



Orange Feather

Fall 2022

August 2022

Greetings to All!

As summer is slowly waning, I have been reflecting back on the birding activities of the past several months of Winter, Spring and Summer of this year. It has been a good year so far.

We still had members who were willing to participate in the Break 100 and the two teams tied with 84 bird species! Hopefully, next year we can have more teams and perhaps a potluck for the countdown like we used to have. A slight change was suggested by Mary Buskey to have the countdown on the Sunday instead of right after the count on Saturday to allow for a more relaxed event. Something to keep in mind for next year!

Reminder to members: Try to schedule some time to participate in the Audubon Christmas Count 2022! The date will be posted.

Through our network of sharing rare sightings I learned about how some warblers could make it through the winter living near a treatment plant. I did get to see those warblers and also an Eastern Phoebe there. The thought never crossed my mind to bird behind a treatment plant, but there is always something to learn about birding possibilities in different areas - with permission of course!

In my own birding adventures, I discovered a Great Horned Owl on a nest back in the month of February, however, due to its location I chose not to report right away. A few days later, I went to check out this owl again and sometime in those four days it decided to vacate her nest! Hopefully she is still alive somewhere else. I was disappointed in that discovery and I hit the books to get the possible answers to this and learned more.

In this issue of the Orange Feather you will see ten personal accounts of selected rare bird sightings in the last 9 months by the folks who discovered or viewed these birds. It was Rich's idea to interview these exceptional birders and cover it in our newsletter.

Changes have occurred to our excellent staff of volunteers with Ajit Antony moving to Colorado to start a new life. We wish him well!

Carlotta Shearson has agreed to take over the technical work that Ajit had been doing along with the regular volunteer service she provides to us. I am very grateful for her diligence, advice and expertise in keeping us up to date with information on the website and managing the groups.io email service and database entries for special files, The Christmas Count and Break 100 results.

In July 2022 our club had been approached by two organizations to support some environmental and community minded efforts. With discussion amongst our Board members and advice of some long term volunteers, the Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club has endorsed: Open Space Institute's efforts to get financial support through NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to create a 2.7 mile loop trail in the Town of Cornwall. Our other endorsement was for Putnam Highlands Audubon Society who is currently trying to re-open the upper parking lot on Indian Brook Rd. so that Constitution Marsh area is more accessible to the general public and also to improve the parking area so it does not negatively impact the neighborhood that it is in.

Additionally, Orange County Audubon has reached out to us to offer posting our local field trips on their website as they have in the past. However, we are restricting participation on any overnight field trips that may occur in the future to Edgar A. Mearns Bird club members, their families or guests on those trips such as Cape Ann.

My thanks goes out to all volunteers who serve this club in various capacities such as the Leaders for Field Trips listed in this issue, and also those who help behind the scenes to inform members and manage business affairs of this club. They are: Board members Linda Strohl, Treasurer and Johanna Bloomfield, Secretary. Volunteers: Della Wells, Membership Chair; Bob Slechta, Chair of Outings; Karen Miller, Past President and now Christmas Count Coordinator; Don Aitchison, Program Chair; Rich Van Tieghem, Newsletter Editor; Carlotta Shearson, Web Master and Technical Expert; Jeff Goulding, What's App; Bill Fiero, What's App; Alan Wells and Tracy Patsch. These people make it possible to keep things running smoothly for our membership and have made my job easier!

Good Birding to All!
Joyce M. Depew, Acting President

Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club

Web: <http://mearnsbirdclub.org/>

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Board of Directors:

Joyce M. Depew, Acting President
Linda Strohl, Treasurer
Johanna Lauren Bloomfield, Secretary
Bob Slechta, Chair of Outings and Christmas Count
Don Aitchison, Program Chair
Della Wells, Membership Chair

A SELECTION OF RARE BIRDS DISCOVERED IN ORANGE COUNTY AND ADJACENT AREAS

Franklin's Gull

On December 16, 2022 Ronnie DiLorenzo had parked by the Newburgh Boat Launch and began scanning a large group of Gulls. She noticed one Gull that looked different from the rest. Ronnie took a photo, transferred the photo to her phone, and uploaded it to Merlin Bird ID. The resulting ID was Franklin's Gull. Bruce Nott also took a photo and sent it to John Haas who confirmed Franklin's Gull. The Gull later flew off to the South. Jeanne Cimorelli later re-located it at the Newburgh Wastewater treatment plant area. Photo: Ronnie DiLorenzo.



Neotropic Cormorant

During the afternoon of May 28, 2022, Bruce Nott and Ken McDermott were at the Newburgh Rowing Club on the Hudson River waterfront, viewing a Double-crested Cormorant that was resting on the rotting pilings. Shortly thereafter they noticed that a different Cormorant with a pale bill was resting on that piling. Photos that were taken showed a white "V" at the base of the bill. A field guide showed a likely match to Neotropic Cormorant. Photos were sent to other birders, who confirmed the identification. The bird was not in breeding plumage, and its sex is not known. It was smaller than a Double-crested Cormorant which is typically 7" taller. The size difference also helped to validate the ID. The bird has also been seen on the pilings at the New York Waterways Ferry in Newburgh NY, in Beacon NY (across the river), and lately on pilings near the Global Oil Terminal in Newburgh on the Hudson River. Photo: Bruce Nott.



Northern Shrike

Matt Zeitler located a Northern Shrike at Wickham Woodlands Park in Warwick on Feb 5, 2022. Many birders subsequently sought out and were able to view the bird. Matt indicated that this was likely the same Northern Shrike that Kathy Ashman had previously discovered during October 2021. Photo: Matt Zeitler.



Tundra Swan

Scotty Baldinger reported: Two groups of Tundra Swans were found in Sullivan County during the month of March 2022. The first group totaling 15 birds were first found by John Haas on March 3rd. John spotted them well off the southwest side of Haven Road when he called me.

The swans were so far away that it was difficult to determine which species we were looking at but John speculated it was a good chance that they were Tundras. We headed over to the Main Boat Launch and walked out the Birch Trail and from there we could determine they were indeed Tundra Swans. I believe the swans stayed until March 9th before moving on. On March 13th Renee Davis reported 7 Tundra Swans on Swan Lake, which stayed for just 2 days.

Photo: Scotty Baldinger.



Arctic Tern

Arctic Terns visited our area on March 13, 2022. These beautiful birds were seen at Glenmere Lake, Wickham Lake and Washington Lake (and likely at other spots). Among other viewers, Karen Miller posted that she had 4 Arctic Terns at Glenmere Lake and photographed them from a distance for 20 minutes. The birds were active flying over the lake, diving to the surface and feeding. As she was leaving to go to Wickham Lake she got a glimpse of a 5th tern. She didn't find any terns at Wickham Lake. Photo: Karen Miller



Little Blue Heron

Ken McDermott reported: On July 23, 2022 he was driving on Route 52, heading to a barber's appointment. As he passed by Algonquin Park, he noticed a white bird standing on the marsh. His initial drive-by ID was Great Egret. Ken's son Curt subsequently visited the park and determined that the bird was an immature (white) Little Blue Heron. The bird was seen picking a frog from the mud, then washing the frog in water and eating it. This Little Blue Heron has been seen at Algonquin Park through at least August 9th, allowing many birders to view and photograph this regional rarity. Ken indicated that there have been 8 to 10 local sightings of Little Blue Herons over the years, and that the majority of those were also young white birds.

Photo: Karen Miller.



Lark Sparrow

Jeanne Cimorelli wrote: January 17, 2022; It was my first time visiting Station Rd West at the recommendation of a birder friend, Ronnie DiLorenzo. As I was driving along slowly, a couple of dark-eyed juncos flushed from the roadside along with another bird – who landed atop some bright, green kale and looked back at me. I didn't recognize the species so immediately snapped this shot and ran it through Merlin Bird ID: Lark Sparrow. I quickly sent it off to John Haas who confirmed the ID. I was struck by the bird's beautiful, bright chestnut facial markings and thankfully it stuck around for some time and was a fairly easy bird for others to see. Photo: Jeanne Cimorelli.



Ross's Goose

Jeanne Cimorelli wrote: March 12, 2022; There had been a snowstorm during the day and I was out canvassing the geese in the Wallkill River and local fields. I was at Camel Farm pond in the Black Dirt Region when probably thousands of snow geese flew in to roost for the evening. With the high number of geese I decided to scope through them for as long as there was light in hopes of finding a Ross's goose. It was very cold and windy and getting dark - I was just about to call it quits when I saw this smaller goose floating out from behind a tree that was blocking part of my view and out into an open area of water. There it was - a Ross's!! I quickly fired off a bunch of photos, but shortly after that it flew off. What a treat – the Ross's goose is a favorite of mine. Photo: Jeanne Cimorelli.



White Ibis

Jeanne Cimorelli wrote: On Oct 18, 2021, the Camel Farm was my sixth and last stop of the day. I've come to appreciate this humble but unique location for the "wild cards" that could drop in here at any time. Scanning the pond and field I noticed a large, white wading bird off in the distance with its back to me and partially hidden by grasses. Something looked off in its size and stance for an egret. Finally it turned its head slightly and I could see a long orange bill and what looked like black tips on its primaries. My first thought was white ibis – but not having a clear view and not being very familiar with either a white ibis or a wood stork and their plumage stages – I wasn't 100% certain. This treat was definitely a case of just being in the right place at the right time! Photo: Jeanne Cimorelli



Dickcissel

Ronnie DiLorenzo reported that on June 9, 2022 she was driving through the Sunflower Farm in the Black Dirt area. She heard a Dickcissel singing very loudly – it was right next to her car! Ronnie snapped some nice close-up photos. The bird remained in the field for additional days, but the habitat was eventually altered due to mowing.

Photo: Ronnie DiLorenzo



NEW BIRDING SPOT IN ORANGE COUNTY: Newburgh NY Wastewater Plant

During the autumn of 2021, Bruce Nott and other birders discovered 15 Blackpoll Warblers at the entrance to the Newburgh Rowing Club. Further visits to the area by birders resulted in more discoveries. Jeanne Cimorelli was able to relocate the recent Franklin's Gull on 12/16/21 at the Newburgh Wastewater Plant, which is just North of the Rowing Club.

The Franklin's Gull was feeding at the final wastewater treatment pool. This pool had a water temperature of approx. 50 Degrees F; just the right temperature for flies to hatch! The availability of these newly hatched insects at the wastewater plant attracted additional birds. Birds that were found at the wastewater treatment site during the winter included Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Tennessee Warbler and Blackpoll Warbler.

Second Osprey Nest Discovered in Orange County

Matt Zeitler discovered the 2nd known (post-DDT) Osprey nesting site in Orange County. The nest is located near the Danskammer Generating facility on the banks of the Hudson River in the Town of Newburgh. Congratulations!

EDGAR A. MEARNS BIRDING CLUB TRIP REPORTS

Rye, NY. March 5, 2022. Leader: Bob Slechta

Great day for the 13 Mearnsers who showed up. NO wind, sunny, mild, and the water (almost) like glass! 50 species with great close looks at Brant, American Wigeon, Greater Scaup, LONG-TAILED DUCKS, Buffleheads, Common Goldeneyes, Hooded Mergansers, Red-breasted Mergansers (with males displaying), Horned Grebes, Ruddy Turnstone, Purple Sandpipers, Common Loons, Great Cormorants, Great Blue Heron, Great Horned Owl (only seen by Tom Crepet), Northern Saw-whet Owl, and Hermit Thrush! If only there was more time in the day. We also had a Peregrine Falcon that zoomed past us at eye level, putting up all of the Gulls.

Black Dirt II. March 16, 2022. Leader: Bob Slechta

What a nice day! Too bad the birds were not very cooperative, making us work hard to get good looks. 60 degrees did feel good though. The trip highlight on our second Black Dirt trip of 2022 was again - Snow Geese! We first spied a thousand plus just west of Mission Land Road at the start of our trip and again at the end while at the Wallkill NWR platform on Oil City Road, the same thousand plus put up and circled low overhead several times... spectacular! We were even able to pick out three Blue-morphs as they circled. As usual Horned Larks, one of our target birds were ever present in number but kept moving about while the large flocks of Black Birds expected were absent. I suspect they had moved through earlier this year with only one group of 200 or so on Celery Avenue. Killdeer and Phoebe on the other hand seemed to be everywhere we went, as were Red-tailed Hawks. Other notables today were Northern Harriers, Raven, White-crowned and Savannah Sparrows and some nice ducks at Oil City Rd. including Pintail, Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Ducks, and a Pied-billed Grebe bringing our trip total to 40 species for the 13 Mearnsers on today's trip.

Wallkill River NWR - Oil City Road. March 26, 2022. Leader: Kathleen Ashman

8 members; Weather cool and cloudy with sprinkles after 10:30am

Platform: 3 Bald Eagles, Common Loon (heard from pond on north side of road), Pied billed grebe, 20+ Ring-necked Ducks, Geese, Mallards, 3 Mute Swans, Wood Duck (heard), American Wigeon, Green-winged Teals, Red-winged Blackbird (with a group of 50+) and Mourning Dove,

Liberty loop: 4 Pintail Ducks, 2 Black Ducks, female Northern Harrier, 10 Northern Shoveler (good looks), 20+ Green-winged Teal, 40+ Yellow-rump Warbler (moving through the western edge woods), Flicker, Turkey Vulture, Red-Bellied Woodpecker, Phoebe, Cardinal, Blue Jay, Robin, White Breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Great blue Heron, Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, Coot (heard), and more.

Eastern Orange Lakes. March 30, 2022. Leader: Carlotta Shearson

On March, 30, 2022, eleven Mearns Club members gathered in the Newburgh Walmart parking lot on a chilly (28 °F), breezy morning for our annual spring round of the lakes of eastern Orange County. The usual birds were present at the Walmart location (including Gadwall,

Mallard, Bufflehead, and Hooded Mergansers), along with a few Tree Swallows and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Across the highway at Washington Lake, birds of note included a Killdeer, five Lesser Scaup, and a couple of Herring Gulls. At Browns Pond, we picked up a Bald Eagle, a number of Ring-necked Ducks, some Common Mergansers, and four Great Blue Herons, among others. We hit the jackpot at Beaver Dam Lake, with a total of 46 species at various locations around the lake: notables included a Merlin, Ruddy Ducks, Horned and Pied-billed Grebes, and an early Barn Swallow, as well as great looks at Northern Shovelers, many Ring-necked Ducks (with visible brown rings), a cooperative Red-shouldered Hawk, and a vocalizing Cooper's Hawk. After having a look at a Great-horned Owl on the nest in the vicinity of Orange Lake, we stopped at the Gardnertown Road marsh, where we had a number of Green-winged Teal, a Swamp Sparrow, and an American Tree Sparrow.

The total count for the day was 60 species—not bad for late March! - Carlotta Shearson

Oil City Platform and Owens Station to Liberty Loop, Sussex County NJ. April 10, 2022. Leader: Joyce Depew

We had 6 participants for this trip: J. Cullen, L. McKnight, K. Todd, Zenon, J. Bloomfield, Don Aitchison. Weather - Sunny with alternate cloudy conditions and temps in lower to mid-40s.

Finally a day without rain! We started at the platform on Oil City Road and despite the sun, the wind chills made it feel like the 30 degree range for the whole trip. There were a small amount of species here: Canada Geese beginning to nest, Mute Swan with one displaying for us, Blue-winged Teal which were in a backlit canal and revealed in a photo that I took, Northern Shoveler, Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, Pied-billed Grebe calling, American Coot, Northern Harrier Gray Ghost males which were chasing each other, Tree Swallows, Winter Wren, Carolina Wren, American Robin, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird. Total: 16 Species.

Later we drove to Owen's Crossing in Vernon NJ to view Lake Wallkill and proceeded to walk up to the Sussex County side of Liberty Loop. There was a lot of flooding of areas that are normally drier in summer months, which caused some waterfowl to spread out in the woods on the left of the trail. A Red-tailed Hawk was sitting on a stump low to the water which was an unusual perch area for this bird. At that point a few of our group saw a huge bird fly toward the marsh of cattails on our right and it coasted into the marsh and disappeared causing us to wonder which type of bird that was. Sandhill Cranes had been reported in the region but we couldn't get a good look once that bird landed.

Onward we went to the Liberty Loop area of Sussex County and collected views of passerines and some waterfowl along the way. To our surprise as we crossed the berm on the loop trail, the large mystery bird flew over our heads and it was a Sandhill Crane! We heard a loud cacophony of sounds and were able to see the female Sandhill on the nest and the male joining her after his flight. He resumed to walk and forage in water up to his body! This was a rewarding find! We had 33 Species which were:
Canada Geese, Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Mallard, American Black Duck, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Mourning Dove, Sandhill Cranes, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Fish Crow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, Amer. Robin, Amer. Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow,

Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Yellow-rumped warbler and Northern Cardinal.

Total Species count for the trip: 39 species (with repeats removed - if I didn't miss any).
Good Birding!

6 1/2 Station Rd Sanctuary, Goshen NY. April 23, 2022. Leader: Don Aitchison

Nine Mearns members (Joe Cullen, Bob Slechta, Joyce Depew, Elise Hagen, Liz McKnight, Don Aitchison, Rich VanTieghem, Linda Strohl, and Johanna Bloomfield) enjoyed mostly sunny weather and comfortable temperatures for this annual Spring field trip. 6 1/2 Station Road Sanctuary offers birders the opportunity to experience plentiful waterfowl as well as a woodland habitat to see a good variety of bird species. Those attending on Saturday were not disappointed, viewing a total of 42 species. At Bob Slechta's urging, Don Aitchison led the group up the path towards the Sanctuary's almost lake-like marsh area where most of sightings took place. There we saw Mute Swans, Canada Geese, Wood Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Mallards, American Black Duck, Green-winged teal, Mourning Doves (both carrying nesting material and occupying a nest), Chimney Swift, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Double-crested Cormorant, American Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Black Vultures, Turkey Vultures, Bald Eagle (juvenile), Red-tailed Hawks, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpeckers, Blue Jay, Fish Crows, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Tree Swallow, House Wren, American Robin, Field Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Swamp and Song Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackle, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and a Northern Cardinal. On the northwest side of the trail, there was less activity as we made a trek to see a reported location of resident Barred Owl. Although we did not see the owl, the group picked up Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, American Goldfinch, a Northern Flicker, Swamp Sparrow and Chipping Sparrows. A final note: Joyce Depew spotted a newborn Snapping Turtle and the group rescued it from the asphalt path to a safe location to continue on its life in safety.

Stewart Sate Forest – Barron Road North. April 27, 2022. Leader: Bill Fiero

It was a wonderful morning as four Mearnsers (Mary Buskey, Joyce Depew, Bob Schlecta, and I) took to Barron Road North braving some strange weather, changing from clouds, sun, strong winds, even some rain and sleet. It didn't deter us, nor did it deter the birds, as we totaled 36 species along our 4.2 mile walk, including a visit to Stick Pond, and returning along the beautiful Escarpment Trail.

The usual residents were seen in varying numbers, with low numbers of Downy and Hairy Woodpecker, and White-Breasted Nuthatch offset by healthy populations of Black-Capped Chickadee, American Goldfinch, and Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, many actively exhibiting nesting behavior. We were a bit early for full spring migration, but we did have several Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Robin, Field Sparrow, good numbers of Eastern Towhee, and a smattering of Ovenbird, Yellow and Palm Warbler, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

It was a morning with nice surprises, as a Broad-Winged Hawk flew across our path, as did a startled Barred Owl. We were happy to hear and see a small number of Rusty Blackbirds in a secluded wetland along Escarpment Trail; perhaps the highlight of the walk was getting great

views of a lone Least Flycatcher, albeit one whose tail was missing due to some unknown mishap.

After four hours we said goodbye at our cars after a fun morning of birds, laughs, and camaraderie. Stewart State Forest is wonderful spot to hike, bike, and due to its wide variety of habitats, GREAT BIRDING.

Kenridge Farm. April 30, 2022. Leader: Amy Greher

April 30th seemed like the perfect day to go birding. We had endured so many cold, windy, rainy days in April that a trip to Kenridge seemed like the perfect place to spend a warm (not so much at first), sunny, spring day and so 21 birders met me at the dog park at 8:00 AM. It was 37 degrees when we started the trip but it warmed up considerably later in the morning. Nothing really special greeted us at the dog park. We heard a House Wren, and saw a Nuthatch and Flicker.

Since we were such a large group of birders with lots of cars, we broke into 2 groups. One group drove down to the main parking lot. The other group left their cars at the dog park lot and walked/birded their way down to Kenridge. We were all supposed to meet by the Grasshopper Park, but we didn't.

The group that walked down the road wound up splitting into 2 groups. One meandered down the road; the other moved at a faster pace. The group that drove up wound up going into the woods instead of meeting us by the Grasshopper Park. We all reconnected from time to time with other group members but we never got together as a group of 21. The property lends itself to trips like this. There are so many trails and so many different habitats to visit. No group got "lost" and we did communicate by phone from time to time.

We counted a total of 52 species as a group but not everyone in the group saw (or heard) every bird. Highlights of the trip included a Green Heron which was spotted in one of its usual spots - the far side of the second pond. Another anticipated find was a Kestrel found in its usual spot - by the barn on the property. We heard a Virginia Rail, and saw numerous Phoebes and Chimney Swifts. A couple of Blue-headed Vireos, numerous Ruby-crowned Kinglets, one Veery, one Hermit Thrush and 2 Brown Thrashers were found on the property as well. We thought we'd see more, but to our disappointment we counted only 2 Yellow-rumped Warblers and one Yellow Warbler. Also noted were 3 Eastern Towhees and we caught a glimpse of a Northern Waterthrush on the island in the back pond. A good look at a Rose-breasted Grosbeak made everyone smile.

We spent about 3 1/2 hours on the property. The entire list of 52 species can be found on e-bird. It was a very enjoyable trip from start to finish. A big thank you to all of our "expert" birders who make leading a trip almost effortless.

Black Rock Forest. May 5, 2022. Leader: Bob Slechta

'Black and White' sums up today's field trip as the low cloud ceiling obscured the hilltops in a 'white' shroud with the 'fall out' of birds appearing as 'black' smudges in the tree tops. It could also be reflective of the 10 plus, easily seen Black and White Warblers we had today! Today's gloomy sky seemed to make the birds very vocal making it easier for us to figure out where to

look for what, not to mention pleasing to the ear! The five of us birded Black Rock from the parking lot to just beyond the science building, coming up with 29 species in that short stretch. After that the remaining three of us went to the Hudson Highlands Nature Center on the 'Boulevard' and then to 'Donahue Park' in town where we added another 21 species by noon. From there we made a stop at my house on the way to the Eagle nest on Otterkill Road for an additional 10 species - bringing our total to 60 for the day. Trip highlights were - Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-throated and Blue-headed Vireo, Tree and Barn Swallow, House and Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Wood Thrush, Gray Catbird, Chipping, Field, and White-throated Sparrows, Towhee, Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, and 12 Warbler species, being - Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Blue-winged, Black and White, Hooded, Redstart, Northern Parula, Blackburnian, Yellow, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, and Yellow-rumps. Pretty good for the five brave souls not willing to let the threat of rain (of which we had none) ruin a day of birding.

PS: Today turned out to be one of the few good days of bird movement this spring.

Bashakill WMA. May 8, 2022. Leader: Joyce Depew

It was a GREAT day for birding and we had 10 participants join us even though it was Mother's Day. The weather was a bit on the windy/chilly side but we were kept distracted by the number of birds that we saw. Present were M. Buskey, Zenon Bachir, J. Tripani, L. McKnight, K. Todd, M. Borko, S. Baldinger, and some new folks who were Jeff, Elizabeth and their daughter.

The absolute best part of this trip was that we saw several species of warblers at the same time/location. Such was a group of warblers foraging on a tree near Haven Rd., not far from the NYS Parking Lot. The other productive area for warblers was the trees around the sandpit at the Nature Trail. The total bird species was 50! I guess we hit this area just perfectly for this trip because the following day I went back and some of the warblers had disappeared. Well, that is migration for you.....! A hit and a miss!

Today's bird list included: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Common Gallinule, Solitary Sandpiper, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Hawk Species-unidentified overhead, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Tufted Titmouse, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Carolina Wren, Gray Catbird, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Amer. Goldfinch, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Oven-bird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Cape May Warbler, Northern Parula, Magnolia Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Pine Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Canada Warbler, and Northern Cardinal.

Many thanks also to Scott Baldinger and John Haas who provided us with some intel that day! Good birding on Mother's Day!

Kenridge Farm. May 15 2022. Leader: Amy Greher

Six birders arrived at the dog park adjacent to Kenridge Farm at 8:00 AM on May 15th. We were able to see many of our favorite spring migrants as well as our favorite resident birds. The

temperature was a mild 66 degrees when we started and went up to 74 degrees. The sky was mostly overcast with some peeks of sun from time to time. It remained muggy and buggy. We birded for about 3 1/2 hours.

We enjoyed listening to and then had exceptional views of a Wood Thrush. He even hung around for a photograph. Gray Catbirds, Northern Orioles and Yellow Warblers were everywhere on the property. We even caught sight of one female Orchard Oriole after much searching. We had good views of a Blue-winged Warbler found in the field near the Muskrat Pond. A Magnolia Warbler was a pleasant surprise as we traveled above the Goose Pond into the woods.

A total of 58 species were found on the property. A full list can be found on e-bird.

Port Jervis Watershed Park / Bux Baum. May 18, 2022. Leader: Ajit Antony

Today was a beautiful cool sunny day with only light NW winds.

I realized that this was the first field trip I have led (not counting a stationary one at the Mount Peter Hawk Watch platform). The areas we birded are part of 4 blocks in the park, including one priority block I have been responsible for on the Breeding Bird Atlas III.

We first went to Brewer's Reservoir (formerly called Reservoir Number 1) which was new to all the 5 Mearnsers who joined us on the trip. <https://tinyurl.com/mtfjyewy> for a map showing all the trails of the park.

We went on the Beginner's Berm Trail a beautiful wide path 0.9 miles each way. Lisa wanted to see a Scarlet Tanager and we were able to find a beautiful male in sunlight, and by the end of the day we had seen 2 others and heard of course a lot more. At the power cut we heard a Prairie Warbler and a Field Sparrow as well as 3 male Baltimore Orioles – one caught in flagrante delicto by Lisa O'Gorman. A small foray at the end of this trail into the woods (where I had had 3 Acadian Flycatcher last year) did not yield one.

We then drove to the eastern end of the park via Peenpack Road where we walked along the Mahackmack Trail. Immediately we heard Least Flycatcher and Yellow-throated Vireo. A Ruby throated Hummingbird was found landing on a branch by sharp-eyed Lisa.

Near the end of the trail I heard the cheeping of baby birds but could not see any in the trees, so I surmised that they may be in a nest hole. We kept looking unsuccessfully. Last year on the same trail I heard a similar sound and was able to find a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker feeding young, so we waited for an adult to show up and eventually Lisa spotted a woodpecker – a Hairy with a very large fat caterpillar in its bill – which kept flying around and we were looking for where it would go and show us the nest hole, but it kept flying back and forth. At one point Lisa thought it went into a nest hole, but on continuing to look at the bird, it had the same large caterpillar in its bill. Lisa then suggested that we may be too close to the nest hole preventing the bird from going in so we kept walking on, and with her infinite patience was able to find the nest hole which was surprisingly small for the size of the bird.

We found 2 pairs of Blue-headed Vireo and one more. I helped the participants how to identify the species by its song, separating it from Red-eyed Vireo.

An Acadian flycatcher called only once; I was the only one who heard and identified it. Here are links to 2 articles on the subject I wrote in 2020 and 2121 for those interested in BHVI song:

<https://tinyurl.com/5usx78x4> <https://tinyurl.com/447pbr6a>

We heard an Eastern Wood-Pewee and one came close enough and stayed around for a while that I could show the participants the diagnostic dusky undertail coverts. It eventually landed 8 feet from us at eye level! We actually saw 3 usually-secretive Ovenbirds which are heard rather than seen. We had good looks at a Louisiana Waterthrush and discussed the features which separate it from Northern Waterthrush – no streaking on the throat (mnemonic = Northern has streaks on the neck), a white eyebrow stripe which widens toward the back and a whitish ground color instead of yellow.

There was a high-pitched sound (of course I couldn't hear it at all until it came close) which no one could identify. Liza Antony used the Merlin app to identify it as Blackburnian Warbler and then gimlet-eyed Lisa O'G found it for all of us. Merlin had identified a Northern Parula Warbler during the above recording, which Gerhard subsequently heard.

Gerhard found us a Robin's nest with the Robin in it, in the fork of a tree 15 feet up.

Here are the eBird checklists for the trip, thanks to Liza Antony's effort:

<https://ebird.org/atlasny/checklist/S110600945>
<https://ebird.org/atlasny/checklist/S110600944>
<https://ebird.org/atlasny/checklist/S110600943>
<https://ebird.org/atlasny/checklist/S110600942>

Zenon and Tom Crepet were the other participants. Jane walked most of the 2nd trail and was most surprised when I told her that she had actually walked 3.5 miles. Including both trails, the rest of us birded a distance of 4.4 miles.

For any birder who wants to go to this area to enjoy nature in its silence except for the birds of course, and not hearing a single automobile or plane, with almost no people (except on weekends when there are bicyclists – who are invariably polite and considerate), here is a link to an article I posted in 2020 about the trails here: <https://tinyurl.com/2xtvskh2>

Thanks to all 5 birders for showing up – I had thought no one would, because of the distance to the northwest corner of Orange County. It was really nice having a small group where everyone could see practically every bird species and we could discuss bird ID in detail.

**Winding Waters Trail (Wallkill River NWR). May 21, 2022.
Leader: Kathy Ashman.**

The big highlight of this trip was a cooperative Mourning Warbler (heard AND seen by most participants!). We had a total of at least 44 species. Other birds that were observed included Canada Goose, Spotted Sandpiper, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Gray Catbird, Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing,

American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Black-and-white Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Indigo Bunting.

Shawangunk Grasslands NWR. May 29, 2022. Leader: Jane Vecchione

13 Mearnsers met at 8:00 am on a sunny May 29. We looked for birds from the parking lot at first and watched Purple Martins at the Martin box; they were carrying leaves into the box, and vocalizing quite a bit. We walked up the entrance road and then searched the area near the pond, seeing many of the species on the list. We returned to the area near the platform where the Grasshopper Sparrow has been seen and eventually it appeared. We had good looks on either side of the ramp and on the railing. One Grasshopper Sparrow would land on the railing and carry nesting material, disappearing into the grasses not far away. From the platform we enjoyed seeing numerous Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks. Some of the group walked to the south toward the Dickcissel Blind (toward Blue Chip at first then parallel with the property line) and had good looks at the Willow Flycatcher. At the end of the trip Tom and I heard the Orchard Oriole in a tree off the pond. We saw and/or heard 44 species.

Here's the complete list of species that were observed:

Canada Goose, Wild Turkey, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, American Kestrel, Eastern Wood-Pee-wee, Willow Flycatcher, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Blue Jay, Common Raven, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, White Breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Blue-winged Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-Breasted Grosbeak, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole and American Goldfinch.

Marshlands Conservancy, Rye, NY. July 2, 2022. Leader: Bob Slechta

Five of us braved the summer heat and humidity for a morning of birding at Marshlands Preserve in Westchester County. As we walked through the fairly quiet woods on our way to the marsh we came upon our first surprise of the day... a young Red-tailed Hawk on the ground ripping at a squirrel it had killed, totally oblivious to our presence a mere ten feet away. The hawk finally got annoyed and left after which we made our way to the meadow and our second novelty sighting of the day. Out in the meadow was a flock of Turkeys hunting for bugs with just their heads visible bobbing about giving us all a chuckle. It was then just a quick walk to the marsh where we got to see most of our target species. They were - Great Blue Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron, Great and Snowy Egret, Double-crested Cormorant, Willet, Common Tern, American Oystercatcher, Osprey, and Marsh Wren. Add in a variety of Swallows, Woodpeckers, Vireos, etc., and we ended our trip with 38 species and a relaxing picnic lunch to finish off our adventure.

UPCOMING TRIPS

Calendar of Mearns birding trips that are planned through the end of March 2023:

August 20, 2022, Sat. - Walkill NWR with Joyce Depew (845-978-9952). Meet at the platform on Oil City Rd. at 8 AM for coots, gallinules, rails, egrets, and shorebirds.

September 3, 2022, Sat. - Black Dirt with Bob Slechta (845-541-8210). Meet at the Jolly Onion in Pine Island, NY, at 8:30 AM for shorebirds, I hope, especially Buff-breasted Sandpiper, if we are lucky.

September 10, 2022, Sat. - Kenridge Farm with Amy Greher (845-774-9399). Be at the Cornwall Dog Park at 8:30 AM and see what we can find at this fabulous birding location as the fall migration heats up.

September 17, 2022, Sat. - Winding Waters with Kathleen Ashman (845-421-5478). Meet in the parking lot at 8 AM for our usual fall trip here as the birds push south. With luck, we'll find a Connecticut Warbler.

September 24, 2022, Sat. - 6 1/2 Station Road with Dave Baker (845-446-4030). Meet where the Heritage Trail crosses the road at 8:30 AM for our first fall trip here, with lots of possibilities.

September 28, 2022, Wed. - Stony Kill Farm with Bruce Nott (845-542-0583). Meet there at 8:30 AM. Last year's trip here was phenomenal; don't miss out!

October 1, 2022, Sat. - Wawayanda State Park NJ. Meet Rich VanTieghem (201-370-2721) at the Warwick Shop Rite (in the front-most lot; facing Route 94) at 8:30 AM for an interesting morning of birding to a locale not visited in a long time.

October 8, Sat. - Kenridge Farm with Amy Greher (774-9399). Meet her at the 'Dog Park' parking area at 8:30 AM. Lincoln's Sparrow and Palm Warbler are likely!

October 12, Wed. - Walkill Rail Trail with Bill Fiero (728-5208). Let's see what turns up at one of Bill's 'go to' birding spots. Meet at the Kimball Park parking area (west end of Lake Osiris Rd.) at 8:30 AM

October 15, Sat. - Walkill NWR Meet Don Aitchison (281-3220) at the Oil City Rd viewing Platform at 8:30 AM. Le Conte's Sparrow or Sandhill Crane all possible.

October 22, Sat. - Croton Point with Jodi Brodsky (282-1058). Be at the RR station ' Boat Launch ' at 8:30 AM and see what turns up at this 'south bound' migrant trap.

November 12, Sat. - Black Dirt. Meet Dave Baker (440-4030) at the Jolly Onion in Pine Island at 9 AM and we will look for Horned Larks, Snow Buntings, and Pipits.

November 19, Sat. - Eastern Orange Lakes with Bruce Nott (542-0583). Meet at the NW end of the Newburgh Walmart at 8:30 AM. Ducks, Ducks, and more Ducks.

December 3, Sat. - Shawangunk NWR for Short Eared Owls . Meet Tom and Jane (443-5440) there at 4 PM (or 5 PM if we are still on Day-light Savings).

December 9, 10, 11, Fri, Sat, Sun. - Cape Ann, MA with Jodi Brodsky. Call her (282-1058) or 'e' mail her (jsbbirder@Gmail.com) for details (lodging etc.) for this always rewarding trip. Harlequin Duck, Scoters, and Eiders are likley.

December 17, Sat. - Christmas Bird Count. If you want to participate in this historical event, contact Karen Miller (381-3203)

January 14, 2023, Sat. - NY State Waterfowl Count. Contact Bob Slechta (541-8210) if you want to help out with Orange County's contribution.

January 28, Sat. - Eagle Trip I with Gerhard Patsch (258-0620). Meet at the Rt 6/202 (Goat Trail) Iona Island over look at 9 AM for 100 plus Bald Eagles.

February 11, Sat. - Black Dirt I. Meet Bob Slechta (541-8210) at the Jolly Onion in Pine Island at 9 AM and another chance for Larks and Buntings, and maybe Rough-legged Hawks.

February 18, Sat. - Eagle trip II with Gerhard Patsch (258-0620). 9 AM at the Iona Island over look for another chance of a great winter trip, especially if you missed the first one.

March 4, Sat. - Rye and Greenwich with Bob Slechta (541-8210). Be at the 'Playland' (north end by lake) parking lot at 9 AM for Loons, Grebes, and northern Ducks closer to home.

March 11, Sat. - Black Dirt II. Meet Bob Slechta at the Jolly Onion at 9 AM for lots of Black Birds plus Horned Larks, Sparrows, who knows.

March 18, Sat. - Walkkill River NWR. If you want to see large numbers of ducks, especially Pintails and Green-wing Teal, meet Joyce Depew (978-9952) at the Oil City Rd. platform at 8:30 AM

March 25, Sat. - Eastern Orange Lakes for a good mix of ducks and our first Phoebes and Swallows. Meet Bruce Nott (542-0583) at the NW corner of the Newburgh Walmart at 8:30 AM

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 Mearns' 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, Chair of Outings