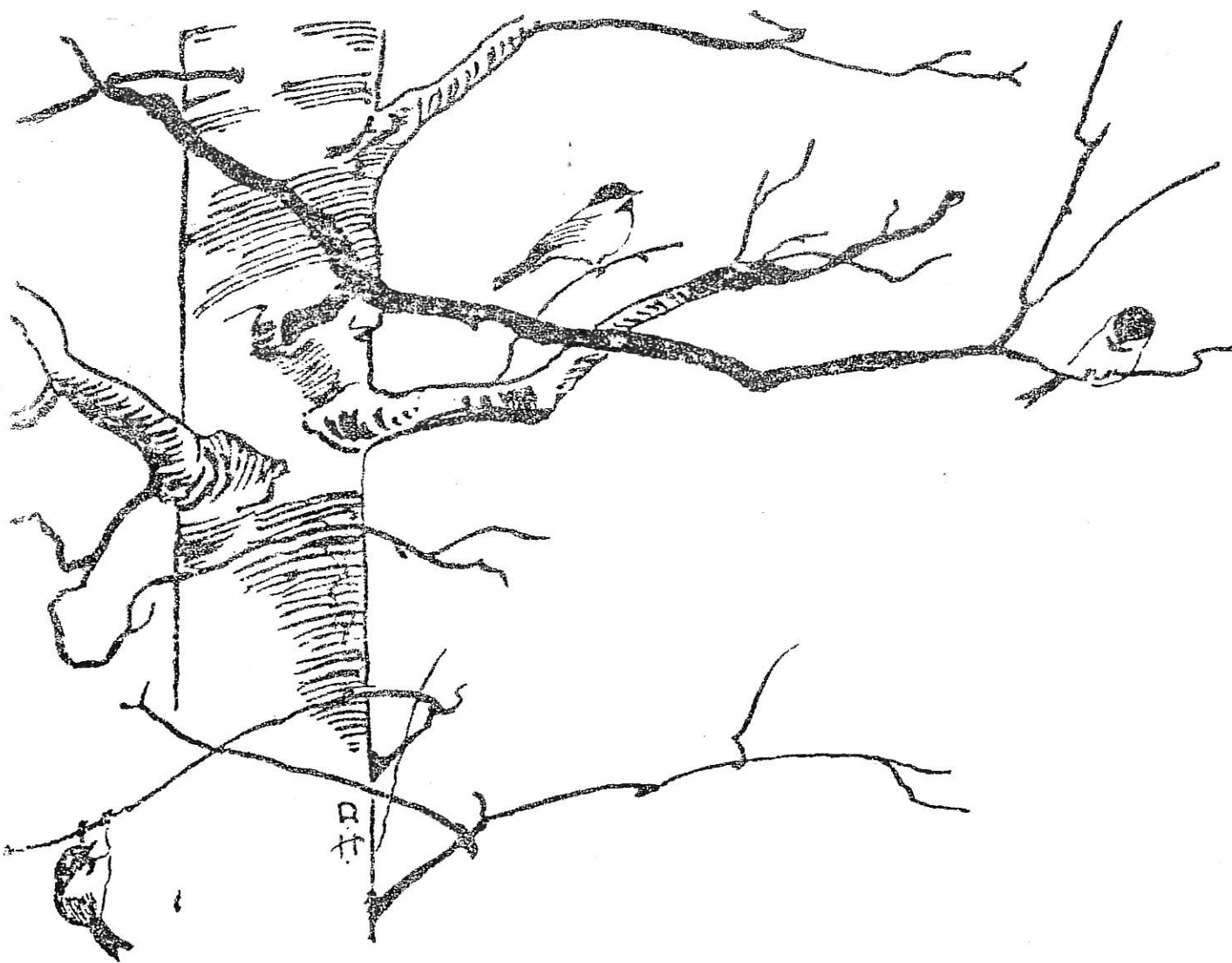


THE ORANGE FEATHER



Orange County, New York

2018 – Fall/Winter

THE ORANGE FEATHER

A publication of
EDGAR A. MEARN'S BIRD CLUB

Orange County, New York

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello everyone!

I hope that you're enjoying your summer and have made time for birding. Once migration slowed down, many of my birder friends took the opportunity to observe the birds that breed in our area. Summer is the perfect time to see growing families of Common Gallinules, Cerulean Warblers, House Wrens, Virginia Rails, and so many more.

To make things interesting, we've had some exciting visitors to our area, including the Henslow's Sparrows at the Grasslands, the Anhinga in Sullivan County, and the Sandhill Cranes, Glossy Ibis, and Roseate Spoonbill at the Wallkill River refuge.

Of course, Nature offers us more than just birds to watch. Recently, I've seen many photos online of local mammals, snakes, mushrooms, plants, butterflies, and dragonflies. Birders can expand their knowledge with every birding experience, which is part of what makes this hobby so appealing and rewarding. Birders are known for generously sharing what they've learned with friends and family, and even with strangers.

As members of the Edward A. Mearns Bird Club, we have much to celebrate in the coming year. Founded in 1959, the club will mark its 60th anniversary in 2019. The board will plan a June dinner so we can recognize all that this organization has accomplished since its inception. Once we nail down a date for this event, please pencil it in your calendar and make plans to join us.

Additionally, we are considering kicking off our anniversary year by participating in the Big Sit on October 13-14, 2018. If you're not familiar with this event, check out this video online:

<https://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/bigsit/about.php>

Or just Google "Big Sit." You'll hear more in September as we pull the details together.

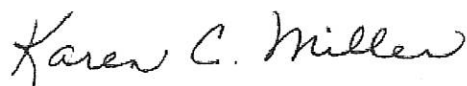
In response to your comments on our March member survey, we're adjusting our meeting schedule and location.

- Starting in September, our meetings will begin at 7 p.m. with a targeted end time of 8:30 p.m.
- Our September meeting will be held at Kenridge Farm.
- Starting in October, our meetings will take place at the Washingtonville Middle School, which addresses your request for a more centralized location.
- Due to security changes at the school, the front door will remain locked. We'll position one of our members at the door to let everyone in until 10 or 15 minutes after the start of the meeting. I realize that might pose a problem for any latecomers. We'll work on a solution to this issue and will notify everyone prior to the October meeting.

There's more to look forward to with our extensive list of outings, new program speakers, and the results from the breeding survey coordinated by **Ajit Antony**.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this newsletter and especially to **Jan Fitzpatrick** for giving us yet another edition of the *Orange Feather*.

Hope to see you all soon! Good birding to you!



Karen C. Miller

MEETINGS

The fall Club meeting dates are as follows:

September 10: Alan Wells: "Birds of Stony Point Battlefield – then and now"

October 15: Dave Baker: "Birding Northern California"

November 12: Max Garfinkle: "Ongoing Studies of blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers in the Hudson Highlands"

December 10: Mearns Share-a-thon

Alan Wells

FIELD TRIPS PAST

Hudson River Eagle trip II – February 17 – Gerhard Patsch, Leader – We started our field trip at the Beacon waterfront by the train station. It was 29 degrees but there was no wind and the sun was at our backs giving us excellent visibility. The Hudson River was mostly free of ice except for some close ice extending about 100 meters from the shoreline where we were observing and searching for birds with our scopes. Our first sightings of the day were of two close Bald Eagles near the edge of the ice, 5 Mute Swans, Ring-billed, Great Black-back and Herring Gulls. One of the Great Black-backed Gulls was picking at a dead, bloody fish on the ice nearby. Common Mergansers and Buffleheads were spotted further out in the river and high above us soared Black and Turkey Vultures and even higher, a Red-tailed Hawk. A short walk at Madam Brett Park, our next stop, gave us good sightings of Golden-crowned Kinglets, Winter Wren and Carolina Wrens, Eastern Bluebirds and Ring-necked Ducks. Several more eagles and a Sharp-shinned Hawk were also sighted. Breakneck Mountain, directly across from Storm King, is not only scenically beautiful, it is also a great spot for observing raptors in the winter. We were entertained by high aerial interactions of two Peregrine Falcons with four Black Vultures, three Bald Eagles and our ubiquitous Red-tailed Hawk. We searched for a possible Golden Eagle who visits this area, but no luck today. Our last stop was Peekskill Bay/China Pier. There was very little river ice at Peekskill Bay so we did not have as many eagle sightings as we did in January. We counted 27 Great Cormorants on and around the bay tower which has become their regular winter home. We heard Fish Crows here and we were thrilled by the sight of three eagles being chased by our third Peregrine of the day! The temperature had climbed to 40 degrees as 13 Mearnsers went to lunch and tallied 43 species.

Rye Playland – March 3– Liza and Ajit Antony, Leader – This is the first time Ajit and I have lead a field trip. The week before the trip, we diligently watched the various weather predictions on the web with frequent consultations with Bob Slechta as to whether we should postpone the trip to Sunday. In the end, we decided to hold the trip on the originally scheduled date even though it was windy. Eleven intrepid birders, braving high winds while driving over the Hudson River bridges, turned up for the bird walk. The age range of birders spanned 60 years: from young 10 year old Riley Dechon who was there with her father Patrick to some senior birders who were young 70+ years! It was wonderful having Riley with us on the trip. The starting temperature was in the high 30's but with wind gusts of 20-30 mph it felt cold indeed! However Ajit and Bob were able to find many areas where we could shelter from the wind and see the birds as well. A Tufted Duck had seen the previous day at Playland Lake so we decided to start the trip birding there and looking for the duck and other species. Unfortunately, we did not find the Tufted Duck but were rewarded with good looks at Lesser and Greater Scaup as we walked partway around the lake. We also had good looks at Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers, Buffleheads and Great Cormorant. Song Sparrows were spotted on the path. Edith Reed Visitor Center was closed because of the storm which had knocked out power to the facility. The feeders outside the visitor center were mostly empty, but we were able to see Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse and Downy Woodpecker at the

feeders. Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Northern Flicker were also spotted in adjacent trees. On the walk back to the Playland parking area we saw a few American Robins in the grass next to the road as well as 3 Killdeer in puddles on the bay side of the road. Before walking back to the lot, we were able to find a sheltered area on the beach and bird the bay and Long Island Sound. Many of us had brought spotting scopes which were necessary to study the distant Brant, common Goldeneye, Common Loon and Great Cormorant. We then drove to the Playland end of the parking lot and several of us decided to brave the wind and bird the boardwalk and adjacent pier. Two senior members of the club decided to stay warm in the car and skip birding the pier. ☺ We were able to find shelter from the wind and were rewarded with seeing the birds quite close to the pier and boardwalk. The water level was so high that the sea wall to the left of the pier was almost completely submerged! We saw many Horned Grebes, Red-breasted Mergansers and Buffleheads as well as distant Great Cormorant and two Common Loons. The best bird which was seen close to us from the pier was a female Greater Scaup. We spend a significant amount of time studying the shape of the head of the bird and the size of the bill nail. The black nail at the tip of the upper mandible of the Greater Scaup is larger and the black spreads out from the tip of the bill to the side of the bill. We were in agreement that this was the best look we had had of a Greater Scaup. By this time it was 12 noon and we were hungry. We decided not to visit Marshlands Conservancy and headed out to lunch at a local café. Good food and good company! This was all in all a good trip with friends. We tallied 36 species. Special thanks to Kathy Ashman for keeping a careful tally of the birds.

Black Dirt – March 10 – Joe Cullen, Leader – 14 club members participated in the field trip today. The day was cold and blustery and a recent snow storm created unsafe driving conditions on the unplowed dirt roads in the sod farms. We birded only from the paved roads which were well plowed. The birds were generally sparse with Horned Larks being the most common species. Several people also saw a couple of Snow Buntings; a lot fewer than expected. Raptors and waterfowl were well represented at Oil City Road with Pintails, Green-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck and Canada Geese seen among others. Several Northern Harriers were seen, along with Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks. A Merlin landed on the wire along the road. It did not stay long but everyone got good looks at it. Barry saw a Short-eared Owl far out over the marsh, but unfortunately he was the only one to see it. Overall we saw a total of 42 species. After a cold and windy morning everyone was ready to go inside and enjoy a nice hot lunch.

Bashakill – March 17 – Scott Baldinger, Leader – 25 club members were on hand for this morning's field trip. Despite being partly sunny, it was an extremely cold and windy morning and a deep freeze had set in overnight freezing up parts of the kill. I was concerned if the target bird for today, the beautiful drake EURASIAN WIGEON found 9 days ago by John Haas, would still be around. It had been hanging just off Haven Road opposite the DEC parking area providing great views to the many birders that had been coming from around the Hudson Valley and other areas to see it. This area was now completely frozen in. Fortunately the bird was still here but had moved farther out on the kill but was still able to provide decent scope views well off the southwest side from the Haven Road bridge. The Eurasian Wigeon ended up staying at the Bashakill for 17 days

before moving on, delighting the many people who came to see this rarity. Despite the cold weather we had a great morning with 40 species found. A nice mix of ducks included: Wood Duck (105), Gadwall (4), American Wigeon (13), Mallard (50), American Black Duck (40), Northern Pintail (6), Green-winged Teal (15), REDHAED (3), Ring-necked Duck (250), Bufflehead (8) and Hooded Merganser (19). Other highlights this morning included Mute Swan, Pied-billed Grebe, Bald Eagle (6), Fish crow, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, American Tree Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, and Purple Finch. A complete detailed checklist can be found at: <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S43727398>.

Oil City Road – March 24 – Kathy Ashman, Leader – Twelve members met at the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge Liberty Loop platform at 8:30 AM for our first spring field trip of the year hoping for abundant waterfowl and early spring migrants. Water levels were high due to the above average precipitation during the winter. To our delight 22 members of the New York State Young Birders were also holding a field trip there at the same time. Gathering at the platform we were able to see Canada Geese, a pair of Mute Swans, Song and White-crowned Sparrows, Northern Harriers and a Rough-legged Hawk. Rather than walk the trail at the same time as the Young Birders and cause overcrowding, we elected to cross over to Liberty Lane in search of waterfowl. In the Liberty Lane impoundment we spotted some beautiful Northern Pintail as we approached the area. We walked further along the trail where we spotted Green-winged Teal, American Black Ducks and Mallards in a drainage ditch. From Oil City we drove to Owens Crossing so that we could enter the southern end of the refuge from there. At the pond at Owens Crossing we had Common Mergansers and American Wigeon. A beautiful light phase Rough-legged Hawk flew low overhead giving everyone good views, and an American Kestrel was spotted as well. Though the trail walking up to the southern impoundment was relatively quiet the southern end of Liberty Loop was quite active with waterfowl. Just before we reached the Loop we heard the drumming and then saw a beautiful Pileated Woodpecker fly right over our heads. Large numbers of Canada Geese, Northern Pintail, Ring-necked Ducks and Green-winged Teal were present in the impound and in the marsh grasses and we were able to get good looks at them. A Belted Kingfisher flew over and we spotted a Common Raven. Jim Clinton spotted two Short-eared Owls that were flushed at the Oil City Road platform area. All of us were able to get on the birds as they flew in the area of the platform. Another exciting find was a pair of Blue-winged Teal that flew in and then disappeared among the marsh grasses. We also learned that the Young Birders had spotted other Blue-winged Teal along the western side of the Refuge. While walking back to Owens Crossing, Bob Slechta spotted several Eastern Bluebirds, which many in our group were able to see. At this point we broke for an early lunch at the Harvest Inn. About half of the group decided to extend the trip by going to Wickham Lake in Warwick. On the drive over some of us spotted a large flock of about 20 Wild Turkeys mixed in with a flock of Canada Geese foraging in a field. Wickham Lake was not as productive as we hoped but we did manage to pick up 8 Bufflehead and 26 Common Mergansers. Still hoping we might find more birds for our list, we drove to Sugar Loaf and stopped to look over the swamp from the Auction Pavilion parking lot. Unfortunately, there were no Rusty Blackbirds or Wilson's Snipe and the only waterfowl we spotted were three Mallards. From there we headed to the

Beaver Pond on Pine Hill Road in Chester. Here, Barry Babcock spotted Tree Swallows flying over the ponds. In addition, we picked up Hooded Mergansers and Gadwall to add to our waterfowl tally for the day. After Beaver Pond we went to nearby Glenmere Lake. Though we added no new waterfowl, we were treated to a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks calling and chasing one another through the tree tops by the parking lot. We felt they were most likely nesting near the area. At this point it was 2:30 PM and we decided to end the trip. Temperature range was 30-46 degrees with clear skies, winds 5-10 mph with gusts to 16mph. The birds of the day were the Short-eared Owls, Blue-winged Teal Northern Pintail (for their beauty and sheer numbers), rough-legged Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk and the Tree Swallows. It was a great day for birding with good friends.

Eastern Orange lakes – March 31 – Linda Strohl, Leader – Today's field trip was most productive with 65 species seen in a number of locations by 17 Mearns Members. The Walmart pond did not have the usual variety of ducks, but we did observe a Great Blue Heron constructing its nest. Gadwall, Ring-billed Gulls, Red-winged Blackbirds and Canada Geese were seen. Orange Lake provided us with great looks at 4 Common Loons. One close-up loon was enjoying a white perch. Many ducks were on the opposite side of the lake. But our scopes brought them into view: Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Horned Grebe, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Lesser Scaup and Ring-necked ducks. We spotted the Great Egret that continues to be seen at Gardener Road. At the Ridge Road pond we found Wilson's Snipe, Rough-winged Swallows, Fox Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, several turtles and we heard spring peepers calling. The swamp on Route 207 was active with Pied-billed and Horned Grebes, Wood Ducks, Eastern Phoebe, Mute Swans and Tree Swallows. Our last good stop was the swamp on Jackson Road where we could see the Green-winged Teal's beautiful colors enhanced by the sunshine. Also there were more pintail, Great Blue Heron and Mallards. All in all, it was a good way to start the season.

Rye – April 7 – Bob Slechta, Leader – What ever happened to spring? It felt like our March trip: cold and windy! At least it was sunny, so once we found a spot out of the wind it was not half bad. Thankfully, the birding was worth the hardship as the ten of us came up with 64 species and many nice looks at seldom seen birds and early spring arrivals. We started out at Playland where we checked the lake and went out on the pier after which we went to Marshlands Conservancy and walked through the woods to the marsh and back, had a quick lunch and then headed off to Greenwich Point to finish up our day. Trip highlights were: one lone Snow Goose, plenty of Brant, scaup species, Long-tailed Ducks, lots of Bufflehead, one female Hooded Merganser, stunning Red-berated Mergansers, Red-throated and Common Loons, 40 plus Horned Grebes (most in breeding plumage), Double-crested Cormorants, Great Egrets, one Snowy Egret, several Osprey, American Oystercatchers, Ruddy Turnstones, a nice close group of Purple Sandpipers, a perched Great Horned Owl, many Eastern Phoebe's, a Horned Lark, one Tree Swallow, several vibrant yellow Palm Warblers, Chipping, Field, Savannah, Song, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows, plus juncos and plenty of blackbirds and goldfinch. So, despite the cool weather everyone was happy with the good looks we had of the majority of the birds, always a plus for any outing.

Winding Waters – April 4 – Kathy Ashman, Leader – At 8:00 AM on a beautiful breezy spring morning 18 club members met at the Winding Waters Trail parking lot. We were immediately treated to the sight of a drake Common Merganser on the Wallkill River and a pair of Northern Rough-winged Swallows flying in and out from under the bridge. Eastern Phoebe's were calling all along the trail, as were Song and Field Sparrows and American Goldfinches. Along one of the channels we flushed Green-winged Teal and American Black Ducks as well as a Greta Blue Heron. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was flitting through the brush along the trail, and we were able to get good looks at the bird. A Palm Warbler was spotted in a maple tree and, though it would not hold still long enough for photos we were all able to get on this bright spring migrant. Across Oil City Road in the trees near the bridge were more Palm Warblers, a female Wood Duck and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Because the area was not overly active, after about .75 miles we decided to turn back and head over to the Liberty Loop. There was a little more excitement there. As we walked the trail to the western side of the marsh, we flushed some Wilson's Snipe and Blue-winged Teal. Northern Harriers were flying over the wetland, and were flushing ducks from the marsh grass from time to time. As we crossed into the Sussex, NJ part of the trail we were treated to Palm Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. When we reached the open water south of the woods we spotted American Coots, Pied-billed Grebes and Ring-necked Ducks. At this point we elected to head back to close the trip and go to lunch. The group spread out along the trail as we returned and those at the back had the good fortune to spot a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers at their nest. Both Maryangela Buskey and Gef Chumard were able to get some photos of them for the checklist. We headed for lunch and conversation at the Harvest Inn. We had a total of 51 species for the day. Temperatures ranged from 44 to 64 degrees, northeast winds 9-14 mph. The bird of the day had to be the Blue-winged Teal with their beautiful powder blue wing patches flashing as they flushed from the marsh.

6 ½ Station Road – Karen Miller, Leader – It was a beautiful, and long overdue, spring morning as 16 Mearnsers birded both directions of the Heritage Trail alongside 6 ½ Station Road. It's always disappointing to miss the Barred Owl that nests here, but we had many gorgeous birds to satisfy our birding interests. With 44 species for the morning, we were thrilled with seven Hermit Thrushes and two Eastern Towhees. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were plentiful and singing loudly. Palm, Pine and Yellow-rumped Warblers were NOT in short supply. Our group worked hard to find a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher that was heard and a Blue-headed Vireo was a first-of-season for most of us. Swamp Sparrow were stunning in the morning light. Waterfowl numbers were down and we didn't see many raptors either. We expect that the migration will pick up speed very soon, and as Bruce Nott said, "Bring 'em on!"

Shawangunk Grasslands – April 21 – Tom and Jane, Leaders – 13 Mearns members met at the Grasslands in decent weather to witness the courtship antics of American Woodcocks and to see late-staying wintering birds including Short-eared Owls. We gathered in the parking lot where we scanned the refuge, both sky and ground, for early migrant birds such as Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles and various raptors, including American Kestrels, Northern Harriers and with any luck, Short-eared Owls. We

easily saw the kestrels and harriers including 2 Gray Ghosts but didn't see any Shorteared Owls at first. Meanwhile we saw other birds including redwings and grackles and an Eastern Meadowlark! It took some time and diligence to find a Short-eared Owl that we were lucky to finally see fly up. We had a Red-tailed Hawk fly over as well as a Great Blue Heron and 3 Mallards that were flying into the pond to the east of the parking lot. Some of us went up on the platform to see if anything would turn up and several people watched a number of sparring Short-eared Owls. A few birds that one normally expects to see were present especially near the feeders: Black-capped Chickadees and Mourning Dove. Some of us-Karen Maloy-heard a winnowing Wilson's Snipe too! We moved out of the parking lot to where we expected to hear and see woodcocks fly. A number of birds were peenting from various directions but none, frustratingly, were visible. Eventually we saw a good flight, but alas, it was the only one we got to see. We saw 16 species.

Bashakill – April 28 – Joyce Depew, Leader – It was a sunny and breezy day with temperatures from the upper forties to 60 degrees by afternoon. The day began to develop from a cool, cloudy, early morning to one with sun and no fog at the Bashakill. This was a nice surprise for me since my outing seem to begin with fog every time I lead an outing here! We had 11 participants who gathered at the Stop Sign Trail at 8:00 AM. The usual bird suspects showed up for this time of year, however, waterfowl presence was on the decline. Great Blue Herons were not spotted – perhaps they had a convention somewhere else. It was a bit disappointing that there were not as many warblers present yet at the Bashakill. It was quiet at times and many participants speculated on the effects that “old man winter” may have had on migration patterns. At any rate, as we progressed from making observations from: Haven Road, the first leg of the Stop Sign Trail, South Road Boat Launch, Nature Trail, Deli Fields and the Pine Boat Launch—conditions didn't vary much and the sounds of birds declined as we approached noon. We totaled 55 species including the following: Bald Eagle and its visible young seen from the Stop Sign Trail, Broad-winged Hawk, Blue-headed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Brown Thrasher (this bird was really mining through the leaves on the Birch Trail), Yellow Yellow-rumped, Palm and Black and White Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush and Rusty Blackbirds to name a few.

Stewart State Forest – May 2– Bill Fiero, Leader – On the warmest morning of the year, 9 Mearnsers met at the Ridge Road parking lot to bird this diverse State Forest for early migrant possibilities. We first checked the wetland on Maple Lane, where we had a number of Bufflehead, Ring-necked Duck, Double-crested Cormorant and one Common Gallinule as well as a number of Great Blue Herons on nest. We then walked into the forest down Ridge Road to search for songbirds. First, at the small wetland, we were surprised by a singing Virginia Rail and a foraging Solitary Sandpiper. Tree Swallows were beginning to feed along the water and singing House Wrens were numerous throughout. Migrant passerines were beginning to appear, and we logged Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray Catbird, Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Eastern Towhee, Veery, Chipping and Field Sparrows. A single Brown Thrasher was a treat, as was a single flyover Northern Raven and a calling Broad-winged Hawk. Warblers included Black and White, American Redstart, Yellow-

rumped, Common Yellowthroat and Ovenbird. We had planned on walking a longer circuit, but as the birding was productive and the day was rapidly heating up, we decided to wrap up around 11:00 AM, having logged just over 3 miles. With the migrants along with the usual resident birds, we totaled 54 species. It was a fun day with good birding and good company. Thanks, everyone!

Kenridge Farm – May 5 – Bob Slechta, Leader – 18 members showed up for the trip today most likely in response to my posting about what a great day Elaine and I had here the day before. Well...they made the right decision as today was even better visually than yesterday. Of the 73 species (16 warblers) today most everyone got to see all of them and see them well too! We started off along the base of the mountain and spent the next hour and a half enthralled by all the bird activity, unable to move very much as we were transfixed watching the birds in close proximity flit about...Great Crested Flycatcher on the ground, Scarlet Tanagers at eye level, Chestnut-sided Warblers buzzing about our heads, Black-throated Blues at our feet, Wood thrush to the left, Veery to the right...get the picture. Sighting highlights for the trip are: Common Merganser and Red-throated Loon flying over, Green Heron, Bald Eagle, Eastern Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher, Yellow-throated, Blue-headed and Warbling Vireos, Tree, Rough-winged and Barn Swallows, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Veery, Wood Thrush, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Blue-winged, Black and White, Nashville Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Magnolia, Blackburnian. Yellow, chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue and Green and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Eastern Towhee, Field, Chipping, Song and White-throated Sparrows, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles. This has to be one of our best trips here. Let's hope next year is just as fruitful.

Doodletown – May 9 – Alan and Della Wells, Leaders – Wednesday was a beautiful, clear spring day (55-74 degrees, wind gusts 2-5 mph from the SE). Ten Mearns Club members braved the morning's chilly temperatures and ascended Gray's Hill, stopping along the way to listen to and observe the recent spring arrivals. During the approximately 3.5 hour walk, we were able to identify 46 bird species, including 13 species of warbler (sorry, no Kentucky Warbler). The trees were alive with singing a Cerulean and Hooded Warblers, but unfortunately most were too high or hidden for best viewing. Highlights of the trip include: one very cooperative Hooded Warbler that perched on a bare branch low over the trail; a spectacular fiery red male Scarlet Tanager; and a nesting pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. After a quick trip back down the hill, most of the group reassembled at Iona Island where we spent about 20 minutes and added 8 additional species including Prairie warbler. That brought the total count to 54. Despite searching for various marsh specialties, such as rails bitterns and Sora, none were found. For a detailed listing see: Doodletown: <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45486633>; Iona Island: <https://ebirad.org/view/checlist/S45487548>.

Bashakill – May 12 – Gerhard Patsch, Leader – The forecast for our trip was for significant rain. Nevertheless, seven Mearns members-the optimists-met at the parking lot. It was foggy, dark and drizzling and it was cold, only in the low forties. A nice

February day in May. But there we were and in the spirit of a challenge, we decided to give it a try anyway. Most of us have, over the years, experienced good birding in the rain but this was not one of those times. After an hour and a half of birding, heavy rain arrived and we called it a day. Our final tally of 53 species surprised us all. We had 13 species of wood warblers and all of the swallows except Purple Martins. Notables included: Common Moorhen, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Brown Thrasher, Orchard Oriole, Blackburnian Warbler, Cliff and Bank Swallows and Bald Eagle. Even in the poor visibility the Blackburnian was striking.

Goosepond – May 16 – Bill Iannone, Leader – It was a cloudy, mild day with the threat of rain that may have scared off some birders with the exception of Bob, Bruce and I. We covered three locations in the Park: the Boardwalk Trail on 17M, the Lazy Hill Trail from Laroe Road and the trail from the parking area on Bull Mill road. The Boardwalk has developed into an excellent birding area in recent years. We enjoyed an active flock of mixed warblers including Blue-winged, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, American Redstart, Ovenbird and Common Yellowthroat. As we expected we found eastern Bluebirds, Tree and Barn Swallows, Carolina and House Wrens, Chipping, Song and Field Sparrows, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, a Least Flycatcher and some beautiful Indigo Buntings. We also expected the fly-overs at the Boardwalk: Wood Ducks, Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawks and a female American Kestrel. Our next stop was the trail from Laroe Road which has become a very easy trail to walk since it has been widened and the bridge repaired. However, parking is still limited. The birding improved as we approached the wetlands and bridge area as we saw Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Eastern Towhee, Blue-gray-Gnatcatchers, Eastern Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher and the usual woodpeckers. Around 10:30 we started to feel a light rain but the birding got more interesting when we went to the trail from the parking area on Bull Mill Road. It was easy to ignore the rain because the birding was so good. It is an interesting environment for birding with the stream, Trout Brook, running next to the trail. We heard the singing in the rain as we saw Cape May, Tennessee and Canada Warblers and heard Mourning Warblers. For me the bird of the day had to be the Cape May Warblers. We had a total of sixteen warblers with at least 4 Cape Mays. It was easy to ignore the rain drops that fell on us.

Break 100 – May 18-19 – See separate article.

Cape May – May 21-23 – Warren Cairo, Leader – It's been awhile since the club last did a trip to Cape May and traditionally they were weekends in the fall. This year's trip was mid-week in the spring and the primary focus was on shorebirds, and boy did we see shorebirds. Heislerville was spectacular with thousands of Dunlin, Semipalmated Plovers and Sandpipers, Black-bellied Plovers, White-rumped Sandpipers, Short-billed Dowitchers and Black Skimmers circling around every time an Osprey or another perceived threat flew over. Cooks Beach gave great looks at one of our targets: Red Knots feeding and flying along with Sanderlings and Ruddy Turnstones, many in their best breeding plumages. And a surprise to me was having all 3 scoter species on the Bay. We started Tuesday listening to a special rarity, a Swainson's Warbler. This is the second year in row this species has been in this same area. It's a restricted area with only

limited access that we were able to use. This area is now closed. We also visited the fairly new Spring Watch (2nd year) at Coral Avenue dune crossing. It's manned by volunteers to monitor the northern migration along the coast. A one day count of Northern Gannets totaled over 15,000. We also had the opportunity to meet and enjoy a conversation with Richard Crossley, the author of the Crossley Field Guides. Next we spent some time at the new Nature Conservancy property, the Garrett Family Preserve, which is about 180 acres that borders Cape Island Creek and has meadows edged with stands of tall trees. Here we had great looks at Yellow-breasted Chats, Indigo Buntings and Blue Grosbeak. This area has had both Fork-tailed and Ash-throated Flycatchers in previous falls. We also birded the Beanery (Rea's Farm) and had good looks at a Prothonotary Warbler. We went to Nummy Island around high tide and were not disappointed. We had Tricolored and Little Blue (one in the white w/blue splotches) Herons and many Clapper Rails. Because of the high tides they were on the higher areas busy preening and giving us very satisfying looks. One evening after dinner we took a short excursion to the Meadows and Cape May Point. At the Meadows we had a Common Nighthawk flying around us giving everyone get looks at this sometimes difficult to find species. But the highlight of this evening was listening to a couple of Chuck-will's-Widows calling very close to where we were. A lifer for a few. We wrapped up with a boat trip to the back bays aboard a pontoon boat called the Osprey. We saw lots of shorebirds, a lingering Common Loon, about 40 Whimbrels, nesting Laughing Gulls, Common and Forster's Terns and many Ospreys on their nests throughout the back-bays. But the highlight was seeing the Peregrine Falcons at their new nest site. The female looked huge compared to the male. All in all, we had 104 species, but more important than a species count is that we had great looks at most of the species and could study them rather than just ticking them off. 14 Mearns Members and a couple of birders from neighboring clubs for a total of 16 made the trip. It was a very enjoyable experience for me to be birding again with some old friends, and some new ones too, and having the opportunity to share with you some of the wonderful birding found in Cape May! Good birding to all and I hope to be birding with you all again.

Hudson Highlands Discovery Center – May 23 – Amy Greher, Leader – The trip started at 7:30 AM at the dog park parking lot located at the turnoff for Kenridge Farm on Angola Road. 12 Mearns birders gathered there awaiting a bird-filled day. Disappointed by the quiet surroundings, we quickly car-pooled down to the main parking lot. The weather was fairly warm starting out at 60 degrees and ending in the low 70's. It was somewhat humid and rain threatened at times but did not happen. Gnats were bothersome as expected this time of year. We gathered in the main parking lot and proceeded up the trail by the fields. We either heard or saw the usual suspects: orioles, Carolina Wren, Tree Swallows, Song Sparrows and a Common Yellowthroat. Closer to the pond area we had Yellow Warblers, Canada Geese, a Green Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-winged Blackbird, and more Song Sparrows to name just a few. As we continued up the path toward the more distant pond we came across a Black-billed Cuckoo, heard at first and then spotted. What a find! The bird was relatively cooperative for a cuckoo. At the pond itself we watched a beautiful pair of Orchard Orioles working on a nest just above our heads. An Osprey flew overhead as well. This is a bird we don't often see on the property. We did see Blue-winged and Hooded Warblers on the woodland trail but

noted that many warbler species had moved on. Only 9 species of warbler were seen today. Late in the morning the group split up. Some of us continued to the Boulevard; a companion property to Kenridge. There we saw 2 Bay-berated Warblers and nearly bumped into a very young fawn who was resting against a tree on one of the trails. On the drive out, we spotted a Cooper's Hawk. A total of 64 species were either seen or heard this morning. We all enjoyed another wonderful day birding.

Box Baum and Rio – May 26 – Bob Slechta, Leader – Before heading up into the montane habitat of Box Baum and Rio we birded our meeting location along the Neversink River at the D & H Canal Museum and had some nice birds. Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Carolina Wren, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Parula and Yellow Warblers, and our only swallows, Tree and Barn were had. Box Baum Road, our next stop was mostly dry upland forest with the most numerous birds being Ovenbird and American Redstart. To our dismay, it was quite evident that the spring migration was over and only the local breeders were ours to find today, of which the following were added to our Box Baum list: Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Downy and Pileated Woodpeckers, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Least and Great-crested Flycatchers, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Veery, Wood and Hermit Thrushes, Worm-eating, Black and White, Pine and Prairie Warblers, Scarlet Tanager and Indigo Bunting. From Box Baum we headed up Route 42 to Old Plank Road and the Rio Reservoir where, in addition to some repeats, including several ethereally singing Hermit Thrushes, we added Dark-eyed Junco, Winter Wren, Black-throated Green and Blackburnian Warblers, Black-billed Cuckoo, a party of Common Ravens creating a ruckus and a Common Yellowthroat. Add in the more mundane birds like House Wren and American Robin and the eight of us ended our day with 59 species and an enjoyable lunch in Port Jervis to end our trip.

Shawangunk Grasslands – June 2 – Tom and Jane, Leaders – Sixteen Mearns members gathered at the Grasslands parking lot on a warm, pleasant morning. It was already known that two Henslow's Sparrows had been present just off the trail on the south side not too far along. We started in that direction, and on our way, we paused for a while to get lovely views of a singing Grasshopper Sparrow perched on the refuge sign by the beginning of the trail. Another was singing from the railing of the ramp! As we continued we got great looks at abundant Bobolinks, some Eastern Meadowlarks and American Kestrels in flight and on their nest boxes. As we reached the area near the Henslow's Sparrows at least one was quite cooperative, singing and popping out of the grasses in different spots, and we all got to enjoy it. Savannah Sparrows were also present in the general area of the trail, but, like last year, more Grasshopper Sparrows were seen and heard than Savannah Sparrows. We walked back toward the entrance way, hearing the chattering of a number of Purple Martins who now occupy the Martin house. A Willow Flycatcher sang from the top of a bush near the pond and we admired a Baltimore Oriole. Brown Thrashers were also seen nicely. In addition a few of us spotted an Olive-sided Flycatcher moving through the trees. It was not seen again though. We had a nice list of 68 species!

Photos by Gef Chumard

4/14/18

Winding Waters Field Trip



Tough Break!

Break 100

May 18-19, 2018

It was a tough Break this year. Rain was predicted for all day Saturday. That's a problem when the Break runs from 4 p.m. on Friday until 4 p.m. on Saturday ... and you have to sleep at least for a few hours Friday night. Since Saturday looked to be a washout, each team was in high gear Friday evening to get as many birds as possible before the rains started.

We had four teams focusing to reach the goal of 100 species in 24 hours, while staying within Orange County.

A - Gerhard Patsch, Ajit and Liza Antony and Bob Slechts

B - Kathleen Ashman, Scott Baldinger, Mary Buskey, Joyce Depew, Karen Maloy Brady and Kevin Brady

C - Karen Miller, John Haas, Joe Chernek and Lisa O'Gorman

D - Dave & Sharon Baker and Alan & Della Wells

Despite the pouring rain on Saturday the teams managed to see a total of 183 species, which is up 24 species from the previous high of 159 species in 2017. Team results are:

A – 114

B – 102

C – 100

D - 88

Many of the common birds were missed due to the continual rain. However, we had two species that were new to the Break in 2018, and have not been seen at least since the Break was limited to Orange County in 2015. Both the White-rumped Sandpiper and the Short-billed Dowitcher were seen at the Camel Farm by teams A & B. It was a good year for Cape May Warblers and Bay-breasted Warblers and our final tally showed one Cape May and three Bay-breasteds .

We were light on shorebirds this year and no falcons were reported. Only one owl was seen, a Barred Owl in Stewart State Forest, thanks to Joe Chernek on his first Mearns Break.

Our Board has discussed offering an orientation/training for this event in advance of the actual date next year, with the hope that more members will participate on a team.

We extend our sincere appreciation to Fitz and Jan Fitzpatrick for again opening their home for our evening meal and wrap-up session. Also thank you to Ajit Antony and Kathy Ashman for collecting the data at the end of the event.

Congratulations to everyone who joined a team and took on the challenge. Less rain next year, please!

Orange County "Break 100 Day"

by [bashakillbirder](#) (John Haas)

From 4 p.m. on Friday, May 18 until 4 p.m. Saturday, May 19, I participated in the Orange County Big Day. Our team consisted of Karen Miller, Lisa O'Gorman, Joe Chernek and me. This was Joe's first time joining our team and it was certainly a memorable event for all of us. We changed our schedule of locations on Friday due to the forecast of heavy rain all day Saturday.

It went pretty well. We birded Port Orange Road, the Camel Farm, Walkill NWR, the Citgo Pond Trail and Rt. 207 marsh on Friday evening. We had a good time and got some nice birds, ending our Friday count with a respectable 63 species. Highlights included Barred Owl (called in by Lisa's great imitation), Common Nighthawk and a dozen species of warbler.

We met again early Saturday morning, heading to Laurel Grove Cemetery in Port Jervis. Here we had some nice warblers, but it was pouring rain the entire time. In fact, it poured the entire day! Temps were only in the mid 40's, and we could see our breath all day! Is this May? Highlights included three BAY-BREASTED WARBLERS! A Common Merganser with seven chicks was an excellent find as this species is a rare breeder in Orange County. Another highlight was approximately 10 BLACKPOLL WARBLERS! We moved on to the Hawks Nest where due to the downpours, we were unable to find the Peregrine Falcon. Elks-Brox Park offered a few new birds between the rain drops but the gate to the upper section was still locked, so we soon moved to the southern part of the county.

Sterling Forest was somewhat productive, but not nearly so as in previous years, again due to the rain. Highlights here included GOLDEN-WINGED and BLUE-WINGED WARBLERS, Indigo Bunting and Hooded Warbler. On to the Sugarloaf area where we added PURPLE MARTIN! A small marsh nearby offered several new birds, as did Knapps View Park.

At the Newburgh waterfront we added three species of gulls: Great Black-backed, Herring and Ring-billed. We were off to Washington Lake with several targets in mind. Suffice it to say we didn't get any of them. It was now 3:45 p.m. and we had 15 minutes left. We were now sure we couldn't make 100, but would get anything new that we could. As we walked around the park we heard some chips uphill in the construction area. We went up and began spishing and drew in three new species. We were completely amazed when a Northern Parula became # 99, followed almost immediately by a MAGNOLIA WARBLER, # 100!!!!

We were soaked to the skin, cold and shivering, but happy as larks that we had hit that magic number...100! A great "Break" with great people, you can't beat that! BTW no photos due to the pouring rain!

BREAK 100

DIARY OF A WELL OILED TEAM

This year's Break was quite the challenge knowing that it was going to rain "ALL DAY" Saturday...and it did, putting any pre-thought plans out the window. As I drove Gerhard, Ajit and Liza to the Fitzpatricks to drop off our food items for the Countdown Friday afternoon we were in constant discussion about our Friday strategy which was of utmost importance since it was to be THE only good weather day. We finally decided around 3:00 PM and headed to Ironwood Road to stock up on warblers. When we arrived it was disconcertingly quiet and we started to worry about our choice, but we hung in there and before long the birds became active and started to talk. We took our time birding Ironwood and Warwick Roads for forest, edge and swamp species, and as I mentioned warblers, of which we picked up 11, notably Golden-winged and a very vociferous Mourning Warbler. We did quite well only being upset at missing the Broad-winged Hawk we saw 3 minute to 4:00, but thankfully we made up for it by spotting an Osprey and Cooper's Hawk in our travels. From here we headed to Mine Road via Arden Valley Road and Seven Lakes Drive where outside of Worm-eating Warbler and Veery it was a bit disappointing. At Mine Road we just birded in the vicinity of the dam and picked up Louisiana Waterthrush and Cliff Swallow. We quickly left for Highland Falls and suburbia where we passed a few feeders on our way to the Hudson River and got our "people" birds: House Finch and Sparrow, Carolina Wren and Northern Mockingbird, plus Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse and White-breasted Nuthatch. At 8:15 PM we arrived back at Mine Road along with just about everyone else for the American Woodcock and Whip-poor-Will. After which we did some feeble owling then to bed by 10:00 PM.

Saturday the Antonys were supposed to be at my house (only 10 minutes from me) at 6:00 AM but when I woke up early and it wasn't raining yet I realized we had a window of opportunity and got myself ready to go, anxiously awaiting a decent time to rouse the Antonys. At 4:45 AM I called them and said I'd be at their house a little before 6:00 AM. As we left their house and headed to Kenridge Farm where we hadn't planned to go, but it was close and had been good all spring – it started to rain. Even so, it was a lucky break as the birds were still active and vocal. We did a quick walk thru and picked up Swainson's Thrush, Black-billed Cuckoo, Field Sparrow, Cedar Waxwings, Magnolia, Tennessee and Bay-breasted Warblers (warblers 14, 15, 16). As we drove out, Gerhard contacted us that he was on his way and we told him of our change and that we'd meet him at Orange Lake after we checked out the Newburgh waterfront, which gave us the expected species. As you can tell by our story so far, The Break presents numerous challenges. Not only do you have to be able to identify the birds by sight and sound, but you also need a strategy and a flexible one too, that will put you in the vicinity of the most variety of birds at the right time with the least effort. Then there is always the weather which can and will throw a monkey wrench into the works making the Break a very challenging and interesting endeavor.

We met Gerhard and scanned Orange Lake, then Gardnertown Road marsh, Washington Lake (Bank Swallows but no night-heron), and the Route 207 marsh where we made good use of our umbrellas. By keeping ourselves and our optics dry we were able to spend the time

necessary and find the, at times, elusive Pied-billed Grebes and Common Gallinules. From there we went to my house to drop off Gerhard's car. Then it was on to Goosepond. The Land Trust property at the south end of Goosepond didn't give us an Orchard Oriole or Cape May Warbler, but we did get Purple Martin at the Bruderhoff's and Eastern Meadowlark at the Sugar Loaf town park. Glenmere Lake was productive with Brown Creeper, Red-shouldered Hawk and our second Bay-breasted sighting of the day. The "Citgo Ponds" at 6 1/2 Station Road was our next stop which proved disappointing. Regardless of our umbrellas our feet and legs were getting soaked so we gave a half-hearted attempt at rails after hearing Marsh Wrens. Then we gave up. By now time was running out so we made a beeline to the Camel Farm picking up Savannah Sparrow on the way and were rewarded with nice looks at Short-billed Dowitcher, White-rumped Sandpiper and Pectoral Sandpiper after which we dashed to Oil City Road. We stopped for 5 minutes, got Willow Flycatcher and had a Great Egret fly in! I almost forgot...luck, one of the main forces in life right up there with gravity also plays a big role. Next, off to Rio and our last chance for fame and fortune. Whizzing down backroads we got there in half an hour with 45 minutes remaining. We went right to the county line in Plank road just as the rain was ending and took our time teasing out birds. Having the rain come to an end just then was just what we needed, and the birds became vocal helping us come up with Hermit Thrush, Black-throated Green (warbler 17), Winter Wren, Dark-eyed Junco and Blue-headed Vireo, but no hoped for Blackburnian or Pine. Even so, our last stop pushed us to 114 species. Not bad, considering the weather that day. In retrospect, using umbrellas Saturday was a big help due to the impact for our demeanor, i.e....not being soggy and sour. Also, having four relaxed compatible bird brains in one vehicle was another important factor, allowing us to strategize, discuss birds, and joke the whole time, even as we buzzed down the road at sub-warp speeds...Maybe next year we won't have to discard our well thought out plans due to the weather.

Bob Slechta

MEMBERSHIP

As of July we have 141 Club members. Now we would like to welcome the following new members to our Club who joined since our last Orange Feather: Rose Sena, Goshen; Peter Cherek, Newburgh; Joseph Cherek, Newburgh; Paul Osgood, Gardiner; Rachel Mack and family, Grand View; Glen Weston and Jeannie Zetterstrand, Salisbury Mills. There are many upcoming field trips and meetings that will interest all of you, so please join us in these future activities. Your fellow members look forward to meeting you one day soon.

Linda Strohl

A PRIVATE TOUR WITH FIELD GUIDES

Canopy Lodge, El Valle de Anton

March 18-25, 2018

In 2010 Fitz and I travelled with Field Guides to Panama for a one week stay at the Canopy Tower. We really enjoyed this tour and talked about going to another of the company's sites: the Canopy Lodge. We actually signed up for a tour there a few years later, but it was just after Christmas into the New Year. The timing was not good for us. We talked with Tracy and Gerhard Patsch about doing it on our own, but we chickened out. I like having a tour company taking care of the details. Late in 2016 I discovered that Field Guides will organize a private tour for its customers. I spoke with the Patsches again and contacted the Field Guides office in early 2017. Yes, they could do a tour for 8 participants. We asked for a week in March. Field Guides was able to secure four double rooms for the week of March 18 2018. All we needed was a guide and the eight participants. We had the Patsches and us (we did the Belize tour with them in 2014). Sharon and David Baker were also interested (Ireland, 2015). Tracy asked Liza and Ajt Antony if they would like to join us. The answer was yes, so we had our group. Field Guides let me know that John Coons would be "delighted" to lead our tour. We were set to go. All we had to do was wait one year for the trip to take place.

We all had a year to plan, study field guides, meet and chat over our plans, and just get ready! In February of this year I discovered that the Cornell bird cams website had a camera at the Canopy Lodge. We all looked at this camera. I spotted several birds that would be lifers for me. This was getting exciting. It was going to be fun travelling with friends and having John as our guide again. Fitz and I have been on several trips with him: starting in Australia in 2002. Our last tour being the Texas coast for spring migration.

March 18th found three of the couples on a non-stop flight from Newark to Panama City. The Bakers flew from Florida. We met John at our hotel about 9:00 PM. The Bakers arrived a short time later. The next morning we were up early and birded the hotel grounds until our Canopy Lodge guides arrived. We had Magnificent Frigatebird and Brown Pelican, as well as a few more common species, such as Clay-colored Thrush and Ruddy Ground-dove. Once our guides arrived we went to Metro Park in Panama City. One of the first birds here was a Whooping Motmot. It was in almost the same spot where Fitz and I saw one on our 2010 visit here. After spending some time here we headed to the Canopy Lodge, a 2+ hour drive.

We arrived at the Lodge in time for lunch. We settled into our rooms and then spent some time looking at the feeders from the comfortable outdoor lounge area. There were our first Gray-headed Chachalacas and my first life bird, the Chestnut-headed Oropendula, looking just like he did on the feeder cam. A visit to the lodge compost pile gave us great looks at Rosy Thrush-Tanager and our life bird Buff-rumped Warbler. We also had a Wood Thrush! A walk out of the compound gave us a roosting Tropical Screech-Owl. We spent some time walking up the road from the Lodge and added several more species. We returned to the Lodge for happy hour, checklist time and dinner. All meals were served in the open air lounge. Food was good

and ample. Our rooms were large and comfortable with porches looking out onto trees and the passing river.

Each day gave us different adventures. We walked trails through fields and forest. We climbed up and down hilly paths. On all but two days we had lunch at the Lodge with some siesta time before venturing out in the late afternoon. The other two days were day long excursions where we had picnic lunches. Once at a gazebo along a lake (Green Kingfisher, Osprey and Emerald Tanager!) and once in a shelter near a school. It was raining that second day. Each day brought us new life birds and for most of us a chance to see tropical species we have seen before. This was the Antony's first birding trip aboard. They must have a terrific life bird list for the trip!

We spent some time waiting at flowers for a particular species to arrive. For instance, the White-tipped Sicklebill flew off from a heliconia flower just as we arrived there in the AM of day 1. We waited but it did not come back. We tried the same spot later in the week. Still no luck. The last day as the rain began to come down heavily and we were all standing on a steep muddy road, John called out "Sicklebill". Slipping and sliding, we all made it to the spot to see this large hummingbird with a deeply decurved bill. Success! The ride home from this area east of the Lodge (towards the Caribbean) was a challenge. The rains were coming down hard, the dirt roads were mud and we had several river crossings to make. It was a bit scary, but our guides were capable and the 4X4 vehicles we were in, were up to the challenge.

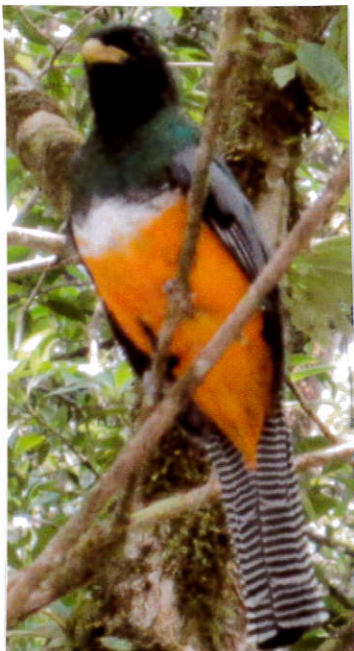
The last morning, March 24, we left the Lodge for the trip back to Panama City. Soon after leaving El Valle we came to an overlook and were able to look down into the caldera of the extinct volcano where the town and Lodge are. The reason for all our steep climbs was evident. We heard and saw a Wedge-tailed Grass-finch at this location. We birded several roads on the way back to the Pan AM Highway. We also birded an area known as Juan Hombron, a mix of grasslands, trees and one water impoundment. Our final stop was in Santa Clara on the Pacific Ocean at Raul's home (the owner of the Canopy locations). We had our final lunch there, looking at Royal, Sandwich and Elegant Terns as a Whimbrel walked the beach and Brown and Blue-footed Boobies flew around an island in the distance.

We spent the night in the same hotel as our first evening. We had a farewell dinner at a restaurant a short taxi trip away. We were outdoors looking at the canal. Two taxis took us back to the hotel. I mention this, because the Fitzpatrick and Patsches shared a "clown-ride" back to the hotel. The four of us were crammed into the back seat with John riding shotgun. We were all laughing much too hard as we tumbled out of the vehicle to see the Bakers and Antonys laughing at the sight! March 25th saw us leave Panama City for home.

It was a wonderful trip with great friends. John is an excellent guide with a great sense of humor (and he is a NY Yankee fan, to boot) and the local Lodge guides were helpful, knowledgeable and friendly. (Fitz and I purchased a watercolor/pastel of a Sunbittern drawn by one of the guides. We saw the Sunbittern on its nest the first day we were at the Lodge). We had a trip list of 249 bird species and 6 mammal species. We saw herons and egrets, kites and hawks, doves and owls. We had 21 species of hummingbirds! There were trogons and motmots,

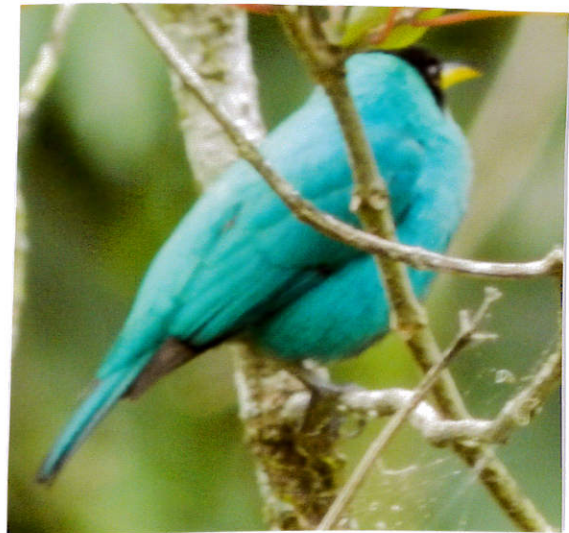
toucans, woodpeckers and parrots and parakeets. We saw antshrikes and antvireos. There were 32 different flycatchers, Kiskadees and kingbirds! We had Louisiana and Northern Waterthrushes, Golden-winged, Black and White, Tennessee, Mourning, Bay-breasted, Yellow and Chestnut-sided Warblers as well as the tropical Rufous-capped and Buff-rumped Warblers. There were many tanagers (all sizes and colors), oropendulas and euphonias. We also saw both Hoffman's Two-toed and Brown-throated three-toed Sloths. There were variegated and red-tailed squirrels at the feeders along with several Central American agoutis feeding beneath the feeder at the lodge. Quite a trip! Thanks to Tracy, Gerhard, Sharon, David, Liza and Ajit for coming along. Thanks to John Coons for leading us again! Where shall we go next?

Jan Fitzpatrick



Orange-bellied Trogon

Green Honeycreeper



Santa Clara, Panama 3/24/18

The group with guides John Coons and Danilo

A MEMORABLE DAY IN THE FIELD

Monday, 7/23/18

The last few days we've been experiencing a tropical depression bringing on occasional heavy rains, extreme humidity and steady SSE winds. It has not been comfortable out in the field but sometimes weather such as this can dump into our area some interesting birds. On Sunday, 7/22 the "What's app" bird alert went off with Linda Scrima reporting a ROSEATE SPPONBILL at the Wallkill River Liberty Loop marsh. The Wallkill River NWR straddles the Orange County, NY and Sussex County, NJ border. Most of the loop trail is in NJ but birds are just a couple of hundred yards from the NY side and it's a great place to get some really good birds for New York State that show up here. A Roseate Spoonbill is a rarity in New York and I was hoping it might fly over to our side of the border. I was busy on Sunday but had a feeling with the aforementioned weather, this bird would still be there on Monday. On Monday morning I checked the weather for Pine Island and it looked like I had a small window between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM to avoid the torrential, on and off, downpours we've been experiencing the last few days. At 8:30 AM Monday, Linda hit the alert that the Roseate Spoonbill was still in the marsh (on the Jersey side) so off I went. At 10:00 I arrived at the parking lot for the NY entrance into the loop trail. I met Kathy Hranowsky and soon after, Linda Scrima, on their way back in, both having had great looks at the spoonbill, but Linda said it had been startled and flown farther south into the Jersey portion of the marsh and was out of sight at the moment. Linda gave me the last reported spot she had seen the bird and off I went. Kathy, who came back out again in hopes for another look and another gal who had been looking for the bird joined me at the spot along the trail where it was last seen and we waited. Despite the heat and occasional rain showers the time passed quickly as I enjoyed watching some active Belted Kingfishers crashing into the water for fish, as well as Great Egrets, Great Blue Herons, Green Herons, Eastern Kingbirds, Indigo Buntings, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Baltimore Oriole. A singing Wood Thrush, Marsh Wren and Carolina Wren kept my mind off the uncomfortable conditions. After about 40 minutes the ladies decided to call it a day and headed in. I was going to give it another few minutes when out of the corner of my eye I saw two Great Egrets on the side of one of the channels and a third bird a few yards from them which I thought had a pinkish hue. I got the binoculars on the bird and sure enough it was the Roseate Spoonbill! The bird was fairly hunkered down in the marsh but started to preen and I managed a couple of decent ID photos of this fantastic bird. A great find so close to home. (<https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S47410514>) I kept hoping something would stir it up so it would fly north into the NY portion of the refuge but no such luck. Still it was a great bird to see this far north and it made the waiting and sweating well worth it! I returned to the car, put on the AC and was about to head back home when the phone rang. It was birding bud John Haas all excited saying "hadn't I checked my messages?" I said, "no, what's up?" He screamed "I have an Anhinga at Morningside Park!!" I said, "could you repeat that, please." He said "I'm not kidding, get over here!" I took the long trip up to Fallsburg, Sullivan County, NY in record time and arrived at 2:00 PM. John said the bird flew out of the area, but it had returned and he had me look in his scope and it was atop a tree on the island in the middle of Morningside Lake. What a find by John! This is a MEGA BIRD for New York State. I'm not sure how many confirmed sightings there have been of

Anhingas for the Empire State (I was told there was one in Buffalo many years ago) but this is an amazing find by John! Others were racing here to see if they could get a look at the bird. Clay Spencer arrived and he had a look in my scope. As I was about to try and photograph the bird, it flew off the tree, down into the lake, out of sight, probably to fish. Karen Miller, Kathy Ashman, Ken McDermott, Bruce Nott and Rich Guthrie, the ebird reviewer for our region, who all got the alert joined us as well. It had been 60 minutes since the bird left the tree so John, who had found the bird while kayaking around the lake around noon time, got back in his kayak to see if he could relocate it. He called several minutes later to say it was perched in a dead spruce to the right of the island and as we trained our scopes and binoculars on the area Karen saw the bird take flight. It circled around the lake going higher and higher and eventually headed south out of view. Fortunately, all of us had good views of the Anhinga in flight, which John says is a juvenile, female based on its plumage. Karen Miller was nice enough to share her checklist with me with some of the flight photos (<https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S47411806>). John has some of the best photos of the bird he took earlier from his kayak which you can see on his blog: bashakillbirder.wordpress.com. Kathy, Bruce, Clay and I hung out here for a while hoping the bird might return but by 4:00 PM the weather got nasty and it was time to call it a day.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL AND ANHINGA in the same day! How about that!

Good Birding!

Scotty Baldinger



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

September trips: August 25-Oil City Road; Sept. 1-black dirt; Sept. 8-Stewart State Forest; Sept. 22-Bashakill; Sept. 29-Winding Waters. See last Feather for details.

October 3 (Wed) – Kenridge Farm – Meet Amy Greher (783-6363) there at 8:30 AM for Palm Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow and much more.

October 6 – 6 ½ Station Road – Meet Liza Anthony (914-213-2869) at 8:30 AM for a rewarding morning of birding at this Orange County treasure.

October 8 (Mon) – Goosepond – Meet Bill Iannone (783-7467) at the boardwalk trail on Rte. 17M at 8:00 AM. If it's anything like last year you don't want to miss out.

October 13 – trip/event – “Big Sit”?? Watch for postings as the date approaches.

October 20 – Croton Point – Meet Jodi Brodsky (282-1058) at the RR station “boat launch” at 8:30 AM and see what this migrant trap turns up.

October 28 (Sun) – Chadwick Lake – Meet Bob Slechta (541-8210) at the Route 300 Newburgh Mall McDonalds at 8:00 AM for an interesting day of birding.

November 10 – Black dirt – Meet Karen Miller (381-3283) at the Jolly Onion at 8:30 AM to look for Snow Buntings, Horned Larks and Lapland Longspurs.

November 17 – Southern Orange lakes – Meet Kathy Ashman (294-6140) at the Chester McDonald's at 8:30 AM to explore the lakes of south-central Orange County.

November 23 (Fri) – Eastern Orange lakes – with Bruce (542-0583) and Bob. Be at the NW corner of the Newburgh Walmart parking lot at 8:30AM to explore lakes and marshes of NE Orange County.

November 24 – Shawangunk Grasslands – for Short-eared Owls. Meet Tom and Jane (255-0324) at the Refuge at 4:00 PM.

November 30-December 2 – Cape Ann, MA – If interested in this fantastic trip contact Jodi Brodsky at 282-1058 or jsbbirder@gmail.com without delay. Look for loons, scoters, eiders, etc.

December 15 – Eastern Orange Christmas Bird Count – Have a fun day counting birds for this historic event. Contact Bob Slechta (541-8210) for more information.

January 12 NYS Winter Duck Count – Scour Orange County for waterfowl for this state-wide census. Contact Bob Slechta (541-8210) if interested.

January 26 – Eagle Trip I – Join Gerhard Patsch (255-5840) at the Rte. 202/6 “Goat Trail” Iona Island overlook at 8:30 AM and see if we can top 100 eagles.

February 2 – Jones Beach – with Jodi Brodsky (282-1058) for a “mini Cape Ann” closer to home.

February 16 – Eagle Trip II – Meet Gerhard Patsch (255-5840) at the (Rte. 32) North Plank Road McDonald's at 8:30 AM to search for eagles, falcons, ducks, etc.

March 2 – Rye – Meet Bob Slechta (541-8210) at the Playland parking lot at 8:30 AM for wintering loons, grebes and ducks.

March 9 – Black dirt – Meet Karen Miller (381-3283) at the Jolly Onion (Pine Island) at 8:30 AM for the fires big blackbird wave not to mention sparrows, larks, buntings and longspurs.

March 16 – Bashakill – for ducks, Fox Sparrows and Rusty Blackbirds. Meet Scott Baldinger (888-2333) at the first parking area (DEC lot) on the left before the Haven Road causeway. Be there at 8:30 AM.

March 23 – Oil City Road – with Kathy Ashman (294-6140). Meet at the Refuge platform at 8:30 AM for 100+ Green-winged Teal and Northern Pintail plus other ducks and early migrants.

March 30 – Eastern Orange Lakes – Meet Bruce (542-0583) and Bob for this always rewarding trip. Be at the NW corner of the Newburgh Walmart parking lot 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!
