



Cayuga Bird Club

September 2019

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Calendar

Sep 6-7 (Fri-Sat): Montezuma Muckrace, Montezuma Wetlands Complex

Sep 7 (Sat): CBC Field Trip: Up the Lake, 7:30am-4:30pm, led by Ann Mitchell

Sep 8 (Sun): Montezuma Guided Shorebird Walk, 7am

Sep 9 (Mon): CBC Meeting (Speaker: Andy Zepp), 7:30 pm, Lab of O.

Sep 13-15: NYSOA annual meeting, Kingston NY

Sep 14 (Sat): Paddle Pedal and Play Festival, 9am-3pm, Stewart Park

Cayuga Bird Club Meeting Bird Habitat Conservation in the Finger Lakes Region



Speaker: Andy Zepp,
Executive Director,
Finger Lakes Land Trust
Monday, September 9, 2019
7:30pm, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

The Finger Lakes Land Trust is working throughout Tompkins County and beyond within a 12-county Finger Lakes Land Trust service area to ensure the permanent protection of significant bird habitat. To date, the organization has conserved more than 23,000 acres. The Land Trust owns and manages a network of 30 nature preserves and holds 140 conservation easements on land that remains in private ownership. It also assists other non-profit organizations and government conservation agencies in establishing parks and establishing public conservation area. Come learn about efforts underway to secure a half dozen Audubon-designated Important Bird Areas as well as the Land Trust's habitat management program that includes the restoration of wetlands and the creation and maintenance of grass and

Sep 14 (Sat): Migration Celebration, 10am-3pm, Lab of O.

Sep 15 (Sun): CBC Field Trip, 7:30am-12:00pm, led by Bob McGuire

Sep 21 (Sat): CBC Field Trip, 7:30am-12:00pm, led by Laura Stenzler

Sep 28 (Sat): CBC Field Trip, 7:30am-12:00pm, led by Jody Enck

Oct 6 (Sun): CBC Field Trip: West Side of Lake, 8am-12:30pm, led by Ken Haas

Oct 12 and 13 (Sat, Sun): Sparrow ID Walks, 8am-10:30am, Cornell Community Gardens, led by Mark Chao

Oct 14 (Mon): CBC meeting (Speaker: Bryant Dossman), 7:30pm, Lab of O.

Oct 20 (Sun): CBC Field Trip, 8am-12pm, led by Phil McNeil

Oct 27 (Sun): CBC Field Trip: Up the Lake, 7:30am-5pm, led by Bob McGuire

Nov 11 (Mon): CBC meeting (Speaker: Christina Hoh, "Monitoring New York's Winter Raptors"), 7:30pm, Lab of O.

Feb. 14-23, 2020: CBC Trip to Costa Rica

Nov 2020: CBC Trip to Colombia

Please check our web calendar for up-to-date field trip information, including schedule changes, at cayugabirdclub.org/calendar.

September Field Trips

Up the Lake (Full Day)

Saturday, Sep. 7, 2019 (7:30am-4:30pm)

Ann Mitchell will lead a full day trip to Montezuma to look for shorebirds and other fall migrants. Meet at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology parking lot at 7:30 am. Bring a snack. We will stop at the north

shrub land habitats.

Andrew Zepp is the Executive Director of the Finger Lakes Land Trust. He has worked in the land conservation field for more than 25 years and is one of the founders of the Land Trust. After receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Industrial & Labor Relations from Cornell followed by a brief stint in retail marketing, he embarked on a career in land conservation with The Nature Conservancy - serving in several land protection and land management positions. During the course of a one-year leave of absence from the Conservancy, he secured a Master's of Professional Studies in Natural Resource Policy from Cornell and worked with local conservationists to establish the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

After working for six years for The Nature Conservancy's Central & Western NY Program, first as Director of Land Protection and then as Associate Director, Andy went to Washington, DC to serve for seven years as Vice President for Programs for the Land Trust Alliance. In this capacity, he was responsible for the creation of a network of field programs to provide increased support for land conservationists across the country.

Andy returned to the Finger Lakes Land Trust in 2003 to serve as its Executive Director. He today oversees a growing non-profit organization that has permanently protected more than 22,000 acres of the region's most significant open space lands. The Land Trust is supported by more than 2,000 members as well as numerous volunteers and 15 staff.

Cayuga Bird Club meetings start at 7:30pm, the second Monday of every month September through June. Doors open at 7:00pm and all meetings are

end of the lake for lunch. Bring a scope if you have one. Contact Ann at AnnMitchell13@gmail.com if you have questions.

Montezuma Guided Shorebird Walk

Sunday, September 8, 2019 (7am-11am)
Dave Nicosia will lead this last in a series of shorebird walks in the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at 7:00am the Montezuma NWR Visitor Center to carpool to a nearby location to be determined. Thanks to Andrea Van Beusichem and Linda Ziembra from MNWR for continuing this popular program. Contact Dave at daven102468@gmail.com if you have questions.

Half-Day Field Trips

*Sunday, Sep 15, 2019 (7:30am-12pm),
led by Bob McGuire*
*Saturday, Sep 21, 2019 (7:30am-12pm),
led by Laura Stenzler*
*Saturday, Sep 28, 2019 (7:30am-12pm),
led by Jody Enck*

These trips will go to "where the birds are", and may include warblers that are 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.

Beginner Bird Walks at Lab of O

*Saturdays and Sundays,
8:30am-10:30am*

There is a beginner bird walk every weekend morning at the Lab of Ornithology, led by volunteer docents from the Cayuga Bird Club. Walks start at 8:30am, meeting by the Visitor Center entrance. Note that the Visitor Center does not open until 10am, and there are no restroom facilities. The walks last approximately 2 hours, and are timed to

open to the public.

From the President

Diane Morton



Welcome back!

Our Cayuga Bird Club executive committee has been busy this summer planning two new initiatives that we hope the club will

support. One project should be a real crowd-pleaser: We'd like to offer a Spring Ornithology lecture course to be taught by Steve Kress! This 8-week course would run from March 24 - May 12, 2020. Steve is revising the course with new slides and materials, so even if you have taken the course before it should be worthwhile to sign up again. You can read more about this project in [a separate column in this newsletter](#). We will ask for a vote at our September 9 CBC meeting to approve offering this course for Spring 2020.

Another new initiative supported by the executive committee is to put up a club Motus receiving tower at Myers Park, to detect radio-tagged migratory birds that pass through our area. Hits recorded by the receiver would be entered automatically into a database used for migratory bird studies by researchers throughout North America (and beyond). The beauty of Motus tracking is that much can be learned about the migratory movements of individual birds without needing to recapture them. We may also use data from a club Motus receiver to share with members of the public and develop outreach efforts around

allow participants to take the 11am Behind-the-Scenes tour offered on most weekend days. (Check the Lab of O website for details.)

Volunteer at the Lab

Share your love of birds by becoming a volunteer at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology! Volunteers guide our behind-the-scenes building tours, lead youth and family programs, table community events, and help run our largest event - Migration Celebration on September 14.

There will be a Volunteer Information Session on Wednesday, September 4 from 6-7pm at the Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca. Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older. RSVP for the Info Session at <https://tinyurl.com/CLO-Volunteer2019> or email Chelsea Benson, cbenson@cornell.edu, for more information.

Migration Celebration

The Lab of Ornithology's annual Migration Celebration will be on Saturday, September 14, 2019, from 10am to 3pm.

This is a free interactive family festival to learn about birds, migration, conservation, and what you can do for birds. Talk with scientists, see cutting-edge technology, view stunning videos, and explore hands-on activities. Enjoy special workshops, guided bird walks, live birds of prey with the Cornell Raptor program, and ice cream from Cayuga Creamery.

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

bird migration. [More about this project is presented in this newsletter](#). If approved by the membership at our September meeting (time permitting), a Motus tracking tower could be built for us this fall by CLO graduate student Bryant Dossman at a club event at Myers Park.

I hope you're all ready to re-engage with Cayuga Bird Club as we head into the fall season. Thanks to CBC leaders Dave Nicosia, Dave Nutter, Bob McGuire and Josh Snodgrass, we have already had some great opportunities to study shorebirds that stop at Montezuma's Knox-Marsellus Marsh during fall migration. The marsh is managed by Montezuma NWR staff to make it a valuable stopover point for these birds. If you haven't made it up there yet this season, there will be another Shorebird Identification walk on Sunday, September 8, 7:00 AM, with Dave Nicosia leading.

Bob McGuire is our new Field Trips chair, and he has been busy putting together a full slate of trips for the fall (see our club calendar). Thanks so much to Ann Mitchell for serving as chair and co-chair of the field trips committee last year and many other times for the club! Ann will start off our fall field trip season, leading a trip to Montezuma on September 7, looking for all sorts of migrants, both shorebirds and songbirds.

Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge and the nearby DEC-managed lands are great places for birds - and for birders. The annual Montezuma Muckrace will be happening September 6-7 to raise funds to support programs and habitat management at Montezuma. Cayuga Bird Club is sponsoring two teams for this year's Muckrace. "Arrogant

Cayuga Lake Basin birds reported over the summer are listed below.

6/1 Black Scoter
6/9 Red Crossbill
6/17 Black-bellied Whistling Duck
8/2 Long-billed Dowitcher
8/16 Laughing Gull
8/18 Baird's Sandpiper
8/28 White Ibis (first Basin record)

2019 year count so far: 270 species

Thanks to Dave Nutter for compiling these records for the club. More details for first sightings of the species listed are on the [CBC website](#).

White Ibis

On the evening of August 28, 2019, Tim Lenz found a juvenile White Ibis at Knox-Marsellus Marsh in Montezuma NWR, as seen from East Road in the Town of Tyre. This is the first-ever record of this species in the Cayuga Lake Basin. It has been seen regularly since, up through the date of this publication (Aug 31).



Field Trip Report **Connecticut Hill**

Suan Yong

On June 8, 2019, a total of 11 people explored Connecticut Hill WMA, with Dave Gislason guiding us around the trails and Suan Yong leading the birding aspect. A roadside Brown Thrasher as our cars approached the WMA was an auspicious start. Hooded Warblers could

Bustards”, with Bob McGuire, Susan Danskin, Dave Nutter, Gary Kohlenberg, Deirdre Anderson, Ken Kemphues and Diane Morton, and a new, second team, “Gull for It!” with Kate Graham, Meena Haribal, and Gladys Birdsall. Please support either team by making a donation to Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex.

(friendsofmontezuma.org/projects-programs/muckrace).

A big thank you to Tracy McLellan who did a wonderful job as newsletter editor last year. I'd like to welcome Suan Hsi Yong as our new Cayuga Bird Club newsletter editor. If you'd like to contribute something to the club's newsletter, please email Suan at cbceditor1@gmail.com.

Good birding,

Diane

Red-Headed Woodpeckers Breeding in Trumansburg

Jared Dawson



Sometimes it pays to bird at home...on May 16, 2019, I happened to look out my second-story window on Bradley St in the village of Trumansburg and see in a tall snag of a sugar

be heard in various spots but were never seen. Soon we got a scope view of a male Scarlet Tanager singing high up above us. We were pretty sure that trills coming from pine trees above were Pine Warblers, but could never get visual confirmation. Back on the road a Black-Billed Cuckoo flew up close then perched in a sumac for good scope views. The rest of the walk in the first area did not see much more of note.



We decided to drive along the road where we had grouse crossing in past trips, towards the cemetery where we had Blackburnian in past trips. We stopped by a field where Prairie Warbler and Field Sparrow both sang. We also saw a male Indigo Bunting flying about, and then someone noticed a female Indigo Bunting sitting quietly and cooperatively behind us.



With time running short, we arrived at the cemetery to find, to our surprise, a Blackburnian Warbler flying down to the road, then back up to the treetop to sing.

maple a distinctive woodpecker, an adult RED-HEADED WOODPECKER. I had seen them a dozen times before in several states, but it had been five years since my last sighting. I was surprised to learn of its local rarity.

I then had four sightings here during June, all single adults, and learned from my birding neighbor Dolores Higareda that she had been seeing it as well since April, although without noting the dates. This pattern held through July, occasional sightings of a single adult, usually favoring three very mature sugar maples around my property, or our suet feeder. Very unusual for a woodpecker, the sexes look identical, so I did not know how many adults might be present.



Finally, on August 6, I saw a juvenile along with an adult, and heard the chattering calls of at least 3 birds! On the 12th, I was able to see and hear two distinct adults and two juveniles, and obtain some photos. Since then I have heard chatter calls occasionally, the last on the 20th, but I have not seen them at my or the neighbors' feeders or trees.



As we drove back to our initial meeting spot, we paused to look at a female Ruffed Grouse in the middle of the road, while at least one chick ran across into cover. Also seen here singing up high was a Rose-Breasted Grosbeak.



It was a fantastic end to another good field trip.

Field Trip Report **Danby Hot Spots**

Wes Blauvelt

On June 1st, 2019, 15 birding enthusiasts gathered at Jennings Pond to search for birds in several Danby Hot Spots. Among the sites visited were Bald Hill Road, the West Danby Fire Station, Walding Lane marsh, Hillview Road wetland and a trail along Michigan Hollow. Many warbler species were seen throughout the day, including Canada, Mourning and Hooded Warblers; the Great Blue Heron rookery at the fire station was active with several nests filled with juvenile birds; an American Bittern, Marsh Wren and Swamp Sparrow were



Not knowing the location of the nest, it is only a strong probability that they were nesting in Tompkins County, as the Seneca county line is quite close, although that area is lacking in the quantity and variety of trees and habitat that Tompkins has. I will see how late I can detect them, and hope that they will return in the spring of 2020!

Proposal: **A Cayuga Bird Club Motus Tower to Detect Migratory Birds**

Diane Morton

The Cayuga Bird Club's executive committee has discussed over the summer a new proposed project for the club - putting up a Motus tracking tower to detect radio-tagged migratory birds as they pass through our area.

Motus tracking, developed by Bird Studies Canada, gathers data on the movements of individual birds and other wildlife, contributing to our understanding of migration routes, timing, and stopover habitats for different species, without requiring re-capture of tagged individuals. If a radio-tagged bird flies within

present at Walding Lane and the Hillview Road wetland produced a Kestrel, Eastern Kingbirds and both Red-Eyed and Yellow-throated Vireo. A special thanks to Geo Kloppel whose knowledge of Danby birding sites enriched the experience for all participants.

CBC Annual Picnic

June 10, 2019



photo by Diane Morton

The Cayuga Bird Club's annual picnic was held at Myers Park on June 10, 2019. The weather was not the best, with a dreary overcast and spurts of light drizzle, but the potluck was well attended. The spit hosted some unexpected Common Terns, and the short after-dinner walk along Salmon Creek was successful in locating "the" local male Orchard Oriole.

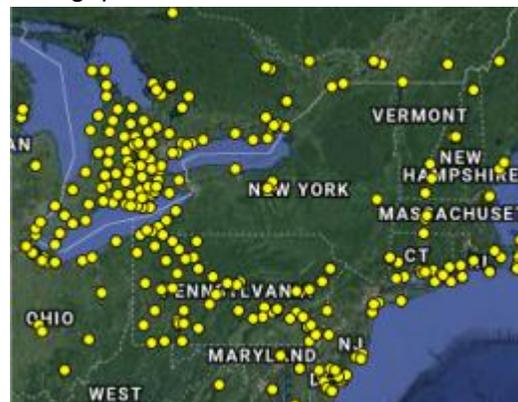
Montezuma Muckrace 2019

Friday - Saturday,
September 6th-7th,
7pm-7pm

The 23rd annual Montezuma Muckrace, a fundraiser organized by the Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, will be held on September 6-7 this Fall.

Teams bird together from 7:00 PM Friday until 7:00 PM Saturday, trying to observe as many bird species as possible.

5-10 miles of a receiver (depending on weather conditions), their detection is logged and that information is shared with migration researchers throughout the international Motus network. Motus tracking becomes more valuable as the array of Motus receivers expands geographically. There are currently no Motus receivers in southern central New York. The closest towers are at Montezuma (2), Seneca Meadows (1) and Braddock Bay (1). Below is a map of nearby Motus Tower locations (notice the hole in our area!) A club-installed Motus tower in our area would serve to fill a gap in this network.



Bryant Dossman, a Cornell Lab of Ornithology graduate student who uses Motus tracking in his research, has provided much advice and is offering to build a Motus receiver for us at cost. Bryant has installed Motus stations at other locations in the US. We have looked for a spot for a Cayuga Bird Club-operated tower that has convenient access, WiFi, and power. After considering several alternatives, Myers Park in Lansing appears to be the best option, and we have received approval from Lansing Parks for installing a Motus receiver there.

Bryant's detailed list of the required components for a club Motus tower adds up to approximately \$1500-1800. We would hold a club event at Myers Park, where Bryant would build the receiving station, explaining the set up as he goes. Bryant has suggested that we

Winning teams over the past several years have identified as many as 148 species, and collectively, as many as 192 species have been seen by the 15 to 28 teams, in a single day

In the 22 year Muckrace history, over \$125,000 has been donated in support of bird habitat restoration, research or public access.

It's a little late to register for this year, so consider participating next year. Or donate to support one of the teams at friendsofmontezuma.org/projects-programs/muckrace.

Field Trip Reports

Montezuma Dike Walks



Mid to late August brings the peak of shorebird migration to Central New York, and for several years now the folks at the Montezuma refuge have permitted organized “dike walks” between Knox-Marsellus and Puddler's Marsh, an area normally off limits to the public. There has been four walks this August, with one more to come on Sunday, September 8, 2019.

Sunday, August 11th, 2019

Dave Nicosia

For the first walk we had 20-25 people. The weather was perfect: low humidity, a light breeze and few insect issues. The habitat is improving for shorebirds near

consider tying the project to the web so that other people, in addition to migration researchers, can follow movements detected by our Motus receiver. We could make this information available to local groups (schools, Sciencenter, our website, etc.) to help engage the public with migratory bird studies. We may also use educational materials developed in Canada for public outreach.

Initially, we may detect only small numbers of birds in a season with our receiver. However, the data provided by Motus tracking should become richer each year as more birds are tagged and more towers are put up.

Future maintenance costs of a club receiver may include replacement of cables and/or updates to the receiver, depending on whether those upgrades would provide substantial improvements to the system (new computer module <\$50 or new receiver modules <\$100) but these are unlikely to be needed for 5 or more years.

At our Cayuga Bird Club meeting on September 9, we will vote on the following proposal: To spend up to \$1800 of club funds to install a Motus receiving station at Myers Park for the detection of migratory birds.

You can read more about Motus tracking at motus.org. I hope you will support this exciting project. If you have questions, please contact Diane Morton at cayugabirdclub.president@gmail.com.

Spring Ornithology with Steve Kress in 2020!

Diane Morton

At our September 9, 2019 meeting we will be

the dike but farther out there is a lot of low vegetation and shallow water with only a few muddy areas within low vegetation. Water levels are still a bit high but continue to slowly fall.

Right off the bat we got lucky as a whole flock of shorebirds landed right in front of us on the muddy areas at the very beginning of the canal. Among this flock were 7 WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS, PECTORAL, LEAST, SEMIPALMATED, SPOTTED and SOLITARY SANDPIPERS. Both species of yellowlegs were present along with KILLDEER and SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS. A WILSON'S SNIPE was also nearby making 11 species! Many with close views.

These birds lasted long enough for most to get on but then took off. Later the group was re-found farther out within muddy areas in the vegetation. I saw them in flight and was more certain on the number of white-rumps. I also had a flyover DOWITCHER that I couldn't ID to the species level. This bird flew toward Puddler's Marsh and dropped out of sight. That made 12 species of shorebirds. But there was many other birds which made the trip special today.

The sheer number of waders was impressive. Over 100 GREAT BLUE HERONS and over 100 GREAT EGRETS were counted. We also had at least 10 GREEN HERONS. There were 2 LEAST BITTERNs seen, and 2 AMERICAN BITTERNs as well as many BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS. One of the LEAST BITTERNs was in a lone patch of reeds not far from the dike giving many excellent views.

Also impressive was the number and

asking for a vote to approve a proposal that Cayuga Bird Club offer and administer a lecture course on birds, *Spring Ornithology with Steve Kress*, in Spring, 2020.



For those of you who are not familiar with Dr Kress, he has previously taught Spring Field Ornithology through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for more than 40 years. Many Cayuga Bird Club members are among those who have benefited from his excellent teaching! Dr. Kress is Vice President for Bird Conservation with the National Audubon Society, and Director of Audubon's Seabird Restoration Program. He is also Manager of National Audubon's Maine Coastal Island Sanctuaries and Audubon's Hog Island Camp in Maine. He is the author of more than 10 books and many articles related to birds and conservation of their habitat, including *Project Puffin: The Improbable Quest to Bring a Beloved Seabird Back to Egg Rock*, co-authored with Derrick Z. Jackson.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology has decided not to offer Steve Kress's Spring Field Ornithology course this year. Steve approached me to ask if Cayuga Bird Club would be interested in administering a course with him teaching it in Spring 2020. Many former Spring Field Ornithology leaders and participants have agreed that offering such a course on birds could be an excellent fit for the Cayuga Bird Club. Steve will be re-designing the 2020

diversity of waterfowl. MALLARDS, BLACK DUCK, NORTHERN PINTAIL, GADWALL, WOOD DUCK, AMERICAN WIGEON, BLUE and GREEN WINGED TEAL, RUDDY DUCK, REDHEADS, CANVASBACK, HOODED MERGANSERS, CANADA GEESE and TRUMPETER SWANS rounds out the waterfowl.

SANDHILL CRANES also put on a show flying by and croaking several times. We had 12 of this species. We had a close encounter with a NORTHERN HARRIER which was coursing very low over the dike close to us. There were brief views of a VIRGINIA RAIL. We also had impressive numbers of PIED BILLED GREBES with 117 counted!

I would like to thank all who participated this morning and for sharing your scopes and expertise with everyone.

My ebird list is at ebird.org/view/checklist/S58911735



Saturday, August 17th, 2019

Bob McGuire

Dave Nutter, Josh Snodgrass, and I signed up to lead today's trip, sponsored by the Cayuga Bird Club. The weather was perfect. Water had been let out of K/M exposing plenty of habitat for shorebirds while still leaving plenty of room for swimming birds. To our great

course, with new slides and materials. CBC members Sandy Podulka and Laura Stenzler have offered to take the lead in planning support for the course.

This will be an 8-week lecture course on Tuesday evenings, March 24, 2020 - May 12, 2020. We have identified the Foundation of Light on Turkey Hill Road as a new venue for this course, as the cost of renting the Lab of Ornithology auditorium is far too expensive. We have discussed charging \$125 for the course for CBC members, or \$140 for non-members (includes \$15 CBC membership). Our preliminary course budget indicates that the club would break even on income/expense if we have 30 participants. With more participants, the course should generate a net gain for the club.

More details on this Spring Ornithology course will be presented our Cayuga Bird Club meeting on September 9.

Merlin Nesting near Ithaca, 2019

John Confer



Fledglings from the GIAC nest

I monitored the nest success for seven nests in spring 2019. The number of discovered nests has remained nearly constant in the last four years. Most of these nests were discovered by others and reported to me, for

surprise, close to 60 people showed up for the 7am start. Word has gotten out over the years that this is a great opportunity to get close looks at the birds, and we had folks from Rochester, Syracuse, and as far away as Sullivan County.

For the next four hours we made our way slowly down to and around the east side of the area. With the help of numerous experienced birders and numerous scopes, we were able to pick out and study sixteen species of shorebirds, ten of ducks, five of waders, seven of raptors, and numerous passerines. Of the many highlights, here are a few: American White Pelican loafing on the water, preening, and then flying, Peregrine Falcon strafing the various flocks, a dozen or more Black-crowned Night-Herons flushed from the trees along the dike, and a single Wilson's Phalarope circle-feeding in the water.

A distant group of dowitchers kept us busy throughout the morning as we pondered their proper ID. This is what I always find most fascinating: the back-and-forth discussion of features to look for, points observed, and finally, as the birds flew in close for a few minutes, the consensus that they were juvenile Short-billed Dowitchers based primarily on shape, overall color, and the warm golden patterning in the tertials.

I would like to thank all who helped out with their knowledge, by sharing their scopes, and all those sharp eyes that first picked out the unusual birds.

Sunday, August 25th, 2019

Dave Nicosia

We had another very successful

which I am extremely grateful. Thank you all for your help.

In short

Of the monitored nests (i.e., nests seen on more than one date), I know that 4 of 5 local nests fledged young. A monitored nest in Freeville probably fledged young. A monitored nest in Endwell fledged young. Three fledglings were seen in Tioga Point Cemetery, one of which had an injured leg. This site has had a successful Merlin nest for at least the last two years,

Some details

Burleigh Drive near DeWitt Middle School.

I'm sorry that I lost the email from the person who first told me of this nest. This pair used last year's American Crow nest. This nest was monitored over several weeks particularly by Binu Shrestha with Tobias Doerr. This nest fledged three young. One Merlin, probably a fledgling, was found dead on the road near the nest a few weeks after fledging.

Ithaca City Cemetery, first reported by Meena Haribal. Although this cemetery has had two failed nests in the preceding years, this nest fledged three young.

Endwell, NY. This nest was discovered and monitored by Deanne France. It fledged two or three young.

Freeville, NY. For the seventh consecutive year, Merlins nested in the vicinity of the post office. This year I did not see young in the nest on my last two visits and thought the nest had failed. A week later Tim Gallagher reported hearing begging calls of fledglings. Either I missed the young, which is possible when they lie down, or there were two nests extremely close to each other, which is possible but unlikely.

GIAC. This nest was first reported by Mike Riley and frequently monitored by Ruth Yarrow. These Merlin displaced a Fish Crow family group after they built the nest. The nest

shorebird walk today. Between 7:15 am and 2:00 pm, we had a total of 70 people from different bird clubs around the area. I began with the group mostly from the Cayuga Bird Club. The Rochester Birding Association and Rochester Young Birder's club met up with us around 9-10 am. I birded with these groups until around 2 pm as the Cayuga group left around noon. This was the highest attendance I have ever experienced with these shorebird walks. I would like to thank all those who brought their expertise and assisted. We were lucky to have some "world class" birding talent with us from the Lab of O. We also had many scopes which helped get people on birds. The success was because of the cooperative effort of all. Thank you!

Now onto the birds...Rarities included continuing AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN in the morning which took off before 10 am. LAUGHING GULL dropped back in with the gulls in KM marsh during the early afternoon. As for shorebirds there were more than I saw Friday. The habitat is getting better with more mudflats than Friday. Thanks to Linda Ziemba who has worked to prepare the habitat for shorebirds. Its working!

Ann Mitchell got on a BAIRD'S SANDPIPER, Dr. Shawn Billerman got on a molting AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER, and Dave Nutter found the first of several STILT SANDPIPERS. There were many SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS, a few possible LONG-BILLED candidates that no one could confirm. There were many yellowlegs of both species with the GREATER outnumbering the LESSER. LEAST and SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS were all over. We also had several PECTORAL SANDPIPERS. Pat Martin and I got on a

was opposite a door into GIAC. With kids going in and out of the school this was a very noisy location even as the Merlin laid a clutch and incubated. The nest spruce tree was in the grass inside a chain link fence around the public swimming pool. The adults continued incubation after the pool opened. Suan has provided digital film of the nest. The nest could be viewed from a public parking lot, and many were able to see the young!! Three young sisters who were lifeguards at the pool knew about Merlins! and fortunately didn't call the police about people with scopes staring across the pool filled with young kids.



Adult Merlin scrutinizing photographer below

The GIAC Merlins were thieves! In the last ~25 years Merlins have expanded into northern New York and have now extended their range 150 miles south of us in Pennsylvania. In almost all other portions of the circumpolar range, Merlins use last year's nest built by corvids and sometimes hawks. Our population of Merlin is unique in that the falcons frequently drive Fish Crows and sometimes American Crows off the nest just as the crows complete the process of building. The Merlins then use the brand new nest as their fresh home. The GIAC nest was built this year by Fish Crow, who were driven off their nest by the Merlins. The Fish Crow did build a second nest in a maple tree on the east side of GIAC and fledged one young as observed by Connor Loomis.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER that flew fairly close to the dike near some dowitchers. The white rump in flight was a give away. The bird was slate gray, longer than nearby SESAs, and primary projection past the tail. This bird didn't last long as it disappeared among a bunch of peeps that flew by. The BAIRD'S was re-found by Jay McGowan later in the morning. Unfortunately we didn't re-find the White-rumped. There were also 2 SPOTTED SANDPIPERS at the beginning of the canal and 1 BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER in transitional plumage. Jay found a WILSON'S SNIPE in flight and we had both KILLDEER and SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS. This makes 15 species of shorebirds! Later with the Rochester Birding Group many of the shorebirds came closer to the dike including the AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER. This bird was joined by another golden-plover. We had great views of these birds and other of the above species. Unfortunately the BAIRD'S SANDPIPER was not re-found this time.



American Golden-Plover

Jay McGowan put together a comprehensive list that totaled 91 species (ebird.org/view/checklist/S59248832). I did my own list (ebird.org/view/checklist/S59252385) because I stayed later with the Rochester group until about 2 pm. I totaled 75

Gimme Coffee/Sears St. This was a very noisy pair first reported by Andy Zepp. On the first day of documented incubation, the male brought an oriole to the female who had been sitting on the nest. Four days later a neighbor reported hearing Merlin calls during one night and Merlin wing feathers were found near the nest. Almost certainly an owl predated the nest.

Warren Rd. First reported by Jane Graves. Jane thought this nest fledged probably just one young.

Seneca St. A pair was seen repeatedly around Seneca/Schuylar. They exchanged food in a tree with a branch hanging over Sears St. They were seen copulating and flying into a nest, and then they left. I once walked down Seneca St. toward the pair sitting in a branch over the road while carrying my scope and tripod in one hand, and my dog and leash and a filled doggy poop bag in the other, and with binoculars around my neck. As I stopped to put up the scope two people got out of a parked car and said there were two Merlin overhead. It was not clear to me why they would shout this out to me. As I watched for evidence of nesting on another day, one person came by and asked if I was watching the Merlin, another person said she had seen Merlin during Spring Field Ornithology. (Only in Ithaca could all this happen.) This Merlin pair could have become the Gimme Coffee or GIAC pair.

Hanshaw Rd. Brad Walker had a pair in his back yard for nearly a month. He filmed them exchanging food, and mating. He recorded their calls over many days, and then they left. They could have become the Warren Rd. pair.

I observed a pair in several occasions near the First Presbyterian Church along **Highland Rd.** and in the nearby area, and then they left.

species but had 4 additional species that were not seen on Jay's list. That makes at least 95 species!

I was wondering if we could ever get to 100 species collectively and in the coming weeks with passerine migration picking up, shorebirds still coming through and of course waterfowl and waders I bet it will happen. There is tremendous diversity in this marsh and these walks are so great in getting people to learn about and appreciate our birds.

Thanks again to Andrea Van Beusichem and Linda Ziemba at the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge for allowing these walks.

Officer Nominations for 2019 Elections

At the October 14 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 the current president of Cayuga Bird Club and has agreed to continue in that position for the coming year.

She has previously

been editor of the club's newsletter and co-chair of the field trip committee. Diane has enjoyed sharing a love of birds with others through being a field trip leader for the Cayuga Bird Club, Spring Field Ornithology, and the weekend walks at

No nest was found nearby.

A male and female were seen around downtown **Dryden** on several dates as observed by Bard Prentiss, and despite about 20 visits by me they disappeared.



A fledgling at GIAC stretches its wings.

Interesting oddities: All these observations were made in urban/suburban environment. No Merlin activity was reported for any forested or agricultural location. The number fledged per nest is considerably lower than in other studies. Maybe we have a low density of prey?

Again, thanks to all those whose help made this story possible.

Suan Yong has posted several videos of the GIAC nestlings to the club's Facebook page:

1. [Parent brings unidentified prey to nest.](#)
 2. [Did this fledgling eat its own feathers?](#)
 3. [Two young merlins.](#)
 4. [Fledglings preen and call.](#)
 5. [Fledgling returns to nest.](#)
-

Night Flight at Mt. Pleasant

Bill Evans

On Friday, August 23, 2019, 25-30 attended an impromptu nocturnal migration event on Mt. Pleasant, and it was not a case of the

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 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. She also volunteers for other helpful groups.

Treasurer: Ken Kempfues



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

**Recording Secretary:
Poppy Singer**



Poppy is a native Ithacan. She has observed birds at a feeder all her life and began identifying birds in their natural habitat 2-3 year ago, when she

early bird gets the worm. Opposite my big night prediction, the first hour or so was very slow with just a few calls heard, but it was a beautiful starry night with a very pleasant crowd to mingle with.



Chris T-H showing a Sora spectrogram

Those who stayed or arrived after 10:30pm got treated to steady migration that seemed to build as time went on. The action really got started when a raucous flock of green herons passed to the west. Thereafter were Black-crowned Night-Heron, Sora, Least Bittern, and shortly after midnight an American Bittern. Amidst the building flight was a steady passage of Veery and by midnight the "pink" of the Bobolink was regular. Also in the mix were a few Swainson's Thrush and a Black-billed Cuckoo.

The warbler flight became steady after 11pm with Chestnut-sided and Common Yellowthroat the most prevalent identifiable calls along with some nice examples of Canada Warbler. Interestingly, American Redstarts didn't start regular calling until around midnight.

Thanks to all who attended, and to the Cornell facilities and astronomy staff who facilitated use of the grounds at the Hartung-Boothroyd Observatory. Special thanks to Chris Tessaglia-Hymes for expert operation of and commentary on the spectrographic stream of

enrolled in SFO. Besides being a birder, she is, among other things, a mother and grandmother, an upholsterer by profession and a gardener and a potter by hobby.

**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: Bob McGuire



Bob is a past president of the Cayuga Bird Club, editor of the basin bird guide, veteran field trip leader and currently head of the field trip

committee. His current passion is to record the vocalizations of all the North American birds.

the real-time audio produced by Cornell's bioacoustic analysis software, "Raven".

Quilt Show



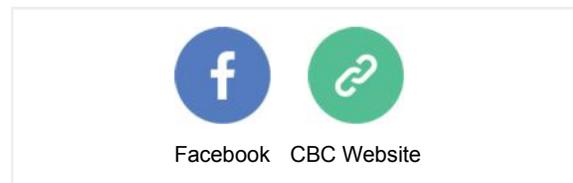
The Tompkins County Quilters Guild will be putting on their biennial quilt show on October 5 and 6 at TC3. CBC member Tracy McLellan is to be the Featured Artist, with a display of 15 bird quilts based on her photographs of tropical birds.

More information is available at:

www.tcqg.org/quilt-show.html

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

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



Treasurer's Report

The club is in excellent financial shape with total assets of \$27,450, including \$24,930 in bank accounts and \$2520 worth of Basin Birding Guide books. This total represents a net gain of about \$1200 due almost entirely to dues from 55 new memberships and generous donations from new and existing members. The proposed 2019-2020 budget is provided below. It contains spending information from the 2018-19 fiscal year and proposed spending for 2019-20. This budget presents the Club's recurring costs which are supported by yearly dues and donations. The

budget will be presented for discussion and approval at the September meeting.

In addition to income from dues and member donations, this year the Club received \$441.96 from the sale of goods donated by R. Tkachuck, \$820 from book sales, and last year we received \$1600 from Holbrook Travel (\$2861.96 total). These additional funds supported the efforts of our Conservation Committee (\$2075.87 of the \$2500 allocation spent thus far) and one-time donations to other birding associations (\$400).

2019-2020 PROPOSED CBC BUDGET

	BUDGETED	ACTUAL (YTD)	Projected through year end	PROPOSED	Notes
	2018-2019	2018-2019		2019-2020	
Income		as of August 26			
Donations Received	\$ 800.00	\$ 795.00	\$ 795.00	\$ 700.00	donations above and beyond membership
Dues Received	\$ 1,900.00	\$ 2,605.00	\$ 2,605.00	\$ 2,310.00	membership dues (154/199 current memberships expected to pay dues next year)
Interest Income (Savings)	\$ 10.00	\$ 21.08	\$ 23.54	\$ 25.00	interest earned savings acct
Income Total	\$ 2,710.00	\$ 3,421.08	\$ 3,423.54	\$ 3,035.00	
Expenses					
Conservation Committee	\$ (200.00)	\$ (200.00)	\$ (200.00)	\$ (200.00)	Annual commitment
Donations Paid	\$ (450.00)	\$ (450.00)	\$ (450.00)	\$ (450.00)	Redheads World Series of Birding, FLLT SBQ
Dues Paid	\$ (300.00)	\$ (300.00)	\$ (300.00)	\$ (300.00)	FLLT, Lab of O, NYSOA, & NYSYBC
Gifts Given	\$ (100.00)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (100.00)	condolences
Insurance	\$ (470.00)	\$ (409.04)	\$ (495.54)	\$ (519.00)	Arcadia insurance annual premium
Muckrace	\$ (200.00)	\$ (100.00)	\$ (100.00)	\$ (100.00)	entry fees for up to 2 recreational teams
NYSOA Annual Meeting	\$ (350.00)	\$ (100.00)	\$ (100.00)	\$ (350.00)	delegate attendance
Paypal Fees	\$ (41.00)	\$ (49.19)	\$ (49.19)	\$ (50.00)	paypal fees from membership payments
Posters	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Speaker Dinner	\$ (250.00)	\$ (201.08)	\$ (201.08)	\$ (250.00)	9 speaker dinners & Myers pavilion rental
Speaker Travel	\$ (300.00)	\$ (218.08)	\$ (218.08)	\$ (400.00)	travel fees for 1 speaker
Supplies	\$ (25.00)	\$ (9.99)	\$ (19.00)	\$ (25.00)	stamps, paper goods
Website/Software Fees	\$ (14.99)	\$ (85.16)	\$ (85.16)	\$ (30.00)	domain name, ibank, publishing software (needed accounting software for new treasurer and fee for domain name went up)
Expenses Total	\$ (2,700.99)		\$ (2,218.05)	\$ (2,774.00)	
Net Income	\$ 9.01		\$ 1,205.49	\$ 261.00	

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 pm 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/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 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 cbceditor1@gmail.com. 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 at www.cayugabirdclub.org/about-us.

Chickadee illustration in masthead by Karen Allaben-Confer



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