



Cayuga Bird Club

October 2017

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Cayuga Bird Club Meeting, October 9



*Who goes there?
Birding with
Infrared
Thermography*

Speaker: Suan Yong

Infrared Thermography allows one to see the temperature of everyday objects. It can highlight warm objects against a cooler background, making it a great tool for finding birds and other warm-blooded animals. A few years ago, when affordable thermal cameras appeared on the market, Suan decided to try using them to see if he could find owls in the night or bitterns in the marsh. He has done both, as well as follow a woodcock skydance, count migrants in the night sky, and track a grouse through thick brush. Suan will share his experiences with this technology.

If there is interest, we can follow the talk with a short walk into Sapsucker woods to see if we find anything interesting.

Suan Yong is a software scientist at GammaTech in Ithaca. His interest in the natural world began as a boy growing up in Malaysia collecting butterflies, and shifted to birding in 2007 after moving to Ithaca. He regularly leads bird walks for the Cayuga Bird Club, Spring Field Ornithology, and other events at the Lab of Ornithology.

The meeting will be held at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Doors open at 7:00 pm and there will be cookies and conversation starting at 7:15. Bird club

Calendar

Oct. 2 Monday Night Seminar

7:30 pm

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Speaker: Noah Stryker

Birding Without Borders: An Epic World Big Year

Oct. 3 Friends of Salt Point Seminar, 7:30 pm

Lansing Town Hall

Speaker: Bill McQuay

Sound Meets Science: Radio Production in the Natural World

Oct. 7, 8 Sparrow Identification Walks, 8:30-

10:00 am

Leader: Mark Chao

Meet at Cornell Community Garden, Freese Road

Oct. 9 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting

7:30 pm, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Speaker: Suan Hsi Yong

Who goes there? Birding with Infrared Thermography

Oct. 21 Field Trip to Montezuma

7:30 am - 4:00 pm, meet at Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Leader: Gladys Birdsall

Oct. 28 Field Trip to Franklin Mountain

Hawkwatch, Oneonta NY, 7:30 am - 4:30 pm

Meet at East Hill Plaza parking lot near CTB

Leader: Gary Kohlenberg

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. 10-12 NYSOA Annual Meeting

Niagara Falls NY

Nov. 11 Loon Watch at Taughannock Falls State Park

6:40- 8:40 am

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

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

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

From the President

Jody Enck



Hello Cayuga Birders,

Fall is “turn-over” time here in central New York. The birds are turning over in terms of migration. Each day brings new gems to my backyard, like the Cape May Warbler I spied in the spruces in the back corner this morning. Soon our club will have some turn-over of its own as we will elect a slate of new officers at our next meeting on October 9th. Please read the [candidates’ biographies](#) in this newsletter.

The upcoming election means that this is my last column as president of the Club. As president, I’ve tried to focus on a couple of things that are near and dear to my birding heart. For example, I’ve tried to build on the relationship we have with the Friends of Stewart Park group to make that city park even more bird- and birder-friendly. It’s been fun to see lots of new birding faces enjoying the avifauna there, especially in the spring and fall. I also have worked to build a Sister Bird Club Network throughout the Americas using neotropical migratory birds as the “glue” that connect us together (see the [article](#) in this newsletter for more information).

Mostly as president, I’ve just tried to stay out of the way of the other officers and dedicated volunteers who keep the Club humming along. We have an awesome field trip committee who puts together great trips, both local and farther afield. We have a host of volunteer leaders who also lead trips for beginning birders at the Lab of Ornithology and who are trained to lead tours of the facility there. We have folks who identify, invite, communicate with, and host for dinner some wonderful guest speakers for our Club meetings. We have a treasurer who volunteers her time to make sure the Club has a budget and that our income is accounted for and our bills get paid. We have a board and executive committee who all volunteer their time to make decisions behind the scenes and who make sure that the Club

Time to Renew Your Membership

Cayuga Bird Club membership dues are \$15 per family or \$10 per student.

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 renewal to keep your newsletter subscription current.

Minutes

of the September 11, 2017 Cayuga Bird Club meeting are [available](#) on the Cayuga Bird Club website.

Upcoming Field Trips



Lincoln's Sparrow, photo by Diane Morton

Mark Chao will lead two morning walks with a focus on sparrow identification on **Saturday and Sunday, October 7 and 8**. Meet at the parking lot of the **Cornell Community Garden on Freese Road at 8:30 am**. Be prepared to walk on uneven ground among tall, possibly wet weeds. We may also visit other nearby sites as birding conditions warrant.

Gladys Birdsall will lead a trip to **Montezuma on Saturday, October 21**. Meet at the **Cornell Lab of Ornithology parking lot at 7:30 am**. We will

meet our obligations as a non-profit organization.

I might have been president the last two years, but it is all of you volunteers who make the club work. I look forward to having lots of fun doing all sorts of birding things with the Club in my new role as "past president."

Good birding!

sDike Walks at Montezuma

Dave Nicosia

I led two walks down the dike between Knox-Marsellus and Puddler's Marshes in the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in September. These walks, in an area normally off-limits to walkers, allowed close views of a variety of migrating shorebirds. 25 people joined me on September 2 and 22 people joined me on September 9.



photo by Diane Morton

Highlights on September 2:

At the beginning from East Rd there were three **Stilt Sandpipers** that were in basic plumage, likely juveniles. The Stilt Sandpipers were near some yellowlegs which made for nice comparisons. We also had 4 peep species also very nice for comparisons. **Least** and **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were most common but we did get nice views of two molting adult **White-Rumped Sandpipers** and a **Baird's Sandpiper**. The White-Rumped Sandpipers were close to Semipalmated Sandpipers making for nice comparisons on size, shape and primary projections. Additionally, the Baird's was near some Least

carpool up the lake from there. Be sure to dress for the weather. Bring lunch and drinks, but we will also have the opportunity to purchase food and drinks. We will return around 4:00 pm. Questions, email: gjb5@outlook.com

Gary Kohlenberg will lead a field trip on **Saturday, October 28 to Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch** in Oneonta. The rain date will be Sunday, October 29th. Notice of any rain cancellation will be on the CayugaBirds listserve. Managed by the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch is the premier site for observing late-season, migrating Golden Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks. In 2016, 231 Golden Eagles were tallied there during the hawkwatch season. This all day trip meets at the **East Hill Plaza parking lot, by CTB, at 7:30 am** to carpool. It's a two hour drive and we expect to be back at 4:30 pm. Bring snacks and water. CTB is a fine place to stock up if not bringing from home. Dress for the weather, which means whatever temperature it is, subtract 10 degrees. It can be windy on the hill. You can bring a scope if wanted for fun, but they're not as necessary on a hawkwatch. You can email Gary if you have questions, jgk25@cornell.edu.

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 or Bob at 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

Sandpipers again making for good comparisons. The difference between coloration, more buffy for Baird's vs more brownish/rufous for Least, and dark legs (Baird's) vs light legs (Least) was evident. There were also a lot of **Killdeer** and **Semipalmated Plovers** too for comparison. Of course both species of **yellowlegs** at times were in people's scopes. This is by far the BEST way to learn the shorebirds in my opinion: seeing the birds in the field right next to other similar species. No book or video comes close to this experience of learning.



Greater Yellowlegs (left) and Lesser Yellowlegs (right)

photo by Diane Morton

Other highlights: a steady stream of **Bobolinks** flying over the marsh, views of **Marsh Wrens**, a very cooperative **Virginia Rail**, **Northern Harriers** and many **Bald Eagles**.

My list for September 2 can be found here: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S38953924>.

For our walk on September 9, some folks started on Towpath Road and met up with us on the dike as most walked down from East Road. We also had a nice group of young birders from the SUNY ESF bird club join us.

This was a day of great bird diversity as Jay McGowan recorded an amazing 109 species between Towpath Road and the dike. See: <http://bit.ly/2eYqdg9>. This is a testament to the great bird diversity we enjoy in the Cayuga Basin!

Highlights from our September 9 walk included a flyover **American Golden-Plover** that we first identified by call. The bird circled around a few times and we got great

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 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.

Officer Nominations

At the Cayuga Bird Club Meeting on October 9 we will be voting for Club Officers and one Director for 2017-2018. The officers are listed below. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor, but if you'd like to nominate someone, please make sure that person wishes to be nominated!

President: Wes Blauvelt



Wes has been a member of the Cayuga Bird Club for about 17 years and is currently vice president of the club. He has actively participated in the Christmas Bird Count and the November Loon Watch. Wes's interests in birding began as a boy and he has been fortunate to travel around the world chasing birds.

Vice President: Diane Morton



Diane is editor of the Cayuga Bird Club Newsletter and co-chairs the field trip committee. She has also been a field trip leader for the Cayuga Bird Club, Spring Field Ornithology, and the weekend walks at Sapsucker Woods. Diane enjoys birding year-round, both locally and further afield.

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.

looks at the bird, which was a molting adult. We also had **Baird's Sandpiper** initially at the beginning of the walk. This bird was in very poor lighting at first and we struggled a bit on the ID. On the way back at the very end of the path on the edge of the water in the channel, we found the bird again in much better lighting and there were actually two of them!



Baird's Sandpiper, photo by Dave Nicosia

We also had a **Yellow-Bellied Flycatcher** closer to Towpath Rd from the dike. We also saw many **Killdeer**, **Semipalmated Plovers**, both **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Least** and **Semipalmated Sandpipers**. A few of us saw a **dowitcher** briefly and a few had a **Stilt Sandpiper** at the beginning. We also got great looks at an immature **Black-crowned Night-Heron** and three **Northern Harriers** soaring close and low. There were also eleven **Sandhill Cranes** and many species of waterfowl. My list for September 9 can be found here (does not include Towpath Road): <http://bit.ly/2vW1LTJ>.



Northern Harrier, photo by Muhammad Arif

Recording Secretary: Becky Hansen



Becky moved to Ithaca 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 serve as recording secretary for the Cayuga Bird Club.

Corresponding Secretary: Colleen Richards



Colleen has been corresponding secretary since 2008. She organizes the monthly club dinner, which honors the speaker and encourages member interaction as well as

corresponding with our program speakers each month to assure they have all they need for their engagement.

Board Member: Jody Enck



Jody started birding 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. Jody is just completing his two-year term as Cayuga Bird Club president.

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

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



Immature Black-crowned Night-Heron, photo by Muhammad Arif

Thanks to all who came along and thanks to the fine folks at Montezuma for supporting these annual shorebird walks.

Nocturnal Flight Calls at Mount Pleasant Observatory

Wes Blauvelt

Utilizing NEXRAD radar, a thermal imaging camera, and Raven Interactive Sound Analysis Software, a group of about a dozen birding enthusiasts, researchers and Cayuga Bird Club members descended upon Mount Pleasant on Saturday, September 9, to listen for calls of night-migrating birds on their journey to the neotropics and beyond.

Winds were light out of the north-northeast, with a broken cloud cover on an otherwise star-filled night. After setting up an array of microphones and computer equipment, Bill Evans, along with Chris Tessaglia-Hymes, demonstrated the power of spectrographic analysis software (Raven) to search out the overflight of birds moving south. Brief chirps were captured as graphic images in the Raven software that allowed Bill and Chris to identify individual birds during the night flight. Suan Hsi Yong brought along his thermal imaging camera and it captured bird overflights as if streaking meteors, and the NEXRAD radar scanned the region for any unusual migratory movements. The night was productive, with Great Blue and Green Herons, Killdeer, thrushes, including Swainson's with their spring peeper night flight chirp, and a Gray-cheeked Thrush. And of course, there was an

Sept. 16 Connecticut Warbler

**2017 total count through September:
271 species**

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

CLO Monday Night Seminar

Speaker: Noah Strycker

Title: *Birding Without Borders: An Epic World Big Year*

When: Monday, October 2, 2017, 7:30 pm

Where: Cornell Lab of Ornithology

In 2015, bird nerd Noah Strycker of Oregon became the first human to see more than half of the planet's bird species in a single, year-long, round-the-world birding trip. Anything could have happened, and a lot did. He was scourged by blood-sucking leeches, suffered fevers and sleep deprivation, survived airline snafus and car breakdowns and mudslides and torrential floods, skirted war zones, and had the time of his life. Birding on seven continents and carrying only a pack on his back, Strycker enlisted the enthusiastic support of local birders to tick more than 6,000 species, including Adelie Penguins in Antarctica, a Harpy Eagle in Brazil, a Spoon-billed Sandpiper in Thailand, and a Green-breasted Pitta in Uganda. He shared the adventure in real time on his daily blog (audubon.org/noah), and now he reveals the inside story. This humorous and inspiring presentation about Strycker's epic World Big Year will leave you with a new appreciation for the birds and birders of the world.

Noah's book about his adventure is due out on October 10.

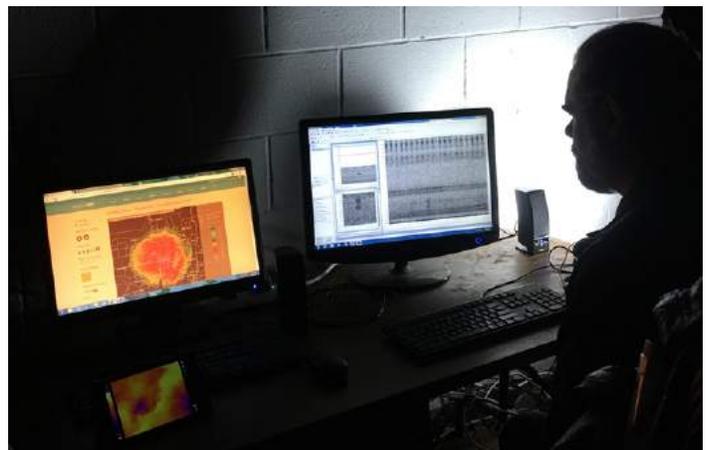
This seminar is being streamed live. Cut and past this web address to watch it and to sign up for alerts about upcoming presentations: <http://dl.allaboutbirds.org/cornelllab-monday-night-seminars>.

Sound Meets Science: Radio Production and the Natural World

array of "confusing" fall warblers... just as difficult to identify by their night calls as by their daytime counterpart- plumage.



Participants watch Chris (center) and Bill (right) as they analyze the flight calls of migrating birds.



Chris is working Raven Interactive Sound Analysis software alongside a computer monitoring radar images of migration movement.

Up the Lake, September 10

Bob McGuire

Five folks joined me for our first field trip of the fall. We could not have asked for better weather, and the birds were there too! This was an all-day trip up the lake with stops at many of my favorites: Salt Point, the ponds in Union Springs, Knox-Marsellus Marsh, Marten's Tract and Carncross Road in the North Montezuma Complex.

We spent quite a bit of time walking the trails at Salt Point, focusing on migrating warblers and singing vireos. A big surprise was a distant Eastern Screech Owl that responded to our tape.

Speaker: Bill McQuay, audio producer and NPR contributor

When: Tuesday, October 3, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Where: Lansing Town Hall, 29 Auburn Road, Lansing

In celebration of autumn at Salt Point, Bill McQuay, an audio producer and NPR Contributor, will give a presentation entitled *Sound Meets Science: Radio Production and the Natural World*. McQuay will focus on radio production techniques for stories about science and the natural world. He will share samples of his work and discuss techniques and technologies used in his award-winning productions.

Sponsored by the Friends of Salt Point, this event is free and open to the public.

[Travel to Honduras in January](#)



Jody Enck and others from the Cayuga Bird Club will be traveling to **Honduras** in January to take part in the [Lake Yojoa Birding Blitz](#) with guides from Birds and Beaks. The Blitz is 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. Participants are grouped into teams, each led by an expert birder who has ample knowledge of the birds in the area and is also an active eBird contributor. Over the 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

The Union Springs ponds gave us the opportunity to study the differences between the two teals, American Wigeon, and Redhead, all in eclipse plumages (or headed that way).



Blue-winged Teal, photo by Diane Morton

At the north end of the lake we skipped the refuge and headed straight for Marten's Tract, had our lunch at the new pavilion and then focused on a variety of shorebirds: yellowlegs, Semipalmated, Least, and Bairds(!) Sandpipers, and Semipalmated Plovers. And after studying them in Union Springs it was readily apparent which teal was which - lots of Green-winged and Blue-winged to compare.



At Marten's Tract, photo by Ken Kemphues

From the overlook at Knox-Marsellus marsh we had good scope views of Mute and Trumpeter Swans, more ducks, a couple of Great Egrets, and a pair of Sandhill Cranes.

My thanks to all who came along and helped with the ID challenges and to Diane Morton for keeping the eBird lists.

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.

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.

For more information, please **contact Jody Enck** at jwe4@cornell.edu. You do not need to be a member of the Cayuga Bird Club to sign up for this trip to Honduras.

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



Black-Mandibled Toucan, photo by Wes Blauvelt

Cayuga Bird Club members have the opportunity go on a **birding trip to Costa Rica in April!** The tour will be organized by [Holbrook Travel](#), which has been bringing groups to Costa Rica to see birds and other wildlife for decades. More than 870 species of birds have been recorded in Costa Rica. The local guides that Holbrook Travel uses are experts at identification by both sight and sound, and will help us to find as many species as possible. 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.

[2017 Muckrace Report](#)

Bob McGuire



The Montezuma Muckrace is one of the highlights of the birding year around here. It began twenty years ago as a fundraiser to support bird and habitat conservation and in that time has raised over one hundred and thirty thousand dollars. Recent funded projects include Motus wildlife tracking towers, observation platforms, and native grassland restoration. For 2017, during a 24-hour period in mid-September, 24 teams scoured the Montezuma wetlands complex to tally as many birds as possible. There were "competitive" teams, "recreational" teams (less demanding rules), "youth", "photo", and "low-carbon" teams.

For the last several years the Cayuga Bird Club has sponsored our team, the Arrogant Bustards. This year we decided to try something new: we welcomed back from Virginia former team-mate and CBC president Deirdre Anderson and expanded the group to fill two cars. The hope was that 8 pairs of eyes and ears would greatly enhance our chances of exceeding last year's total of 104 species. As a "recreational team" we were only required to get one person on a bird, but we would try, as always, get as many team members as possible on each one.

Our day began at 6 am at the north end of Cayuga Lake. The first bird of the day always brings a smile, and hearing the squawk of a Great Blue Heron in the dark told us we were off to a good start. By ear we quickly added Gray Catbird, Belted Kingfisher, and Wood Duck. Then,

This trip is planned for **April 20 - April 29, 2018**. The cost is \$2500 per person, and includes all meals, accommodations and activities, in-country transportation, full-time guide, bottled water, a donation to the Cayuga Bird Club and carbon offset. The fee does not include international airfare, gratuities for guide or driver or items of a personal nature.

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.

For more information and a detailed itinerary, contact Jody Enck at jwe4@cornell.edu. This trip is limited to 12 people.



What is happening with the Sister Bird Club Network?

Jody Enck

The Sister Bird Club Network aims to link bird clubs in the Americas through the neotropical migratory birds we all love. Since our webpage (www.sisterbirdclubnetwork.com) went live over the summer, various clubs, individuals and even school groups from AK, MA, NY, PA, TN, Brazil, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and the Amazon Binocular Project have filled out the on-line form to join the network. I encourage all of you to join as individuals!

as it began to get light, we counted Green Heron, Cormorant, Canada Goose and two more “ear” birds: Great Crested Flycatcher and Carolina Wren.

The early morning fog was still thick at the MNWR visitor center so we skipped the wildlife drive and walked the Seneca River Trail instead, picking up Downy and Pileated Woodpeckers, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, our first warblers (Black-and-white, Tennessee, Bay Breasted, and Common Yellowthroat), an Eastern Bluebird, and our only Common Grackle of the day.

Esker Brook Trail has always been one of our “go-to” spots for forest birds and paid off this year as well. Though we actually saw very few birds, we tallied a couple of needed birds by ear: Wood Thrush, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Ruby-throated Hummingbird is often a difficult bird because you never know exactly where to look for it. We were fortunate to have one buzz past as we were getting back into the cars.

At this point the fog had lifted, and we zipped back to the refuge to do the wildlife drive. The main pool held most of the needed ducks: American Wigeon, Black and Ring-necked Ducks, Green-winged Teal, and Redhead. Benning Marsh held our first Great Egrets plus Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal, Semipalmated Plover and Semipalmated Sandpiper. And there we heard our first fly-over Bobolink.

Our next stop was THE LONG MARCH. This year, for the first time, the dike at Knox-Marsellus Marsh was open to the public. We parked at the west end of Towpath Road (Towpath - still an on-going mud hole) and walked-- east on the dirt road, north/west/south along the dike and back to the cars. Unfortunately the numbers of woodland birds on Towpath was low, and the variety of shorebirds in Knox-Marsellus was equally low. We did pick up our Pectoral and Baird’s Sandpipers, flushed an American Bittern, and tallied Trumpeter Swan, Osprey, and Turkey Vulture. After two hours of walking we were ready for lunch! We took a quick break at the Nice ’n Easy on Rt 20 and then a quick hop back to Mud Lock, now clear of fog, for a distant Great Black-backed Gull.

Every year we try to scout ahead for birds that would be

We also have a [Facebook page](#) that you can join and follow to see what is happening in clubs all up and down the Western Hemisphere. To date, there are more than 175 members in our Facebook group from the Americas, the Caribbean, and as far away as Africa and India.

You may recall that I went to Honduras for about a month last fall to meet with Clubs there to kick-start the Network. I've also been working with a like-minded group of individuals from the Juniata Valley Audubon Society in Pennsylvania (their group is called Partners in Neotropical Bird Conservation) to build connections. To highlight some of the outcomes of our nascent work, and to communicate about our hopes and dreams that underlie the promise of the Network, several of us have organized a Symposium to be held on November 3, 2017 in conjunction with the sixth Partners in Flight Conference and the 21st Congress of the MesoAmerican Society for Biology and Conservation, to be held in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Here is the program for that Symposium on the Sister Bird Club Network:

1. Jody Enck (Founder of the Sister Bird Club Network and President, Cayuga Bird Club): *Sister Bird Club Network: What, Why, How?*
2. Mayron Mejia (President, Asociación Hondureña de Ornitología) and Oliver Komar (Vice President of ASHO): *The ASHO strategy to build a bird club network in Honduras.*
3. Katinka Domen and William Oreana (Beaks and Peaks Birding and Adventure Tours): *Using the Sister Bird Club Network to enhance ecotourism.*
4. Chris Fischer, Mark Bonta, Laura Jackson, and Ian Gardner (Juniata Valley Audubon Society, Partners in Neotropical Bird Conservation): *Sister Bird Clubs working together: lessons learned.*
5. Francisco Rovelo (Teacher, Minerva School) and Norman Espinoza (Hummingbirds Club): *Engaging youth in birding activities through the Sister Bird Club Network.*
6. Oliver Komar (Professor, Zamorano University, Vice President of ASHO): *How bird clubs can contribute to avitourism and Neotropical Ornithology through eBird.*
7. Jody Enck: *Symposium summary: bringing the dream to reality.*

difficult to find. A couple of days before the event we had staked out several feeders in the area. There we planned to find Brown-headed Cowbird, Chipping Sparrow, Eastern Bluebird, Northern Flicker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Sandhill Crane. After lunch we checked all of them-- and came up empty: none of our targets! We had already found Bluebird and Chipping Sparrow, but we really needed the cranes and the nuthatch.

We continued north, checked in at the Montezuma Audubon Center (Muckrace headquarters) and scoped the pond for Solitary Sandpiper. From there we drove over to Marten's Tract, one of the few places in the whole Complex with any shorebird habitat. All we could come up with was a group of Least Sandpipers. Oh yes, and one of us got a quick glimpse of a skulking Sora!

Howland Island is open to vehicle traffic during the Muckrace, and we spent a couple of hours both driving and walking the dirt roads, hoping for a flock of migrating warblers or just to add a few of the birds we had missed so far. We never did find a feeding flock but were able to add Fish Crow (calling once) and Bank Swallow. The biggest surprise of the day came late on the drive when we heard a not-too-distant Barred Owl call twice. Our first thought was that another team somewhere up ahead was trying to call one in. We drove on, found no one, and ticked it for ourselves.

We still had time before our last planned stop so decided to run back to where we had staked out the cranes for another look. Sure enough, they were back-- two Sandhill Cranes quietly feeding in the field where our scouts had seen them just the day before.

Our final stop was Van Dyne Spoor Road. The idea was to be there at the end of the day to watch for returning blackbirds (possible Yellow-headed?) and any marsh birds settling in for the night. While we were picking through the swallows perched on the wires, a Merlin swooped in, grabbed one, and flew off to the near-by woods to pluck it, while we watch through our scopes. Then, in short order, an American Kestrel flew past followed not long after by a Peregrine Falcon.

At 6:50 we packed up and headed back to the MAC to hand in our checklist, grab a slice of pizza, and await the results. Our grand total was 98 species, good enough for

Perhaps the best way to understand what this Network is all about and what it can be for birders would be to go on one of the two trips we have planned for 2018 to visit the birds and some of the birders in Central America. The first of those will be a trip to Honduras during the second half of January. The second trip will be to Costa Rica in late April. Please see the announcements in this newsletter about how to find out more about these trips.

Our ability to continue enjoying neotropical birds depends not only on conserving those species and the habitats they need. It also depends on sustaining the livelihoods of the people who have the greatest impact on habitat conservation in the neotropics. Meeting with those folks, understanding aspects of their day-to-day lives, and supporting collaborative projects with them are just a few of the things that will help ensure that we can continue enjoying neotropical migratory birds here in North America.

Splits, Lumps, Name Changes for 2017

Diane Morton

The American Ornithological Society's committee on classification and nomenclature of North and Middle American birds (NACC) had its annual meeting this summer and made decisions on classification of bird species and name changes. The Cassia Crossbill (pronounced CASH-uh, species name *Loxia sinesciuris*) is endemic to Cassia county, Idaho, and is now recognized as a separate species from Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*). *sinesciuris* means "without squirrels". There are no squirrels in Cassia county, and the main predator of lodgepole pine in the forests there is the Cassia Crossbill instead of squirrels. The unique relationship between the crossbill and the pines has allowed speciation to occur, with the Cassia Crossbill developing stronger facial muscles and a larger bill to pull seeds out of cones, a job done by squirrels elsewhere. Surprisingly, this adaptation occurred in the presence of other crossbills. The Cassia Crossbill has slightly different vocalizations from the Red Crossbill, key to proper identification in areas where both Crossbills are present.

Cayuga Bird Club member Suan Yong found

second place in the "recreational" category. The winning "competitive" team scored 126 birds. And then there was the team "Jay McGowan" consisting of three Cornell students: 122 birds. Jay was not a member of the team - did he know about this??

Remember: this is a fundraiser. Donations in support of the Arrogant Bustards can be sent to Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex (or FOTMWC), attn: Treasurer, c/o MNWR 3395 US Route 20 Seneca Falls NY 13148. You can also [donate online at the Friends of Montezuma website](#).

Thanks to the entire team: Susan Danskin, Ann Mitchell, Deirdre Anderson, Ken Kemphues, Dave Nutter, Gary Kohlenberg. (Diane Morton was a member of the team but was unable to make the big day.)

Sapsucker Woods and Mundy Wildflower Garden Trip, September 23, 2017

Meena Haribal



Eleven enthusiastic birders joined me on a beautiful fall day for a birding trip. We decided to do Sapsucker Woods first. As soon as we left parking lot, we saw a flock of birds land on a tree. I thought they were starlings, but diligent Mark Chao corrected me and told they were female blackbirds. Sure enough they were Red-winged Blackbirds and more joined them. Then there were lots of American Goldfinches with the young calling "Feed me Feed me". Soon Mark found a beautiful and cooperative Blue-headed Vireo silently feeding in trees. Then there were a few Black-throated Green warblers - a couple of them gave us good views. Mark explained to us how he differentiates Black-throated Green Warblers' chips from Cardinals' chips. We continued along the path and at the Kip's Barn platform we had two Tennessee Warblers,

crossbills on a trip to Cassia County, Idaho this summer and has shared some of his photos of the birds he found, below.



For comparison, here is Suan's photo of a Red Crossbill taken at Crater Lake, Oregon, a few years ago:



Are the top three birds Cassia Crossbills? Suan consulted with Matt Young and Jay McGowan of Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Macaulay Library, who who found in Suan's recordings only calls from Type 2 Red Crossbills, and none from Cassia's (formerly Type 9). Suan notes that the crossbill family he observed came to feed on the

one with a very yellow underside suggesting that it was probably a first-year bird. We also heard and saw Warbling Vireos and a Wood Duck on the pond.

Then it was quiet until we reached Sherwood Platform. Here we hit a small group of birds, which consisted of Ruby-crowned Kinglets and more Black-throated Green warblers without black throats, that is, mostly females and young birds. We also saw two or three Northern Parula warblers and several Common Yellowthroats, some singing garbled songs. Gladys and I saw a Nashville Warbler. At the turn of the bend further down the trail near the bench we saw a family of young Song Sparrows and somewhere on the trail we also heard a Swamp Sparrow. A Pileated Woodpecker flew over our head calling loudly as if to grab our attention. It was birdy although not as much as had been reported the previous day.

By then it was almost 10:30 am-- some of the members decided to spilt and the rest of us proceeded to Mundy Wildflower Garden. Mundy was comparatively quiet; the only new birds we added here were a Red-eyed Vireo, a Hairy Woodpecker, a Field Sparrow and a Belted Kingfisher along with many Chipping Sparrows and American Goldfinches. Then we decided to call it an afternoon! Over all it was a pleasant day with cool temperatures. Thanks to all who joined the trip and to Mark Chao for sharing his knowledge of calls with us!

Hummingbird Nesting: A Mama's Hard Work (part 2)

Story and photos by Dave Nutter

Over the course of six weeks a single tiny female hummingbird, carrying at first fluff, spider silk, and bits of lichen, then countless cropfulls of nectar and minuscule prey, created two more hummingbirds.

To recap part 1: On 6 June I followed a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird carrying fluff to the beginning of her nest on a branch overhanging Fall Creek. By 12 June the nest appeared complete and on the 13th she was clearly incubating, as she was on June 24th. On June 29th I first saw evidence that eggs had hatched when she fed two tiny young. By the end of the first week of July the babies were growing needlelike bills and a bit of down, but their eyes were still closed.

ground, and conjectures that these Type 2's didn't quite have the right tools to get at the cones in the trees, and so would be more likely to come down to pick at old fallen cones.

So if you go out to Cassia County, Idaho, it can still be tricky to identify a Cassia Crossbill!

More splits by the NACC:

Magnificent Hummingbird was divided into two species, Rivoli's Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*), found in southwestern United States down to Nicaragua, and Talamanca Hummingbird (*Eugenes spectabilis*), which inhabits cloud forests and oak forests of Costa Rica and western Panama. One field mark difference: throat color is yellow-green for Rivoli's and turquoise for Talamanca.

Northern Harrier is now *Circus hudsonius* in North America to distinguish it from the old world Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). A second new world/old world split is for Northern Shrike, *Lanius borealis* in North America, separate from the Great Gray Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) of western and central Eurasia.

Some of you may have lost a gull species from your life list; Thayers Gull is now considered a subspecies of Iceland Gull.

Additional changes have been made to species names of a number of waterfowl and to the order in which sandpipers and sparrows, chat, and other birds are arranged taxonomically. For details on these changes, see the NACC's [publication](#), or this [summary](#) from the American Birding Association.

Leaves helped shelter the nest from sun, rain, and predators' view. Growing foliage also made photography challenging. The slightest breeze would bring a leaf in the way or swing the nest out of frame. The family survived torrential rain, strong winds, and the human version of storms: a snagged fishing line yanked on an adjacent branch and a tremendous Independence Day fireworks display.

I showed the nest to Melissa Groo. We communicated but worked independently. The photo of the female holding fluff in part 1 is hers (Thank-you!), and more of her gorgeous professional work can be seen on her website and Facebook page which shows some photos of this nest. I took the rest of the photos in these articles with my phone through my scope.



Despite retaining a yellow gape and developing a warbler-like bill, I think of this as the babies' "reptile phase". Their feather tracts were just starting to develop, and they looked to me like the serrated ridges on some of the larger lizards.



[NYSOA Meeting November 10-12](#)

The 70th Annual New York State Ornithological Association Meeting and Birders Conference is scheduled for November 10 – 12, 2017 in Niagara Falls, New York. Hosted by the Buffalo Ornithological Society (BOS), the activities will be based at the brand new Double Tree by Hilton Hotel on the spectacular rapids of the Niagara River, just above the mighty Niagara Falls. Conference attendees will be able to walk to the falls and Niagara Falls State Park, which is not only wonderfully scenic but spectacular for birds. The dates were chosen so as not to interfere with Thanksgiving and to give birders a chance to see some of the special gulls that occur along the Niagara River, as well as a great assortment of waterfowl. Depending on the weather, there will be a chance to see Little, Franklins, and Sabine's Gulls, and Black-legged Kittiwake.

Several exciting field trips are planned, as well as two entertaining speakers for the Friday and Saturday night programs. The keynote speaker will be Neil Hayward, who broke the North American Big Year record a few years ago, and on Friday night, Paul Guris will talk about pelagic birding in New York State waters. We are expecting a top-notch assortment of vendors, artists, and other birding groups. The BOS is proud and extremely excited to host the annual birders conference and look forward to seeing you there!

[Register for the Conference](#)



Their eyes were finally open but still bulging and circular, reminiscent of chameleons'.

These 9 July photos were taken from the closest approach I made, with the scope about 23' from the nest. Sitting on the bank of Fall Creek with one tripod leg in the water, I became familiar with a seedling Multiflora Rose, a colony of tiny stinging ants, and a small cloud of mosquitos, but I managed to avoid the Poison Ivy and any ticks. The angle was looking steeply upward, yet the young were large enough to be seen over the rim of the nest.

On 11 July I visited around sunset. This dim, backlit photo shows a baby's bill angling up to the left, but also new details: extending up to the right at a lower angle are a couple of its growing primaries, almost entirely encased in the sheaths which hold them straight. Tail feathers show atop the rim of the nest in front of the large twig at the right, also straight but with white tips extending from the sheaths. These babies are definitely going to be birds!



By 13 July the feathers are starting to extend beyond their sheaths, but they still haven't spread out. Instead of a broad contour of plumage, lines of feathers cover a baby's throat and surround its eye.



Below is a baby whose head is out of the frame on the right side. I think we see some neck area feathers to the right and its right wing extending on top to the left.



In the center, below, one nestling faces upward with eye closed. Its sibling appears to be lying atop to the right, with the underside of its tail (feathers mostly sheathed) facing us, and the underside of its left primaries (also mostly sheathed) immediately to the left of the tail. Beyond is its roughly feathered head pointed left. The dark eye is open, the ear behind it is not yet covered, and the bill is angled slightly upward toward the tip of a twig.



A final photo from 13 July: Despite being fairly "big"

babies, they are still much smaller than Mama. Her bill is entirely inside the left nestling whose translucent chin shows pink.



From the morning of 16 July. The young are active, they don't fit in the nest, and they crawl on & over each other, but seem good-natured about it.



From the video I took immediately after the photo below, I'm convinced that the mother's right foot is perched on the base of the bill of one nestling. The other's begging looks menacing here, but in fact it was fed quite amicably.



I returned in the evening and took this portrait.



On the 18th I only took a few usable photos, including these portraits. Mostly I was trying video, including slo-mo, hoping to capture the nestlings exercising their wings, which Melissa Groo told me she had seen. The youngsters were quite active, looking around, preening, poking and tasting things, and moving against, past, and over each other. Wing exercises had to be behind each other's back.



The morning of 19 July was sultry. The Sycamore leaves drooped in the still and saturated dawn air. I tried to scope from the taxi but couldn't see the nest at all. In the middle of the day I returned, and this time I did manage to see the nest: The rim was a simple line; no one was in or on it. The young hummingbirds were somewhere out in the world.

The first part of Dave's story of the hummingbird family was published in the [September 2017 issue](#) of the Cayuga Bird Club Newsletter, available on the Cayuga Bird Club website.

Cayuga Bird Club

Educating and inspiring the birding community of the Cayuga Lake Basin and Central New York since 1914

The Cayuga Bird Club meets on the second Monday of each month, September through June, beginning with refreshments at 7:15 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Johnson Center on Sapsucker Woods Road. All meetings and most field trips are free and open to the public. Membership costs \$15 annually per household, \$10 for students, payable in September. Payment may be made via Paypal at cayugabirdclub.org or by mailing a check to Cayuga Bird Club, c/o Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca NY 14850.

Please include your email address (or addresses for family memberships) with your membership application to receive the club newsletter.

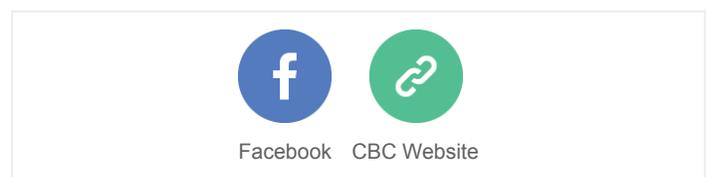
Members receive via email the monthly Cayuga Bird Club Newsletter, from September through June. Newsletter submissions may be sent to Diane Morton, newsletter@cayugabirdclub.org. Of particular interest are articles about local bird sightings, bird behavior, birding hot spots, book reviews, and original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

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

Chickadee illustration in masthead by Karen Allaben-Confer

Don't miss an issue of the newsletter: add newsletter@cayugabirdclub.org to your email contacts.

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