



Cayuga Bird Club

January 2017

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Calendar

Jan. 9 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting, 7:30 pm
Host: Kevin McGowan
Share Your Photos Night

Jan. 21 Cayuga Bird Club Field Trip to local areas,
Meet at Cornell Lab of Ornithology
8:00 am - 12:30 pm
Leaders: Diane Morton and Ken

Cayuga Bird Club Meeting, January 9



Share Your Photos Night!

Host: Kevin McGowan

Club members can each share a maximum of **five** photos during their **three minutes** on the stage. Send your photos by **January 4** to Kevin at kjm2@cornell.edu. The Subject Line on the email MUST BE "**Bird club photo submission Jan2017.**" Kevin will send an acknowledgement when he receives them. IF you do not get an acknowledgement, contact Kevin again WELL before the meeting date. Remember, you must attend the meeting to show your photos. Don't be shy! Share! Although photo submission is limited to club members, the meeting is open to all!

The meeting will be held at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Doors open at 7:00 pm and there will be cookies and conversation starting at 7:15. Bird club business begins at 7:30 pm followed by the presentation.

Fairy Tern, Lord Howe Island, Australia

From the President

Jody Enck



Happy New Year Cayuga Birders!

If you are like me, you are appreciating the new beginning that the New Year brings. New birds, new resolutions, new opportunities. What will be your first new bird of the year? Will you resolve to do more

Kemphues

Feb. 13 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting, 7:30 pm

Speaker: Jennifer Walsh-Emond, PhD
How Adaptations To Tidal Marshes Shape Differences Between Saltmarsh And Nelson's Sparrows: Lessons From The Field And Laboratory

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

First-of-Year Birds Reported during December 2016 for the Cayuga Lake Basin

Listed below are Cayuga Lake Basin first arrivals reported last month.

Dec. 3 American White Pelican

2016 total count: 274 species

Thanks to Dave Nutter for compiling these records for the club. The 2016 total number of bird species for the Cayuga Lake Basin (274) is somewhat lower than in past years (an average of 287 species for the previous 5 years). Will there be more rarities in 2017? Details of this year's findings as well as basin counts for previous years are available on the [CBC website](#).

December Cayuga Bird Club Meeting Minutes are available at the [CBC website](#).

Field Trip to look for Winter Birds - Jan. 21

On **Saturday, January 21**, Diane Morton and Ken Kemphues will lead a half-day trip to look for winter birds. This will include waterfowl at the lake as well as field birds such as Horned Larks, Snow Buntings, and perhaps Lapland Longspurs. We will meet at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at **8:00**

birding in 2017? Will you engage in the new Sister Bird Club network that is starting up? Whatever your new beginnings, I hope they are happy and fruitful!

A new year also brings our annual Christmas Bird Count on January 1st. This opportunity to get out and bird early in the year is always fun. There are fun birds to see, great camaraderie to experience, and lots of anticipation about what birds and how many we will see. I hope most of you reading this message were able to participate.

On January 9th, we will have our annual member photo night. Club members can share a maximum of five photos during the 3 minutes you will have to take the stage. Send them by **January 4** to Kevin McGowan at kjm2@cornell.edu. The Subject Line on the email should be "Bird club photo submission Jan2017."

I also am working on a webpage to support the Sister Bird Club Network linking clubs here in North America with Clubs in Central America (and farther south, too). I will be giving a presentation about the Network at our March meeting. In the meantime, please let me know if you want to help get it off the ground.

May all your birding this year bring you excitement, awe, and a special connection with birds and birders wherever you are.

Good birding,



Annual Christmas Bird Count - January 1



photo by Jay McGowan

am and plan to return at 12:30 pm. Wear warm layers for the winter weather. Please check the Cayuga Bird Club calendar for updates in case the date needs to be changed due to weather conditions. If you are a beginner and would like to borrow binoculars, please contact Diane at dianegmorton@gmail.com ahead of time.

All are invited to join us on this trip regardless of experience level or membership status.

Merlin Photo ID App - New Version Includes 650 Bird Species

Carl Steckler

The new version of Merlin is fantastic. Not only will it identify photos of birds taken with your phone, you can take a photo from the LCD screen of your digital camera. It should work with digiscoping as well. I gave it a workout on the recent CBC field trip to Niagara Falls and it was near 100% correct on identification. At worst it gave you the correct bird on the second or third choice. It even identified Charley Harper birds. We even went so far as to take selfies to see what bird Merlin identified us as, great fun. No, I won't say which bird Merlin identified my selfie as.

I can say that the Merlin team has brought this app a long way and it will be a great addition to both beginners and advanced birders. Good work Team Merlin!

[Download Merlin free for your iOS or Android device and try it out.](#)

Short-eared Owl Surveys

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Region 8 Wildlife Office has begun this year's wintering raptor surveys near Trumansburg. Volunteers who would like to help with this project are still welcome to participate. The species of greatest interest is the **Short-eared Owl**,

This year's Ithaca Christmas Bird Count, organized by the Cayuga Bird Club, was held on January 1, 2017. We had 134 participants out in the field counting birds, and another 14 reporting from their feeders at home. Within our 15-mile count circle, a total of **88** species were found on count day. In addition, Black Scoter, Canvasback, Greater Scaup, Glaucous Gull, Tundra Swan and Eastern Towhee have been found during count week, to bring our total thus far to **94 species**. Other birds noted included scaup species, gull species, and Mallard x Black Duck hybrids. The total species number may change, as additional species seen by January 4 are added to the count.

At the Compilation dinner at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Paul Anderson tabulated numbers of individuals for each species as the area coordinators read off their numbers. The preliminary total for the January 1 count is **41,876** individual birds. This is higher than our average count (37,638 over the last 10 years). Rough count numbers for each species are provided below. Some numbers may later be refined if it seems birds were counted by multiple parties of observers. "High" means that this is the highest number Ithaca has ever recorded on a Christmas Bird Count. Details for some of the more unusual sightings will be posted on the Cayuga Bird Club yearly first records [web page](#).



A notable new bird for the Ithaca Christmas Bird Count was a **Ross's Goose**, found by

Ken Rosenberg at Stewart Park. This species, rare for Ithaca, was seen by many other birders that morning and the following day.

Ross's Goose, Ithaca, photo by Jay McGowan

Christmas Bird Count Numbers, 1/1/2017

SNOW GOOSE - 7,764

ROSS'S GOOSE - 1* (Not previously seen on a count day!)

CANADA GOOSE - 4,946

a state endangered species, but all raptor observations are important and will be documented. From these surveys, we hope to learn more about wintering population sizes, movement patterns, and the factors that influence winter habitat choice. The findings of this study will ultimately be applied toward developing a conservation plan for this species.

Surveys will be conducted from ½ hour before sunset to ½ hour after, and we meet before and after each survey to coordinate efforts and talk about our observations. This work does involve lots of standing out in cold weather, but the excitement of seeing raptors (and some provided snacks) will help to insulate us!

We will meet at the Ulysses Philomathic Library, 74 East Main Street, Trumansburg. Survey sites are usually within a 20-minute drive of our meeting location.

Upcoming Trumansburg Area Meeting/Survey dates will be: January 5 & 19; February 2 & 16; March 2, 16 & 30; April 13 & 27.

Please email christina.hoh@dec.ny.gov if you'd like more information or would like to get involved with our surveys this winter. Whether you can participate for the rest of the season or for only a single evening, we would greatly appreciate your assistance!

Thank you,
Christina Hoh

[January 5 Fundraiser to Benefit Cayuga Bird Club - Paint It Forward with Wine and Design!](#)

GADWALL - 4
AMERICAN WIGEON - 3

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK - 43
MALLARD - 1321
NORTHERN PINTAIL - 4
REDHEAD - 4,221
RING-NECKED DUCK - 4

LESSER SCAUP - 2
LONG-TAILED DUCK - 3
BUFFLEHEAD - 27 (High)
COMMON GOLDENEYE - 98
HOODED MERGANSER - 67 (High)

COMMON MERGANSER - 125
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - 4
RUDDY DUCK - 30
RUFFED GROUSE - 8
WILD TURKEY - 254

COMMON LOON - 4
PIED-BILLED GREBE - 7
HORNED GREBE - 6
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT - 7 (High)
GREAT BLUE HERON - 3

TURKEY VULTURE - 57
BALD EAGLE - 3
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK - 6
COOPER'S HAWK - 15
RED-TAILED HAWK - 148

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK - 3
AMERICAN KESTREL - 4
MERLIN - 1
PEREGRINE FALCON - 3
AMERICAN COOT - 268

RING-BILLED GULL - 215
HERRING GULL - 600
ICELAND GULL - 1
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - 2
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL - 115

ROCK PIGEON - 1438



Visit wineanddesign.com/ithaca for more information.

MOURNING DOVE - 841
EASTERN SCREECH-OWL - 40
GREAT HORNED OWL - 12
BARRED OWL - 1

BELTED KINGFISHER - 7
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER - 216
YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER - 1
DOWNY WOODPECKER - 337
HAIRY WOODPECKER - 130

NORTHERN FLICKER - 13
PILEATED WOODPECKER - 55
NORTHERN SHRIKE - 2
BLUE JAY - 586
AMERICAN CROW - 5,634 (probably higher than this based on roost numbers during count week)

FISH CROW - 6
COMMON RAVEN - 30
HORNED LARK - 45
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE - 2,591
TUFTED TITMOUSE - 559

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - 60
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH - 456
BROWN CREEPER - 20
CAROLINA WREN - 41
HOUSE WREN - 1 (only the second time this has been reported on count day)

WINTER WREN - 2
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET - 6
EASTERN BLUEBIRD - 176
HERMIT THRUSH - 1
AMERICAN ROBIN - 541

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD - 22
EUROPEAN STARLING - 3,953
CEDAR WAXWING - 152
SNOW BUNTING - 161
YELLOW-RUMPED (MYRTLE) WARBLER - 1

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW - 361
SONG SPARROW - 28
SWAMP SPARROW - 1

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW - 106

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - 1

DARK-EYED JUNCO - 968

NORTHERN CARDINAL - 399

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD - 1

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD - 4

PURPLE FINCH - 1

HOUSE FINCH - 272

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH - 747

HOUSE SPARROW - 439

Also noted during the compilation:

Mallard X Black Duck - 3, Scaup sp. - 7, Gull sp. - 7. A notable miss this year was Northern Harrier.

The Ithaca Christmas Bird Count numbers will be reported to Audubon as part of the larger national Christmas Bird Count. You can explore results from other areas, view photos, and get more information about the Audubon Christmas Bird Count [here](#).

Short-eared Owls Field Trip Report

Ann Mitchell



Ten warmly dressed birders, one driving through blizzard-like weather in Syracuse, joined me in search for Short-eared Owls on Lake Road near the Long Point Winery. We arrived at the winery around 3:45 P.M. The first birds we saw were a pair of Northern Harriers and a Red-tailed Hawk flying around the fields south of the winery. After awhile searching unsuccessfully there, we walked down the road to where we could see fields on both sides of the road. As it got dark, a snow squall developed. We headed back to the cars and drove to where we could view both fields. Unbeknownst to me four members of our group had headed home. After a

short while sitting in the warmth of our cars watching the fields on both sides of the road, we saw the first owl in the field opposite the winery. That was around 5:00. We all got out of the warmth of the cars and eventually viewed three owls together. Shortly after seeing those owls, a couple of us noticed a male owl on the other side of the road. Success!! Thanks to everyone who joined me!!!

Niagara Falls Trip Highlights

photos by Jay McGowan



Bonaparte's Gulls

Eight people joined Jay McGowan on an overnight trip to Niagara Falls, Ontario, on December 3-4. Highlights of the trip included seeing eight species of gulls, including **Iceland**, **Thayer's**, **Black-headed** and many **Bonaparte's Gulls**. The group also observed wintering waterfowl, including **Red-breasted Mergansers** and **Harlequin Ducks**.



Juvenile Thayer's Gull



Black-headed Gull



Iceland Gull



American Falls, photo by Ann Mitchell

North American Bird Species Name Changes in 2016

Summarized by Diane Morton

Each year, the names of birds undergo review and new names come into use. In North America, the American Ornithological Union Checklist Committee publishes a

summary of these name changes, including those affected by splitting species, lumping them, or replacing old names with new ones.

While none of the recent changes affect names of birds likely to be found in the Cayuga Lake Basin, in your travels outside the area you may find some birds that now have new names. To help you keep up to date with these changes, we've outlined below the changes to common bird names that were made in 2016. These are from the 57th supplement to the AOU Checklist of North American Birds, by Chesser et al., [The Auk, 133, 544-560](#).

Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay and **California Scrub-Jay** are now distinct species, split from Western Scrub-Jay, based on differences in ecology, genetics, and vocalizations as well as evidence for selection against hybrids ([Gowen et al. 2014](#)). If you have seen a Scrub-Jay in Utah or New Mexico, for instance, you might add Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay to your list, while a Scrub-Jay in coastal California is likely a California Scrub-Jay. eBird's species maps are useful for exploring the differences in range between these two bird species.

Leach's Storm-Petrel has been split into three species. Those in the northern part of the range, including the coasts of Canada and the US, will still be called **Leach's Storm-Petrel**, but two forms that nest off the coast of Western Mexico will become known as **Townsend's Storm-Petrel** and **Ainley's Storm-Petrel**.

Additional new species added to the list because of splits from other species include **Russet-naped Wood-Rail**, **Puerto Rican Parakeet**, **Lesser Violetear**, **Isthmian Wren**, **Canebrake Wren**, **Blue-capped Motmot**, **Lesson's Motmot**, **Whooping Motmot**, **Choco Sirystes**, **Costa Rican Warbler**, and **Tacarcuna Warbler**.

Just one species has been lost by merger with another species: **Caribbean Coot** is no longer considered separate from **American Coot**.

Rufous-necked Wood-Rail has been added to the list of species known to occur in the United States.

The checklist committee also made some changes to common names based upon global usage. The Sky Lark of British Columbia will now be call **Eurasian Skylark**, to conform with common use elsewhere. The new name for

Orange Bishop, a locally common bird in Southern California, is **Northern Red Bishop**, as it is called in its native Africa.

Another big change that will affect future field guides is the order in which species will be listed. DNA analysis has provided more insight into the phylogenetic relationships between bird species. This new information has led to a reshuffling of the positions of some families, orders, and species within genera in bird lists.

Future splits and lumps? Recent papers have suggested that [Yellow-rumped Warbler may be composed of four distinct species](#). Other research indicates that [Common and Hoary Redpolls might be considered a single species](#). For now, those species names remain unchanged, but these may be put to the committee for decision in the next few years.

If you use [eBird](#), or keep track of your bird sightings another way, it is useful to include subspecies information if possible. That way, if a species is split later, you will be able to update your list easily. eBird will automatically update for you if the split is based on unique ranges, but will do that “if and only if we can be 99.9% sure that we know which one you saw”. See the [eBird Help page on this topic](#) for additional suggestions on keeping your list current when species splits occur.

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 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. 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.

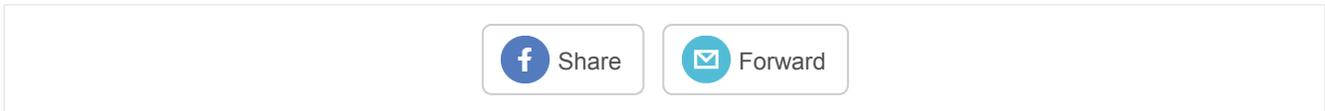
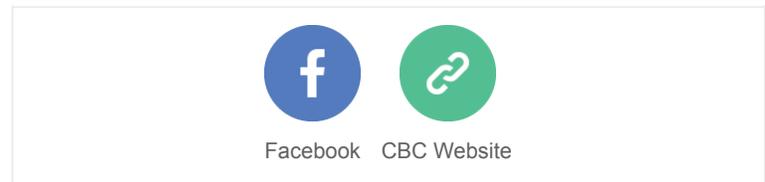
Members receive via email the monthly Cayuga Bird Club

Newsletter, from September through June. Newsletter submissions may be sent to Diane Morton, cbceditor1@gmail.com. Of particular interest are articles about local bird sightings, bird behavior, birding hot spots, book reviews, 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

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