

The Kestrel

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON CHAPTER FOR CENTRAL NEW YORK AND THE EASTERN LAKE ONTARIO BASIN

Vol. 56 | No. 2

Fall/Winter 2025

ONONDAGA
Audubon



FALL/WINTER PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



KAYLA FISK

Crafting Night November

Date and Location TBD

Get creative with us at a nature-themed Craft Night this November. We'll be creating bird-inspired crafts in a relaxed and welcoming setting. Whether you're a seasoned crafter or just looking to try something new, this is a great opportunity to unwind and connect with others who appreciate birds and the outdoors. Stay tuned for final details!

Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation: "Are Loons on Thin Ice with Climate Change?"

Wed., December 3, 6:00 - 7:00 pm

Virtual via Zoom

Like many species, Common Loon populations have been impacted by climate change. Over the last two decades, Adirondack loons have experienced increasing nest failure and migration disruption due to climate change. "Are Loons on Thin Ice due to Climate Change?" provides an overview of the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation's observations of how climate change is impacting Adirondack loons, as well as information about loon behavior and natural history.

Wingspan Game Night

Wed., September 17, 5:00 - 7:45 p.m.

Manlius Library, Upper Hallway Community Room

1 Arkie Albanese Ave, Manlius, NY 13104

Join us for a relaxing and fun *Wingspan* Game Night, where bird enthusiasts and board game lovers alike can learn how to play the award-winning game *Wingspan*. Whether you're a seasoned player or brand new to the game, all experience levels are welcome! We'll walk through the rules, play a casual round, and enjoy the beautifully illustrated world of bird conservation. This is a great opportunity to get familiar with the game ahead of our *Wingspan* Competition coming later this fall! All materials will be provided.

Wingspan Competition Tournament

Sat., October 4, 10:30 am - 2:30 pm

Manlius Library, Upper Hallway Community Room

1 Arkie Albanese Ave, Manlius, NY 13104

Put your birding and board game skills to the test at our *Wingspan* Competition Night! Compete against fellow players in a friendly tournament-style event featuring the beloved game *Wingspan*. Prizes will be awarded to top scorers. Whether you're aiming for victory or just enjoying the challenge, it's sure to be a fun and engaging afternoon. Prior knowledge of the game is recommended. Join our earlier Game Night to brush up!



ANDREW HUDNUT

Please Note: Several programs will be taking place on different days from our typical meetings.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

To participate, please contact the count compiler for your area, who will confirm the date and provide details about the count.

Clinton

TBA

Matt Perry 315-796-2233

Cortland

Sat., December 20

Matt Young may6@cornell.edu

Montezuma

Mon., December 15

Chris Lajewski 315-365-3588

Christopher.Lajewski@audubon.org

New Woodstock

TBA

Matt Young may6@cornell.edu

Oneida

TBA

Oswego

TBA

Rome

Sun., December 21

Bruce Carpenter 315-271-9073

Skaneateles

TBA

John Cashier 315-469-3314

Syracuse

Sat., December 20

Jason Lusier juscierjd@lemoyne.edu

Thousand Islands

TBA

Josh Van Wieren 613 923-5261 x113

josh.vanwieren@canada.ca

Watertown

Sat., December 20

Bill Haller 315-778-1484

haldex@twcnr.org

The Kestrel

Editor Kayla Fisk

Officers, Chairs, and Directors 2024-2025

President	Dori Joiner
Vice President	Alison Kocek
Secretary	Anna Stunkel
Treasurer	Ruth Florey
Birdathon	Paul Richardson
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Education	Kayla Fisk
Field Trips	Fred Leff
Membership	Danielle Davignon
Programs	Emma Borys
Native Plants	Diane Emord
Sanctuaries	Dave Fitch
Directors	Maryanne Adams, Emma Borys, Kayla Fisk, Kennedy Sullivan

Join

To become a member of Onondaga Audubon Society, please send your name, address, and a check for \$15, payable to Onondaga Audubon Society, to the address below. Chapter-only members receive *The Kestrel* newsletter. For information on National Audubon Society membership, please visit audubon.org. Joint members with National Audubon receive *The Kestrel*, plus *Audubon* magazine.

Volunteer

If you would like to talk to a committee chair about how you might help, contact OnAudubonCom@gmail.com, and a representative will contact you.

Donate

If you would like to help us achieve our mission, you can do so by mailing a check to:

Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 620
Syracuse, NY 13201

Stay in touch

Letters to the editor may be sent to OnAudubonCom@gmail.com or the address above.

Visit our website: OnondagaAudubon.org

If you would like to receive *The Kestrel* by email only, please send your request to OAS.Membership@gmail.com.



If you would like to receive email reminders about public programs and field trips, send an email to OAS.Programs@gmail.com with the word *Subscribe* in the subject line.

Problems with subscriptions should be referred to the membership chair at OAS.Membership@gmail.com.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

New Events, Leadership Changes, and Conservation Efforts

By Dorothy "Dori" Joiner
President

Welcome, friends! I hope you stayed cool and enjoyed birdwatching this summer. As fall approaches, we can look forward to colorful leaves, crisp breezes, and the awe-inspiring migration of birds heading to their winter homes.

In this edition of the *Kestrel*, we share articles that provide information about our activities, sanctuaries, conservation issues, field trips, and upcoming events. Our conservation article highlights some good news: it shows how one individual has embraced the importance of enhancing his land's habitat for the benefit of native wildlife. Whether you own many acres or a small lot, you can also make a difference by removing invasive species and replacing them with native plants to support birds, pollinators, and insects. Every little bit helps! The Sanctuary column offers updates on the new hawk counter at Derby Hill Bird Observatory, the 2025 counting season, improvements to the grounds, and highlights the donated Memorial Bench for the bluff. Make sure to read about the new Mitigation Murals applied to glass windscreens on the ESF campus. These nature-inspired murals are not only beautiful but also help prevent migrating songbirds from colliding with the transparent glass.

Next, I would like to update you about some changes in leadership on the Onondaga Audubon Board of Directors. On June 30, 2025, our Treasurer, Bob Kuehnel, retired after six years of dedicated service. We're grateful for his outstanding financial management and for keeping us informed about local conservation issues. Bob was a valuable part of the team, and we are sad to see him go. Ruth Florey, a friend and birding companion of former Treasurer Paul Richardson, is our new Treasurer. Ruth has experience in treasury management. Paul

is helping Ruth with the transition and is sharing some of the workload, acting as Assistant Treasurer.

We have also added two new board members to our team: Emma Borys and Kennedy Sullivan. Emma is currently our Program Director and is also interested in creating programs and activities for young birders. Kennedy Sullivan is the director of the Great Lakes Piping Plover (GLPP) Recovery Program and has recently become more involved with Onondaga Audubon. She is now assisting our Sanctuary Chair, Dave Fitch, in helping maintain the cottage and grounds at Derby Hill. Welcome, Ruth, Emma, and Kennedy!

This summer, Onondaga Audubon was pleased to sponsor an undergraduate intern from Tufts University, Jillie McLeod. She worked alongside Kennedy as a steward for the GLPP Recovery Program and assisted with Onondaga Audubon projects at our Derby Hill Sanctuary. Don't miss her article about her internship on page 3. A big thank you to Jillie for all her help this summer!

Lastly, I urge everyone to take an active role in staying current and engaged with our local conservation concerns. While we can each do our part in creating native habitats on our own land for birds and pollinators, it's equally important to raise our voices and take action to protect native wildlife facing habitat loss from human activities in our area, such as the proposed construction of the Micron chip fabrication plant. Many government-funded environmental agencies are facing budget cuts or being eliminated, which is discouraging. However, we must remain hopeful and take action at the local level. If everyone does their part together, we can make a difference!



Black-capped Chickadee.

KAYLA FISK

SANCTUARIES

Derby Hill Updates

By David Fitch
Sanctuary Chair

This past spring migration season was Counter David Brown's first at Derby Hill, but visitors quickly learned that we had found an experienced raptor counter, photographer, and birder. David brought with him technical skills and equipment that made it possible to share his daily observations and knowledge with anyone having internet access. For those who monitored his daily videos, it was equivalent to participating in a free raptor identification course from the comfort of one's home. David's experience interacting with visitors was an added plus for our hawkwatch. I wish to acknowledge and thank former Counter Brandon Brogel for his role in helping us recruit David Brown. David's season report of the count (*The Rough-leg*) has been printed and mailed to members and is accessible through Onondaga Audubon's website.

Again this year, Jay and Pat Chapman arranged for the delivery of a load of wood chips to be used on sanctuary trails. With the assistance of some visitors from Baltimore Woods, we were able to spread the majority of the material on some perennial wet spots by Discover Derby Day. I thank Derby Hill neighbor Gary Toth for helping to move the pile closer to areas of need with his tractor.

Last fall, we were contacted by the family of Elizabeth Weaver with a



The Weaver family with their donated bench in memory of Elizabeth Weaver.

request for a memorial to Elizabeth, who passed in 2024. The Weavers conveyed that while she was not an avid birder or hawkwatcher, she often visited Derby Hill from the family's camp on nearby Ramona Beach. She enjoyed the peace and quiet of the sanctuary and the view of Lake Ontario from the bluff. The family decided on a weather-proof bench, which has been placed on the Mexico Bay overlook for visitors to enjoy. We extend our condolences to the Weavers and thank them for choosing Derby Hill for this remembrance.

I would also like to welcome new OAS board member Kennedy Sullivan as Sanctuary Co-chair. Her enthusiasm to contribute her time and talents to the betterment of our sanctuaries has been gratifying. I believe that her skills and local presence will fill a much-needed gap in sanctuary stewardship.

*If you would like to receive the 2025 Derby Hill Bird Observatory newsletter, **The Rough-leg**, and to be added to the mailing list for future issues, please contact: oas.membership@gmail.com*



Gary Toth is using his tractor to move wood chips for the trails at Derby Hill.

DAVID FITCH



JILLIE MCLEOD

Jillie McLeod at Sandy Pond while out monitoring the beach for the Piping Plover Program.

New York Great Lakes Piping Plover Recovery Program

By Jillie McLeod
Onondaga Audubon Summer Intern

This summer, I had the opportunity to work, as an intern helping to conserve the endangered Piping Plover. I am from the greater Boston Area, and an undergraduate at Tufts University studying environmental studies and political science. However, my summers have been spent in the Sandy Pond area for as long as I can remember. The Piping Plover project was intriguing to me because of its significance to an area that means so much to me. I remember the year a Piping Plover first reappeared on the beach and the excitement surrounding it! I have watched as previous stewards worked on the beach each season, and I always wanted to become one as well! I feel a strong responsibility to the 17-mile dune ecosystem that is the Piping Plover's only suitable habitat in Northern New York, and I have witnessed how it changes constantly over time. Working on this project has given me the responsibility of monitoring the beaches daily to check for plovers, record behaviors, assist in dune restoration efforts to create suitable habitat, and spend time educating beachgoers about Piping Plovers, their life cycles, and protection measures. Combining all of my interests in species conservation, ecosystem restoration, and effective education with my connection to the area made working with plovers a perfect fit. I have loved getting to hang out with our resident plover, Hawkeye, and all of the other shorebirds that frequent the beach, and being able to become even more connected to the shores of Eastern Lake Ontario!

DAVID FITCH

CONSERVATION

Micron, Habitat Loss, and What We Can Do About It!

By Maryanne Adams
Conservation Chair

Ever since the incredible findings from Doug Tallamy's research highlighted the essential role of native plants supporting biodiversity became more widely known, the movement to increase the use of native plants in landscaping has been gaining momentum. It's a good way to counteract the onslaught of development that is happening everywhere. Here in Onondaga County, and many counties surrounding ground zero for habitat eradication (the 1400-acre Micron development site in Clay), we need to plan strategies for offsetting the catastrophic loss of undeveloped land that will be happening for the foreseeable future.

In the past, birds might have been able to forage in areas away from suburbia by accessing undeveloped land within flying distance and bringing food back to the nest. That will become more difficult as open space disappears. Specifically, 104 acres of land along Route 31 have been purchased by Onondaga County for supply chain industries for Micron, taking away another food source for local birds. Additional parcels of undeveloped land near the Micron site (about 130 acres) just came up for sale. Even more land will be used for road widening, additional power lines, solar and wind projects to supply energy to Micron, and water pipe pathways to bring millions of gallons

of clean water in and to take treated wastewater away. Additional land will be required for housing developments and necessary services for the growing population, including shopping centers, entertainment, schools, and medical facilities. Millions of dollars will be invested in new hotels, lakeside apartments, and townhouses. In a nutshell, every inch that can be developed probably will be.

The wetlands directly impacted by the construction of Micron's four fabs will simply disappear. Trees will be cut, and the land will be drained and filled. In this spot alone, there will be a direct loss of more than 200 acres where wildlife could breed and forage. The land chosen for mitigation will be of no benefit to local birds and wildlife as it will be barren for many years before it is restored to true wetland quality.

Bird lovers know that birds need more than the seed and suet offered in backyard feeders if population declines are to be turned around, because 96% of terrestrial nestlings' diets consist of protein from insects, especially caterpillars. Tallamy's research found that a Carolina Chickadee needs at least 5,000 caterpillars to raise a clutch. More than 90% of butterfly and moth caterpillars feed exclusively on certain native plants. How will there be enough food to raise the next generation of birds if land is cleared, native vegetation is removed, and landscaping is done with nonnative plants?

Habitat loss is often cited as the greatest cause of bird population decline. While planting native vegetation will help, it won't reverse the trend. Each bird species has a very specific set of requirements. Certain robust species like House Sparrows, European Starlings, and Rock Pigeons seem to do quite well with very little. Lighted supermarket signage, decaying wooden eaves, and the undersides of bridges are often home sweet home to these species. However, less common species have more specialized habitat requirements for breeding. National parks, state parks, wildlife management areas, land trusts, and undeveloped private land provide

some of this. Unfortunately, open space is not protected forever unless an environmental group purchases it or the landowner puts it into a conservation easement. I'm sure that most of you have had the shocking experience of returning to one of your favorite birding spots after some time has passed, only to find that it had been cleared.

Thankfully, this does not always happen. Twenty years ago, John Rybinski bought 120 acres of land on a hilltop in the town of Pompey, south of Syracuse. He did not purchase it to create a wildlife sanctuary; he merely saw it as an opportunity to stop sleeping in his office in Manlius. As a landscape contractor, John was working seven days a week and had little time for commuting. Cozy Nook Farm was only six minutes from work and close to John's family, who lived in Cazenovia.

One could describe the farm as having "aged out." Corn-stubbed fields and weedy hay lots were transitioning into early succession. Decrepit, rusting barbed wire fences needed to be removed. Some said, "Brush hog it while you can." Others advised "Subdivide it now so you will be ready to sell it if a buyer shows up," and "Put in a road."

But John had other plans. For a long time, he had been concerned about the loss of agricultural land in New York State. According to the Alliance for New York Farmland, 363,885 acres of farmland were lost to development from 2017 – 2022. If projections are accurate, 452,000 more acres could be converted to urban and low-density housing by 2040. Also, leasing land for solar and wind projects could convert thousands of additional acres of farmland and open space (grasslands, forests, and wetlands) as electricity needs jump exponentially to meet the extreme needs of data centers, Micron, and the growing number of residential customers.

John wanted to keep this piece of land from being developed.

The local DOT had marked the old maples that lined the street in front



WWW.BYOWNER.COM

An example of property for sale near where Micron will be developed.

of the farmhouse for removal, but understanding the value of old trees for wildlife, John intervened. He walked the property and began to make changes. He took note of the struggling hardwoods and began the arduous task of removing invasives like buckthorn and multiflora rose to help the desirable trees grow pole-sized where they could out-compete other vegetation.

As John spent more time on his land, his feeling of connection to it grew. When 120 acres next door went up for sale, he bought it because he knew that if he didn't buy it, someone else would and the opportunity would not repeat itself.

Next, a fifty-acre parcel behind the farm was offered for sale. Plans for a subdivision had already been drawn up, so the writing was on the wall. John managed to acquire the funds for this parcel. Soon, more land down the road was in danger of development, and John bought another hundred acres to keep it wild.

Altogether, John has been able to put 430 acres into a conservation easement, so that it will never be developed. The property contains a variety of habitats. There are wetlands, high elevation wetlands, successional agricultural fields, second-growth forest, mature forest, and a large pond.

Initially, the vegetation on most of the property contained too much of the wrong thing: (the wrong thing being invasive vegetation). With the advice of George Spak, a certified herbicide applicator and conservation easement inspector, John was able to enjoy his new hobby - cutting back and removing invasives. Over the years, John was able to get rid of much of the buckthorn, multiflora rose, and honeysuckle. He found that when the honeysuckle and buckthorn resprouted, the deer would help by browsing on the new shoots. In addition to removing invasives, John hired a tree planter and added thousands of trees to the property. One year, he added 20,000 new trees to the landscape.

John also conducted AVID (Assess Vegetation Impacted by Deer)



JOHN RYBINSKI

John Rybinski stands next to a field of warm-season grasses that he planted to replace a fescue monoculture.

surveys on his property and applied habitat management strategies for white-tailed deer, to keep that population healthy. Over time, John's efforts encouraged some native vegetation to return. And, as you might expect, as the habitat improved, a wide variety of wildlife and many bird species settled on the property or passed through during migration. Frequently seen mammals include bobcats, coyotes, red foxes, white-tailed deer, and beavers. Birds seen on the property include Osprey, Bald Eagle, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, Eastern Screech Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Mallard, Double-crested Cormorant, Wood Duck, Canada Goose, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Ruffed Grouse, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, as well as a variety of warblers and ducks. American Woodcock have also settled in, and once John saw a group of thirty young ones following a parent.

For John, this has been a rewarding and enjoyable endeavor. He was not an expert when he embarked on this, as he put it, "learn as you go" project, but he has seen the positive changes his efforts have yielded. He has found that "You don't have to be an expert, and you don't have to do everything all at once." He's well on his way to achieving his long-term goal of creating the greatest amount of biodiversity possible on the biggest parcel of

land around, using the best management practices available.

While not everyone has the wherewithal to buy all the available undeveloped land around them, anyone can help birds by joining the movement to regenerate biodiversity. The Homegrown National Park (HNP) initiative brings together like-minded individuals who wish to promote biodiversity in their landscapes. Habitat Gardening CNY, a local chapter of Wild Ones, shares the same mission. Along with Audubon's Plants for Birds program, these organizations provide expert advice about how to use native plants in your landscaping. Please consider adding native plants to your yard and, of course, don't use pesticides. You can make the world a better place for birds simply by improving your habitat. Even a very small action can make a difference if it increases biodiversity. We need to counteract the immense habitat loss that is just around the corner.

Meanwhile, John would love to share his little piece of paradise with Onondaga Audubon. John's nature preserve on a hill in Pompey is a unique place that more birders should enjoy, even though it is still a work in progress. We'll be planning some field trips to this delightful spot soon. Please let us know if you'd like to join us by sending an email to goldtailedhermit@aol.com.

BIRDATHON

Another Great Year for the Birdathon!

By Paul Richardson
Birdathon Coordinator

The 2025 Onondaga Audubon Birdathon was held on Saturday, May 17th. There were 12 teams this year with a total of 31 participants. Most teams reported periods of heavy rain during the event. Rain before the event also made some areas difficult to access.

The team totals below have been sorted by those identifying as Competitive (following the original Birdathon rules of sticking together) or Recreational (where team members could split up).

The high species totals for the nine competitive teams went to The Uncommon Mergs with 148 species, Archaeopteryx with 136 species, and Total Eclipse of the Redstart with 120 species. There were 26 team single-species this year, highlighted by Black Scoter, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black Tern, and Sedge Wren. There were also 16 team doubles, which included Sandhill Crane, Prairie Warbler, and Pine Siskin.

As of early July, more than \$4000 has been raised, with the top three team donations coming from Marsh Madness, What the Hawk?, and Total Eclipse of the Redstart. I anticipate receiving additional donations throughout the year and will be reporting the overall team donation totals in the Spring/Summer 2026 Kestrel.

Thank you to everyone who participated and donated to this year's Birdathon!

ESF Pilot Project Helps Prevent Bird Collisions with Nature-inspired 'Mitigation Murals'

By Meredith Barges
Chair of Lights Out Central New York

This spring, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) gave its Syracuse campus a bird-friendly makeover in time for bird migration. With a new pilot project, five all-glass windscreens

Competitive Teams (Ranked)

Team	Team Members	Species	Notable Species: (x) indicates how many teams found that species
The Uncommon Mergs	Dennis Anderson (Leader), Matt Voelker, Tim Wing	148	Northern Pintail (1), Sedge Wren (1), Gray-cheeked Thrush (1), Cape May Warbler (1), Orchard Oriole (1)
Archaeopteryx	Mickey Scilingo (Leader), Martin Mau, Matthew Brown	136	Red-breasted Merganser (1), Red-throated Loon (1), Lesser Black-backed Gull (1), Sandhill Crane (2)
Total Eclipse of the Redstart (Baltimore Woods)	Tom Meier (Leader), Anna Stunkel, Jason Mauro, Jonathan Kresge, Bill Wallauer	120	Ring-necked Pheasant (1), Palm Warbler (1), Lincoln's Sparrow (2)
The Loon Rangers	Chris Stanger (Leader), Dr. Stephen Schwab, Frank Brosch	112	Acadian Flycatcher (1), Trumpeter Swan (2), Winter Wren (2), Lincoln's Sparrow (2)
But did you see the Eagle?	Kayla Fisk (Leader), Robert Fisk, Melinda Fisk	110	Lesser Yellowlegs (1), Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (1), Least Bittern (2)
Bluebirds	John Rogers (Leader), Pat Burns	108	Hooded Merganser (1), Common Merganser (2), Fish Crow (2)
Wrenegades	Faith Baker (Leader), Barbara Robinson, Ted Baker, Kharisma Baker, Charlie Baker, Joel Baker, Ariel Baker	103	American Coot (1), Vesper Sparrow (2), Pine Siskin (2)
Osprey Can You See	David Nash (Solo)	94	Least Bittern (2), Prairie Warbler (2), Mourning Warbler (3)
What-the-Hawk?	Carla Bregman (Leader), Jane Fagerland, Sue Boettger	79	Black Scoter (1), Black Tern (1), Brandt (2)

Recreational Teams (Alphabetical)

Team	Team Members	Species	Notable Species: (x) indicates how many teams found that species
Marsh Madness	Jeanne Ryan (Leader), David Ryan, Sarah Stuart, Robyn Niver, Patti Rojec	101	Common Merganser (2), Ruffed Grouse (2), Golden-crowned Kinglet (2)
Old Gray Gnat-catcher	Paul Richardson (Solo)	95	Blue-winged Teal (1), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (1), Eastern Screech Owl (3)
The Blackburnians	Jan Needham McGraw (Leader), Jane Needham	87	Swainson's Thrush (2), Pine Siskin (2), American Bittern (3)

in front of Baker Hall and the Gateway Center were transformed into decorative "mitigation murals" to protect birds from fatal building collisions. Every year in the United States, nearly 2 billion birds die after colliding with glass windows and walls.

The initiative is a collaboration of the SUNY ESF Office of Sustainability, SUNY ESF Division of Sustainable Facilities & Operations, Guy A. Baldassarre Birding Club, and PhD student Meredith Barges.

The five transparent windscreens were treated with hand-painted,

nature-themed designs using water-resistant acrylic paint and paint pens to create "contrast visual markers." These markers help birds to recognize the glass as a solid object and avoid flying into it.

ESF has seen its share of bird collisions. Just this spring, two American Woodcocks and an Ovenbird collided with the front of the ESF Gateway Center. These fatalities were added to the dozens of collisions reported at SUNY ESF and collected through the SUNY ESF Community Collision Project on iNaturalist. The new mitigation measures aim to prevent

losses in the future.

Environmental illustrator Katie Mulligan created three of the five murals. Known for her artwork focused on New York's wetland conservation, Mulligan brought regional themes into the designs. "I wanted to include something that wasn't only decorative, but also had a hint of our local environment," she said. "There's a Mourning Dove on one of the windows that is based on the Mourning Dove couple that's nesting near Baker Hall. All of the plant life is also native or occurring in New York State as well. When I started at Baker Hall, I picked some of the top species that collide with windows in New York State."

Barges, an Onondaga Audubon board member who researches bird-friendly building policies, helped guide the project's design to ensure it followed evidence-based practices. "Collisions are completely preventable," she said. "The science is clear—with bird-friendly design that treats all glass with a minimum 2"x2" pattern, we can significantly save bird lives."

Barges designed and painted a mural of a hummingbird flying over a field of flowers, with floral

stencils, in front of Upper Baker Hall. ESF undergraduate student Emily McClary helped add the stenciling. The Birch tree mural was designed and created by Barges and SUNY ESF undergraduate students Leila Kaufman, of the Mighty Oaks Student Club, and Jenelle Grigevlevich.

The project received final approval in late March, just in time for New York's spring migration season, which runs from April 1 to May 31. This timing was key, as tens of millions of birds pass through Onondaga County during this period.

The new murals have drawn serious attention on campus. Students have responded positively, not only to the conservation effort but also to the unexpected addition of beautiful, nature-themed art to their daily surroundings.

The murals will remain in place through the spring and early summer. If successful, the initiative could serve as a model for permanent installations at SUNY ESF and seasonal mitigation projects at other institutions looking to reduce bird deaths caused by glass collisions.

The ESF community hopes the combination of science and art will lead to lasting change—and fewer bird

casualties on campus.

For information on how to prevent bird building collisions at your home, school, or office, visit www.audubon.org/news/reducing-collisions-glass



MEREDITH BARGES

"Migration Mural" is being completed.

Onondaga Audubon is currently seeking individuals to take on these special roles:

-Webmaster and Social Media:

Someone who has experience to revamp our website, handle posting to social media, and advertise upcoming events on these platforms.

-Event Table Coordinator:

Duties include taking our table, literature, and banner to Program Meetings and other environmental events. In addition to displaying information, the coordinator reaches out to attendees, answers questions, raises awareness of our organization, and encourages them to join.

OA FIELD TRIPS: AUGUST 2025- FEBRUARY 2026

Please contact the trip leader at least two days in advance to enroll. Each trip will have a limited number of participants, and signing up is required. The trip leaders may limit the number of participants at their discretion and will provide the time and meeting location when you enroll. People who do not sign up in advance but show up on the day of the trip will not be allowed to participate.

Pop-Up Field Trips. Other trips may become available and will be announced 1-2 weeks in advance by social media, so keep an eye out for these special events!

Welcome to all beginning birders! We hope you will join us this fall to catch some migrants flying through our area en route to their winter homes. Please bring binoculars if you have them. If not, inform the leader; they may loan you a pair. Be sure and dress according to the weather and

wear appropriate footwear. Bring water and snacks if you need them.

Split Rock Quarry Saturday, August 30, 2025

Paul Richardson:
richardsonp.audubon@gmail.com

Paul will lead a field trip to Split Rock Quarry in Camillus. Contact Paul to sign up and for information on carpooling, as parking is limited. We will walk for about 3 – 4 hours, looking for Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows, Towhees, possibly some raptors, and early migrating warblers. Please bring insect repellent, sunscreen, binoculars, water, and a light snack. The trails are quite variable, with surfaces of bedrock, grass and soil, and gravel. There are some moderately steep sections.

Seneca Meadows Education Center Sunday, October 12, 2025

Fred Leff: (315) 956-0462 and/or email to fredleff@verizon.net

After meeting, we will drive to the Seneca Meadows Wetland Preserve and

walk for up to 3 miles in 3 to 4 hours. All the trails will be open as the Bald Eagles have fledged. Optional: If anyone wants to bird more areas in Seneca and/or Wayne County, we will add 3 more hours. We should see migrating songbirds, raptors, many waterfowl, and possibly Sandhill Cranes. Please dress for the weather and bring water, insect repellent, sunscreen, and snacks.

The Montezuma Wetlands Complex: A Late-Autumn trip Sunday, November 23, 2025

Fred Leff: fredleff@verizon.net or text/call (315) 956-0462

Join Fred for an all-day trip (possibly 7 hours total) to several locations within and near the Montezuma Wetland Complex. We will meet at the Seneca Meadows Education Center, and our first birding location will be the Seneca Meadows Wetland Preserve. When finished (a maximum of 2 hours), we will visit several locations in the Montezuma National

Continued on page 8



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"Migration Murals" at ESF, featuring Katie Mulligan on the left.

MEREDITH BARGES

FIELD TRIPS: AUGUST 2025-February 2026 *Continued from page 7*

Wildlife Refuge. There should be many migrating waterfowl, late migrant song-birds, Sandhill Cranes, herons, and Bald Eagles. As some locations are far from viewing spots, spotting scopes and (of course) binoculars are recommended. Carpooling is highly recommended as we may be driving a significant amount. Please pack a lunch, water, and dress for the weather. Please contact Fred for details, meeting place, and time.

Fairhaven Beach State Park Sunday, December 21, 2025

Fred Leff: fredleff@verizon.net or text/call (315) 956-0462

Join Fred at a central location so we can carpool to Fairhaven Beach State Park. Once people begin to register, we will discuss carpooling. We may see Purple Sandpipers, along with wintering sea ducks, Red-throated and Common Loons, Horned Grebes, wintering gulls, Swans, possibly Snowy Owl, and possible rarities. Please dress for winter with multiple layers, hats, gloves, etc., and appropriate footwear. I will have my spotting scope, and you are welcome to bring yours as well.

Creek Walk at Onondaga Lake Sunday, January 25, 2026

Fred Leff: fredleff@verizon.net or text/call (315) 956-0462

Fred will lead a short bird walk to Onondaga Lake in search of our wintering Bald Eagles. In past years, we have observed them in great numbers. Only about ½ a mile of the trail will be open. It could be slippery if snow or ice is present. Please dress for the weather and bring binoculars and/or spotting scopes. Besides Bald Eagles, we should see many wintering ducks, such as Goldeneyes and Mergansers. We anticipate adding more of these trips during the winter. Leaders, contact information, start times, and meeting locations will be announced on social media.

Onondaga Lake's West Shore Trail and the Inner Harbor in Winter Saturday, February 14, 2026

Fred Leff: fredleff@verizon.net or call/text to (315) 956-0462

This will be a field trip to look for Bald Eagles, wintering gulls, wintering waterfowl, and possible rarities. Fred will lead a walk to the Syracuse Inner Harbor to look for

waterfowl and wintering gulls. Then we will drive to the Destiny USA "Pink" lot (park near number 3) and walk the Creek Walk to the Onondaga Lake shoreline where the wintering Bald Eagles roost. We will stop just past the railroad bridge. Please dress warmly and contact Fred for additional information. Spotting scopes are highly recommended.

NOTE: Additional trips may be added during the winter months, depending on weather conditions and bird activity. Examples are extra trips to view: Bald Eagles on Onondaga Lake, Snowy Owls or Rough-legged Hawks, and/or winter finches (if there is an irruption). Check out Facebook for announcements on these special events.



An immature Glaucous Gull, one of the many gull species you may find on these winter field trips.

KAYLA FISK