Short-eared Owl and possible Snowy Owl or Northern Shrike depending on what has arrived (possibly at Finger Lakes Regional Airport, or at one of the Finger Lakes National Forest grassland sites). Actual

has a background in wildlife biology and social science. In 2016, he founded the Sister Bird Club Network to link birders and bird clubs throughout the Western Hemisphere by raising awareness of the conservation needs of the neotropical migratory birds we all love. He is a past president and current chair of the conservation action committee for the Cayuga Bird Club. In 2020, he'll be leading trips for the Club to Costa Rica and Colombia.

Cayuga Bird Club meetings start at 7:30pm on the second Monday of every month September through June, and are open to the public. Building doors open at 7:00pm and are locked at 7:45pm.

From the President

Diane Morton



It's winter! There is something special about seeing birds in the winter months. Each week more waterfowl are returning and soon we'll be seeing rafts of Red-heads, Canvasbacks

and other ducks on Cayuga Lake. Hundreds of Tundra Swans are now congregating at the north end of the lake, and Snow Geese have also been spotted. Winter raptors should also be making their appearance; a Snowy Owl has already been reported west of Cayuga Lake where one has been sighted for several winters. And this fall we've been treated to large flocks of migrating Sandhill Cranes in the Montezuma area, including one group last week with more than 150 individuals in their ghostly gray plumage.

Time for some winter birding! Bundle up for the weather and join us on some of our club's winter field trips. This Saturday, Ken Kemphues and I will be heading around the lake, stopping to look for wintering waterfowl, raptors, and possibly even field birds. The following weekend Josh Snodgrass will have a late-afternoon trip on the West side of the lake, with a possible

locations to be determined. Should be a fun time! We expect to return by 6pm. Be sure to dress very warmly.



Beginner Bird Walks at Sapsucker Woods

*Saturdays and Sundays,
8:30am-10:30am*

There is a free beginner bird walk at the Lab of Ornithology every weekend morning, led by Cayuga Bird Club volunteer docents. Meet at 8:30am by the Visitor Center entrance. Note that the Visitor Center does not open until 10am, and there are no restroom facilities. The walks last approximately 2 hours, and are timed to allow participants to take the 11am Behind-the-Scenes tour offered on most weekend days.

Cayuga Lake Basin First-of-Year Birds Reported

November, 2019

11/4 Purple Sandpiper

2019 year count so far: 276 species

Thanks to Dave Nutter for compiling these records. Complete lists can be found on the [CBC website](#).

Cayuga Bird Club T-shirts!

Our T-shirt committee has come up with an attractive design to use for Cayuga Bird Club t-shirts. The design features our club's logo, a lovely drawing of a chickadee done by Karen Allaben-Confer some years ago, which we use on our club's stationery, website and newsletter. The overall design to use on t-shirts was a group effort, but special thanks go to Poppy Singer who suggested the final arrangement of chickadee and text. We'd also like to thank Raaj Bora's sister, Rishma Bora for an initial design that inspired us to produce this one.

opportunity to witness Short-eared Owls in flight at dusk, always a thrilling sight. For field trips at this time of year, please remember to check our club's online calendar in case of weather-related cancellations or rescheduling:

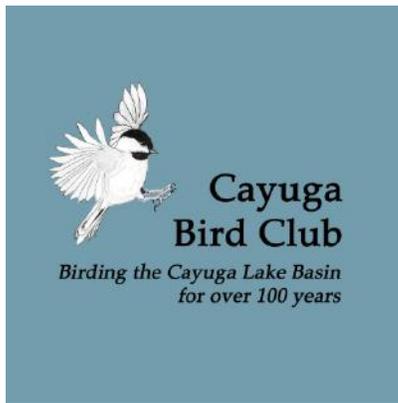
www.cayugabirdclub.org/calendar.

And then there is the opportunity to go birding for fun and for a purpose on January 1 - our Ithaca Area [Christmas Bird Count](#)! If you are in town on New Year's Day, I urge you to join in the count, even if only for a short part of the day. Our individual efforts for the Christmas Bird Count all contribute to Audubon's huge data set of counts across the continent, providing a detailed snapshot of where birds are during this short interval, and how many. It is especially informative to see how those species numbers and distributions have changed over the years, including bird species that are in decline.

If there's blank space below, it's been clipped by gmail. [Click here to view the full newsletter on the web.](#)

If you've never participated in the Christmas Bird Count before, but would like to join in the effort this year, contact me at cayugabirdclub.president@gmail.com, and I will connect you with one of our nine area leaders. If there is a particular area you'd like to go on New Year's Day, you may contact the area leader directly (contact information for Christmas Bird Count area leaders is below). Or you can record the number of birds you observe at your feeders that day and call in your sightings in to our volunteers at the Cornell Lab. All count participants are invited to a dish-to-pass supper and Count Compilation that evening at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, a fun way to end the day. We'll hear the results of our Ithaca area count, and how the numbers this year compare to previous count years.

I will be out looking for both resident and migrant winter birds in our area in the coming



T-shirt order information went out to Cayuga Bird Club members on November 27 by email. Short-sleeved t-shirts are available in two color choices, Stone Blue or Carolina Blue. A long-sleeved version of the t-shirt is also available, in Carolina Blue only. The order price is \$18 each for short-sleeved or \$23 each for long-sleeved shirts for adult sizes S-XL. T-shirts in sizes 2XL-4XL are an additional \$4 each.



Stone Blue (left) and Carolina Blue (right)

We will be accepting orders until our next Cayuga Bird Club meeting, Monday, December 9. We expect our shirt orders to take approximately 2 weeks to be printed; we will notify you when the shirts have come in. You can pick up your shirt(s) at the January 13 Cayuga Bird Club meeting or make arrangements with Diane Morton to pick up your order in Ithaca on another date. You may pay by cash or check (payable to Cayuga Bird Club) when you pick up your shirt order.

For more information about ordering T-shirts, please contact Diane Morton, cayugabirdclub.president@gmail.com.

Field Trip Report Owl Night

Bob McGuire
November 1, 2019

Friday's was the best owl trip ever! Twenty folks joined Suan and me in the

weeks. I hope you have a chance to get out there and enjoy these birds too!

Good Birding!

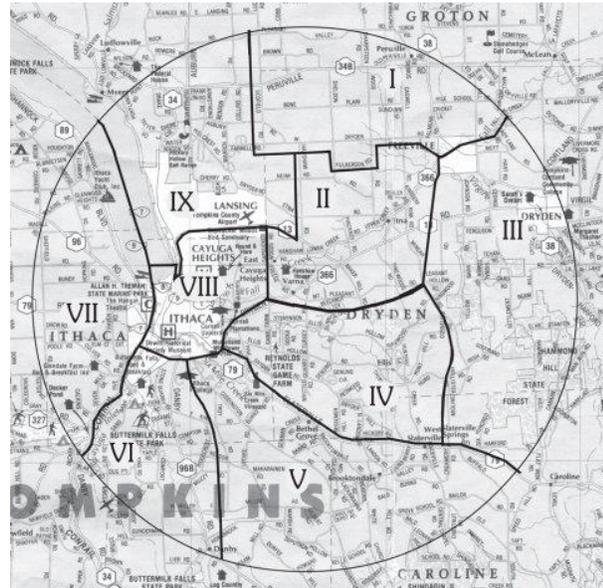
Diane

Ithaca Christmas Bird Count

Wednesday, January 1, 2020

Get ready to participate in Audubon's Christmas Bird Count on New Year's Day! This is Audubon's 120th Christmas Bird Count and our club's 58th consecutive year of participation. We will start the new year off by counting all the birds we can find within our 15-mile Ithaca count circle on Wednesday, January 1. Everyone is welcome to participate for the count, which is used to map species distribution and abundance of birds across North America as well as areas of South America, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands. Last year, 159 participants reported 85 species totaling 20,336 individual birds.

Within the 15-mile diameter Ithaca count circle, shown below, we have nine areas from which to choose, each with their own hotspots.



Detailed map (PDF) available at www.cayugabirdclub.org/Resources/christmas-bird-count/CBCMap.pdf

There are many options for participation and your input is invaluable at all levels. You can choose a count area or stay at home to count birds that come to feeders in your yard. You can

search for some of our local owls. After a brief discussion in the Lab of O. parking lot, we headed for Bull Pasture Pond and a staked-out Eastern Screech-Owl. One, then a second, bird flew in after a few minutes of playback, and we were able to get a light on it for good binocular views.



Eastern Screech-Owl. Photo by Jim and Kay Burkett

From there we drove to the Stenzlers' house of Hunt Hill Road for their resident Barred Owl. I cautioned folks that the Barred Owl's territory is large and that it was possible that it would not hear us. We did not get a response, and after fifteen minutes we left. We stopped on Hurd Road, the far edge of the owl's range, and were pleasantly surprised when it appeared right overhead after just a few minutes.

As we were getting ready to leave, I got a call from John Confer's banding station. They had just netted a Northern Saw-Whet Owl. Ten minutes later we arrived at his house on South Hammond Hill Road and spent the next 45 minutes watching two NSWOs being banded, measured, weighted, and then released.



Northern Saw-Whet Owl being banded. Photo by Jim and Kay Burkett.

I have done this trip for several years now, and this is the first time we have successfully found and closely observed

count owls in the very early morning, or wait until it has warmed up a bit to go out on your own or with others. Beginners can be paired with more experienced birders — the more eyes and ears, the better. Dress warmly, be sure to have some hot beverages and get out and enjoy the day.

Christmas Bird Count Area Leaders are listed below. If there is an area where you'd like to help count birds, please get in touch with that leader and they will discuss specific locations with you. If you'd like assistance in choosing a count area, please email Diane Morton at cayugabirdclub.president@gmail.com.

If you choose to stay home and count birds at your feeders, write down the total time you spend watching, the species you see (or hear), and the maximum number of birds of each species seen at any one time. (This is the same protocol as Project Feederwatch). Debbie Mahoney and Donna Scott, our club volunteers, will be answering the phone at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (607-254-2473) between 4:00pm and 6:00pm to record your tallies for each species. And please, call before 6:00pm!

Here are the count areas and their leaders:

I. Colleen Richards (clr82@juno.com)

West Dryden, Hile School Road area. Open fields, secondary growth fields, and woodlots. Possible Merlin, White-winged Crossbills, blackbirds, and sparrows.

II. Bob McGuire

(bmcguire@clarityconnect.com)

Fall Creek area, Mount Pleasant, Neimi/Hanshaw Road. Woodlands and fields. Good for turkeys, hawks, and herons.

III. Phil McNeil (phil.mcneil@gmail.com)

Beam Hill, Yellow Barn Road, the northern end of the Jim Schug Trail in Dryden. Pine and spruce forests. Good for winter finches.

IV. Laura Stenzler (lms9@cornell.edu)

Ellis Hollow area, Snyder Hill, Ringwood. Woodlands and fields. Good for hawks, turkeys, bluebirds, sparrows, owls, and finches.

V. Sandy Podulka (sgp4@cornell.edu)

Six Mile Creek gorge, Brooktondale area. Our largest area, good birding and hiking. Possible turkey and grouse.

VI. Wes Blauvelt

(ravenbarnconsulting@gmail.com)

Danby area, Finger Lakes Trail, and

all three owls. Many thanks to John Confer, Julia, and Phil at HHOWLS for accommodating us at the banding station and to all those who suggested good owling locations.



Thermal image of participants watching the just-released Northern Saw-Whet Owl.

Photo by Suan Yong.

[See John Confer's HHOWLS report later in the newsletter.](#)

Field Trip Report Where the Birds Are

Paul Anderson

Saturday, November 16, 2019

I was joined by 12 eager birders on this sunny but very chilly Saturday morning. We started by going to Stewart Park to see what was on the water. On the east side of the park we were treated to a nice collection of waterfowl, with highlights including Wood Ducks, Ruddy Ducks, and a few Aythya including Lesser Scaup, Redheads, and Ring-necked Ducks. It was hard to see much that was far out on the water because of the extreme shimmer. The Swan Pen area was lively with Passerines, including Goldfinch, House Finch, countersinging Carolina Wrens, and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Here's the eBird checklist:

ebird.org/checklist/S61487073

We then went North, stopping first at Ladoga where the best find was a pair of Long-tailed Ducks, and a pair of White-winged Scoters. At Myer's, we found a nice Lesser Black-backed Gull on the spit, but diversity was otherwise very low:

ebird.org/checklist/S61492343

We headed towards the Aurora Boathouse, first stopping in King Ferry at the coffee shop. As we descended into Aurora, we could see huge rafts of Snow Geese far out on the lake. Just judging from the scale, there must have been tens of thousands of birds in three large groups. At the boathouse itself, the wind

Buttermilk Falls. Noted for wintering bluebirds and robins.

VII. Josh Snodgrass

(cedarshiva@gmail.com)

West side of Cayuga Lake, Bostwick Road, Mecklenberg Road. Good for waterfowl, including all three species of merganser.

VIII. Lynn Leopold (lynnbird58@yahoo.com)

Cornell campus, Cayuga Heights, and Stewart Park. Good for rare birds, Fish Crows, and gulls.

IX. Mark Chao (markchao@imt.org)

East side of Cayuga Lake, Lansing area. Fields, woodlots. Waterfowl and field birds, including Northern Shrike and Short-eared Owl.

At the end of the day, join other Christmas Bird Count participants, families and friends at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Johnson Visitor Center, open at 6:00pm, for our compilation dinner at 6:30pm followed by the compilation of sightings at 7:15pm. Bring a dish to share, a beverage and your own table service. The dinner will be held in the lobby of the building. (Please do not bring food or beverages into the Fuertes Auditorium.)

Paul Anderson will again serve as our count compiler this year, and will tell us how this year's numbers compare with previous years' counts during the compilation after the dinner.

Our counts will be submitted to Audubon. A summary report is published each year and all count data are available on their website: audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count. We urge you to browse this site to learn more about the importance and scope of this ongoing project that we contribute to each year.

Join us for the count on New Year's Day!

['Early Bird' promotion](#)
for
**Spring Ornithology Course
Registration**



Early registrants for our new course, Spring Ornithology with Steve Kress, will be entered

had picked up a bit to make it quite cold, and the shimmer again made it really difficult to see far away birds, so we could only barely make out the distant snow geese. In consolation we had a Bald Eagle soaring over the location where they nest.

ebird.org/checklist/S61492068

Finally, we decided to make one last stop at Long Point on the way home. This yielded a few loons, but not much else:

ebird.org/checklist/S61491877

The only other bird of note was a Pheasant that flew across the road on the way back.

Despite the cold, the shimmer, and the low diversity, we all had a great day.

Field Trip Report Loon Watch at Taughannock Point

Suan Yong

Sunday, November 10, 2019

I had no idea what turnout to expect for my first ever loon watch on this cold dark November morning. Zero seemed an understandable likelihood. Instead, about 20 people showed up, including some members of the public who saw this event announced in the Ithaca Times calendar.



Air temperature was around freezing, winds were moderate from the south, 10-15mph. The good news: the hills shadowed us from the wind, so it was relatively comfortable. The bad news, this was headwind for the southbound loons, so the loon count was low. My tally of migrating loons is as follows:

Period	Time	Count (flying)
1	6:35-6:50	1 southbound
	(6:50 sunrise)	
2	6:50-7:05	7 southbound
3	7:05-7:20	0

into a drawing to win two books authored by Dr. Kress! Register by January 1, 2020 to be eligible (current registrants are also included). You may win a set of the American Museum of Natural History's Pocket Birds of North America (Eastern Region and Western Region). These handy photographic field guides bring each bird species to life, and include detailed illustrations that show typical plumage, juvenile and adult, male and female, and appearance during winter and summer months. These books have a compact easy-to-use format.



This Spring Ornithology course will be held Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 pm, March 24 to May 12, 2020, at the Foundation of Light, 391 Turkey Hill Road, Ithaca, NY. There is ample on-site parking. The cost for the course is \$125 for Cayuga Bird Club Members and \$140 for non-members, which includes a CBC membership.

Dr. Kress is well known for teaching a popular Spring Field Ornithology course through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for more than 40 years. His new course is perfectly timed to help people identify spring migrants and better understand bird behavior. His dynamic lectures will feature photos and audio recordings of local birds.

Dr. Kress has served for many years as Director of the Audubon Seabird Restoration Program and Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine. He is the author of more than 10 books and numerous articles related to birds and wildlife conservation.



Dr. Kress's presentations will include topics such as bird identification; bird song; mysteries of migration, such as how and why birds migrate and some of their amazing migration feats; courtship, nesting, and rearing of young; bird conservation; and

4	7:20-7:35	1 southbound 1 northbound
5	7:35-7:50	8 southbound 3 northbound
6	7:50-8:05	4 southbound 2 northbound 1 u-turning back north
7	8:05-8:20	4 southbound

Although these counts are low, they fit the historically observed trend: an early burst around sunrise of loons from northern Cayuga Lake, then a lull before a second push of loons from Lake Ontario, with a subset returning northbound after reaching Ithaca and deciding not to attempt the risky over-land journey.



*Common Loon flying against late fall colors.
Photo by Raaj Bora.*

The counts above do not include about 5 loons fishing in the nearby waters, including one working very close giving good naked-eye looks. Almost all southbound loons flew low, almost skimming the surface of the water, presumably to minimize headwind, while those flying back north flew higher. Most flew individually, with a few loose pairs.



*Common Loon fishing just offshore.
Photo by Kevin Murphy.*

An early highlight was an adult bald eagle that flew in and perched up close, triggering some nervous quacks from the mallards in the stream. Later we watched a young herring gull with a fish being chased and harassed by an adult herring gull, soon joined by a ring-billed, while a loon on the water seemed to follow along, perhaps hoping to pick up a dropped quarry. A rattling kingfisher, a

ways to attract birds to your yard through feeders, plantings, water, and landscaping.

Sign up now -- or give a course registration to someone who'd enjoy learning about birds!

Course registration is available at:
www.cayugabirdclub.org/spring-ornithology

For more information, email:
cayugabirdclub.president@gmail.com

Hammond Hill Owl Study (HHOWLS) for 2019

A collaborative effort by John Confer, Phil McNeil, Jessie and Bryan Gorges, Julia Gillis, Madeleine Ulinski, Bob McGuire and many others.



A presentation by Valerie Freer at the 2010 NYSOA meeting in Syracuse encouraged me to try banding Northern Saw-whet Owls on my property 10 miles southeast of Ithaca. It seemed almost unimaginable that multitudes of little saw-whets winged southward past our home every fall as suggested by Valerie. Yet, with a small, trial effort in 2010, I was astonished to capture 17 saw-whets. In 2011, 29 birds were captured. In 2012 over a dozen volunteers assisted our Hammond Hill Owl Site (HHOWLS), which expanded to the net arrangement we still use. This year's banding provides some unique results and the opportunity for an overview of some results from a decade of effort.

HHOWLS is pleased to welcome visitors with prior permission. The number of visitors has to be limited to assure safe handling of the birds and accurate recording of the data. Phil McNeil served as gate-keeper for this year, a thankless but essential task. This year we had 48 individuals who participated in the banding on one or more nights for a total of 145 visitor-nights and an additional 19 visitors with the [Cayuga Bird Club owl field trip](#).

Some aspects were tricky: trying to keep up with fast changing weather reports causing banding to be cancelled; finding enough people for one night, and having way too many for another night; trying to find a balance between

flock of cedar waxwings, and a red-tailed hawk harassed by crow and gull rounded out the morning's sightings. Here's the e-bird list recorded by Jody:

ebird.org/checklist/S61345988



Young Herring Gull with fish, chased by adult and common loon.

Photo by Raaj Bora.

Thanks to all who showed up, especially those with scopes willing to share as mine gets repaired in the shop.

Field Trip Report

Franklin Mountain

Gary Kohlenberg

Saturday, November 23, 2019

Our enthusiastic group of five made the 2 hour drive to Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch on a beautiful Saturday. We had hope for a Golden Eagle migration day. Sunny conditions in the low 30's with light variable winds was comfortable for us, but I wondered if birds would move. An active hilltop feeder kept us entertained with American Tree Sparrow, hyperactive Blue Jays and the great visibility kept me hopeful that we would see raptors.

We saw a kettle of Common Ravens with a beautiful adult Bald Eagle first over the SUNY school. A Red-tailed Hawk was up next until 11am when Ken broke the ice with our first Golden Eagle heading right down the middle of the valley. With an even count of eagles the next pitch was another adult Bald Eagle followed 30 minutes later with another Golden Eagle!

It continued this way until 1:50 pm when Steve Hall our official counter picked up the last Golden Eagle for the day.

including new folks and making sure we had a few members of our core of experienced banders on hand each night to handle the owls. The fun side of 145 visitors was the exciting mix of knowledge and experience these folks brought to the project. Every night was filled with interesting discussions on a wide variety of topics (HHOWLS Natural History Seminars), and lots of laughs. Between net checks that don't produce owls, which occurred all too often this year, we have ~35 minutes of personal and environmental tales: canoeing adventures, travels to three continents to record bird songs, studies of Fish Crow and Merlin, song production by birds, raptor rehab, kayaking among walrus, academic attitudes among undergraduates: in short anything that appeals to a group brought together by an interest in wildlife and conservation. Seeing the excitement when visitors get to see a Northern Saw-whet Owl up close for the first time, and getting our regulars getting giddy with excitement when an owl is found in the nets, makes it well worth the effort.



All capture and processing of birds is done with federal and state license and in full accord with best practices for the safety of the

birds. Northern Saw-whet owls are captured in a mist net. We use about 110 m of this netting, which resembles a glorified hair net. An audio replay of their call, a "Toot, toot, toot," attracts migrating owls into the nets. After careful extraction from the net, the owls are carried to the HHOWLS banding shed where they are processed and released back into the wild to continue their migration.

The first step in the banding process is to attach a numbered, aluminum band on the leg. This provides a unique identification number registered with the Bird Banding Laboratory. Measurements of the wing chord and weight indicate if the bird is male or female: females being considerably larger than males.

Last in the process is to discern the molt pattern of the flight feathers to estimate the owl's age.



Currently, we can age the owl as hatch-year or



We left the hill at 2pm with a tally of 5 adult Golden Eagles, 5 adult Bald Eagles, 12 adult Red-tailed Hawks and 9 Common Ravens. A couple Goldens provided nice, long, views in the sun for field mark discussion; a State Bird first for Diane and lifer for Taj. This was my personal high count for G.E. The calm winds meant birds could come from any direction, but they all were straight out over the valley and college.

It was a very nice day of birding made better with great company. Thanks to Ken, Diane, Taj and Ann for a good time.

Minutes

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

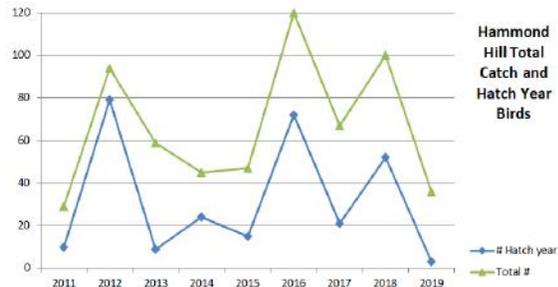
Cayuga Bird Club

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 7:15 pm 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/membership 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 news-

second-year, while other molt patterns indicate an after-second-year bird. Fluorescent compounds called porphyrins emit a vibrant pinkish color under UV rays. Only feathers molted within the last few months actually fluoresce since the porphyrin decomposes within a year. The adjacent image shows new, fluorescing flight feathers on the outside and inside of the wing and older feathers in the middle, which is typical of a second year bird. The Bird Banding Laboratory does not accept that a third-year pattern can be reliably recognized. HHOWLS is trying to develop a statistical analyses that can find a distinctive third-year molt pattern.

After the banding process is complete, the owl is released onto a sheltered branch surrounded on three sides by dense shrubbery. In time the owls fly away at their leisure, carrying with them their new band and all the well-wishes of the HHOWLS crew.



For fall 2019, we opened the nets on 20 nights, our most intensive effort ever. We caught only 36 saw-whets, the lowest number since using the current number of nets. Of these only 3 (8%) were hatch-year birds, by far our lowest percent for hatch-year birds. The graph above shows that the three years with large numbers captured are dominated by hatch-year birds. A large number of hatch-year birds suggests a high reproductive success that year. Our data shows that the saw-whet population can provide high capture rates one, two, or three years after a year of low reproductive success.

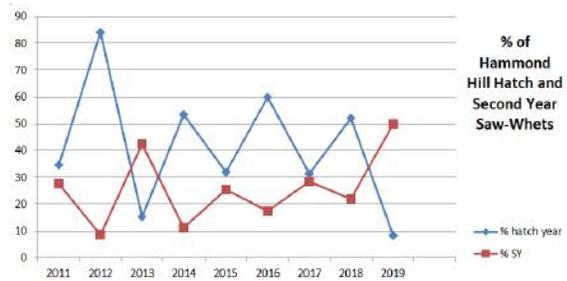
Using the ages of owls we can see some distinct patterns in population dynamics over the years. The graph below shows that the percentage second-year birds spikes one year after a hatch-year boom – which is expected as the large hatch group subsequently becomes the large second year group. For example, a higher than average number of hatch-year birds in 2018 led to a higher than average number of second-year birds this year. Also, years with low numbers of hatch-year birds are followed by years with lower than average numbers of second-year birds.

letter. 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.

Send newsletter submissions to cbceditor1@gmail.com by the 25th to be included in the next issue. Please contribute sightings, news, announcements, book reviews, original poetry, art, photos, and anything else that might be of interest to the local birding community.

Cayuga Bird Club Officer contact information is available at www.cayugabirdclub.org/about-us.

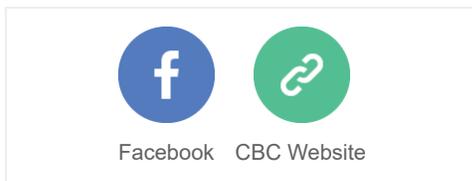
Chickadee illustration in masthead by Karen Allaben-Confer.



Over 10,000 saw-whets are banded every year by a large number of saw-whet banders. This leads to a great deal of information about the movement between banding stations. This year we caught a saw-whet banded in 2015 near Hebron, PA, about 100 miles westsouthwest from us. This bird has made many migrations north and south since being banded. Oddly, this is the third bird we have recaptured that was banded near Hebron, PA, under the supervision of David Hauber, one of which was a remarkable seven years old. This year we also caught and banded two Barred Owls and one Eastern Screech Owl.

Don't miss an issue of the newsletter: add newsletter@cayugabirdclub.org to your email contacts.

Stay in touch with the Cayuga Bird Club through our [Facebook](#) page and [Webpage \(cayugabirdclub.org\)](http://www.cayugabirdclub.org).



Tobi and Noah with one of the Barred Owls.



An unhappy Eastern Screech Owl.

The nocturnal behavior of owls makes them mysterious and the opportunity to see them up close is unusual. HHOWLS is delighted to share this with others. We hope that awareness and concern for environmental issues is increased by visiting our banding process. Hope to see you next year.



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Cayuga Bird Club
159 Sapsucker Woods Road
Ithaca NY 14850

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