



Cayuga Bird Club

January 2018

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Calendar

Jan. 7 Field Trip - Cayuga Lake, 8:00 am - 12:30 pm

Leaders: Bob McGuire & Ken
Kemphues

Meet at Stewart Park, east end

Jan. 8 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting

7:30 pm, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Share Your Photos Night

Jan. 21 Field trip to look for Winter Birds, 8:00 am - 12:30 pm

Leaders: Diane Morton & Ken
Kemphues

Meet at Stewart Park, east end

Cayuga Bird Club Meeting January 8, 2018

Share Your Photos Night!

Host: Kevin McGowan



Kevin McGowan will once again host the Cayuga Bird Club's annual *Share Your Photos 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 at kjm2@cornell.edu. **The Subject Line on the email MUST BE "Bird club photo submission Jan2018."** 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 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 with cookies and conversation starting at 7:15. Bird club business begins at 7:30 pm followed by the presentation. All are welcome.

Feb. 12 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting
7:30 pm, Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Speaker: Bob McGuire,
*Across Siberia: Birding with a
Microphone*

**Feb. 16-19 Great Backyard Bird
Count**

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

Minutes
of the December 12, 2017
Cayuga Bird Club meeting
are [available](#) on the Cayuga
Bird Club website.



January Field Trips

Join **Bob McGuire** and **Ken Kemphues** on a half-day field trip along Cayuga Lake on **Sunday, January 7**. We'll look through the variety of ducks that have begun aggregating at the south end of the lake and then go north as far as Union Springs. **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 or snack and something to drink. We plan to be back by 12:30 pm. Email **Bob** at bmcguire@clarityconnect.com if you have questions.

On **Sunday, 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

From the President

Wes Blauvelt



I am looking forward to our January meeting. It will feature the annual **Cayuga Bird Club Share Your Photos Night**. All club members are welcome to share their favorite

photographs of birds they have taken in the past year and beyond. You can do this by sending up to five photographs to Kevin McGowan by January 4 (see above for instructions for submission).

This year I plan to present photographs of birds from my trip last February to Costa Rica. I have made numerous trips to Costa Rica over the past 25 years and find it to be one of my favorite birding destinations. This April you can participate in a Cayuga Bird Club endorsed trip to Costa Rica organized by Holbrook Travel. As part of our endorsement agreement, Holbrook will make a donation to the Cayuga Bird Club for each enrolled participant. The trip will take place between April 20-29, 2018 and will be led by our own Jody Enck. For those of you who have not traveled to Costa Rica or Central America, this will be a great opportunity for you to be introduced to neotropical birds. The itinerary will include visits at Selva Verde Lodge, Tirimbina Biological Reserve, La Selva Biological Stations and the cloud forests of San Gerardo de Dota. The deadline for signing up for this trip is fast approaching - January 15, 2018. For more information on the trip or to enroll go to holbrook.travel/cayuga-cr18.

The annual Christmas Bird Count is now a part of our history. The 56th annual Cayuga Bird Club count took place just a couple of days ago on January 1st. Temperatures were in the single digits and wind chill made conditions feel below zero for the hearty 120+ individuals who took on the challenge of "extreme birding" for the day. Preliminary counts have been tabulated and they show that we observed 101 species (which is a

Larks and Snow Buntings. We will **meet at the east end of Stewart Park at 8:00 am** and plan to return at 12:30 pm. Wear warm layers for the winter weather. All are invited to join us on this trip regardless of experience level or membership status. If you are a beginner and need to borrow binoculars, please contact Diane at dianegmorton@gmail.com ahead of time (limited number available).

These field trips are open to all. Please check the [Cayuga Bird Club calendar](#) for updates in case there are date or time changes for these or any other field trips.

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

No new Cayuga Lake Basin first arrivals were reported in December, 2017.

2017 total count: 276 species

Thanks to Dave Nutter for compiling these records for the club. Details are available on the [CBC website](#).

Great Backyard Bird Count February 16-19, 2018

new count day record) and over 40,000 individual birds. Three species were found that have never been a part of our count: **Black Vulture, Tufted Duck** and **European Goldfinch**. And there were several new high counts. Details of the count appear elsewhere in the newsletter. Thanks to all of our count coordinators, club members and to Paul Anderson for coordinating the compilation in “real time” and for making this another successful Christmas Bird Count.

As the New Year begins, there will be many other opportunities for those of us who do not migrate south to bird the Cayuga Lake Basin. In January we have two field trips with a focus on the winter waterfowl of Cayuga Lake, January 7 and 21, as well as Beginner Bird Walks scheduled for January 13, 14, 20, 21, 27 and 28th at Sapsucker Woods. Our Field Trip Planning Committee will be meeting later this month to organize a schedule of additional field trips for late winter and into the spring. Stay tuned for those trips to be posted on the club web calendar. The Department of Environmental Conservation will also be continuing their Winter Raptor Survey in the Trumansburg area and at Montezuma. If you are interested in participating in this survey, the next scheduled survey dates for Trumansburg are January 4, 18 and February 1 and at Montezuma on January 16 and 30. The weather may be frigid, but these surveys are a great opportunity to see **Short-eared Owl, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk and Rough-legged Hawk**. So whether your travels take you south or you remain in the north for the winter, we are very fortunate to live in a year round bird-rich environment with many opportunities to enjoy and advocate for our feathered friends.

Stay warm out there!





Black-Mandibled Toucan, photo by Wes Blauvelt

Birding Trip to Costa Rica in April!

The Cayuga Bird Club has arranged a trip with [Holbrook Travel](#) to **Costa Rica**, a country in which more than 870 species of birds have been recorded. This trip is planned for **April 20 - April 29, 2018**. The cost is \$2500 per person, and includes all meals, accommodations and activities. (The fee does not include international airfare). The trip is appropriate for both beginners and more advanced birders.

Trip highlights will include taking hikes in the 500-acre rainforest reserve at Selva Verde Lodge, an area that provides habitat to more than 350 bird species, including the endangered Great Green Macaw. Then we will get a different perspective of the rainforest from atop the 100-meter



Christmas Bird Count Results January 1, 2018

This year's Ithaca Christmas Bird Count was held on January 1, 2018. We had 122 participants out in the field counting birds (in frigid weather!), and another 12 reporting from their feeders at home. Within our 15-mile count circle, a total of **101 species** were found on count day, a new record! This includes three new species never before recorded for count day in Ithaca: **Black Vulture (3), Tufted Duck** and **European Goldfinch!** Our previous count record was 99 species in 2013. In addition to the new birds, our count numbers were the highest ever observed for the Ithaca Christmas Bird Count for twelve species: **Mute Swan (7), Redhead (16,401), Ring-necked Duck (250), Lesser Scaup (501), White-winged Scoter (4), Long-tailed Duck (47), Common Goldeneye (272), Common Merganser (216), Red-breasted Merganser (21), Bald Eagle (14), Dark-eyed Junco (1528), White-crowned Sparrow (9).**

Misses include Ring-necked Pheasant, Merlin and Northern Shrike. Keep an eye out for these species in the next three days, for possible count week additions.

Our total count of individual birds on January 1 was 40,583, just above our 10-year average of 38,328.

Thanks to the area leaders for coordinating these efforts, to all of the Ithaca Christmas Bird Count participants and to Paul Anderson, our compiler of the count.

suspended walkway at Tirimbuna Biological Reserve, and see species that spend their time in the forest canopy. We will also visit the world-renowned La Selva Biological Station to watch for species such as Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Crested Guan, and Spectacled Owl and spend two nights in the cloud forest of the San Gerardo de Dota, with its many hummingbirds, tanagers and flowerpiercers.

For more information and a detailed itinerary, contact Jody Enck at jwe4@cornell.edu. You do not have to be a Cayuga Bird Club member to join this trip.

Montezuma Audubon Center Winter Programs



Are you looking for fun and exciting activities this winter for your friends and family? The Montezuma Audubon Center's programs are a great way to explore our winter wonderland, the birds we all love and their habitats. Join us for hot cocoa and snowshoe programs to explore the wild side of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex in the snow. Hop in our van and tour Montezuma and Cayuga Lake to experience songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl who use these Important Birds Areas. Don't miss the live owls that will be the stars of our Owl Prowl program. You can also rent snowshoes from us to explore the winter landscape on your own. Programs will go on with or without snow. Space is limited and registration is required for all programs. Please call 315-365-3588

Individual species counts (preliminary) are listed below (thanks to Paul Anderson and Dave Nutter):

Snow Goose - 12

Cackling Goose - 1

Canada Goose - 5781

Mute Swan - 7

Tundra Swan - 12

Gadwall - 7

American Wigeon - 2

American Black Duck - 18

Mallard - 635

Northern Pintail - 3

Green-winged Teal - 2

Canvasback - 57

Redhead - 16,401

Ring-necked Duck - 250

Tufted Duck - 1 (Stuart Krasnoff, SW Cayuga Lake, Ithaca)

Greater Scaup - 9 (may be revised)

Lesser Scaup - 501

Surf Scoter - 1

White-winged Scoter - 4

Long-tailed Duck - 47

Bufflehead - 5

Common Goldeneye - 272

Hooded Merganser - 2

Common Merganser - 216

Red-breasted Merganser - 21

Ruddy Duck - 4

Ruffed Grouse - 1

Wild Turkey - 65

Red-throated Loon - 1

Common Loon - 1

Horned Grebe - 4

Double-crested Cormorant - 1

Great Blue Heron - 2

Black Vulture - 3 (Anne Clark, Varna)

Turkey Vulture - 26

or e-mail montezuma@audubon.org.

For more detailed information on the programs below, as well as other winter programs at the MAC, visit the [Montezuma Audubon Center website](#).

Jan. 6 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm **Hot Cocoa and Snowshoe Hike**

Jan. 13 11:00 am - 2:00 pm **Walking in a Winter Wineryland**

Jan. 18 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm **Cayuga Lake Birding Van Tour**

Jan. 20 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm **Owl Prowl**

Feb. 3 10:00 am-12:00 pm **Nature of Montezuma Lecture Series: Bird Banding with Dr. John Van Niel**



Cayuga Bird Club Meeting **February 12, 2018**

Speaker: **Bob McGuire**

Title: ***Across Siberia: Birding with a Microphone***

Bob spent part of last summer traveling across Siberia, from the Mongolian border to the Arctic Ocean. Join him for recordings, videos, and photos of some amazing birds as well as landscapes, street scenes and stories from an experience he will never forget.

Northern Harrier - 4
Sharp-shinned Hawk - 5
Cooper's Hawk - 18
Bald Eagle - 14
Red-tailed Hawk - 114

Rough-legged Hawk - 1
American Coot - 111
Ring-billed Gull - 216
Herring Gull - 1006
Iceland Gull - 2

Lesser Black-backed Gull - 1
Great Black-backed Gull - 140
Rock Pigeon - 737
Mourning Dove - 728
Eastern Screech-Owl - 30

Great Horned Owl - 6
Barred Owl - 1
Northern Saw-whet Owl - 1
Belted Kingfisher - 1
Red-headed Woodpecker - 1

Red-bellied Woodpecker - 221
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 5
Downy Woodpecker - 360
Hairy Woodpecker - 164
Northern Flicker - 12

Pileated Woodpecker - 28
American Kestrel - 2
Peregrine Falcon - 2
Blue Jay - 1034
American Crow - 1686

Fish Crow - 3
Common Raven - 22
Horned Lark - 91
Black-capped Chickadee - 1567
Tufted Titmouse - 315

Red-breasted Nuthatch - 11
White-breasted Nuthatch - 273
Brown Creeper - 19
Winter Wren - 2

Bob McGuire is a former president of the Cayuga Bird Club and Editor of *Birding The Cayuga Lake Basin*. An avid birder and sound recordist, Bob has contributed over 4000 recordings to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Macaulay Library. His personal collection includes the vocalizations of nearly 600 North American birds.

Carolina Wren - 35

Golden-crowned Kinglet - 32

Eastern Bluebird - 74

Hermit Thrush - 1

American Robin - 14

Northern Mockingbird - 14

European Starling - 2345

Cedar Waxwing - 68

Snow Bunting - 882

Yellow-rumped Warbler - 3

American Tree Sparrow - 345

Dark-eyed Junco - 1528

White-crowned Sparrow - 9

White-throated Sparrow - 213

Savannah Sparrow - 1

Song Sparrow - 70

Swamp Sparrow - 7

Eastern Towhee - 1

Northern Cardinal - 404

Red-winged Blackbird - 12

Rusty Blackbird - 2

Brown-headed Cowbird - 3

House Finch - 256

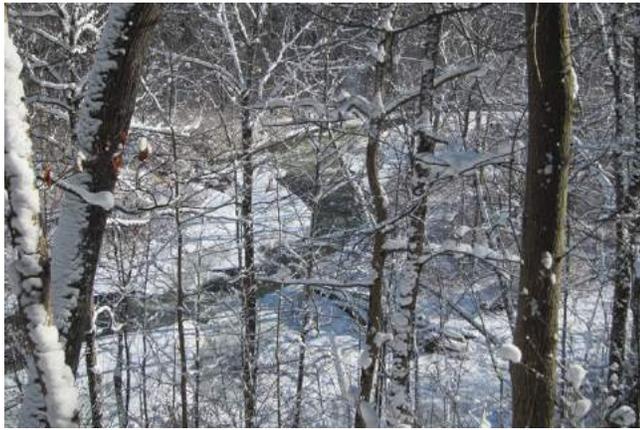
Purple Finch - 22

European Goldfinch - 1 (Bob McGuire, Whitted Rd, Dryden)

American Goldfinch - 462

House Sparrow - 449

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](#).



photos by Jody Enck, January 1, 2018

Volunteering at the 2017 Batumi, Georgia Raptor Count

Sandy Wold

I will never forget my first morning at the Sakhalvasho observation station looking down into the serene valley below with the endless ancient Black Sea to the north. The starry night faded as the sun illuminated the lush foothills of the Greater Caucasus Mountains, which remained hidden in the clouds and 160 miles away. Four of us sat in a reverent pause with our scopes and binoculars at the ready. As we gazed into the northern horizon, there was a shared and palpable anticipation of what the raptor migration might bring.



When I first submitted my application to the Batumi Raptor Count (BRC) last summer, I was assured I would be of help. However, by Day 2, I realized that I was pretty useless because the volunteers there were all familiarized with all thirty-one species from their European homelands. In addition, these birds

were passing by so fast and sometimes too high for me to identify. Furthermore, “experts” in the group were so good at identification, that they called most of the birds before I could even find them in my scope. The less experienced of us were only needed if birds came by the hundreds and thousands, and that did happen as the day warmed up. Several massive kettles formed suddenly at times: steady streams of raptors would emerge from the clouds, descend quickly, then split and/or mix with other streams, or some lifted up from the valley, creating raptor tornadoes filled with hundreds of hawks and black kites and sometimes a handful of storks and cranes with an occasional solitary osprey or rare gull or eagle in the mix. When this happened, the team shifted into warp speed while experts shouted out scarce or rare sightings like the Steppe Eagle, Pallas’ Gulls, or the Crested Honey-buzzard.

Western Black Kites were the easiest to identify with their notched tails, and they were most numerous during my visit. But the European Honey-buzzards and Steppe Buzzards dominate, numbering in the hundreds of thousands by the end of the count and are the main reason the annual count now exceeds ONE MILLION! I couldn’t tell these buzzards apart until Day 5 when I decided to sketch them.



The three harriers (Montagu’s, Marsh, and Pallid) were also challenging as they were often back-lit and flew along the coastline. Of these harriers, there were dark and light forms and several ages to discern. The eagles (Booted, Short-toed, Steppe, and Greater Spotted) were especially thrilling, but they were often too high to see, yet I had several

close-encounters.

Steppe Buzzard

Batumi Raptor Count NGO

The BRC is an NGO run by ten hard-working and devoted European board members, who each have a

background and/or job in ornithology and conservation. The BRC mission is multi-fold: annual data collection, internships for eastern and western European students, illegal hunting monitoring, conservation education, and ecotourism development. The board collaborates with the Georgian conservation group, SABUKO, to do projects such as co-sponsoring the annual Batumi Bird Festival. At the 2017 festival I attended, a Dutch expat spoke on his many years living in Turkey and working for BirdLife International to mitigate illegal hunting of raptors and inhumane practices of falconry in northern Turkey. The BRC is using this BirdLife model to build relationships with Georgian falconers to do the same. Some of the BRC volunteers are also involved with a German nonprofit, the Committee Against Bird Slaughter, fighting illegal poaching of European passerines and raptors in Cyprus and northern Italy. The situation is a serious and pervasive problem

throughout the Mediterranean, relatively new to Georgia, and done largely out of boredom, according to surveys. One of several successful strategies to stop

illegal hunting, he shared, was to introduce men to the sport of clay target shooting.

Ecotourism

Batumi beaches have recently become a major tourist-destination for Israelis and Jordanians but



are otherwise surrounded by rural poverty and major road, tunnel, and bridge construction projects with some scary detour situations. Georgia is still in transition to independence from Communism. For most people, Russian is the second language, but English is now desired. The village where I stayed only got internet in the last year or two. The BRC has played a huge role in helping build the local tourist economy by working with locals to obtain grants to help families renovate their homes to western standards so they can accommodate the growing number of tours, independent tourists, and volunteers who come for the annual migration. Homes were clean and modest and many had courtyards and gardens with figs, grapes, and vegetables, enclosed



by ornate wrought iron fences.

Education

On Day 5, I asked to switch from counting to education and got permission to pick up where they left off their last project. I ended up going into two schools and four classrooms to talk to 4th-7th graders about raptor migration and the BRC. Elza, a teacher I met at a social event, invited me to talk at her schools; and she translated for me. I asked students what birds of prey they knew, what food chain they depended on, and asked how their food supply was affected by the change in season. Then I drew pictures of local raptors on chalkboards, used the maps on the walls, and shared my raptor sketches. The students were excited and engaged as I helped them understand why Westerners loved these birds so much and wanted to visit their village. Then we went outside to look through the scope and binoculars. Serendipitously, a kettle of Black Kites, Honey Buzzards, and Steppe Buzzards was whirling immediately above the roof of the school! We were less than a half mile below Station One, and these raptors were so close that

we did not even need binoculars!



In conclusion, I highly recommend volunteering for international raptor counts to better understand raptor conservation and to meet amazing people! Go early in the count season and stay longer if you can (3+ weeks). Also, familiarize yourself with the raptors in their breeding grounds before you go. Finally, consider collecting and bringing binoculars to give to local science teachers. To learn more, you can visit www.batimiraptorcount.org and keep an eye out for their upcoming documentary, “Worlds Collide.”

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.

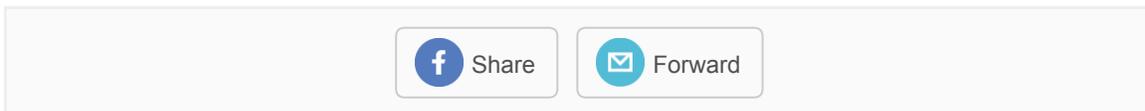
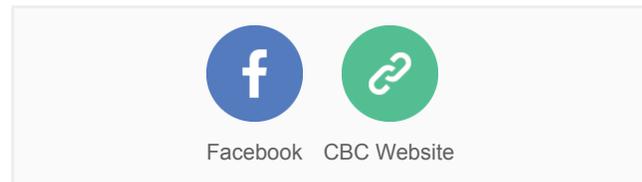
Members receive via email the monthly Cayuga Bird Club Newsletter, from September through June. Newsletter submissions may be sent to Diane Morton, newsletter@cayugabirdclub.org. Of particular interest are articles about local bird sightings, bird behavior, birding hot spots, book reviews, and original poetry, art, and photos. To make sure you don't miss an issue, add newsletter@cayugabirdclub.org to your email contacts.

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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