



# Cayuga Bird Club

## March 2018

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## [Calendar](#)

**Mar. 4 Field Trip: West side of the Lake**

**8:00 am - 12:30 pm**

Leader: Ken Haas

Meet by the big turtle at the Ithaca Children's Garden

**Mar. 11 Field Trip: Around the Lake**

**8:00 am - 4:00 pm**

Leader: Bob McGuire

Meet at Stewart Park, east end

**Mar. 12 Munding Distinguished Lectureship, 5:00 pm**, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Speaker: Dr. Rosemary Grant

*Evolution of Darwin's Finches:*

*Integrating Behavior, Ecology, and Genetics*

## [Cayuga Bird Club Meeting](#)

**March 12, 2018**



**Speakers: Alizé Carrère, National Geographic Explorer, and Shawn Billerman, NSF Postdoctoral Fellow, Cornell Lab of Ornithology**

### ***Adapt and Thrive: Creatively Living in a Climate Changed World***

In 2012, Alizé Carrère received support from National Geographic to conduct research in Madagascar, where she spent several months uncovering an unlikely agricultural adaptation in

**Mar. 12 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting**

**7:30 pm**, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Speakers: Alizé Carrère & Shawn Billerman

*Adapt and Thrive: Creatively Living in a Climate Changed World*

**Mar. 17 Field Trip, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

Leader: Meena Haribal

Meet at Lab of O parking lot

**Apr. 8 Field Trip: Dryden Lake, 7:00 am - noon**

Leader: Ann Mitchell

Meet at north parking lot, Lab of O

**Apr. 9 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting**

**7:30 pm**, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Speaker: Paul Guris, Founder of See Life Paulagics

*Pelagic Discoveries – Birding the Mid-Atlantic and New York Waters*

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

**Minutes**

of the February 12, 2018 Cayuga Bird Club meeting are [available](#) on the Cayuga Bird Club website.



**Upcoming Field Trips**

**Ken Haas** will lead a half-day field trip on **Sunday, March 4**. We'll look for wintering waterfowl on the lake as well as winter field birds nearby. We'll meet by the big turtle in the **Ithaca Children's Garden at 8:00 am** for carpooling and expect to return at 12:30 pm. Wear warm layers and bring a snack and something to drink. Bring a scope if you have one. All are invited to join us regardless of experience level or membership status.

**Bob McGuire** will lead an all-day trip around the lake on **Sunday, March 11** to look for waterfowl and other birds that have recently been reported. **Meet at Stewart Park, east end, at 8:00 am** for carpooling. Note that Daylight Savings time begins March 11. We will

response to severe deforestation. Learning of farmers who were turning erosional gullies into fertile pockets of farmland, her work evolved into a greater story of creativity and resourcefulness amongst the oft-repeated narrative of climate doom.

Shawn Billerman will begin the program with an introduction to the birds of Madagascar and the habitats they depend on. This will set the stage for Alizé, who will talk about the environmental degradation she has seen and the human responses to climate change she has studied. With the persistence of climate change, people across the world are experimenting daily with different adaptive methods on the ground. At a time when doomsday narratives dominate the current climate conversation, adaptation plays an increasingly vital role for both its practical application and as a hopeful reminder of our resilience as a species.

**Alizé Carrère** is a National Geographic Explorer researching and documenting climate change adaptation by humans, in practice. She completed her B.A. at McGill University in Environmental Sciences and International Development and then she spent time living in Panama before returning to McGill to complete an M.Sc. in Bioresource Engineering. With support from National Geographic, Alizé Carrère has been documenting case studies in places such as Madagascar, Bangladesh, India, Norway and the United States to create a web series that reveals human ingenuity and resourcefulness in the face of environmental adversity. The first episode recently premiered at the Telluride Mountain Film Festival, documenting sea level rise in Bangladesh and examining how farmers are adapting by building floating gardens and other buoyant infrastructure. It won the Norman Vaughan Indomitable Spirit Award. Alizé has been traveling around the world sharing her experiences from the field, reminding us of the most important trait that has allowed for our continued survival on earth.

**Shawn Billerman** joined the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in November 2016 as an NSF postdoctoral fellow after completing his PhD at the University of Wyoming. For his PhD, Shawn studied a hybrid zone between Red-naped and Red-breasted Sapsuckers, investigating the mechanisms that have contributed to observed shifts in the hybrid zone over the past 100 years. Prior to graduate school at Wyoming, Shawn completed his BSc at Cornell

stop for food at the north end of the lake. Expect to be back around 4:00 pm. Dress warmly and bring a scope if you have one. Questions? email Bob at [bmcguire@clarityconnect.com](mailto:bmcguire@clarityconnect.com). The trip is open to all.

On **Saturday, March 17, Meena Haribal** will lead a full-day trip (8:00 am - 5:00 pm) to areas where birds of interest are found. We may go some distance from Ithaca, maybe up to Sodus Bay and Fair Haven. We will be looking for lingering winter birds, especially Snow Buntings, Red-throated Loons, Scoters, Long-tailed ducks, gulls, and maybe owls. **Meet at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology parking lot at 7:30 am.** Bring lunch and something to drink; we will also make a stop to purchase coffee and food. Dress warmly for the weather. For questions, contact Meena at [mmh3@cornell.edu](mailto:mmh3@cornell.edu) or at 607-229-8710. Bring a scope if you have one. Rain date is March 18. This trip is open to all.

**Ann Mitchell** will lead a half-day trip to Dryden Lake on **Sunday, April 8, 7:00 am - noon**. Because Spring Field Ornithology will be underway, we will meet at the far parking lot at the Lab of Ornithology, 7:00 am. We might be lucky and see Swamp, Field, and/or Savannah Sparrows, not to mention one or two swallow species. It should be a fun trip. Please email Ann if you have questions at [annmitchell13@gmail.com](mailto:annmitchell13@gmail.com). This trip is 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**

Cayuga Lake Basin birds reported in February are listed below.

Jan. 21 Eastern Phoebe  
Feb 10 Green-tailed Towhee  
Feb. 16 Slaty-backed Gull

University. For his postdoctoral research, Shawn is working to understand the factors that influence patterns of speciation on a broad scale. His is coauthor of the book *Bird Families of the World: An Invitation to the Spectacular Diversity of Birds*.

Cayuga Bird Club meetings start at 7:30 pm, the second Monday of every month. Doors open at 7:00 pm and all meetings are open to the public. Seating is limited; if room capacity is reached, the building will be locked, so come early.

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## **From the President**

*Wes Blauvelt*



Early signs of Spring Migration were all around this past weekend. On Saturday a large movement of Snow Geese passed through the area. I personally observed several flocks in

excess of 100 birds and was treated to a spectacular display of migration when skeins of Snow Geese stretch from horizon to horizon at one time, passing over my observation point during a 10-15 minute period. My guesstimate was 10,000+ individual geese . . . and my truck windshield was spotted with goose poop to “mark” the occasion!

Reported arrivals of American Woodcock, American Pipit, Northern Shoveler; Bald Eagles on nests and a very early Rose-breasted Grosbeak all point to an early spring. And very soon we should expect to see the return of Eastern Phoebe, Tree Swallow and Osprey. Check out the ***Spring Arrival Dates for the Cayuga Lake Basin*** posted on our [Cayuga Bird Club \(CBC\) website](#) for a list of 129 migratory birds that visit each year (scroll to the bottom of the webpage to see this list). It is a great resource and is always fun to track the pulse of migration as each species returns to their breeding territory.

Wood Ducks will be returning soon to breed in our area (Mean Arrival Date March 9). In anticipation of their arrival, I spent the last couple of weeks working to rehabilitate a couple of Wood Duck nest boxes. And taking advantage of the cold weather, I placed them in my swimming and beaver ponds while ice was still present. This allowed me to walk out on the ice and locate the nest box over water. Hopefully this

Feb. 16 Bohemian Waxwing  
Feb. 17 Greater White-fronted Goose  
Feb. 20 Ross's Goose  
Feb. 21 Northern Shoveler  
Feb. 21 Eurasian Wigeon  
Feb. 21 Killdeer  
Feb. 24 Sandhill Crane  
Feb. 24 American Woodcock  
Feb. 24 Fox Sparrow  
Feb. 24 Eastern Meadowlark  
Feb. 25 Rose-breasted Grosbeak

**2018 total count: 138 species**

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

## **Paul C. Munding** **Distinguished Lectureship**

**Monday, March 12, 5:00 - 6:30 pm,**  
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

**Speaker:** Dr. Rosemary Grant,  
Princeton University

**Title:** *Evolution of Darwin's Finches:  
Integrating Behavior, Ecology, and  
Genetics*

Dr. Rosemary Grant is a hero to generations of students and scientists in the field of evolution. Her work (along with husband Peter) on the finches of the Galapagos Islands provided one of the first and clearest demonstrations of natural selection occurring in real time, and is a foundational example for this subject in every high school and college biology classroom. Featured in the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Beak of the Finch*, she showed that bill size in different populations of finches can change over very short periods—as little as two years—driven by environmental conditions and food availability. The findings turned the world of evolutionary biology on its head, as such changes were previously thought to take hundreds or even thousands of years. In her talk, Dr. Grant will cover many of the highlights from her work on Darwin's Finches and discuss the

strategy will provide the nests some protection against predators seeking a tasty meal. Coincidentally, one of our members approached me about where he could find nest boxes, hoping to place them on Beebe Lake. If anyone knows of a source, please let me know. Perhaps this could be a project for our Conservation Action Committee, which Jody Enck has agreed to Chair in the coming year.

As many of you know, National Geographic, in partnership with National Audubon, BirdLife International and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, has declared 2018 the Year of the Bird. Together they will explore the world's changing environment and its impact upon birds. That is why I am especially pleased that we will have representatives from two of these organizations as our March speakers. Shawn Billerman, a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Evolutionary Biology at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, will start the program with an overview of the birds of Madagascar and the habitats that they depend upon. Alizé Carrère is a National Geographic Young Explorer. A native Ithacan, Alizé has been exploring the world and studying the impact of environmental decay and human response since her graduation from McGill University. Her work has featured organic floating gardens in Bangladesh, ice stupas in India and agricultural adaptations in the deforested highlands of Madagascar. Her CBC presentation will focus on the "lavaka" of Madagascar.

I hope Shawn has a photograph of the Red Owl of Madagascar (*Tyto soumagnei*) to share!



complementary insights she has gained from decades of exploring their behavior, ecology, evolution, and genetics.

## **Cayuga Bird Club Meeting April 9, 2018**

**Speaker:** Paul Guris, Founder of See Life Paulagics, Pelagic Birding Tours

**Title:** *Pelagic Discoveries – Birding the Mid-Atlantic and New York Waters*

**Description:** Over the years, *See Life's* trips have turned up a number of pelagic discoveries including rarities, high counts, identification tips, habitat requirements, and behavioral traits. This program will explore a range of these discoveries in the Mid-Atlantic, particularly in the New York area. Examples include rarities like Western Gull and Fea's Petrel. Birds like Band-rumped Storm-Petrels, once considered to be incredibly rare in our area, turn out to be regular and even expected in the right areas at the right time of year. Dovekies have a highly specialized requirement for feeding that makes them generally easy to find.

Don't expect a dry, data-driven presentation, do expect a lot of photos, and do expect a fair share of not-so-serious moments.

**Bio:** Paul Guris has been birding since age 12, which is longer ago than he cares to admit. His first boat trip on salt water was in his mother's third trimester. He has traveled the nation and several countries in Central America and Europe seeking out landbirds, but the pelagic species always call him back. He has served on both Pennsylvania and New Jersey's rare bird records committees, captained the multi-year NJ Audubon World Series of Birding winning team, the Nikon/DVOC Lagerhead Shrikes, and served a variety of positions including president of the over 125-year-old Delaware Valley Ornithological Club.

## **Birding Trip to Honduras**

*Tracy McLellan*

The birds were fantastic on the trip to Honduras in January 2018, as arranged by Jody Enck with Beaks and Peaks Birding and Adventure Tours of Honduras. Becky Hansen and I were met at the airport in the capital city, Tegucigalpa, by Katinka Domen, one of the Beaks and Peaks owner/guides. We traveled for 11 days from cloud forest to the Caribbean Sea, then Josh Snodgrass joined us for the Lake Yojoa Birding Blitz. It is not easy to point to a single highlight—there were so many.

We started the trip with a hike at La Tigra National Park, a high-elevation cloud forest. We saw **White-faced Quail**, **Dove**, **Mountain Trogon**, **Mountain Thrush**, several wrens, brushfinches, and a **Blue-and-white Mockingbird**, among others.



The unusually cold and windy weather made us go to a lower elevation sooner than planned. We then went



**Great Potoo** delighted us.

Becky and I were interested in having the time to take photographs, and the birds and the guides were obliging. An **Agami Heron** in an area with mangroves on the north coast gave us a half hour to photograph it.

**Resplendent Quetzals** on the mountain near Lake Yojoa feed on the fruits of a tree that shades a coffee plantation. We spent a morning with two quetzals,

to the northern coast to see birds in forests, gardens, mangroves and at the beach. **Collared and Semipalmated Plovers**, **Magnificent Frigatebirds**, many herons and egrets, kingfishers, trogons and a

Paul organized pelagic trips out of New Jersey as far back as the mid-1980s and he has led for several other tour companies. In 2002 Paul and his wife Anita started their own pelagic tour company called *See Life Paulagics* to provide greater opportunities in the Mid-Atlantic region. They run trips sailing out of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and occasionally other places. The thrill of discovery and a love of the sea keep the excitement going even after all these years.

### Spring Field Ornithology



The Cornell Lab's [Spring Field Ornithology course \(SFO\)](#) is taking place from **March 28th – May 20th**.

**SFO** is an Ithaca-area tradition that has helped thousands of people learn about birds and birding over the past four-plus decades. It is also a great way to get to know the birding community and the birding hotspots around the area. Designed for all skill levels, the course has two main sections plus a pair of overnight trips.

- **Wednesday night lectures**, including a visit to the bird collection of the Cornell Museum of Vertebrates and a nighttime 'owl prow!'.
- **Saturday or Sunday field trips** to regional birding hotspots such as Braddock Bay Bird Observatory, Derby Hill Hawk Watch, Montezuma, Sapsucker Woods and Greensprings Natural Cemetery.
- **An overnight and a weekend trip** to birding meccas: Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge and Magee Marsh, Ohio.



and male and a female.



The owner of the area has planted 500 trees of the three species that quetzals utilize in the area, as well as rescuing a great number of orchids from land that was being cleared. Motmots and trogons are very good at posing for photographs, as are hummingbirds and honeycreepers at feeders.

Our area shares many species of birds with Honduras, but Honduras has more than twice as many species overall.

The only species wholly endemic to the country is the **Honduran Emerald**, a small hummingbird of dry forests.



The Lake Yojoa Birding Blitz attracted 40 Honduran birders from birding clubs around the country and five from the US. It was held at Panacam Lodge in a national park near the largest body of fresh water in the country. Three days of intensive birding in this biologically rich area yielded sightings of over 300 species. Evening meetings included testimonials about the number of life birds seen. Josh had the record with 55 lifers on his first full day in Honduras (including a **Lesson's Motmot** perched on the sign

**Dr. Steve Kress**, VP for Bird Conservation for National Audubon Society, returns to teach the course, joined by a host of guest lecturers from around the Lab. A cadre of local birding experts lead the weekend trips. Visit <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/sfo> to watch a video about the course, look at photos, review the course schedule and enroll, and learn about the offerings. Early bird discounts apply through February 5th!

Contact Marc Devokaitis at [mjd356@cornell.edu](mailto:mjd356@cornell.edu) or see the links below for more information: [Full schedule](#), [Online portal](#).

### **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 or e-mail [montezuma@audubon.org](mailto:montezuma@audubon.org).

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



at Panacam). Many of the participants were young birders, some of whom had done a course in forestry management sponsored by the US Forest Service. The enthusiasm and the energy in the group were contagious. Plans are to make this an annual birding festival, with the aim of attracting more birders from outside the country.

I attended the final segment of the trip with William Orellana, the other Beaks and Peaks owner/guide, and a couple from Washington state. We travelled to the western side of the country to the town of Gracias and the Mayan ruins of Copan, with a combination of birding and interesting cultural tours.



**Scarlet Macaws** at the ruins were a big hit, as were **White-throated Magpie-Jays** and more views

of the Honduran Emerald.

We felt safe at all times. Many infrastructure projects, including improvement to the main roads and a new airport, are in progress. The couple running Beaks and Peaks are dedicated to expanding tourism and conservation in the country. On many of our trips we were joined by local birders. The grassroots conservation initiatives, like the quetzal trees, hummingbird gardens, and birding trails that we enjoyed, ensure future birding opportunities. We share a lot more than the birds that migrate between our areas; getting to know some of the local people gave the trip an added depth and a connection with the country.

**Mar. 3** 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm **Owl Dissection & Discussion Workshop**

**Mar. 3** 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm **Hot Cocoa and Snowshoe Night Hike**

**Mar. 10** 10:00 am - 12:00 pm **Nature of Montezuma Lecture Series: Glacial Geology of the Finger Lakes Region**

**Mar. 15** 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm **Montezuma's Bird Migration Van Tour**

**Mar. 17** 11:00 am - 2:00 pm **St. Patrick's Day Wine and Wings Van Tour**

**Mar. 28** 9:00 am - 4:00 pm **Derby Hill Hawk Watch Trip**

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*Photos by Tracy McLellan. From top: Josh viewing Lesson's Motmot on sign at Panacam Lodge; White-faced Quail-Dove; Great Potoo; Agami Heron; Resplendent Quetzal; Honduran Emerald; Lesson's Motmot; White-throated Magpie-Jay; Keel-billed Motmot.*

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## **Field Trip Report - Birds Around the Lake**

*Ann Mitchell*

Five intrepid birders joined me on February 11th for an excellent day of birding. We met at Stewart Park in the icy parking lot and scoped out the gulls. There were no white-winged gulls, so we headed to East Shore Park where we saw a number of **White-winged Scoters**, **Long-tailed Ducks**, **Common Mergansers**, **American Coots**, and Dave found a **Red-throated Loon**. After that success, we headed to Ladoga where there were two **Northern Pintails**, which we added to our list. We decided to look for field birds so we headed to Belltown Dairy where there were many **Snow Buntings** and **Horned Larks**. Dave found a beautifully plumaged **Lapland Longspur** for us. Before heading up the lake, we stopped at the King Ferry Corner Store for coffee, etc.

Long Point was the next stop where there were many **Red-breasted Mergansers**, **American Black Ducks**, **Mallards**, and one **Common Loon** on the water, and six **Eastern Bluebirds** and several **Dark-eyed Juncos** flitting around in the trees. We stopped on the road heading to Aurora and saw a **Golden-**

**crowned Kinglet** among a number of other passerines in the trees. At the Aurora Boathouse, Wes and Bob counted 27 **Horned Grebes!**

Our last stop on the east side of the lake was Harris Park in Cayuga. We had just set up our scopes to look through the Aythya flocks, when we received a Rare Bird Alert from Jay saying the **Gyr Falcon** was back at Hoster Road. Well, I asked Leigh if she had ever seen one. She said No, so we all hopped back in the car and Bob took to the road. Dave said Gyrfalcons only sit for 30 minutes at a time. We arrived at Hoster Road in 20 minutes. We watched the bird for ten minutes and it flew. How Dave knew it would fly, is beyond me!

We next went to Van Cleef Lake in Seneca Falls to look at gulls. We found four **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, one juvenile **Iceland Gull**, and one adult plumaged **Glaucous Gull**. The last place we stopped was the Finger Lakes Regional Airport where we saw two **Snowy Owls** - one light one and one dark one. Beautiful birds.

I am glad the weather didn't interfere with the trip. No accidents. Only the parking lots were icy. It sprinkled for a couple hours, but it was only a bother to the optics. People saw some new year birds AND Leigh had two Lifers - Lapland Longspur and Gyr Falcon. Thanks to everyone for coming. The trip was a success!

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### **Field Trip Report - Around the Lake Again**

*Suan Yong*

After a week of wild weather swings (70 degrees on Tuesday, 30 and snowing on Thursday), 14 birders gathered at Stewart Park on Saturday, February

24, for a full-day field trip up and down the lake. We started with good looks at the **Eurasian Wigeon** that had been hanging out with its American counterparts all week at Stewart Park.



Farther out was another local rarity, a **Red-Throated Loon**. Driving up the lake, our stops at Ladoga, Myers, Long Point, Union Springs, and Mud Lock gave us great looks at a good variety of waterfowl: **White-Winged Scoters** at Ladoga and Long Point; many **Common Goldeneyes** with males performing their head throw-back display; **Red-Breasted Mergansers** scattered as far as the scopes could see at Long Point, some doing neck-stretch displays; distant **Horned Grebes** at Long Point, with a pair vigorously head-bobbing in close proximity; **Tundra Swans** at Mud Lock, with at least one **Mute Swan** in their midst; representation from each of the expected Aythyas (**Redhead**, **Greater** and **Lesser Scaup**, **Ring-Necked Duck**, **Canvasback**), plus **Buffleheads**, **Pied-Billed Grebe**, and **Double-Crested Cormorant**. A noisy **Killdeer** flushed at Myers was a first-of-year for most participants; two **Bald Eagles** attended the nest in Aurora, one immediately taking to the air as we arrived; skeins of **Snow Geese** were seen far to the north from Long Point, gathering in a huge raft on the lake that we could barely make out from the Aurora bluffs. At Mud Lock, my thermal camera found a hotspot across the channel which turned out to be a beaver curled up next to its distinctive tail.

An RBA sent us driving north across the Mucklands - which was devoid of the large snow goose gathering I'd been hoping for, possibly due to hunter activity - up to Carncross Road where six ESF vehicles were already getting good looks at seven **Greater White-Fronted Geese**, foraging reasonably close and well-camouflaged amid the corn stalks. Further out were a good variety of ducks, mostly **Northern Pintails** and **American Wigeons**, with **American Black Ducks**, **Gadwalls**, and **Mallards**. In their midst was found another Eurasian Wigeon, and a hard-to-follow

**Green-Winged Teal.** The ducks scattered a number of times, either due to the passing train or the fly-over Bald Eagles, or perhaps some other reason we could not discern.

Returning past the Mucklands where we scoped a handful of Snow Geese not far from a flock of decoys, we stopped for lunch at the Nice N Easy, then proceeded to the MNWR Visitor Center where from the lookout tower we counted at least 20 Bald Eagles on the still-frozen main pool, among a similar variety of waterfowl we'd already seen. We added **Northern Shovelers** to our list, as well as two **Trumpeter Swans** who looked to be establishing territory in a nearby pool.

From here we drove to the Finger Lakes Regional Airport, a much-anticipated destination for many of the participants, and we were greeted immediately by a **Snowy Owl** sitting at the end of the runway. Astute scoping soon found a second Snowy Owl far off at the Lott Farm, and a third Snowy Owl at the apex of the airport building. Owl number 3 flew across the runway and disappeared beyond the crest, but scoping in that direction soon found what turned out to be a fourth Snowy Owl sitting on an orange runway structure. A fifth Snowy Owl was then found on a fence further down. Owl number 3 soon re-emerged in the distant brush -- an almost all-white individual. We had known that this site hosted at least a couple of snowy owls, with perhaps a third at the Lott Farm. But to see five Snowy Owls from one spot was quite the unexpected treat.

A Gyrfalcon RBA sent us hurrying off in a race against the "30 minute rule". We arrived at Hoster Road to find two cars waiting, and quickly got our scopes on the **Gyrfalcon** perched facing us, sitting beautifully on a high tree. We had plenty of time to study its falcon-shaped tail, big body, and fainter-than-peregrine facial marks. It soon made a defecating motion, but hung out for a good while longer, fanning out its tail at one point for a good stretch. Finally, it took off flying with its powerful wingbeats, heading east towards (or beyond) the lake and out of sight.



Our last stop of the day was the intersection of Seybolt and Reese Roads, where our last Snowy Owl of the day was perched on a pipeline structure which had hosted a/the snowy owl the last few years.

Thanks to all participants, whose collective knowledge and observational skills made for a wonderful day of birding.



*Six Snowy Owls seen on the trip.*

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*Red Crossbill photo by Ken Kemphues*

## **NYSOA Winter Weekend in the Adirondacks**

*Diane Morton*

The New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA) organized a winter birding weekend in the Adirondacks February 10-11. Ken Kemphues, Gladys Birdsall, and I headed up there to participate in the field trips offered both Saturday and Sunday. We also found another Cayuga Bird Club member, Marty Borko, there when we arrived. In all, about 20 people participated in the birding weekend.

We were very lucky to have Joan Collins and Matt Young as our field trip leaders. Joan is a well-known Adirondack birding guide based out of Long Lake, and past-president of NYSOA. Matt Young works at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and is an expert on the varied types of Red Crossbills and their vocalizations. Within 15 minutes of our start on Saturday morning, we heard, then saw, our first White-winged Crossbills of the trip. Wow! Life bird right

away! Then at the next stop, we had Red Crossbills as well! We were lucky



enough to have the Crossbills come down to the road to gather grit, making them much easier to see. At Little Tupper Lake, we saw both species of Crossbills doing this together, which made for very nice comparisons between them.

Matt encouraged us to listen through headphones attached to his parabola recorder which enhanced our ability to hear the detailed calls of the crossbills.

Many were type 10/7 Red Crossbills, but we also heard type 3, and at one location had both types so that we could better learn the differences in their vocalizations. Matt gave an excellent talk on Saturday afternoon about the crossbill ranges and habitats, vocalizations, and bill adaptations.



We also enjoyed seeing other boreal birds in the Adirondacks, including Gray Jays, one Boreal Chickadee, and a Black-backed Woodpecker that was drilling for larvae from a dead tree right next to the road. All 20 of us gathered around to watch and take photos of the woodpecker while the bird continued its work. After about 20 minutes of watching, we departed before the woodpecker did!



Mid-February turned out to be a wonderful time for birding in the Adirondacks.

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## **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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:newsletter@cayugabirdclub.org) to your email contacts.

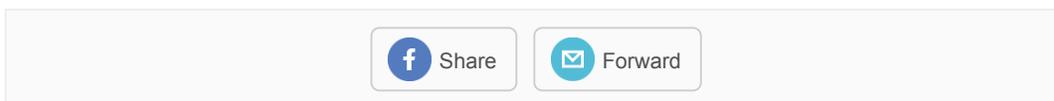
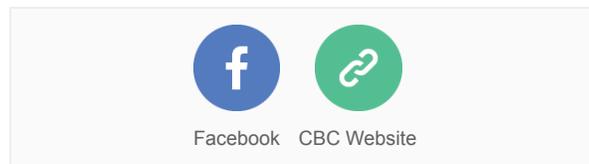
Cayuga Bird Club Officer Contact Information is available on the [Cayuga Bird Club website](#).

*Chickadee illustration in masthead by Karen Allaben-Confer*

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**Don't miss** an issue of the newsletter: add [newsletter@cayugabirdclub.org](mailto: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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