



Cayuga Bird Club

June 2018

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[Cayuga Bird Club Annual Picnic](#) June 11, 2018

Myers Point Park, Lansing
6:00 - 8:00 pm

Cayuga Bird Club's annual dish-to-pass picnic will be held at Myers Park in Lansing (off route 34B) on **Monday, June 11, 2018**. Bring a generous dish to share—main dish, appetizer, salad, or dessert. Also bring your own place setting, something to drink, and binoculars. There will be a short bird walk after dinner. Come meet and socialize with your fellow bird club members!

[From the President](#)

Wes Blauvelt



My neighborhood consists of mixed hard wood and mature White Pine forests. My neighbors are the State of New York (Danby State Forest) and two logging companies. For

over 40 years, this neighborhood has been untouched by the chainsaw, with the exception of

June 3 Field Trip: Dorothy McIlroy Preserve, Summerhill, 7:00 am - noon

Leader: Gladys Birdsall

June 4 CLO Seminar, 7:30 - 9:00pm

Dark ecology: studying night-time bird migration with weather radar

June 10 Field Trip: Connecticut Hill, 7:30am - noon

Leader: Suan Yong and Dave Gislason

June 11 CBC Annual Dish-to-Pass Picnic, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Myers Point Park Pavilion A, Lansing

Sept. 10 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting, 7:30 - 9:00 pm

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

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

Minutes

of the May 14, 2018 Cayuga Bird Club meeting are [available](#) on the Cayuga Bird Club website.

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

Cayuga Lake Basin birds reported in May are listed below.

- May 1 Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- May 1 Warbling Vireo
- May 1 Black-throated Blue Warbler
- May 1 Scarlet Tanager
- May 2 American Golden-Plover
- May 2 Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- May 2 Eastern Wood-Pewee
- May 2 Yellow-throated Vireo
- May 2 Veery
- May 2 Wood Thrush
- May 2 Blue-winged Warbler
- May 2 American Redstart
- May 2 Cape May Warbler
- May 2 Cerulean Warbler

my personal efforts to supply fire wood for home and hearth.

Four years ago one of the logging company neighbors embarked upon a logging operation that resulted in a clear cut of approximately 50 acres. The trees in this forest were mature red oak, black cherry and hemlock. And I would estimate that many of the trees were in excess of 150 years old. The logging company completed the operation during the winter months; minimized the erosion of soils and left the tree tops to decompose back to compost. I walk this property often searching for birds and my initial reaction to the clear cut was dismay. The forest that I had enjoyed for many years was gone... and now looked like a wasteland. I should note that the logging company did leave approximately 10% of the trees uncut to supply seed trees to facilitate a natural regrowth of the forest, although it will be another 100 years before it returns to the condition before the cut.

Every year since the clear cut I walk the area during migration to see what species are settling into this “new” habitat. Where once there were 100’ red oaks, now there are thickets of black raspberries and whips of oak, cherry, hickory, hawthorn and maple growing from the stumps of the harvested forest. Bushwhacking has a whole new meaning for me as I navigate through the cut in search of birds.

In the first couple of years after the logging, the diversity of birds was minimal. Blue Jays, chickadees and woodpeckers seems to predominate. But things began to change during the third year post harvest and this year there seemed to be an explosion of diversity. On a recent hike through the area I found nine different species of warblers including Canada, Prairie, Chestnut-sided (many), Magnolia, Black-and-white and Blue-winged along with



May 2 Blackburnian Warbler
 May 2 Chestnut-sided Warbler
 May 3 Black-bellied Plover
 May 3 Barn Owl
 May 3 Eastern Whip-poor-will
 May 3 Red-eyed Vireo
 May 3 Swainson's Thrush
 May 3 Lincoln's Sparrow
 May 3 Indigo Bunting
 May 3 Orchard Oriole
 May 4 Tennessee Warbler
 May 5 Least Bittern
 May 5 Black-billed Cuckoo
 May 5 Philadelphia Vireo
 May 5 Hooded Warbler
 May 6 Semipalmated Plover
 May 6 Common Nighthawk
 May 7 Orange-crowned Warbler
 May 9 Worm-eating Warbler
 May 9 Bay-breasted Warbler
 May 9 Canada Warbler
 May 9 Wilson's Warbler
 May 10 Willow Flycatcher
 May 10 Blackpoll Warbler
 May 12 Cattle Egret
 May 12 White-rumped Sandpiper
 May 12 Semipalmated Sandpiper
 May 12 Short-billed Dowitcher
 May 12 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
 May 12 Alder Flycatcher
 May 14 Gray-cheeked Thrush
 May 14 Mourning Warbler
 May 15 Long-billed Dowitcher
 May 15 Acadian Flycatcher
 May 16 Grasshopper Sparrow
 May 16 Clay-colored Sparrow
 May 17 American Avocet
 May 19 Stilt Sandpiper
 May 20 Wilson's Phalarope
 May 21 Olive-sided Flycatcher
 May 22 Brant
 May 22 Ruddy Turnstone
 May 22 Red-necked Phalarope
 May 23 Whimbrel
 May 23 Sanderling
 May 29 Red Knot
 May 30 Mississippi Kite

2018 total count: 265 species

Scarlet Tanagers, Baltimore Orioles and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks.

This year my other logging company neighbor is removing all of the marketable White Ash trees in advance of the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. I have mixed feelings about this decision. I get the business decision to remove the trees while they have economic value, but I wonder if there are trees in the forest that could resist the borer and provide future seed stock for a regeneration of the species. Nevertheless, the trees are being cut and I am hopeful that the changes in habitat will again result in new and unexpected avian residents... my most favorite of neighbors.



Wes



Cayuga Bird Club Trip to Costa Rica

Jody Enck

Five members of the Cayuga Bird Club were joined by two other U.S. birders for a great trip to Costa Rica from April 20-29, 2018. **Donna Scott, Phil McNeil, Leigh Stivers, Monica Weimer, and Jody Enck** were joined by Alex Chester (Ocklawaha Valley Audubon Chapter, central Florida) and Derek Nunes (independent birder from the Sacramento, California area). The idea for the trip grew out of discussions within the Sister Bird Club Network,

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

Upcoming Field Trips

Gladys Birdsall will lead a half-day trip to the **Dorothy McIlroy Bird Sanctuary**, a preserve of the Finger Lakes Land Trust, on **Sunday, June 3, 7:00 am - noon**. The preserve is located along the outlet of Lake Como in the town of Summerhill, and has a peat swamp and hemlock forest that supports a high diversity of species more commonly found in northern forests. The preserve also protects a number of uncommon or rare plant species. Meet for carpooling at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology north parking area at 7:00 am. We will return at noon. Bring a snack and something to drink. Any questions, contact Gladys at gjb5@outlook.com.

Suan Yong and **Dave Gislason** will lead a Cayuga Bird Club field trip to **Connecticut Hill** on **Sunday, June 10, 7:30 am - noon**. Meet at 7:30 am at the Wegman's parking lot (away from the store, by the inlet) or at 8:00 am at the intersection of Connecticut Hill Rd., Boylan Rd., and Lloyd Starks Rd. Bring water and a snack. Insect repellent may also be helpful. If you have questions, contact Suan at suan.yong@gmail.com.

These 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.

Monday Night Seminar

Cornell Lab of Ornithology
June 4, 2018, 7:30 - 9:00 pm

Speakers: Cecilia Nilsson, Kyle Horton, Adriaan Dokter, Cornell Lab

which aims to connect birders throughout the Western Hemisphere and beyond.

We started our tropical adventure upon arrival in the capital city of San Jose where we met our in-country guide Gilbert "Chito" Molina and our bus driver, Oldemar. Even before leaving the city, we saw nearly 30 species. The Rufous-collared Sparrows, Blue-gray Tanagers, and Blue-and-White Swallows that wowed us on the afternoon of our arrival soon became old friends that we encountered in many places along our journey.

After leaving San Jose, we spent three nights at Selva Verde lodge in the Caribbean lowlands. Of course, we took most of a day to get there, birding up and over the continental divide, with stops at La Paz Waterfall Gardens, Cinchona, and a nondescript pull-off beside a mountain road. La Paz is in a higher elevation cloud forest, and we found Purple-throated Mountain-gem, Black-bellied Hummingbird, Slaty Flowerpiercer, Yellow-thighed Finch, and about 45 more species. Even the impromptu roadside stop to check out some feeding flocks netted 27 species.

From our base at Selva Verde, we visited research stations at La Selva and Tirimbina. We also took a ride on a covered boat to find Sunbittern among many other wonderful species. Some heavy rains dampened us physically, but did not dampen our spirits. Our morning at La Selva netted over 80 species, including 12 species of flycatchers, 2 species of puffbirds, and just about every woodpecker species we could have hoped to encounter. We also saw more than 10 different sloths over the course of our time in the lowlands (both two-toed and three-toed species), including two moms with babies.

of Ornithology Edward W. Rose
Postdoctoral Fellows

Title: *Dark ecology: studying night-time bird migration with weather radar*

Description: Join us for an evening exploring what normally goes unseen during migration season, featuring Cecilia Nilsson, Kyle Horton, and Adriaan Dokter, all Edward W. Rose Postdoctoral Fellows at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Cecilia will talk about why we use radar to study migration, and how she uses it to learn about how birds migrate and how their migration is shaped by winds. Kyle will discuss his use of radar to quantify and forecast migratory flights, from small to large-scales, highlighting the impact of anthropogenic light at night on nocturnally migrating birds. Finally, Adriaan will discuss how he uses the radar network to count the number of migratory birds leaving and entering the US. In this talk we will explore not only where birds migrate, but also when and where they die, how successful they reproduce, and how North America's avifauna has changed over the last two decades.

This seminar will be live-streamed at the Monday Night Seminar webpage, bit.ly/BirdTalks.

Our next
Cayuga Bird Club meeting
will be held on
Monday,
September 10, 2018,
7:30 pm
at the
Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Mark your calendars!

Montezuma Audubon



Three-toed Sloth, photo by Alex Chester

Back at Selva Verde, we made some connections with the local birding and environmental community by visiting the environmental education center there and donating two pairs of binoculars for local school groups to use.

From the Caribbean slope we headed to the east-central part of the country and stayed two nights at Rancho Naturalista near Turrialba. Along the way we encountered some migrating flocks of raptors. One massive kettle held an estimated 1,200 Mississippi Kites. Rancho is known for its middle-elevation birds, including some hummingbird specialties like Snowcap, Black-crested Coquette, and Green-thorntail. Hard to imagine Snowcaps becoming ho-hum, but we did see many of them.



Snowcap, photo by Alex Chester

We were able to watch that species and several others taking baths in a small mountain stream where they come in the late afternoon every day to bathe. And yes, we felt a little voyeuristic while

Center June Programs



Spring into action at the Montezuma Audubon Center with these family-friendly programs and special events! Bird watching walks, tours of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, Derby Hill Hawk Observatory, and Cornell's Lab of Ornithology, guided paddling trips around Montezuma, Scout badge programs and the home school nature series are great ways to experience the spring waterfowl, bird of prey, and songbird migration. Space is limited and **REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED for all programs**. Please call 315-365-3588 or e-mail montezuma@audubon.org.

For detailed information on the programs below, as well as other spring programs at the MAC, visit the Montezuma Audubon Center [website](http://www.audubon.org).

June 2 6 pm - 8 pm **Crusoe Creek Paddle**

June 7 1 pm - 4 pm **Montezuma Birdwatching Tour**

June 9 9 am - 12 pm **Birding and Bogging Tour**

June 15 8 am - 11 am **Montezuma Birding Van Tour**

June 21 5:30 pm - 8 pm **Summer Solstice Celebration Paddle**

June 23 12 pm - 4 pm **Birds and Brews**

watching Crowned Woodnymphs bathe in a woodland pool.

At Rancho, we also met up with a young guide named Mercedes "Meche" Alpizar. In 2017, Meche saw more than 700 species of birds in Costa Rica and photographed more than 680 of them. She recently was honored as one of the best birders in the country. Among her many rewards is a sponsored trip to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in June for a sound recording workshop. Meche will be in Ithaca on June 11th when we meet for our annual picnic, and she hopes to join us there if she can get away from the sound recording workshop. One of her passions is trying to get more young women into birding and nature study in Costa Rica. I hope we can hear more from her about this effort at our picnic.

We spent the last couple of days of our trip staying in the high elevations in the central mountains. Our base was the Savegre Mountain lodge, which sits in a valley at about 7,200 feet elevation. One day we birded the very localized paramo habitat at the highest elevations – over 11,200 feet. This habitat is one commonly found in the Andes, and holds unique species like Volcano Junco, Volcano Hummingbird, Timberline Wren, and Peg-billed Finch.



Fiery-throated Hummingbird, photo by Alex Chester

Perhaps the highlight of our stay in the highlands was seeing eight different Resplendent Quetzals. We scarcely hoped to wish that we might see even one of these magnificent birds. The males have, well, resplendent, three-foot-long tails. The green and reds of these birds is jaw-dropping. To see so many was an unexpected

The Montezuma Audubon Center is open Tuesday - Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm; Trails are open daily from dawn to dusk. Location: 2295 State Route 89, Savannah, NY 13146.

**New York State Birders
Conference & NYSOA 71st
Annual Meeting**

**Hosted by
Burroughs Audubon Nature Club &
Rochester Birding Association
October 5 – 7, 2018 in
Henrietta, NY**

The weekend meeting will include Friday afternoon field trips for early arrivals and a welcome reception and buffet followed by two workshops, each run twice and in parallel on Friday night. On Saturday morning there will be field trips, with shorter ones for delegates, who will then attend the annual delegates' meeting. A papers session will be held in the afternoon and a banquet and speaker in the evening. Sunday morning will bring more field trips, with several planned along routes toward attendees' home cities. Friday and Saturday afternoons will also provide an opportunity to visit vendors and other exhibits while meeting with birding friends.

**Saturday Night Banquet Speaker:
Greg Miller A Big Year: Life After**

The banquet speaker will be Greg Miller of The Big Year book and movie fame. This is the 20th anniversary of Greg's Big Year. He will approach the subject from the viewpoint of what followed from his adventures: the book, the movie, and his future involvement in birding. He was able to spend time on the movie set interacting with Jack Black (who played him), Steve Martin, and Owen

treat.



Resplendent Quetzal, photo by Alex Chester

Our trip was over far too soon. Altogether, my notes indicate that I saw 304 species of birds. Others may have seen a few more or a few less. We had a fabulous time and deepened our friendships with each other. We already are making plans for another Cayuga Bird Club trip. Where do you want to go?



Field Trip Report - Monkey Run

Liisa Mobley

Seven birders joined me for a snowy morning walk, the last Sunday in April – now a distant memory after the last few very warm days.

Despite the wet snow, which pelted our eyes and fogged up our binoculars, we managed to find 25 species of birds, and, I think, we had fun. I won't go into all the details, especially as I seem to have forgotten some of them already; fortunately, Wes was keeping the eBird list! We started out from the

Wilson and served as Bird Consultant to the movie. He has become an advocate of bringing birding to as many people as possible through talks and leading tours, makes bird records contributions through eBird, and has a special interest in encouraging young birders.

Greg is one of the three birders whose competitive Big Years in 1998 became the basis for the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Big Year* by Mark Obmascik, published in 2004 and later the Twentieth Century Fox full length movie filmed in 2010 and released in 2011. His interest in birding began at a young age, started and encouraged by his father. He has been birding for over 50 years, covering all 50 states and much of Canada. In 2016, he embarked on another Big Year, this one non-traditional. It consisted of 11 one-week tours aimed at introducing many to target species birding, with a goal of surpassing 500 species with that limited-time, focused approach. He currently lives in Sugarcreek in the heart of Amish Country in Northeast Ohio.

Friday Night Workshops

One workshop will feature a description of the use of eBird as the data input tool and archival database for the NY Breeding Bird Atlas III to begin field work in 2020. There will be examples from the work in progress using this tool on other breeding bird atlas projects, such as those in Wisconsin and Virginia. This tool allows near real-time access to data, so one can see almost immediately the status of effort in any block or of the project as a whole in lists and maps. Experts in the design and use of the tool from the eBird Team will lead the presentation and discussion. The other workshop will be a presentation on Snowy Owls and

Monkey Run parking lot, first heading towards Fall Creek, and veering left, going downstream a short way; we then backtracked, and made our way upstream, eventually following the trail uphill to a forest of red pines and white pines, and then over to the railroad right of way, and back to the parking lot. Oh, and mud, yes, mud.

We heard a **Ruffed Grouse** drumming (near the parking lot), and saw **Cedar Waxwings** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** along the way. All of us heard an **Eastern Towhee** in a large brushy area; some of the group stayed long enough to get good looks. Closer to Fall Creek, we saw **Common Mergansers** and **Wood Ducks** – we thought that perhaps some of the ducks were nesting in the sycamores on the other side of the river, but we couldn't quite confirm that they were entering a nest cavity. In the pine woods, overlooking the creek from a bit of a height, there was one popular pine which seemed to attract several birds, including a **Palm Warbler** and two **Brown Creepers**. On the way back along the old railroad right of way, we had very close looks at a **White-throated Sparrow** sitting in a bush close to the path; it was joined by another White-throated Sparrow which preferred to remain less obvious.

We saw 25 species, in 2.5 hours, on a 2.5 mile walk.

For a complete list of birds, please see our checklist:

<https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45069365>

Field Trip Report - Park Preserve

Paul Anderson

We had a fine time on our May 5 field trip. We met at the CLO parking lot, and while waiting there we were treated to a nice view of a **Common Raven** being harassed by crows and blackbirds. It landed on one of the utility poles and croaked its displeasure.

project SNOWstorm by Tom MacDonald, a long-time Snowy Owl bander and one the world's experts on these spectacular birds. As you hear some of the more recent findings from tracking devices put on some of these owls, you will be even more impressed and fascinated by their lives.

Field Trips

The Rochester area has multiple areas where migrating birds of all types congregate. The shoreline of Lake Ontario, with its Braddock and Irondequoit Bays; parks and cemeteries such as Durand Eastman Park, Webster Park, Mount Hope Cemetery, and Holy Sepulchre Cemetery; glacial treasures such as Mendon Ponds Park with its kettle holes, ponds, woodlands, and fields; and parcels preserved by the Genesee Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy make up a vibrant, diverse habitat for birders to enjoy. Field trips will highlight shorebird species lingering near our inland ponds and inlets, passerine banding efforts at Braddock Bay Bird Observatory, and songbirds along the scenic pathways of our parks and preserves. As the 2018 fall migration unfolds, Rochester's field trip experts will be scouting areas to locate the best spots for finding fall treasures. Full trip descriptions will be published nearer the conference date, and specific field trip locations with sign-ups will be available at the meeting's check-in table.

Papers Session

A papers session will be presented on Saturday afternoon beginning at 1:30 PM and ending by 5:00 PM, with a short break mid-session. Typically, papers relate to topics of interest to birders and are often given by students or researchers from New York schools.

On the way to the preserve we spotted a **Red-tailed Hawk** on the ground in a field on Freese Road, where it was being mobbed too. At the same point one of our party observed a **Bobolink** and a flyover **Pileated Woodpecker**.

At the preserve we started at the SW entrance and did the loop down to the creek including the ravine. Our first observation was of singing **Eastern Towhees** and a distant **Prairie Warbler**. Large numbers of **American Goldfinch** were present near the entrance. A few **Dark-eyed Juncos** kept making appearances. Further in we heard and saw first **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**, then some **Golden-crowned**. Several **White-throated Sparrows** were singing lustily. An enthusiastic **Ovenbird** popped into sight and sang. A couple of **Field Sparrows** sang too. Two **Broad-winged Hawks** flew over.

As we entered the woods leading down to the creek we heard **Black-throated Green**, and probable **Magnolia Warblers** (we never got visuals). At the creek we struck out on the Louisiana Waterthrush we had hoped to see.

We bumped into a couple of other birders who had seen a Black-throated Blue and a Blackburnian, and heard a Winter Wren at the ravine. We did not succeed in repeating their success, but were compensated by the sight of a pair of **Hermit Thrushes**.

Back at the entrance we decided to go to the other parking area and do the boardwalk. There we added **Solitary Sandpiper**, **Chestnut-sided Warbler**, **Common Yellowthroat**, and a flyover **Cooper's Hawk**.

As a bonus, on the way back we bumped into John Fitzpatrick on Mt. Pleasant Road who pointed out the location of **Horned Larks**. A lovely male **Northern Harrier** was there too. A bit further up we got out of the car when we heard a **Savannah Sparrow**, and then got great scope views of a singing male Bobolink at the very top of a tree.

Thanks to everyone who participated. It was well worth the effort.

Lodging and Meeting Information

This meeting will be centered at the RIT Inn and Conference Center at 5257 West Henrietta Road in the town of Henrietta just south of Rochester and adjacent to the NY State Thruway not far from Exit 46. There are two restaurants in the hotel. For more information: www.rit.edu/ritinn/ A block of rooms has been reserved at the RIT Inn and Conference Center to be held through September 14, 2018. Rate for all rooms is \$109.00 plus tax. Contact the RIT Inn and Conference Center directly at 585-359-1800 to make your reservation. Be sure to mention the NYSOA meeting for the special rate.

Friday and Saturday meals will be in the Mohawk/Cayuga Room. Workshops will be in nearby rooms immediately following the Friday buffet, and NYSOA Business, awards presentations, the raffle results, and the main speaker will follow Saturday's dinner. The hotel restaurant will be open for breakfast before the morning field trips plus at regular hours, including open for lunches. There are also other restaurants in the nearby area.

Meeting Registration information is available [here](#).

Field Trip Report - Finger Lakes National Forest

Josh Snodgrass

On Sunday, May 6, I led my first ever birding field trip for the Cayuga Bird Club to the Finger Lakes National Forest in (mostly) Schuyler County. Ten courageous birders met me at Teeter Pond at 7:30 am for an all day trip through the National Forest to battle mud, mosquitoes, and multiflora rose in the search for birds. We started at the parking lot and birded a bit in Horton Pasture (technically Seneca County), just across the street to the north. This first leg yielded some very cooperative **Baltimore Orioles**, singing **Brown Thrasher** and **Northern Mockingbird** for good auditory comparisons, distant **Bobolinks**, very loud **Field Sparrows** and scope views of a perched **Red-tailed Hawk**. At Teeter Pond itself, we had several exuberant **Yellow Warblers**, freshly arrived from migration and arguing for territory, drumming and foraging **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** (this species would be present in good numbers throughout the day), **Red-winged Blackbirds** and **Common Grackles**, and some singing **Least Flycatchers** - another species that would reappear at several locations throughout the day, singing enthusiastic Chi-BECK songs and perching for great views.

From Teeter Pond, we carpoled south to Ballard Pond, where we had exceptionally cooperative **Eastern Meadowlarks**, perched singing Bobolink, a scope-able **American Kestrel**, and a surprising six(!) **Wilson's Snipe** foraging, flying and being super cooperative in the marshy spot across the street from Ballard Pond parking lot. The Snipe were one of the highlights of the day for me, a county bird, and the most I've seen at one time. We also picked up singing **Savannah Sparrows**, one of the few birds we would fail to get a look at on the trip.

From Ballard we traveled south to the Potomac Wildlife Ponds (and a fortuitous Port-a-John). We walked the loop trail, catching a glimpse of **Osprey**

above the trees, multiple Least Flycatchers, double digit numbers of **Eastern Towhee**, a flyover pair of **Wood Ducks**, singing **Wood Thrush**, many singing **Ovenbirds**, and briefly vocal **Veery**, drumming **Ruffed Grouse**, a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, both resident nuthatches and several species of warbler. We had good views of **Chestnut-sided**, heard a few **Common Yellowthroat**, and were blown the raspberry by two **Blue-winged Warblers** from deep brush, offering only fleeting glimpses to some of us. As a consolation for the poor views of Blue-winged Warbler, a **Blue-headed Vireo** popped out and presented himself in a nearly leafless tree for good study. We slogged back through the mud to be surprised by a **Great Blue Heron** flying into and perching in a pine tree, which was still hard to discern, despite being 100x bigger than a warbler.

Here we parted ways with about half of the party and broke for lunch at Dandy Mart in Hector. From there, we headed back to the southwest part of the forest and birded several spots along Burnt Hill Rd. We stopped by Gorge Trail, South Burnt Hill Pond, and South Slope Trail. At Gorge Trail we finally got good views of **American Redstart**, and brief look at a **Broad-winged Hawk** as it flew away. Some of the best birding of the day was at South Burnt Hill Pond, where we encountered quite a few **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, and in one tree had two **Nashville Warblers**, four **Purple Finches**, two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and a Yellow-rumped Warbler. We also had our only **Magnolia Warbler** here, as well as calling **Pileated Woodpeckers**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, and a singing **Brown Creeper**. Our final stop added only a single calling **Common Raven**, and several species we'd encountered earlier.

I had a fantastic time. Our final tally was about 67 species, and still early in the season. It was great reconnecting with some warblers I got to see on their wintering grounds in January and with the very people who I'd seen them there with. Thank you to everyone who came out - you made the trip so much fun! And thank you to the Cayuga Bird Club

for inviting me to lead my first field trip - I can't wait to do another one! See you all soon!

Field Trip Report - Danby Hot Spots

Wes Blauvelt

On May 19th Jae Sullivan joined me for a tour of Danby “Hot Spots” in search of warblers, flycatchers and cuckoos. For the second year in a row the weather did not cooperate. With temperatures in the 50's, clouds and mist hugging the tops of the Danby Forest and a light drizzle that converted into a steady rain after we started our tour, Danby was anything but a “Hot Spot”.

Our original itinerary was to include Jennings Pond, Bald Hill Road with a possible trek to the Worm Eating Warbler redoubt on Thatcher's Pinnacle, the marsh on Hillview Road to listen for Virginia Rails and then double back to Danby along Michigan Hollow Road for flycatchers and cuckoos. It soon became obvious to us that this field trip would be an abbreviated edition of that itinerary as we decided to bird by truck, with occasional forays into open spaces between the raindrops. Our efforts were not completely futile as we identified **Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, and Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, and Pine Warblers** between the raindrops. But the constant need to clean our optics and glasses from raindrops ended our trip prematurely. I should note that on scouting trips earlier in the week I was successful in finding Mourning, Hooded, Magnolia, Black & White and Blackburnian Warblers on this same route. So I encourage all of you to give Danby and its “Hot Spots” a look-see on a day when the weather is more cooperative. You will enjoy it! And Jae, thanks for joining me.



Mourning Warbler, photo by Wes Blauvelt

Field Trip Report - Shindagin Hollow

Laura Stenzler

It was supposed to be a rainy, cool morning so I expected few to turn out for a bird walk in Shindagin Hollow State Forest, but four intrepid birders heeded the call and joined me! We started at the beginning of the unpaved part of Shindagin Hollow Road where we had a **Scarlet Tanager** serenading us. The rain held off as we walked up the road a bit. It was kind of quiet so we headed back to the cars to set up a shuttle – one car was placed near the balsam swamp and one at the parking area which is about 1 mile up the unpaved part of the road from where we started. We then walked from there to the balsam swamp. The rain held off and we had good looks at **Canada Warblers**, **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, **Chestnut-sided Warblers**, **American Redstarts** and many others. We heard **Mourning Warblers**, **Black-throated Blue**, **Black-throated Green** and one **Blackburnian Warbler**. At a certain moment, we heard another sound that was a bit of a puzzle. It sounded like a kitten mewling. What kind of bird could that be? Well, it turned out to indeed be a kitten, which was curled up in the grasses along the side of the road with its sister. They were probably 5 or 6 weeks old and cold, hungry and docile. We carried them along on our walk to the balsam swamp, where we finished up with **Least Flycatchers**, **Yellow Warbler** and **Baltimore Oriole** as the rain started in earnest. The birding

was a bit quieter than it had been when I scouted the week before, but still a great trip. And, later in the day the kittens found a home with a friend of one of the trip participants – a very happy ending to a fun morning!



Prairie Warbler, photo by Mark Chao

Spring Bird Quest 2018

Mark Chao

For me, nothing lifts the spirits quite like the Finger Lakes Land Trust Spring Bird Quest (SBQ). I mean, who *wouldn't* feel lucky and energized about getting out in our woods and fields and wetlands, just when the weather is warming up and all of our breeding birds are singing?

But in the days leading up to Memorial Day weekend and this year's SBQ, I have to admit, it was a little challenging to look on the bright side. The weather forecast called for a very hot Saturday at the High Vista Preserve and the Hinchcliff Family Preserve, followed by big thunderstorms just at the time of our Sunday walk at the Houghton Land Preserve, then more rain and lightning on Monday at the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve. In the worst case, I thought, we'd get drenched, or even have to cancel a walk on the spot for the first time ever in 12 years. In the best case, I expected the birding to be difficult, and maybe for attendance to lag as people found better things to do than endure the uncooperative elements.

As it turned out, the weather was essentially perfect on Saturday and Monday, with very good human turnout as usual. Sunday's walk did have slightly lower attendance than expected, but we had only light precipitation, which was barely perceptible as we walked through the mature broadleaf forest. By the time the clouds opened up and unfurled sheets of rain, we were already in our cars and halfway home. I felt like a gambler leaving the saloon with pockets full of silver dollars and galloping away just before the black-hatted villain steals his money and his horse.

The birding itself posed some challenges. At High Vista, we repeatedly heard **Mourning Warblers**, **Hooded Warblers**, a late **Black-throated Green Warbler**, and many others singing quite close by, but failed to see them in the dense vegetation. Similarly at Hinchcliff and Houghton, we saw an unexpectedly small fraction of the bird species we heard. It felt a little as if my optimism was backfiring a bit, yielding frustrated hopes instead of expected rewards, plus a nagging feeling of letting participants down.

But I talked some sense into myself. "Mark. Dude. Are you actually complaining about 'only hearing' birds in these beautiful places, including two new 200-acre preserves that the Land Trust has opened to the public just in the last three years [Hinchcliff and Houghton]? That is a pretty good problem to have. Do the other birders look disappointed? No. Stop feeling sorry for yourself, and just keep birding."

So I did. And in the end, the rewards piled up beyond what even the brightest-eyed optimist would expect – including **Chestnut-sided Warblers** close by in perfect light at High Vista, a **Brown Thrasher** right by the parking lot at Hinchcliff, a pair of **Scarlet Tanagers** and two singing **Blackburnian Warblers** at Houghton, and then too many great birds at Lindsay-Parsons to fully enumerate here, including a singing **Prairie Warbler** and **Bobolink** perched for scope views for

many minutes atop short nearby trees.



Chestnut-sided Warbler, photo by Mark Chao

I ended up with a modest 65 species for the weekend, not counting a **Wild Turkey** whose feathers we found on the trail at the High Vista Preserve, nor a **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** and at least one **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** that others found but I missed at Lindsay-Parsons. I know I could have found a lot more species with more effort. But I'll gladly take what we got – benevolence from the weather gods, endless energy and generous donations for the Land Trust from our attendees and other supporters, and eventual birds aplenty.

Many thanks to all for a fine weekend!

Cayuga Bird Club

***Educating and inspiring the birding community of
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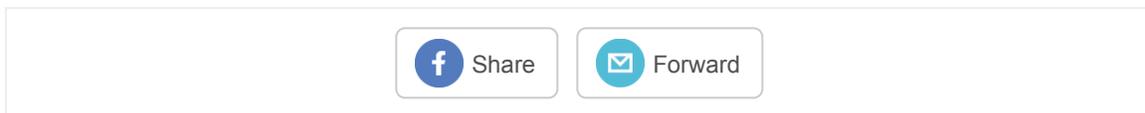
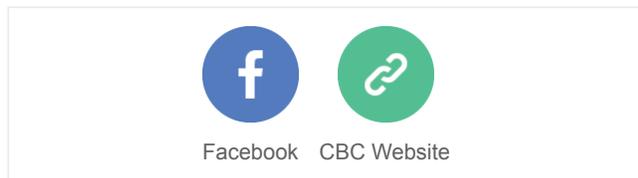
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Chickadee illustration in masthead by Karen Allaben-Confer

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