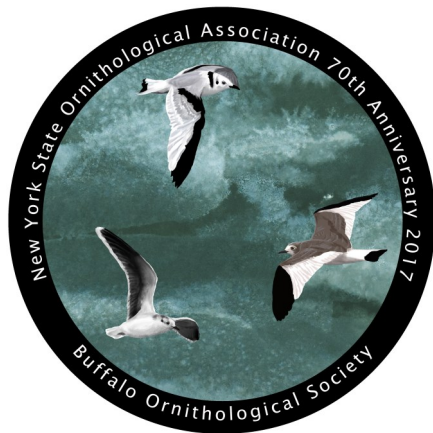


NYS Birders Conference and NYSOA Annual Meeting

Buffalo Ornithological Society hosted the 70th Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association November 10 – 12, 2017 in Niagara Falls, New York. The activities were based at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel adjacent to the spectacular rapids of the Niagara River, just above the mighty Niagara Falls. Conference attendees were able to walk to the falls and Niagara Falls State Park, which are not only wonderfully scenic, but also spectacular for birds. The event was a great success and full of enjoyment for the 178 participants.



Annual Meeting Field Trip. Photo by Carena Pooth

Friday afternoon Field Trips to the Tifft Nature Preserve, and also along the Buffalo Waterfront were attended by 26 birders, and experienced the coolest temperatures of the weekend at 20°F which was 18 degrees below normal. The birds were good, proving that good birding happens at all times of the year and under most conditions.

After the Friday evening buffet, guest speaker Paul Guris spoke to the evening gathering about pelagic birding trips. Paul's

Atlantic seaboard trips have been spectacularly successful at finding not only species that are regular but a long list of birds that were previously thought to be extremely rare to non-existent in our state's waters. He showed some of the great birds seen on his trips and gave us a sense of what can be expected if you go on one of his adventures.

(Continued from page 1)

Saturday morning field trips were off at 6:30 a.m., just before sunrise, and included two groups of delegates birding above the US and Canadian Falls, along with a productive trip to nearby Buckhorn Island State Park. Additionally, there were two Lower Niagara River Field Trips, one along the Canadian side and another along the US side. The Saturday field trip participants were able to document 38 species of ducks, geese, swans, grebes and gulls.



Robert DeLeon addresses the Paper Session Audience

Saturday afternoon Paper Session presentations covered six diverse (birding) subjects and included a high level of interest, and great question and answer periods.

After a great Saturday evening dinner, Keynote Speaker Neil Hayward gave an amusing and riveting presentation on his 2013 Big Year birding adventure. He described his 250,000 miles of travel, which took him to the remote corners of this continent: Barrow in the frozen north; the Dry Tortugas, dangling off the Florida Keys to the south; Newfoundland, poking out to the east; and tiny Adak, adrift in the volcanic Aleutian chain of the west. By the year's end, he'd netted 749 species of birds and set a new ABA Big Year record. In this talk, Neil took a Big Year of Birding and condensed it into a Big Hour of enjoyment for all. We heard about exotic birds, remote places, volcanoes,



*NYS Young Birders Club members attend the Annual Meeting Banquet.
Photo by Carena Pooth*

polar bears, Aleutian plumbing and more! His program was jointly sponsored by The Buffalo Museum of Science, annual fall William C. Vaughan lecture series, and the Buffalo Ornithological Society.



The Birder's Marketplace. Photo by Joan Collins

Throughout the conference, the Birder's Marketplace was a very popular gathering place. Twenty vendor displays, including artists, avian rehabilitators, and bird-oriented non-profit societies, offered great places to talk about avian subjects close to our hearts.

Overall, the field trips were planned for the best birding locations, including all along the Niagara River, the Buffalo waterfront, Tifft Nature Preserve, Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant, Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, and along Lake Ontario. A grand total of **116 field trip participants** were able to collectively **identify 101 species** seen during this exciting weekend.



Alec Humann, Willie D'Anna, & Sue Barth—Members of the Buffalo Ornithological Society's Annual Meeting Committee. Photo by Carena Pooth

As always, the NYSOA conference was a great opportunity to meet new friends and renew ties. We're all looking forward to the 2018 conference, to be hosted by the Rochester Birding Association October 5-7, 2018.
- B. L. Kittiwake

Highlights of the 2017 Delegates' Meeting

The **President's Report** was delivered by Joan Collins. The full report, which appears in this newsletter, summarizes NYSOA's activities over the past year. Andy Mason submitted a detailed Treasurer's Report, and Joan delivered the report from the Auditing Committee.

Bill Ostrander reported that the **Awards Committee** would be presenting three certificates of appreciation, two Lillian C. Stoner Awards, and a Gordon M. Meade Distinguished Service Award at the evening banquet. To read about the latest and many past award winners, visit the NYSOA website.

The **Conservation Committee** report from Andy Mason listed numerous activities undertaken in the past year, including meetings with DEC, involvement with local groups on specific concerns, and writing letters on behalf of NYSOA and its members. One issue that the committee worked on was the Coast Guard's proposal to allow increased use of the Hudson River for anchorage of petroleum barges. The Coast Guard has since withdrawn the proposal and a state law has been passed giving the state increased oversight over anchorages.

Carena Pooth reported on the **County and State Listing Project**. She received reports from 112 participants for 2016, four of whom were under age 18. The compilations for 2016 and past years are available on the NYSOA website.

The **Marketing, Publicity, and Field Trips Committee** designed and purchased NYSOA winter hats as a give away item for the Annual Meeting registrants. It turned out to be an appropriate choice, as temperatures in Niagara Falls were more typical of January than November. Greg Lawrence continues to update the NYSOA Facebook page, and welcomes submissions of photos and other materials to post there. Kathy Schneider reported on the successful Montezuma shorebird workshop and field trip in August, and is planning a winter weekend field trip in the Adirondacks.

The **Membership Report**, prepared by Patricia Aitken and Berna Lincoln, showed that NYSOA currently has 528 annual members, 41 life members, and 43 member clubs and organizations.

The **New York State Avian Records Committee** (NYSARC), under the leadership of Willie D'Anna, is working diligently and making good progress addressing the backlog of rare bird reports. The committee will be issuing a report soon covering its decisions on 2015-2017 potential first state records. NYSARC is also developing

a policy about acceptance of records that were submitted to eBird but not to NYSARC.

Carena Pooth reported that the **New York State Young Birders Club** had another successful year, with many well-attended field trips. The club now has 56 youth members.

Seth Ausubel reported for the **Publications Committee**. He reports that progress is being made in getting *The Kingbird* caught up to its production schedule. Seth thanked Bill Ostrander for creating a software tool that makes it possible for the *Kingbird* Regional Editors to sort through eBird data that would otherwise be overwhelming. Carena Pooth continues to update the *Checklist of the Birds of New York State*, which is available in printed booklet form, or on the website in printable format. The 2018 checklist will be available soon, and will reflect the latest American Ornithological Society taxonomy updates. Carena supplied a written report showing the changes from the previous edition.

Bob Spahn provided an update on the planning process for the **New York State Breeding Bird Atlas III** (BBA III). The preliminary Steering Committee met again on October 25 and reaffirmed an interest in a New York State BBA III. There is much work to be done to be ready to start fieldwork in 2020 – see the Wisconsin BBA II website for a look at what is needed. Clearly eBird will be the data input tool and project database and archive. At this point we lack a long-term Steering Committee chair, a position held by NYSOA people in the previous two New York BBA's. It is also clear that there is interest on the part of the users of the data in trying to obtain more quantitative data. A Science Committee is working on the details. In other news from the **Research Committee**, Bill Ostrander reports that the 2018 Waterfowl Count period will be January 13-21. A coordinator is needed for Region 9.

Carena Pooth supplied a printed report on usage of the NYSOA and NYSYBC websites, which she continues to maintain and update regularly. Other than the home page, the most popular page on the NYSOA site is the *Checklist of the Birds of New York State*. The websites contain a large amount of useful information, and Carena's hard work at keeping it all up to date is much appreciated.

Connie Adams, DEC Senior Wildlife Biologist, provided an extensive report on DEC activities of interest to NYSOA's membership. DEC conducts monitoring of alpine forest birds, lowland boreal birds, Common Loons, marsh birds, Eastern Whip-poor-wills, and Prothonotary Warblers, as well as wintering grassland birds and several other species and groups. The report also covers DEC's management plans for game birds, Mute Swans and Double-crested Cormorants.

The delegates elected Officers to one-year terms and Directors to two-year terms:

Officers

President: Michael DeSha
Vice President: Tim Baird
Treasurer: Andy Mason
Secretary: John Kent

Directors 2017-2019

Brian Dugan
Brendan Fogarty
Lucretia Grosshans
Carena Pooth

The delegates elected

the Nominating

Committee for 2017-2018, consisting of Bob Adamo (Chair), Kathryn Schneider, and Dominic Sherony.

The delegates also elected the **Auditing Committee** for 2017-2018, consisting of Stephen Chang (Chair), Tom Burke, and Peter Capainolo.

Finally, the delegates approved a new member organization, the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development.

Next year's Delegates Meeting is scheduled for October 6, 2018, in Rochester.

- John Kent

2017 NYSOA Awards

NYSOA honored several individuals with awards at the annual meeting in Niagara Falls. A Certificate of Appreciation was awarded to Keith and Margaret Brace of Aquebogue for welcoming birders to their yard to see two wintering Rufous Hummingbirds. The Braces made several accommodations to keep the birds warm and well fed through the winter. A second Certificate of Appreciation was given to Jack Delehanty for welcoming birders to his Tupper Lake property to see a Ross's Gull last winter. Jack even offered overnight accommodations in his home for birders who traveled a long distance! A Certificate of Appreciation was given in gratitude for Matthew Perry's many contributions in the Onondaga Region to conserving and restoring bird habitat, advocating for birds, documenting bird life, and educating others about birds. And finally, the Buffalo Ornithological Society was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for a fantastic job organizing a great weekend!

Awards chair Bill Ostrander presented two Lillian Stoner Awards, which provide funding for high school and college students who show exceptional interest in birds to attend the NYSOA annual meeting. One went to Hannah Mirando. Hannah is an active member in the Eastern Long Island Audubon Society. She writes articles for the chapter newsletter. Hannah has been an active member in the NYS

Young Birders Club for four years, where she has served as Records Chair and enthusiastic Big Day fundraiser. She also volunteers at the South Fork Natural History Museum

where she

started a young birders club. Hannah has produced several award-winning bird-related science fair projects. Hannah is aiming for a career in ornithology and the environment.

The other Stoner award went to Eamon Freiburger. Eamon is a member of the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club and has presented programs there and to other bird clubs about the NYS Young Birders Club and his time spent at Hog Island Audubon Camp. Eamon has been a very active member of NYSYBC for six years, where he has served as President and Secretary. He is also one of NYSYBC's biggest fundraisers, having served on its World Series of Birding Team four times and as an independent Big Day fundraiser twice.

Seth Ausubel announced the Emanuel Levine Memorial Award winner for the year's best *Kingbird* article. This year's winner was Doug Gochfeld for his article, "What's It Gonna Be? Predicting the Next New Additions to the Avifauna of New York" which was published in *The Kingbird*, Volume 66, Number 1, March 2016.

President Joan Collins presented two Gordon M. Meade Awards. The Gordon M. Meade Distinguished Service Award, named after NYSOA's first President, is NYSOA's highest award. It is given to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and service over many years, often as an officer, board member, and/or committee chair. The first award went to Barbara Butler, for her outstanding service to NYSOA in a wide variety of capacities over many years. Barbara served for six years as one of the first group of NYSOA directors; served on the Resolutions Committee for ten years, created NYSOA's first website with Kevin McGowan, was Recording Secretary for two years, and held the position of Membership Database & Circulation Manager for six years.

The other Gordon M. Meade Award went to Angus Wilson, for his outstanding leadership and service to NYSOA as Chairman of the New York State Avian Records Committee for 18 years. Angus implemented processes to facilitate bird sighting reviews by the committee. He also spearheaded the development and expansion of the now extensive NYSARC area of the NYSOA website, enabling online submission of rare bird sighting reports, establishing a historical NYSARC sightings database, and making detailed historical data available to the public online.

NYSOA awards are posted on the website at <http://nybirds.org/FedAwards.html>.

- Bill Ostrander



David & Debra Suggs greet attendees! Photo by Joan Collins



Delegates' Meeting. Photo by Carena Pooth

President's Report 2016-2017

70th Annual Meeting

The President's Report is a summary of the New York State Ornithological Association's (NYSOA) activities over the past year beginning with the 2016 Annual Meeting.

The September **2016 Annual Meeting**, hosted by Chemung Valley Audubon Society, was a great success enjoyed by 95 participants. The weekend event featured field trips with 122 species tallied, a lecture and walk led by "John James Audubon" (Brian "Fox" Ellis, historical reenactor), Dr. Rob Bierregaard's keynote address on Ospreys at the banquet, workshops, and Paper Session. It was a great educational event and wonderful way for birders from around the state to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. The Buffalo Ornithological Society signed up to host 2017's 70th Annual Meeting with only a year to plan!

The **NYSOA Archive** continues to be maintained by Linda Clark Benedict. It is housed at the Cornell University Library. There is an online finding aid and you can find the link by visiting the NYSOA website.

The **Awards Committee**, chaired by Bill Ostrander, presents awards at the Annual Meetings. NYSOA has a variety of awards including the Lillian C. Stoner award for an outstanding student or students, which helps the winner(s) attend the Annual Meeting. Kai Victor was the recipient of the award at the 2016 Annual Meeting. Four Certificates of Appreciation were also awarded, and the Emanuel Levine Memorial Award was given for the year's best journal article in *The Kingbird*. A President's Award was also presented. To learn about the latest, and many past, award winners, visit the NYSOA website.

The **Conservation Committee**, chaired by Andy Mason, continues to be an active and productive group. Committee members write the quarterly conservation column in *New York Birders*, meet regularly with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in Albany, keep well-informed of conservation issues of importance from around the state, speak at public hearings (such as the recent hearing on the Boreas Ponds Tract in the Adirondacks, where NYSOA advocated for a "wilderness" classification), and write letters on behalf of NYSOA. As a result of the Committee's meeting with the DEC this past May, the *Conservationist* magazine published Tom Salo's article, "Non-lead Ammunition – a safer alternative", in the October issue.

Once again, Carena Pooth compiled the annual **County and State Bird List Report**. The 2016 report was published in the April issue of *New York Birders* and contains 12 pages of fascinating statistics including members' yearly and life lists from birding across 62 counties, 10 regions, and the state of New York. This year, 17 participants included a life list total for the new Pelagic Zone. You can find the 2016 report on the NYSOA website.

The **Marketing, Publicity, and Field Trip Committee**, chaired by Tim Baird, came up with the wonderful NYSOA water bottle give-away at last year's Annual Meeting, and this year, along with Kathy Schneider, the great NYSOA winter hat! We are still in need of a chair for this committee if you would like to volunteer! NYSOA events and updates are regularly publicized by Greg Lawrence on our Facebook page with a link to the website. Mary Beth Warburton organized a winter weekend featuring a presentation, social dinner, and field trips in Oswego (which happened to coincide with the state's first ever Clark's Grebe at Oswego Harbor!), and Kathy Schneider organized the summer weekend field trip and shorebird workshop at Montezuma.

Berna Lincoln, **Membership Manager**, and Pat Aitken, **Circulation Manager**, keep track of individual and club memberships, and send out renewal notices. Pat works with the printers of *The Kingbird* and *New York Birders*, sending electronic and paper address information. We are still in need of a new Circulation Manager if you would like to volunteer. NYSOA is in the process of moving its membership data from a spreadsheet to an online management system.

The **New York State Young Birders Club** (NYSYBC), chaired by Carena Pooth, and now in its 9th year, remains a very active group with events and field trips every month. Many of NYSOA's member clubs are partner organizations for the NYSYBC and offer field trips for the young birders.

Mike DeSha continues to regularly update the **Organizational Handbook**. The Handbook is an invaluable resource for people elected or appointed to positions in NYSOA. Responsibilities for each position are detailed by a person who has filled the position, which greatly helps during transitions.

Seth Ausubel chaired the **Publications Committee** and held regular conference calls with editors and committee members. Four issues of NYSOA's journal, *The Kingbird*, were published by Shai Mitra, Editor, and Patricia Lindsay, Production Manager. Bob Spahn continued to work with the Regional Editors for *The Kingbird*. Bill Krueger is the new Region 7 Editor. This past year, NYSOA licensed content of *The Kingbird* for inclusion in the Biodiversity Heritage Library. Four issues of our newsletter, *New York*