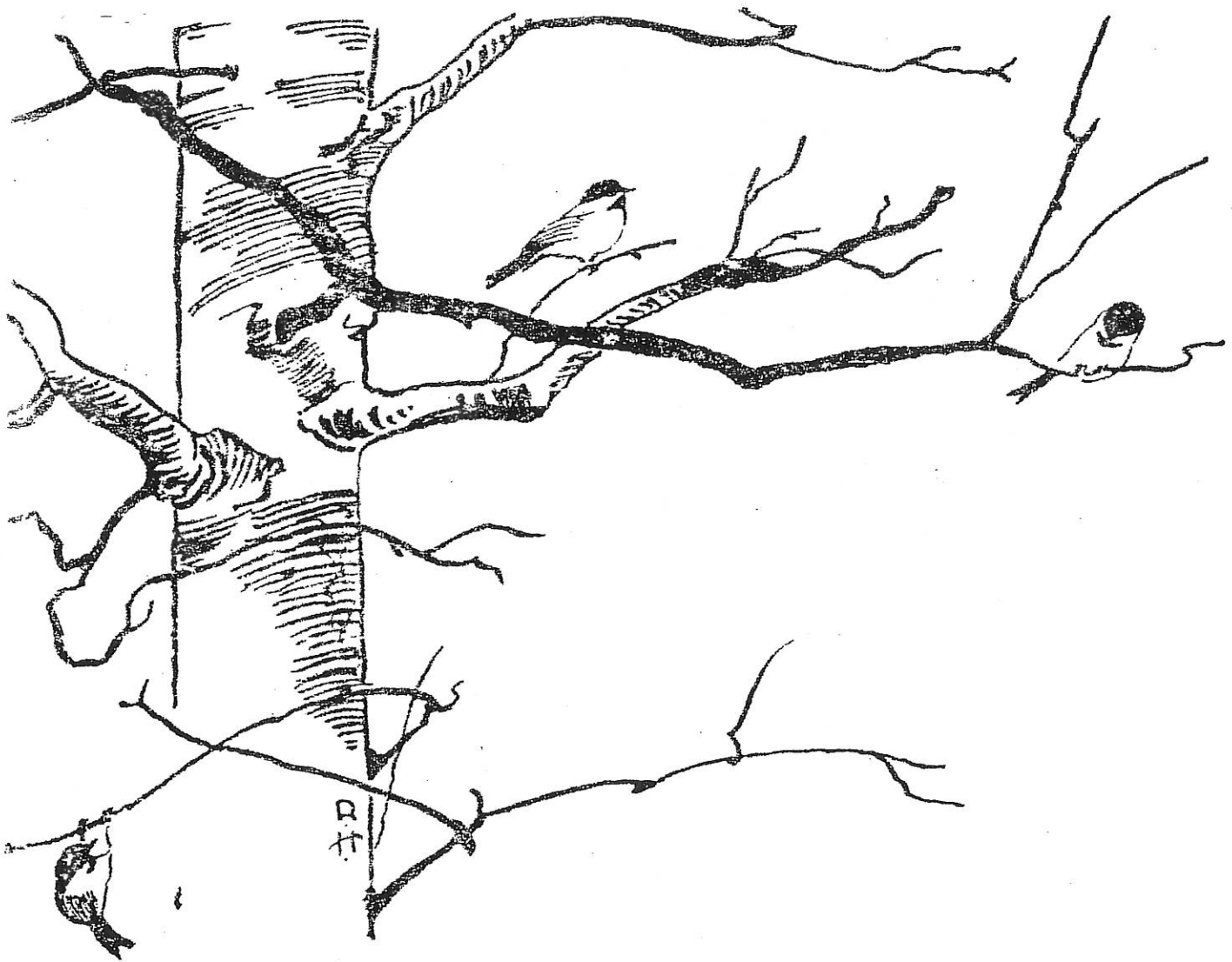


# THE ORANGE FEATHER



*Orange County, New York*

*2019 – Fall/Winter*

August, 2019

**THE ORANGE FEATHER**

A publication of  
EDGAR A. MEARN'S BIRD CLUB  
Orange County, New York

**Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club**

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**President's Message**

August 2019

Hello, everyone!

It was a rainy spring that is now followed by a hot summer! For some, that can make for challenging birding days. Others just plow through whatever the weather gives us. No matter what your birding weather preference is, I hope that you were able to get out there and enjoy the birds at your favorite hotspot.

To wrap up our 60<sup>th</sup> Mearns Anniversary celebration, I'd like to say thank you again to our committee who pulled this event together. If you were able to attend, I trust that you enjoyed the evening, reflected on our past and were able to catch up with other Mearns members while sharing your birding experiences.

Linda Strohl has been shopping online for the perfect Dennis Murphy memorial bench. It will be delivered to the Wallkill River Refuge where our members can assemble the bench and then place it on the back trail of the Liberty Loop, facing into New York. I walked that area recently

and noticed that the space has been cleared for our bench. Our goal is to get it in place by September so we can start the new Mearns year with a clean slate, and also so walkers and hikers can enjoy the bench before the winter weather.

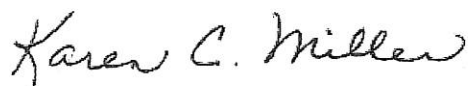
One of the more exciting birding events in Orange County was the discovery of the Yellow-crowned Night Herons on April 15, 2019 by Joyce Depew and her grandson, Ben. The sharp eyes of this 8-year-old spotted what he thought might be a Green Heron, but it was a bird of more significance when Joyce realized that Ben had seen a Yellow-crowned Night Heron. How fun is that! And how motivating and inspiring is it that this little boy spotted this great bird. To read more about this unusual find in the county, read the article Joyce submitted in this edition of the Feather.

Summer will soon come to a close and we'll resume our monthly Mearns meetings. While setting up our meeting calendar with the school, we realized that several of our meetings fall on holidays and the school will be closed. We haven't yet resolved a location and date for these conflicts, but I encourage you all to pay close attention to Della's monthly reminder emails that she sends you. We will do our best to keep you informed of any changes.

We will vote on new officers at our September meeting, so start thinking about who you would like to lead our Mearns Club for the next two-year term. Maybe it's YOU!

Thank you to everyone for all that you do as a birder and a Mearns. Again, we are grateful for Jan Fitzpatrick's efforts to complete this edition of the *Orange Feather*.

Hope to see you out there soon! Enjoy your birding!



Karen C. Miller

#### MEETINGS

9/09/19: Birding Ethiopia by Lee Hunter

10/14/19: Birding Arizona by Jeff Goulding

11/11/19: Birding Thailand (title to be confirmed) by Bill Fiero

12/13/19: Mearns Share-a-thon, Members Night

1/13/20: Large Wading Birds of North America

Meetings are held in the Washingtonville Middle School Library beginning at 7:00 PM.

Alan Wells

**Dates are pending!**

**Check Mearns Yahoo**

**Site for up-to-date**

**Information**

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## FIELD TRIPS PAST

Rye Playland – March 3 – Bob Slechta, Leader – What a weekend! Having to navigate two snow storms and deciding how to or if to dodge them kept me pondering what to do. I made my decision Thursday night and hit the jackpot. Sunday turned out great! No wind, mild temperatures, sun and calm water...so instead of bundling up and shivering, we could relax and enjoy our viewing. Unfortunately most everyone stayed home and only six members showed up for what turned out to be a stupendous trip! We had three really good birds today: a sleeping Great Horned Owl we got great looks at, two pair of handsome Redheads, and best of all, unbelievable views of a Black-headed Gull that was transitioning from first winter bird to a first summer bird. We had fabulous looks at this bird from 25 feet taking in its markings: reddish bill and legs, black tail band and ear spot, plus its behavior at seeming to vibrate as it stirred up the water below with its feet bringing food to the surface to grab. It was probably 15-20 minutes that we watched the bird feed and take to the air, truly marvelous! Other birds of note seen today at Playland, Grass Island and Greenwich Point were: Yellow-rumped Warbler, blackbirds, American Robins, Great Cormorant, Red-throated and Common Loons, lots of Horned Grebes, Red-breasted and Hooded Mergansers, Common Goldeneye Bufflehead, Long-tailed Duck, Lesser and Greater Scaup, American Black duck, Mallard, American Wigeon, Gadwall and of course, lots of Brant. In all 44 species were seen for this enjoyable day.

Black Dirt – March 19 – Karen Miller, Leader – Fourteen birders, including two guests from Dobbs Ferry, started the morning at the Liberty Loop. We were greeted by large flocks of American Crows and Canada Geese and smaller numbers of Northern Pintails, Ring-necked Ducks, American Black Ducks and a Common Merganser. Our next stop was across the state line in New Jersey at Owens Station Road to take advantage of the restrooms and to check out the lake. Approximately 92 Ring-necked Ducks filled the far end of the lake, joined by more Black Ducks, Mallards, one Northern Shoveler and two American Wigeon. We also counted seven Mute Swans and three Common Mergansers. A Few days earlier Bruce Nott had experienced some great birding with sparrows along the Wallkill River, so we stopped at the Winding Waters parking lot. We searched the habitat surrounding the parking lot, but luck was not with us on this day for great sparrows. We headed to the heart of the Black Dirt region and spent time birding Turtle Bay Road, Lynch Avenue, Pearce Circle and Onion Avenue. These roads are always worth the trip and we added many species to our daily list from this area. Raptors included two Northern Harriers hunting over the fields, one Cooper's Hawk and one Sharp-shinned Hawk, six Red-tailed Hawks and one Rough-legged Hawk. Blue Jays were numerous with a count of 15. Carol Weiss spotted some small birds along Onion Avenue and we all rushed to get on them. It was a nice surprise to find that she had spotted a flock of about 10 Horned Larks. Twenty White-throated and three White-crowned Sparrows were not overlooked. Canada Geese and American Crows were flying in very large numbers, which is normal for this time of year. After a good morning of birding, we headed off to lunch at the Harvest Restaurant. Our friends from Dobbs Ferry joined us and I shared that they had met Mearnsers the weekend before on the field trip to



Croton Point Park. When they called me for directions to our Black dirt trip, they told me that they had met Edgar Mearns the week before. I replied that I didn't think so! At lunch they asked who Edgar Mearns was and Barry Babcock gave them a detailed description of the man that our Club honors by taking his name. Thank you, Barry, for providing an impromptu lesson on a birding legend. Our final tally showed 28 species, but even though there were some slower moments we had some fun and some good birds!

Bashakill – March 16 – Scott Baldinger, Leader – 17 attendees enjoyed a productive morning of birding on the Bashakill. After enjoying warm temperatures (mid to upper 60's yesterday) it was back to winter this morning with temperatures in the low 40's and WNW winds at 15 mph gusting to 25 mph. Still, the light was good and the waterfowl were plentiful with excellent numbers of Wood Duck, Mallard, American Black Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Common and Hooded Mergansers seen along with smaller numbers of Bufflehead, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Lesser Scaup and Green-winged Teal. We had a total of 8 Bald Eagles today (both adult pairs nesting here and 4 immatures putting up the waterfowl). The highlight of the morning came right at the start of our field trip when eagle eye Bruce Nott spotted **2 Sandhill Cranes** off the southwest side of Haven Road Bridge! Some of our group enjoyed the first of season Wilson's Snipe also found off Haven Road. Despite the steady wind we found some other good birds as well. On Haven Road some got to see the FOS Eastern Phoebe and a second one was found over at the Pine Boat Launch. At our South Road feeders Pine Siskins were viewed; at the Nature Trail boardwalk are we had looks at Golden-crowned Kinglets and at the Deli Fields parking area and boat launch were 7 Fox Sparrows and 5 Rusty Blackbirds. We finished with a solid 49 species for the morning. Checklist with photos can be viewed at: <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S53896249>. Considering the extremely windy weather, our first of the year Bashakill trip turned out to be top notch! Last year's March trip featured the beautiful Eurasian Wigeon and this year a pair of Sandhill Cranes! How cool is that?!

Oil City Road – March 23 – Kathy Ashman, Leader – Only 7 people showed up at 8:30 AM to brave the cold blustery winds of March on this first weekend of spring. It was a far cry from the beautiful weather we had at this time last year for the annual outing to the Liberty Loop. At least the ducks turned up for the occasion. We started out at the platform as we waited for people to arrive. The impound in front of the platform held Canada Geese, Ring-necked Ducks and a pair of American Black Ducks. The area west of the platform held lots of ducks in the marsh grasses. They were predominately Northern Pintail, Mallards and Green-winged Teal, but there were some Wood Ducks, Northern Shoveler and Hooded Mergansers to keep things exciting. Unlike last year however, there were no Blue-winged Teal. After leaving the platform, we walked a short way up Liberty Lane, and had some great looks at a handsome drake Northern Shoveler. There were a few sparrows there as well and we all had good looks at both White-crowned and Song Sparrows before heading back to the parking lot. We elected to walk the loop despite the cold winds. Highlights of the New York portion of the trail were Northern Mockingbird and Great Blue Heron. On the New Jersey side we had Brown Creeper, Pileated Woodpecker, Tree Swallows, and large numbers of both American

Wigeon and Ring-necked Ducks. Bob Slechta spotted some Wilson's Snipe as they flushed from the marsh. On the eastern portion of the marsh, Joyce Depew found several American Coots and we enjoyed watching them as they chased one another in territorial defense. Passerines were few and far between, as given the high winds and cold temperatures, they must have been hunkered down. The Bird-of-the-Trip had to be the Northern Pintails due to their beauty and sheer numbers. There were a total of 37 species seen on the trip, and 12 of those were waterfowl. After the trip a few of us adjourned to Franico's Pizzeria for hot soup and pizza. Temperature range: 32-36 degrees, wind chills were 21-28 degrees, NW winds between 9-16 mph with gusts to 25 mph. It was mostly cloudy and we traveled 3 miles.

Eastern Orange lakes – March 30 – Bob Slechta, Leader – Bruce did his usual bang up job of scouting out where all the ducks, etc. were, even to the point of gluing the feet of a dozen Cedar Waxwings to some crab apple trees along 17K in Newburgh, just kidding, but he had spotted them in his travels and they stayed there long enough for us to enjoy! Our trip today produced 13 species of waterfowl with Common Merganser and Ring-necked Ducks the most numerous. Thankfully it was a nice day (got to 70 degrees) so we could study the ducks that always seemed to be on the FAR shore, where we added Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Black Duck, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser and Ruddy Duck plus 2 Common Loons, 3 Pied-billed Grebes, 3 Horned Grebes and a dozen jet black Double-crested Cormorants. As to the passerines the aforementioned waxwings plus another dozen at Chadwick Lake and a serenading Winter Wren were the highlights. Not many Tree Swallows were seen or even a Belted Kingfisher, but we did have Great Blue Herons on nest already at Walmart, singing Eastern Phoebes everywhere, and plenty of Killdeer, especially at the Route 207 marsh where we also added at least a half-dozen snipe that Bruce said would be there (which was nice as only a few of us got to see the first snipe sighting at Orange Lake). In all, it was a nice leisurely trip ending with 52 species.

Southern Orange lakes – April 1 – Kathy Ashman, Leader – Due to a scheduling conflict the field trip was changed from April 1<sup>st</sup> to April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Seven members gathered at 7:30 AM at the Chester McDonald's, then headed off in search of waterfowl. Our first stop was at the Beaver Pond on Pine Hill Road in Chester. Waterfowl present were Gadwall, Mallard, American Black Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded and Common Mergansers. Also present were Killdeer, Cooper's Hawk, Tree Swallows, Eastern Bluebird, Rusty Blackbird and a flyover of a male Purple Martin. Our total tally for the Beaver Pond was 27 species. The second stop of the morning was Glenmere Lake Park in Florida. Waterfowl highlights at this location were Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Pied-billed and Red-necked Grebes and a Double-crested Cormorant. Additional notable birds at Glenmere were Red-shouldered Hawk, two Pileated Woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Common Raven, 9 Eastern Phoebes and a few Tree Swallows hawking over the lake. Total number of species seen here was 26. After Glenmere Lake we headed to Wickham Lake in Warwick. Though waterfowl were not numerous we did manage to pick up some new species: Horned Grebe, Common Loon, Bald Eagle, Northern Flicker and Northern Mockingbird. Our total for Wickham was 22. The next lake to be visited

was Greenwood Lake. The first stop was at the Waterfront Park where we added Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, Fish Crow and Ring-billed Gull to our list. Total species at this location was 22. From Waterfront Park we headed to the Kayak/Boat Launch on Old Dutch Hollow Road. Unfortunately, the only waterfowl at this site were Mallards. We did however get another Bald Eagle and a Red-shouldered Hawk. A Mute Swan was occupying a nest in the reeds just off the boat launch ramp. Total species at this location was 11. After a brief, non-productive stop at Walton Lake we went on to Round Lake in Monroe. Though there were only 6 species present, we did get Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, Pied-billed Grebe and 5 more cormorants. From Round Lake we made a brief stop at West Mombasha Lake where we had 6 species previously seen. For the fun of it on our way back to Chester we stopped briefly at Goosepond Park, south of Chester. We added two more species for the day: White-throated and Song Sparrow. The trip officially ended at 1:30 PM. Temperature was 36 degrees with calm winds. We started with 7 member and concluded the trip with 4. A total of 59 species were seen, with 17 species of waterfowl including all three species of grebes normally found in Orange County during migration. All agreed that the bird of the day was the beautiful and confiding Horned Grebe seen at Wickham Lake.

Rye – April 6 – Bob Slechta, Leader – What a nice day to be at the beach! Sand under our feet, sun on your face, a slight breeze, temperatures in the sixties and fellow Mearnsers at your side. We started off at Playland where we had the most Horned Grebes of the trip (40 plus with some in breeding plumage) and our only Black-crowned Night-Heron and white-winged Scoter both spotted by eagle-eye Bruce. Also present were Brant (seen everywhere we went), Long-tailed Ducks, Red-breasted Mergansers, Common and Red-throated Loons, Gadwall, and lots of Bufflehead that were displaying an intriguing behavior. We observed very compact groups of 12-20 Bufflehead that would all at once, in an instant, disappear under water and then after a minute or so all at once pop to the surface, still in their compact groups. Very interesting!! Also seen was our first (at least 8 that day) American Oystercatchers on a distant rock. From Playland the seven of us headed to The Marshlands to add some variety and the expected Osprey and egrets. We did well with the egrets, getting nice close looks at both (2 Great and 5 Snowy) and the expected Osprey (4 total with 2 nests on site) plus the hoped for variety. Highlights of which were: Wild Turkey, Eastern Phoebe, Field, American Tree and White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyes Juncos, Tree Swallows, and our best, a Brown Creeper plus the bonus of a Northern Harrier that we enjoyed watching hunt over the fields. At this point, being 11:30 we did a checklist as Bruce was departing and we came up with a nice tally of 54 species. From The Marshlands we grabbed a quick bite to eat then it was on to Greenwich Point where we had nice looks at many of the birds seen at Playland and added a few more of the more common birds missed earlier plus a very cooperative and relaxed Great Horned Owl. It was here we decided that the best bird of the day was the Oystercatcher as there were 3 of them (probably 2 males and a female) that kept flying back and forth constantly calling out as they chased each other right in front of us! After Greenwich only a few of us continued to Sherwood Island State Park which turned out to be disappointing at mid-afternoon. Large rafts of ducks could be seen but they were too far out and in poor light. The last two stops, however, were well worth it. Burying Hill Beach came through with a nice adult Lesser Black-backed Gull



close in and active for us to enjoy while just up the road at Southport Beach there were at least 50 Bonaparte's Gulls at varying plumages resting on the beach until a fly-over Bald Eagle put them up. Very nice! At this point we called it quits and headed home with 65 species under our belts and an enjoyable day at the beach.

Oil City Road – April 13 – Karen Miller, Leader – The morning cleared after heavy rain the previous night. When the sun came out around 11:00 temperatures rose and it became very warm. With the longtime closing of the trail on Liberty Loop we went with plan B in order to have a successful morning of birding. Our small group of 6 birders enjoyed birds in both Orange and Sussex Counties, crossing the state border in the black dirt region. As is customary for me, we started at the platform on Oil City Road. We spent an hour seeing many species in the vegetation. We still had Northern Shovelers, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Ducks Hooded Mergansers and a Belted Kingfisher. Two Northern Harriers were hunting over the marsh in both states and a Ring-necked Pheasant could be heard in the distance. Also of interest was an American Kestrel flying over, and about 13 Wilson's Snipe, but the BEST bird had to be the Sandhill Crane that was flying over the New Jersey side of the marsh. Great birds, all seen from the platform. We moved on to Owen's Crossing in New Jersey to check out the lake and then headed down the trail that took us to the back of the Liberty Loop. I love this flat trail and we were lucky in both spots to find a Wood Duck, Ring-necked Ducks, American Black Ducks, 4 American Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal, 4 Mallards, 8 Mute Swans, 25 Green-winged Teal and 3 Pied-billed Grebes. Walking back to our vehicles we were startled by the croaking of three Sandhill Cranes. We spotted them just off the trail and watched them displaying for their mate. That was a real thrill since the birds had been spotted recently in the general area but we got really good looks at these birds. On the way to lunch we drove down Missionlands Road but didn't find much more than pigeons, a Northern Flicker, a Red-tailed Hawk and an Osprey. We ended our birding session with a respectable tally of 52 species for the morning, not too bad considering most of the Loop was closed.

Shawangunk Grasslands – April 13 – Tom and Jane, Leaders – 15 Mearns members met at the parking lot at 7:00 PM. We had eyes and ears ready for American Woodcock but none showed themselves in the entrance road! Some members were nearer to the pond than the entrance and heard a distant woodcock (Gerhard) roughly in the direction of Albany Post Road. We did see a Northern Harrier and a Mallard! I saw three species.

6 ½ Station Road – April 20 – Carlotta Shearson, Leader – On Saturday morning five die-hard Mearnsers headed to 6 ½ Station Road in the pouring rain on the off chance that the less-than-promising radar picture was wrong. Fortunately, our optimism was rewarded---the rain slackened shortly after we arrived at the parking area, revealing a soggy American Kestrel high on a nearby utility tower. As we headed east in a warm drizzle, a Brown Thrasher began vocalizing in the brush, along with a House Wren. Farther down the trail we enjoyed good looks at a cooperative Palm Warbler, a number of Myrtle Warblers and two Yellow Warblers, all seeming extra brilliant against the drab trees and sky. When we reached the large pond on the north side of the trail we encountered two Rough-winged Swallows obligingly sitting still on a branch near the water, while

numerous Tree Swallows swooped over the surface of the pond and a Virginia Rail called from the trees. Having spotted three Green-winged Teal at the far side of the pond to the south, we made our way back to the parking area accompanied by the sounds of Swamp and Field Sparrows, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, a Carolina Wren and an Eastern Towhee. A quick trip down the trail to the west turned up a somewhat bedraggled Barred Owl, who eyed us intently from a branch a little way into the woods. A couple of Wood Ducks, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, a Common Yellowthroat, some White-throated Sparrows, and a selection of the usual suspects brought our total for the day to 40 species.

Bashakill – April 27 – Joyce Depew, Leader – A Spring Outing at the Bashakill. As is typical this time of year, April is not always “lamb-like” as I was taught early in my childhood. Weather temperatures swing like a pendulum and can be “naughty or nice”. Today the mean temperature range was in the low 40’s with chilly winds, cloudy conditions and occasional rain. The participation was good with regular participants: Bob, Bruce, Lisa, Mary, Barry, Joe, and Claudia, totaling 10 observers. Welcome newcomers: Liz and Chris! With the combined efforts of all birders we totaled 49 bird species in spite of the conditions. Having good numbers of bird spies in the field makes a difference! As a side interest, Mary also discovered a raccoon in a tree just across Haven Road where the new walkway bridge is. It was huddled in a crotch of a tree trying to sleep, but it did give us the eye! This animal appeared to shiver when observed in the scope. It’s anyone’s guess as to the reason it was shivering in that protected area. I wondered if it was fear or distemper. We birded the Stop Sign Trail, South Road and boat launch, the Nature Trail, Horseshoe Trail, The Deli Fields and the Pine Boat Launch. Some highlights were: Bald Eagles and nest, Wild Turkeys, Hairy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Black and White and Black-throated Blue Warblers, a Least Flycatcher (ID by Bruce and Bob), Osprey, Wood Duck, Eastern Bluebird and Louisiana Waterthrush.

Glenmere Lake – May 1 – Kathy Ashman, Leader – Five members gathered in the parking lot of Florida’s Glenmere Lake Park at 8:00 AM. We trekked down to the waterfront hoping there would be waterfowl present. Sadly, we only saw Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Mallard and Bufflehead. After surveying the lake, we birded the wooded area surrounding the parking lot and the park entrance. We then headed onto the rail that runs along the northern side of the lake edge. Total distance walked was 2 miles on a beautiful May morning. We had a fantastic morning of birding at Glenmere with a total of 63 species. Wood warblers were present in good numbers with a total of 10 species represented. Seen were: Ovenbird, Blue-winged, Black and White, American Redstart, Yellow, Black-throated Blue and Green, Palm, Pine, and remarkably an estimated 100 Yellow-rumped Warblers. Raptors seen were Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Cooper’s Hawk, American Kestrel and Bald Eagle. In addition we were fortunate to get a great look at a Barred Owl. Woodpeckers represented were Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy, Pileated and Northern Flicker. Yellow-throated, Blue-headed and Warbling Vireos were seen. Swallows present in good numbers included Northern Rough-winged, Tree, Barn, Bank and Cliff. Other highlights were: Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Chipping Sparrow, 17 Purple Finches, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Field Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Chimney Swift, Great-crested Flycatcher and Common Raven. Birds of the day due to their sheer numbers were the Yellow-rumped Warblers.

and the gorgeous Purple Finches. Though it was a long walk over uneven terrain, the birds seen were well worth the effort. We ended the trip at 12:00 noon. Temperature range was 47 to 55 degrees, partly cloudy skies with light westerly winds. Glenmere Lake Park is a marvelous site for birding.

Doodletown – May 4 – Bob Slechta, Leader – Yet another weekend with unsettled weather! Fortunately today turned out okay, in fact pretty good for birding, as a warm front sat just to our north producing a nice calm mild cloudy day. Doodletown produced as always and we successfully found our target birds and got good looks at Hooded and Cerulean Warblers. Twelve warbler species were tallied today being: Ovenbird, Worm-eating, Louisiana Waterthrush, Blue-winged, Black and White, Nashville, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded, American Redstart, Cerulean, Yellow, Black-throated Blue and Green. Other notable sightings on our leisurely walk (it's getting harder and harder to walk up the hill) were: Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Osprey, Broad-winged Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Hairy Woodpecker, Great Crested and Least Flycatchers, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-throated and Warbling Vireos, lots of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Veery, Wood Thrush, Gray Catbird, Purple Finch (they are making a good showing this spring), Eastern Towhee, Savannah and White-throated Sparrows, Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak for a total of 61 species that the eleven of us got to enjoy. After doing the checklist a few members continued to Iona Island where they picked up seven more species. Highlights were: Greater Yellowlegs, Merlin, Common Raven, Orchard Oriole and lots of Yellow-rumps. It was a very productive day as the potential for rain finally arrived the next day.

Storm King Art Center – May 5 – Bob Slechta, Leader – As I mentioned in my Doodletown write-up 'the next day it rained', well that was today! Believe it or not there were three of us and the bird walk went off under a steady light rain. Amazingly we came up with 45 species and actually had decent looks at the following: 40 plus Chimney Swifts swirling overhead, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tree and Barn Swallows, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Wood Thrush, Gray Catbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, Black and White, Nashville and Black-throated Blue Warblers and 20 plus Yellow-rumped Warblers. Other birds of note not seen well or only heard were: Osprey, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-throated and Warbling Vireos, Field and White-throated Sparrows, Worm-eating, Blue-winged and Prairie Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart and Scarlet Tanager. It could have been a much better day as there was good bird activity, if it only weren't raining making it difficult to view them especially if they were high up in the trees. They also weren't very vocal which often helps in locating their presence. Any way the three diehards had a nice walk at the Art Center, better than sitting home.

Kenridge Farm – May 5 – Amy Greher, Leader – On Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 11 Mearnsers set off once again to bird Kenridge Farm. This is a favorite birding spot visited by us at least once in the spring and again in the fall. The property never disappoints us. It was a sunny, warm day (60+ degrees) by spring standards. We started in the upper parking lot. Due to slow school busses, I arrived after the action had begun. The dog park area and

upper lot produced about a dozen birds. Then we moved on to the main “farm” area. Some of us decided to walk down to the farm and bird along the way; while others preferred to carpool down to the main parking lot. We decided to meet by the wooded area on the left side of the property. The plan fell apart when we found the meadow area more productive than expected and the woods fairly quiet. We had not shared cell phone numbers so we had no way of contacting the other group. We later learned that they took the original route. Both groups reconnected thanks to Carlotta who spotted us and then notified the other group. We all met back at the dog lot. Due to the split, we counted a total of 66 species that many (but not all) had seen or heard. Most memorable were the Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers who unexpectedly showed up on the back pond. Other highlights included: Least and Great Crested Flycatchers and a pair of Eastern Kingbirds. Warblers were plentiful as well, including: American Redstarts, Nashville, Black and White, Magnolia, Yellow, Blue-winged, Palm, Chestnut-sided and Common Yellowthroat. We had great looks at Hooded Warblers as well. Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, Blue-headed and Warbling Vireos, Veery, Gray-cheeked and Wood Thrushes were among the more common residents. As always, Kenridge Farm is a great birding spot. We all enjoyed the day! In attendance were Bob, Liz, Gerhard, Joe, Linda, Kathy, Mary, John, Carlotta, Dave and me.

Bashakill – May 11 – Gerhard Patsch, Leader – It was a cloudy, windy and cool morning with temperatures in the 50’s as 21 participants met to see what the Bashakill had to offer. On our stroll from the parking lot to the causeway bridge we saw Yellow, Chestnut-sided, and Black and White Warblers, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat and Louisiana Waterthrush. Ovenbirds along with Warbling, Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos were heard and seen several times. Approaching the bridge we scoped the Osprey and Bald Eagle and, at a distance, we could glimpse eaglets on a nest. Then a young birder from another group exclaimed that there were a couple of Black Terns flying over the Kill, which we quickly spotted and gratefully enjoyed! We had our glamour bird. On the Nature Trail, as temperatures gradually climbed the birds became more active and we added several more warblers to our list: Northern Parula, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue and Green, Wilson’s, Canada and Cerulean, for a total of 17 warbler species. Other notables included Common Moorhen, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Common Raven, Northern Rough-winged Swallow and Swainson’s Thrush. Our final tally for the trip was 72 species, not bad for a cool, windy overcast morning.

Goosepond – May 13 – Bill Iannone, Leader – It was a cloudy, misty morning which had a cold, damp feeling throughout the day, although it did warm up to a balmy 45 degrees for this mid-May trip. A light rain did not hit us until mid-day. However, the three of us were dressed for the wet, chilly weather and collected 74 species. Damn the weather, full speed ahead! We covered the boardwalk on 17M, the Bull Mine Trail, Laroe Road Trail, and two stops on Kings Highway (Knapp’s View Field and the pond at Jenack’s Auction in Chester). The boardwalk, which has a good amount of water this year, and the trail on Bull Mine Road have become good birding spots in the spring. The weather presented the challenge of poor lighting and misty conditions but the birds were there in spite of the conditions. We counted 14 warbler species including: Blue-winged, Tennessee, Black-throated Blue, Canada, and Black and White. We were surprised to find 3 Northern



Waterthrushes. There was a good show of several male and female Rose-breasted Grosbeaks on the trip. Six sparrow species were found along the way: Chipping, Field, Swamp, White-throated, Song and White-crowned. At the Boardwalk a Solitary Sandpiper flew up out of the wetlands while Bobolink and Eastern Kingbirds were patrolling the field at Knapp's View. A Green Heron was looking for a good nesting spot at the Boardwalk also. Another nice surprise was a good view of a Black-billed Cuckoo at the Bull Mill Trail. We usually get some flyovers at the Boardwalk and this time it was several Wood Ducks. At the pond near Jenack's Auction House there was a lot of swallow activity: Tree, Barn and Rough-winged. The best surprise was the rewarding trip for the birders who put up with the challenging weather.

Break 100 – May 17-18 – See enclosed checklist for details.

Cape May – May 21-23 – Warren Cairo, Leader – See separate article

Stewart State Forest – May 22 – Bill Fiero, Leader – Kathy Ashman led this trip for Bill. Seven Mearns members gathered at the Ridge Road parking lot at 8:00 AM in search of local breeding birds and late migrants. We were not disappointed. On the first part of our trip we walked down Maple Avenue to the wetland where we had Canada Geese with goslings, Wood Duck and Mallard. We had good looks at Spotted Sandpipers exhibit courtship and copulation. Also present were Great Blue and Green Herons and Great Egret. From Maple Avenue we returned to the parking lot and then made our way down Ridge Road. Raptors seen were Turkey Vulture, Broad-winged and Red-tailed Hawks. Flycatchers were present in good numbers with five species seen: Eastern Wood-Pee-wee, Alder, Willow, Great-crested and Eastern Kingbird. Vireos were also seen in good numbers: Yellow-throated, Warbling, Red-eyed and we had great looks at a White-eyed Vireo. Thrushes did not disappoint with Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Swainson's and Wood Thrushes, and American Robin. Nine species of wood warblers were seen during the morning: Ovenbird, Blue-winged, Black and White, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Prairie and a remarkable Mourning Warbler. Other birds of note were Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting and Northern Bobwhite. We ended our outing at 12:30 PM with a total of 65 species, after walking a total of 3.5 miles. Temperature was a balmy 66 degrees under partly cloudy skies. Winds were out of the northeast at 4 mph with gusts to 6 mph. Birds of the day were the White-eyed Vireo and the Mourning Warbler. My thanks to Bill for asking me to lead the Stewart trip in lieu of his absence. It was a fabulous morning of birding.

Shawangunk Grasslands – May 25 – Tom and Jane, Leaders – Fifteen Mearns members met for this trip on a very pleasant day that produced a number of nice birds. After gathering in the parking lot and taking in what could be seen from there, Grasshopper Sparrow on the refuge signs, some of the group started along the path that heads towards Blue Chip and passes the path to the observation deck. Amazingly, Patrick spotted, what was undoubtedly the best bird of the trip, an American Bittern in the swale doing its best to remain inconspicuous. Of course he was facing into the sun and his neck feathers gave him away. We got good looks at it and then moved on. Some of the typical grassland birds were seen easily: Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird and Eastern Meadowlark.

American Kestrels were seen as well. The group went only a short distance before returning to the parking lot and starting up the entrance road. A Brown Thrasher serenaded us from a border tree and more birds were seen including: Willow Flycatcher near the pond, and a number of warblers. These included Blue-winged, Yellow, Common Yellowthroat and American Redstarts. At least one Purple Martin was seen by the Martin house. Several members heard and saw a Black-billed Cuckoo near the Hoagerburgh end of the entrance road. Several flycatchers were seen including an Eastern Wood Peewee and a Great-crested. We then decided to go to the town park where we finished the trip. Unfortunately there was no Henslow's Sparrow. We had 47 species.

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Scott Baldinger



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# Cape May Spring 2019

May 21- 23, 2019



Spring in Cape May is a fabulous time! May's full moon and associated high tides bring thousands of long distance migrating shorebirds to fatten up on the abundance of horseshoe crab eggs along the Delaware bayshore.

It's always interesting to observe how these birds, from the tiny Semi-palmated Sandpipers to the bulkier Red Knots, arrive skinny and completely depleted of their fat reserves. Then after gorging on horseshoe crab eggs and hopefully doubling their weight over a couple of weeks, they depart for another long non-stop flight, to their high arctic breeding grounds.

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We were fortunate to witness this spectacle and enjoy many of our local nesting birds as well. This year's outing had 13 members and we were also able to 'Break a Hundred' with a total of 109 species, with thousands of some individual species seen.

We began our adventure at one of my favorite spots - the Ocean City Visitor center. The Center is located on an elevated highway over a tree grove which sits along side an extensive marsh and waterway. It has proven to be a great habitat for breeding Night Herons, Egrets and Ibis, all of which can be easily viewed from the center's walkway. I would encourage anyone visiting the area to make this stop

We had both Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night Herons on nest with one Yellow-crowned nest having 5 robin-egg-blue eggs. Both Great & Snowy Egrets were on nest and displaying their beautiful plumages for all to enjoy. Glossy Ibis were also on nests as was a hybrid Glossy / White-faced Ibis. There had been a White Ibis reported there earlier but we were unable to locate it.



Our next stop was at the Heislerville WMA. This impoundment's water levels are controlled to provide sufficient water in winter for migrating ducks, and is lowered in the spring and fall for migrating shorebirds. We arrived just after high tide which is the ideal time because the tidal flats out in the bay are now under water and many of the shorebirds come to this impoundment to rest and/or continue feeding. We were not disappointed. Thousands of Semi-palmated Plovers & Sandpipers, Dunlin, many in their breeding plumage, were seen, as were good numbers of Short-billed Dowitchers, Greater & Lesser Yellow-legs, Black Skimmers, Double-crested Cormorants and a Bald Eagle or two to get everything up and flying. A wonderful sight, seeing thousand of shorebirds flying.

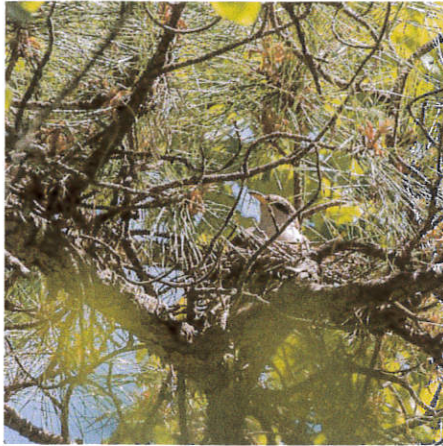
Our next stop was a last-minute addition. My friends Kathy & Roger Horn had made an interesting discovery. We met them in Belleplain State Forest where they had their spotting

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scopes focused on both a Yellow-billed Cuckoo's nest and a Ruby-throated Hummingbird nest. Not something you see everyday.



On to Cook's Beach to see the Red Knots - and they were there! My estimate was a few thousand Red Knots along with Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpipers and Plovers, Dunlin, and Black-bellied Plovers. Not to mention all the gulls: Laughing, Herring, and Great-black Backed. In the adjoining marshes were numerous Seaside Sparrows but I only had one Marsh Wren. In past years there were many. Lots of calling Clapper Rails too.



We called it a day after Cook's Beach to allow folks time to check in at their hotels and get ready for dinner. Dinner was at Tisha's which was its normal excellent fare.

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After dinner we headed to the Nature Conservancy's property, the South Cape May Meadows, where we were treated to Common Night-hawks, Timber-doodles (Woodcock) and listened to calling Chuck's-wills Widows. We tried to drive closer to where the Chuck's were calling but to no avail. Most interesting to me was that when Allan returned to his hotel there was one calling right there, probably on the roof of his hotel.

The next morning we got an early start at Higbee Beach. Our target was a Swainson's Warbler. It had been heard in numerous locations around Higbee in the past week. While we didn't find the Swainson's we did have a good mix of birds. Indigo Buntings, Blue Grosbeaks, Prairie Warbler, White-eyed Vireos, etc.

Next stop was Rea's Farm, aka The Beanery. Our target species here was Prothonotary Warbler. Alas, no Prothonotary Warbler was seen or heard. We did have a few Green Herons fly over but the best find was Ajit's spotting a very high flying Mississippi Kite. Great find Ajit!

We then headed north to Nummy Island following a brief stop for a slice at Nemo's Pizzeria. Nummy is also better at high tide and we had knockout looks at many individual shorebirds at relatively close distances. Ajit again came through and spotted a Clapper Rail among the assembled shorebirds giving everyone good looks at a very elusive bird. A couple of Tri-colored Herons and American Oyster Catchers too. On to Stone Harbor Point.

Stone Harbor Point has been the focus of a study on the effect of beach restoration efforts on the success of beach nesting birds, in particular the Piping Plover. We were very fortunate to have very good looks at a banded Piping Plover. I forwarded Allen's photos to the team monitoring the Piping Plovers and expect to hear back from them shortly.



As if Piping Plovers aren't enough of a highlight, it was topped by a perched Northern Gannet. It looked perfectly healthy and was just sitting on a jetty with some very late Purple

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Sandpipers, Least and Semi-palmated Sandpipers, Semi-palmated Plovers as well a raft of both Surf and Black Scooters feeding in and around the jetty.



We called it a day and met at Lucky Bones for dinner. After dinner a few of us took a ride in hopes of hearing Whip-poor-wills and Black Rails. It was a pleasant ride and very quiet forest and marsh. No luck with either species.

In the morning we returned to Rea's farm to try again for the Prothonotary Warbler. This time with success. We had two show themselves. I'm wondering if one wasn't a fledgling they way they were interacting. Great looks at our target bird.

On to breakfast at Beach Plum Farm. A great place to visit and bird. It's a working farm that is open to the public, and especially welcomes guests of Congress Hall who owns the farm and uses what's produced here in their restaurants. They also serve a good breakfast and lunch that you can enjoy outdoors on picnic tables while watching birds. They have a trail through the wet woods which we took a walk around. We were rewarded with another singing Prothonotary Warbler and a Wilson's Warbler.

Then on to the 'Osprey' boat cruise around the back bays of Cape May and Wildwood. We saw lots of Ospreys on nests. Many Whimbrel. Both Common and Forster Terns on nests.





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But one upsetting thing was when we went by the Peregrine Falcon nest. It had been cleared out. Captain Bob of the Osprey had taken a tour out the day before in the morning. Had great photos of an adult with fluffy white chicks. When he returned in the afternoon, all were gone. We don't know what happened. Could it have been a falconer collecting birds to train? We are trying to find out but it's really upsetting that a bird that is making a comeback from near extinction can have it nest raided, most likely by humans.

Just heard some really good news, this year's count of Semi-palmated Sandpipers has reached 90,000 and the Red Knot count is a whopping 30,000. Still not the numbers seen in the 70's & 80's but much higher than just a few years ago. I guess the limitations for the harvesting of Horseshoe Crab is working!!

Many thanks to Alan Wells and Karen Miller for their eBird reports and great photographs.

Thanks to all who participated, you made it easy and a lot of fun to go birding together. Hoping we can do it again next year. Please consider future trips in the fall for hawks and even in the dead of winter for alcids. This winter was a banner year for Razorbills with the occasional Dovekie. We even had a Gyrfalcon but only one Snowy Owl.

Stay well, Good Birding!

Warren Cairo

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### MEMBERSHIP

We have had a number of new members join us these past few months. At this time we would like to give them a warm welcome to our club. They are as follows: Kathy Lang, Sussex, NJ; Wilma Amthor, Bloomingburg; Tom Millard, Hewitt, NJ; Christopher Alwang, Bloomingburg; and Jillian Atlas, Goshen. We look forward to spending time with you birding in the field, at our interesting club meetings and at other club activities.

During our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner we added John and Mary Yrizzary to our Life Membership list with much appreciation for their contributions to our club over the many years. Also, it was mentioned that a longtime friend and Life Member, Al Merritt, had passed away recently.

There are 110 Mearns Club members at this time. There is always room for more enthusiastic birders to join us and participate in all the enjoyable and educational events!

Linda Strohl

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	<b>E.A.Mearns Bird Club Break 100 for 2019</b>						
2	Date: May 17-18, 2019						
3						Seen By	
4	<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b># Groups</b>	<b>Location seen in Orange County</b>
5	<b>WATERFOWL</b>						
6	Canada Goose	x	x	x	x	4	
7	Mute Swan	x	x	x	x	4	
8	Wood Duck	x	x	x	x	4	
9	American Wigeon		x			1	Camel farm
10	American Black Duck						
11	Mallard	x	x	x	x	4	
12	Blue-winged Teal					0	
13	Ring-necked Duck						
14	Lesser Scaup						
15	Bufflehead					0	
16	Common Merganser			x		1	D&H Canal Museum
17	<b>GALLINACEOUS BIRDS</b>						
18	Wild Turkey			x		1	
19	<b>LOONS</b>						
20	Common Loon						
21	<b>GREBES</b>						
22	Pied-billed Grebe						
23	<b>PIGEONS &amp; DOVES</b>						
24	Rock Pigeon	x	x	x	x	4	
25	Mourning Dove	x	x	x	x	4	
26	Eurasian Collared-Dove						
27	<b>CUCKOOS</b>						
28	Black-billed Cuckoo	x	x	x	x	4	Ironwood Road
29	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	x		x	x	3	Ironwood Road, Elks-Brox Park
30	<b>NIGHTJARS</b>						
31	Common Nighthawk	x	x	x	x	4	
32	Whip-poor-will	x	x	x	x	4	
33	<b>SWIFTS</b>						
34	Chimney Swift	x	x	x	x	4	
35	<b>HUMMINGBIRDS</b>						
36	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	x	x	x	x	4	
37	<b>RAILS, COOTS &amp; CRANES</b>						
38	American Bittern		x			1	
39	Virginia Rail				x	1	
40	Sora	x	x	x	x	4	
41	Common Gallinule						
42	American Coot						
43	Sandhill Crane		x			1	Liberty Lane
44	<b>SHOREBIRDS</b>						
45	Black-bellied Plover						Liberty Lane
46	Semipalmated Plover		x		x	2	Camel farm
47	Killdeer		x	x	x	3	
48	Spotted Sandpiper	x	x	x	x	4	
49	Solitary Sandpiper	x	x	x	x	4	
50	Greater Yellowlegs		x	x	x	3	
51	Lesser Yellowlegs	x	x	x	x	4	
52	Dunlin	x				1	Camel farm, Route 207 marsh
53	White-rumped Sandpiper						
54	Least Sandpiper		x		x	2	
55	Pectoral Sandpiper			x		1	Liberty Lane
56	Semipalmated Sandpiper						
57	Short-billed Dowitcher						
58	Wilson's Snipe						
59	American Woodcock	x	x	x	x	4	
60	<b>GULLS</b>						
61	Ring-billed Gull	x			x	2	
62	Herring Gull	x			x	2	
63	Lesser Black-backed Gull						
64	Great Black-Backed Gull						
65	Common Tern						
66	<b>LOONS</b>						

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
4	SPECIES	A	B	C	D	# Groups	Location seen in Orange County
67	Common Loon						
68	<b>CORMORANTS</b>						
69	Double-crested Cormorant	x	x	x	x	4	
70	<b>HERONS AND ALLIES</b>						
71	American Bittern						
72	Least Bittern						
73	Great Blue Heron	x	x	x	x	4	
74	Great Egret	x				1	Route 207 marsh, Wallkill River NWR
75	<b>Cattle Egret</b>		x	x	x	3	Liberty Lane/Winding Waters Trail
76	Green Heron	x	x	x	x	4	
77	Black-crowned Night-Heron						
78	<b>Yellow-crowned Night-Heron</b>		x	x		2	Middletown
79	<b>NEW WORLD VULTURES</b>						
80	Black Vulture		x	x	x	3	
81	Turkey Vulture	x	x	x	x	4	
82	<b>HAWKS</b>						
83	Osprey			x		1	Laurel Grove cemetery
84	Bald Eagle	x	x	x	x	4	
85	Northern Harrier			x	x	2	
86	Sharp-shinned Hawk						
87	Cooper's Hawk	x		x	x	3	Museum on the Boulevard
88	Red-shouldered Hawk	x	x	x	x	4	
89	Broad-winged Hawk		x	x	x	3	
90	Red-tailed Hawk	x	x	x	x	4	
91	<b>OWLS</b>						
92	Eastern Screech Owl	x				1	Mine Road -Area U
93	Great Horned Owl						
94	Barred Owl				x	1	Rio Dam Road
95	<b>KINGFISHERS</b>						
96	Belted Kingfisher	x		x		2	Goose Mountain SP [S], Elks-Brox Park
97	<b>WOODPECKERS</b>						
98	Red-Headed Woodpecker						
99	Red-bellied Woodpecker	x	x	x	x	4	
100	Downy Woodpecker	x	x	x	x	4	
101	Hairy Woodpecker			x	x	2	
102	Northern Flicker	x	x	x	x	4	
103	Pileated Woodpecker	x	x	x	x	4	
104	<b>FALCONS</b>						
105	American Kestrel		x	x	x	3	
106	<b>Merlin</b>		x	x			Wallkill River NWR, D&H Canal Museum
107	Peregrine Falcon		x			1	Hawk's Nest
108	<b>FLYCATCHERS</b>						
109	Olive-sided Flycatcher						
110	Eastern Wood Peewee	x	x	x	x	4	
111	Acadian Flycatcher		x	x		2	Port Orange Road, Mine Road
112	Alder Flycatcher			x	x	2	Ironwood Road, Winding Waters Trail
113	Willow Flycatcher	x	x	x	x	4	Kenridge Farm, Liberty Lane
114	Least Flycatcher			x	x	2	
115	Eastern Phoebe	x	x	x	x	4	
116	Great Crested Flycatcher	x	x	x	x	4	
117	Eastern Kingbird	x	x	x	x	4	
118	<b>VIREOS</b>						
119	White-eyed Vireo						
120	Yellow-throated Vireo	x	x	x	x	4	
121	Blue-headed Vireo	x		x		2	Rio Dam Rd., Ironwood Road
122	Warbling Vireo	x	x	x	x	4	
123	Red-eyed Vireo	x	x	x	x	4	
124	<b>CORVIDS</b>						
125	Blue Jay	x	x	x	x	4	
126	American Crow	x	x	x	x	4	
127	Fish Crow	x	x	x	x	4	
128	Common Raven	x	x	x	x	4	
129	<b>LARKS</b>						
130	Horned Lark						

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
4	SPECIES	A	B	C	D	# Groups	Location seen in Orange County
131	<b>SWALLOWS</b>						
132	Purple Martin		x	x	x	3	
133	Tree Swallow	x	x	x	x	4	
134	N. Rough-winged Swallow	x	x	x	x	4	
135	Bank Swallow		x	x	x	3	Wallkill River NWR, Cedar Swamp Road
136	Cliff Swallow			x		1	Lockenurst Pond [Westtown]
137	Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x	4	
138	<b>TITS, NUTHATCHES, CREEPER</b>						
139	Black-capped Chickadee	x	x	x	x	4	
140	Tufted Titmouse	x	x	x	x	4	
141	White-breasted Nuthatch	x	x	x	x	4	
142	Red-breasted Nuthatch			x		1	Elks-Brox Park
143	Brown Creeper		x			1	Boxbaum Road
144	<b>WRENS</b>						
145	House Wren	x	x	x	x	4	
146	Winter Wren	x		x	x	3	
147	Marsh Wren		x	x	x	3	Wallkill River NWR
148	Carolina Wren	x	x	x	x	4	
149	<b>GNATCATCHERS</b>						
150	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	x	x	x	x	4	
151	<b>KINGLETS</b>						
152	Ruby-crowned Kinglet						
153	<b>THRUSHES</b>						
154	Eastern Bluebird		x	x	x	3	
155	Veery	x	x	x	x	4	
156	Gray-cheeked Thrush						
157	Swainson's Thrush			x	x	2	Rio Dam Road
158	Hermit Thrush			x	x	2	Rio Dam Road
159	Wood Thrush	x	x	x	x	4	
160	American Robin	x	x	x	x	4	
161	<b>MIMIDS</b>						
162	Gray Catbird	x	x	x	x	4	
163	Northern Mockingbird	x	x		x	3	
164	Brown Thrasher		x	x		2	Laurel Grove Cemetery, Elks-Brox Park
165	<b>STARLINGS</b>						
166	European Starling	x	x	x	x	4	
167	<b>WAXWINGS</b>						
168	Cedar Waxwing	x			x	2	Kenridge Farm, Cornwall on Hudson
169	<b>OLD WORLD SPARROWS</b>						
170	House Sparrow	x	x	x	x	4	
171	<b>PIPITS</b>						
172	American Pipit						
173	<b>FRINGILLID FINCHES</b>						
174	House Finch			x	x	2	
175	Purple Finch						
176	Pine Siskin			x		1	D&H Canal Museum
177	American Goldfinch	x	x	x	x	4	
178	<b>WOOD WARBLERS</b>						
179	Ovenbird	x	x	x	x	4	
180	Worm-eating		x	x	x	3	
181	Louisiana Waterthrush	x		x	x	3	Mine Road
182	Northern Waterthrush		x	x		2	Port Orange Road, Goosepond Mountain SP
183	Golden-winged	x		x		2	Old Orange Turnpike [Sterling Forest]
184	Blue-winged	x	x	x	x	4	
185	Black-and-white	x	x	x	x	4	
186	Tennessee				x	1	
187	Nashville						
188	Mourning			x		1	Goosepond Mountain SP [S]
189	Kentucky						
190	Common Yellowthroat	x	x	x	x	4	
191	Hooded	x	x	x	x	4	
192	American Redstart	x	x	x	x	4	
193	Cape May		x	x		2	Laurel Grove Cemetery, Elks-Brox Park
194	Cerulean	x	x		x	3	

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
4	SPECIES	A	B	C	D	# Groups	Location seen in Orange County
195	Northern Parula	x	x	x	x	4	
196	Magnolia	x		x	x	3	Mine Rd., Port Orange Road
197	Bay-breasted	x	x	x		3	Rio Dam Road, Laurel Grove C, Elks Brox Pk.
198	Blackburnian		x	x	x	3	
199	Yellow	x	x	x	x	4	
200	Chestnut-sided	x	x	x	x	4	
201	Blackpoll	x	x	x	x	4	Laurel Grove Cemetery
202	Black-throated Blue			x		1	Goose Mountain SP, Port Orange Road
203	Pine		x	x	x	3	
204	Yellow-rumped	x	x	x		3	Laurel Grove Cemetery
205	Prairie	x	x	x	x	4	
206	Black-throated Green		x	x	x	3	
207	Canada						
208	Wilson's		x			1	
209	Yellow-breasted Chat						
210	<b>EMBEREZID FINCHES</b>						
211	Eastern Towhee	x	x	x	x	4	
212	Chipping Sparrow	x	x	x	x	4	
213	Field Sparrow	x	x	x	x	4	
214	Savannah Sparrow			x	x	2	
215	Grasshopper Sparrow						Knapp's View Park, Indiana Road
216	Song Sparrow	x	x	x	x	4	
217	Swamp Sparrow	x	x	x	x	4	
218	<b>White-throated Sparrow</b>		x				Hawk's Nest
219	White-crowned Sparrow		x	x	x	3	Liberty Ln., Benedict Park, Winding Waters
220	Dark-eyed Junco	x		x	x	3	Old Plank Road
221	<b>CARDINALIDAE</b>						
222	Scarlet Tanager	x	x	x	x	4	
223	Northern Cardinal	x	x	x	x	4	
224	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	x	x	x	x	4	
225	Indigo Bunting	x	x	x	x	4	
226	<b>ICTERIDAE</b>						
227	Bobolink	x	x	x	x	4	
228	Red-winged Blackbird	x	x	x	x	4	
229	Eastern Meadowlark		x	x	x	3	Knapp's View Park, Cross Road
230	Common Grackle	x	x	x	x	4	
231	Brown-headed Cowbird	x	x	x	x	4	
232	Orchard Oriole	x	x	x	x	4	
233	Baltimore Oriole	x	x	x	x	4	
234	<b>Total Species by Group</b>	100	116	131	121		
235	<b>Total species all groups combined</b>					152	
236	Manual count by group	100	116	131	121		
237							
238	<b>OBSERVERS:</b>						
239	Group A: Alan & Della Wells, Dave Baker, Joe Trapani						
240	Group B: Karen Miller, John Haas, Lisa O'Gorman						
241	Group C: Kathleen Ashman, Maryangela Buskey, Joyce Depew, Scott Baldinger						
242	Group D: Bob Slechta, Liza & Ajit Antony.						
243							
244	Notes: 6 new species seen in 2019 are formatted <b>Bold</b> since the Break was limited in 2015 to Orange County, NY.						
245							

WAKING UP WITH THE BIRDS AT FIRST LIGHT:  
BOREAL FOREST BIRDING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Deep in the heart of the Pemigewasset wilderness, lies a protected tract of boreal forest that is (almost) impenetrable by humans. I decided to work on my New Hampshire 48 Four Thousand footers starting the beginning of July for a few days. The Four thousand-footer club is a club that one gets to belong to after climbing 48 four-thousand-foot-high mountains within the confines of the state of New Hampshire.

I set out to climb up into the upper reaches of the vast and beautiful, and serene boreal forest of New Hampshire on June 30<sup>th</sup>. After winding down after that long car ride, I hiked up to Galehead hut (the remotest hut in the Appalachian Mountain Club hut system), and quickly was amazed at how many birds were present at elevations from 3000 to 4900 feet. The hut was in the heart of a tract of boreal forest, close to a valley overlook. From there, I saw and heard many species.

I heard a Swainson's Thrush, a Hermit Thrush, a northern Parula, a Magnolia Warbler, a blackpoll warbler, a Blackburnian warbler, dark eyed junco, and the ever present white throated sparrow, who sang to me at the top of North Twin Mountain at 4700 feet.

Up in the woods at 3800 feet, it's easy to be an early riser. Almost every morning, I got up at 4:15 to the call of (a white throated sparrow), beckoning me to enjoy the morning before anyone else got up with a fresh cup of coffee. It was so soothing and calming to wake up to the dawn sounds of avian calls from many species, such as the boreal chickadee.

This was an adventure vacation that was well worth the time, money and planning. While I did lots and lots of mileage and was a bit sore from constant hiking and backpacking, I was rewarded with many views of not only the mountains, but also of warblers nesting (including the black throated green warbler).

The sky was magical; one cloud that loomed over a mountain one day resembled a wild turkey, so I took a photo of it, and will have to show everyone this photograph some time during a presentation (perhaps our December share-a-thon).

I chatted with many people and shared with them what it was that I was seeing and hearing. One woman remarked, "you sure know your birds". I thanked her. They aren't MY birds; they are a part of nature and are to be shared by all. They are part of the intricate web of life that lives within the boreal forest of the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

Thankfully, they will probably be there next year (perhaps not the same individual birds), but offspring of the migrants welcoming me at 4:15 AM in the morning at the crack of dawn.

By David Hultgren



My Study of Yellow Crowned Night Heron Pair in Orange County, NY  
2019  
by Joyce M. Depew

On April 15, 2019 I had invited my eight year old grandson, Ben, to come birding with me since he had spring vacation from school. We have been doing this kind of activity a couple of times a year since he was 4 years old. When I visit his home we also look for birds since there is a large assortment of them due to varied habitat there. Ben has an avid interest in all wildlife, great eyesight, attention span, and memory. Each year I see him grow and attain more skills and interest. I enjoy his company very much!

We began our ride through the neighborhood that day on Prosperous Valley Rd in rural Middletown and traveled through to Vanburenville Rd. approximately 3 miles away. Ben was in the back seat while I was driving toward Middletown on Vanburenville Rd. With excitement, he told me that he just saw a bird that he believed to be a Green Heron. I pulled off the road, backed up to the driveway of a home which had a small pond. Instead of seeing a Green Heron, I discovered that it was a Yellow Crowned Night Heron! I explained to Ben that this was a "record" and rare bird for our region. We were both thrilled! I took photos and reported it on the "What's App" for other Mearns Bird Club members hoping that some would get to see this bird while it was still present. As a result, other birders arrived later on. At that time there was only one Yellow Crowned Nigh Heron seen.

Exactly one week later on April 22, 2019 Scott Baldinger and Bill Fiero discovered that there were two Yellow Crowned Night Herons at the same location! Scott put out the notice. This was very thrilling news, but I couldn't make it back to the location at the time. Other birders took photos and made observations of the behaviors exhibited by these herons towards each other. Some observers saw courtship type of behaviors that day indicating the presence of a male and female. I wish to note here that the sex cannot be determined in this species without mating behavior.

My observations have continued throughout the Summer of 2019 since I now have an agreement with the owner of the property there. This has allowed me to observe these herons in locations that can't be seen from the road. I have checked this location usually two times per week for several weeks, successfully viewing both feeding together in early evening hours. I have also noted that one YCNH is more wary than the other. Since the spring, I have seen these herons leaving the original location to explore nearby areas that are inaccessible to me.

These herons have acclimated well to this New York State environment. I've observed and photographed feeding and nest building, and I saw the completed the nest in an oak tree. Unfortunately, however, I've observed neither mating, nor egg incubation. Sadly, the nest has remained empty. I last viewed this pair on July 8, 2019, and I have not seen them since the hot weather arrived this July. I hope that I will see them again before they decide to migrate.





Joyce Depew



Mary Buskey 3/22/19 oil city rd.

## CHECKLIST CHANGES 2019

On June 9<sup>th</sup> the Avian Records Committee got together for a checklist upgrade as there have been many changes these past few years that needed to be dealt with. First on our agenda was the movement of three species from Accidental status (seen less than three times in the county) to the main list. They are: Yellow-crowned Night Heron, its third county sighting this spring outside Middletown; Say's Phoebe, its third sighting recorded this past January at Winding Waters Trail; and Kentucky Warbler, with Sterling Forest and Mine Torne Road being the two hot spots for this bird. Next, we created a new seasonal abundance category, "e", to denote a species as being highly unlikely, extraordinarily rare for that time of year. From there we proceeded to make seasonal occurrence changes to over 30 species, and changed a few of the group names /headings/family names back to English for uniformity and simplicity. So check out the latest checklist revision on the Club's Yahoo site. While you're at it give Ajit Antony a pat on the back for all the work he puts into maintaining our checklist on line, making all the changes for each revision, and also for the most up to date breeding status of Orange County birds, thanks to the effort put in on his "mini-breeding atlas" project these past few years. Enjoy the new Checklist out in the field where I hope to see you.

Bob Slechta

Chairman, Avian Records Committee

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## FIELD TRIP 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](mailto:fjfitz@frontiernet.net). Please do this soon after you lead the trip. Please include the number of species seen, number of participants, weather conditions and highlights of the trip. If you post the trip online, please send an expanded report fleshing out the details of the online posting. A complete listing of species seen is not necessary. Thank you!

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## FALL & WINTER FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE – E.A. MEARN'S CLUB

September trips: Sept. 7-Doodletown; Sept. 14 – Black dirt; Sept. 18 – Hamptonburgh Preserve; Sept. 21-Bashakill; (Sept. 25 – Chadwick Lake with Bob Slechta. Meet at 8:30 at the Dunk'n Donuts at Rtes. 32 and 300, Chronomer Valley. This trip was not on the previous schedule.) Sept. 28-Winding Waters. See last Feather for details.

October 1-3 – Cape May – If interested contact Warren Cairo at [wrcairo@gmail.com](mailto:wrcairo@gmail.com) or 845 800-0506 at least a month ahead so he can give you details and know who is coming. Cape May is a fabulous migrant trap for southbound birds.

October 2 (Wed) – Kenridge Farm – Meet Amy Greher (783-6363) at the Dog Park at 8:30 AM for Palm Warblers and with luck a Lincoln's Sparrow.

October 5 – 6 ½ Station Road – Meet Carlotta Shearson (234-8314) at 8:30 AM. We will look for migrating warblers and the resident Brown Thrasher.

October 6 (Sun) – Storm King Art Center – with Bob Slechta (541-8210). Let's see if we can find some birds amongst the giant outdoor sculptures. Meet at 8:30 AM. Free admission.

October 12 – "Big Sit" – with Kathy Ashman (294-6140). Our first event last year went well, so bring a chair, some food and enjoy the company of your fellow Mearnsers and come and go as you please. There will be notices put out prior to the event so keep your eyes peeled.

October 14 (Mon) – Goosepond – Meet Bill Iannone (783-7467) at the 17M Boardwalk Trail at 8:30 AM. There will be sparrows, warblers and thrushes to be found.

October 19 – Croton Point – Meet Jodi Brodsky (282-1058) at the RR station "boat launch" at 8:30 AM. This is always a rewarding trip.

October 26 – Oil City Road – with Joyce Depew (978-9952). Meet at the platform at 8:30 AM. There should be good ducks and sparrows along with other fall migrants.

November 2 – Kenridge Farm – with Amy Greher (783-6363), Meet her at the main parking lot at 8:30 AM and see if we can find Hermit Thrush, both kinglets and a late warbler or two.

November 9 – Black dirt – Meet Dave Baker (446-4030) at the Jolly Onion at 8:30 AM to scour the area for Honed Lark, Snow Bunting, raptors and maybe a longspur.

November 16 – Southern Orange lakes – Meet Kathy Ashman (294-6140) at the Chester McDonald's at 8:30 AM and she will find us a good variety of ducks and other waterfowl.

November 23 (Fri) – Eastern Orange lakes – with Karen Miller (381-3283) and Bruce Nott. Be at the NW corner of the Newburgh Walmart parking lot (by automotive) at 8:30AM for a productive and rewarding day with all the birds pinned down by Bruce.

November 30 – Shawangunk Grasslands –with Tom and Jane (255-0565). Meet them at the Refuge at 5:00 PM as the Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers start to hunt for dinner.

December 7-8 – Cape Ann, MA – Contact Jodi Brodsky at 282-1058 or [jsbbirder@gmail.com](mailto:jsbbirder@gmail.com) for this fabulous trip....alcids, grebes, loons, winter ducks and other northern birds.

December 21 – Eastern Orange Christmas Bird Count – If you've never done it and want to join the fun contact Bob Slechta (541-8210) for more information.

January 18 NYS Winter Duck Count – If you would like to be a part of the count contact Bob Slechta (541-8210).

January 25 – Eagle Trip I – Join Gerhard Patsch (255-5840) at the Rte. 202/6 “Goat Trail” Iona Island overlook at 8:30 AM for this very popular trip We had 140 Bald Eagles last year!

Feb. 1-3 Cape May – Contact Warren Cairo ([wrcairo@gmail.com](mailto:wrcairo@gmail.com) or 845 800-0506 for a great weekend of winter specialties along the NJ coast. Contact Warren at least one month ahead and he will get in touch with you a week prior with trip plans as it is weather dependent this time of year. (Keep the next weekend open, Feb.8-10, in case the first weekend is a no-go.)

February 15 – Eagle Trip II – Meet Gerhard Patsch (255-58400 at 8:30 AM at the Goat Trail overlook for another eagle hunt and whatever else pops up.

February 22 – Black dirt – with Karen Miller (381-3283). Meet her at the Jolly Onion Inn in Pine Island at 8:30 AM to look for larks, buntings, falcons, etc.

March 7 – Rye/Greenwich – Meet Bob Slechta (541-8210) at the Playland parking lot at 9:00 AM and scour the Sound for winter ducks, loons, grebes, etc.

March 14 – Black dirt II – Meet Karen Miller (381-3283) at the Jolly Onion (Pine Island) at 8:30 AM for another try at larks, buntings and longspurs plus the arrival of large flocks of blackbirds and maybe our first Killdeer.

March 21 – Oil City Road – with Kathy Ashman (294-6140). Meet at the Refuge platform at 8:30 AM for large numbers of ducks... hundreds of Northern Pintails and Green-winged Teal.

March 25 – Southern Orange Lakes – Meet Kathy Ashman at the Chester McDonald's at 8:30 Am for a different mix of waterfowl to be found on lakes and ponds.

March 28 – Eastern Orange Lakes – Meet Bruce and Karen (381-3283). Be at the NW corner of the Newburgh Walmart parking lot at 8:30 AM for another look at waterfowl in the NE corner of Orange County.

March 28 – Shawangunk Grasslands – Meet Tom and Jane (255-0565) at 7:00 PM for woodcock and hold-over Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers. Holding this trip in March should be better than past April trips.

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**2020 Dues:** Dues are due by December 31, 2019 for the 2020 Mearns year. Individual Membership is \$20.00 and Family Membership is \$30.00. Your prompt payment is appreciated. Thank you. Karen