

ORANGE FEATHER

NEWSLETTER - FALL 2023



Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club - Orange County, New York

mearnsbirdclub.org

A Note from Joyce Depew - President of the E. A. Mearns Birding Club:

Dear Members:

Welcome to another Autumn and Winter of Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club activities! Please note that due to lack of coverage, we will not have a September meeting this year, as I will be away a few weeks in September.

Members may not have been aware that the positions of Officer and Board are 2 year commitments and this year I needed confirmation as to which persons would be staying on or not. Thankfully, most of our current Officers and Board Members have agreed to stay on! The approval vote of officers for the next term will be at the meeting on **October 9, 2023.**

Our wonderful staff of volunteers who handle all of our email and web related information systems have agreed to stay on. They deliver vital services to the Board and the membership via: "What's App", Groups.io system, mearnsbirdclub.org, mearnsbirdclub@gmail.com, club surveys and storage of vital club information such as bird count data from Audubon Christmas Count, NYS Waterfowl Count and The Break 100!

The Vice President position remains open and, on a sad note, our Program Chair is stepping down. Thank you Don Aitchison for the excellent service you gave us as Program Chair to our club for the last 2 years!

We need members who are willing and able to fulfill the Vice President (Officer Position) and a Board position open for Program Chair! Both should attend as many monthly meetings as possible, have organizational skills and be able to communicate with other officers of the club and board members. Both positions have voting rights. Both positions greatly affect the quality and performance of our club. Members who consider these roles will have their questions answered completely. They will be given help to get started if they take a position. After all we want you to succeed.

FYI...

Without a Vice President who can cover, meetings will need to be cancelled when the President can't attend. When I became Vice President originally, it was with the understanding that I **was not quitting** band performances for the club! This still holds true, once in a while, depending on the band's schedule now that I am President. This year, I have to travel to weddings during September and December.

Filling the vacancy of our Program Chair position is critical to having quality presentations at our meetings! The Program Chair is required to gather information on possible presenters for the club, negotiate a price, seek Treasurer's approval of same and schedule them for a club meeting. The Program Chair will also take charge of the club's computer projector and set up for the guest presenter at meetings. The only meeting for which we do not schedule a presenter for is the December Share-a-thon

which requires some knowledge of “presentation software”, own a laptop and load arrangement of photos from members.

Upcoming Club Meetings are on the **2nd Monday** of the months of: October, November, December, January, March, April and May. Time: We set up at 6:45 pm for the 7 p.m. meeting.

*I am reaching out to **ALL** of the membership, for just 2 persons to fill these positions.*

PLEASE consider: donating some of your time to being **Vice President** or **Program Chair**. Submit your interest to me Joyce Depew, President via the club’s email system: mearnsbirdclub@gmail.com. Provide your phone number etc. so we can discuss and submit your candidacy to the Board for approval. **I need this information before September 30, 2023.**

Our club’s mission, in a nutshell, is dedicated to enjoying birding, and educating our members and the public to grow in appreciation of our beloved birds and their environment. Our club has been fantastic in its contributions to this effort with: eBird listing, NYS Ornithological Association, NYS Young Birders, National Audubon Christmas Counts and NYS Waterfowl counts. Through the efforts of the founders and volunteers of this club from 1959 to present, “volunteerism” makes it a successful club!

GOOD NEWS: There are terrific presentations booked for our October 2023 and November 2023 meetings. For the December meeting, the annual Share-a-Thon (Members' showcase) is planned. (More info to follow at meetings.) Don’t miss out on these presentations!

Our Annual Picnic in June 2023 was a great success! The food was terrific! My thanks to Linda Strohl, Tracy Patsch, and members who attended and brought various food choices. A game was introduced and conducted by our new member Stephanie. She even offered a homemade prize!

I wish for the continued success of this club and for great birding ahead! News on the street (from John Haas’ blog) is that it could be a good year for Crossbills to appear due to the increase of White Pine cone production!

Good birding to all!

Joyce Depew, President

Club Membership:

Receiving this newsletter is a benefit of membership! Annual membership in the Mearns Bird Club is \$20 for an individual, \$30 for a family, and \$8 for a student.

To Join or Renew: Please send your name, mailing address, e-mail address, phone number (for club contact ONLY), and a check payable to "Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club" via US Mail to: **Linda Stroll, Treasurer, 8 Park Road, Salisbury Mills, NY 12577-5028**
You may use the membership form on the back cover (last page) of this newsletter.

Welcome New Members:

Stephanie Uszenski, Walden, NY
Timothy and Karen Sullivan, Warwick, NY
Kevin and Lorraine Yeager, Warwick, NY

BREAK 100 Report, by Joyce Depew

This season I tried to implement a new format where each team could choose their own starting time and ending time, beginning Friday and ending Saturday. 3 Teams participated and there was some confusion as to how this should run, but the event was successful. Each team's data is available on the Mearns files.

SUMMARY OF BREAK 100 RESULTS:

Team A – D. Baker, S. Baker and J. Trapani:

72 Species, 3 p.m. Fri. to 3 p.m. Sat., 24 hour standard time period.

Team B - J. Depew, M. Buskey and N. Compentiello:

95 Species, Fri. 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., 14 hours.

Team C – R. Slechta, C. Shearson

79 Species, Fri. 11:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. & Sat. 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., 8.5 hours.

Total bird species for the event (un-duplicated count): 105

My analysis, from the results and the chosen times by each team, revealed that it **IS** beneficial for our club to permanently adopt the format in which each team chooses their times to begin and end - within a 24 hr period, beginning with a designated Friday and ending by midnight on Saturday in the same weekend. 2 teams were unable to bird across both days this year but were able to obtain a substantial number of species. Unfortunately, none of the teams broke 100 species this year, Factors that contributed to this: Saturday's weather, and a lack of time to bird across both days during a 24 hr. period.

Thank you to all who participated in this annual EAMBC event! - Joyce



Kestrel fledgling, by Maryangela Buskey



Brown Thrasher with fledgling, by Maryangela Buskey

Rye/Greenwich Trip Report
March 5, 2023. Trip Leader: Bob Slechta

50 degrees or 48 species I don't know which is the better number! A sunny warm 50 degree day at the Sound felt pretty good though. The five of us enjoyed the day with great looks at most of the birds. Especially the close at hand were numerous Long-tailed Ducks and Red-breasted Mergansers. The males of these species were engrossed in courting the females, which provided us a spectacle to be seen!

Eight Purple Sandpipers at Playland were a nice find, as were the first Killdeer to show up busily chasing each other for prime breeding territory. The other two birds, to tout as trip highlights, were Great Horned and Barred Owl. Both birds were located in the Holly Grove at Greenwich Point, perched in the open for all to enjoy!

Other birds of note today were Common Loon, one Red-throated Loon, Horned Grebes, Great Blue Heron, Cormorant, Brandt, Black Ducks, Gadwall, Wigeon, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Common Golden-eye, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Hooded Merganser, all three Gulls, Fish Crow, Robins, and Black Birds. - Bob



Franklin's Gull - Oregon, by Rich VanTieghem

Black Dirt II Trip Report
March 12, 2023. Trip Leader: Bob Slechta

This is the second trip in two weeks that I've had to move to Sunday on account of the weather! In both instances it worked out superbly as we had little or no wind (which is rare for the Black Dirt area). Instead, it was sunny and mild! The nine of us ended up with 47 species today thanks to making a stop at Oil City Road to bolster our numbers by adding Bald Eagle, a lone Tree Swallow, Black Vulture, Mute Swan, Northern Shoveler, Mallard, Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Ring-necked Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, and Coot.

In the Black Dirt, our highlights were: 2 Common Merganser, Killdeer, Turkey Vultures, Northern Harriers, Cooper's Hawk, a Dark Phase Rough-legged Hawk, Kestrels, Fish and Common Crow, 300+ Horned Larks, at least 4 Snow Buntings, Eastern Bluebirds, Robins, Mockingbird, Goldfinch, Juncos, White-throated Sparrows. a Yellow-rumped Warbler, both Grackles and Red-wing Black Birds. There were no Snow Geese today. It's a good thing we had them on our prior trip to the Black Dirt! - Bob



American Goldfinch in flight, by Dave Baker

Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge Trip Report
March 18, 2023. Trip Leader: Bob Slechta

Eight Mearnsers started off the trip at the Oil City Road platform, but only six members continued on to Owens Station Road, where we continued our battle with the chilly west winds. Thankfully, there was a good mix of waterfowl in excellent light for all to see. Woodland birds, on the other hand were hard to come by today.

Today's trip highlights are - Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck (our most numerous bird today), Bufflehead, Common Merganser, Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot, Killdeer, and one Wilson's Snipe (that gave us a show as it flew in a nice arc right in front of us), Northern Harrier, Red-Tailed and Red-Shouldered Hawks, Eastern Phoebe, Common Raven, 5 Tree Swallows, Eastern Bluebirds, Swamp, Song, and Tree Sparrow, Junco, Grackles and Red-winged Black Birds - bringing our trip tally to an impressive 43 species considering the strong winds today. - Bob

Eastern Orange Lakes Trip Report
March 26, 2023. Trip Leader: Carlotta Shearson

On the cool and breezy but sunny morning of Sunday, March 26, fourteen Mearnsers met at the Walmart beaver pond in Newburgh for our annual round of some of the water bodies of eastern Orange County, led by Bruce Nott. After leaving the beaver pond, we visited Washington Lake, Orange Lake, the marsh near the intersection of I84 and NY747 (from a hill above the intersection), the Clark Street pond, and a number of viewing spots around Beaver Dam Lake. Highlights included Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted and Hooded Merganser, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Lesser Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Ruddy Duck, Horned Grebe, Tree Swallows, and a Rusty Blackbird. The total number of species was 53.



Long-billed Curlews - Oregon, by Rich VanTieghem

Long Island Sound / Rye Greenwich Trip Report
April 8, 2023. Trip Leader: Bob Slechta

Where did all the Ducks go?? Our first stop, Playland had NONE of the following expected birds: Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Ring-necked Duck, and Loon. We had only 2 Brant, and 3 Horned Grebe! Thankfully there were plenty of Bufflehead and Red-breasted Mergansers to enjoy.

With the Sound being so quiet, I decided to go next door to Marshlands and was glad to have Brenda along. She was a great help with locating birds and getting our list up to 45 species. Sightings of note are - Double-crested Cormorant, Great and Snowy Egret, Osprey, Kestrel, American Oystercatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Rough-wing and Tree Swallow, Brown Creeper, Turkey, Hermit Thrush, White-throated Sparrow, and Swamp Sparrow. Even though we missed a lot of ducks, it was a very pleasant day with plenty of sun, little wind and good friends! - Bob



Least Flycatcher - Bashakill, by Joyce DePew

Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge Trip Report
April 15, 2023. Trip Leader: Liz McKnight

Despite the threat of possible rainstorms, 10 members of the Mearns Bird Club came out for the Wallkill River NWR field trip this morning. The trip description said "with luck we'll see Blue-winged Teal, Sandhill Crane and Rusty Blackbird". We saw all of the above and many more, for 51 species in all. We started out at the platform on Oil City Rd where it was 68 degrees and sunny - a joy after the unseasonably high temperatures that we had the day before. We saw American Coot, Tree Swallows, and lots of Red-winged Blackbirds among several other species.

After gathering and spending some time there, we drove around to the NJ side of the refuge at Owens Station Rd. We were instantly treated to a couple of beautiful Purple Martins and an Osprey that seemed to be either agitated by, or trying to agitate, a Great Blue Heron. We crossed the road and began walking up the trail, coming to a very "birdy" spot where we saw and/or heard many birds including several Sparrow species, Northern Cardinal, Eastern Bluebird, Downy Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, and a tiny Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. We also noticed a couple of different butterflies, including a Mourning Cloak. Continuing on, we came to what I call the back side of the marsh and we noted how dry it appeared to be. We were also watching some very large Snapping Turtles exhibit some frenzied behavior - most likely mating behavior. As we continued on and then rounded the bend, a distant pair of Wood Ducks were spotted, along with a Wild Turkey, Killdeer, both Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, and a very camouflaged Wilson's Snipe! We continued on in hopes of finding the nesting Sandhill Cranes, and thanks to determination and good spotting by Lisa O'Gorman we were able to spot the female on the nest. Although today really felt like spring, we only had one warbler species; a Palm Warbler.

Our 51 species included :

Canada Goose (many) , Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Wild Turkey, Mourning Dove, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, both Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, an assortment of woodpeckers including: Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy, Pileated, and Northern Flicker. Also seen or heard were Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Blue Gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, American Goldfinch, an assortment of sparrows including Chipping, Field, White-throated, White-crowned, Song, and Swamp. There were many, many Red-winged Blackbirds and also spotted were Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, and Rusty Blackbird. And lastly, Northern Cardinal and Palm Warbler.

Despite some foreboding clouds and a couple of rumbles of thunder, the rain really held off for us ... rewarding us with a lot of species!

6 1/2 Station Rd. Sanctuary Trip Report
April 22, 2023. Trip Leader: Don Aitchison

A total of ten Mearns members gathered at the 6 1/2 Station Rd. trail head at 8:30 AM under cloudy skies and with a temperature of about 50 degrees. The forecast was for showers to hold off until later in the day. As we finished our trip, we saw glimpses of the sun and felt a much welcomed sense of warming temperatures. The area covered today included the stretch from 6 1/2 Station Rd. on the Heritage Trail towards Goshen. One member of the group (Yaveh) also hiked up the trail in the direction of New Hampton, where he was able to pick up an additional six different species.

We birded for 3 hours and 8 minutes and walked a total of 2.16 miles. Along our walk, we sadly also saw the carcass of a dead mink near the asphalt path. A total of 50 species were observed or heard including a juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk carrying prey in its talons, a wild American Turkey, an Eastern Pe-wee and two Green Herons. Additionally, there was a spectacular sighting of an Osprey, circling above, in search for a fish in the open water, while being tailed briefly by an immature Bald Eagle!

The total list of species included Canada Geese, Mute Swans, Wood Ducks, Mallards (in flight), a Green-winged Teal, Wild Turkey, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, immature Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, American Crow, Common Raven, Tree Swallows (hundreds), Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Palm Warbler, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal (male and female), Red-winged Blackbird (male and female), Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, and several American Goldfinch. All enjoyed the fellowship and a very decent representation of the birdlife of this wooded, marshy habitat. Although we had to deal with bicyclists whizzing by and an occasional unkind remark about our being on "their riding" path, we felt rewarded and very satisfied with our outing today.



Mallard ducklings, by Maryangela Buskey

Stewart State Forest (Barron Rd.) Trip Report
May 3, 2023. Trip Leader: Joyce Depew

This week the weather produced several rain events prior to this outing. I can't complain because we had inadequate snow or rainfall this winter, and our region was heading toward drought conditions! A drought in Spring could be devastating if it continues into the Summer Season. Before this recent rainfall, the streams were at a lower level than normal for Spring and it was difficult to sneak up onto a bird for a photo due to the dry leaves.

5 birders decided come out of their dry homes to test out the weather conditions and see if we could get some interesting birds today! We searched a small area near the power line, but avoided the Escarpment Trail (due to wet conditions). Most of our trek was on Barron Rd. and we made it all the way to a very large field and swamp. As the air warmed up, sounds of Blue-winged Warbler and Oven Bird were prevalent. As a result of our efforts, we obtained 36 Species! See list below:

Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Mourning Dove, Mallard, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Blue-headed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Tree Swallow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray Catbird, American Robin, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Oven Bird, Northern Waterthrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, and Northern Cardinal.



Barred Owlet, by Maryangela Buskey

Bashakill Wildlife Management Area Trip Report
May 6, 2023. Trip Leader: Joyce Depew

It was a cool morning at the Bashakill with fog at 8 a.m. which later disappeared to reveal a beautiful day! I met the participants at the NYS Parking Lot on Haven Rd., since earlier in the week both ends of the Haven Rd. Bridge had been flooded! There were 17 participants (members and non-members) which made for plenty of “eyes in the field.”

We birded Haven Rd., the Stop Sign Trail and part of the Horseshoe Trail where we met fellow member Scott Baldinger. He reported seeing Common Gallinules interacting with each other in the marsh. My group was also successful in seeing a few of these secretive birds which vocalized to each other while swimming in and out of young Cattail plants.

We had a friendly debate regarding the species identification of 2 birds. One bird kept only one side of its body visible while it foraged around. To some of us it looked like a Hermit Thrush. Diane Bliss managed to get a very good photo shot of this bird and it was definitely a Veery! Gerhard and I were also speculating on whether or not a large bird in a distant tree was a young Red-tailed Hawk or an immature Bald Eagle. My photo indicated the patterns on the front of the bird which looked like the dark necklace and white belly of a Red-tailed. Tom came by with his scope and the ID was confirmed to be an Immature Bald Eagle. Gerhard was correct in his original assessment, that it appeared to be too large to be a hawk! It is always good to remember that some bird calls can be confusing to us as well as the appearance of the birds (especially immature raptors!). Even the best birders can encounter this problem.

The trip ended around 12:30 p.m and while we concluded with 48 species, another participant came forward with a species that we did not record - making the grand total of 49!

Here were the species seen today:

Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Mourning Dove, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Eastern Screech Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray Catbird, Veery, American Robin, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Orchard Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Cerulean Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Northern Cardinal.

Migration is finally in full swing!

Vassar Farms Trip Report
May 10, 2023. Trip Leader: Ernie Welch

Ernie reported that only one Mearns member attended the trip. Nevertheless, an impressive count of 59 species were found on the property.

Trip list: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S136920199>

16 Canada Goose, 5 Mallard, 1 Wild Turkey, 7 Mourning Dove, 1 Solitary Sandpiper, 4 Great Blue Heron, 1 Green Heron, 6 Turkey Vulture, 2 Red-tailed Hawk, 1 Belted Kingfisher, 4 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1 Downy Woodpecker, 3 Hairy Woodpecker, 2 Northern Flicker, 2 Eastern Phoebe, 1 Great Crested Flycatcher, 1 Eastern Kingbird, 2 Warbling Vireo, 11 Blue Jay, 4 American Crow, 4 Black-capped Chickadee, 2 Tufted Titmouse, 12 Tree Swallow, 1 Barn Swallow, 1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 2 White-breasted Nuthatch, 2 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 2 House Wren, 1 Carolina Wren, 5 European Starling, 12 Gray Catbird, 1 Northern Mockingbird, 3 Eastern Bluebird, 1 Hermit Thrush, 4 Wood Thrush, 10 American Robin, 5 House Sparrow, 6 House Finch, 14 American Goldfinch, 1 Chipping Sparrow, 2 Field Sparrow, 3 White-crowned Sparrow, 6 Song Sparrow, 1 Swamp Sparrow, 5 Eastern Towhee, 5 Baltimore Oriole, 21 Red-winged Blackbird, 7 Brown-headed Cowbird, 24 Common Grackle, 2 Blue-winger Warbler, 4 Common Yellowthroat, 7 American Redstart, 1 Northern Parula, 1 Yellow Warbler, 1 Black-throated Blue Warbler, 3 Yellow-rumped Warbler, 1 Scarlet Tanager, 5 Northern Cardinal, and 3 Rose-breasted Grosbeak.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird, by Dave Baker

**Hudson Highlands Nature Museum Trip
May 13, 2023. Trip Leader: Amy Greer**

On Saturday, May 13, 2023 eleven Mearnsers enjoyed another WOW day outdoors at the Hudson Highlands Nature Museum (also known as Kenridge Farm). The temperature ranged from 72 degrees to 75 degrees which made for a very pleasant walk. We tallied 70 species of birds during our 4 hour trip. Yes, 70!

We started the trip at the dog park which was bursting with birdsong. We repeatedly heard the melodic call of a Wood Thrush. Orioles, Catbirds and a Warbling Vireo added their spring songs as well. We carpooled over to the main campus, where a female Kestrel greeted us by the barn. Her mate was located later by the large pond. It was nice to see that they have made this property their home. As we walked over to the large pond, we couldn't help but see numerous Barn Swallows and Tree Swallows. Many nesting boxes were taken already by the Tree Swallows. Some of us were lucky enough to spot the Green Heron but then it faded into the high grass. A Least Sandpiper, a Solitary Sandpiper and a Lesser Yellowlegs were found on one of the smaller ponds. Redstarts, Hooded and Blue-winged Warblers, a Northern Parula, a Tennessee Warbler, as well as Yellow Warbler and Common Yellowthroats were either seen or heard.

Kenridge offers such a varied habitat that you never know what you might find there. Go to eBird for a complete list. Look under Kenridge Farm. Listed here are some highlights: Wood Thrush, Baltimore Oriole, Least Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Hooded Warbler, American Redstart, Blue-winged Warbler and Wood Duck.



Yellow-headed Blackbird - Oregon, by Rich VanTieghem

Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge
May 27, 2023. Trip Leaders: Jane Vecchione and Thomas Crepet

7 participants in addition to the leaders gathered at the parking lot on a blue sky day, with temperatures in the 50s and little wind. The beautiful weather was conducive to a relaxing and leisurely trip.

We noticed that there were no meadowlarks or sparrows on or close to the ramp as they typically have been in previous years. The grass was short from a controlled burn earlier in the season so maybe this was the reason.

We decided to walk toward the pond first since birds were singing. Purple Martins were chattering and active at their nest site. Birds we observed included Eastern Kingbirds, Willow Flycatcher, Tree and Barn Swallows, Swamp and Song Sparrows, Yellow Warbler and Towhee. We heard an Orchard Oriole singing and were pleased to spot him in the open at the top of a tree near the pond. He was an immature with a black bib and yellowish body and cooperated for photographs. Perhaps he was the best bird of the day for some of us.

When we returned to the ramp we saw a few Kestrels by their nest box and a possible Peregrine Falcon flying by. From the ramp we got great looks at Bobolinks and a Meadowlark. A walk toward Blue Chip turned up Mockingbirds. And finally as we were returning to the parking lot we were able to get a good look through the scope at a singing Grasshopper Sparrow in the field. No Savannah Sparrows were seen by us on this trip!

By the end of the trip the temperature was in the 70s. A total of 47 species were counted.



Red-breasted Mergansers, by Maryangela Buskey

Oil City Road Trip Report
May 31, 2023. Trip Leader: Rich VanTieghem

We had an enjoyable Mearns birding trip at the Liberty Loop area of Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge (in both Orange County, NY, and Sussex County, NJ). Participants were Joyce Depew, John Lehmann, Linda & Steve Strauchler, Zenin Bachir and Rich VanTieghem (trip leader). The weather was sunny and warm. Water levels in the impoundments were quite low, and conditions were generally dry.

We viewed or heard a total of 43 bird species. Our first find was a Willow Flycatcher (with many more Willows seen and heard as we walked the trail). Other flycatchers were Great-crested, Eastern Kingbird, and Eastern Wood-Pewee. Water birds included Hooded Merganser, Wood Duck (with 4 cute ducklings), Common Gallinule, multiple Pied-billed Grebe, and Great Blue Heron. Baltimore and Orchard Orioles entertained us at multiple points around the loop trail. Other highlights included Cedar Waxwings, Wood Thrush, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Towhee, Common Yellowthroat (many), Yellow Warbler (many), Killdeer, Barn & Tree Swallows, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-throated and Warbling Vireos, and hundreds of showy Red-winged Blackbirds. As we arrived back at the parking area, Steve Strauchler quickly spotted a Ruby-throated Hummingbird by the kiosk - a nice ending to a pleasant outing.

Complete list of species:

Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Hooded Merganser, Pied-billed Grebe, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Common Gallinule, Killdeer, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Blue Jay, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Tufted Titmouse, Marsh Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Northern Cardinal, and Indigo Bunting.



Louisiana Waterthrush, by Joyce Depew

UPCOMING MEARNS BIRDING TRIPS - August 2023 thru March 2024

Aug 19, Sat. - **Wallkill River NWR**. Meet Johanna Bloomfield (541-778-1754) at the Oil City Rd. Platform at 8 AM for migrating shore birds and local breeders like Common Gallinule and with luck Sandhill Crane.

Sept 2, Sat. - **Black Dirt Region**. Meet Dave Baker (845-440-4030) at the Jolly Onion in Pine Island at 8:30 AM to search for Buff-breasted Sandpipers and American Golden-Plovers.

Sept 9, Sat.- **Kenridge Farm**. Meet Amy Greher (845-774-9399) at 8 AM at the 'Dog Park" and see what we can find at this productive site as Fall migration picks up.

Sept 16, Sat. - **Winding Waters Trail** (just West of the Oil City Road platform). Meet Bob Slechta (845-541-8210) there at 8:30 AM for a good mix of birds and hopefully a Connecticut Warbler.

Sept 20, Wed. - **Stonykill Farm** (Wappingers Falls, NY). Meet Bruce Nott (845-542-0583) there at 8:30 AM and see if he can top last year's tally of 60 species. A good place to see Lincoln's Sparrow.

Sept 30, Sat. - **Six and 1/2 Station Road Sanctuary**. Meet Don Aitchison (845-281-3220) at 8:30 AM where the Heritage Trail crosses the road and see what fall migrants we can turn up in the marsh and in the trees and brush bordering it.

Oct. 4, Wed. - **Bashakill** with Joyce Depew (845-978-9952). Meet at the Stop Sign Trail at 9 AM for a good variety of birds at this birding Hot Spot!

Oct. 7, Sat. - **Kenridge Farm** with Amy Greher (845-774-9399). Be at the Dog Park at 8:30 AM and Amy will track us down a Lincoln's Sparrow and other Fall migrants

Oct. 14, Sat. - **Black Dirt** with Dave Baker (845-440-4030). Meet at the Jolly Onion in Pine Island at 9AM and we will search for White-crowned Sparrows, Pipits, and maybe some Plovers.

Oct. 21, Sat. - **Rye/Playland** with Jodi Brodsky (845-282-1058). Meet at the Playland parking lot at 8:30 AM and look for Fall migrants heading south along the Sound, with options for visits to Marshlands and/or Greenwich.

Oct. 29, Sun. - **Wallkill River NWR** with Liz Mcknight (201-400-1428). meet at 9AM at the Oil City Rd. Platform. Sand Hill Crane? Leconte's Sparrow? Anything is possible here!

Nov. 11, Sat. - **Black Dirt** with Dave Baker (845-440-4030). Meet at The Jolly Onion in Pine Island at 9AM and we will search for Larks, Snow Buntings, and Longspurs.

Nov. 25, Sat. - **Shawangunk Grasslands** with Tom and Jane (845-443-5440). Short-eared Owls should be in! Be there at 4:30 PM.

Dec. 1,2,3 - Fri-Sat-Sun - **Cape Ann, MA !!** Join Jodi Brodsky on this fabulous club trip for Eiders, Scoters, Loons, and much more. Call Jody at 845-282-1058 or e-mail her at jsbbirder@Gmail.com for details.

Dec. 16, Sat - **Eastern Orange Christmas Count!** If you want to join in the fun, give Karen Miller (our count coordinator) a call at 845-381-3203.

Jan. 13, Sat - **New York State Waterfowl Count.** If you are interested in participating, please contact Bob Slechta (845-541-8210). This is always a fun day of searching Orange County for Ducks, Geese and other waterfowl.

Jan. 27, Sat - **Eagle Trip #1** with Gerhard Patsch (845-258-0620). Meet at the Iona Island overlook on the 'Goat Trail' at 9AM for an enjoyable winter day of Eagle watching!

Feb. 17, Sat - **Eagle Trip #2** with Gerhard Patsch again (845-258-0620). This trip is so popular we run a second trip - especially as river ice and weather conditions can vary so much and produce quite different outcomes. Meet at the Iona Island overlook on the 'Goat Trail' at 9AM

Mar. 2, Sat - **Black Dirt** with Bob Slechta (845-541-8210). Be at the Jolly Onion in Pine Island at 9AM for Larks, Buntings, Longspurs, and Rough-legs.

Mar. 9, Sat - **Rye/Greenwich** with Bob Slechta (845-541-8210). Meet at the Playland parking lot at 9AM for Purple Sandpipers, Long-tailed Ducks, Loons and much more!

Mar. 23, Sat - **Wallkill River NWR** with Joyce Depew (845-978-9952). Join us for a wildlife spectacle of hundreds of ducks of multiple species! Be at the Oil City Rd. platform at 9AM.

Mar. 30, Sat - **Eastern Orange Lakes** with Bruce Nott (845-542-0583). Be at the Northwest end of the Newburgh Walmart at 8:30 AM, and explore a variety of lakes in Eastern Orange County, and the wide range of waterfowl species that can be found.

Notes:

The trip leader's phone number is included so that you can call the night before or the morning of the trip if you have any questions. You can also check the Mearns Groups.io site for any last minute changes. *If you lead a trip, then you are responsible to send a write-up (for the next newsletter) to Rich VanTieghem at rich.w2vt@gmail.com

Happy Birding!

Sincerely, Rich VanTieghem - Orange Feather Editor

On the last page: Meeting locations and dates; Membership form (new or renewal)



Mearns Bird Club - Meeting Location

Meetings are held at the Blooming Grove Senior Center at 4 Horton Road in Blooming Grove, NY. The senior center, and its parking lot, are located behind the Blooming Grove Police Department.

Meeting Dates

General meetings of the Mearns Club are held at **7:00** pm on the second Monday of every month from October 2023 through May 2024 (**except February**). At club meetings, a club member or an outside speaker will give a presentation about his or her birding travels or studies. The popular December meeting is a "Share-a-thon", where members can present their bird-related photos or artwork.

Membership Form (New or Renewal):

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ PHONE: _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPE (Circle One): NEW RENEWAL

Annual membership is \$20 for an individual, \$30 for a family, or \$8 for a student.
Mail this form along with a check payable to "Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club" to:

Linda Strohl, Treasurer
8 Park Road
Salisbury Mills, NY 12577-5028
