

The Kestrel

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

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Fall/Winter 2026

ONONDAGA
Audubon



FALL/WINTER PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



KAYLA FISK

Birding 101

Thurs., September 17, 6:00 - 7:30

p.m.

DEC Visitor Center

270 Restoration Way, Syracuse, NY 13207

Did you want to get started birding but aren't sure where to start? Join us in a Birding 101 workshop where we will go over everything you need to build a strong foundation for your birding journey. We will cover topics such as choosing binoculars, how to use apps like eBird and Merlin, and tips to ID birds right here in Central New York.



MARYANNE ADAMS

Native plants feed pollinators.

Healing the Earth for Our Native Birds

Wed., October 14, 6:00 p.m.

In Person, TBD

Adding native plants to your yard helps create habitat that birds need to breed and

thrive. Maryanne Adams, Conservation Chair of Onondaga Audubon, will explain how to get started with native gardening and how we can work together to build a bird-friendly community.



Common Wood-pigeon in Bristol, England.

Cities for Wildlife: Conserving Biodiversity in a Crowded World

Wed., November 11, 6:00 p.m.

Zoom

Understanding how science can inform urban planning and community action to create healthier, more biodiverse cities for both wildlife and people has never been more important. Dr. Jason Luscier, Professor at Le Moyne College, will share highlights from his research on urban biodiversity, exploring how birds and other wildlife respond to the challenges and opportunities of city life through his CatTracker community science project, a multi-city study of urban bird diversity in Europe, and other ongoing research examining the effects of urbanization on wildlife.

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 19

Matt Young may6@cornell.edu

Montezuma

Mon., December 14

Chris Lajewski 315-365-3588

Christopher.Lajewski@audubon.org

New Woodstock

TBA

Matt Young may6@cornell.edu

Oneida

Fri., January 1

Mark Burns

Markwilsonburns@gmail.com

Oswego

Sun., December 20

Bob & Melinda Fisk

Mfisk@twcny.rr.com

Rome

Sun., December 20

Bruce Carpenter 315-271-9073

Skaneateles

TBA

John Cashier 315-469-3314

Syracuse

Sat., December 19

Jason Luscier luscierjd@lemoyne.edu

Thousand Islands

TBA

Josh Van Wieren 613-923-5261 x113

josh.vanwieren@canada.ca

Watertown

Sat., December 19

Bill Haller 315-778-1484

haldex@twcny.rr.com

JASON LUSCIER

The Kestrel

Editors	Molly English-Brown, Ally Farnand, Kayla Fisk
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Field Trips	
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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

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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.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Remembering Bill Purcell

By Dorothy "Dori" Joiner
President

Some people leave a lasting impression not through grand gestures, but through quiet dedication, kindness, and generosity. Bill Purcell was one of those people. It is with great sadness that I announce his passing and reflect on the many ways he enriched our birding community and profoundly influenced countless birders.



Bill looking for birds on a winter field trip, January 20, 2018.

Since I regret not having known Bill as well as I would have liked, I reached out to those who spent more time with him and asked them to share their memories. Their responses carried a remarkably consistent theme. Bill possessed an extraordinary knowledge of birds, yet he never sought recognition for it. Instead, he was a patient, humble teacher who was always willing to help others find, identify, and appreciate birds.

Bill especially loved winter birding. He was most at home along Onondaga Lake, the Oswego River, and the bluff at Derby Hill Bird Observatory, where he excelled at identifying ducks, geese, gulls, and other waterbirds. He led many field trips for Onondaga Audubon, and I have fond memories of his popular "Baldwinsville to Oswego" winter birding caravans each January and February. He was also an exceptional raptor observer and a familiar presence at Derby Hill, where he assisted the official hawk counters and often stepped in as a substitute counter himself. His Birdathon team consistently topped the list for the most species recorded, and he never

passed up the chance to chase a rare bird to add to his county list. Bill birded in all 62 counties in New York State and listed over 100 species for each one. He also organized and led the Oneida and Oswego Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) for over 20 years, and participated in the Syracuse CBC for 30 years.

Beyond Onondaga Audubon, Bill generously shared his expertise as the online moderator for Oneidabirds (a regional listserv that was created to share information about bird sightings) and, for several years, as the Region 5 editor for *The Kingbird*, the quarterly journal of the New York State Ornithological Association. Together with Dorothy Crumb, he served as a co-coordinator of the DEC's second New York State Breeding Bird Atlas in 2000-2005. More recently, he was an eBird reviewer.

These accomplishments represent only a portion of Bill's many contributions to birding. More than his impressive knowledge or remarkable field skills, Bill will be remembered for his quiet kindness, gentle spirit, and unwavering generosity. He mentored beginning birders with patience and humility, always willing to share what he knew without ever making anyone feel inadequate. His understated, infectious laugh and warm encouragement made everyone around him feel welcome.

Bill helped countless birders find not only birds but also the confidence to become birders themselves. His legacy will live on in the many people he inspired, taught, and befriended. He will be deeply missed.



Bill watching the raptor migration at Derby Hill Bird Observatory, March 31, 2018.

SANCTUARIES

Derby Hill Updates

By David Fitch
Sanctuary Chair

We were pleased to have Counter David Brown return for a second count season at Derby Hill.

It has been gratifying to have someone with his experience, talent, communication and technical skills contributing to Derby Hill's 48-year database of raptor populations and migration trends. David's knowledge of weather patterns and their effect on avian migration have helped visitors improve their odds of catching memorable flights. His appreciation of the uniqueness of our hawkwatch comes through in his daily videos and in his season report, *The Rough-leg*, which is provided to members and accessible through our website. Readers will also note David's commitment to observing and recording the arrival of non-raptor species.

In the fall of 2025, Onondaga Audubon applied for a grant from the Richard S. Shineman Foundation to purchase some new picnic tables for the North Lookout and to improve parking at both lookouts. In January, we learned that the grant had been awarded in the full amount requested (\$4,100). We are grateful to the Foundation for making these improvements possible and to Kennedy Sullivan for preparing the grant application. Four new weather resistant picnic tables have now been assembled and are in place for visitor use. I wish to thank Bob Fisk, Art Walker and Mickey Scilingo for assisting in the transport, unloading and assembly of the tables. The grant



New picnic tables at the North Lookout.

also provided funds to purchase 20 tons of stone for the parking lot, which was spread and compacted by neighbors Gary Toth and Charles Cole.

In preparation for OAS's annual Discover Derby Hill day, a work day was scheduled on May 2nd to clear trails, spread wood chips and overall spruce up the sanctuary. We had a nice turnout (see photo) and accomplished several much needed tasks. I wish to thank all who contributed. I am hoping that we can make this an annual event.



Kennedy Sullivan, Jay Chapman, Karen & Anna Stunkel, Aubree & Dustine Devine, and Pat Chapman.

Derby Hill Field Trips

By Anna Stunkel
Secretary and Former Hawk Counter

Leading a field trip to Derby Hill is a gamble, always dependent on weather factors such as wind direction and speed, precipitation, temperature, and cloud cover. The good news is that no matter what the weather is doing, there is always something to see. I lucked out big time last year when I brought a trip to Derby and the day began with pouring rain, then cleared up to reveal the busiest recorded raptor flight in Derby Hill history (21,176 migrating raptors, which were mostly Broad-winged Hawks!)

This year, I led two Onondaga Audubon field trips at Derby. The first one (March 28) was a chilly and snowy day at the South Lookout. It was not very busy, but we had some nice looks at Bald Eagles, and Turkey Vultures were moving along.

For our second field trip (April 25), the raptor flight was not very busy due to the gloominess factor, but

we were totally inundated by Yellow-rumped Warblers. I am not sure I have ever seen so many of them at Derby Hill before, including during my two seasons as the official counter in 2017 and 2018. Ten visitors and I enjoyed a leisurely stroll among the hedgerows, watching the Yellow-rumped Warblers feed on insects and finding a few other early-season warbler species such as Palm and Pine Warblers.

Derby Hill Day was also a great success on May 9. The day started with a Snowy Egret flyover, which is pretty uncommon for the area. I led several walks throughout the day, including one for the CNY Hiking group. We had nice views of species like Magnolia Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Red-headed Woodpecker, and American Redstart. Several kids enjoyed running through a bird migration obstacle course that I set up, dodging challenges like trash and a stuffed cat to reach the finish line.

I also led two trips for my job as an Environmental Educator at Baltimore Woods Nature Center. On April 15, environmental club students from Skaneateles High School enjoyed a nice flight (609 raptors for the day) with good views of some low-flying birds. Many of the students were new to birding, and this trip really sparked their interest. They were especially impressed by the Red-breasted Mergansers close to shore, with beautiful views in the sunshine. April 17 was a more modest flight, but we had another nice walk through the hedgerows enjoying some early-season warblers and other songbird species.

I miss going to Derby Hill after the hawkwatch season, but fortunate to live nearby and to have volunteered on the Board of Onondaga Audubon several years after serving as the official counter. David Brown has done an amazing job sharing this special place with visitors both in person and through his Lyco Birds YouTube channel. I look forward to seeing what the next season will bring!

If you would like to receive the 2026 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

CONSERVATION

Experiencing Joy and Averting Misery

By Maryanne Adams
Conservation Chair

I wish everyone could start their day with some joy, the way I did one morning in the last week of June. The sun woke me up at 5:58 a.m., and I decided to get up so I could check out which birds were visiting the native red mulberry tree we had planted several years ago. The tree was full of fruit, and all the birds in the neighborhood knew it.

I sat on the deck near the tree for the next hour and a half, immersing myself in nature instead of checking my phone for the latest dire news. A tiny sliver of Lake Ontario was visible, just above the tree line, and the air was filled with the sounds of life.

The first bird to visit the mulberry tree was a Northern House Wren. She has a family in one of the Martin-house gourds, so she was most likely hunting for insects to feed her young. There is also a pair of Great Crested Flycatchers in the gourd condo. At 6 a.m. one of the flycatchers was already perched on the highest point of the gourd array, doing his best to sing without dropping the dragonfly he had in his mouth.

At 8:15 a.m., the list of visitors to the mulberry tree was growing. A Downy

Woodpecker and a Red-eyed Vireo enjoyed some berries. Additional visitors now included three American Goldfinches, three American Robins, and three Gray Catbirds. There were also pairs of Northern Cardinals, Northern Orioles, Scarlet Tanagers, and House Finches. A Wood Thrush grabbed some ripe berries as did five Cedar Waxwings. Watching these birds filled me with joy.

Not everyone is so lucky. I've been watching YouTube videos called "Crime Pays But Botany Doesn't." Their creator, Joey Santoro, hails from a tough part of Chicago, and he doesn't temper his speech, at all. But in my opinion, harsh language is called for these days. Mr. Santoro has very strong opinions about the way landscapers do things in the United States. The title of this series is "Spiritually Depraved & Misery Inducing Landscapes of North America," and he blames the sterile environment for obesity, addictions, and a whole host of other human problems. I tend to agree with him, which is why I am very concerned we'll see more landscapes like the ones he shows us in those videos.

Some kinds of development are more concerning than others. What is the likelihood that a hyperscale data center will be built near you? The answer to that question might depend on your town board. Earlier this year, an application was filed to build a 300-megawatt hyperscale data center

in Lysander, New York, on 120 acres at the intersection of Hencle Boulevard and Oswego Road. However, on May 7, the Lysander Town Board halted the project with a six-month moratorium. On June 30, the Town of Clay approved a one-year moratorium on data centers to give the board time to do more research about their energy/water usage and other effects they might have on the community.

Isn't Micron and the development of all the necessary infrastructure, housing, and support services for the projected workforce in the surrounding area enough? I hope no huge data center is ever approved for the region. Data centers are known to be an extractive system. They consume vast amounts of electricity, a great deal of water, and considerable open space, which deprives the community of these resources and forces them to compete for them. In addition, data centers can harm wildlife through noise and light pollution. Once a facility is up and running, the relentless hum of diesel generators and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems creates noise levels that are impossible to ignore. In addition, communities near hyperscale data centers report that people are dealing with a phenomenon known as infrasound. Standard decibel meters don't register these frequencies, and the long-term effects are unknown. The inaudible rumble passes through walls, so people are affected, even when they are inside their own homes. Because hyperscale data centers require all-night lighting, light pollution from the facility can disrupt bird migration as well as the life cycles of insects and wildlife in the vicinity. People who live nearby will find the lights impossible to ignore, and their sleep cycles will also likely be disturbed.

These concerns have prompted action at the state level. On June 4, the New York State Legislature passed the Responsible Data Center Development Act, which would freeze all data center development for projects of 20 megawatts or more for one year. This act became law on July 14 when



MARY HARKOLA

Baltimore Oriole and Gray Catbird at a backyard bird bath.

Governor Hochul signed an executive order halting the permitting of facilities that need 50 megawatts or more of power. This one-year moratorium gives the state more time to study the effects of the rapid data center build-out on water and power resources as well as on humans.

It is more important than ever for people to pay attention to local and state politics because once approval for a project that will affect you is given, it is impossible to roll it back.

Another example of a project that stunned its neighbors was built in Oneida, N.Y. In June, Onondaga Audubon received a letter describing the light pollution from the greenhouses at Green Empire Farms in Oneida. Since then, I've learned that the massive glow is from two 32-acre greenhouses on a hydroponic farm that raises non-GMO produce all year long. The lighting from this facility can be seen for miles. While it's wonderful that it yields a great product and employs more than 200 workers, it's truly unfortunate that when plans for the project were approved, they did not address the light pollution the farm would create. Retractable shutters or reflective insulation could decrease the glow, but they should have been installed during the initial construction. This project was the first I'd heard about in which such an unreasonable amount of light pollution had been allowed. Many people hate it, especially those who live nearby. (Check out the postings and photos on Friends and Families of Verona, New York on Facebook.) I will be looking into this further.

I am extremely fortunate to be living in the middle of a 20-acre patch of woods, insulated from noise and light pollution and sterile landscaping. It would be nice to pretend that industrial developments and other land-gobbling projects don't exist. However, unless we remain vigilant regarding zoning changes and project approvals, we risk losing more of the joy-producing landscapes that are so important for our mental health.

Shooting Double-crested Cormorants

Recently, a concerned citizen called to inquire if it was legal that a fisherman was shooting cormorants in Sodus on Lake Ontario. Her brother was out fishing and he witnessed this. A phone call to the Department of Environmental Conservation provided some answers. It turns out that the USDA issued a Federal permit allowing the take of DC Cormorants in the Blind Sodus area. The reason for this was that the population of nesting adults had increased from 20 to 200. Since cormorants eat fish, the fishermen

were not happy and one of them obtained the permit. It is the United States Department of Agriculture that makes the call if a permit is requested. In this case, they granted it. If you want to know more about the permitting process, you can call this number: 585-226-5380. According to the person I spoke with, the permittee must always carry the permit with them and can use it in only the area specified by the permit. If you are concerned that a person is shooting birds illegally, you can contact DEC Enforcement at 1-844-332-3267.



Flock of Double-crested Cormorant.

ALAN MIDDLETON

Appreciating the under-appreciated

*By Kayla Fisk
Education Chair*

Everyone seems to look forward to and love particular bird groups — warblers, hummingbirds, and orioles seem to be the ones at the top of the list, and you can't really blame the favoritism. They are brightly colored, easy to ID, and are usually conspicuous. On the other hand, there are groups of birds that seem to cause disdain, or even dread among birders for their difficulty, whether it's because many species look so similar, or because they are typically in places that make them harder to locate and observe.

For most birders, the challenging groups are shorebirds and gulls, and mastering these species distinguishes those who know, understand and appreciate these birds a step above. Understanding these tricky birds takes time, experience and an eye for the more subtle differences.

Someone with these qualities stands out brightly in the birding community. As Onondaga Audubon's President Dori Joiner said, Bill Purcell was one of those birders, a pillar of the birding community, a wealth of knowledge, and an appreciator of the birds that many overlooked. Bill was happy to share his lifetime of knowledge, helping new and experienced birders alike; he was someone who shaped our local birding community. Those birders, like Bill, who have been birding long enough to gain the knowledge and skill to be confident in these difficult ID's, have mastered the art of noticing the finer details present in bird plumage. So while many see gulls as just a group of white and gray birds, birders like Bill, can see past that first impression.

When you slow down and take the time to observe these species, you will quickly see why they are such fascinating birds and a favorite among a niche subset of birders. Gulls are highly intelligent and extremely social birds, making them remarkably adaptable. While at first glance they may all look alike, there are subtle differences that allow

continued on page 6

BIRDATHON

Another Great Year for the Birdathon!

By Paul Richardson
Birdathon Coordinator

The 2026 Onondaga Audubon Birdathon was held on Saturday, May 16. There were 11 teams this year consisting of 30 total participants. Rain held off for most of the day, resulting in 182 total species being seen.

High species totals for the six competitive teams went to The Uncommon Cuckoos with 138 species, Archaeopteryx followed close behind with 137 species, and Wrenegades were third with 96 species. There were 26 team single species this year, highlighted by Brant, Ruddy Duck, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Gray Jay, and Orange-crowned Warbler. There were also 13 team doubles, which included White-winged Scoter, Ruffed Grouse, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

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

As of late June, more than \$3500 has been raised, with the top three team donations coming from Marsh Madness, The Blackburnians, and Wrenegades. I anticipate additional donations throughout the rest of the year and will be reporting the overall team donation totals in the Spring/Summer 2027 Kestrel.

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

Continued from page 5
you to even age them — with different gull species taking anywhere from one to four years to reach maturity, each showing a different plumage pattern. Simple things like bill coloring, molt patterns, leg color, and bill shape are key differentiating features of gull species. By tackling this group of birds, you will develop an eye for the finer details of bird ID.

In Bill's honor, we should also slow down and take a closer look at those birds we often skim over with our binoculars. Just like Bill, they have so much to teach us about the bird life around us.

Competitive Teams (Ranked)

Team	Team Members	Species	Notable Species: (x) indicates how many teams found that species
Uncommon Cuckoos	Dennis Anderson (Leader), Bryan Rutledge	138	Brant(1), Horned Grebe (1), Pectoral Sandpiper (1), Bonaparte's Gull (1), Orchard Oriole (1)
Archaeopteryx	Mickey Scilingo (Leader), Martin Mau, Matthew Brown	137	Ruddy Duck (1), Least Bittern (1), Rusty Blackbird (1), White-winged Scoter (2), Golden-winged Warbler (2)
Wrenegades	Faith Baker (Leader), Barbara Robinson, Charlie Baker, Joel Baker	96	Green-winged Teal (1), Vesper Sparrow (1), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (2), Pied-billed Grebe (3), Great Black-backed Gull (3)
Osprey Can You See	David Nash (Solo)	89	Ring-necked Duck (3), Northern Parula (3), Fish Crow (4), Cliff Swallow (4), Cerulean Warbler (4)
What the Hawk?	Carla Bregman (Solo)	66	Common Merganser (2), Cooper's Hawk (3), Sandhill Crane (3), Cerulean Warbler (4), Trumpeter Swan (5)
Bushwhacking Fool	Daniel Crane (Solo)	46	American Black Duck (1), Hooded Merganser (1), Northern Saw-whet Owl (1), Gray Jay (1), Lincoln's Sparrow (2)

Recreational Teams (Alphabetical)

Team	Team Members	Species	Notable Species: (x) indicates how many teams found that species
Bluebirds	John Rogers (Leader), Sue Rogers, Pat Burns	101	Common Goldeneye (2), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (2), Sharp-shinned Hawk (3), Eastern Whip-poor-will (3), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (3)
Marsh Madness	Jeanne Ryan (Leader), David Ryan, Sarah Stuart, Liz DelConte	95	Great Horned Owl (1), Olive-sided Flycatcher (1), Ruffed Grouse (2), Alder Flycatcher (2), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2)
Old Gray Gnatcatchers	Paul Richardson (Leader), Sue Gilmore, Ruth Florey	92	Horned Lark (1), Mourning Warbler (2), Grasshopper Sparrow (2), American Bittern (3), Winter Wren (4)
The Loon Rangers	Chris Stanger (Leader), Dr. Stephen Schwab, Frank Brosch	96	Greater Yellowlegs (2), Cooper's Hawk (3), Lesser Yellowlegs (3), Long-tailed Duck (4), Sora (4)
Towhee, or Not Towhee (Baltimore Woods)	Tom Meier (Leader), Anna Stunkel, Jason Mauro, Jonathan Kresge	128	Great Egret (1), Northern Mockingbird (1), Orange-crowned Warbler (1), Wilson's Warbler (1), Golden-winged Warbler (2)

Winter is the perfect time to be on the lookout for these birds. While you will see plenty of our year-round species such as the Ring-billed Gull and American Herring Gull, this is the time of year that we will see some new faces on our waterways. The largest gull species in the world, the Great Black-backed Gull, will be the next most common species, with the Inner Harbor in Syracuse hosting quite a few of these striking birds, the same color palette as the Bald Eagle —a striking yellow bill, white body and black back, often as many as 30 individuals present at one time.

And then there are our more northerly

visitors, Glaucous and Iceland Gulls. Both are striking birds that, depending on age, will be all white birds. But there is always the chance for more extreme rarities such as Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Little Gulls or the holy grail — a Slaty-backed Gull.

If you're looking for places to bird this winter, whether that be for gulls or waterfowl, your best bet is looking for open water, with Onondaga Lake and the dams of Baldwinsville in Onondaga County, following the river up through Phoenix, Fulton, and ultimately the Harbor in Oswego being your best starting point.

Another example of an under-appreciated and misunderstood bird is the Double-crested Cormorant, which was discussed in Maryanne's earlier segment. Although these birds may initially seem like simple, dull brown or shiny black creatures, a closer look reveals their elegance. You'll notice their stunning turquoise eyes, and vibrant school-bus yellow throat. While their population is now stable, they are another species whose range and population have recently changed dramatically due to conservation efforts. Before this species was granted protection, it faced numerous threats, including persecution due to fishing disturbances, polluted waterways, and the impact of DDT.

The same factors that increased our Bald Eagle population—the banning of DDT and increased water quality—have allowed the cormorant population to rebound as well.

Maybe we should begin to look at these other under-appreciated birds the same way we view the other comeback species. As a symbol of

our past and present, conservation and advocacy have resulted in the recovery of bird populations that were nearly extirpated in our area.

Climate change is also affecting many species' wintering range. Water is staying open year-round in many parts of our area, leading to the increase of not only cormorants, but wintering bald eagles, herons and other waterfowl that would normally spend the winter months on our coastlines or further south.

While species such as warblers and other colorful songbirds seem to get all the glory, we should also appreciate the species that may not be as eye-catching. When you slow down, you will quickly learn that these more inconspicuous groups can be just as fascinating, both visually and behaviorally.

If you want to learn more about under-appreciated bird groups, especially gulls, please follow our social media accounts or subscribe to our monthly newsletter. There will be a virtual Gull ID workshop later in the

year, as well as several pop-up bird walks specifically targeting groups such as our winter waterfowl and glorious gulls!

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

-Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Chair: *Enhance inclusivity at events, sanctuaries, and public initiatives.*

-Field Trip Coordinator: *Plan public field trips by coordinating with leaders and managing the schedule.*

-Native Plants Chair: *Partner with HGCNY to select and promote 12 bird-friendly native plants annually (The Birdy Dozen). Write articles for the Kestrel and email blasts.*

-Program Coordinator: *Host free public meetings on birds, wildlife, and conservation, seeking speakers for in-person or virtual events.*

-Public Outreach Coordinator: *Organize tabling outreach at events and prepare educational pamphlets.*

For more information, email us at OnAuduboncom@gmail.com.

OA FIELD TRIPS: SEPTEMBER 2026 - JANUARY 2027

All are welcome! Whether you're new to birding or have years of experience, we'd love to have you join us.

Sign-up is required. To help ensure an enjoyable experience for everyone, please contact the trip leader two days in advance to reserve your spot. When you sign up, the trip leader will provide the meeting time and location. If you haven't registered in advance, you're still welcome to check with the leader—if space is available, you may be able to join.

Beginning Birders Welcome! Here's your chance to learn from the experts. If you have binoculars, please bring them. If you don't, let the trip leader know when you register—we may be able to loan you a pair. Dress for the weather, wear comfortable footwear suitable for the terrain, and bring water and any snacks you may want during the outing.

Pop-Up Field Trips: We occasionally offer additional "Pop-Up" field trips throughout the season. These special outings are announced one to two weeks in advance on our social media pages, so

be sure to follow us and watch for these exciting opportunities.

We look forward to birding with you!

Green Lakes State Park
Saturday, September 12, 2026
Paul Richardson

Email:
richardsonp.audubon@gmail.com

This September, Paul Richardson will lead a field trip to Green Lakes State Park. The hike will last between 3 and 5 hours (or longer), depending on the trail length and weather conditions. Participants are highly encouraged to bring their own water and insect repellent. Please contact Paul for more details, including the specific time and meeting place.

Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge
Tuesday, September 15, 2026
Dave Fitch
Email: dfitch52@gmail.com (preferred)
315-657-2040 (text or call)

Join OAS on this trip to Montezuma to look for ducks, geese, swans, marsh birds, and migrating shorebirds. We will also check out other birding hotspots within the Montezuma complex as time

permits. Please contact Dave to sign up and confirm the meeting time and place.

Creekwalk/Onondaga Lake
Saturday, September 26, 2026
Paul Richardson

Email: richardsonp.audubon@gmail.com

Paul Richardson will lead a field trip to Onondaga Lake to look for waterfowl and late migrating songbirds. Please contact Paul for details, the specific time, and the meeting place.

CNY Land Trust Pleasant Valley Preserve
Saturday, October 3, 2026
CJ Harkola
Email: cjharkola@gmail.com
(315) 243-2690 (text or call)

Join CJ for a guided walk at Pleasant Valley Preserve, a 297-acre area managed by CNY Land Trust. Pleasant Valley is a mix of flat terrain and hilly trails that may be muddy (especially near the bridge and wetland area). We will have options to stay on flat terrain through the meadows. We will walk about 0.3 miles down to the bridge and wetlands, with the option to continue into the woodlands via the Red Trail, a 1.7-mile loop with hilly terrain and about 180 feet of elevation gain.

Continued on page 8



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Great Black-backed Gull among a flock of Ring-billed and American Herring Gulls at the Inner Harbor, Syracuse.

KAYLA FISK

FIELD TRIPS: September 2026 - January 2027 *Continued from page 7*

Onondaga Lake West Shore Trail Saturday, October 10, 2026

CJ Harkola
Email: cjharkola@gmail.com
(315) 243-2690 (text or call)

Join CJ on a trip to the Onondaga Lake West Shore Trail. This is an easy, paved walking trail and offers views of waterfowl, resident birds, and late-fall migrants. Meet CJ at the Visitor Center and bird along a portion of the trail that has a slight incline (less than 1 mile). Then caravan down to the mini parking lot and walk to the pedestrian bridge, including "marshy spits" (1 mile each way). This trip is great for beginner birders. Please contact CJ for more details and the specific meeting time.

Long Branch Park @ Onondaga Lake North Shore: How to Use the eBird Smartphone

Sunday, October 18, 2026
Jason Luscier
Email: lusciejd@lemoyne.edu
(479) 871-9199 (text or call)

Join Jason for a morning of birding the

north shore of Onondaga Lake, starting at Long Branch Park. In addition to sighting some excellent fall waterfowl, attendees will learn the ins and outs of the eBird smartphone app. This will likely be a 2-3 hour outing, so be sure to have water, snacks, etc. Please contact Jason for details and the meeting place.

Seneca Meadows Wetland Preserve Saturday, October 24, 2026

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

Meet Fred at the Seneca Meadows Education Center in Waterloo, NY. 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 will 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.

Creekwalk for Bald Eagles and Syracuse Inner Harbor Saturday, January 30, 2027

Paul Richardson
Email: richardsonp.audubon@gmail.com

Paul Richardson will lead a morning hike along the Creekwalk to the Onondaga Lake shoreline where the wintering Bald Eagles roost. He will also head to the Syracuse Inner Harbor to look for waterfowl and wintering gulls. Please dress warmly and contact Paul for additional information.

NOTE: More trips to view the eagles in February may be announced depending on weather conditions and ice on the lake.

Additional trips may be added during the winter months, depending on weather conditions and bird activity. Examples would be extra trips to view the bald eagles on Onondaga Lake (depending on lake ice), snowy owls, or rough-legged hawks (if there is an irruption). Check out Facebook and Instagram for announcements on these special events.