



# Cayuga Bird Club

## November 2017

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## Cayuga Bird Club Meeting, Nov. 13



Stories from Project FeederWatch: *What We Have Learned from 30 Years of Counting Birds*

### Speaker: Dr. Emma Greig

Project FeederWatch is a continent-wide bird counting effort in which people keep track of the birds that visit their feeders in winter. We will learn about how the program works, and perhaps more importantly, what we have learned from 30 years of data collection. Why are Anna's Hummingbirds expanding their range? Is feeding birds harmful or helpful? Project FeederWatch data provides insights into both of these questions, and many more.

Emma Greig (Ph.D., University of Chicago), joined the Citizen Science program at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in 2013 as the project leader of Feederwatch. Prior to joining the Citizen Science team, Emma was a postdoc in the Macaulay Library at the Lab of Ornithology, working with Mike Webster (2010-2013), and now continues to collaborate with the "Weblab" on questions related to behavioral ecology and evolution in birds. Emma's dissertation looked at the function of Splendid Fairy-wren vocalizations, including the enigmatic "Type II" song that is given in association with predator vocalizations.

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

## Calendar

### **Nov. 4 Owling Field Trip**

6:00 pm - 10:00 pm (Rain Date Nov. 5)

Meet at Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Leaders: Suan Yong and Bob McGuire

### **Nov. 6 CLO Seminar**

7:30 pm, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Speakers: Paul and Alan Singer  
*Arthur Singer: 50 Years of Wildlife Art*

### **Nov. 10-12 NYSOA Annual Meeting**

Niagara Falls NY

### **Nov. 11 Loon Watch at Taughannock Falls State Park**

6:40 - 8:40 am

Meet at North end of Taughannock Falls State Park  
Leader: Wes Blauvelt

### **Nov. 13 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting**, 7:30 pm, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Speaker: Emma Greig, PhD  
*Stories from Project FeederWatch: what we have learned from 30 years of counting birds*

### **Dec. 11 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting**, 7:30 pm, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Speaker: Leonardo Campagna, PhD  
*Patagonia, Argentina. A naturalist's paradise!*

### **Dec. 16 Short-eared Owls Field Trip**

Meet at Cornell Lab of O, 3:00 - 6:00 pm  
Leader: Ann Mitchell

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

begins at 7:30 pm followed by the presentation. All are welcome.

## From the President

*Wes Blauvelt*



As I start my term as your president of the Cayuga Bird Club (CBC), I want to thank you for the privilege and opportunity to serve the membership during the next two years. Over the next

couple of months I hope to meet with many of you and learn more about your interests in birds and birding and about your expectations from CBC membership. My interest in delving into this topic was perked by a question asked at a recent CBC leadership meeting, "What do I get for my membership?". I believe this to be an extremely important question to answer in order to ensure the continued success of CBC and growth of its membership. And I hope that my conversations with you will guide us as we build upon the past successes of CBC and the vision of its founders.

To start this conversation, it may be helpful to look back at the objectives of the CBC as reported by Arthur A. Allen in "Bird-Lore" and attributed to Dr. Ruby Green Smith, a founder of CBC. Writing in the forward of the CBC Constitution, Dr. Smith listed four areas of focus:

1. Protections of birds from their enemies
2. The increase of native birds by the erection of bird-houses and bird baths and the feeding of winter birds
3. Seeking of legislative improvements of game laws protecting non-detrimental birds and
4. Persistent education campaign regarding the interest and value of bird life.

With this background, let me offer my thoughts about the value of CBC membership and what I get for my membership dues. First, let me say that I have been a member for 10+ years, perhaps longer. But my

Cayuga Bird Club meeting are [available](#) on the Cayuga Bird Club website.

## **Upcoming Field Trips**

Join **Suan Yong** and **Bob McGuire** in exploring the area's woodlands to look and listen for various **owl species on Saturday, November 4. Meet at the Cornell Lab parking lot at 6:00 pm**, dress warmly (as there will be much standing still in the cold), and bring a headlamp or flashlight. If conditions are right, we might visit John Confer's HHOWLS saw-whet banding site to learn about the banding process, and if we're lucky, see an owl being banded. **If weather is inclement, we will try again on Sunday** (note that this is "Fall back" weekend). For questions, contact Suan at [suan.yong@gmail.com](mailto:suan.yong@gmail.com) or Bob at [bmcguire@clarityconnect.com](mailto:bmcguire@clarityconnect.com).

**Wes Blauvelt** will lead a **Loon Watch at Taughannock Falls State Park on Saturday, November 11, at 6:40 am**. Meet at the north end of the main entrance on the lake side, which is before the bridge on the creek if you are coming from Ithaca. The loon watch location is at the north end where the creek enters the lake. We will count loons for two hours as they fly south over the lake.

Dress very warmly as standing on the lake with a north breeze can be very cold. If you are lucky you may see hundreds of Common Loons flying overhead. There is also the possibility of seeing waterfowl such as scoters and Long-tailed Ducks on the lake.

These field trips are open to

active involvement in CBC has only been in the past 3 or 4 years. If I think back on my time as a member, CBC activities have introduced me to a wide range of birding experiences. Field trips around Cayuga Lake, New York State and into Canada led by skilled CBC members have been at the core of my involvement with the CBC. And the Beginner Bird Walks at Sapsucker Woods and Renwick Wildlife Sanctuary are often the first contact that community members have with CBC and birds. The monthly lecture series, perhaps the oldest tradition of CBC, has demonstrated a consistently high level of talent drawn from throughout the rich academic and birding communities of Ithaca and Cornell. These lectures have provided me with a wealth of information about the conservation of bird life and are at the core of my adult continuing education experience. The monthly bird list compilation, another tradition that dates to the beginning of the club, along with the annual Christmas Bird Count have provided me with an opportunity to monitor bird life and patterns of migration throughout the year. What better way to start the birding year than to get up at dawn the morning after New Years Eve and take a walk in subfreezing temperatures and wind-blown snow to look for the first "new" birds of the year? I like to refer to this as "extreme birding" and have the CBC to thank for this annual experience. And then there is the social camaraderie that comes with a potluck dinner to go with the Christmas Bird Count tabulations and the 'end of year' picnic at Myers Point.

I believe the special projects initiated by previous leadership represent another important benefit to CBC members. Whether it is participating in a spring clean up of the trails around Renwick Wildlife Sanctuary, contributing to development of the *Birding the Cayuga Lake Basin* guidebook, or efforts by CBC to act as an incubator for the emerging Sister Bird Club Network, each represent an opportunity for members to contribute to activities that benefit birds or promote birding in our community and beyond.

So as we move forward during the next year, I hope to learn more about what you get out of your CBC

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.

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### First-of-Year Birds **Reported in October for the Cayuga Lake Basin**

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

Oct. 2 Nelson's Sparrow

Oct. 20 Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

Oct. 25 Cave Swallow

### **2017 total count through September: 274 species**

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

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### CLO Monday Night Seminar, November 6



**Speakers:** Paul and Alan Singer

**Title:** *Arthur Singer: 50 Years of Wildlife Art*

**When:** Monday, November 6, 2017, 7:30 pm

**Where:** Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Join Paul and Alan Singer, sons of prolific wildlife artist Arthur Singer for a special evening commemorating the talent and

membership. And perhaps more importantly, what CBC gets from its membership as it pursues its “mission” of promoting bird conservation. As Dr. Smith wrote over 100 years ago, the CBC “proposes to teach the conservation principle by a concrete example of conservation of bird life.”

As a final note, I want to thank Jody Enck for his leadership these past two years. As vice president, I was in a great position to observe Jody’s commitment, dedication, and hard work in representing the CBC’s interests on numerous community forums and guiding the club’s agenda. And I also want to thank all of the officers and directors for their continued support and willingness to serve in leadership positions for the next year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Danskin', written over a horizontal line.

### Cayuga Bird Club Treasurer's Report

Fiscal Year September 1, 2016 - August 31, 2017

*Susan Danskin*

work of their father. First, Paul Singer will provide a look at the wildlife art of Arthur Singer from 1934 until his death in 1990. Then, Alan Singer, Arthur's illustration assistant on a variety of projects including revisions to the Field Guide to Birds of North America and the US Postal Stamp commemoratives, will share his observations on Arthur's working methods and approach to illustration and painting. The talk is also being live streamed at [bit.ly/BirdTalks](http://bit.ly/BirdTalks) (case sensitive).

Paul and Alan Singer have co-authored a new biography called *Arthur Singer: The Wildlife Art of an American Master*. The book will be available at the the Wild Birds Unlimited store in the Cornell Lab Visitor Center for signing after the seminar.

Arthur Singer began drawing animals as a teen during outings to state parks, the Bronx Zoo, and the American Museum of Natural History. Years later, he collaborated with jazz legends Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway on album covers. In the 1940s, he served in a secret battalion during World War II nicknamed "The Ghost Army." From the 1950s onward, though, he pursued a career dedicated to wildlife art. Most of all, Singer loved to paint birds. He did thousands of them, with the spectacular birds-of-paradise being his favorites.

Singer introduced many others to the wonder of birds through his *Golden Guide to Birds of North America*, still in print 50 years after it was first published. The Birds and Flowers stamps that Arthur and Alan Singer illustrated together in the early 1980s were

	BUDGETED	ACTUAL
	2016-2017	2016-2017
<b>Budgeted Income</b>		
Donations Received	\$ 500.00	\$ 605.00
Dues Received	\$ 1,850.00	\$ 1,945.00
Interest Income (Savings)	\$ 10.00	\$ 11.63
<b>Budgeted Income Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,360.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,561.63</b>
<b>Budgeted Expenses</b>		
Conservation Action Committee	\$ (100.00)	\$ -
Donations Paid	\$ (450.00)	\$ (400.00)
Dues Paid	\$ (300.00)	\$ (300.00)
Insurance	\$ (450.00)	\$ (230.48)
Muckrace	\$ (100.00)	\$ (100.00)
NYSOA Annual Meeting	\$ (200.00)	\$ -
Paypal Fees	\$ (40.00)	\$ (41.65)
Speaker Dinner	\$ (250.00)	\$ (132.45)
Speaker Travel	\$ (200.00)	\$ (200.00)
Website/Software Fees	\$ (14.99)	\$ (62.48)
<b>Budgeted Expenses Total</b>	<b>\$ (2,104.99)</b>	<b>\$ (1,467.06)</b>
<b>NET BUDGETED INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 255.01</b>	<b>\$ 1,094.57</b>
<b>Non-Budgeted Income</b>		
Basin Birding Book Sales		\$ 950.40
Native Plants Native Birds Book Sales		\$ 284.25
<b>Non-Budgeted Income Total</b>		<b>\$ 1,234.65</b>
<b>Non-Budgeted Expenses</b>		
none		\$ -
<b>Non-Budgeted Income Total</b>		<b>\$ -</b>
<b>TOTAL NET INCOME</b>		<b>\$ 2,329.22</b>

<b>Balance Sheet as of 8/31/17</b>		
<b>Cash Assets</b>		
Checking Account		\$ 3,575.81
Evans Fund		\$ 461.79
General Savings		\$ 15,339.23
<b>Total Cash Assets</b>		<b>\$ 19,376.83</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
		\$ -
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>\$ 19,376.83</b>
8/31/16 Total Assets		\$ 17,047.61
9/1/16-8/31/17 Net Income		\$ 2,329.22
<b>8/31/17 Total Assets</b>		<b>\$ 19,376.83</b>

## Cayuga Bird Club Book Sales

September 1, 2008 - August 31, 2017

Income	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Basin Birding Book Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Basin Birding Book Sales	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,460.80	\$ 4,060.80	\$ 2,374.30
Basin Birding Book Sales Tax Received	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5.76	\$ 5.76	\$ 5.62
Native Plants Native Birds Book Gifts	\$ 6,925.00	\$ 43.25	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Native Plants Native Birds Book Sales	\$ 4,224.08	\$ 3,645.27	\$ 1,908.22	\$ 1,781.30	\$ 564.71	\$ 631.54
Native Plants Native Birds Book Sales Tax Received	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1.52	\$ 4.25	\$ 17.78
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 11,149.08</b>	<b>\$ 3,688.52</b>	<b>\$ 1,908.22</b>	<b>\$ 11,249.38</b>	<b>\$ 4,635.52</b>	<b>\$ 3,029.24</b>
<b>Expenses</b>						
Basin Birding Book Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (14,462.46)	\$ -	\$ -
Native Plants for Native Birds Expenses	\$ (5,910.56)	\$ (2,117.25)	\$ (26.00)	\$ (2,074.00)	\$ -	\$ -
Sales Tax Submitted to NY State	\$ (21.51)	\$ (14.44)	\$ (55.63)	\$ (5.62)	\$ (9.50)	\$ (8.74)
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ (5,932.07)</b>	<b>\$ (2,131.69)</b>	<b>\$ (81.63)</b>	<b>\$ (16,542.08)</b>	<b>\$ (9.50)</b>	<b>\$ (8.74)</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>		
Basin Birding Book Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
Basin Birding Book Sales	\$ 873.83	\$ 1,468.80	\$ 950.40	\$ 19,188.93		
Basin Birding Book Sales Tax Received	\$ 20.37	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 37.51		
Native Plants Native Birds Book Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,968.25		
Native Plants Native Birds Book Sales	\$ 527.88	\$ 625.35	\$ 284.25	\$ 14,192.30		
Native Plants Native Birds Book Sales Tax Received	\$ 10.37	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 33.92		
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 1,432.15</b>	<b>\$ 2,094.15</b>	<b>\$ 1,234.65</b>	<b>\$ 40,420.91</b>		
<b>Expenses</b>						
Basin Birding Book Expenses	\$ -	\$ (5,760.00)	\$ -	\$ (20,222.46)		
Native Plants for Native Birds Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (10,127.81)		
Sales Tax Submitted to NY State	\$ (49.63)	\$ 9.50	\$ -	\$ (155.57)		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ (49.63)</b>	<b>\$ (5,750.50)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ (30,505.84)</b>		

TOTAL NET INCOME 2008-2017 \$ 9,915.07

hugely popular.

"The collections of art and the wonderful new wall murals are just a few of the reasons why we visit the Cornell Lab," said Alan Singer. "It's our hope that our father's work will stimulate conversation and engagement when it comes to our environment and conservation. That is what the combination of art and science can do so well."

**Exquisite bird illustrations and paintings created by Arthur Singer (1917-1990) will hang in the Visitor Center auditorium beginning November 2.** They will be on view through February 2018, between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. each day of the week.

## **Travel to Honduras in January**



**If you are interested in traveling to Honduras in January with Jody Enck and others from the Cayuga Bird Club, please contact Jody at [jwe4@cornell.edu](mailto:jwe4@cornell.edu) ASAP.**

You'll be able to join in the [Lake Yojoa Birding Blitz](#), an annual event to find as many species as possible (typically 200-300 birds) in the national parks and preserves around the Lake Yojoa area of Honduras. Over the

-Susan Danskin



## **Sparrow Walks, October 7-8**

*Mark Chao*

Ever since I was little, I've been entertained, enchanted, and occasionally exasperated by oxymorons and paradoxes – such as “deafening silence,” “sweet sorrow,” and “bumpy smooth” (my 8<sup>th</sup>-grade lab partner's apt description of a rock). And don't even get me started on “This statement is false.”

But like all birders, I've come to recognize the essential truth of one seemingly paradoxical bidding – “Expect the unexpected,” as well as its schoolyard variant, “When you least expect it, expect it” – especially at the Cornell Community Gardens in October.

I have to admit, I thought at first that an unfortunate corollary paradox might apply to this year's Cayuga Bird Club field trips on October 7 and 8, as the garden plots seemed unexpectedly low on unexpected birds. On both Saturday and Sunday, we had fine views of Savannah Sparrows and Song Sparrows, showing many stages of molt and therefore posing interesting ID challenges beyond the scope of published field guides. On each day we also saw at least one juvenile and two adult White-crowned Sparrows. But we had some difficulty finding other less common birds – only a fleeting view of a probable Lincoln's Sparrow on Saturday, and a couple of Field Sparrows on Sunday, and no other sparrow species in the gardens.

course of three full days, each team visits different routes and registers the variety of bird species they find, contributing to a deeper scientific knowledge of the avifauna in this hugely biodiverse region. **This year's Birding Blitz is scheduled for January 25-29, 2018.**

There is also an option to come for a "Blitz pretour" excursion to the highlands and north coast of Honduras for 7 or 11 days before the Lake Yojoa Blitz, and/or for a "post-tour" to the Gracias and Copan areas, January 29 - Feb 3, 2018, with guides from Beaks and Peaks.

The cost for the [Lake Yojoa Birding Blitz](#), January 25-29, is \$800, with a portion of the funds going to the Honduran Ornithology Association.

The cost for the [11-day pretour to the highlands and north coast of Honduras](#), **January 15-25**, is \$3000. A shorter **7-day pretour** is also offered at \$2000, from **January 19-25**. The **post-tour** option to go to the Gracias and Copan areas, **January 29 to February 3**, is a more cultural trip, with less focus on birding, and is available for \$1600.

You do not need to be a member of the Cayuga Bird Club to sign up for this trip to Honduras, but you do need to sign up soon! Contact Jody at [jwe4@cornell.edu](mailto:jwe4@cornell.edu).

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**[Travel to Costa Rica with Holbrook Travel and the Cayuga Bird Club](#)**

But on both days we had other gratifying finds. A few lingering Eastern Phoebes perched up for what may be our last looks for several months. A tight flock of Red-winged Blackbirds descended on some white pines laden with open cones, gorged themselves on the seeds, and exited suddenly a minute later. The behavioral resemblance to crossbills was unmistakable, and for me, unprecedented. An American Kestrel attacked a dense flock of starlings, but then in an instant, the flock wheeled with breathtaking coordinated agility and sent the kestrel fleeing. Most unexpected of all was a Wilson's Snipe that flushed up from the grass near our group on Saturday. Somehow, only Reuben Stoltzfus saw this snipe at first, but he got the rest of us on the bird as it flew in a wide arc across Freese Road. A brief jaunt across the road yielded no repeat sighting of any snipe, but we did get the weekend's only views of Swamp Sparrow, plus two Palm Warblers together.

Toward the end of both field trips, we carpoled over to Cornell's fields along Bluegrass Lane, where various eBird users had recently reported Nelson's Sparrow in cattail patches hidden among the tall corn stalks and grasses. On Saturday, almost our whole group got long, satisfying views of one Nelson's Sparrow, noting the bright yet exquisitely muted orange frame around gray auriculars, as well as the sharp white stripes on its back. Collectively, we confirmed the presence of at least two Nelson's Sparrows. I feel nearly certain that we saw at least two again on Sunday, but alas, this time our shared sightings were only fleeting glimpses of dark little birds in flight. Only a couple of us saw a Nelson's Sparrow at rest, and then only momentarily. So the glass feels somewhere between half full and one-quarter empty.

Otherwise, to my surprise, we saw almost no songbirds in these fields. But a couple of raptor sightings overhead – a Merlin on Saturday and a Cooper's Hawk on Sunday – nicely capped off the site visits and the weekend.

And so, in the end, our field trips fell short in some



*Black-Mandibled Toucan, photo by Wes Blauvelt*

### **Let's go on a birding trip to Costa Rica in April!**

We have arranged a tour with [Holbrook Travel](#) to Costa Rica, a country in which more than 870 species of birds have been recorded. The trip is appropriate for both beginners and more advanced birders. We'll also be able to observe other fascinating Costa Rican wildlife like frogs, monkeys, bats and sloths.

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 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. We'll spend two nights in the cloud forest of the San Gerardo de Dota, with its many hummingbirds, tanagers and flowerpiercers. We'll also look here for the Resplendent Quetzal, a gorgeous bird that lives in this forest year round.

This trip is planned for **April 20 -**

respects but somehow simultaneously fulfilled our expectations and delivered some fine surprises. Does that make sense? Maybe not completely...but when it comes to birds in our weedy fields and gardens in October, that statement is at least not false.



### **Trip to Montezuma, October 21**

*Gladys Birdsall*

On Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, nine people joined me for a trip to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. The weather could not have been more perfect. We made stops at Salt Point and Long Point State Park to see what might be out on the lake there. At Salt Point we saw six cormorants and four female Common Mergansers and at Long Point there were several Mallards. It was extremely windy there and the lake was very rough, so we moved on to the MNWR visitor center.

The visitor center had a variety of ducks and shorebirds. There were Northern Pintails, Northern Shovelers, Green-winged Teal and Mallards. Shorebirds included both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Pectoral Sandpiper. A beautiful Wilson's Snipe was also seen. A female Northern Harrier flew over the marsh for nice viewing. Red-winged Blackbirds were also heard and seen.

Heading out along the Wildlife Drive, the last car in our caravan was lucky to catch a Northern Shrike fly up into a tree near LaRue's Lagoon. There were Common Gallinules, American Coots, and Pied-

**April 29, 2018.** The cost is \$2500 per person, and includes all meals, accommodations and activities. The fee does not include international airfare, gratuities for guide or driver or items of a personal nature.

For more information and a detailed itinerary, contact Jody Enck at [jwe4@cornell.edu](mailto:jwe4@cornell.edu).

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## **NYSDEC Winter Raptor Surveys**

It's almost that time of year! It sure feels like we're finished with heat waves this fall, meaning wintering raptors will soon be showing up in local fields and wetlands. Every year, NYSDEC regions across the state monitor wintering raptor presence to record where and how these birds are spending their time here. Some of these species are of conservation concern, such as the Short-eared Owl and Northern Harrier, and our data helps in planning management decisions that might affect these species.

Since we have so much potential habitat here in DEC Region 8 (roughly the counties between Iroquois NWR and Montezuma NWR/Cayuga Lake), we depend on volunteer surveyors to help us find wintering raptors. We record any owls, hawks, and other raptors that we see during hour-long surveys around sunset. Surveyors have been treated to some great sights in the past, like talon-locking owls, eagles buzzing flocks of geese, and even other critters like mink playing in the snow. Yes, it does involve being outside in the WNY winter, but our pre-survey meetings always include hot

billed Grebes along with a great variety of ducks out on the Main Pool. Ducks included Gadwall, American Wigeon (hundreds), Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck and Scaup-- both male and female seen, but a good distance out there. In a tall tree near the "carp gates", a Peregrine Falcon perched for all to enjoy. It appeared to be a young bird with a completely dark front. Twice it flew out over the ducks on the Main Pool, and not one duck took flight. It returned both times to about the same perch in the same tree. The bird was banded and through our scopes at highest power we could make out a 5 and under that was an 8, but we could not make out another number in front of the 8. The Peregrine was still there when we continued on. Two swans were seen on the Main Pool: an immature Trumpeter Swan and a Mute Swan. In the Eaton Marsh area we observed three tiny female Bufflehead among many Canada Geese.

At Benning Marsh we saw several species of the same ducks seen on Wildlife Drive, including Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, and Green-winged Teal. There were several very close Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. A group of eight Dowitchers came together right out in front of us for really nice views.



Twenty-six Herring Gulls sat out on the drier area along with six Ring-billed Gulls.

We also enjoyed seeing an immature Bald Eagle and two adults flying by at different times while on the Wildlife Drive.

drinks and snacks to help fortify us against the cold!

We run surveys out of two locations in order to cover a large portion of the Finger Lakes/Genesee region, and survey sites are usually within a 20-minute drive of our meeting location. Avon-area surveys are held every other Tuesday (starting **11/21**) and we meet beforehand at the DEC Avon office (6274 E. Avon-Lima Rd). Trumansburg-area surveys are held every other Thursday (starting **12/7**) out of the Ulysses Philomathic Library (74 E. Main St). Our first few meetings/surveys will take place around the 3:30-5:30pm time frame. We run surveys through April, and since sunset time changes as the winter goes on, if your schedule doesn't allow you to join us early in the season, later might work out.

Whether you're a seasoned veteran or a brand-new birder, all are welcome to come and join in. Newbies are paired with staff or experienced surveyors until they feel comfortable with the process, and you are welcome to help with just one survey, the entire season, or anything in between.

Please send me an email at [christina.hoh@dec.ny.gov](mailto:christina.hoh@dec.ny.gov) if you'd like more information or think you might want to participate. Please include which meeting location you'd be interested in working from.

Thanks so much to everyone who has made these last few years of surveys such a success- our region is truly unique in having such a dedicated volunteer crew collecting a wealth of information. Hope to see you soon!

We decided to check out Knox-Marsellus on East Road for Sandhill Cranes and were not disappointed. We first heard them and then saw nine cranes flying towards us and then they flew to the east. Eight more were seen out in the water at Knox-Marsellus, wading and feeding. A bit later, four more Sandhill Cranes flew in but also veered to the east. There were also Green-winged Teal, Northern Shovelers, American Crows and Canada Geese. When we first arrived and got out of our cars at the overlook, we noticed birds overhead-- swirling around, feeding, were fifty or more Tree Swallows. They moved overhead all around, behind us, and then moved to the east out of sight, returning later.

I want to thank everyone who joined me for this wonderful day of birding.

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## **Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch Trip**

*Gary Kohlenberg*



*photo by Diane Morton*

Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch was the destination of the Cayuga Bird Club field trip Saturday, October 28th. I was excited to introduce our small group of seven to what I consider an under-appreciated hawk-watch, at least in our area. Owned and managed by the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, it is a small, rocky-soiled hilltop overlooking the Susquehanna River valley. Hawk-watching, being weather dependent, is always a crap shoot, but the day was forecast to be sunny and warm. Meeting at East Hill Plaza we carpoled to the sanctuary along what I consider to be a very beautiful drive. Arriving at the watch we were greeted by Larry Dake, the

## Montezuma Winter Raptor Survey Season

The 2017/2018 Montezuma Winter Raptor Survey season will begin on **November 15** and runs through March 28. We will learn which species have chosen to spend the winter at the Montezuma Wetlands Complex. Our weekly surveys provide important information that will assist the Refuge and the DEC in managing habitat to attract and hold raptors. Accurate data collection is always our highest priority. Surveyors' work is important, and time devoted to helping with the surveys is always appreciated. There are some additional benefits to volunteering with the project, including an opportunity to sharpen raptor ID skills, to enjoy watching raptors conduct their deadly serious efforts in search of food under difficult climate conditions, and to experience the solitude of Montezuma in the winter. Surveyors will visit parts of Montezuma that are normally closed to the public, and learn more about what attracts raptors to the complex in the winter season.

Our protocol will be essentially the same as that used in the past several seasons. Surveys will be conducted weekly on Wednesdays, beginning one half hour before sunset and ending one half hour after sunset. We have 24 sites available for survey: 21 we will attempt to survey each week, and 3 that will be surveyed approximately once a month. There will be a few site changes from last year.

official counter, and two members of the Naturalist Club of Broome County.

As is sometimes the case, Turkey Vulture was the first big bird to be seen. They are some of the best, most efficient flyers in the bird world and are not too fussy about the weather. A stiff SW wind kept the birds at long distance for challenging raptor spotting. With our many eyes, including Reuben Stoltzfus, scanning the far hills by scope, we had decent diversity of raptors. The day provided more than half a dozen adult Bald Eagles, one being enthusiastically harassed by an accipiter. Red-tailed Hawks were well represented and provided good training in distant ID with their classic buteo shape and habit of making big lazy circles in the sky. A Coopers Hawk was tallied along with a couple Sharp-shinned Hawks and a few raptors too distant to name. One Sharpie blasted by, no more than 30 feet overhead, for great looks and "bird of the day" honors.

Passerines usually move through hawk-watch sites as well so we enjoyed seeing flocks of Eastern Bluebirds and Cedar Waxwings. Diane Morton tracked down a calling Golden-crowned Kinglet that we could hear from the hilltop. Blue Jays were a constant companion along with a few Slate-colored Juncos, goldfinches, robins, crows and chickadees. A warbler managed to fly by anonymously; this can be a very good spot for migrant warblers. One of the top entertaining birds at Franklin Mountain is always the Ravens. At least five Common Ravens were seen and heard multiple times; one may have been a migrant.



*photo by Wes Blauvelt*

On our way back we made a stop in Whitney Point to visit the reservoir. Most of the group didn't know of this birding spot and Wes Blauvelt suggested we give it a try. Pulling in to Dorchester Park, at the

Each site will be staffed with at least one veteran surveyor who is able to make quick and often difficult identification of the raptors who frequent our area. If you are an inexperienced surveyor, or even new to birding, you are welcome to attend and you will be assigned to accompany a veteran surveyor. The more eyes we have at each site, the greater our chances of spotting raptors. We meet each week in the Refuge Offices across from the Visitor's Center at the times listed below. There you will receive a briefing, obtain assignments, and pick up materials for the survey. Surveyors will return to the office after completion of the survey to turn in data and exchange information about experiences.

Wednesday, Nov. 15, meet at 3:15 pm

Wednesdays, Nov. 22, 29, Dec. 6, 13, 20, meet at 3:20 pm

Wednesday, Dec. 27, meet at 3:25 pm

Raptor Survey dates (always Wednesday) and meeting times for January, February, and March, will be announced later, and will include information about the Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey. Those interested in helping with the surveys should contact David Marsh, at [dsmarsh77@gmail.com](mailto:dsmarsh77@gmail.com).

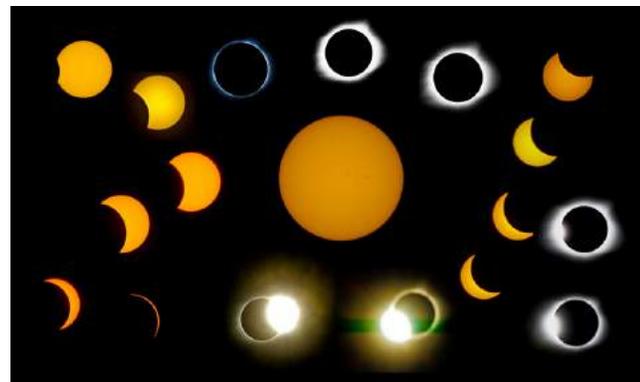
-David Marsh

south end of the reservoir, we could see hundreds of Canada Geese loafing on the grassy shore. Diane was quickly able to find a Brant mixed in and with Wes scoping we increased



the total Brant to six. Upper Lisle County Park on the north end of the reservoir was only a few miles away and made for our last stop of the day. It is the inlet to the reservoir from the Otselic River and has some nice bird habitat. There weren't any ducks there avoiding the wind, as we speculated there might be, but shorebirds were glimpsed from the iron bridge over the river. They turned out to be 3 plump Greater Yellowlegs. After parking we had nice dead close views of the group very actively feeding up to their bellies all around a grassy islet in the river. This bridge can apparently be flooded as Wes found on his last visit, but was many feet above the water this day.

*Brant photo by Diane Morton*



## **A Journey to View the Total Solar Eclipse**

*Meena Haribal*

My first total solar eclipse was in February, 1980 in Yellapur, India. Just the day before we left for Yellapur, I had acquired my first ever long focus 200 mm telephoto lens (used) and did not have any time to practice my photography with the lens. I shot the

partial eclipse of the sun through a darkened negative and totality without any filter. I was shooting with film and film was expensive so I was very conservative with it, but I got very good results with two really dazzling diamond rings, Bailey's beads and corona etc. in just about 1 min 18 seconds of totality. We also observed egrets returning to the roost, cows running helter-skelter in a confused manner and many of the locals hid inside their houses. We even ran an experiment to measure the drop in light intensity with a photochemical reaction. Back then there was no weather forecaster — we really did not need a forecast as the skies were clear during that time of the year. Eight of us simply barged into a friend's relative's large house and stayed for three days where they welcomed us and provided us with free wonderful homemade food and accommodation.

The August 2017 eclipse was a different beast and needed lots of planning. I started my plans last year as to where to go to view the total solar eclipse of 2017. I wanted to find a location within driving distance as I had to carry my photographic gear and also a location where there were good chances that weather would be clear. Carbondale, Illinois was chosen by some of the top NASA people as they predicted maximum chances of clear weather there. I decided on a location close to it but where I was hoping loads of people would not be visiting. In June I tried to book the accommodation; no hotels were available for three days in that area. So I chose the Mark Twain National Forest campground in Missouri as my base. So that I could bird earlier the day before eclipse, I found a room in a hotel in Fredericktown, Missouri which was luckily still available at reasonable price. I could charge my camera batteries and have an internet connection in case I could not do those things at the campground or with my car charger. Most of the hotels were booked more than year in advance and some hotels were selling at \$500 per room. A friend of mine tried to book a hotel at the last moment in South Carolina and they were quoting \$999 for a normal \$100 hotel!

My plans evolved as a national forest hopping trip. National Forests are far prettier and wilder than the state parks! I decided to do three days driving of five to six hours each and spend the nights at national forests to reach my final destination of Mark Twain NF 1000 miles away. My initial plan was to stop at Allegany National forest, but that changed as my friend from Columbus, Ohio wanted to me to visit with her. So I spent a day in Columbus visiting the university and zoo.

My next stop on August 18 was Hoosier National Forest in Indiana. I chose Celina-Indian Lake campground as a place to stay as it was close to the highway. It was a short trip from Columbus, including a scary drive through Cincinnati as the bridge over I-71 was under major repairs. Thanks to Google assistant which took me through downtown Cincinnati -- I was totally clueless where I was going but just listening to the directions was great, albeit scary at times. I arrived at Hoosier NF just before noon. The campground was in a nice location with exceptionally clean hot shower and water cooler! I think this is the best campground I have ever stayed. I went to Celina Lake where there were lots of odonates and butterflies and a few birds. Eastern Kingbirds, Cedar Waxwings and Eastern Wood-Pewees were the most abundant birds. That evening I took a drive on Indiana route 66 which is supposed to be scenic. The first part it was scenic when it went along Ohio River, but after about two miles or so it was mostly corn fields. I thought maybe for the people of Indiana corn fields are scenic. Along this road, though, I saw many Eastern Meadowlarks, Indigo Buntings, Savannah Sparrows and Caroline Chickadees. That night a Barred Owl hooted for quite some time.

The next morning, I headed to Silver Mines campground in Mark Twain NF via Carbondale, Chester, and St Mary's in Illinois, as I was planning to find a nice location to watch the eclipse. I did find a couple of spots near Chester; one was Kinkaid Lake shore and the other was Little Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge. Otherwise most of the locations were flat boring corn fields. All along the drive to Carbondale, I saw hundreds of Monarchs,

Red-spotted Purples and Spicebush Swallowtail butterflies, many killed along the roadside. Luckily traffic was low, so death was not rampant. Finally, in the Mark Twain NF, I arrived at the Silver Mines campground around 2.00 pm. The first thing I observed at my site was a Zebra Swallowtail butterfly fly by. I was excited seeing this butterfly after many years. I hiked some parts of the NF. There were many pawpaw trees and I also found an ichneumonid called *Trogus pennator*, which lays eggs on Zebra Swallowtail butterfly caterpillars. Birding-wise it was slow; highlights were a Yellow Billed Cuckoo, Red-bellied and Hairy Woodpeckers, and many Eastern Wood Pewees and Cedar Waxwings. There were many interesting plants, a species of ironweed (*Vernonia* sp), beautiful white milkweed plants (*Asclepias verticillata*) and numerous other composites. A forest ranger watched me with interest and asked me if I was looking for anything specific. I told him about my interests. Then he suggested a place to look for Hines Emerald dragonfly near Bixby. I decided I would go next day if I had time. That evening I watched a flock of about ten migrating nighthawks. In the night, I heard two different Barred Owls calling.

The next day was the day before the eclipse. I decided to explore some more nearby regions for viewing locations. I had kept watch on the weather and it was supposed to be clear on eclipse day. But that day the forecast changed and there was 60 percent of chance thunderstorms. The locations I had looked for in the Bloomsdale region were not very good. So I decided to head to the Bixby area of Mark Twain NF to look for Hines Emerald. I found the bog, but I did not find any emeralds or any odonates, but I did find hundreds of Red-spotted Purples, Spicebush Swallowtails and some lycaenids butterflies along the road. By then, the sky was getting darker, so I thought it was better to head back to camp. Cheryl Heinz and her family from Chicago were to join me at the campground to view the eclipse. As I started towards the campground it poured so heavily that at several locations I had to pull over to wait for the rain to slow down as the visibility was low and it was thundering. By then, I

decided I was going to stay in a hotel as my cell phone's reception was very poor in the National Forest and also couple of batteries of my cameras had drained and there was no way I could charge them with my car battery as my cell phone was constantly attached to the charger to get directions and was getting drained because of the poor signal.

I arrived at the Fredericktown hotel and was told everything was heavily booked and lots of people were to arrive to view the eclipse. Fredericktown was in the path of totality with 1.37 minutes of totality expected. The next day's forecast was mostly cloudy for the region with possible 60% chance of thunderstorms for during the time of totality and the thunderstorms were coming from northwest. So I looked up other nearby localities and it seemed that Hopkinsville in Kentucky, two hours away, was the best location. All night I kept watch on the weather to see if it was changing, but it did not seem to change.

So to view the eclipse, I decided to head towards Eddyville, Kentucky, to the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area. But before that I wanted to meet my friend who had arrived late at night and was staying in my campground. She decided to stay in the Mark Twain forest and take chances. I took a detour of 10 miles to visit her and around 9:00 am I headed towards Eddyville, KY. The route was little tricky until I reached I-24. Thanks to Google assistant again, who directed me through many turns and twists to I-24. I-24 was almost in the path of maximum totality so either side of the highway would be a good location. As I neared the national recreation area I found lots of cars heading to that entrance, so I decided to try the next exit and some of the side roads. The rural roads are so very narrow, barely wide enough for two cars passing and do not have any shoulder or even a white line, and next to the road were private properties without any way of pulling off. I saw one group of people that had pulled out in the triangle section of the road junction but it seemed almost full, so I continued driving. Some of the locals were letting people use their private property and I heard were charging anywhere from \$50 per person to \$500 per car. I

was not going to pay that amount.

Finally, I saw a sign for a cemetery; I thought that would be best place to pull in. Luckily, when I arrived at the cemetery there were only three cars, I chose the less crowded location and started to set up my



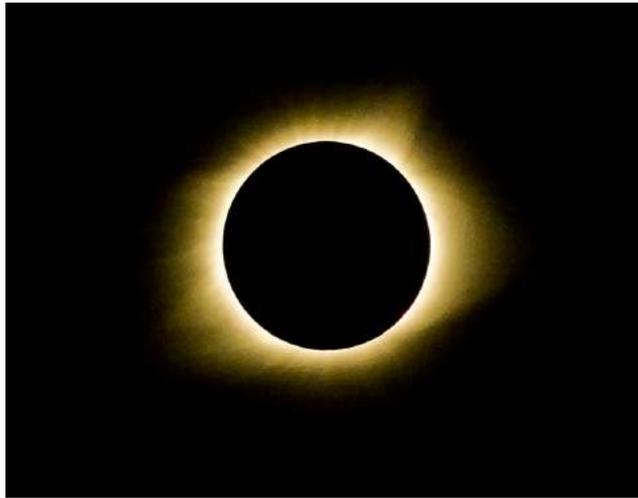
gear. I set up a camera for time-lapse photography and another one for still shots on tripods and I wanted to use a

third camera for a video. But somehow I had mixed up the tripods' quick release plates, so I ended up shooting with one camera hand held. Because of that I also had to change plans of taking video with the other camera. I also left a digital recorder under the time-lapse camera to record the surrounding sound during the eclipse. I used welder's glass #10 as a filter for one camera and solar filter for the other camera. This eclipse was to happen at around noon, so the sun was at a very high angle, almost at 80 degrees, so it was a feat to look through the view finder of the camera. I listened to the birds that were singing during to the eclipse and watched the surroundings. The Common Snout butterflies were



very abundant. They were trying to get salt off my camera body and straps. Two of the fellow eclipse watchers came to

talk to me. One was from Louisville, Kentucky, and the other from Cleveland, Ohio. We enjoyed watching the sun and taking pictures at regular intervals. Just as totality was happening I had frenzied activity. I had to change the time-lapse to every 2 seconds (but forgot to change the aperture setting so all pictures were dark ☹), to remove the filter just before the totality, to take video with one camera and to take stills. I accomplished all these tasks but forgot to watch the waves of shadows coming before the totality began. As soon as the totality started everyone started to clap.



I continued photographing. I listened to changes in the sounds around me, Pewees and Tufted Titmice were singing. The Snouts disappeared. One species of cricket started calling, but I missed looking for stars. 2 min 37 secs were over before I knew it. I thought it was a long enough to do variety of things. You are bound to miss something while you are so worried about doing everything. As soon as the sun started to poke out from the other side of the moon everyone clapped once again and started to leave. I stayed until the eclipse was over.

After I came home I listened to my 2.5 hours of recordings. I found that just at the eclipse totality the traffic noise on I-24 had become quiet for a minute, as probably most people pulled off to observe the eclipse. During the eclipse I heard several cars go past in the area I was, who did not care about the eclipse. Overall, I did 2500 miles round-trip to locations where I had never been. The National Forests were awesome and I had no idea that Missouri, Illinois and Indiana had anything other than flat cornfields. I would love to visit these locations in spring and early summer.

I did post-eclipse analysis and thought about what I would do differently on April 8, 2024— if I am still alive in 7 years, when an eclipse is going to be very near us and will have a peak totality time of 4 min 30 sec! I would make a list of things to be watched beforehand, with reminders, and choose a good location like Braddock Bay or someplace similar, and hope to see the third eclipse of my life! After all, these plans are weather-dependent!



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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](http://Cayuga Bird Club website).

*Chickadee illustration in masthead by Karen Allaben-Confer*

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