



Cayuga Bird Club

April 2020

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Field Trips

I am deeply saddened to report that the remainder of field trips for this spring have been cancelled. I had lined up a full calendar of trips, one every week, until the middle of June and had engaged a great roster of experienced leaders. I will now wait until the Covid-19 situation improves and bring back the trips just as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, I hope that you will get out and enjoy the birds. For those of you who don't already have it, the *Merlin Bird ID* app is a great help in identifying birds, the *Sibley* app is a great portable field guide, *Birding the Cayuga Lake Basin* (where to look for birds in our area - a book, on sale at Agway), and CBC website offers tips on where to go.

Signed,

From the President

Diane Morton



Our world has changed dramatically in just few short weeks, with the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus, Covid-19. We've all had to quickly adapt to changes in how we work, connect with family and friends, and participate in activities. Just three weeks ago, we had our regular March Cayuga Bird Club meeting at the Cornell Lab, and had a field trip the following weekend. Within days, cancellations began for group events, followed quickly by more restrictive social distancing measures. Our April Cayuga Bird Club meeting has been cancelled but Sarah Kaiser is rescheduled to speak at our September 14 meeting. We have also cancelled other club group activities, including field trips, until the distancing recommendations change.

We can find solace in solo activities that bring us joy and peace; for me this is watching birds. As I go out birding alone, I enjoy seeing the birds going about their usual activities: territorial tussles of robins, head-bobbing courtship displays of waterfowl, woodpeckers drumming. And I delight in hearing the many chickadees and cardinals singing their sweet songs now outside my house, with more birds joining in each week.

Let's continue to connect - at a distance - with one another around our love of birds. If you do not already follow our Cayuga Bird Club Facebook page, give it a try - members post photos of birds they are seeing, share links to bird-related content, and ask questions. If you are not already receiving local



Bob McGuire
Field Trips Coordinator

Calendar

Due to the COVID-19 situation, club events and other area birding activities are suspended for at least the next two months, including but not limited to:

- The April and May club meetings;
- Field trips for the rest of spring;
- Weekend Beginner Bird Walks at Sapsucker Woods;
- Bird Walks at Stewart Park;
- Finger Lakes Land Trust *Talks and Treks* through May;
- *Birds and Blossoms* Bird Walks at Cornell Arboretum.

Stay tuned for word about the club's June meeting and annual potluck.

For information about the club's trip to Colombia in November 2020, contact Jody Enck:

jodyenck@gmail.com



Cayuga Lake Basin First-of-Year Birds Reported

March 2020

3/2 Killdeer

birding news, you could join the Cayugabirds email Listserve for email notifications about the birds that are seen in our area. These postings may inspire you go go out on your own to find woodcocks peenting in the evening or newly arriving migrant songbirds. For more information, see:

northeastbirding.com/CayugabirdsWELCOME.htm

I'd like to share with you some exciting and positive news for the club. Cayuga Bird Club has been awarded the 2019 Richard B. Fischer Conservation award by the Town of Ithaca. We are pleased and honored to have been selected for this award, which recognizes the club's contributions to local conservation, both in education and in our conservation action projects. There will be a ceremony and tree-planting at a later date. Read more about the Cayuga Bird Club's conservation award in this issue of the newsletter.

When it is safe to do so, we will get back to Cayuga Bird Club's regular meetings, field trips, habitat restoration, and other activities. In the meantime, we hope each of you will be able to get out to enjoy birds in public parks, preserves, and your own neighborhoods. The birds are returning!

Good birding,

Diane

Cayuga Bird Club Chosen for Town of Ithaca's Richard B. Fischer Conservation Award

Wes Blauvelt, Diane Morton, Donna Scott

We are pleased to announce that the Cayuga Bird Club (CBC) has been selected to receive the Town of Ithaca's 2019 Richard B. Fischer Environmental Conservation Award! This is the Town of Ithaca's way of recognizing a group or individual who has actively contributed to the improvement of our natural environment. At the Conservation Board's March 5, 2020 meeting, the Cayuga Bird Club was approved as the seventeenth



3/2 Rusty Blackbird
3/4 Sandhill Crane
3/5 Greater White-fronted Goose
3/5 Indigo Bunting
3/10 Eurasian Wigeon
3/10 Tree Swallow
3/11 Sora
3/13 Blue-winged Teal
3/13 Fox Sparrow
3/15 Eastern Towhee
3/17 Wilson's Snipe
3/17 Bonaparte's Gull
3/18 Broad-winged Hawk
3/18 Marsh Wren
3/19 Greater Yellowlegs
3/21 Osprey
3/26 Caspian Tern
3/28 Virginia Rail
3/29 American White Pelican
3/30 Vesper Sparrow
3/30 Pine Warbler
3/31 Barn Swallow

2020 year count: 153 species

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

**American Woodcock
Detected by CBC
Motus Tower in its Fall
Migration**

Diane Morton

Our Cayuga Bird Club Motus receiving station for detection of radio-tagged migratory birds was installed at Myers Park last October. Now when you look at the map on motus.org, you can see our receiving station at the southern end of Cayuga Lake!

winner of this prestigious award. Cayuga Bird Club joins past honorees including Cornell Plantations Natural Areas Program, the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, Museum of the Earth at PRI and individuals including Betsy Darlington, Dan Hoffman, and A. Carl Leopold.

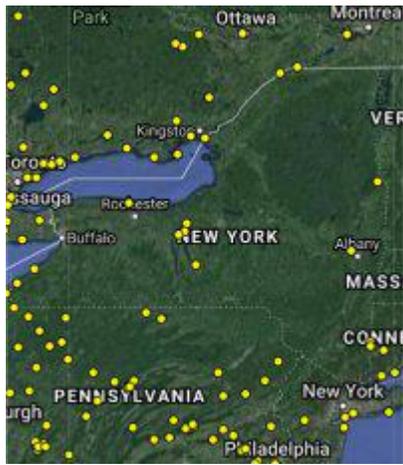
There will be a celebration of this award with a gathering to plant a commemorative tree in honor of the Cayuga Bird Club in an Ithaca Town Park. Cayuga Bird Club will also be added to the commemorative Fischer Award plaque that hangs in the Ithaca Town Hall lobby.

The award was made to the CBC for its activities in public education about bird conservation, and for improving protected areas for birds. Our education and outreach efforts include our Sapsucker Woods and Stewart Park public bird walks, field trips, and workshops that we have held for families and the general public. Our bird conservation efforts include our habitat restoration project at Lighthouse Point, bird house building and installation (including the Purple Martin house at Stewart Park), and our new Motus tracking station.

We especially want to thank our CBC Conservation Action Committee chair, Jody Enck, for his leadership in both the habitat restoration project at Lighthouse Point and nest box installations. Under Jody's leadership and with his many hours of hard work, the club has planted more than 70 trees and shrubs of a variety of different native species at Lighthouse Point, a Cornell Botanic Gardens Natural Area at the south end of Cayuga Lake. These native plant species will be better hosts for native insects, important food sources for many birds. We also planted fruiting shrubs that provide important nourishment for birds during migration. We were joined in the habitat restoration project by students from New Roots school who learned more about birds and the importance of native plant species for their survival. We are also grateful to Cornell Botanic Gardens for their cooperation, advice and assistance with the project.

Thanks to all of you who have contributed in various ways to Cayuga Bird Club's conservation-related activities and outreach programs.

Photos below show some of CBC's 2019 efforts for bird conservation.



We recently learned that our station detected its first migratory bird on November 8, 2019: an American Woodcock on its way south from Canada.

At motus.org, we can find out that the woodcock was tagged on April 27 near the Lake Erie Science and Nature Center, Huntington Beach, Ohio, as part of a Powdermill Nature Reserve Project. The bird spent several days along the southern shore of Lake Erie and then headed north, where it was detected north of Toronto on May 19. With few Motus stations in northern Ontario, the bird remained undetected in the summer months.

But then in November, this particular woodcock reappeared for its southward migration. At 5:45 pm, November 7, it was detected by a station on Wolfe Island, in Northeast Lake Ontario. *Just 3 hours later the bird was detected by our station at Myers Point, 110 miles south of Wolfe Island!* It was flying at a rate of around 36 miles an hour! The bird was next detected 33 hours later - 610 miles south of us - by a station in southern Tennessee. Whew!

The map below from motus.org shows the route of this particular American Woodcock, the left path heading north, and the right path its southward journey, going by Myers Park.



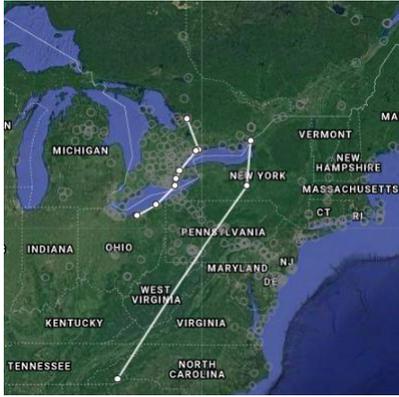
Jody installing a nestbox for Prothonotary Warblers.



New Roots students planting native plants.



Native tree saplings (swamp white oak).



We will soon be uploading more recent data from our receiver to motus.org. It will be exciting to find out what may fly by our Motus receiver heading north!



Purple Martin houses at Stewart Park.

Field Trip Report Around the Lake

*Bob McGuire, March 1 2020
photos by Barbara Clise*



Twelve folks joined me for an around-the-lake trip on a beautiful, warmish late winter morning. This time of year it's all about lingering field birds and waterfowl, along with the first of the spring migrants. With stops at Myers, Aurora Bay, Union Springs, and Cayuga Lake State Park we found most of the wintering ducks, all three swan species, and the start of the great Northern Pintail gathering.



Ross's Goose at Ladoga Point

Report Osprey Nest Locations!

Please help track osprey population growth again this season

by Candace Cornell



Your help is vital!

Ospreys have started returning to our area and this will be my 8th year surveying the growth rate of the Cayuga Lake Osprey population and of those throughout the entire Finger Lakes. This survey, which has grown from 35 nests in 2013 to 135 nests in 2019, is only possible because of the invaluable assistance I get from fellow birders reporting sightings and nest locations. I am asking for your help again this year!

Reporting

Help me track area nests and find new ones by reporting all nests you see or sightings of Ospreys, especially if carrying nesting materials in flight, to my email address cec22@cornell.edu. Please include the nearest street address or nearest roads to the nest, the GIS coordinates if possible, and a brief description of where the nest is, such as "in field

A detour up Fenner Road brought us a large flock of Snow Buntings (life bird for at least one participant), a few Horned Larks, but no longspurs. Aurora Bay yielded seven Horned Grebes (no Eared, and no loons) and a distant raft of several thousand Snow Geese. We capped the day off with a cooperative Snowy Owl near the gas well on Seybolt Road.



Snow Geese

Now, as I write this, the air is filled with the calls of Snow Geese moving north overhead, and the raucous “konk-ker-eee” of Red-winged Blackbirds around our pond. A Killdeer has just been reported. Open the gates and let them come!



Cayuga Lake State Park

Field Trip Report **West Side of the Lake**

Ken Haas, March 8, 2020

This trip was originally scheduled for Saturday, the day before. But due to possible bad weather, and the fact that Sunday would provide weather more complementary to birding, I pushed our trip back 24 hours. Actually, 25 hours, since Daylight Savings Time started Saturday night and we all bumped our clocks ahead one hour.

We met at the Ithaca Children's Garden to car pool. The temp-

near hedgerow on pylon" or "nest on telephone pole 100 ft. west of #5555 Fiver Road, Clyde."

Most of the area nests already in the survey are listed on the Cayuga Lake Osprey Trail located at tinyurl.com/CLOspreys

Doppelganger: Osprey vs. 2nd Year Bald Eagle

Ospreys are often mistaken for a second year eagle in flight or when the eagle is sitting in an Osprey nest. Look for the Osprey's full bandit mask and note that eagles have yellow feet compared to blackish blue Osprey feet.

Just as a refresher, this is a female Osprey with a faint necklace on her breast. Note she has a typical Osprey's dark bandit mask.



Female Osprey. (Photo by Suan Yong)

Eagles, below, have a wingspan of around 8 feet whereas an Osprey wingspan is up to six feet. In the right light, the two species can look alike.

erature was in the mid twenties but sunny, with the forecast suggesting that it will warm up considerably by the time we're done. Our first stop was Taughannock Falls State Park, where bird activity was fairly quiet. We did catch a quick look at a fly-by Red-breasted Merganser just off shore heading South. We got a good look at a Hairy Woodpecker at eyelevel on a tree trunk close by doing a good job of ignoring us for a while.



Off to Sheldrake Point, where the construction of last year seems to be finished, allowing us to get closer to the water with unobstructed views. But a nearby, ringing jackhammer breaking concrete was making hearing birds difficult. A singing Carolina Wren and Tufted Titmouse were among some of the bird sounds getting through. Suddenly, against the blue sky, appeared first one, then two adult Bald Eagles making lazy circles in the sky.



Our last stop was Dean's Cove. Still sunny and the temperature was in the mid 40's now. Parking in the upper lot gave us a distant view of what we calculated to be approximately 2,000 Snow Geese on the lake. Just above the water's surface but close to shore,



Second Year Bald Eagle. (Photo by Teresa McGill: [facebook.com/mcgillsnatureinmotion](https://www.facebook.com/mcgillsnatureinmotion))

Planning for a Birdier Future

Jody Enck

We all are spending more time at home these days than we ever could have imagined. The Cayuga Bird Club Conservation Action Committee wants to help you take full advantage of this unprecedented opportunity. We want everyone to use this time at home to make it even birdier than it is now.

Here are some step-by-step directions for how to improve habitat around your home for birds and your own enjoyment – because you'll see more birds!

Step 1. Map out your space to identify the part that you want to improve. Don't take on a space that is too big! Focus on something small and doable as a first step.

I rent a place that has nearly 11 acres of potential bird habitat. That includes the yard of almost an acre, a small over-grown area that used to be a combination horse pasture and apple orchard of about 1/3 acres, and the rest in woods.



one Belted Kingfisher chased another. A beautiful, male Eastern Bluebird flew in the Sumac shrub close to where we were standing, only about 15 feet away! Having the sun behind us made the bird's plumage just glow. A beautiful picture that will live in my memory for a long time. It will have to. I left my camera in the car!

Montezuma NWR Draft Hunting and Fishing Plan



The Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge is seeking public input on proposed changes to its Hunting and Fishing Plan.

Draft plan documents can be found at the refuge's website:

fws.gov/refuge/montezuma/

Updates include: species changes, hunting area changes, regulations, and season changes.

The Public Comment Period is open through May 1, 2020.

Send official comments to:

andrea_vanbeusichem@fws.gov

or by mail to:

Montezuma NWR

Attn: Public Comment

3395 US Route 20 East

Seneca Falls, NY 13148

For more information, call 315-568-5987, ext 4228 and leave a message. We will return your call.

Video of a 30-minute briefing session can be found online at:

facebook.com/FriendsoftheMWC/videos/1559847604167365/

Because I rent, I can't do much about the yard area. But, that's OK because it includes a number of flower and shrub beds and fruit trees, all of which attract and provide OK (but not great) habitat for breeding birds, like House Wren, American Robin, Eastern Phoebe, and Northern Cardinal. The woods is way too big for me to focus on easily. So, I am choosing the 1/3 acre, overgrown area as being just right to focus on for now.

Step 2. Identify what the bird habitat looks like in that space. That way, you'll know what needs to be improved, and what is already just fine. Start by determining the plants that exist in your space. Use the internet to determine which ones are native, and which ones are non-native. The National Audubon Society has some good resources [here](#) about why that is important. Additional resources can be found [here](#) from the American Bird Conservancy.

In my target space, I have some great, native shrubs already. These include Red-stemmed Dogwood, Gray Dogwood, and White Pine.



But, I also have several non-native species that will need to be removed. These are Tartarian Honeysuckle, Multi-flora Rose, and European Buckthorn. In addition, a substantial portion of the target area is dominated by thick grasses that prevent native woody species from growing.



Now, you have your map. You have your inventory of what is in your targeted habitat space. And, you have a sense of the two things that need to be done. One is to replace the non-native species with more appropriate native species. The other thing is to add more native species where all you have is "open space."

Stay tuned to the Club newsletter and to our Club

Minutes
of the March 9, 2020
Cayuga Bird Club meeting
are available on the
Cayuga Bird Club
[website](#).

Facebook page for more steps in the process. Let's all use the Facebook page to show each other our bird habitats, and what we do to improve them.

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 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.

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.

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](http://cayugabirdclub.org) (cayugabirdclub.org).



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CBC Website



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