



Cayuga Bird Club

October 2015

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Calendar

Oct 2-4 NYSOA Meeting, Albany, NY

Oct 3 CBC Field Trip, Freese Road Community Gardens, 8:30-10:00 am
Leader: Mark Chao

Oct 10, 11 CBC Field Trips, Freese Road Community Gardens, 8:30-10:00 am
Leader: Mark Chao

Oct 12 CBC Meeting,

From the President



This is my last column as President of the Cayuga Bird Club. At the meeting in October, I will step down and we will hold elections for new officers. Jody Enck is running for President and I am glad to be handing the reins over to a person who I know will do a great job.

It has been a pleasure and an honor to be the President for the last two years. One of the best parts has been working with the other officers. We are lucky to have such a capable group of enthusiastic individuals to keep the club running, and I would like to thank all of you for making the last two years a great experience. I look forward to continuing my involvement as the webmaster and as a director.

In this last column I wanted to relay a story of one of the best birding experiences I have had all year. I didn't go to a fancy location, and I didn't see any really rare birds. What made this so special was seeing how much a young birder enjoyed the experience of observing some new birds for the first time.

On the day that many of my birding friends had headed up to Montezuma for the Muckrace, and short of time, I had gone to Sapsucker Woods on my own for a quick walk to see if there were any good migrants that had stopped by. On the trail, I met a couple with an 8-year-old son and 10-year-old daughter. Unfortunately I didn't remember their names. As a birthday treat for the boy, they had traveled from their home in New Jersey to visit the woods and the lab. They weren't very

Lab of O, 7:30 pm
Speaker: Bill Evans,
Director of Old Bird, Inc.

Nov 9 CBC Meeting
Lab of O, 7:30 pm
Speaker: Marie Read,
wildlife photographer

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

First-of-Year Birds Reported during September 2015 for the Cayuga Lake Basin

9/1 Golden-winged Warbler

9/5 Western Sandpiper

9/7 Western Kingbird

9/7 Connecticut Warbler

9/8 Kentucky Warbler

9/25 Hudsonian Godwit



**2015 count to date:
275 species**

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

Dues are Due!

Reminder Notice

If you haven't yet
renewed your annual
membership in the
Cayuga Bird Club,
now is the time. Dues

experienced birders however, and I offered to walk with them and help them find and identify the birds.

They had been looking at some birds high up in a tree that they had thought were goldfinches, but when I pointed out that they were Cedar Waxwings, the boy was overjoyed and the kids carefully wrote down the new observation in their notebooks. We then ran into a mixed flock with some migrants which included a very nice Hooded Warbler, and this was another life bird for the family. Later I helped them find a couple of Green Herons and Wood Ducks on the pond, and a few woodpecker species in the woods. Each one of these observations was greeted with joy and wonder. The boy drank in all the details and repeated them back with enthusiasm. At the end of the walk he exclaimed "this is the best day ever!" The mother told me that Sapsucker Woods was the most beautiful wild area they had ever experienced.

I lead beginner bird walks in Sapsucker Woods about once a month. The attendees are always grateful, but I have never had anyone enjoy it as much as this little 8-year-old boy. It was hugely rewarding to me to have helped this family enjoy their walk so much. I encourage other members to sign up to volunteer for these too.

Paul

Cayuga Bird Club Meeting, October 12



**Speaker: Bill Evans,
Director of Old Bird,
Inc., A U.S. nonprofit
focused on nocturnal
migration research
and education**

The impact of wind energy on birds in our region: fact versus fiction

Bird migration researcher Bill Evans will present a synopsis of his work for wind developers and groups

are \$15 per family or \$10 per student per year. Payment may be made via Paypal at cayugabirdclub.org or by mailing a check to Cayuga Bird Club, c/o Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca NY 14850.

Please include your email address (or addresses for family memberships) with your membership payment to keep your newsletter subscription address current.

September 2015 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting Minutes

recorded by Becky Hansen are [available](#) on the CBC website.

Osprey updates

Learn about the resurgence of Ospreys in the Cayuga Lake Basin at Candace Cornell's blog, [On Osprey Time](#).

Stay in touch through our [Facebook](#) page and [Cayuga Bird Club Website!](#)



concerned about wind power in Ontario and New York. He will draw from his involvement with the Black Oak, Wolfe Island, Ostrander Point, Galloo Island, Maple Ridge, and Cape Vincent wind projects, and portray the challenge of studying and mitigating impacts to birds from these and future wind energy projects in our region.

Bill Evans is director of Old Bird Inc., a US nonprofit focused on nocturnal bird migration research and education. He has studied nocturnal bird migration in the eastern U.S. for 30 years and co-authored the CD-Rom, Flight Calls of Migratory Birds with Michael O'Brien in 2002. Bill's expertise on nocturnal bird migration has led him to active involvement in efforts to mitigate avian fatalities at communications towers and wind turbines. He has directed the website towerkill.com for 17 years and continues research toward understanding the impacts of artificial light on night-migrating birds and the concentration dynamics of night-migrating birds along shorelines and mountainous terrain. Bill's scientific publications on night migration are included at www.oldbird.org/pubs.htm; his research has been noted on NPR, PBS, BBC, CBC and in Science, The New York Times and numerous other science-news periodicals. Bill currently lives with his wife and two children in the remote highlands of southern Tompkins County.

The meeting will be held at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. The evening will begin with cookies and conversation at 7:15 pm. Cayuga Bird Club business, including election of new officers, begins at 7:30 pm, followed by the speaker's presentation. All are welcome.

Field Trips at Freese Road Community Gardens

Mark Chao will lead three field trips with a focus on sparrow identification on October 3rd, 11th, and 12th at the Cornell Community Gardens on Freese Road. Savannah, Song, Field, Lincoln's, White-throated and White-crowned sparrows are often found here at this time of year, as well as migrating warblers. Each walk will begin at **8:30 am** at the parking lot for the community gardens, accessible via Freese Road, and will last until about 10:00 am. Participants should be prepared to walk on uneven ground overgrown by tall weeds.

Muckrace!

by Diane Morton

The nineteenth annual Montezuma Muckrace, a 24-hour fundraiser/race to find as many bird species as possible within the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, was held on September 18-19th. 135 people on 37 teams took part in the Muckrace, the highest level of participation yet, finding a total of 188 species. The winning team, "B.S. in Birding" (three graduate students from SUNY Brockport and University of Rochester) found 121 species, including such rarities as Golden-winged Warbler and Yellow-headed Blackbird. This year's Muckrace has raised more than \$10,000 for habitat restoration and environmental education programs. Donations are still being accepted: <http://friendsofmontezuma.org/projects-programs/muckrace/>.

I participated in my first Muckrace this year, joining Mark and Tilden Chao, Meena Haribal and Ken Kemphues as team "From Heron to Bitternity" (Mark gets credit for the clever name). Ken, Meena and I drove up to meet Mark and Tilden at the Montezuma NWR visitor's center just before the Muckrace began. Tilden was reading in the car as he waited, having homework over the weekend as a high school freshman-- but he was game for the race. We entered Wildlife Drive to position ourselves to be ready for birds at 7 pm-- and the race was on! Tilden spotted our first bird-- a Solitary Sandpiper! Immediately after that, Mark saw a small raptor that resolved into a Sharp-shinned Hawk when it flew. Not a bad start! We added Northern Shovelers, Wood Ducks, Great Blue Herons, Swamp and Song Sparrows and other more common birds as we continued along the drive. Eaton Marsh had both Yellowlegs and Short-billed and Long-billed Dowitchers, and we tried to distinguish among other shorebirds as the light was fading, being sure of Least and Pectoral Sandpipers. Then we spotted something different-- a phalarope! We determined this was a Wilson's Phalarope based on its long, fine bill and lack of eye spots.

After checking into our rented cabin near Armitage Road we drove to a spot that Meena suggested for finding Eastern Screech Owl. Mark did a very credible screech owl whistle (no playback is allowed during the Muckrace) to see if he could get a response. And then we heard it--an Eastern Screech Owl trilling back! We were so surprised by this success that at first we wondered if there was another muckracer calling owls. But the sound was authentic and continued for quite some time; we judged it to be the real thing. After returning to the cabin we hoped to hear more night sounds, but it was a quiet night with no more birds counted.

The next morning we headed for Towpath Road, and took the strategy of walking for a bit, the driving for a bit, to get to the dike between Knox-Marsellus and Puddler's Marshes. Towpath Road turned out to be a great spot for songbirds; we counted Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, several kinds of flycatchers and woodpeckers, and Tennessee, Nashville, Northern Parula and Black-throated Green warblers. (Another team further up the road watched a Connecticut Warbler bathing in one of the road puddles!) Going out on the dike did not add much to our count; the best bird we saw out there was an American Pipit, spotted by Meena as she scoped the mudflat.

We were eager to get to Howland Island, which was open for the Muckrace. I had not explored this area before and it was fun to see new territory. We added Yellow-throated Vireo here and came upon a flock Tree, Barn and Bank Swallows and one Purple Martin lined up for easy viewing on electrical wires. Further on, a Merlin flew above us as we stopped to chat with the DEC team. Meena directed us to a spot she thought might be good for warblers, and sure enough, they came. Tilden spotted a Black-and-White Warbler, and we also managed to see the underside of a bright yellow Wilson's Warbler. A flock of Blue-winged Teal flew up from a nearby marsh. And as we left the island, a Peregrine Falcon flew over, the first of three sightings that day.

After taking a lunch break (and staying out of the rain) at

the Montezuma Audubon Center, we walked out to explore the wetlands behind the building. We added Eastern Bluebird and Pied-billed Grebe here and then decided to walk around to get a better view of the shallow areas. This was a great move-- there were ten species of shorebirds concentrated in the muck, including Stilt Sandpipers and Semipalmated Plovers! We could have stayed much longer studying all of the shorebirds, but after an hour it was time to move on. As we were leaving, we ran into our friends on the Arrogant Bustards team, who pointed out a Wilson's Phalarope that we had overlooked.

On a return to the wildlife refuge visitor center, we added Black-bellied Plover, but our repeat of Wildlife Drive did not yield any new species. We added several ducks and American Coot to our list at Tshache, and then decided to take a short hike on the Esker Brook Trail, where the Arrogant Bustards had found thrushes. We did hear Wood Thrush there, and also saw American Redstart. We were still missing a number of common species as it came down to the end of the race. Driving back to the MAC to turn in our tally sheet, we spotted two American Kestrels-- the last species we added to our list-- and finished the Muckrace with 96 species of birds for our team.

This was a great experience-- getting an entire day to focus on birds, in the company of our tireless and always good-humored teammates. Other teams that we ran into were very friendly, often pointing out birds that they had found and were excited to share. And what a good cause-- making the Montezuma Wetlands a better place for birds and other wildlife.

The Cayuga Bird Club sponsored the Arrogant Bustards team, comprised of Dave Nutter, Ann Mitchell, Susan Danskin, and Gary Kohlenberg. They found several uncommon species during the day, beginning with a Ross's Goose in the bay near Mud Lock and later a Vesper Sparrow. You can read Dave Nutter's vivid and entertaining report of their Muckrace day here: [Arrogant Bustards Full Report](#).

Muckrace teams in the "photo" category counted only birds they photographed during the 24-hour period. This unique challenge was won by the Shutterbirds, comprised of Suan Hsi Yong and Eaton Birding Society members Mark Miller, Amy Barra, and Jill Chesley. These talented photographers managed to digitally capture 70 species in the Montezuma wetlands areas! A selection of Suan's photos from the Muckrace are shown below.

Thank you to everyone who made donations to this fundraiser for the Montezuma Wetlands Complex!

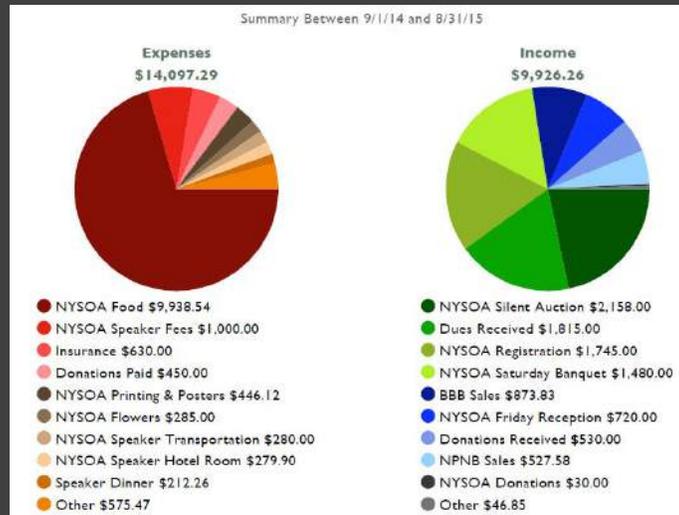
Photos by Suan Hsi Yong



*Top left: Black-bellied Plover and Pectoral Sandpiper
Top right: Eastern Wood-Pewee
Middle left: Cape May Warbler
Middle right: Bobolinks*

Annual Treasurer's Report

By Susan Danskin



Balance Sheet as of 8/31/15

Cash Assets

Checking	\$6,736.92
Evans Fund	\$461.79
Gen Savings	\$10,471.21
TCTC CD	<u>\$3,555.40</u>
Total Cash Assets	\$21,225.32

Liabilities \$--

Net Assets 8/31/15 **\$21,225.32**

Total Assets 8/31/14 \$25,396.35

Net Income 9/1/2014-8/31/2015
\$(4,171.03)

Officer Nominations for 2015 Elections

At the Cayuga Bird Club Meeting on October 12, we will be voting for Club Officers and one Director. Nominated officers are listed below. The nominee for new President is Jody Enck. Nominations for continuing officers are Wes Blauvelt, Vice President; Susan Danskin, Treasurer; Becky Hansen, Recording Secretary; Colleen Richards,

Corresponding Secretary. Paul Anderson will become a Director after completing his term as club President. Officer nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the meeting, but if you'd like to nominate someone, please make sure that person wishes to be nominated!

President: Jody Enck



Jody Enck started birding about 50 years ago as a wee lad growing up on a farm in Pennsylvania. Since then, he's been learning more and more about birds and birders. Jody especially loves watching birds in his back yard and learning what the local residents are up to. He also has been known to be a closet lister with more than 500 species seen in the U.S. He has a background in both wildlife biology and social science and enjoys meeting birders of all types. He hopes to continue the great Club tradition of welcoming all birders no matter what their interests and helping them feel like they really belong in the Cayuga Bird Club.

Vice President: Wes Blauvelt



Wes has been a member of the Cayuga Bird Club for about 15 years and has actively participated in the Christmas Bird Count. Wes's interests in birding began as a boy and he has been fortunate to travel around the world chasing birds. In retirement, Wes hopes to become a more active and productive member of the bird club.

Treasurer: Susan Danskin



Susan has been club treasurer since October 2009, after stepping down from her position as club president. She is looking forward to continuing her work. She has been a club member for a number of years, working on various committees and leading many field trips.

Recording Secretary: Becky Hansen



Becky moved to Ithaca fairly recently, after nearly 40 years in the NYC area, hoping to take advantage of the opportunities here to learn more about birds. She enjoys participating in the bird club meetings, field trips, the Christmas bird count, and going to Monday Night Seminars. She leads some of the weekend bird walks at the Lab of Ornithology. She also loves traveling all over the world to get to see wonderful birds and places. Becky is happy to have the chance to serve as recording secretary for the Cayuga Bird Club.

Corresponding Secretary: Colleen Richards



Colleen is willing to continue as corresponding secretary. Besides occasional volunteer acknowledgements, etc., she corresponds with our program speakers each month to assure they have all they need for their engagement. She also organizes the club dinner which honors the speaker and encourages member interaction.

Director: Paul Anderson



Paul got hooked on birding when he took the Lab of O's Spring Field Ornithology course eight years ago and has been a member of the club since then. He contributed photos to Birding in the Cayuga Lake Basin, and he became the club webmaster and overhauled the website. Paul is also a docent for the Lab of Ornithology, leading beginner bird walks there on weekends, and has been a field trip leader for the club on many occasions. Paul is the current president of the club and is now stepping down after his two-year term.

Cayuga Bird Club

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. To join, send a check (made out to "Cayuga Bird Club") to Cayuga Bird Club Treasurer, c/o Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850. [Online payment option](#) is available at the Cayuga Bird Club website.

Members receive via email the monthly Cayuga Bird Club Newsletter, from September through June. Newsletter submissions may be sent to Diane Morton, cbceditor1@gmail.com. Of particular interest are articles about local bird sightings, bird behavior, or birding hot spots, as well as original poetry, art, and photos.

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

Chickadee illustration in masthead by Karen Allaben-Confer



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