



Orange Feather

Fall 2021

President's Letter

August 2021

Hello everyone,

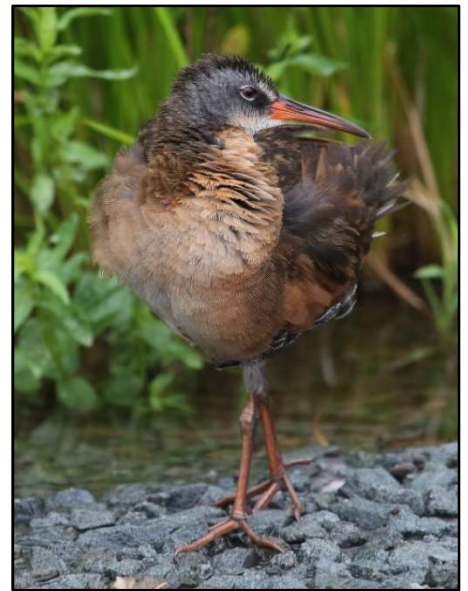
It seems that it is finally time to get our club back on track. I am hoping that we can resume meetings in September at the end of our regular summer break. Field trips resume mid-August and are listed in the schedule in this newsletter.

Considering the recent events of COVID, I think we can all agree that returning to the school for meetings is probably not realistic. Linda Strohl is checking on a few options where we could meet, and I hope that we can get something that is reasonably central to the county. If you know of any community facilities that might be appropriate for our group, please let me or Linda know. Watch for any club announcements from me that will keep you informed as we make progress in our search.

Coincidentally, my second term as president is ending soon. In October we will elect a new President and other club officers.

As we re-start our Mearns meetings, this is a good time for new leadership. I'm a firm believer in new leaders who will bring fresh ideas and perhaps a different perspective. Please give some thought to whom you would like to nominate for these positions. We have several active Mearns members who could serve the club well. If YOU are interested, please step forward and let us know.

It's been a great four years for me as your leader, BUT, as Ken McDermott reminds me, this is a club about birds! I have learned much from all of you ... about birds, and about birding! We are fortunate to have many great opportunities for birding in our local area and within a reasonable driving distance. I am proud of our club and our members. We always respect the birds and abide by the code of birding ethics. I am amazed at how we treasure every bird, whether it's the Ferruginous Hawk or an American Robin. We share our knowledge with others who may not be aware of the beauty of birds. Birders are good people and I thank you all for that!



Karen C. Miller

Karen C Miller, President
Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club

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Board of Directors

Karen C. Miller, President

Kathleen Ashman, Vice President

Linda Strohl, Treasurer

Kathleen Hranowsky, Secretary

Bob Slechta, Chair of Outings and Christmas Count

Alan Wells, Program Chair

Della Wells, Membership Chair

Membership Update - Linda Strohl

We welcome the following new members to our Club and we look forward to another exciting year of birding together:

Louis Liebhaber, Warwick, NY

Jeff and Cheryl Wischhover, Kerhonkson, NY

Gordon and Phyllis Schultze, Hawthorne, NJ

Rena Lee, Newburgh, NY

Lou, Pam, and Spencer Ciaccio, West Hurley, NY

David and Ingrid Gillaspy (renew) Hewitt, NJ

Barbara Thomascall, West Point, NY

Susan Joseph, Rhinebeck, NY

John and Deborah Gilson, Campbell Hall, NY

Jeanne Cimorelli, Montgomery, NY

Johanna Lauren Bloomfield, Warwick, NY

2022 Membership dues:

Please make your dues payment on or before January 1, 2022. Mail a check made payable to E. A. Mearns Bird Club — to the club treasurer: Linda Strohl, 8 Park Road, Salisbury Mills, NY 12577. Annual dues are \$20 for an individual membership, \$30 for a family membership, and \$8 for a student membership.

Member News:

Congratulations to **John Haas** on his appointment in April as eBird Reviewer for Sullivan County!

Scott Baldinger was honored by the Early Birders for his many years of volunteering to lead their weekly Tuesday Early Birders Walks in Minnewaska State Park. A beautiful glass etching honoring Scott (shown below) has been installed in the "Birds of Minnewaska" display at the new Lake Minnewaska Visitor Center.

Congratulations Scott!



More than 20 members gathered this summer at the annual Mearns Bird Club picnic at Winding Hills Park in Montgomery, NY. We very much enjoyed being able to get together again as a group. The weather was beautiful, as were a Baltimore Oriole's songs from the canopy.



THREE FAVORITE SIGHTINGS IN ORANGE COUNTY

Submitted by Ken McDermott

For this article I simply asked local birders, mostly Mearns members - "What/When/Where were your three favorite bird sightings in Orange County?". Here are the replies that I received and I thank all those who responded.

Warren Cairo: American Kestrel was my trigger bird in that I first saw one in Cape May at a hawk banding demonstration in the pavilion next to the hawk watch. I was visiting family in Cape May and Kelly, the birder, wanted to go to the hawk watch so I as the SOB (spouse of birder) went along. I became fascinated by this beautiful falcon and needed to learn more about them which has led me down this road of the wonderful world of birding. When I got back home to Slate Hill I was telling my brother-in-law about this beautiful falcon. He had never seen one and asked if they were around here and said he would love to see one. So I took him for a ride hoping to find an American Kestrel. We headed out Lower Road toward Pine Island with the hopes of finding one. It was in the fall so there was a reasonable chance of seeing one. Well this turned out to be a ride neither of us would soon forget. Well before we reached the Warren Sod farms we found our first Kestrel. It was perched close to the road and we had great looks. We continued on and there was another. And another, and another! They were everywhere we looked. There were males, females and some juveniles too. Simply nothing I had anticipated nor experienced since. I would guess there were easily between 50 to 100 American Kestrel that we saw that day. They must have been forced down by weather conditions while on their southern migration. We were both very happy, him seeing his first American Kestrel and me being able to show him one. **Short-eared Owl:** Kelly and I were still new to birding and neither of us had seen a Short-eared Owl. We had heard that there had been sightings out near Oil City Road. So one evening we drove out to Oil City Road. When we got there we did a quick scan and I saw what might be a Rough-legged Hawk in the distance. So I drove out the road across from the parking lot and parked the car to get out the scope. Kelly remained in the car, passenger side. The hawk was perched in trees north of us closer to the Wallkill Creek and she was watching it from the car as I went to get the scope out of the trunk. As I got out, I looked over the roof and there within 50' from the passenger side of the car is a Short-eared Owl sitting watching us. It was something of a comedy act from that point on with me trying to get Kelly's attention away from the Rough-legged Hawk and look in the opposite direction without disturbing the Owl. Eventually she caught on to my attempts and we were both able to enjoy our first looks at the really beautiful Short-eared Owl! **Western Bluebird:** It was CBC time of year. Kelly and I were going out to a family gathering and we were ready early so we took a short ride to scout a part of our CBC area. The area we drove was mainly black dirt farms where we usually had good Sparrows along the road and there was one spot that had some bushes that offered perches above the surrounding grasses and was usually a good spot. We stopped to take a good look at what was there. Along with the usual contingent of Sparrows was a Bluebird. But this wasn't one of our usual Eastern Bluebirds. This was all blue. We were still pretty new to birding but it sure looked like a Mountain Bluebird to us. We knew this was not common to NY. I didn't have a camera; how could we document this find? I called John Tramontano who had been sort of mentoring us. It turned out he was at a Christmas party at the Middletown Elks club when I finally reached him. When he heard what we thought we had he came right out. We got him on the bird and we followed it to a nest cavity in a nearby tree where it apparently spent the night. We had our confirmation! Word got out throughout the club and many if not all got to see the rarity, with some even taking a detour on their CBC routes for a look.

Matt Zeitler: Yellow-headed Blackbird, Lynch Ave, New Hampton, 03/23/19. I really enjoyed this sighting for two main reasons - the first is twofold - it's a really good bird for the county, and I found it. The second is that, despite the odds and the bird not being very cooperative, I was able to share it with several other birders. There were high fives all around when the bird was finally relocated. **Barnacle Goose** at the Camel Farm, 11/24/21. Barnacle Goose is one of the coolest birds out there, and I'd been trying for one in OC for years and years. To finally get it, and to see that beautiful bird flying across the field brought me such joy. And again, this was a sighting shared with other birders - it's always better that way! **Ruffed Grouse**, Black Rock Forest, 06/10/18. This is another bird that I'd wanted to get in the county for absolutely ages. I tried for years and put in the time and effort, and eventually was rewarded with this sighting. Unfortunately I was all alone on this one, but it was really an exhilarating and rewarding experience.

Scott Baldinger: Ferruginous Hawk, Pink-Footed Goose, Yellow-Crowned Night Heron

Jan Fitzpatrick: Harris's Sparrow at Fitzpatrick's home, 12/14/13-5/12/14. Found on the club's Christmas Count. Immature plumage. Bird disappeared in April to return in breeding plumage! Seen by a bunch of Mearnsers. **Ivory Gull**, Newburgh filtration plant, 1/13/14. Found by Ed Treacy. Fitz, Mike Evanyke and I called in sick from school and spent the day with many others looking and waiting for the bird to appear. Thrilling when it did. **Crested Caracara**, River Road, Montgomery, 4/10/15 (Fitz's birthday) and the day before we were headed to the Texas coast for a bird tour, where we saw another Caracara on 4/15/15 on the Bolivar Peninsula. What fun to tell the tour guide that we had already seen the bird that year in New York.

Rob Stone: Sedge Wren, August 2006 with Warren Cairo, Oil City Road. Seemingly forever nemesis bird. Life bird. **Northern Wheatear**, October 2011 with Dick Ryley, Oil City Road. "Confirmed (lol)" the "those birds must come through here but no one ever sees them" hypothesis. Top ten luckiest birding moment for me. **Snowy Owl**, November 2013 at Warren Sod Farm. Beautiful bird. First one for my son, who was 8 at the time.

Ronnie Dilozenzo: Ferruginous Hawk 2/4/21 Corner Lynch and Breeze Hill Rd. I ran into Diane Bliss and we were in our cars talking about where to look for the FEHA next, when it flew down and landed on the electric wire right behind us! **Golden Eagle** 2/17/21 Black Dirt-Celery Ave. After many attempts to view the resident Golden Eagle at Storm King Mountain (and failing every time)-I was out looking for the FEHA and noticed a huge number of Canada Geese had taken off and were frantically flying away - I noticed a huge raptor flying through them and lo and behold it was a Golden Eagle! **Golden-winged Warbler** 6/12/21 Ironwood Drive. Finally understood where to go on Ironwood Drive thanks to info shared by other Mearnsers - I got to see both the male and the female.

Linda Scrima: Just three favorites? Favorite bird sightings and what I have learned:

Ferruginous Hawk: It is a little embarrassing to not identify a first state record on the spot. I was participating in the annual NYS Waterfowl Count in the Black Dirt Region and I saw this backlit hawk perched in the distance. It was much lighter than the usual hawks we see and took some photos to study later. Upon studying the photo I realized this hawk had an exceptionally large gape, different head coloring and lacked the traditional belly band of a Red-tailed Hawk. I sent the photo out to a few people and a Hawk group I belong to on social media. Even people familiar with Ferruginous Hawk were cautious about confirming the identification, because of the lack of records of this hawk on the east coast. Why is it my favorite sighting? It was a (first) state/county bird, but also in my NY Breeding Bird Atlas priority block and my 5 Mile Radius! What I learned: do not be embarrassed to ask questions! **Gyr Falcon:** It was a very

dark/overcast and very cold winter day. I was debating going out, but decided last minute to go the Wallkill River NWR. It was a few minutes before sunset and I saw a Gyrfalcon perched in a tree. I took a few photos as the Northern Harrier harassed the Gyrfalcon, and chased it out of sight. What I learned: Any day is a good day to go out birding! Even for a few minutes.

Summer Tanager: I was finishing up birding in Port Jervis when I heard a different call and looked up and photographed a Summer Tanager. I was a new birder and trying to figure out what it was (did not think it was a Scarlet Tanager and sounded different). It flew and I realized it was a Summer Tanager. I got the word out, but it was not relocated that day. I wanted to learn more, so I returned to the same location (at the same time) the next morning, and to my shock, it returned and perched in the evergreen again. I learned to try to figure out bird patterns/behavior. It seemed that this tanager warmed itself as the sun was rising over the mountain and then flew and continued its day. What I learned: Knowing local birds' calls and knowing the difference between local birds' calls and migrants is important. Study behavior and look for behavior patterns. What I have learned overall while birding: it is more important to study and learn about birds (identification markers/calls/behavior/migration patterns, etc.) than trying to quickly check off as many species on a list.

Frank Murphy: I don't bird Orange County much, just Ulster, but my favorites would be: **Ivory Gull** on the Hudson near Newburgh many years ago. **Golden Plovers**, 9/10/11 Dirt Region. **White-rumped Sandpipers**, 9/10/11.

Ken McDermott: **Ivory Gull** - 1/12/81 - on the Hudson at Newburgh following the dual sightings of Beezer Sequin and Ed Treacy. Thankfully the bird was seen for about a week and a great many members plus visitors got to enjoy this arctic wonder. **Crested Caracara** - 4/10/15 - River Road, Montgomery found by my son, Curt, in a farm field. This bird also stayed in the area and was seen by a great many birders. **White-phased female Gyrfalcon** -2/22/15 - on this date in a tree above a farm pond off of Lake Osiris Rd., Walden. Finally having passed into Orange County having been watched daily from 2/7/15 at Blue Chip Farm, Hoagerburgh Road, Shawangunk, Ulster County.

Yahvey Hoffman: **Ferruginous Hawk, Glaucous Gull, Connecticut Warbler.**

Lisa O'Gorman: My favorite three! **Blackburnian Warbler**. May 8. Minnewaska. **Black-throated Green Warbler**. May 12. Nature trail Wurtsboro. **Chestnut-sided Warbler**. May 14. Laurel Grove Cemetery.

John ("Lobsta") Cavalari: **Barred Owl** I saw in Otisville this year. It was random and a target bird for quite a while. **Northern Harrier** I saw in the Great Swamp. A good bird the first time I saw it in OC outside the Black Dirt. **Horned Larks** I saw on Indiana Road on a stark cold day with snow on the ground. With my mother when I was able to get her to bravely cross the road that looked like it belonged in North Dakota that day.

Bill Fiero: This was harder than it sounded. Let's go: **Yellow-Breasted Chat** that I had at Stewart. **Ferruginous Hawk** due to its importance. **Lark Sparrow** in the yard.

Karen Miller: Almost impossible to pick only three in 10 years of birding but these are some most notables: **Common Yellowthroat** – Heritage Trail, 6 1/2 Station Road, Goshen ... This is the bird that started it all for me. May 14, 2010. **Snow Goose** – Fancher Davidge Park, Middletown; flocks of Snow Geese are a sight and sound not easily forgotten. Feb. 6, 2017. **Winter Wren** – Kenridge Farm, Cornwall. Lifebird, seen with Matt Zeitler. Oct. 12, 2012.

Jeff Goulding: **Gyr Falcon** a couple of years ago with Peter and Ken. **Black Tern** at the Wallkill Wildlife Refuge platform where it stood on the water gauge marker. **Black-bellied Whistling Duck** also at the refuge but across the street.

Liza Antony: This was a tough task as I have more than three. However if I were to be limited to three, these three are the ones I would choose: **Connecticut Warbler** - September 16, 2017 at Winding Waters Trail .The bird popped up on a branch 10 feet away!! **Crested Caracara** - April 10, 2015 at Montgomery, New York. Thanks to a phone tag from Curt. **Ferruginous Hawk** -January 19, 2021 Black Dirt Area.

Alan Wells: **Mississippi Kite**; nesting pair; Sterling Forest State Park, at the parking area across the road from the Lautenberg Visitor Center; 5/29/2012-6/14/2012: fantastic photo opportunities of a rare species in Orange Co. **Crested Caracara**; Scott's Corner Golf Course; 4/14/2015; how often does a Caracara show up in Orange Co.!! I guess the loss of an eye did not help its navigational skills. We missed its Doodletown appearance, but were glad we were able to see it in Orange Co. **Red-necked Grebe**; Algonquin Park; 6/14/2012; in near full breeding plumage; while uncommon to rare in our area during winter, a near breeding plumage bird is a real treat!

Della Wells: **Crested Caracara**; Scott's Corner; 4/14/2015; the infamous one-eyed caracara! **Golden-winged Warbler**, male; Sterling Forest State Park—Indian Hill; 6/1/2014; Golden-wings are always a treat, no matter when or where! **Bobolink**; Wallkill River NWR—Winding Waters Trail; 7/30/2014; large aggregation of post-reproductive birds staging for the southward migration.

Ajit Antony: I chose these rarer species because I have not seen these species outside Orange County, or I might have and forgotten. **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**, 4/23/11, Wallkill River NWR. **Mississippi Kite**, 5/28/12, Sterling Forest. **Crested Caracara**, 4/10/15, Montgomery.

Gerhard Patsch: **Golden Eagle**. Many sightings at Storm King over the years, but the best was when I watched the GE for close to an hour eat/devour a gray squirrel. **Crested Caracara** first sighted at Doodletown on January 5, 2015. He was a mere stone's throw from the Orange County line and the bird disappeared in that direction. Seen again on River Road between Walden and Montgomery on April 10, 2015. Found by Curt! **Mississippi Kite**, observed at Sterling Forest. I am still looking for the exact date. There are many others of course, but as you can see, I have a special fondness for raptors.

Mary Busky: **European Goldfinch, Crested Caracara, Blue Grosbeak.**

Bill Busky: **Bald Eagle, Wild Turkey, Merlin.**

Dave Baker: **Snowy Owl, Yellow-breasted Chat, Mississippi Kite.**

Sharon Baker: **Cedar Waxwing, Northern Flicker, Yellow-rumped Warbler.**

Joe Trapani: **Virginia Rail** - May 2021 Six and half Station Road. **American Woodcock** - May 2021 - Mine Road. **Rose-Breasted Grosbeak** - May 2020- Kenridge Farm.

Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – February 13, 2021

Black Dirt Region – Trip I

Trip Leader: Karen Miller Photo by: Karen Miller

Weather: Clear and partly sunny; 14 degrees at start time

We were happy to welcome Gordon and Phyllis Schultze to our Black Dirt field trips again, bringing our group to eight birders. It was a cold morning, but we were a hearty bunch.

We started our outing at Skinners Lane where Horned Larks were most frequent. Sadly, we did not see any Lapland Longspurs. Celery Avenue did not share the Great Horned Owl either but there were about 1000 Canada Geese and one Mute Swan on the river, plus many American Crows and Mourning Doves in the trees and on the ground.

We got lucky on Onion Avenue. When we stopped about halfway down this road and got out of our cars, Gordon immediately spotted the Ferruginous Hawk on the far side of these massive fields. We watched it for only a minute or two before it flew across the field towards us and made a short stop in a tree above us. A few minutes later it reappeared and made another quick flight across the field and back. Other birds on Onion Ave were Crows, Horned Larks, Juncos and Song, American Tree and White-throated sparrows.

Lynch Avenue offered us more Red-tailed Hawks, Horned Larks, an American Kestrel and Song and White-throated sparrows. Horned Larks feeding along the road were the highlight of Turtle Bay Road, followed by Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, American Tree and Song sparrows and more Northern Cardinals.

It was not a very birdy day. With only 19 species, we were thrilled to have the Ferruginous Hawk with no work at all. Thank you to Gordon for spotting it. It certainly compensated for the low number of birds and everyone on the team got to see this outstanding hawk. It's always a fun morning birding with fellow Mearnsers in the Black Dirt!

Trip Photo: Ferruginous Hawk



Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – February 20, 2021

Eagle Trip II

Trip Leader: Gerhard Patsch

This Hudson River Bald Eagle Trip II ranged from the Bear Mountain Bridge to Croton Point.

We had 10 species of waterfowl including Gadwall, Black Duck, Buffleheads, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, and in the same optical field, a drake Common Merganser and a drake Red-throated Merganser side by side.

We spotted only 5 Great Cormorants. A Hermit Thrush was in the same tree as on our last eagle trip; no doubt the same bird.

It was a very good day for raptors with 7 species tallied. Peregrine Falcon 1, Red-shouldered Hawk 1, Northern Harrier 1, Cooper's Hawk 1, Red-tailed Hawk 4, and one Golden Eagle!

And thanks to many ice floes on the Hudson, we enjoyed 132 Bald Eagle sightings! At some of our stops, you would have had to close your eyes not to see any eagles. It was grand.

12 participants tallied 48 species.

PHOTO GALLERY:

Barred Owlet (and parent) by Maryangela Buskey

"This barred owlet was found along my neighbor's driveway. Its much larger sibling was in a nearby tree, but this one was small and bedraggled. Currently it is with Annie Mardiney and showing some slow progress towards independence."



Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – March 6, 2021

Rye NY and Greenwich CT

Trip Leader: Bob Slechta

Our March trip to the Long Island Sound was as to be expected.... COLD and WINDY !! Regardless, seven members showed up to get a look at birds not often seen in Orange County like Purple Sandpipers, Long-tailed Ducks, Red-breasted Mergansers, Horned Grebes, Brant (in number), and an unexpected Bonaparte Gull practically at our feet! Overall though, bird numbers seemed low today, perhaps due to the strong north winds blowing off shore at low tide.

Our trip started out at Playland Park after which we stopped at Grass Island and then Sherwood Island State Park and environs which brought our trip total to 42 species including other notables of - Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Widgeon, Black Duck, Green-wing Teal, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Killdeer, Common Loon, Great Cormorant, Great Blue-heron, Red-shouldered Hawk, and a few Black Birds but not much else thanks to the strong winds.

Hopefully we will not need to wear masks next year and it won't, I repeat ... won't be so darn windy !!

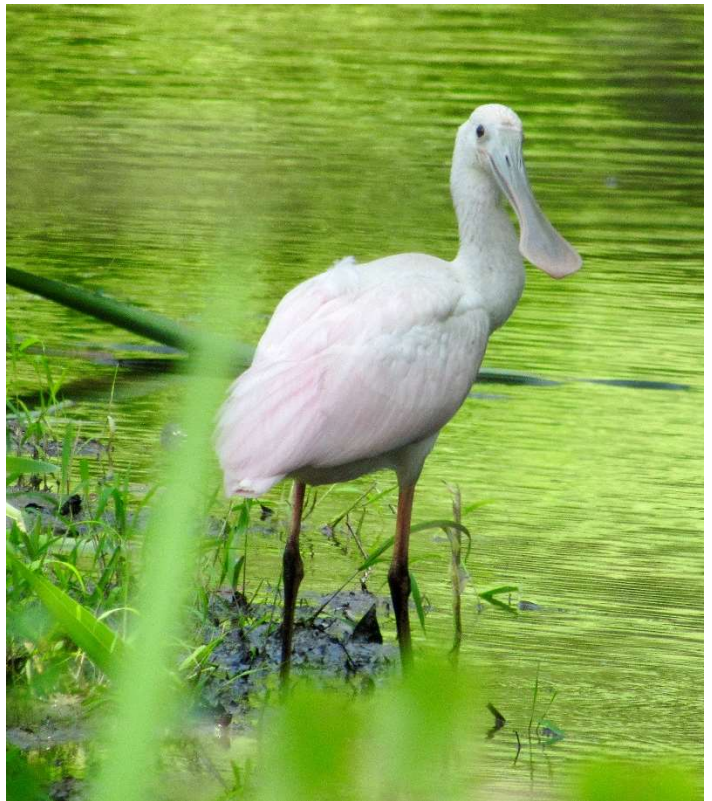
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PHOTO GALLERY:

Glossy Ibis by Jeanne Cimorelli.
Location: Camel Farm



Roseate Spoonbill by Scott Baldinger.
Location: Wappingers Falls, NY



Barred Owl by Rick Hansen.
Location: Ridge Road, Goshen NY

Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – March 13, 2021

Black Dirt Region - Trip II

Trip Leader: Karen Miller Photos: Karen Miller

Weather: Sunny, windy and cold; 31 degrees at start time, reaching 46 degrees mid-afternoon

Again, we started our Black Dirt Trip with eight birders. We agreed that we would head to Celery Avenue first, but after running into a flock of 30 Horned Larks on Pulaski Highway, we decided to make a quick stop at Skinner's Lane.

Celery Avenue was the highlight of the trip when we saw a Great Horned Owl sitting in the sun. It was the best bird of the morning. This road got lots of attention when the Ferruginous Hawk was around, and we were pleased to get 24 species on Celery Avenue this morning. We had a few ducks on the water with Canada Geese and many passerines on the riverbank.

Onion Avenue was a surprise with enormous flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles. We were all overwhelmed with the numbers of blackbirds. Even long-time birder Bob Slechta commented that he had never seen flocks of this size when blackbirds migrated through.

We stopped on Lynch Avenue to search for Wilson's Snipe in the wet areas of the cornfields. No luck this time but we will keep looking. No sign of the Ferruginous Hawk but it was reported at the Camel Farm. We DID have many Red-tailed Hawks in the Black Dirt.

Our last stop was at the beaver pond on Pine Hill Road near Glenmere Lake. We were treated to many species of waterfowl including Canadas, Mute Swans, Wood Ducks, a Northern Shoveler, Mallards, American Black Ducks, Green-winged Teal, Bufflehead, Hooded Mergansers and a Pied-billed Grebe. It was a great ending to a rewarding field trip with 40 species in this favorite birding area of Orange County.

Trip photos are shown above-right and below:



Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – March 20, 2021

Liberty Marsh, Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge

Trip Leader: Kathleen Ashman Photos: Kathleen Ashman

Seven members of the club met at 8:30am at the parking lot platform, on this first day of Spring. Three other members joined us later on in the trip. The weather was crisp and chilly this morning with a temperature of 18 degrees and NW winds at 4-7mph. Skies were clear with a few scattered high clouds. Unfortunately waterfowl were not present at the hoped for variety and numbers.

In the New York portion of the marsh we were able to see Ring-necked Ducks, American Black Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, Wood Ducks, Mallards, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Bufflehead, Common Mergansers, Canada Geese and Mute Swans. Other species seen in New York were Bald Eagles (2 immature, and 1 adult), Song Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds, Eastern Phoebe (heard by Joe Cullen), American Robin, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Harrier, Common Grackle, Ring-billed Gull and American Crow. A highlight for our trip was watching a male Pileated Woodpecker excavating a nest cavity, and the female later flew in for inspection. In general, other than waterfowl, there were very few birds. It was perhaps because it was so cold this morning.

We fared a little better when we entered the New Jersey portion of the loop trail. The additional species added to our tally were American Widgeon, some vocalizing Pied-billed Grebes, vocalizing Wild Turkeys, American Coot, Fish Crow, and Northern Cardinal. By the time we completed our walk at 11am we had a total of 33 species for the morning, the temperature had reached 36 degrees, and the winds had shifted to the South at 7-11mph. After completing the morning portion of the trip, five of us elected to visit some of the southern Orange County lakes to see if we could pick up additional species of waterfowl. Although Wickham Lake and Greenwood Lake had a few waterfowl, the numbers were low and we did not pick up any new species. At this point it was around 12:30pm so we elected to call it a day.

On my way home, I stopped at Greenwood Lake Passive Boat Launch, Round Lake, Pine Hill Rd. Beaver Pond, and 6 ½ Station Road Wildlife Sanctuary. Round Lake had a solitary Ruddy Duck and four Greater Scaup along with Common Mergansers, Hooded Mergansers and Bufflehead. 6 ½ Staton Road had a drake Blue-winged Teal (previously located and reported by Rick Hansen) in addition to Wood Ducks, Bufflehead, Green-winged Teal, American Black Ducks, Mallards, Hooded Mergansers, Ring-necked Ducks and Canada Geese.

All in all, we enjoyed being out on a beautiful day with migrating waterfowl and excellent company. Trip photos are presented below:



Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – March 27, 2021

Eastern Orange County Lakes

Trip Leaders: Bruce Nott and Carlotta Shearson

Weather: sunny and 48°F at the start.

Thirteen birders gathered at the Newburgh Walmart beaver pond on a warmish, sunny Saturday in late March for the start of the club's spring exploration of the lakes of eastern Orange County. The pond had a decent variety of ducks - including Wood Ducks, Ring-necked Ducks, Green-winged Teal, a Northern Shoveler, and a dozen or so accommodating Gadwall at the eastern end—as well as a Great Blue Heron and some Tree Swallows.

Across Route 300 at the north side of Washington Lake, we picked up Greater Scaup, Killdeer, Pied-billed Grebes, and a couple of Bald Eagles, along with an Eastern Phoebe. At Browns Pond, we were treated to good views of a Double-crested Cormorant in gorgeous breeding plumage, as well as a pair of chickadees busily excavating a cavity at the top of a snag. On the pond were American Widgeon, Lesser Scaup, Hooded and Common Mergansers, Bufflehead, Mute Swans, and Ring-necked Ducks.

After a quick stop at Crestview Lake, we headed to the eastern shore of Orange Lake, where Kathy Ashman picked out a number of Horned Grebes, two relatively nearby and the remainder in the far distance at the north end of the lake. There were many Bufflehead on the west side of the lake. Our next stop was the Gardnertown Road marsh to look for Wilson's Snipe. Although we struck out on the snipe, a Red-shouldered Hawk flew over low, and we picked up Cooper's and Red-tailed Hawks as well. The final stop was Chadwick Lake, where three additional Horned Grebes, another Red-shouldered Hawk, and many Common Mergansers (300) and Ring-necked Ducks (150) were seen. Number of species for the day: 46-ish.

PHOTO GALLERY:

Cattle Egret by Scott Baldinger (left) and Carol Weiss (right). Location: Rockland Lake



Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – April 3, 2021

Rye NY and Bridgeport CT

Trip Leader: Bob Slechta

The four Mearnsers aka... 'Peeps' (as it was Easter weekend) enjoyed a very rewarding trip to the Long Island Sound and a nice tally of 58 species. There being only 4 cars today we had more flexibility, so instead of Marshlands we headed to Bridgeport right after Playland which was a little slow. Notable sightings at Playland were 3 American Oystercatchers, both Cormorants, our first of many Osprey, and many Long-tailed Ducks.

Once we reached Stratford the birding really picked up and we had GREAT looks at some GREAT birds, they being - Brandt (only a hand full at Playland), Gadwall, Green-wing Teal, Greater Scaup, Surf Scoters (a dozen or more nice and close, stunning bird), White-winged Scoter (only one and hard to pick out), Long-tailed Duck (only a few here), Bufflehead, 1 Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Horned Grebe (a nice breeding male right below us at the Lordship sea wall), 2 Northern Gannets (lit perfectly by the afternoon sun as they wheeled about), American Coot, approx. 80 Sanderling and 10 Dunlin (fairly close, feeding on the jetty as the tide came in), 1 Greater Yellowlegs (on the backside of the beach, in the marsh), 2 Bonaparte's Gulls (swimming with Herring and Ring-billed Gulls), phenomenal views of one Iceland and one Glaucous Gull (both first year birds, twisting and turning no more than 30 feet from us), Common Loon (more seen at Playland), and Red-throated Loon (more seen here), more Double-crested Cormorants, Great Blue Herons, 1 Great Egret, more Osprey, 1 Northern Harrier, lots of Fish Crows (but no Common Crows), 1 Eastern Towhee (heard), and 1 female Boat-tailed Grackle !

Not bad for a last minute change in plans ... yes? - Bob

PHOTO GALLERY:

Red-headed Woodpecker by Dave Baker.
Location: Plutarch Road



Black Vultures by Dave Baker.
Location: Iona Island



Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – April 10, 2021
Oil City Road, Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge

Trip Leader: Joyce Depew

It was a typical April day with temps between 55 and 63 degrees and a very small group met me at the platform on Oil City Road. Participants: Bob Slechta, Joe Cullen and Donovan Aitchison. I am always happy to visit this place but today it quickly turned to disappointment.

As we began our walk around the Loop we quickly realized that the water in the main marsh was significantly lowered. After all the snow and rain we have had, there should have been deeper pool levels. I can attest to that fact since I was there 3 weeks before and things appeared normal for spring with plenty of water around. The bird count on the NY western side was very low. As we moved on toward the berm which crosses into NJ we were dismayed to learn that the water was gone in some areas and what remained were some dead and dying carp and turtles moving about. There was even a Canada Goose that did not look healthy at all as it was curled in the muddy zone as though it was on a nest, however, it wasn't! At that point for NY we had 21 species of birds and in this mix were 6 species of waterfowl, 1 species of wader, 1 shore bird species, two raptors, and smaller passerines. (*See: Bold faced font below indicating species in NY*).

We returned to the platform on Bob's suggestion and drove ourselves to Owens Station to take a look at the Sussex County side of the refuge. On our walk there it was productive and we had a wonderful flock of Rusty Blackbirds singing and foraging in the swamp along the wooded path. On this side we ended with 38 species. The only species that was not found in NJ were: **Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Palm Warbler and Hairy Woodpecker**. Adding these to the entire list below gave us a total of 42 species for the trip. The other species are: **Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Mallard Duck**, American Black Duck, **Green-winged Teal**, Ring-necked Duck, Wild Turkey, **Pied-billed Grebe**, Mourning Dove, American Coot, **Killdeer, Great Blue Heron**, Turkey Vulture, **Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker**, Eastern Phoebe, American Crow, Common Raven, **Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Tree Swallow**, White breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, European Starling, Eastern Bluebird, **American Robin**, American Goldfinch, Field Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, **Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow**, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal.

I spoke to a couple of local people who shared information that the marsh was being drained to dredge it out! I verified this after birder Amy Klein suggested that I read the news she found on the Friends of Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuges page on Facebook. There are some reasons given for the dredging project of this marsh which is labeled as Pool 6. My fear is that water recovery in this place will be slow since in late summer the marsh water lowers naturally. For example: Several years ago the drain valves were left open at the refuge during a government shutdown. It took a few years for the water levels to become normal again because we did not have the usual amount of snow during several winters. There were also a succession of droughts in the summers that followed. I believe that this contributed to the lack of water and growth of weeds on the east side of the marsh over the past few years. I also noticed the declining number of waterfowl on that side of this marsh since I first visited there in 2008 during my Avian Biology studies. We will observe, as birders usually do, and take note of the impact of this project as it moves forward.

Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – April 21, 2021

6 1/2 Station Road Sanctuary, Goshen NY

Trip Leader: Amy Greher

Seven birders participated in the trip, which began at 8:30 AM with a quick passing shower. The weather was cool for April, with clouds and a light wind for most of the trip.

We identified a total of 47 bird species. Highlights included 48 (approximately) Yellow-rumped Warblers spotted all along the Heritage Trail. Two Common Gallinules, a Green Heron, a pair of Wood Ducks, a Virginia Rail and a Pied-billed Grebe were found as well by the marshy water.

We also had good views of Palm warblers along the Heritage Trail.

Some of the other sightings included: Blue-winged Teal, Pied-billed Grebe, Mourning Dove, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Barn Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, Chipping Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, and Northern Cardinal.

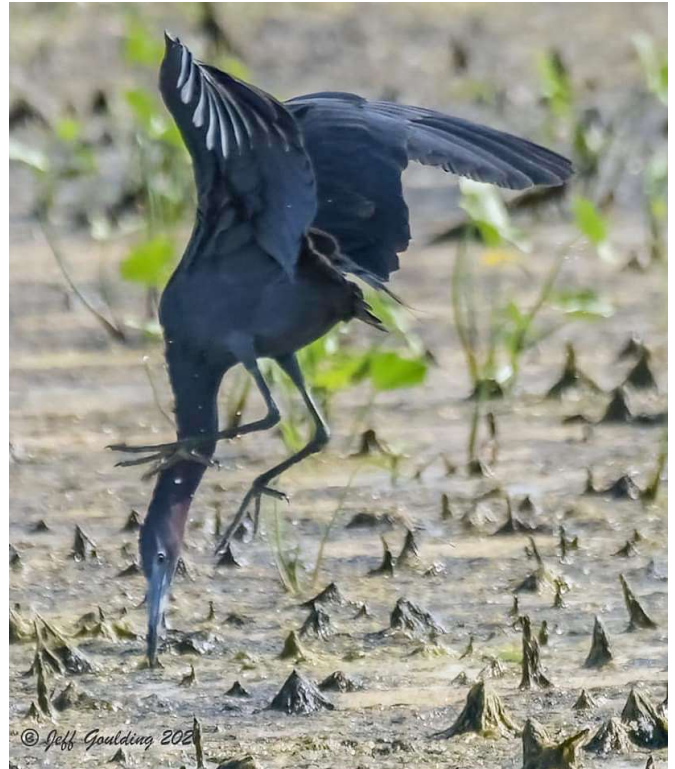
Our leisurely walk on the paved path ended around 12:30 PM and we parted before the heavy rain and colder weather arrived.

PHOTO GALLERY:

Wilson's Phalarope by Scott Baldinger.
Location: Morningside Park, Sullivan County NY



Little Blue Heron by Jeff Goulding.
Location: Near Kerens, TX



Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – April 25, 2021

Bashakill Wildlife Management Area

Trip Leader: Scott Baldinger

Despite a low turnout (only Rich Van Tieghem and Zenon Bachir on hand), the field trip to the Bashakill which was cancelled from Saturday (due to the BKAA Cleanup) to today turned out to be a fun day of birding. The weather cooperated with only the first half hour a light drizzle and then precipitation-free for the next four hours.

Highlights included Virginia Rails (including one seen), Common Gallinules, the continuing WHITE-EYED VIREO (found in the orchard this morning), Blue-headed Vireo, Pine Warblers, Palm Warbler, Black & white Warblers, multiple Louisiana Waterthrush, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Ring-necked Ducks, Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Herons, Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Mute Swans, Bald Eagles, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawks, Broad-winged Hawks, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flickers, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Common Ravens, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Fish Crows, Eastern Towhees, Chipping Sparrows, Swamp Sparrows, Field Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, Eastern Phoebe, and Eastern Bluebirds.

We finished with 57 species for the field trip. With the upcoming warming trend next week, the Bashakill should expect a huge influx of new species many of which are overdue.

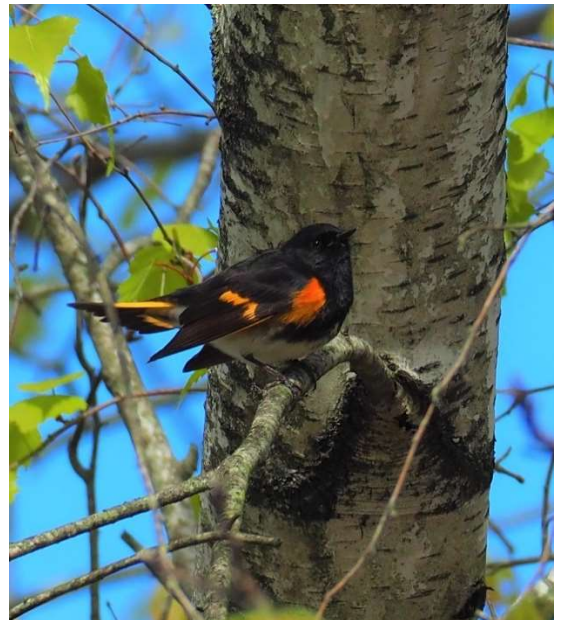
Complete checklist can be viewed at: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S86353838>

PHOTO GALLERY:

Blue-winged Teal by John Cavalari.
Location: Horseshoe Trail at Bashakill WMA



American Redstart by Gef Chumard. Location:
Fancher-Davidge Park in Middletown



Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – April 28, 2021

Chadwick Lake, Town of Newburgh NY

Trip Leader: Bob Slechta

At last! Things are starting to get back to normal. At least that's how it felt as a year's worth of Covid fears and precautions started to melt away with people getting vaccinated and the CDC relaxing Covid rules. As a result we had a nice turn out today with 12 Mearns members, all hoping to get a glimpse of some migrants and early arrivals.

Most of today's trip was spent along the southwest corner of the lake as there was good bird activity and jovial comradery. Notable birds on this part of the trip were - Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hooded Merganser, Blue-headed Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Parula, Nashville Warbler, Palm Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, and the always numerous Yellow-rumped Warbler in addition to new arrivals (local breeders) such as - Catbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Towhee, Gnatcatcher, Barn, Tree, and Rough-winged Swallows, Warbling Vireo, Chipping Sparrow, Black-and-white and Pine Warbler.

After three hours and the temperature getting close to 80, we decided to make a drive to the north end of the lake where we barely spent an hour as the birds were quieting down due to the heat. Added to our list were - Wood Duck, Osprey, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Bald Eagle, Broad-winged Hawk (15 for the trip), House Wren, plus Field and Swamp Sparrow for a total of 55 species and the added bonus of birding with friends once again.

PHOTO GALLERY:

Dickcissel by Karen Miller.

Location: Shawanqunk Grasslands NWR



Wilson's Snipe by Karen Miller



Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – May 1, 2020

Stewart State Forest

Trip Leader: Bob Slechta

What the _ _ _ _ (take your pick) happened? Wednesday was warm and in the 80's and here we were walking down Ridge Road shivering and holding on to our hats for dear life as the wind howled, sending 40 degree air down our necks ... nasty and cold!

Needless to say the birding was tough going so when we reached the first marshy area, I queried everyone on leaving and going to Barron Road and hopefully out of the wind. Everyone readily agreed and off the 7 of us went. It was definitely the right choice as we wound our way through the forest along the edge of the 'power line' cut on the 'Escarpment Trail'.

At least we were able to see and hear birds now with the following birds of note –

Phoebe, Broad-winged Hawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Blue-headed Vireo, Raven, House Wren, Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Catbird, many Goldfinches, Field Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Towhee, and for Warblers - Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Blue-winged, Black-and-white, Yellow, Pine, Yellow-rumped, Prairie, Nashville and Black-throated Green.

Even though we only tallied 35 species today, everyone enjoyed the discovery of the 'Escarpment Trail' and the birding it provided.

PHOTO GALLERY:

Ferruginous Hawk by Joyce Depew. Location: Onion Rd.



Brown Thrasher by Joyce Depew.
Location: Bashakill WMA



Virginia Rail by Dave Baker. Location: 6 ½ Station Rd.



Yellow-crowned Night Heron by Joyce Depew.
Location: Middletown NY



Trip Report - Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Outing – May 5, 2021

Goosepond Mountain State Park, Chester NY

Trip Leader: Bob Slechta

And the answer is... Rain. The question being - what is good birding weather. After the previous weekend's nasty windy weather, today's forecast of light showers and mild temps looked pretty good, at least to some of us. The four of us started off at the main trail head on Laroe Road and were rewarded right away with lots of bird activity. In fact the birds remained active throughout our trip even during periods of light rain, which was never heavy enough to be problematic with our binoculars. Hence we got to see many of the birds today.

On this segment of today's trip we tallied 47 species and the 'bird of the day', a White-eyed Vireo right in front of us at eye level - Very nice!

Other birds of note here were - Chimney Swifts, Pileated Woodpecker, Great Crested and Least Flycatcher, Tree and Barn Swallow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Catbird, a small flock of at least 10 Purple Finch along with Goldfinch feeding on tree catkins, Field, Swamp, and White-throated Sparrow, Towhee, Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and for Warblers - Ovenbird, Blue-winged, Black-and-white, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded, Redstart, Northern Parula, Blackburnian, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue and many Yellow-rumped kept us spinning about in hopes they were something more exotic.

Next we went to the trailhead off Bull Mill Road minus one Mearns and birded a bit after which Bruce and I went to the 'boardwalk' trail off 17M where we picked up our second surprise of the day ... a Marsh Wren! I've never had one here in all the ten plus years going to this spot.

At the last two locations we added to our list of course with goodies being - Wood Duck, Solitary Sandpiper, Eastern Kingbird, Phoebe, Yellow-throated and Warbling Vireo, Bluebird, Wood Thrush, Chipping Sparrow, Louisiana Waterthrush, Tennessee, Nashville, and Magnolia Warbler, for a grand total of 65 species including the usual Woodpeckers, Jay, Titmouse, Chickadee, and White-breasted Nuthatch. Not bad for a rainy day in May!

PHOTO GALLERY:

Phoebe by Joe Trapani



Wood Ducks by Bill Fiero



Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Event – May 8, 2021

Bashakill Wildlife Management Area

Trip Leader: Joyce Depew

The recent weather pattern over the past few weeks was repeated today with Saturday's weather basically being lousy! We had chilly temps in the low to mid 40 degree range with intermittent rain showers that we dodged for a few hours but got progressively worse as the morning progressed. In spite of this, we had 8 participants: Me, R. Slechta, R. VanTieghem, L. Strohl, D. Rawson, J. Cullen, J. Trapani, G. Fowler. Some folks decided to drop out after the first hour or so due to the weather. My thanks to all who showed up so the trip wasn't a total "wash." Thanks to Rich who had his scope which assisted us with ID of some of the waterfowl in the marsh.

Wilson's Warbler was spotted, however, the actual number of warblers for the outing was low. Flycatcher species such as Great-crested Flycatcher and Least Flycatcher were not seen or heard as I had experienced at the Bashakill only 5 days earlier. The Eastern Kingbirds were active! A few of us had a nice look at a Virginia Rail that decided to cross the road near us to join some others hiding in the marsh who emitted a group style "grunt" call!

At the Horse Shoe pull off we had an astounding number of American Goldfinch and I would estimate that there were over 30 individuals high up in the trees singing away! Apparently, they were migrating through the region.

Today's bird count was 41 species which were:

Canada Geese, Wood Duck, Mallard, Virginia Rail, Common Gallinule, Spotted Sandpiper, Great Blue Heron, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray Catbird, Veery, Wood Thrush, American Robin, American Goldfinch, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Northern Cardinal and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

PHOTO GALLERY:

American Oystercatcher by John Cavalari.

Location: Breezy Point National Recreational Area in Queens NY



Painted Bunting
by Jeff Goulding.

Location: Near Kerens, TX



Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Event – May 16, 2021
Kenridge Farm, Cornwall NY

Trip Leader: Bob Slechta

First wind, then rain, and now ... it's all over? Even though we identified 63 species today, the only migrants we had were Solitary Sandpiper and White-throated Sparrow! So here it is, May 16 and the bulk of the spring migration appears to be over (we only had 6 Warblers today - all local breeders). Even so, our list of 'local' birds at Kenridge Farm is quite impressive when you consider that we missed regulars here like House Finch, Bluebird, Chickadee, Pileated Woodpecker, Carolina Wren and even Cowbird! Even so, exploring the different habitats at Kenridge made it an enjoyable day for the 13 of us as we strolled the property on a warm, partly cloudy day, and just to show you the scope of the diversity I am listing all the birds we had sans the two migrants previously mentioned.

They are: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Mourning Dove, Virginia Rail, Spotted Sandpiper, Great Blue and Green Heron, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Flicker, Kestrel, Great Crested Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Wood-Pewee, Phoebe, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, Crow, Raven, Tree Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, House Wren, Veery, Wood Thrush, Robin, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Mockingbird, Starling, Cedar Waxwing, House Sparrow, Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Towhee, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Grackle, Ovenbird, Blue-Winged Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Indigo Bunting. As you can see a nice mix of birds for field, thicket, woods, pond, wet, and human structures.

Hopefully by the fall we will have better access to this great birding location. It was enjoyable to be out and about with fellow birders. – Bob

PHOTO GALLERY:

Black-billed Cuckoo by Scott Baldinger.
Location: Bashakill WMA



Virginia Rail by Amy Greher.
Location: 6 ½ Station Road, Goshen NY



Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Event – May 19, 2021

Ironwood Drive, Sterling Forest State Park

Trip Leader: Bob Slechta

The Quest For The Mythical Golden-winged Warbler!

It was a beautiful day to search for the ever elusive Golden-winged Warbler at one of the few remaining locations in Orange County - Ironwood Drive. Fourteen Mearnsers joined in the search and our perseverance paid off! Walking up the north trail under the Power Lines, we heard the song and diligently followed it back and forth before finally getting looks at the bird (they hide so well) - thanks to Liza spotting it in a shrub right in front of us.

Other goodies we had today are - Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Double-crested Cormorant, Osprey, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Broad-winged Hawk, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Phoebe, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Raven, House Wren, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, Catbird, White-throated Sparrow, Towhee, Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting, and for Warblers - Ovenbird, Blue-winged, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded, Yellow, Redstart, Cerulean, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Prairie, and Blackpoll (the only migrant).

A quick stop up the road at the Doris Duke Preserve added Chipping Sparrow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Wood-Pewee, and Red-shouldered Hawk to our list, bringing the day's total to 54 species and good looks at quite a few.

I personally was thrilled to get nice looks today at my first Hummingbird, Prairie Warbler and Cerulean Warbler of the year. - BOB

PHOTO GALLERY:



Purple Martins by Carol Weiss.
Location: Iroquois NWR in Oakfield, NY

Female American Redstart on nest by Amy Greher. Location: West Virginia



Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Event – May 22, 2021
Goosepond Mountain State Park, Chester NY

Trip Leader: Kathleen Ashman

Thirteen members came out for the late May outing at Goosepond Mountain State Park. After meeting at the Chester Plaza parking lot we drove over to the Lazy Hill Road park entrance off of Laroe Rd. The trees and bushes were already well leafed out, making actual sightings difficult. Most of the birds on our count were ID'd by song rather than actual sightings. We walked from Laroe Rd. out the Lazy Hill Road Trail, over the Seeley Brook, through the meadow and back. Along the way to our great disappointment, we only managed to either see or hear six species of warbler: Ovenbird, Blue-winged Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, and Prairie Warbler. Lisa O'Gorman spotted an Ovenbird for us in the understory, and with her good directions she was able to get us all on this beautiful bird. Other highlights included Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Baltimore Oriole, Wood Thrush, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Barred Owls dueting, Great-crested Flycatcher, and Cedar Waxwings. Joe Cullen spotted a pair of Orchard Orioles copulating which was a nice sighting for the NY Breeding Bird Atlas. We had a total of 44 species for the Goosepond Mountain portion of the trip.

Many of us then proceeded to Goosepond Mountain South on Bull Mill Road next to the Trout Brook. There we were able to pick up Chimney Swift and Warbling Vireo. We had a total of 50 species for the day. Weather: clear skies with scattered clouds, temperature range between 7:30am and 11:30am was 63 to 74 degrees, winds out of the northwest at 6 to 13mph.

Ebird Checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S88878921>

After the official field trip ended, a few of us went to Knapp's View in Chester to try for Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks. The Bobolinks were well seen and heard, but sadly it was not so for the Meadowlarks. All and all it was a good day despite the low species total and the lack of Warbler species.

Trip photos are shown below, including the singing Ovenbird:



Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Event – May 31, 2021
Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge

Trip Leaders: Tom Crepet and Jane Vecchione

The date of this trip was changed because of a cold steady “pouring” rain on the day it was scheduled. On this Memorial Day Monday six Mearnsers met under completely overcast skies but actually very comfortable temperatures, and with no wind. At the parking lot a number of Savannah Sparrows were singing and there seemed to be one on every post. No Grasshopper Sparrows were heard or seen at this time. Numbers of Bobolinks and Meadowlarks were active in the field. Their colors stood out nicely with no sun visible, and throughout the trip we got great looks at them. Ravens too were heard in the distance near Blue Chip Farms, and Mallards and Canada Geese flew over the refuge.

We decided to work our way up the entrance road where birds we heard and saw included Willow Flycatcher, a Swamp Sparrow by the stream, Yellow Warbler and Barn Swallows near the Martin house. A Bluebird flew toward a nest box that had a Tree Swallow on it. The Bluebird did not land but it knocked the Tree Swallow right off the box! On our walk toward the pond a few of us heard a Virginia Rail in the wetland. We took a look at the lovely new plaque on the Mearns bench at the pond. A Kestrel was also seen perched in the distance.

As we were returning back, it was Gerhard who caught sight of perhaps the bird of the day. A Virginia Rail quickly flew over the road! We returned toward the gazebo and most of us walked the trail toward Blue Chip where we had several nice birds; new additions included Chimney Swifts, Kingbirds- 2 in a bush, and a Brown Thrasher singing from a dead snag.

We then headed toward the platform and from there were finally rewarded with more than one nice sighting of Grasshopper Sparrows through our scopes. It seemed this day though, there were more Savannah Sparrows seen than Grasshopper Sparrows. While doing the checklist we were treated to a great view of a Cooper’s Hawk as it flew over at low altitude. We decided to call it a day at 1:30 pm! Forty six species were seen or heard!

PHOTO GALLERY:



Female Cerulean
Warbler (collecting
nesting material)
by Karen Maloy

White-eyed Vireo
by Karen Maloy



UPCOMING TRIPS:

Here are the trips that are planned thru March 2022. (see "Notes" section below)

August 21, Sat - Wallkill River NWR - Meet Joyce Depew (978-9952) at the Owen's Station Road parking area at 8:00 AM for Egrets, Ibis, Least Bittern, and who knows what else.

August 28, Sat - Black Dirt region - Be at the Jolly Onion in Pine Island at 8:00 AM and hopefully Karen Miller (381-3283) will find us some Buffed-breasted Sandpipers.

September 11, Sat - Stewart State Forest - Meet Bill Fiero (728-5208) again at the North Ridge Road parking area of Stewart State Forest at 8:00 AM. Perhaps a Yellow-breasted Chat?

September 18, Sat - Winding Waters Trail, Wallkill River NWR - Meet Kathy Ashman (421-5478) there at 8:00 AM and maybe we will be lucky with a Connecticut Warbler.

September 25, Sat - Bashakill WMA - Meet Scott Baldinger (888-2333) at the Deli Fields at 8:30 AM. Philadelphia Vireo and Gray-cheeked Thrush are likely!

October 2, Sat. - Kenridge Farm with Amy Greher (774-9399). Be at the main parking lot at 8:30 AM. Lincoln's Sparrow and Palm Warbler are likely!

October 6, Wed. - Stonykill Farm, Fishkill NY with Bruce Nott (542-0583) and Carlotta Shearson (234-8314). Meet them at the farm at 8:30 AM for a good mix of Sparrows and Warblers.

October 9, Sat. - Goosepond Mountain State Park with Bob Slechta (541-8210). Meet next to the Chester McDonalds at 8:00 AM and we'll hunt for Thrushes, Sparrows, and Warblers.

October 16, Sat. - Croton Point County Park (Westchester) with Jodi Brodsky (282-1058). Be at the RR station 'boat launch' at 8:30 AM and let's see if we can top last year's 35 Palm Warblers.

October 23, Sat. - Wallkill River NWR with Joyce Depew (978-9952). Meet at the Oil City Rd. platform at 8:30 AM and hopefully the Sand Hill Cranes and their offspring will still be there.

November 6, Sat. - Black Dirt Region with Dave Baker (440-4030). Meet at the Jolly Onion in Pine Island at 8:30 AM and we'll search for Horned Larks, Pipits, and maybe Vesper Sparrows.

November 20, Sat. - Eastern Orange County Lakes with Bruce Nott (542-0583) and Carlotta Shearson (234-8314). Meet at the NW corner of the Newburgh Walmart at 8:30 AM for Ducks, Ducks, and more Ducks.

November 26, Fri. - Southern Orange County Lakes (Plus) with Kathleen Ashman (294-6140). Meet at the strip mall next to the Chester McDonalds at 8:30 AM for more Ducks - different lakes.

November 27, Sat. - Shawangunk Grasslands NWR with Jane Vecchione and Tom Crepet (443-5440). Be there at 4:00 PM for Short-eared Owls.

December 3, 4, 5, Fri-Sun. - Cape Ann, MA with Jodi Brodsky. Call her (282-1058) or email her (jsbbirder@gmail.com) for details (lodging etc.) for this always rewarding trip with many birds that we do not get down here during the winter.

December 18, Sat. - Northeast Orange County Christmas Bird Count. If you've never participated and want to join-in, give Karen Miller a call (381-3203) and be part of this national event.

January 15, Sat. - New York State Winter Waterfowl Count. If you want to join-in, contact Bob Slechta (541-8210)

January 29, Sat. - Eagle Trip I with Gerhard Patsch (258-0620). Meet at the Iona Island overlook on Rt. 202/6 (the Goat Trail) at 9:00 AM for 100+ Bald Eagles and other goodies.

February 12, Sat. - Black Dirt Trip I with Bob Slechta (541-8210). Meet at the Jolly Onion in Pine Island at 9:00 AM for Larks, Buntings, and Rough-legged Hawk.

February 19, Sat. - Eagle Trip II with Gerhard Patsch (258-0620). Meet at the Iona Island overlook on Rt. 202/6 (the Goat Trail) at 9:00 AM and see if we can top the previous Eagle trip.

March 5, Sat. - Rye NY & Greenwich CT with Bob Slechta (541-8210). Meet at the Playland parking lot at 9:00 AM for wintering Brant, Loons, Grebes, and ducks.

March 12, Sat. - Black Dirt Trip II with Bob Slechta (541-8210). Meet at the Jolly Onion at 8:30 AM for Longspurs, Larks, and thousands of Black Birds.

March 26, Sat. - Wallkill River NWR with Kathleen Ashman (421-5478). Be at the platform on Oil City Rd. at 8:30 AM for large numbers of water fowl - especially Pintails and Green-wing Teal.

March 30, Wed. - Eastern Orange County Lakes with Bruce Nott (542-0583) and Carlotta Shearson (234-8314). Meet at the NW corner of the Newburgh Walmart at 8:30 AM for a good mix of water fowl and maybe some Swallows.

NOTES:

- The phone number given for each trip leader is there for you to call the night before or the morning of if you have any questions. You can also keep an eye on the Mearn's Groups.io site for last minute changes.

- If you lead a trip, you are responsible for sending a write-up to Rich VanTieghem at rich.w2vt@gmail.com

- Regarding Covid protocol: If you've been vaccinated, then you do not need to wear a mask. If you have not been vaccinated, then you may need to mask-up depending on the latest government guidelines. Keep your eyes open for any changes that we make to our field trip Covid rules. – Bob Slechta, Trip Coordinator

Editor's Note:

Thank you to all of the members who contributed articles, trip reports, data, and the more than 35 photographs that are presented in this newsletter. Happy birding! - Rich VanTieghem