

Cayuga Bird Club Newsletter - February 2019

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Cayuga Bird Club

February 2019

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Calendar

Feb. 10, Field Trip - Around the Lake

Meet at 8am at Stewart Park

**Feb. 11, Cayuga Bird Club Meeting,
7:30pm**

NY Breeding Bird Atlas III

Cayuga Bird Club Meeting February 11, 2019

Title: NY Breeding Bird Atlas III

**Speaker: Ian Davies, eBird Project
Coordinator, Cornell Lab of Ornithology,
Ithaca, NY**



NY BREEDING BIRD ATLAS III

In 2020, birders across New York will embark on the state's third breeding bird atlas: a five-year effort to document breeding birds in the region. New York will be the first state to start a third breeding bird atlas and will be taking advantage of modern tools to maximize the area we can cover: the atlas data collection will be run through eBird. Come learn about breeding bird atlases, how you can take part, and how to make your summer birding count.

Ian Davies is the eBird Project Coordinator at the Cornell Lab. He focuses on project coordination and management, as well as outreach and engagement. Ian

Speaker: Ian Davies

Feb. 16, Field Trip - Winter Finches

Meet at 7:30am either at Lab or O or Lime Hollow Nature Center

Feb. 23, eBird Workshop, 10:00am CLO Visitor Center

Presenters: Diane Morton and Phil McNeil

March 1 and 2, Ithaca Native Landscape Symposium

Cinemapolis, Ithaca

March 3, Field Trip - Around the Lake

Meet at 8am at Stewart Park

Sat, March 9, Field Trip - West Side of the Lake

Meet at 8am at the turtle at the Ithaca Children's Garden

See our [Web Calendar](#) for more events and field trips.

Upcoming Field Trips

Sunday, February 10 - Around the Lake, led by Bob McGuire

8:00am – 4:30pm

Meet at Stewart Park, east end

Join Bob McGuire on a full day trip around Cayuga Lake, with a focus on waterfowl. 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. If you have questions, email Bob at bmcguire@clarityconnect.com

Sat, February 16, Winter Finches, led by Matt Young

7:30am – 2:00pm

Matt Young will lead trip to look for Evening Grosbeaks, Common Redpolls and other winter finches. We never know what we might find!

Matt is an expert at finch vocalizations and taxonomy, especially crossbills and grosbeak; if we are lucky enough to find any of these birds, he will be able to tell us

also writes the majority of the articles on the eBird homepage, and helps coordinate the global review network of eBird data quality volunteer reviewers.

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



We have just completed an online auction of items donated by Richard Tkachuck, raising over \$500! Thank you to everyone who participated in the auction — those of you who made a purchase, the committee who coordinated the sale, and most of all, Richard.

Richard is a long-time member of the Cayuga Bird Club and served as our newsletter editor for several years. Richard has expressed interest in helping the club with conservation efforts, including through the Sister Bird Club Network. A number of local projects are also being planned by our Conservation Action committee: installing nest boxes at the south end of the Cayuga Lake, a birdhouse-making workshop for children, and habitat restoration at Lighthouse Point (Jetty Woods) in collaboration with the Cornell Botanic Gardens. We'll need more hands-on help with the local projects: please contact Conservation Action committee chair Jody Enck at jodyenck@gmail.com to learn more and get involved.

February is a month to plan ahead for longer days and warmer weather. Ian Davies will give a presentation at our February 11 meeting about New York State's third Breeding Bird Survey, to begin in 2020, using eBird as a portal for data input. Birders will gather data for five years on breeding birds in survey blocks that cover all parts of the state, using eBird to enter the data. Come learn more about this extensive project and how you might participate in censusing our state's breeding birds.

As a follow-up, Phil McNeil and I will be holding an eBird

which type they are by call.

Meet at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology or Lime Hollow Nature Center (to be determined based on where the best finches are) parking lot at 7:30am for carpooling. We expect to return between 1:30-2:30 pm. Wear very warm layers for the winter weather. Bring a snack and something to drink, and a spotting scope if you have one.

Sun, March 3 - Around the Lake, led by Suan Yong

8:00am – 4:30pm

Meet at Stewart Park - east end

Join Suan Yong on a full day trip around Cayuga Lake. 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.

Sat, March 9 - West Side of the Lake, led by Ken Haas

8:00am – 12:30pm

Meet at the big turtle at the Ithaca Children's Garden, 121 Turtle Lane, Ithaca. Ken Haas will lead a half-day trip on the west side of Cayuga Lake. We'll look for wintering waterfowl on the lake as well as winter field birds nearby. Wear warm layers and bring a snack and something to drink. Bring a scope if you have one.

These field trips are open to all.

eBird Workshop - February 23

Diane Morton and Phil McNeil will offer a free eBird Workshop on Saturday, February 23, just for Cayuga Bird Club members. We'll answer your questions about making the most of eBird, with tips that make it easy to enter your bird sightings. Want some help getting started with the eBird mobile app on your phone? Need help with editing or sharing eBird checklists or adding photos or sound

workshop for Cayuga Bird Club members on February 23 to help people become more comfortable with using eBird — both the eBird mobile app, and the ebird.org website. If you'd like hands-on help with eBird, we hope you'll join us.

We also have some winter-themed field trips planned, two with a focus on waterfowl around Cayuga Lake and a trip to look for winter finches with Cornell's finch expert, Matt Young. More details about those trips are in this newsletter. Please check our club calendar for any weather-related cancellations or rescheduling of field trips, particularly at this time of year.

And if you're dreaming of a getaway for next winter, Jody Enck has organized a second trip to Costa Rica with Holbrook travel, February 14-23, 2020. We saw stunning bird photos at last month's Share Your Photos night from several CBC members who went on last year's trip. What a great opportunity for some fantastic birding! More information about the 2020 trip, with a link to itinerary details, are included in this newsletter.

Good birding,

Diane

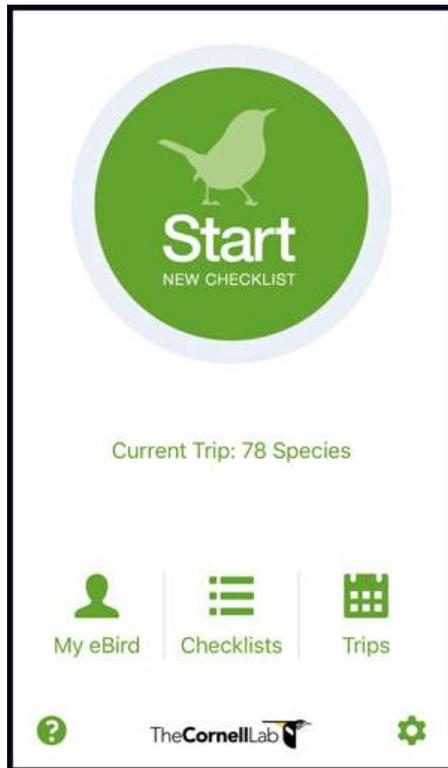
Photo Sharing - January 14, 2019

A small sampling of the superb photographs presented by members at the January 14th meeting.



Red-winged blackbird by Muhammad Arif

recordings? Using the app when you are traveling or have no cell service? Planning a birding trip using eBird to find great hotspots or target birds?



This workshop will be held at 10 am at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Visitor Center. Please download the free eBird mobile app to your smartphone or tablet prior to the workshop, and set up a user name and password. (We'll help if you run into a snag). We will also discuss using the eBird website by computer if you don't use the mobile app. Questions? Contact Diane Morton at cayugabirdclub.president@gmail.com.

Field Trip Report - Around the Lake

Bob McGuire

Twelve adventurous souls joined me for an all-day, around-the-lake trip on Sunday, January 13th. I always enjoy this trip early in the year - because nearly all of the birds are new (for the year, at least)!

We started out with a huge bang: Ken Kempfues picked a Tufted Duck out of a small flock of diving ducks off East Shore



Bald Eagle by Divya Teja Saridey



Crested Caracara by Phil McNeil

Park. From there we checked the usual hotspots (Ladoga, Myers Park, Center Road, Aurora bay, Union Springs ponds, and Mud Lock) before lunch. By then we had found most of the expected waterfowl, including several Green-winged Teal and two White-winged Scoters.



The afternoon was rather disappointing, with no Snowy Owls south of Seneca Falls and no Gyrfalcon around the quarry on Hoster Road. We did, however, pick up Savannah Sparrows in a flock of Song Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos, and added another Northern Mockingbird for the day.

The weather? Well, it was cold, but not too windy. I look forward to doing it all again in early February.

Club Trip to Costa Rica

Jody Enck

Mark your calendar – February 2020 Cayuga Bird Club trip to southern Costa Rica

Have you ever dreamed of seeing dazzling hummingbirds, breath-taking trogons and toucans, or witnessing awesome aerial predators that seem too fantastic to be real birds? Maybe you just want to escape winter in Ithaca and head to the tropics.

Or, perhaps you are interested in meeting with birders in another country and sharing their passion for birds and bird



Fiery Throated Hummingbird by Jody Enck



King Penguin by Lindsay Goodloe

conservation.



Fiery-billed aracari

You can do all these things next year if you join us on our trip to southern Costa Rica.

We have worked with Holbrook Travel to develop a special itinerary for us! Several of our Club members traveled to northeastern and central Costa Rica in April 2018. We loved our experiences so much that we decided to go back and visit a different part of the country. We'll be meeting and birding with members of the San Vito Bird club for a day on our trip. For more information about the trip, including full itinerary, cost, and other logistic details, please go to [this webpage](#).

We also have been working with Holbrook to develop an itinerary for a birding trip to Colombia for November 2020. Information about this trip will be available in the next couple of weeks. If you have any other questions, please contact trip co-leader Jody Enck at jodyenck@gmail.com.

Conservation Action Committee Activities

Jody Enck

We have been busy planning, writing, and meeting recently to be ready to hit the ground running with conservation activities when it gets warmer. In December, we submitted a grant application to the American Birding Expo for Purple Martin apartment colonies, Prothonotary Warbler nest boxes, and loaner binoculars to use with families and kids around the south end of Cayuga Lake. We just got news this week that our proposal was one of the top



Ruffed Grouse by Ann Mitchell



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker by Ken Haas

10 out of 120 total submitted, but we did not get funding.

We also will be making and painting some nest boxes that we do not buy commercially, and we're planning some events for late winter/early spring through which we will engage the public in building and erecting these.

In mid-January, we had a productive meeting with staff from the Cornell Botanic Gardens (CBG) about bird conservation work (habitat improvements including removing invasive plant species, possibly planting some native plants, and erecting nest boxes) in Jetty Woods/Lighthouse Point. Our interests and plans for conservation work on that parcel are consistent with what the CBG staff want to happen there. Please let me know if you want to get involved in the work for this parcel, and if you are willing to become a formal CBG volunteer to facilitate that.

In late January, we had a similarly productive meeting with folks from the City of Ithaca and Friends of Stewart Park about conservation actions for Renwick Woods and the area around the "Swan Pen" in Stewart Park. A few of us will be leading bird walks on Saturday mornings in those parcels in April and May of this year.

Overall, it's great to work collaboratively with like-minded folks from other local organizations. If you want to know more, or want to help out in any way, please let me know at jodyenck@gmail.com.

Cayuga Bird Club Meeting **March 11**

Title: Borneo: a birding tour of Sabah, Malaysia

Speakers: Susan Danskin, Diane Morton, Ken Kemphues

The presenters traveled to the island of Borneo last summer for a birding tour in the state of Sabah, Malaysia. Borneo's unique geography makes it home to a high



Pink Pigeon by Mark Chao



Snowy Egret by Judy Burrill



Yellow-breasted Warbler by Suan Yong

number of endemic bird species, plus an amazing diversity of plants, insects, and mammals. They traveled to the highlands of Mount Kinabalu, lowland rainforest jungles, and coastal wetlands, seeing hundreds of birds, including all eight species of Borneo's Hornbills, edible-nest swifts in a large cave, trogons, sunbirds, spiderhunters, blue flycatchers, and the world's largest flower. The diversity of life in the protected forests they visited was truly remarkable; however, much of Borneo's forested area is threatened by rapid expansion of palm oil plantations.

Ithaca Native Landscape Symposium

This annual event will take place on March 1 and 2 at Cinemapolis in Ithaca. Of particular interest to birders should be a talk by Suzanne Treyger of Audubon New York on Improving Habitat for Forest Birds: Landscape and Local-scale Management Recommendations. More information about the symposium can be found on its [website](#).

Volunteer Opportunity

Calling all bird education enthusiasts! The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is seeking volunteers to assist with this year's Kids Discover the Trail! 5th grade school field trips, better known as KDT. This is an intense spring-only burst of educational programming, with about 600 students and teachers visiting the Cornell Lab in a 6-week period. We need your help to engage them all! KDT volunteers lead walks and biodiversity surveys in Sapsucker Woods in the mornings, and/or facilitate activity stations in the visitor center after lunch.

You do not have to be an expert birder to participate. The theme is biodiversity and citizen science – helping 5th graders to identify species and collect data for

Book Review - Ravenmaster

Wes Blauvelt

Christopher Skaife's *Ravenmaster: My Life With the Ravens At the Tower of London* is a charming and easy read covering the history, mythology and life of the ravens that occupy the Tower of London.

Known as Guardians of the Tower and Sentinels of the White Tor, ravens have occupied the tower since its earliest days with many fables about their occupation linked to the survival of the tower and Crown. In 1666 a fire destroyed virtually all of the structures inside the walled medieval city of London. Scavenging pigs and ravens descended upon the city and King Charles II ordered them to be exterminated. However, upon the advice of his astronomer who viewed the killing of ravens as a bad omen, the ravens were spared. Thus the legend of the tower ravens was born. Should the ravens ever vacate the tower, the Crown would fall, the kingdom would collapse and the tower would turn to dust.



Christopher Skaife is a Yeoman Warder, a Beefeater, a 25 year veteran of Her Majesty's service and the Ravenmaster, but not a professional ornithologist. His book is not a scientific examination of the biology and behavior of ravens, but a story about his life with the tower ravens. It tells the story of his interaction with the ravens—the rules of care, the daily routine, the individual personalities of Munin, Merlina (originally thought to be male and named Merlin), Erin, Grip II (named after Charles Dickens's pet raven) and the others—and the mischief and pranks that ravens partake in with the Ravenmaster. It chronicles the life of the Ravenmaster: early morning routines to feed and

themselves. Plus, we'll train you! We will have 4 training sessions in April and early May, followed by the actual programs in May and the first half of June. New volunteers start by shadowing experienced leaders. You can sign up for the program dates that best fit your availability.

Please contact Leo Sack at Its55@cornell.edu or 607-254-2165 if you are interested in volunteering for KDT.

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

Cayuga Lake Basin birds reported in January are listed below, excluding those found on the January 1, 2019 Ithaca Christmas Bird Count (detailed in last month's newsletter).

Snow Goose
 Trumpeter Swan
 Tundra Swan
 Canvasback
 Pied-billed Grebe
 Snowy Owl
 Gadwall
 American Wigeon
 Northern Pintail
 White-winged Scoter
 Gyrfalcon
 Peregrine Falcon
 Mute Swan
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet
 Hoary Redpoll
 White-crowned Sparrow
 Brown-headed Cowbird
 Iceland Gull
 Black Vulture
 Horned Lark
 Ruddy Duck
 Savannah Sparrow
 Northern Shoveler
 Green-winged Teal
 Red-necked Grebe
 Glaucous Gull
 Tufted Duck
 Ring-necked Pheasant
 Common Loon
 Fox Sparrow
 Wood Duck
 Eared Grebe
 Red-throated Loon

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

water the ravens; monitoring their health; chasing the occasional escapee; and sharing the raven's story with the crowds that visit the tower daily.

The ravens are pinioned, keeping them within the confines of the tower. Skaife has introduced a minimum trimming technique that removes a small portion of three primary feathers on one wing. This technique allows the birds to experience limited flight, expanding their range of movement beyond hops and short glides. This can create chaos, however, as Skaife tells in the story of an escape by Munin and her eventual recovery at the Royal Observatory. While visiting the Tower in December, I noticed several of the ravens at the top of the White Tower. They could only reach such heights by a short flight, nonetheless, the birds remain loyal to the site and rarely escape to the "wilds of London."

If you are looking for a light read with an engaging story that can be completed in one or two sittings, the Ravenmaster may be for you.

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.

Details of the species listed can be found on the [CBC website](#). Thanks to Dave Nutter for compiling these records for the club.

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.

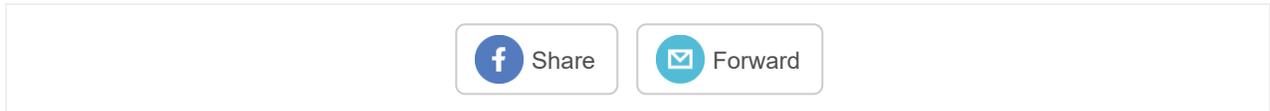
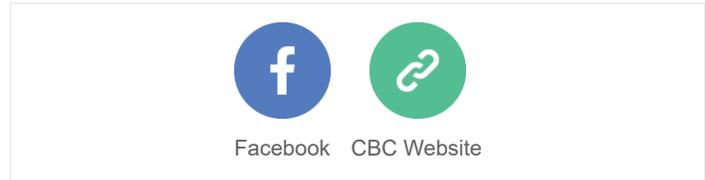
Cayuga Bird Club Officer Contact Information is available on the [Cayuga Bird Club website](#).

Chickadee illustration in masthead by Karen Allaben-Confer

Minutes

of the January 14, 2019 Cayuga Bird Club meeting are available on the Cayuga Bird Club [website](#).

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 [Cayuga Bird Club Website](#).



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