

August, 2015

THE ORANGE FEATHER

A publication of

EDGAR A. MEARN'S BIRD CLUB

Orange County, New York

2014 OFFICERS

President – Jeff Goulding, 561-3250, cell-845 764-7207

Vice-President –

Secretary – Kathleen Ashman, 294-6140

Treasurer – Linda Strohl, 496-3021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to start off by saying a BIG thank you to Dave Baker for his many years (5, I think) of being Speaker Chairman. Throughout the years he has used his many resources including beating the bushes in finding speakers and presenters for our intrepid club to enjoy. Also, many thanks to club members for sharing their wonderful birding trips and their great photographs of their adventures and birds from far away lands. It is very interesting to see birds from other locales.

Dave also came up with the idea of the "Share-A-Thon" which has grown over the years to become a very nice way for club members to show a piece of themselves. This has showcased the amazing talent we have in the club from painters to poets to photographers that don't regularly show their work.

With his departure as Vice President, Curt McDermott has stepped up to take over the chair. I am confident that with his resources and ideas, the baton will not be dropped and that the club will continue to have speakers without a hitch. I am sure Curt, as Dave did, will welcome any and all ideas. With many hands work becomes easier.

With Curt's assuming the Presentation Chair, this opens the VP position to another club member to become involved. It is a very easy post to hold in that the person fills in when the president can't lead the meeting. We could redefine this position if the club agrees into a shared position between the President and VP. This is just an idea that may be worth discussing.

Having Break 100 held only in Orange County was a resounding success! There was a good feeling that there was a common cause and all were involved in stepping up to the challenge. Indeed many teams did reach that goal of Breaking 100. The fun was back in the event. Many said that there was TIME to actually enjoy the birds now that we didn't have four counties to travel to. Some new areas were discovered which will aid many in the next Break and even in the "off" season. Although the Fitzpatricks were very much missed, the potluck at Kenridge Farm was great. I believe we are off to a very good start on a new Break tradition.

The ending of the long winter proved to be a bonanza for some very good birds! A light phase Gyrfalcon that was found by Mearns Club Member, Karen Maloy at Blue Chip Farm drew hundreds from the surrounding area to see this rare beautiful gem. The bird even drifted into Orange County to be counted here. Another nice treat spotted by Curt McDermott was the Crested Caracara that stayed in the area for a week plus, feasting on mysterious meals appearing during the night.

All in all a very interesting end of one season and the beginning of the next.

Good Birding!

Jeff Goulding

MEETINGS

All meetings are at the Outdoor Discovery Center (Kenridge Farm) in Cornwall. The meetings begin at 7:30 AM.

September 14, 2015: Share-a-thon rescheduled from winter of 2014-2015

October 5, 2015: Birds of NZ &/or Utah – Joe Trapani

November 9, 2015: Confessions of a Color-blind Birder – Steve Schuyler

December 14 2015: Share-a-thon II

January 11, 2016: Winter gulls along the Hudson River – Curt McDermott

February, 2016: No meeting

MEMBERSHIP

At this time our Club has a total membership of 143. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our seven newest members: John Friedle, New Paltz; Elizabeth Jamison, Carmel; Ellen Rosenshein Newburgh; Harriet Earnest, Warwick; Bill Steele, Highland; Carlotta Shearson, Cornwall; and Laura Soles, Cornwall. We look forward to meeting you and enjoying many club opportunities together.

Linda Strohl

FIELD TRIPS PAST

Hudson River Ramble – February 14 – Bob Slechta, Leader – When I awoke at 6:30 and looked at the thermometer, it read 2 degrees! The first thing that came to mind was “I must be crazy to think of birding on a day like this”. Well, I wasn’t alone...there were eleven other crazy Mearnsers eager to freeze their “butts” off! We started at the Newburgh-Beacon waterfronts which were fairly quiet, with the river chocked full with ice and only the 3 common gulls, a lone Bald Eagle, and a pod of Lesser Scaup present. The fruit trees at Dia Beacon produced some American Robins and at Madame Brett, Carol Weiss found us a winter hardy Gray Catbird. Our next stop at Breakneck didn’t produce the Golden Eagle so we all headed down to Croton with a quick stop at China Pier in Peekskill where we had a dozen Bald Eagles some Great Cormorants and our lunch. At Croton we were very fortunate in that the ice pushed many ducks close to the boat launch giving us probably the best, up close looks a Redheads any of us ever had! Between the boat launch and several upstream vantage points we had a nice variety of waterfowl with all three mergansers, Gadwall, Buffleheads, Mallards, American Black Ducks, Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot, Canada Goose and Mute Swan. Also seen in our travels were the usual mix of woodpeckers, corvids, sparrows, etc., plus a few quality birds like the Winter Wren sneaking about our feet, the Rough-legged Hawk over the landfill, and best of all two eye level and close Long-eared Owls! It turned out to be a pretty good trip with 55 species as we ended our day at 2:30, when the snow began to fall.

Black dirt – February 21 – Joe Cullen, Leader – This morning eleven participants gathered to search for winter residents in the black dirt areas. The weather was very cold, fortunately there was little or no wind. It was partly cloudy becoming overcast by trip’s end. Birds were few and many of the usual areas we bird were inaccessible due to heavy snow cover on dirt roads in the sod farms. The birds we found were mostly along the edges of plowed roads and areas with feeders. We found a few Horned Larks and Rough-legged Hawks. Most of the open country winter residents probably moved further south in search of sufficient forage due to the low temperatures and heavy snowfall of recent weeks. We had a total count of 22. The bird count was a bit low but everyone enjoyed the birding and were glad to end the trip was a warm lunch at the Harvest Inn.

Jersey shore – February 28 – Greg Prelich, Leader – It has been a frigid month here in New Jersey, with the weathermen telling us that it was the second coldest February on record. Indeed, all freshwater ponds were frozen solid, and the entire bay on the west of Sandy Hook was a solid block of ice suitable for a march of penguins. These conditions limited where birds could be found, but also tended to concentrate them into fewer areas. Seven birders set out today under rather pleasant conditions considering the recent chill, with a high temperature of 30 degrees and mild breezes that permitted easy ocean viewing. OK, enough about conditions; what did we see? At Manasquan Inlet we were treated to close looks at two Red-necked Grebes and multiple Common Loons feeding near the end of the jetty, and Purple Sandpipers in their expected location near the water’s edge. Offshore rafts of hundreds of Black and Surf Scoters were interspersed with abundant Long-tailed Ducks in their elegant winter plumage. It was a good start. The

group progressed to the Shark River area, which as usual, was full of waterfowl. Here we were treated to 14 species of ducks including wonderful views of Common Goldeneyes, Northern Pintails, 13 Canvasbacks and a pair of Redhead. Horned and Red-necked Grebes were so close that binoculars weren't even needed. The highlight here for all was a breeding plumage male Eurasian Wigeon whose orange head practically glowed in perfect lighting. Proceeding up the coast, a brief stop at the Allenhurst jetty revealed a flock of at least 55 Purple Sandpipers. It was a pleasure to behold a flock of that size, when much smaller groups are the norm. We ended our day with a few hours in Sandy Hook, impressed by large flocks of scoters and scaup. And I do mean LARGE FLOCKS. Ajit and Bob both agreed that they had never seen a scaup flock that large. Our estimate of 5,000 scaup from just one beach locations was probably conservative. Other reliable birders this week estimated 22,000 Greater Scaup and >70,000 scoters at the Hook! We finally turned our view away from the ocean and searched for land birds, happily locating several Hermit Thrushes, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and flocks of Horned Larks. Our main target was a Bohemian Waxwing that had been seen mixed in with a Cedar Waxwing flock near the Boy Scout Camp area multiple times this week. Our birding adrenaline ran high when we located a large Cedar Waxwing flock in that area, but alas, we couldn't find a Bohemian amongst them. This was an example where just the possibility of finding a rare bird made the chase a thrill. A fine day was had by all, with 49 species recorded.

Black dirt region – March 7 – Bob Slechta, Leader – Things hadn't changed much since the last trip here two weeks ago. There was still over a foot of snow on the ground and it was still cold. As it was on our last trip here the edges of Mission Lands Road was where all the Horned Larks were but this time we also located two Lapland Longspurs making the trip worthwhile for the nine of us. Another highlight was that of a Rough-legged Hawk that gave us nice looks perched and in flight, as did a Bald Eagle along Turtle Bay. We changed our route a little today and it paid off as we came upon two very productive feeder setups bumping up our species variety for sparrows, woodpeckers, etc. Some of us also managed to spot Eastern Bluebirds Wild Turkeys, a Cooper's Hawk and a Merlin making a pass at a flock of European Starlings. Otherwise it was the same vast white desert of snow it's been since mid-January.

Rye – March 15 – Jodi Brodsky, Leader – Our trip to Rye Playland was rescheduled to Sunday due to rain. Our morning started out pretty windy and chilly. Nine members slowly gathered at the beach area just beyond the gate to the nature center. We scanned the waters and then headed over to the boardwalk which I was glad to see repaired and open. The group had a great opportunity to admire Great Cormorants in breeding plumage. There were numerous Brant, Lesser and Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye, and 1 Blue-winged Teal hanging out with a group of Green-winged Teal. We decided to take a ride over to Greenwich Point and see if we would be lucky and find the previously reported owls roosting in the grove. Note to self and others: Greenwich Point is a very busy place to visit on Sundays. In spite of the crowds and long walk and no owls, we did enjoy finding Ruddy Turnstones and Sanderlings, both life birds for Bruce. Many members extended the trip without me and drove to Stamford CT in search of a Painted

Bunting. Those lucky folks were successful AND got to see a Dickcissel along with Monk Parakeets. As always it was a great pleasure to spend the day birding with friends.

Oil City Road – March 21 – Kathy Ashman, Leader – Members met at 8:30 AM at the Wallkill River NWR platform. Temperatures for the day ranged from 26 to 41 degrees, the ground had a thick snow cover, and the water was frozen. The group elected not to walk the Liberty Loop as originally planned, but instead drive around the black dirt region looking for birds. Waterfowl were limited at the refuge due the frozen water. Waterfowl seen throughout the area were: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Mallard, Green-winged Teal and Hooded Merganser. Highlights for the day included Rough-legged Hawk, Killdeer, Horned Lark, Savannah, Fox and White-crowned Sparrows. The bird of the day was a beautiful and cooperative Rusty Blackbird seen near the Winding Waters Trail parking lot. Another non-avian highlight was a Coyote which we spotted in a snow-covered field off Maloney Lane. As we watched from a distance we were able to observe it pounce and catch a Vole under the snow. At the end of the trip we adjourned for lunch at the Harvest Inn in Pine Island. Total species for the day was 46.

Shawangunk Grasslands – March 21 – Tom and Jane, Leaders – Four of us met at Popp's Park in Wallkill to start our trip. We got nice looks at Hooded Mergansers and checked out the new eagle's nest location along the river (no eagles seen this time, though). On Lippincott Road some of the waterfowl we saw included Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, and Common Mergansers. We then cruised up Bates Lane and stopped for perhaps not enough time to try to find Red-headed Woodpeckers, on the side road where they were previously reported. We did see Wild Turkeys though. Perhaps the highlight at the Grasslands Refuge was a few impressive looks at Rough-legged Hawks perched and in flight. Other raptors included Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks American Kestrel and Cooper's Hawk. No owls were seen this afternoon. It was cold and raw and we decided we should have included in the trip a bite to eat before heading to Galeville (oh, well...) to look for woodcocks. Finally just as we were leaving though the entrance way a few of us heard and briefly caught sight of an American Woodcock in flight.

Eastern Orange lakes – March 28 – Linda Strohl, Leader – Today's chilly weather and mostly frozen lakes did not stop the 14 members who traveled around the area to find some open water. Our first stop was to check on the nesting Otterkill Road eagles. We spotted them, in addition to a group of Wild Turkeys while enroute. Beaver Dam Lake's northern end was rather productive with Hooded Mergansers, Bufflehead, Wood Ducks, Ring-necked Ducks (which were abundant today), Mute Swans, and our first sighting of an Eastern Phoebe. On the pond near Clark Street by Stewart Airport we added Great Blue Heron, Green-winged Teal and spotted a Red-tailed Hawk nest. While traveling on Route 747 we passed the GBH rookery and then the eagle nest along Route 52. The Gardnertown Road pond provided American Wigeon, Common Goldeneye and large snowflakes. Common Mergansers were seen on Harrison's Lake in Newburgh and added to our list. After our lunch break, most of us continued onto the Newburgh waterfront where the usual Ring-billed Gulls and Rock Pigeons were seen along with a surprising Cooper's Hawk. A Northern Pintail was spotted on the Moodna Creek in lower

Cornwall, and our first Tree Swallows were also present. Even though the open water was minimal today, we ended up with 46 species of waterfowl and land birds. Many thanks to all the participants who traveled the 50 miles and made the trip so enjoyable.

Bashakill – April 11 – Joyce Depew, Leader – Windy outing at the Bashakill! Today we had nearly 30 participants as we gathered at 8:00 AM in the Stop Sign Trail parking lot. All were filled with the anticipation of great birding until....the weather turned colder than we all thought it would originally and Scott B. informed me of the wind gusts to come during our outing....unfortunately he was correct! On his suggestion, I made a few changes to my route plan to “bird the Bash” and it worked out well with 63 species of birds located. It didn’t necessarily keep all 30 people birding since about 15 people left around 10:00 AM and some others before lunch (Be sure to look at what they missed- besides the chills :-). Areas included were Stop Sign Trail parking lot, Haven Road, South Road, the Boat Launch, Deli Fields and finally the Pine Boat Launch off Route 209. Three warblers were discovered: Pine, yellow-rumped and Palm. The Eastern Screech Owl still occupies his/her roosting hole at the Deli Fields. Ducks included: Wood Duck, Gadwall, Blue-winged and Green-winged Teals, a beautiful REDHEAD, a pair of Northern Shovelers, Hooded Mergansers, Ring-necked Ducks, Common Goldeneye, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Mallards, Buffleheads and a scaup (yes, there was some speculation as to which scaup this was). The area itself is more likely to have Lesser Scaup according to one source but during migration both scaups are possible-you be the judge :-). We also had Horned and Pied-billed Grebes, American Coot and Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Ring-billed Gull, Red-bellied, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, BROWN CREEPER, RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, White-breasted Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, Black-capped Chickadee, FOX SPARROW, European Starling, Red-winged Blackbirds, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Swamp, White-throated and Song Sparrows, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Northern Cardinal, Dark-eyed Junco, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird and Canada Goose. It turned out to be a good day for the remaining 8 of us who stopped for lunch around 1:00 PM.

Oil City Road – April 15 – Kathy Ashman, Leader – 19 members met at the refuge platform. Temperatures for the day ranged from 48 to 64 degrees on a breezy day. Waterfowl seen included: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal and Ring-necked Duck. Other highlights of the day were a Bald Eagle, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned and Red-shouldered Hawks, American Coot, Killdeer, Wilson’s Snipe, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Phoebe, Tree Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown Thrasher, Song, Chipping and Swamp Sparrows and Red-winged Blackbird. No warblers were seen as we walked around the Liberty Loop. Species count for the day was 45.

Kenridge Farm – April 18 – Amy Greher, Leader – Saturday was a perfect weather day for birding. Thirteen of us scoured the property for 3 hours in temperatures that went from 50 to 70 degrees. A total of 47 birds were counted here. Nine hearty souls

continued on to the Washington Lake area under Bruce's direction to continue the trip. We added 11 more birds for a grand total of 58 species. Of note at Kenridge were some good views of Ruby-crowned Kinglets, a Lesser Scaup and a Bufflehead both on the closer pond and 2 Green Herons also flying near the pond. Just before leaving an immature Bald Eagle flew over our heads. It was a day to observe our common birds' behavior such as the many Eastern Bluebirds selecting nesting boxes and competing with the numerous Tree Swallows looking for nesting sites as well. We did catch a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and a Yellow-rumped Warbler but most of our migrants were not present. The Washington Lake area brought us the much promised Black-crowned Night Heron, Ruddy Ducks and Horned Grebes as highlights. Listed here are the Kenridge birds first, followed by the Washington Lake birds. Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Wild Turkey, Green Heron, Turkey and Black Vultures, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American and Fish Crows, Tree Rough-winged and Barn Swallows, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Chipping, Field, Song and White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch and House Sparrow. Then: Mute Swan, Ruddy Duck, Horned Grebe, Double-crested Cormorants, Black-crowned night Heron, Broad-winged Hawk, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls, Rock Pigeon, Belted Kingfisher and House Wren. We all enjoyed the day.

Chadwick Lake – April 22 – Bruce Nott, Leader – 17 birders arrived Wednesday morning to walk the 4 mile loop around Chadwick Lake Park. Temperatures ranged from the mid 40's at 8:00 with some clouds and sun, but turned warmer finishing at 61 degrees. 55 species were seen or heard. Some highlights were COMMON LOON, Double-crested Cormorant, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, and Pileated Woodpecker. There were also many Eastern Phoebes. There were nest building Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and a Blue-headed Vireo. Yellow-rumped, Pine and Palm Warblers were seen and a Louisiana Waterthrush was heard along with an Eastern Towhee singing in some very dense cover. After a lunch break some of us headed for Washington Lake. Five additional species were added to the list here. They included Spotted Sandpiper, Fish Crow and a nice look at a Broad-winged Hawk circling overhead. The Black-crowned Night Heron was not seen today. We finished up with a quick look at a Wilson's Snipe just as a heavy downpour hit, thus ending a great day to be afield. Our final tally was 60 species. Thanks to all who enjoyed the day, and a special thanks to the Town of Newburgh Parks Department who maintain and care for this beautiful watershed.

6 ½ Station Road – April 25 – Kathy Ashman, Leader – Nine members of the club met on a sunny but chilly spring morning. The morning temperature was 30 degrees and winds were about 10 mph from the northwest. The first warbler of the day was a Yellow Warbler spotted by Joe Cullen at the trail entrance. Everyone was able to get good looks at this beautiful bird bouncing around in a bush in the bright morning light. We walked

east along the Heritage Trail hoping to see shorebirds and warblers. Additional warblers seen were Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers, though none were present in large numbers. A Great Blue Heron was seen in the north pond and Green-winged Teal were spotted in the south pond. While sitting on the bench looking for birds over the north pond Barry Babcock and Joe Cullen spotted some Chimney Swifts. Additional highlights were two Eastern Towhees and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. After walking the trail we drove up briefly to the parking area north of the trail, but added no new species. The group elected to drive around the corner to the ponds near the Citgo Gas Station on Route 17M. Here we heard both the Virginia Rail and the Sora as well as a Marsh Wren. A second Yellow Warbler was sighted close up in a buckthorn. An Osprey flew overhead and Black Vultures were also seen. Two Green Herons in breeding plumage were in a marshy area and a Blue-winged Teal was spotted among the reeds by Bruce Nott. After birding the group adjourned to the Goshen Diner to warm up and eat lunch. The temperature at the end of our trip was 50 degrees, but it was still breezy. In total 49 different species of birds were seen. Of the warblers present, the Yellow-rumps were seen in the greatest numbers. Everyone agreed the bird of the day had been the Yellow Warbler.

Winding Waters Trail – April 29 – Barry Babcock, Leader – 46 species were found by 17 members on the three mile walk around the Winding Waters Loop Trail. Weather was clear and seasonable with a high of about 65 degrees. Migrants were generally scarce, although Savannah, Song and Field Sparrows were common. Yellow and Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen well by the group and Least Flycatcher was heard and spotted by some. Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Greater Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper and a colorful male American Kestrel rounded out the list.

Stewart State Forest – May 2 – Curt McDermott, Leader – The morning began with a bit of indecision on the part of the trip leader. The dilemma...bird Ridge Road, which appeared to be birdy, or bring the group of 13 to Maple Road to show all the new foot bridge across the south end of the Great Swamp, risking lower numbers. We took a group conscience and off to Maple Road we went. The route include swampland, dense woods and open fields. The new route ended at the foot bridge which was not yet completed but gave a taste of the birding possibilities to come. The Highlights of the trip were wonderful looks at two species, typically known to be canopy dwellers. A brilliant and always beautiful Blackburnian Warbler proved low and extended views for all to see. This cooperative bird occupied bare branches 20-25 feet off of the ground for roughly 10 minutes. The second fantastic look that we had was at a male Black-throated Green Warbler, who took a page from the Blackburnian's playbook. This beautiful specimen came as low as 8 or 9 feet and continued from there to a height of 15 feet for a very long time. What a wonderful day to leave the camera in the car. Ugh! In all, it was a beautiful birding day (temperatures 54-70 degrees) with wonderful people. Total species count was an even 50

Goosepond – May 6 – Bill Iannone, Leader – Six members ignored the prediction of showers in the morning and were rewarded with an interesting field trip. We had a few drops of rain as we gathered at McDonald's but not a drop as we entered the trail on

Laroe Road. Our current strategy is to walk the trail to the bridge then return to Laroe Road and complete the trip by walking the boardwalk on Route 17M. Gray Catbirds, Eastern Towhees, Ovenbirds and Field Sparrows must claim Goosepond as their home turf because we heard them singing throughout the trip. It was good to see the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds arrival this spring. We listened to Wild Turkeys on our walk and had some fly-overs: Canada Geese, Wood Ducks and Mallards. We did get 4 woodpeckers including an extended views of a Pileated Woodpecker hanging upside down dismantling a dead limb. The reliable Solitary Sandpiper appeared at the bridge as usual but this time brought a mate. Nine warblers were found including a close look at Nashville Warbler which was a highlight of the trip. Prairie Warblers serenaded us as we saw Blue-winged Warbler, American Redstart, Yellow Warbler and Common Yellowthroats. A special appearance was made by a Hooded Warbler which may be a first time at Goosepond. It would be nice if they moved in permanently each year. In addition, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks have become a regular feature of the park. We gathered 58 species for the day in early May.

Bashakill – May 9 – Gerhard Patsch, Leader – Twenty members and friends gathered at the parking lot on a sunny spring morning and were greeted by the calls of a Virginia Rail right at the start of our field trip. Bruce Nott had already set up his spotting scope and found a Blue-winged Teal for us far out in the kill vegetation. A very good find indeed. Warbling Vireos, Ovenbirds, Gray Catbirds and Yellow Warblers were fairly numerous, but warblers were not. Only 11 species of wood warblers were seen or heard, including: Northern Parula, Blue-winged, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Pine, Cerulean, Black and White, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush and Common Yellowthroat. This relatively low number of wood warblers could possibly be a reflection of the fact that we, because of a fully packed parking lot at the nature trail, did not bird this usually productive area. I was, however, surprised to see and/or hear Cerulean Warblers much more frequently than usual this spring. Sharp-eyed hawkers, Liza and Ajit respectively spotted a Broad-winged Hawk and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Our group also sighted 4 Bald Eagles, but, and this is hard to believe, only one Redstart! Other notables included Scarlet Tanager Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Baltimore Oriole, Brown Thrasher and Pileated Woodpecker. The Bashakill didn't feel very birdy this morning, nevertheless, we ended up with 70 species for the day.

Linear Park – May 13 – Scott Baldinger, Leader – 6 club members enjoyed a great walk along the D & H Canal Linear Park trail this morning. We started at Hornbeck's Basin and walked out to the Summitville trailhead, an easy 4 mile walk along the canal. We had 2 great highlights both about a mile from the trailhead where both an OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER and a GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER were found. We found 12 species of wood warbler along the canal. In addition to the Golden-winged Warbler, big numbers of Yellow Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, Ovenbirds and Chestnut-sided Warblers were seen and heard. Other warblers along the canal included both Northern and Louisiana Waterthrush, Black and White, Magnolia, and Blue-winged Warblers, American Redstarts and a Northern Parula. Other species found along the canal included Wild Turkey, Wood Ducks Belted Kingfishers, Baltimore Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (both males and females), Scarlet Tanagers (again both male and female), a

pair of Orchard Orioles, multiple Veery and Wood Thrush, Least and Great-crested Flycatchers, Yellow-throated, Warbling and Red-eyed Vireos, Northern Flicker, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, House Wrens, White-crowned Sparrows and Indigo Buntings. We heard a Yellow-billed Cuckoo and near the Summitville trailhead had great looks at 2 Spotted Sandpipers and a Solitary Sandpiper. We finished a fun morning of birding with 63 species found.

Break 100 – May 15 & 16 – see separate article

Doodletown – May 23 – Barry Babcock, Leader – A chilly morning in the 40's with clear blue sky brought out 12 members for the walk up to Doodletown. Perhaps the cool weather or just a lull in migration kept our total species count at 51. Some great highlights and life birds for some of us included two Olive-sided Flycatchers and a long look at a singing Kentucky Warbler. 12 species of wood warblers, yellow-billed Cuckoo, Scarlet Tanager, Baltimore Oriole, Warbling, Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos were seen or heard. A big miss was Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Turkey and Black Vultures were soaring high overhead but no hawks or falcons were seen. Although we were all looking for one of the famous Doodletown timber rattlesnakes, unlike last year, none were found.

Shawangunk Grasslands May 24 – Jeff Goulding, Leader – Eight people gathered at the refuge for an early (7:00 AM) start to the field trip. With temperatures in the low to mid-40's we all looked more like a fall field trip than a spring one. Ralph Tabor shot me an e-mail giving me a heads up on what was seen the previous day and there were some nice birds. He also alerted me to the malfunctioning gate but was there to have it open for us. Big shout out to Ralph! First off from the parking lot area good looks were had of a Savannah Sparrow on the top of a weed. With scopes in hand we started by going down the entry road and picked up a couple of Eastern Kingbirds in a nearby apple tree along with a Willow Flycatcher on the opposite side of the road. Continuing down the road a nice look at a Yellow Warbler was had by all which prompted a discussion on the parasitic actions of Brown-headed Cowbirds which were head in the area. A Scarlet Tanager was spotted at the top of a distant tree by Kathy Ashman after hearing it call. A Field Sparrow was also spotted further down the road and a Blue-winged Warbler was heard as well as a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Coming back from exploring the road we headed left to see if we could pick up the Grasshopper Sparrow. Distinguishing the calls between the Savannahs and the Grasshopper proved to be challenging but once sorted out they were evident. We all had very good looks at these sometimes-hard-to-see birds. For once they were on top of weeds singing their little bills off. One particular bird had beautiful coloring. Proceeding down this path Kathy spotted a Brown Thrasher flying up into a tree, pausing just long enough for nearly all to get at least a quick look at the bird before it headed off towards Blue Chip. Making our way to the other path we saw pretty much the same birds. The cool temperatures of the morning were becoming a faded memory as the day was heating up. We all decided to go to Old Fort Road at the suggestion of Tom and Jane to see what was there. At a nice turn around near the end of the road we saw a beautiful oriole nest hanging from a tree along with a Green Heron that flushed and decided to land on a nearby fence post then fly into a tree. It is so strange for

me to see a heron in a tree. We continued to the other side of Old Fort, which is Bates Lane, to see if we could pick up the Upland Sandpipers that were seen the previous day. We did pick up THREE Frenchmen from NYC who were adding to their life list and they gladly pointed out where the Uppies were cavorting about. Total number of species, most of which were also seen, was 54.

Brigantine – May 30 – Bob Slechta, Leader – The Edgar A. Mearns Bus, aka Bruce Nott's van left the Harriman RR Station parking lot at 7:00 AM and delivered all six of us to Brigantine for an enjoyable day of birding. The highlight of the trip had to be the American White Pelican Joe Cullen spotted which ended up landing fairly close for great looks. For me though, the best aspect of this trip is the up-close viewing of the many shorebirds, etc., in breeding plumage. A Ruddy Turnstone, a mere twelve feet from you, in breeding plumage is hard to top. Even though we were at the back end of the shorebird migration there were still plenty of species to see, with the emphasis on "see" versus the "heard but not seen" comment often uttered on trips. In addition to the most numerous bird of the day...hundreds of Semipalmated Sandpipers we saw: Great and Snowy Egrets, Black-crowned Night Herons, Glossy Ibis, Clapper Rails, American Oystercatcher, Semipalmated Plover, Black-bellied Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, Willets, Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitchers, Laughing Gulls, Gull-billed and Forster's Terns, Black Skimmers, Seaside Sparrows, Marsh Wrens, Purple Martins, Bald Eagle, Ospreys, Peregrine Falcon, Carolina Chickadees, White-eyed Vireo, Orchard Oriole and Boat-tailed Grackle to name the more notable birds of the day. Our whole day was spent driving the refuge loop road which provided us with 77 species (with a few birds seen enroute to and from) and a good deal of sunburn to remind us of our trip.

Editor's Note: I'd like to thank all the contributors to this edition of The Orange Feather. I think it is another good one! Also, thank you to Linda Strohl who keeps the membership list in order for me and to Lynn Barber who prepares the address labels for the mailings. And thank goodness for Karen Miller who is taking care of the electronic version of this edition. As we get into the fall and winter, keep those field trip reports coming (remember: they should be about the highlights of the trip), and if something exciting happens please plan on sharing an article, etc. with club members. Again, my thanks to all of you. Jan Fitzpatrick

BOB'S POP-UP TRIPS

Croton 3/11/15: Spring was in the air today (56 degrees) and the birds were on the move, noticeable by the change in numbers as we birded the areas around Croton and Peekskill. Common Mergansers, Buffleheads and Bald Eagles were definitely filtering out of the region, their numbers down quite a bit. However, Great Cormorants (30+ in Peekskill Bay), Common Goldeneye (about 30 in Croton Bay) and Wood Duck (12 on the Croton River) numbers were up as they made their way north. Of course, Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles and American Robins were in evidence today, but especially noteworthy were the two Tree Swallows and displaying Killdeer at Croton in addition to the Great Blue Heron and a Belted Kingfisher. Thankfully many of the wintering birds were still around providing us with Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers, Ruddy Duck, Redhead, Northern Harrier, American Tree and White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Junco and Pine Siskin. Throw in the usual woodpeckers, corvids, vultures, Eastern Bluebird, Black-capped Chickadee etc., and a very nice Brown Creeper and we had a nice day of birding with 56 species.

Croton Point and Environs 4/26/15: With a total of 57, today's trip to Croton produced only one more species than the March 11th trip, the difference being the absence of any overwintering waterfowl (except for Bufflehead) and the arrival of many new spring migrants. Outside a few spots today the birding was still slow, eerily quiet actually, but we did have some nice sightings none the less. Today's highlights were: 3 fluffy juvenile Great Horned Owls, Double-crested Cormorants vs Great, many Tree Swallows (just the 2 in March), with a few Barn, Rough-winged and Bank Swallows, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrushes, Eastern Towhee, and a nice grouping of Savannah, Field and Chipping Sparrows, not to mention Bald Eagle, American Kestrel and the Osprey which continues to nest on the communication tower at the RR Station.

Storm King Art Center 5/17/15: It was a nice day for a walk at the art center with plenty of sunshine and mild temperatures but not so good for birding. Even though our bird list hit 50, many of the birds were heard and not seen, disappointing, I'm sure, for the art center affiliated individuals that showed up for the walk. It was a good thing I brought my small scope on the walk as it allowed us good looks at the few birds we did manage to see, such as Wood Thrush Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Bluebird and Bobolink. We also managed a quick look at a Brown Thrasher, and a high up Bald Eagle. We heard many Blackpolls, a Northern Parula, and most significantly, a Cerulean Warbler which seems to be showing up in many places this year. Of all the other birds like vireos, woodpeckers sparrows, swallows, etc., you expect to find as local breeders, it's not hard to come up with 50 species. Getting nice looks at the birds this time of May is another story.

Bob Slechta

Orange County Break 100

May 15 & 16, 2015

Compiled by Curt McDermott

This year marked the first time after years of discussion, that our annual "Break 100" was restricted to the confines of Orange County. While some may have been a bit apprehensive at first, all welcomed this change as an exciting new way to celebrate birding in our club and county. But, would these new restrictions have a great impact on the number of species seen? Would it be possible to break 100 species in a 24 hour period of time, or would we need adjoining areas? Time would tell. FYI, Orange County ranks 9th in the state, out of 62 Counties, for number of species seen. It has also seen more than the neighboring Counties that we have relied on in the past.

The new boundary restrictions called for a new way of thinking and strategizing this year. What would we do without the Bashakill or Blue Chip and Shawangunk Grasslands? Well, we would have to take advantage of places that Orange had to offer, like 6 ½ Station Rd., the underexplored Sterling Forest, Oil City Road and of course Mine Rd. Mine Road, once a haven for Warbler sightings has almost become a thought of the past due to the roads closure by our Military. This year, a determined Jeff Goulding, saw to it that our access would not be denied. After many e-mails and phone calls, we were granted access for the weekend. Thanks Jeff, I'm not sure where to currently get Whip-poor-will in Orange, outside of there.

This year also marked the first time in many, many years that the "Countdown Dinner" was not held at the Fitzpatrick's home (We did miss you both!). Instead, as the Fitzpatricks were enjoying Ireland, we ended our weekend at the Museum of the Hudson Highlands Discovery Center, in Cornwall. In total, we had 6 teams participate, comprised of 21 members. The atmosphere was festive and great dishes were brought and enjoyed by all. Incidentally, if you didn't have the meat dish brought by the Antony's, shame on you. I suppose we can just beg them to bring it again!

On to the countdown...Early on, it seemed that groups were doing well with the species that they had discovered. Before long, it was obvious that our trepidations about keeping things within the County were unwarranted. Our total number of participants for the count was up by two people from the previous year. Our final total number of species seen was 155. Can you guess what the total number of species seen the previous year was? One would guess a number that the number would be much lower, right? Wrong, the number was also 155. We successfully achieved the same number of species using only Orange County. An interesting

thing was that although the total number of species was the same, team averages were slightly lower. I would guess that this is an indication of individual species being more spread out, rather than in concentration, as offered by areas such as the Bashakill. Regardless of the reason, the "Break" is alive and well and was enjoyed by all.

With the new boundaries for the "Break 100", a new list is born. The Avian Records Committee of the EAMBC recently voted to retire the old list, with its previous boundaries. With that being done, we have started a new list. All bird species seen this year were seen for the first time within the new rules. Next year's B-100 checklist will only contain the species seen this year and hopefully many write-ins from YOU. Wow, 155 new species. We won't see that again! This new list provides an additional level of excitement and anticipation, as well as a real chance for all participants to add something new to it. All lists can be seen on our Yahoo site, thanks to the continued efforts of Dr. Ajit Antony. Thank you Doctor Antony! It is noteworthy that this year's team of Dr. John Tramantano, Dr. Chris Valligny and Bob Senerchia found a species never before seen on ANY Break 100 and only once previously in Orange County. While at Oil City Rd., the group managed to see and ID a flyby Eurasian Collared Dove. Congratulations on the excellent find!

The following is a listing of teams/ totals:

Team A – Claudia Perretti, Grace Gloeckler, Jane Tiller, Linda Strohl - 78

Team B – Kathleen Ashman, Mary Buskey, Joyce Depew, Karen Maloy Brady-101

Team C – Jeff Goulding, Lisa O'Gorman, Karen Miller, John Haas - 106

Team D – Bob Slechta, Drs. Ajit & Liza Antony – 126

Team E – Dr. John Tramantano, Dr. Chris Valligny, Bob Senerchia - 127

Team F – Ken McDermott, Steve Schuyler, Curt McDermott – 126

Notable sightings:

Lesser Scaup – Teams A, C, D, E – 6 ½ Station Rd., Rear pond off of 17M

Common Tern – Team E –

Eurasian Collared Dove – Team E – Oil City Rd.

Red-headed Woodpecker – Team F – Elks Brox Park

VIREOS	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
White-eyed Vireo											Black-and-white	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Yellow-throated Vireo		✓		✓	✓	✓					Tennessee				✓	✓			
Blue-headed Vireo				✓	✓						Nashville			✓	✓	✓			
Warbling Vireo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Mourning								
Red-eyed Vireo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Kentucky								
CORVIDS											Common Yellowthroat	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Blue Jay	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Hooded		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
American Crow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					American Redstart	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Fish Crow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Cape May		✓						
Common Raven		✓		✓	✓	✓					Cerulean		✓		✓	✓	✓		
LARKS											Northern Parula		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Horned Lark				✓	✓						Magnolia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
SWALLOWS											Bay-breasted				✓	✓	✓		
Purple Martin		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Blackburnian			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Tree Swallow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Yellow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Northern Rough-winged	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Chestnut-sided			✓		✓	✓		
Bank Swallow			✓	✓		✓					Blackpoll	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Cliff Swallow				✓		✓					Black-throated Blue		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Barn Swallow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Palm								
TITMOUSE, NUTHATCHES, CREEPER											Pine		✓		✓	✓	✓		
Black-capped Chickadee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Yellow-rumped		✓			✓	✓		
Tufted Titmouse	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Prairie		✓		✓	✓	✓		
White-breasted Nuthatch	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Black-throated Green	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Red-breasted Nuthatch		✓									Canada			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Brown Creeper			✓		✓						Wilson's			✓		✓			
WRENS											Yellow-breasted Chat								
House Wren	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					EMBEREZID FINCHES								
Winter Wren						✓					Eastern Towhee	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Marsh Wren		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Chipping Sparrow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carolina Wren		✓		✓	✓	✓					Clay-colored Sparrow								
GNATCATCHERS											Field Sparrow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Vesper Sparrow								
KINGLETS											Savannah Sparrow		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Golden-crowned Kinglet											Grasshopper Sparrow			✓		✓	✓		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet											Song Sparrow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
THRUSHES											Lincoln's Sparrow								
Eastern Bluebird	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Swamp Sparrow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Veery	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					White-throated Sparrow			✓		✓			
Gray-cheeked Thrush											White-crowned Sparrow								
Swainson's Thrush						✓					Dark-eyed Junco				✓				
Hermit Thrush				✓	✓						CARDINALIDAE								
Wood Thrush	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Scarlet Tanager	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
American Robin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Northern Cardinal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
MIMIDS											Rose-breasted Grosbeak		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Gray Catbird	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Indigo Bunting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Northern Mockingbird	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					ICTERIDAE								
Brown Thrasher				✓	✓	✓					Bobolink	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
STARLINGS											Red-winged Blackbird	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
European Starling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Eastern Meadowlark	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
PIPITS											Rusty Blackbird								
American Pipit				✓							Common Grackle	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
WAXWINGS											Brown-headed Cowbird	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Cedar Waxwing	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓					Orchard Oriole	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
WOOD WARBLERS											Baltimore Oriole	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Ovenbird	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					FRINGILLID FINCHES								
Worm-eating		✓		✓	✓	✓					House Finch	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Louisiana Waterthrush	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Purple Finch								
Northern Waterthrush					✓	✓					Pine Siskin				✓				
Golden-winged		✓	✓	✓							American Goldfinch	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
<i>Blue-winged</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓													
Brewster's											House sparrow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Lawrence's											TOTALS								

EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE ✓

BROKEN PROMISES

It's funny how some romances die. Well not Ha! Ha! laughing funny, but all-of-a-sudden, unexpected funny. Matter of fact it's not "funny" at all, but sad and somewhat tragic - - at least that's the way it was with me.

April and I had always had a great relationship - - and why not, she was dependable, bright, not given to excesses, and warm. (Hey! What's not to like?) But over night it seemed she became contentious, unreliable, her disposition often cloudy and inconsistent, and her mood a day-to-day variable.

In an effort to clear the air and, hopefully, to get back to our past good times, I consulted with some of my friends. They thought her mood swings might possibly be due to climate change. I scoffed at that and asked if they were going to suggest I consult the Farmer's Almanac next!

As I was pondering my options, she presented me with "the day of reckoning"! It was a cold, rainy, totally miserable day - - so I did the only thing I could do - - I tore off her page and now I'm looking forward to a new relationship with May.

COOx2 . . .Apr '15

CHICKEN HUNT

Saturday, April 11, 2015: My daughter, Susan, and I drove about 75 miles to the Attwater Prairie-Chicken NWR, Eagle Lake, TX. We were hoping to see the endangered Attwater's Prairie-Chickens perform their courtship dance. At 7:00 AM the refuge van took us to the "booming" grounds. After scanning the area, my daughter located a displaying male standing on a windmill's concrete platform. We saw 3 males doing their fancy dance: forward bowing, raising feathers on the top of their heads, fanning their tail feathers, inflating yellow cheek air sacs and booming (sounded like loud humming). During our ride back to refuge headquarters, Susan spied another male Prairie-Chicken in the tall grass along the road. Everyone got great looks at an Attwater's Prairie-Chicken. At headquarters we enjoyed a free breakfast: bacon and egg or sausage and egg kolaches, plus fresh fruit.

Later, Susan and I joined a bird walking tour of the prairie. In addition to seeing many birds our guide identified the beautiful prairie wildflowers. The guide and several birders decided to walk in the tall grass, hoping to flush birds. Suddenly they stopped and began taking photos; Susan thought they had discovered something dead. SURPRISE! The "something" was a large, live Cottonmouth Snake. Susan and I added the Attwater's Prairie-Chicken and a Sedge Wren to our life lists.

The night before the outing, my 3 year old grandson asked where we were going and what we were going to do. Connor's father, Phil replied: "They're going on a Chicken Hunt."

Louise A. Hirst



AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT

Ken McDermott, Chairman

There had recently been a long quiet period as far as the former Checklist Committee members are concerned but some recent activities have occurred which have called for action and for us to have discussions. The following are items which, as a committee, we felt needed action and here are our collective positions on these items -

A) The work of the committee over the years since it was founded clearly included much more than the maintenance of a "checklist" for the use of our club. Recent conversations and communications with Dr. John Tramontano, and New York State Avian Records Committee(NYSARC) members Angus Wilson and Tom Burke over the extent of the information which we maintain led us to an agreement that in the future the committee should be known as the E.A.MEARN'S AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE.

B) We have fairly recently been made aware of the sighting of a single BLACK-NECKED STILT by John Haas on Sept. 8, 1998 at the "Goshen Ponds", which is to say those four small but fruitful ponds which are found at Rte. 17 on the edge of Goshen near the diner. We have voted to add it to our ACCIDENTAL list.

C) On Oct. 16, 2013 a single NELSON'S SPARROW was found by our ever vigilant Rob Stone at 6 1/2 Station Road, Goshen at the area which we access by going in the trail near the gas station on 17A. The bird was very well photographed by John Haas and also seen by Dennis Murphy, Curt McDermott, Bruce Nott and possibly others whose names I forgot. The committee has voted to add it to our list as ACCIDENTAL.

D) The finding of a GYRFALCON in Ulster Co.in February of this year by Mearns member Karen Malloy, and its' subsequent sightings and documentation through photography on Feb. 19 & 20 when it was seen in Orange County by Mearns members Ralph Tabor, Drew & Peter Schuyler, Rob Stone, Jeff Goulding and Ken McDermott, on/near Lake Osiris Road, Montgomery, thus our first record ever, will be recognized by inclusion in the checklist as an ACCIDENTAL.

E) That the sensational find of a NORTHERN CARACARA in the Town of Montgomery on Apr. 10, 2015 by Mearns member, Curt McDermott, potentially only the third record for the State and the first for Orange Co., and its' being seen by innumerable birders from all over the Northeast through at least Apr. 16, have earned it inclusion on the checklist as an ACCIDENTAL.

F) That the checklist for Break-100s of the years through last year, 2014, be "retired" by The Avian Records Committee as the NEW Orange County ONLY Break-100 started this year and has replaced it. Therefore the species called at next years Break-100 countdown will only be those species found on this years count. This newness will in the future allow for an all new level of excitement, NOT COMPETITION, as "new" species will be added to the summary list.

G) On May 26, 2012 a MISSISSIPPI KITE was spotted at the Sterling Forest Visitor's Center and the bird, later joined by another, was seen by many Mearns members over the next few weeks well into June. An attempted nesting failed and the adults disappeared. On this year's BREAK-100, on May 9, 2015, several people well known as accomplished birders saw an adult Mississippi Kite on Ironwood Road, Sterling Forest. Later in May Shai Mitra, undisputedly one of the top birders in the State, reported that a man known to him who was visiting his brother in Highland Mills saw an adult MIKI soaring and heading East. On that basis the committee has decided that the species should then be moved from Accidental on the Checklist to Regular status. It will thus be listed as "R _ _ _". An asterisk at the end of the species name will indicate that it has nested in the county.

My thanks to all the committee members for your continued interests and contributions which allow for the maintenance of avian records in our county with recognition and very special thanks to Dr. Ajit Antony for his knowledge and willing helpfulness in the uploading and maintenance of the online checklist.

IRELAND OR TEXAS OR BOTH?

Last year Sharon and David Baker asked us if we wanted to sign up for the Field Guides spring tour to Ireland. They had already done so. Since we had to back out of the fall Ireland trip they were on a few years ago, we decided to try again. I called Field Guides and they “wait listed” us and told us that the Bakers were also on the wait list. What to do? We like taking a spring trip, so we looked at the catalog and decided that the Texas Coast Migration Spectacle with John Coons was the way to go. We have been on several other trips with John and always enjoyed ourselves. The Texas trip was April 11-17, 2015. Soon after we had fully paid for this tour, we were notified that we were off the Ireland waitlist. What to do? Ireland was May 6-17th. We had 18 days between trips. Could we do it? We decided to give it a try.

The Texas trip: We arrived in Houston at dinner time and met our group in time for supper. There were just seven of us including John. That was a really nice size tour group. The first day was spent in Jones State Forest, the Trinity River area and the Big Thicket near Silsbee, TX. We saw Red-headed and Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Brown-headed Nuthatches, White-eyed Vireos and Hooded Warbler, among other species in the forest. We had our first Prothonotary Warbler at the Trinity River. Along Gorestore Road in the Big Thicket we had a spectacular close view of a Swainson’s Warbler. Finally Fitz was able to check this off his life list. We also saw a Bachman’s Sparrow and Prairie Warbler nearby. We ended the day at Massey Lake where we encountered a pair of Barred Owls. They came right up to us, displaying and calling to each other. We ended the first day with 54 species.

The next morning we headed towards the Texas coast travelling through many rice fields and a sewage treatment plant. We added American Golden Plover and Upland Sandpiper in the rice fields. The treatment plant gave us Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Black-necked Stilts and Blue-winged Teal. We also saw White-faced Ibis, Willet, Lesser Yellowlegs and Short-billed Dowitchers while driving to High Island on the Texas coast. We arrived at our motel in early to midafternoon. A Eurasian Collared Dove greeted us there. High Island is a small community built on a salt dome. It is the one wooded location in the area. As you approach the area you can see that there are no other trees in the vicinity. Around 4:00 PM we headed to the sanctuaries run by the Houston Audubon Society. There are three separate areas: Boy Scout Woods, Hook’s Woods and Smith Oaks Woods. In a little under two hours we saw 27 species of birds in the three forests. The birds come in every afternoon after their flight across the Gulf of Mexico. If the weather is right you can get a tremendous “fall out” of birds. We had 8 warbler species, Painted Bunting, both Baltimore and Orchard Orioles and Inca Dove, plus many others. There is a rookery at Smith Oaks and there we saw breeding plumaged Great and Snowy Egrets and gorgeous Roseate Spoonbills.

On the 14th we drove to Anahuac NWR scoping the rice fields as we went into the refuge. We started the day with a Barn Owl flying over the motel! Sedge Wren, Whimbrels, Dunlin and Fulvous Whistling Ducks were highlights before entering the refuge. A Bobcat greeted us at the refuge entrance. The skies were threatening as we began the drive along the refuge roads. We had seventeen species of birds before the rains came. Highlights included: Purple Gallinule, Least and American Bitterns, Sora and King Rail and Neotropic Cormorant. After lunch we

drove to the Bolivar Peninsula and along the Gulf of Mexico. At Rollover Pass we added 15 species to our list. Some of what we saw included American White Pelicans, Black Skimmer, Avocet, Reddish Egret, Sandwich, Royal, Least and Black Terns and Piping Plover. The late afternoon found us back at Smith Oaks Woods. Highlights there were Golden-winged Warbler and Gray-cheeked Thrush. Our trip list now stood at 154.

It was back to Bolivar Peninsula the next morning. Again at Rollover Pass we added a bunch of new species to our list. The highlight was a Snowy Plover, a life bird for both of us. We also had a nice Clapper Rail. While driving down the peninsula towards the Galveston Ferry Terminal we added Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and Crested Caracara (hard to believe this wasn't a year bird as we had seen the Orange County bird the day before our trip began). We also saw Seaside and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows, White-tailed Kite, Gull-billed and Caspian Terns and Mottled Duck. It was back to the woods in the afternoon where we added a Nashville Warbler. Driving along the rice fields towards Anhuac later we added Bald Eagle and Swainson's Hawk to our list.

On the 16th we headed to Sabine Forest near the Louisiana border. We heard and saw a Yellow-breasted Chat here and also saw another Swainson's Warbler. Back at the Audubon sanctuaries that afternoon we saw many of the previous species plus Chestnut-sided Warbler and Swainson's Thrush. The last day saw us heading back to Houston International Airport for our flights home. We added Hudsonian Godwit and an Anhinga as we drove inland. We ended this spectacular trip with 183 species of birds and 6 mammal species! Great work for 5 ½ days of birding. And we were all able to get out of Houston Airport before the flooding rains came in that night.

The Ireland Trip: That is another story for another day. Trust me, it was also a great experience.

Jan Fitzpatrick



FALL & WINTER FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE – E.A. MEARNS CLUB

September trips (see last Feather for details): 9/5 Doodletown & Bear Mountain; 9/5 black dirt & Oil City Road; 9/12 black dirt; 9/19 Basha I; 9/26 Basha II; 9/30 Stewart State Forest.

October 3 – Hudson Highlands Nature Museum Outdoor Discovery Center – (Kenridge Farm) Meet Amy Greher (783-6363) at 8:00 AM. Lincoln's Sparrow is likely.

October 7 – Goosepond – Meet Bill Iannone (783-7467) at the Chester McDonald's at 8:00 AM. Lots of wild fruit and lots of birds

October 10 – Winding Waters Trail – Meet Curt McDermott (549-5596) there at 8:00 AM. This is a great spot for sparrows and other fall migrants.

October 14 – Croton Point – Pete Johnson (914-261-2895) will meet you at the park entrance/office at 8:30 AM to bird this good fall migration trap on the Hudson River.

October 17 – Storm King Art Center – Be there at 8:30 AM for FREE admission to bird the art center with Bob Slechta (534-7029).

October 24 – Chadwick Lake – Meet Bruce Nott (542-0583) at the town park at the south end of the lake for kinglets, thrushes, etc. Check the time on the Mearns Yahoo site.

October 31 – Oil City Road – Meet Kathy Ashman (294-6140) at the platform at 8:30 AM to look for egrets, ducks, shorebirds, sparrows and more.

November 7 – Kenridge Farm – (HHNMODC) Meet Dave Baker (446-4030) at 8:30 AM at this always productive birding spot.

November 14 – Black dirt – with Joe Cullen (236-4869); meet at the Jolly Onion at 8:30 AM for pipits, larks, buntings and who knows what else.

November 21 – Eastern Orange lakes – Meet Linda Strohl (496-3021) at 8:00 AM at the Salisbury Mills Mini Mall on Rte. 94 and we'll look for ducks, ducks and more ducks.

November 28 – Black dirt – It's the black dirt again for another shot at larks, pipits, buntings, etc. Meet Dave Baker (446-4030) at the Jolly Onion at 8:30 AM.

November 28 – Shawangunk Grasslands – Meet Tom and Jane (255-0324, 255-0565) at 3:30 PM at the Popp Memorial Park next to Stewart's in Wallkill and check for ducks before going to the grasslands for Short-eared Owls, Harriers and Rough-legged Hawks.

December 5 & 6 – Cape Ann, MA – For trip details contact Jodi Brodsky at 282-1058 or jsbbirder@verizon.net. This is a great trip for wintering waterfowl: grebes, alcids, eiders, scoter, etc.

December 19 – Eastern Orange Christmas Bird Count – If you never partook in this event and want to... contact Bob Slechta (534-7029).

Southern Orange Christmas Bird Count – A date for this event to be decided in the fall. Watch the Mearns Yahoo site for details.

January 1 – Jamaica Bay and Jones Beach – Start your year list off right. Contact Herb Stein (496-7986) for details. Someone willing to drive is necessary.

January 9 – Rockland County ducks – with Pete Johnson (914 261-2895); meet at the Rockland Lake fishing station at 8:30 AM.

January 17 Duck Count – If you want to partake in this statewide count watch the Mearns Yahoo site for information.

January 30 – The Eagle Trip – with Gerhard Patsch (255-5840); be at the Rte. 202/6 “Goat Trail” pull off at 8:30 AM and expect 100+ eagles.

February 13 – open for a pop-up trip: watch the Yahoo site.

February 20 – Hudson River Ramble – Meet Gerhard Patsch (255-5840) at the Newburgh Mall Rte. 300 McDonald’s at 8:30AM for a day scouring the Hudson River for birds.

February 27 – another open date, so watch the Yahoo site.

March 5– Black dirt region – for Rough-legged Hawks, Harriers, Horned Larks, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs and who knows what else. Meet Joe Cullen (236-4869) at the Jolly Onion at 8:30AM.

March 12 – Bashakill and environs – Meet Scott Baldinger (888-2333) at the Stop Sign Trail at 8:30 AM and see what winter finches, ducks, and maybe Fox Sparrows are about.

March 19 – Rye – Meet at Rye Playland parking lot at 8:30 AM. With Jodi Brodsky we’ll look for Long-tailed Ducks, grebes, Goldeneye, scaup, etc.

March 26 – Oil City Road – for early passerines and large numbers of ducks. Meet Kathy Ashman (294-6140) at the refuge platform at 8:30 AM.

NOTES

The phone number is given for each leader. If you have any doubts about a trip happening due to weather CALL either the night before or in the morning (the leader will be up checking the weather too, so CALL!) You can also keep an eye on the Mearns Yahoo site for trip cancellations or changes.

If you lead a trip you are responsible for sending a write up to Jan Fitzpatrick, 1 Keith Place, Campbell Hall, NY 10916 or fjfitz@frontiernet.net. Please include the number of species seen, number of participants, weather conditions and highlights of the trip. If you post the trip on line please send me an expanded report fleshing out the details of the on-line posting. Thank you!
