



Cayuga Bird Club

September 2018

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Cayuga Bird Club Meeting September 10, 2018



Speaker: Muhammad Arif

Backyard Birds of Bangladesh

During three recent visits to Bangladesh, Muhammad Arif saw many of the country's common backyard birds and photographed more than 50 species. Muhammad Arif will share some of these pictures, describe his experience birding in Bangladesh, and discuss the status of birds in this tropical river delta, such as the

[2018 CBC Officer Nominations](#)

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Calendar

Sept. 1 Montezuma Shorebird Walk with Dave Nicosia,

Meet at the Montezuma Visitor Center at 7:00 am or at the East Road overlook at 7:15 am.

Sept. 6 Volunteer Training Session,

Cornell Lab of Ornithology
11:00 am

Sept. 9 Field Trip Up the Lake with Ann Mitchell

7:30am - 4:30pm. Meet at CLO parking lot

Sept. 10 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting,

7:30pm - 9:00pm
Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Speaker: Muhammad Arif
Backyard Birds of Bangladesh

Sept. 14-15 Annual Montezuma Muckrace

Montezuma Wetlands Complex

Sept. 15 Migration Celebration,

10:00am - 3:00pm
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Sept. 22 Field Trip to "where the birds are" with Meena Haribal

7:30am - noon. Meet at CLO parking lot

Sept. 29 Field Trip to Roy H Park Preserve with Gladys Birdsall

7:30am - noon. Meet at CLO parking lot

Oct. 5-7 NYSOA meeting, Henrietta NY

Oct. 6 eBird October Big Day

Oct 6 & 7 Sparrow Identification Walks with Mark Chao, 8:00am -

10:30am. Cornell Community Gardens, Freese Road

Oct. 8 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting,

7:30pm - 9:00 pm
Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Speaker: Kyle G. Horton, PhD
Cloudy with a Chance of Migration

Blue-throated Barbet shown here.



Bio: Muhammad was born in Bangladesh and has lived most of his life in the US, including 25+ years in Ithaca. He discovered the passion for both birding and photography only about two years ago. He works as an IT professional at Cornell and uses the time for birding and nature photography to help balance the analytical nature of his job. He is also an avid Salsa dancer.

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

From the President

Wes Blauvelt



It has been a busy summer full of travel for many of our club members. From Maine and Rhode Island to Arizona and California, our members have traveled across the country in pursuit of their passion to find and observe

birds. And the travel was not restricted to North America, with reports of trips to France, Ireland, Sweden, Iceland and Malaysia. Our January meeting should be very entertaining and full of surprises as members share their photos of birds seen during the year.

Over the summer, Diane Morton and I have worked to update our club by-laws. The principal change to the by-laws addresses the issue of Conflict of Interest. New

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

Time to Renew Your Membership

Autumn is the time to rejoin the Cayuga Bird Club!

Annual dues are \$15 per household or \$10 for students and cover your subscription to this newsletter from September through June as well as other bird club activities. Keep informed about birding trips, meetings, and other bird-related happenings in and around Ithaca.

Payment may be made via Paypal at cayugabirdclub.org/membership 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.

Upcoming Field Trips

**Sept. 1 7:00 am - 11:00 am,
Montezuma Shorebird Walk with Dave Nicosia**

Meet at the Refuge Visitor Center, 3395 U.S. Route 20 East, Seneca Falls, NY 13148 a little before 7:00 am on Saturday. At 7:00 am we will caravan from the Visitor Center to the East Rd overlook of Knox-Marsellus Marsh. Folks can meet us at the East Road overlook at 7:15 am if they want. After a brief introduction and scan of the marsh from the overlook, we will walk down to the dike of Knox-

York State requires that all non-profit organizations maintain a Conflict of Interest Policy as part of its by-laws. Our by-laws have been silent on this topic, but with these changes will now contain language that will satisfy New York State. While reviewing the by-laws, several other changes were made to bring the by-laws up to date and consistent with club operations. The proposed changes will be presented to the Executive Committee for review in early September and to the membership at the September meeting. A vote would be planned for the October meeting.

A slate of new officers will also be presented to the membership at the September meeting. They include: Diane Morton, President; Donna Scott, Vice President; Ken Kemphues, Treasurer; Poppy Singer, Recording Secretary; Colleen Richards, Corresponding Secretary; Wes Blauvelt, Director. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor and as is our practice, the newly elected officers will serve for a one year period and the director for a three year term. Brief biographies of the [candidates](#) are included in this newsletter. Election is scheduled for the October meeting.

While it may seem far way, planning for the Christmas Bird Count has begun. This year we will need to find replacements for count coordinators in Area IV (Laura Stenzler will be traveling and unavailable) and Area VI (Asher Hockett is moving out of the area). Please let me know if you would like to volunteer as a count coordinator for either of these areas. I can be reached at wwblauvelt@gmail.com.

The annual Migration Celebration presented by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology (CLO) will take place at CLO on Saturday, September 15th between 10 AM and 3 PM. The Cayuga Bird Club will host a station at the event where members will demonstrate the use of "Merlin" to the public, help identify birds that are in the feeder garden, and provide a game, "What's Your Bird Watching Style", for young birders. On the same day, the [Muckrace](#) will be taking place at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. This is a 24-hour birding event and fundraising effort sponsored by the Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex. The Cayuga Bird Club is sponsoring one team and will sponsor one more team if there is an interest among the membership. Please

Marsellus Marsh, an area normally off-limits to pedestrians. Our primary goal is to observe shorebirds on their southbound migration who stop to feed and rest here, but other birds and wildlife are also of interest. Bring binoculars and a field guide. If you have a spotting scope, please bring it. Dress for the weather, as there is no shelter, and bring water and a snack.

Sept 9 7:30am - 4:30pm, Up the lake with Ann Mitchell

Ann will lead a full day trip to Montezuma to look for migrating shorebirds and other fall migrants. Meet at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology parking lot at 7:30 am. Dress in layers for the weather. Bring a snacks. We will stop at the north end of the lake for food. Bring a scope if you have one. Contact Ann at AnnMitchell13@gmail.com if you have questions.

Sept 22 7:30am - noon, Where the birds are with Meena Haribal

Meena will lead a half-day trip "where the birds are" This may include Fall warblers that are still passing through as well as other fall migrants. Meet at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology parking lot at 7:30 am. Bring something to drink and snacks. We should be back by about noon. Dress warmly according to the weather.

Sept 29 7:30 am - noon, Roy H Park Preserve with Gladys Birdsall

Gladys will lead a trip to the Finger Lakes Land Trust's Roy H Park Preserve (South). Meet at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Parking lot at 7:30 am. We will look for late migrating songbirds, and time permitting, make a stop on the way back along Mt. Pleasant Road to look for Horned Larks, Sparrows, and Wild Turkeys. Bring something to drink and a snack and dress for the weather. Contact Gladys at gjb5@outlook.com if you have questions.

Oct 6 and 7 - 8:00 am - 10:30 am, Sparrow ID walks at Cornell

contact me if you would like to seek club sponsorship for a team and go to

<https://friendsofmontezuma.org/projects-programs/muckrace/> if you would like to make a contribution in support of the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge.

Finally, I would like to direct your attention to [Jody Enck's article](#) in this month's newsletter outlining the activities undertaken this summer by the Cayuga Bird Club Conservation Action Committee. I have been impressed by the energy, imagination and enthusiasm that this committee has displayed while developing strategies for improving habitats in several popular birding hot spots at the south end of Cayuga Lake. Their work is only beginning and they could use the support and participation of additional club members as they work in the tradition of the club's mission to preserve bird life.



Conservation Action Committee Gets Busy

-Jody Enck

Our Conservation Action Committee was re-established last spring after a hiatus of several years, and we hit the ground running. We've had some deeply engaging and spirited planning sessions, one field trip to conduct site visits, and have developed plans for making a difference in the year to come. This column will just touch on the highlights.

We have decided to focus on habitat improvements for several regularly-birded parcels at the south end of Cayuga Lake: (1) the Fuertes Bird Sanctuary (swan pen) and surrounding parts of Stewart Park, (2) Renwick Woods, (3) Jetty Woods, and (4) the fields and woods surrounding Hog Hole. To guide our habitat planning, we have decided to focus on enhancing habitat for three focal migratory species, which are rare and/or declining breeders locally: (1) Wood Thrush, (2) Prothonotary Warbler, and (3) Purple Martin. On Sunday, 26 August, committee members visited all these sites except for Hog Hole to get a sense of the size of these areas, the existing habitat conditions (e.g.,

Community Gardens with Mark Chao

Mark will lead a walk with a focus on sparrow identification. Meet at the Cornell Community Gardens on Freese Road at 8:00am. Be prepared to walk among very tall, wet weeds and uneven, slippery surfaces. We may also visit other nearby sites as birding conditions warrant.

These trips are open to all. Please check the [Cayuga Bird Club calendar](#) for updates in case there are date or time changes for these or any other field trips.

Cayuga Bird Club Picnic

We had very pleasant evening at Myers Point for our annual June picnic! Here are some snapshots from the event.



photo by Diane Morton



photo by Diane Morton



photo by Jody Enck

over-run by non-native plant species), and to see what birds currently are using those areas.

It is important to note that we don't plan to do habitat improvements by ourselves. First, we will partner with existing local institutional partners (e.g., Friends of Stewart Park, City of Ithaca, Cornell University Botanic Gardens, NYSDEC, etc.). More exciting to us, we plan to work with the Ithaca Youth Bureau, GIAC, Southside Community Center and other local groups to engage members of the Ithaca community who currently are not joining us in birding or conservation activities. Conservation action is possible only through purposeful outreach to the broader community to get them involved. In particular, we plan to engage as many youth as possible in our efforts. Indeed, one of our major efforts will be to start a young birder group within our club.

We also want to point out that some of our committee members have been busy on their own and did not wait around for the rest of us to get started. For example, Magnus Fiskesjö got permission from the Cornell Botanical Gardens to erect a couple of nest boxes around Beebe Lake on the Cornell campus. Although his initial interest was to provide nesting sites for Wood Ducks, at least one Eastern Screech-owl has taken a fancy to one as a roosting site. In addition, Sandy and Ed Buckles have accumulated a lot of conservation outreach materials. They are relatively new members who moved here from the Cleveland, Ohio area, and they bring with them experience as successful grant writers for engaging local community members in conservation actions.

We are very excited to be working hard on behalf of birds and other wildlife. If you want to join us (no experience necessary), please email Jody Enck at jodyenck@gmail.com.



Hooded Mergansers, photo by Suan Yong



Mallards, photo by Suan Yong

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

Cayuga Lake Basin birds reported June-August are listed below.

- June 28 Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
- July 10 Yellow-breasted Chat
- July 17 Willet
- Aug 12 Golden-winged Warbler
- Aug 25 Baird's Sandpiper
- Aug 25 Buff-Breasted Sandpiper

2018 total count: 271 species

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

Volunteer at the Cornell Lab

What: Volunteer Information Session

When: Thursday, September 6, 11:00 am

Where: Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca

Description: Join our growing team of Visitor Center volunteers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. If you're interested,



Sapsucker Woods Weekend Bird Walks are led by CBC Members - Spread the Word!

-Linda Orkin

For almost ten years now docents have been leading beginner birds walks on the weekends all year long in Sapsucker Woods, an almost mystical oasis in the minds of birders from all areas and of all abilities. That lure only requires a love of birds and a desire to see them and know them. In the earlier years this offering of beginner bird walks was solely under the aegis of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and its volunteer outreach program but about four years ago it became a joint venture with the Cayuga Bird Club with all walk leaders being members of the club and volunteering in that capacity, and with the club making eight pairs of binoculars available for loan. This is a labor of love for all of the leaders and the excitement of the participants at their introduction and deepening appreciation of all the life that abounds in these precious woods is more than enough reward. I will add that the walks are targeted towards the most basic beginners but people of all levels of experience come and are excited and active participants.

I want to take this chance to mention the people who have been so enthusiastic and dedicated all these

please plan to attend our volunteer information session. Come to the Visitor Center and you will be guided to the room where the session is being held. Lab volunteers are needed to lead guided tours and to assist with youth education programs.

Contact: cornellbirds@cornell.edu



Migration Celebration!

Come explore the Cornell Lab of Ornithology! Learn about bird migration, conservation, and the amazing world of animal sounds. Enjoy interactive exhibits, games, workshops, and trail walks.

Free tickets to workshops will be handed out at the Migration Celebration welcome table. Space is limited so be sure to arrive early, check the schedule, and pick up your tickets!

Cayuga Lake Creamery and The Silo Food Truck will be part of the celebration this year.

Be a Migration Celebration volunteer!

You'll receive training on what to do on the morning of the event. Contact Anne Rosenberg at baj3@cornell.edu by **September 7** to volunteer.



New York State Birders Conference & NYSOA 71st Annual Meeting

years: Paul Anderson, Marc Devokaitis, Dick Feldman, Ken Haas, Caroline Manning, Diane Morton, Lee Ann van Leer, Lisa Wood, Suan Hsi Yong and me, the coordinator, Linda Orkin, as well as Becky Hansen, one of our mainstays who has just moved to Houston but who led walks up until three days before her move date. We will all very much miss her, and to all of these wonderful people I offer sincere and deep thanks. Doing this is true activism in the service of the birds and their environment. If anyone is interested in joining this crew please email me, Linda, at wingmagic16@gmail.com. We would love to have you. We can always use more help from our excellent birding community.

I was asked to talk about the walks by Nateal Falk Ericson for WHCU radio on August 23. You might enjoy listening to this podcast and perhaps it might inspire you to come along as a participant or as a leader.

<http://whcuradio.com/podcasts/your-turn-8-23-18/>

You can see the walk schedule on the first page of the Cayuga Bird Club website. For highlights of some of the walks you can go to this link.: <http://www.cayugabirdclub.org/sapsucker-woods-beginner-walks>. And please be sure to pass an open invitation to join a weekend walk along to friends, family and visitors.

For a little teaser I include a few excerpts from reports of weekend walk highlights, below.

Dick Feldman... "As we were walking over there, in the trees on the left, we saw a Blue-Winged Warbler, with a caterpillar in its beak. It was the first I'd seen there and was a thrill for me and some of the others. Others were equally excited by the Blue Jays and Downy Woodpeckers. The GBH was in the big snag, visiting his old home."

Ken Haas..."Families from Norfolk, VA, the Bronx, NY and an island in the Caribbean came to Sapsucker Woods for their first ever guided bird walk. Sunny and warm to start, the day quickly approached the 85 degree mark. Looking through my mini-scope we got great looks at Great Blue Heron, Green Herons, and two Kingfishers while overlooking the pond."

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

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

The banquet speaker will be Greg Miller of The Big Year book and movie fame. This is the 20th anniversary of Greg's Big Year. He will approach the subject from the viewpoint of what followed from his adventures: the book, the movie, and his future involvement in birding.

One Friday night workshop will feature a description of the use of eBird as the data input tool and archival database for the NY Breeding Bird Atlas III to begin field work in 2020. There will be examples from the work in progress using this tool on other breeding bird atlas projects, such as those in Wisconsin and Virginia. Experts in the design and use of the tool from the eBird Team will lead the presentation and discussion. The other workshop will be a presentation on Snowy Owls and project SNOWstorm by Tom MacDonald, a long-time Snowy Owl bander and one of the world's experts on these spectacular birds.

Lodging and Meeting Information

This meeting will be centered at the RIT

Lisa Wood...."A returnee from last week and a woman with two 7-ish-year-olds joined me this sultry morning for a slow, two-hour meander to the Sherwood platform and back. The kids especially enjoyed the about-to-fledge robins on the ledge above the seed closet door at the visitors center and two snakes (parent and young?) sunning near the feeder garden fence. A preening male Green Heron gave us ample views and seemed to be a life bird for everyone. Kingfishers were noisy and very (inter)active. A warbler (sp.) foraged high and distant in the trees to the west as we were nearing Sherwood. The returnee declared that he'd "caught the bug" and had spent the week learning about how to buy binoculars. Since he'd used the CBC's Leupolds last week, I let him use my 8x30 Swarovskis to get a feel for the two kinds. Figured that might provide helpful field experience after a week of online research."



birders on the dike, photo by Diane Morton

Montezuma Shorebird Walks

This report comes from Dave Nicosia's August 25 Guided Shorebird Walk at Knox-Marsellus Marsh at the Montezuma NWR:

We had an awesome day, people were very nice, weather was perfect, habitat excellent and there were good numbers and variety of shorebirds and other birds too. We had great views of **Baird's, White-rumped, Semipalmated, Least, Pectoral** and **Stilt Sandpipers**. Also present were both species of **yellowlegs, Black-bellied Plovers, Semipalmated Plovers** and of course **Killdeer**. Some of us also got on a **Long-billed Dowitcher** which was among **Short-billed Dowitchers**.

A **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was also spotted by Chris Wood from East Road but we weren't able to relocate it.

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

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

Bird Poster Exhibit at CLO

2018 has been declared the [Year of the Bird](#). With that in mind, students from Ithaca College designed a series of posters, urging people to appreciate birds and nature and participate in citizen science. Their work will be on display in the Cornell Lab's Visitor Center auditorium, **starting September 15**. This exhibition displays posters by students working with design for a good cause—to create meaningful civic engagement. Stop in to see their great work.

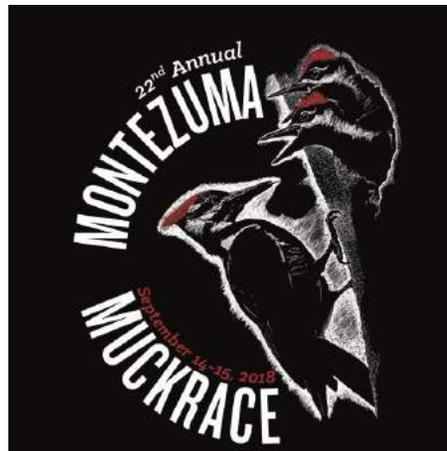


Cayuga Bird Club Meeting **October 8**

Speaker: **Kyle G. Horton**, Ph.D.;
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Cornell
Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca

A **Peregrine Falcon** was really stirring up the shorebirds by this time. The immature **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was still present. All in all, a great day. Special thanks to Dave Nutter, Bob McGuire, Jay McGowan and Tim Lenz who assisted me in finding birds and helping make sure people got on many of these birds. A link to the morning's eBird list of 61 species is [here](#).

Note: another shorebird walk will be led by Dave Nicosia at Montezuma on Saturday, September 1, 2018. Meet at the Montezuma NWR Visitor Center on route 20 at 7:00 am or at the East Road overlook of Knox-Marsellus Marsh at 7:15 am.



Montezuma Muckrace 2018

The Montezuma Muckrace is an annual fundraiser for the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, an Important Bird Area that supports a million or more waterfowl of at least thirty species, thousands of inland migrating shorebirds and a variety of other birds. Teams "race" to find as many birds as possible within the 242-square mile Montezuma Focus Area, which has been highlighted under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan as critical migratory bird habitat.

This year's Montezuma Muckrace begins at 7:00pm, Friday, September 14 and ends 24 hours later, on Saturday, September 15.

Teams can join in the fun by participating in one of several categories:

- Youth: (ages 9-16), any number, identifying birds without adult assistance

Title: Cloudy with a Chance of Migration

Description: The notion of hundreds of millions, if not billions, of migratory birds passing in and out of broad geographic areas is of considerable public and ecological interest – and of conservation concern. Capturing and quantify these large-scale movements has remained a principle challenge. Kyle will discuss how he uses weather surveillance radar to quantify and forecast migratory movements across the United States.

Bio: Kyle Horton received his B.S. in Biology from Canisius College in 2011, M.S. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Delaware in 2013, and Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Oklahoma in 2017. He is currently a Rose Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. He uses a range of tools to study migratory birds, including radar, acoustics, and citizen science data. He is currently working on understanding changes in migratory timing, population estimates, impacts of artificial light, and developing migration forecasting systems.

Officer Nominations for 2018 Elections

At the October 8 Cayuga Bird Club Meeting, we will be voting for Club Officers and one Director. Nominated 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: Diane Morton

Diane is currently vice president of the Cayuga Bird Club as well as editor of the club newsletter and co-chair of the field trip committee. She has enjoyed sharing a love of birds with others through being a field trip leader for the Cayuga Bird Club,

- Low-Carbon: any number, no motorized assistance - biking, walking, canoeing, etc
- Family/Mentor: any number, at least one parent/leader with any number of young/beginning birders
- Photo: any number, can only count birds that it can photograph or video record calls with a camera.
- Recreational: any number of adults
- Competitive: any number of adults, all birds tallied must be identified by at least 2 members of the team and 95% of tallied birds must be seen or heard by all members of the team.

For details about team categories, rules, and how to participate, see the Muckrace website:

<https://friendsofmontezuma.org/projects-programs/muckrace/>.

The Cayuga Bird Club will sponsor the Arrogant Bustards recreational team, with Dierdre Anderson, Susan Danskin, Ken Kemphues, Gary Kohlenberg, Bob McGuire, Ann Mitchell, Diane Morton, and Dave Nutter. If you'd like to make a donation in support of this team or any other Muckrace team, you can do that online at the Muckrace homepage (scroll down): <https://friendsofmontezuma.org/projects-programs/muckrace/>. Funds raised will be used for bird conservation, wildlife habitat improvement and public access in the Montezuma Wetlands Complex .



Birding with Kids

-Jody Enck



Spring Field Ornithology, and the weekend walks at Sapsucker Woods. Diane enjoys birding year-round, both locally and further afield.

Vice President: Donna Scott



An active member of the Cayuga Bird Club, Donna, along with several other stalwart CBC-ers, put together the New York State Ornithological Association's

Annual Meeting in Ithaca hosted by CBC in Fall of 2014. In addition, Donna is a Director of the Friends of Salt Point, Inc., which helps the Town of Lansing manage the Salt Point Natural Area by Salmon Creek and Cayuga Lake. Not having enough to do since retiring from Cornell in 2002, she is also the President of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes (see www.fingerlakesfunerals.org)! This cuts into birding time, but is important volunteer work.

Donna has been birding for more than 45 years, and took the Spring Field Ornithology (SFO) course two times. She has participated in the CBC's Christmas count for over 15 years and has been going to Lab of O. seminars for years. Her birding ventures include field trips with SFO, the CBC, and birding during her many travels, including to Florida, Maine, Ontario Canada, Peru, Ecuador and Costa Rica, and soon she will go birding in the Four Corners area of southwest USA.

Treasurer: Ken Kemphues

Ken is a retired Cornell professor and has been a member of the Cayuga Bird Club since 2013. He served as chair of his department at Cornell for six years and

During summer of 2018, the American Birding Association podcast features two segments on birding with kids ([May_podcast](#) [July_podcast](#)). The podcasts included great interviews with birding parents and/or bird trip leaders who offer bird walks for kids. The speakers provided excellent advice, and I encourage all readers to check-out the podcasts.

I, too, am a birding parent. This post is about some of my experiences of birding with kids.

First, a little background for context. I've been a birder just about all my life. When I got married, my spouse tolerated my birding, but she didn't get much enjoyment out of it herself. So, when our kids were born, there was not a lot of natural socialization into a birding culture going on for the boys. It wasn't easy to even maintain a bird feeder in the backyard or walk around our woods with binoculars looking for birds. We ended up separating and getting divorced when the boys were about 9 and 12 years-old.

Life as a birding parent post-divorce has looked very different than life as a birding parent pre-divorce, although in many ways, I was a single-parent birder in both of those lives. Here are a couple of vignettes about birding with kids from each of those lives.

"My eyes know, but they can't talk..."

Each year around my birthday in mid-March, my two young sons and I plan a trip around the Finger Lakes looking for signs of spring. We especially try to find some of the big flocks of migrating waterfowl that pass through here in March. A few years ago when my boys were 7 and 10, we started our day at the south end of Cayuga Lake where they enjoyed counting individuals of the species of birds they could identify. One son estimated that he saw 15 mallards while the other counted over 50. The actual numbers didn't matter, just finding species they could recognize and getting in the habit of trying to estimate their numbers made it fun for me and them. As morning wore into afternoon, we had driven north to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. The boys were hanging in there, but I knew we'd have to head home soon before they got bored. I



has twelve years of experience as treasurer for another local non-profit organization.

**Recording Secretary:
Poppy Singer**



Poppy is a native of Ithaca who has always enjoyed long walks in the wilderness. After raising 2 children 20 years apart in age, she finally lived out her dream

of attending Spring Field Ornithology in 2017. Since then, she likes nothing better than being outside with the birds and her binoculars. She has been searching for a way to volunteer in the birding community, so when Diane asked if she would like to be secretary of CBC she accepted!

**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: Wes Blauvelt



Wes has been a member of the Cayuga Bird Club for about 18 years and is currently president of the club. He has actively

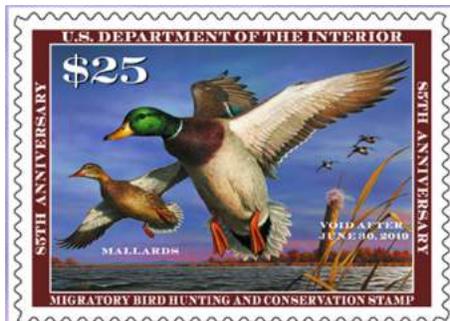
was just hoping to find that one thing that would make it a day for them to remember. Several miles north of the refuge, we found it – thousands upon thousands of Snow Geese. We parked to watch the spectacle and both boys climbed atop the car for a better view. For over a half an hour, we couldn't even talk to each other over the din of goose talk as wave after wave of birds lifted off and continued north on migration. Finally, when the last, small flocks were straggling overhead, I asked my boys how many Snow Geese they thought they had just seen so they could add them to their lists. My 7-year old responded, "I don't know. My eyes know, but they can't talk. So I can't ask them." My eyes knew something, too – that my sons were becoming birders.

A moral of this story is that even young kids will tolerate a lot if there is some amount of fun, excitement, or even spectacle for them to experience.

Pride and confidence

In the summer of 2015, my then 12- and 15-year olds accompanied me on a trip to the west coast. I wanted them to experience the ecology, sights, and smells of a part of the country that is quite different from the humid, mixed broad-leaf ecosystems with which they were familiar in the northeastern U.S. We took this trip when much of the West was deep into a multiple-year drought, and you might think it would be hard to find birding opportunities that would pique the kids' interest. However, agriculture reins supreme in California in terms of water use. So, many of the agricultural fields were an irrigated oasis of green amidst a sea of parched landscape. Huge numbers of raptors were attracted to these fields because the lush, green vegetation provided excellent habitat for small rodents and insects that served as prey for the raptors. We sought these areas out because of the sheer number of raptors attracted to them. The boys soon became good at telling apart two of the common Buteo species we encountered. Both Red-tailed and Swainson's Hawks are large raptors that often hunt by soaring although both also can be found stealthily acting as sit-and-wait predators on whatever perch site they can find. Both also have variable plumage, so field marks sometimes aren't all that diagnostic. Add to that the fact that a lot of the birds that we saw were back-lit making them just a

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.



Migratory Bird Stamps **Support our National Wildlife Refuges**

Help support habitat in our National Wildlife Refuges for migrating birds through the purchase of a Migratory Bird and Conservation Stamp, better known as the "Duck Stamp". Funds from the purchase of duck stamps goes directly to support the [National Wildlife Refuge System](#) and has already helped to protect 6.5 million acres of wetland and grassland habitat.

The 2018-2019 stamp, showing a pair of Mallards, was painted by Bob Hautman, whose earlier paintings have twice won the duck stamp contest. In addition to showing your support of public land and contributing to the refuge system, your purchase of the stamp gets you free entry to the refuges across the country all year.

You can buy a Duck Stamp at post offices, National Wildlife Refuge offices, sporting-goods stores or from the [American Birding Association](#).

dark silhouette of a raptor. Those silhouettes are pretty different, though, with Swainson's tending to be thinner and longer-looking and Red-tails looking a bit like they are body builders. The kids themselves came up with the mantra that Swainson's are svelte and Redtails are robust!



Svelte or robust? Can you make the call?

A moral of this story is that kids like to be reminded that they do know a lot, and that the birding skills they are developing are useful and can be something that gives them pride.

Kids as co-leaders

Most kids, mine included, don't like to go along on field trips involving mostly older birders. Let's face it. It can be incredibly boring for young kids to enjoy the company of birders substantially older than themselves. What's even worse is when the kids feel like they are not very good at birding, and people patronize them by telling them that they are better than they know they are. This is not helpful, and kids see right through it. That actually can be humiliating for them.

I have been lucky to stumble on a way for my kids to feel good about "having to go" with me while I led a field trip for older folks who were mostly new to birding. We showed up early at the meeting spot to get out the scope and make a quick assessment of what birds were around. About a dozen people showed up. Most were pretty new to birding, and some had no optics. We started with introductions, a bit of discussion about expectations, and some instruction on using optics. My

kids, in their early teens at the time, were tagging along with no expectations of helping out. As we started our bird walk, I quickly got swamped with questions and requests for help. On top of that, there were some people who clearly needed some help, but were too timid to ask “the experienced leader.” The birders soon started asking my kids for help. “How do you make both of these binocular thingies focus at the same time?” “Where is that bird they are talking about?” “Is that bird over there a goose?” Later, as we were driving home, my kids were talking among themselves, and they expressed disbelief that they knew a lot more about birding than the adults on the walk.

A moral of this story is that letting kids demonstrate their competence is much more confidence-boosting than showering them with false praise.

There are a lot of ways to involve kids in birding and to help them to become better at it. Many of those ways have more to do with building confidence, providing social support, allowing them to demonstrate what they’ve picked up, and getting them excited about nature rather than turning it in to a lesson about bird identification.

This essay originally appeared on Jody Enck's blog, [Model Birder](#), in August 2018.

**Field Trip Report - Dorothy McIlroy
Preserve and Summerhill**

Gladys Birdsall



Eight birders joined me for a trip to the Dorothy McIlroy Preserve and Summerhill on Sunday, June 3rd, including four people from this year's Spring Field Ornithology course (Kate, Amelia, and Thierry from the King Ferry area, and Poppy).

We found many of the birds on this trip by sound vs. sight, good practice for all of us. From the parking lot at the McIlroy Preserve we heard both **Red-eyed** and **Warbling Vireos**, **Alder Flycatcher**, **Baltimore Oriole**, **Ruffed Grouse** and **Common Yellowthroat**. As we walked to the woods we picked up a **Belted Kingfisher** out over Lake Como and saw two male **Wood Ducks** on the water. Within the woods we heard the songs and calls of **Veery**, **Wood Thrush**, **Ovenbird**, **Black-throated Green Warbler**, **Northern**

Waterthrushes and a **Great-crested Flycatcher**. The viewing platform overlooking the marsh area south of Lake Como, was pretty lively. Immediately five **Great-Blue Herons** lifted off the marsh and flew to the other side away from us, then circled around and landed in various trees. We also saw three **Green Herons** flying around. Other birds we saw or heard here included **Eastern Kingbird, Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, Tree Swallows, Swamp Sparrow, Yellow Warbler, Mallards, Mourning Doves** and **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**.

On our way back to the parking area we were treated to beautiful Pink Lady Slipper wildflowers, seen along the path. Just before leaving the preserve, we heard the burry song of a **Yellow-throated Vireo**.

From the McIlroy Preserve we stopped along Creech Road in an area where there is a swampy area on one side with woods beyond that. This swamp drains to the other side of the road, where there is a brushy area and grassy fields. At this stop we heard both Alder and **Willow Flycatchers**. Other birds we found here were **American Goldfinch, Cedar Waxwings, Catbird, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Barn** and Tree Swallows, **Song Sparrow, American Crows**, Baltimore Oriole and a **Common Raven** flew right overhead for very good looks. We later saw two Ravens flying in the distance calling and interacting.

Leaving there and driving past the grassy fields we saw and heard **Bobolinks**. We stopped and walked about a quarter mile down a side dirt and gravel road to a pond. The pond has many dead trees out in it, and we were hoping to find an Olive-sided Flycatcher. We unfortunately struck out for the flycatcher. An **American**



Robin was sitting on a nest on a stump out in the water. On our walk back to the car, we had more of the usual woodland species and also

heard an **American Redstart**.

We decided to drive down Hoag Road slowly, listening, to hear what birds we could pick up along the way. But at our first stop we got out of the car. We heard Common Yellowthroat, **Canada** and **Blackburnian Warblers**. There were **Dark-eyed Juncos** singing in the woods, yet we heard another very rapid trilling coming from the treetops of the tall pines. Ken played the songs of the **Pine Warbler** and this matched the bird singing way up high. As we got close to Lick Street, we heard **Indigo Bunting**, and a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was in a hedgerow across a grassy field. A **House Wren** also sang a couple times.

We stopped when we got to Lick Street. We got out of the cars to say farewell to the folks who drove over from King Ferry. We then noticed a **Ruffed Grouse** just across Lick Street, walking around on Hoag Road, its neck feathers were all fluffed/ruffed out, looking like a big collar. We got wonderful looks at the grouse strutting slowly around and then slowly walking into the grass at the side of the road. A nice surprise to wrap up the trip.

Thanks to Diane Morton for doing ebird lists for the trip and thanks to everyone who joined me this beautiful June morning.

Connecticut Hill, June 10, 2018

Suan Yong



Twenty-two participants took part in this CBC field trip, co-led by Dave Gislason and Suan Yong. Starting at the intersection of Boylan, Connecticut Hill, and Lloyd Starks Roads, we could hear the songs of the expected

Hooded Warbler, **Chestnut-Sided Warbler**, and **Scarlet Tanager**. Alas, none of them were visually cooperative. That would be the theme of the morning, as we explored the woods filled with songs of **Ovenbird** and **Veery** and **American Redstarts**, none willing to sit still long enough for even fleeting looks. The exceptions were the **Eastern Towhees**, several of whom sang out in the open for great scope views. A **Ruby-Throated Hummingbird** also sat for good looks.

Out in the open by one of several beaver ponds, we had good looks at **Cedar Waxwing**, **American Goldfinch**, **Yellow Warbler**, **Song Sparrow**, and a silent Empidonax which we believe to be an **Alder Flycatcher** based on a later call of "Free Beer!" from the same general direction. Among several groves of pines could be heard trills of what we believe to be **Pine Warblers**; alas, we could get no visual confirmations to convincingly rule out **Dark-Eyed Junco**. **Swamp Sparrows** also sang from the marshes; also unseen. A **House Wren** proved to be a cooperative subject popping in and out of a bush where we suspect its nest resided. Two female-type **Purple Finches** perched briefly for good looks, one of them fluttering its wings begging to be fed by the other.

The overcast skies allowed my thermal camera to be effective. It found many chipmunks and squirrels, and on a couple occasions a singing Ovenbird and Veery, but always they would fly off before I could share a scope view with others.

The one good subject it found was the nest of a **Red-Eyed Vireo**, located on a low tree at eye level not far off the trail.



A final walk along Boylan Road finally found some cooperative Chestnut-Sided Warblers. Then two **Broad-Winged Hawks** flushed from above us, one repeating its squeal as it circled high into the sky for good looks. It was a nice way to end a pleasant morning.

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 the monthly Cayuga Bird Club eNewsletter, from September through June. To make sure you don't miss an issue, add newsletter@cayugabirdclub.org to your email contacts.

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, bird conservation news and 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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