



Cayuga Bird Club

October 2020

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Calendar

For the foreseeable future, CBC presentations and meetings will be virtual on Zoom. These events remain free and open to the public. Register at cayugabirdclub.org/webinars

Oct 3 (Sat): NYSOA Virtual Meeting.

Oct 12 (Mon) 7:30pm: Zoom Presentation: Bosque del Apache (Muhammad Arif), followed by CBC meeting and officer elections. ([Register](#))

Oct 17 (Sat): October Big Day (ebird.org/octoberbigday) and Global Bird Weekend (globalbirding.org)

Nov 9 (Mon) 7:30pm: Zoom Presentation: Social Lives of Bornean Babblers (Sara Kaiser), followed by CBC

Cayuga Bird Club Meeting

Birds of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge



Speaker: Muhammad Arif
Monday, October 12, 2020, 7:30pm

[Click Here to register for the Zoom webinar.](#)

With over 400 species of birds observed, Bosque del Apache NWR is the number one birding hotspot in New Mexico. Muhammad will share photos of sandhill cranes, snow and ross's geese along with several other species of birds not seen in the northeast from his trip in 2019.

About the Speaker: Muhammad Arif works at Cornell as an IT professional and spends most of his spare time for

meeting.

Dec 14 (Mon) 7:30pm: Zoom Presentation (Melissa Groo), followed by CBC meeting.

Jan 1, 2021 (Fri): Ithaca Christmas Bird Count.

Jan 11, 2021 (Mon) 7:30pm: Share Your Photos Night (hosted by Kevin McGowan), and CBC meeting.

Dec 1-10, 2021: CBC Trip to Colombia. Contact Jody (jodyenck@gmail.com) for information.

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

Cayuga Lake Basin First-of-Year Birds Reported

September, 2020

9/04 Connecticut Warbler
9/06 Buff-breasted Sandpiper
9/08 Long-tailed Jaeger
9/09 Black-bellied Whistling-Duck
9/16 Red Phalarope
9/26 Nelson's Sparrow

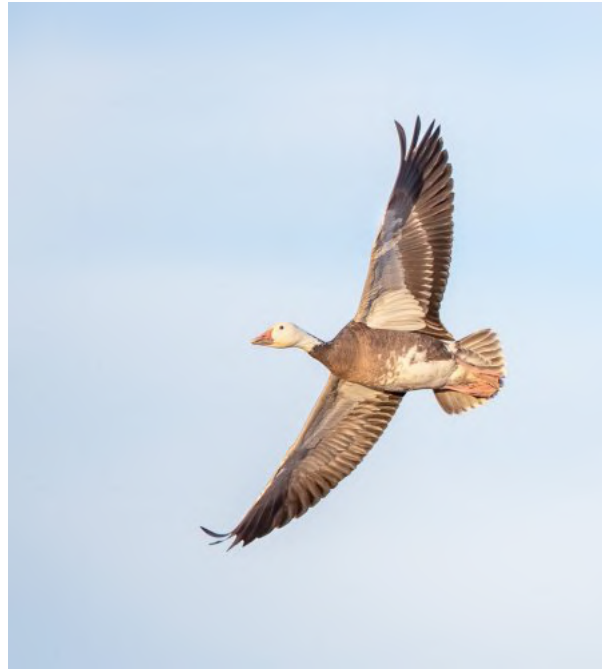
2020 year count: 275 species

Thanks to Dave Nutter for compiling these records. Complete lists can be found on the [CBC website](#).

Time to Renew Your Membership

Autumn is the time to join or renew your membership in the Cayuga Bird Club!

his passion for birding and bird photography. He has called Ithaca home for nearly 30 years and is very grateful to be part of the wonderful birding community here.



Cayuga Bird Club meetings start at 7:30pm on the second Monday of each month, September through June, and are open to the public. Each virtual meeting begins with the speaker's presentation, followed by club business.

From the President

Diane Morton



As I come to the end of my two-year term as president of the Cayuga Bird Club, I'd like to thank all of you who've made this such an effective and fun organization to be a part of. We've accomplished a lot while connecting with one another over our shared love of

birds.

The club's conservation projects, under the leadership of Conservation Action chair, Jody Enck, have been especially worthwhile. Pulling non-native invasive plants at Lighthouse Point Natural Area and replacing them with native trees and shrubs will improve habitat for both resident and migratory birds. It was for this work that Cayuga Bird Club was awarded the Richard B. Fischer Environmental Conservation award by the Town of Ithaca this year. ([Read more about the award and tree-](#)

Annual dues are \$15 per household or \$10 for students. Your dues support the club's activities, including our monthly meetings with invited speakers, club projects, and more. Members receive our monthly Cayuga Bird Club newsletter, September - June.

Dues payments 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**

Peregrine Falcons Nesting in Taughannock Gorge

After a 74-year absence, a pair of Peregrines raised three chicks this summer at Taughannock Gorge.

Read Tim Gallagher's article in Audubon Magazine at:
tinyurl.com/y4tv7cuv

[planting ceremony in this newsletter](#)). This project has also been a great way to involve others in restoring habitat for birds, including students at New Roots school and other groups.

I am also pleased that the CBC's Purple Martin House, which we put up at Stewart Park in 2019, was successfully used by Purple Martins this season for nesting and rearing young. Purple Martins have experienced steep population declines in North America, in part due to loss of natural cavities for nesting. Providing human-made nesting boxes can help their population grow. This is the first time that Purple Martins have nested at Stewart Park in many decades — we look forward to their return next spring.

Last fall the club voted to install a Motus receiving station at Myers Park for the detection of radio-tagged migratory birds. With the help of Bryant Dossman of the Cornell Lab, we put up the Motus radio tower last October. So far we have detected two migratory birds on their southward journeys: an American Woodcock on November 8, 2019, and, more recently, a nightjar on August 21, 2020. ([See more about the nightjar detection in this newsletter](#)). Many radio-tagging projects were put on hold this spring; we hope our receiver will detect more birds in 2021.

A new venture for the club, we offered a Spring Ornithology course this past spring, taught by ornithologist and conservationist Steve Kress, to help more people learn about birds. This course was planned to be an in-person offering, but with the Covid-19 pandemic, we quickly adapted it to be an 8-week webinar course. We had 75 participants, making it a quite successful undertaking for the club. Steve Kress is a wonderful and experienced educator; participant reviews indicated that students highly valued the course. Steve is interested in partnering with the club again to offer the course this coming spring.

We've had excellent participation in so many other club activities. Before precautions went into effect to help prevent coronavirus transmission, we had field trips nearly every weekend to a variety of birding hotspots. Thanks to Bob McGuire, our field trips chair, for organizing these. We also had a high level of participation in the Christmas Bird Count, and many members have begun helping with New York's Breeding Bird Atlas effort.



Photo by Melissa Groo

Nightjar Detection by CBC Motus Station

by Diane Morton



On August 21, 2020, at approximately 7:20 pm, a nightjar was detected by Cayuga Bird Club's Motus receiving station at Myers Point. The bird was tagged as part of a study being done by the [Norris Lab](#) at the University of Guelph, Ontario, to study Common Nighthawk and Eastern Whip-poor-will movements with the hope of gaining insight into why the populations of both species have seriously declined in recent decades. While the focus of the study is on these birds' movements near their breeding grounds, data on their migratory behavior can also be gleaned from this project.

This particular nightjar (exact species not noted at motus.org) was detected repeatedly during the summer at a site near Gravenhurst, Ontario, north of Toronto. The bird began its

Our program speakers for the monthly meetings have also been outstanding. After a pause in the spring, we are now holding our meetings by Zoom webinar. Our first webinar of this fall featured an informative presentation with gorgeous photos of Antarctic birds by Marie Read, and was attended by more than 130 people. Until we can meet together again in a large group, these webinars are a good way for us to carry on with club meetings, and have allowed us to open them to a wider audience.

The enthusiasm for Cayuga Bird Club activities is gratifying. Membership reached its highest level ever this year, with over 230 dues-paying memberships. Our Cayuga Bird Club Facebook group has grown to over 770 members. And then there are our Cayuga Bird Club T-shirts! Another first for the club, the shirts turned out quite well and many members chose to get one.

We will be holding Cayuga Bird Club officer elections at our October 12th meeting. I am delighted with the nominations of Suan Hsi Yong for president and Josh Snodgrass for vice president; both have great ideas for the club moving forward. We are also lucky to have experienced officers who've agreed to continue in their roles: Treasurer Ken Kemphues, Corresponding Secretary Colleen Richards and Recording Secretary Poppy Singer. As I step down from being president, I have been nominated to be a director for the club, joining current directors Bob McGuire and Wes Blauvelt.

I'd like to thank Donna Scott for serving as vice president of the club for the past two years; her thoughtful advice and practical help have been especially valuable to me. And finally, I want to thank Suan for the excellent job he has done as CBC's Newsletter Editor, and welcome Jill Leichter to that position, starting with our next issue!

Good birding,

Diane

**Trip to Colombia
Bird the Central Andes
with Cayuga Bird Club**

southward journey in August with detection west of Niagara Falls on August 17 and at the Braddock Bay Bird Observatory station on August 18, before being detected by our station at Myers Point on August 21st. The bird was subsequently detected in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware, and on September 7, in Vero Beach Florida. Nightjars are long-distance migrants; it will be interesting to learn if this bird is detected at more distant locations in the Caribbean or South America.

A map of Motus detections of this nightjar is shown below. (Very short duration detections, which are likely spurious, have been filtered out).



Knox-Marsellus Marsh Virtual Shorebird Walks

For the past several years, the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge has organized late summer shorebird walks along the dikes of the Knox-Marsellus Marsh, a normally restricted access area. These walks have been extremely popular in the

December 1-10, 2021



We have a new trip to Colombia planned through Holbrook Travel, with a December 2021 departure. Land cost is \$3450 excluding international airfare.

Details are available at:
holbrook.travel/cayuga-co21

Richard B. Fischer Environmental Conservation Award presented to CBC at Salem Park Event

by Diane Morton
 photos by Mike Smith and Diane Traina

On Sunday, September 20th, the Town of Ithaca's Conservation Board presented the Cayuga Bird Club with the annual Richard B. Fischer Environmental Conservation Award. This award was established to honor Dr. Fischer for his significant efforts to preserve important environmental resources in the Town of Ithaca.



Town of Ithaca Conservation Board Chair Mike Roberts presents the Richard B. Fischer award to the Cayuga Bird Club,

past. Alas, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these walks could not be offered this year.

Instead, Dave Nutter and Ferris Akel were given permission to prepare Virtual Shorebird Walks, which are available on Ferris's YouTube channel. Here are links to the videos:

- 8/15 youtu.be/P2BOfHkCPZU
- 8/22 youtu.be/bYNQKidVLOg
- 8/22 youtu.be/KAGlhghuoFI
- 8/29 youtu.be/ZNVNXCge18I
- 9/05 youtu.be/V2tJiTvabk

Winter Finch Forecast



Read the latest Winter Finch Forecast by Tyler Hoar at the new Finch Research Network (FiRN) website: finchnetwork.org/winter-finch-forecast-2020

Gentrified Neighborhood

by James Burkett

*Three billion birds gone
Lost their home
Expelled!
Their neighborhood - gentrified
Property values increased
Oak Towers, torn down
Hedge Row, bulldozed
Insect Diner, closed
Seed Smorgasbord, gone
Clear Water Bar, a toxic mess*

*There's no reason to stay
There's nowhere to go
Neighbors are in the same boat
Ergo, fade away!*

represented by president Diane Morton and CBC Conservation Action Chair, Jody Enck.

Cayuga Bird Club was selected for the award for educating Ithacans about bird conservation and for improving habitat for birds. The efforts of the club's Conservation Action Committee, headed by Jody Enck, was especially noted for "their ongoing work restoring the ecological health of the woods at Lighthouse Point: removing invasive plants and planting native species".

Members of the Town of Ithaca's Conservation Board presented the award to representatives of the Cayuga Bird Club's Conservation Action committee at Salem Park in the Town of Ithaca. Following the award presentation, the group planted a dozen Shadbush Serviceberry trees (*Amelanchier canadensis*) at the park. These trees were chosen because they will provide fruit for many different songbirds to enjoy.

As noted on the award, "What is good for birds is good for the Earth!"

Thank you to everyone who has helped with Cayuga Bird Club's conservation projects. This work is continuing; if you would like to get involved with the Conservation Action Committee's activities, please contact Jody Enck at jodyenck@gmail.com.



The award certificate.



Cayuga Bird Club Conservation Action Committee members Diane Traina, Jody Enck (with framed Fischer Award), Diane Morton, Ann Mitchell, Linda Clougherty, Tracy McLellan.



This poem is part of the collection, **Lament of the Whippoorwill**, by CBC member James Burkett, with cover illustration by Kay Burkett. The book's poetry explores life in this era of major climate change and mass extinctions. It is aimed at the conscience and is meant to be part of larger efforts to prod humans into action. The book is available in paperback through Amazon.

Officer Nominations for 2020 Election

At the October 12 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!

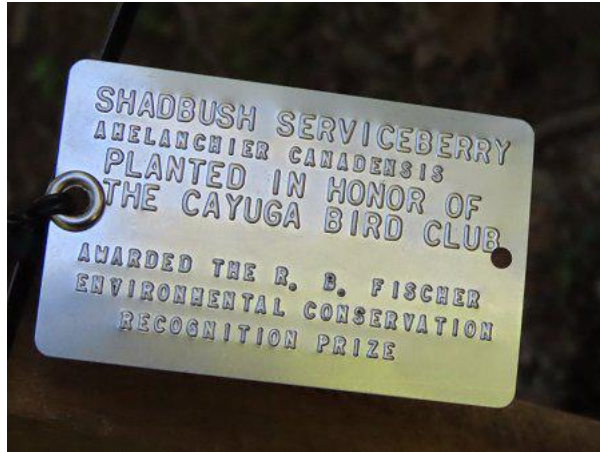
President:
Suan Hsi Yong



Suan is a software engineer 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



Tree planting at Salem Park.



Label for one of the Serviceberry trees.

If there's blank space below, it has been clipped by gmail. [Click here to view the full newsletter on the web.](#)

Building on our Conservation Successes

by Jody Enck

This week I was contacted by an undergraduate student at Cornell University who is taking a course this fall called Restoration Ecology. The student was sent my way by Todd Bitner, the instructor for the course who also is Director of Natural Areas at the Cornell Botanic Gardens. By the end of the semester, the student will develop a management plan for the Lighthouse Point Woods Natural Area. Of course, this is the area where the Conservation Action Committee has been working hard with several collaborating groups to improve habitat for birds. (See the [accompanying article](#) about Cayuga Bird Club receiving the Richard B. Fischer Environmental Conservation Award from the Town of Ithaca, largely for our work at Lighthouse Point Woods).

The management plan developed by the student may provide some useful ideas for us to incorporate into our bird-focused, conservation efforts at the south end of

Field Ornithology, and other events at the Lab of Ornithology.

**Vice President:
Josh Snodgrass**



Josh is an active birder and conservation volunteer living between Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. He has benefited immensely from the shared knowledge and passion of the birders in our area. He is a club field trip leader, Christmas Bird Count Area VII compiler, and does breeding or wintering bird surveys for Montezuma NWR, NYDEC, and USGS. He is currently working to remove invasive plant species to improve bird habitat on his property.

**Treasurer:
Ken Kempnues**



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**

Cayuga Lake, although we will not be obligated to follow the suggestions developed as part of a course project. This is now the second Cornell student who has engaged with us because of our conservation success at Lighthouse Point Woods. About a year ago, a graduate student (Mary McKean) completing her Masters of Professional Studies degree in the Cornell Institute of Public Affairs started working with us because of our community engagement work at Lighthouse Point. Mary applied for and received a grant from Engaged Cornell to explore some of the relationships we already have developed with bird clubs and conservationists in Honduras, where some of the migratory birds breeding in Lighthouse Point Woods go to spend the winter.

Mary visited with some of the same people I met with in 2016 when I traveled to Honduras to start the Sister Bird Club Network, and to start building relationships with birders and communities working hard to benefit the migratory birds we share. Most of her time was spent in the area around Lake Yojoa, which also is the area visited by 3 other members of the Cayuga Bird Club (Tracy McLellan, Becky Hansen, and Josh Snodgrass) in 2017. This past spring, Mary McKean finalized her MPS report, titled "Sister Bird Club Network – recommendations for development." Her recommendations will help us strengthen conservation relationships and engagement with groups locally as well in areas where "our" breeding birds migrate.

The stories of these two Cornell students (and the Richard B. Fischer award) are just a couple of examples of the broader reach of our conservation success at Lighthouse Point. Maybe this is a good time to reiterate why the Conservation Action Committee chose that area as one of our focal points for our work. Here are the top 3 reasons for choosing this area: (3) location, (2) location, (1) location.

Reason #3: popular location for birding. Many Cayuga Bird Club members and other birders enjoy birding in the Lighthouse Point Woods. Members of the Club have been birding there since our Club's founding in the early part of the 20th century.

Reason #2: great location for public engagement. Our conservation work there has attracted students from the New Roots Charter School, interest from after school programs from several other local schools, and civic groups, including Trees Up Tompkins, which has cleared a big plot near the entrance and recently planted 20 seedlings of several native shrub and tree species.

Reason #1: great location for the birds. According to eBird, 220 species of birds have been recorded in the woods and surrounding waters. Of these, >80 species are neotropical migrants. It's not just that quite a few warblers, vireos, gnatcatchers, and orioles nest in these woods, but many of the neotropical migratory species use Lighthouse Point Woods as stop-over habitat on their way to wintering areas in Latin America. This was



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 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:
Diane Morton**



Diane has served as president of Cayuga Bird Club since 2018 and previously served as editor of the club's newsletter and co-chair of the field trip committee.

driven home to me in the last week or so. We had favorable conditions for migration a couple nights during late September, but I was somewhat disappointed at the low diversity and number of birds in my own home patch. So, I went to Lighthouse Point to see what was around. I was not disappointed. The locally rare, seasonally flooded forest habitat there was hopping with migrants!

Our efforts at restoring high-quality bird habitat at the south end of Cayuga Lake are paying off. Let's work together to keep up the good work.

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. During the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings are virtual, starting with a speaker presentation at 7:30pm, followed by club business. Meetings are free and open to the public, but registration is required at cayugabirdclub.org/webinars. 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.

Send newsletter submissions to cbceditor1@gmail.com by the 25th to be included in the next issue. Please contribute sightings, news, announcements, book reviews, original poetry, art, photos, and anything else that might be of interest to the local birding community.

Cayuga Bird Club Officer contact Information is available at www.cayugabirdclub.org/about-us.

Chickadee illustration in masthead by Karen Allaben-Confer.

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 [Webpage \(cayugabirdclub.org\)](http://cayugabirdclub.org).

Diane enjoys sharing her love of birds with others and has been a field trip leader for Cayuga Bird Club, Spring Field Ornithology, and at Sapsucker Woods. This past spring Diane helped to coordinate the club's new online course, *Spring Ornithology with Steve Kress*.



Facebook



CBC Website

Minutes

of the September 14,
2020 Cayuga Bird Club
meeting
are available on the
Cayuga Bird Club
[website](#).



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