

## NYSOA 2018 Annual Meeting

In 1948, a group from across the state gathered in Rochester for the first annual meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, which had been organized the previous year under the leadership of Rochester's Dr. Gordon Meade. A photo of this well-dressed group was on display at this year's check-in table to remind everyone of NYSOA's founding. Every 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting since, the years ending in 8, has been held in Rochester.

This year's host clubs were Burroughs Audubon Nature Club and the Rochester Birding Association. The Annual Meeting was held at the RIT Inn and Conference Center in the Rochester suburb of Henrietta and was attended by 187 registrants, including many local birders who were new to NYSOA.



*A wonderful time at a great dinner! Photo by Richard Ashworth*

The traditional Friday afternoon to Sunday morning schedule provided field trips, a welcome reception, two dinners, workshops, the delegates' meeting, a paper session, and a Saturday evening program that honored the young recipients of the Lillian Stoner Award – Silas Hernandez, Avery Scott, and Garret Van Gelder; the Gordon Meade Award – Tom Burke; the Manny Levine Award for the best paper in *The Kingbird* in the previous year – Sarah A. Lazazzero (Piecuch) and Christopher Norment; and the NYSOA President's Award – Carena Pooth.

Rainy weather did not dampen the spirits of field trip participants. 121 species were sighted at the various inland and lakeshore locations, highlighted by Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Hudsonian Godwit, Wilson's Phalarope, and Common Raven.

Friday night began with a festive reception featuring scores of hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Following dinner, attendees were treated to two workshops: Daena Ford of Braddock Bay Raptor Research spoke about that organization's mission, programs, and accomplishments,



*Friday afternoon field trip. Photo by Richard Ashworth*

while Ian Davies provided information on the use of eBird in Breeding Bird Atlas work, pertinent to the upcoming NY BBA III and using examples from the current WI BBA II work.

After a Saturday morning of field trips and the delegates' meeting, the afternoon paper session focused on a variety of topics: effects of agricultural grain diets on American Black Ducks wintering on Long Island; use of telemetry as a research tool; the use of flight calls and recording devices to track migration, with a focus on surprise King Rail detections; time of day factors in flight calls and behaviors of migratory wood warblers; effects of West Nile Virus on spatiotemporal trends in avian populations; nest box selection in certain cavity nesting birds; assessment of some of the wetland management techniques at Montezuma Wetlands Complex; and a survey of birds using the High Acres Nature Area, a Waste Management property east of Rochester.

The featured speaker Saturday night was Greg Miller, one of three birders whose 1998 Big Year quest was featured in a book by Mark Obmascik and a movie both entitled *The Big Year*. Greg's talk was funny, informative, and inspirational. In addition to an often hilarious account of his work as a consultant to the movie, he spoke humbly of how he had become well-known based on a contest he didn't win and a book he didn't write. He has been able to put the hobby of birding, taught to him by his father, into a career of giving talks, guiding trips, and writing a yet-to-be-published book themed on how to determine where to go birding to maximize species to be found in limited time available using eBird data. He inspired all of us with the story of how *The Big Year* changed his life. Most of the audience came away enthused about our pursuit of birds and aware that our passion for birds can reap positive results in our lives.

The 2019 Annual Meeting will be held in Kingston, NY, September 13-15.

*- Bob Spahn and Shirley Shaw*

# President's Report 2017-2018

## 71<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association

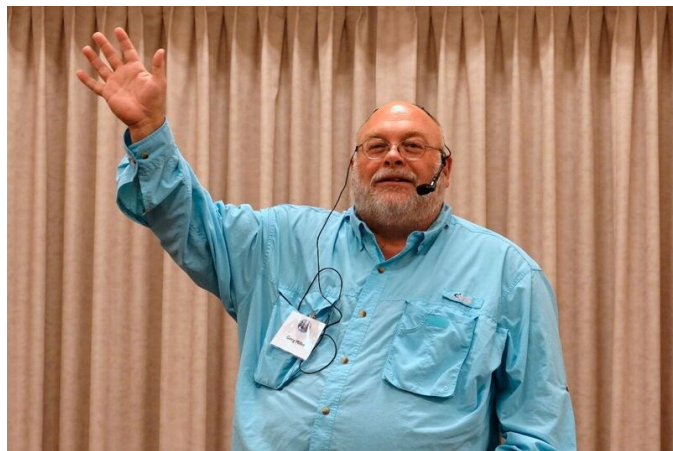
This report is a summary of NYSOA activities over the past year beginning with the 2017 Annual Meeting. Highlights of the year include a highly successful 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting hosted by the Buffalo Ornithological Society, beginning of intensive planning for the third New York State Breeding Bird Atlas effort, and significant changes to NYSOA membership routines due to the sudden and totally unexpected death of our Membership Manager, Berna Lincoln in October 2017.

The November 2017 **70<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting** in Niagara Falls, NY was hosted by the Buffalo Ornithological Society. The event was a total success even as the temperature for one of the field trips was recorded as 20 degrees, which I suspect will make it the coldest Annual Meeting of all those seventy years. There were 178 attendees who enjoyed a presentation on Pelagic Birds by Paul Guris, and a Keynote by Neil Hayward, who related stories about his 2013 Big Year where he found 749 species for a new record.

The **Awards Committee**, chaired by Bill Ostrander, presented Stoner Awards to two outstanding young birders. Two Gordon Meade Awards, given to those individuals who have provided significant service to NYSOA, were presented to Barbara Butler and Angus Wilson. Several Certificates of Appreciation were also awarded.

The **Bylaws Committee**, chaired by Robert Spahn and ably assisted by Shirley Shaw and Tim Baird, produced changes to our Bylaws to conform with New York State regulations on conflicts of interest. Their resulting changes were approved by the Board of Directors in regular session for presentation and adoption at this annual meeting. I commend them for their work.

The **Conservation Committee**, chaired by Andy Mason and including Joan Collins and new Committee member Brian Dugan, took on a variety of issues. Of particular note is the Lighthouse Shores Wind Project on Lake Ontario, brought to our attention at the 2017 Annual Meeting. The Committee and the Board of Directors agreed to join the Coalition opposed to the wind farm. A second issue arose when a minor back road in the Adirondacks was proposed as a detour around repair of a culvert on NY Rte.30, a major roadway. This entailed upgrading the minor road, which passes through sensitive habitat, without environmental input due to the "emergency." A strongly worded letter was not effective in preventing the changes and we are discussing how best to confront issues like that that arise from time to time. The Trump Administration has



*Greg Miller enjoyed telling us about The Big Year as much as we enjoyed hearing about it! Photo by Richard Ashworth*

reinterpreted the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to the detriment of many migrating birds as they confront new development. California has laws that may mitigate the impact of this new interpretation. I have asked the Conservation Committee to investigate whether this may be the case in New York State. Brian Dugan is interested in wildlife corridors for protecting animals confronting roadways. The Committee has signed on to advocate further protection of Chuck-will's-widow, Common Nighthawk, and Whip-poor-will in New York State.

Carena Pooth compiles the **County and State Bird List Report** for those who are interested in participating in this friendly and fun competition. The results are published in the April issue of *New York Birders* and are available online at the NYSOA website.

The **Marketing, Publicity, and Field Trip Committee** is really the group that promotes NYSOA. It is without a Chair, but Tim Baird, Kathy Schneider, and Joan Collins continue to provide the impetus for the giveaways for members attending the Annual Meeting and for organizing field trips for NYSOA members. It is an important committee and a volunteer is urgently needed to take over this chair.

As I mentioned earlier, the death of Berna Lincoln, our **Membership Manager**, necessitated many changes in operational procedures. Thankfully, Joan Collins stepped in to transfer mail and to take on the burden of Membership Management. Publication Committee members, Tim Baird and Pat Aitken, our **Circulation Manager**, along with Joan, Carena Pooth and me convened to sort out responsibilities. Thanks to their help and particularly Joan's taking over as Membership Manager, we have gotten back to where we had previously been.



*The Kingbird*, under editorship of Shai Mitra, is slowly getting back to schedule, with the likelihood of the publication of five issues in 2018. Joan Collins is on track to produce four outstanding issues of *New York Birders* and Carena Pooth keeps both the printed and online versions of the **New York State Checklist** updated online as the AOS changes species names, genera and families. Sales of the printed checklist remain brisk.

The **New York State Young Birders Club** has thrived under the careful mentorship of Carena Pooth in the ten years since its inception in 2008. It is almost impossible to imagine this organization without her, and it has been clearly a labor of love on her part. She finds she must give up this leadership role for family health reasons, but it is critical for the health of this organization of young birders that we fill the chair position as soon as possible.

The **Research Committee**, chaired by Greg Lawrence, oversees many of the projects relating to field birding. Bill Ostrander compiles the Waterfowl Count, on which the DEC relies for its waterfowl assessments. The overwhelming commitment that is the NY Breeding Bird Atlas III will be the focus of research for the next seven or eight years. While the previous two Atlases were directly under the control of NYSOA, this atlas is a joint project of NYSOA, the New York Natural Heritage Program, New York State DEC, Audubon New York, eBird/Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the Cornell Cooperative Research Unit, and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). The Atlas will be funded by a federal aid grant to DEC that will be contracted to various parties as determined by the Steering Committee. It is apparent that NYSOA will not be able to control this project as it has the previous Atlases. Nevertheless, the NYSOA Board has committed to working on this next iteration. A logo contest jointly funded by NYSOA and Audubon New York resulted in a very attractive logo. Kathy Schneider has been appointed by NYSOA as a co-chair of the Atlas Steering Committee. In addition, Robert Spahn, Joan Collins, Greg Lawrence, and me are members of the Steering Committee, so NYSOA is well represented. Meetings have been held throughout the year and applications for the job of Project Coordinator have been received and are currently being evaluated.

Carena Pooth, **Website and Information Committee** Chair, keeps the website up-to-date with the latest NYSOA information and news.

Tom Burke was appointed to another term on the **NYSARC Committee**. Willie D'Anna was confirmed as the Chair of the Committee.

It has been my pleasure to work with this Board, the Officers and Committee Chairs. Thank you for your service.

Respectfully submitted, Michael J. DeSha, President

## NYSOA 71<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting October 6, 2018 Henrietta, NY

**T**hirty-seven delegates from twenty-three NYSOA member clubs were present for the annual business meeting. Michael DeSha opened the meeting with his President's Report, summarizing the activities of the officers and directors over the past year. He expressed his thanks to Joan Collins for taking over as membership manager. With help from Pat Aitken as circulation manager, Joan has taken over the membership records and will be working to transfer them to Wild Apricot, an online membership management system. Mike also recognized Carena Pooth for her ten years of outstanding service as leader of the New York State Young Birders Club. Mike commented that the nominating committee has found it increasingly difficult to find candidates for jobs as officers, directors, and committee chairs. He encouraged NYSOA members to become involved and consider volunteering. A chair is currently needed for the Marketing, Publicity, and Field Trips Committee, and a new treasurer will be needed within the next year as Andy Mason steps down after ten years of service.



*Lauren Scott, lucky winner of the Zeiss binoculars!  
Photo by Richard Ashworth*

A change to the NYSOA bylaws was approved, inserting language that requires officers and directors to submit a signed statement that they have no conflicts of interest with regard to their NYSOA position. This was needed because of a change in New York law governing nonprofit organizations. Bob Spahn researched and drafted the revisions to the bylaws after the issue was brought to the attention of the board last fall. Bob also recently discovered another change to New York law that will require another minor change to the bylaws, to be voted on next year. This revision will require that members be notified of the upcoming annual meeting more than 10 days but no more than 50 days in advance.



*Greg Miller mentoring Rion Yoshimura. Photo by Richard Ashworth*

Andy Mason reported that the Conservation Committee has worked on several issues this year. NYSOA has been part of a coalition opposing the plan to install 600-foot-high wind turbines along the Lake Ontario shoreline. The committee also voiced strong objections to the New York State DOT's use of Sabattis Circle Road in the Adirondacks as a detour around construction on Route 30, sending heavy traffic through an Important Bird Area at the peak of breeding season. Andy also reported that the committee will be working over the coming year on a NYSOA position statement on large-scale solar power developments and their effects on bird habitat. Input is welcomed from any interested members.

Carena Pooth reported that it was the most active year yet for the NYSOA county and state listing project, with 129 submissions. See her full report in this issue.

Alison Kocek volunteered to take over from Greg Lawrence as administrator of the NYSOA Facebook page. She will be welcoming submissions of photos and other materials that would make for interesting Facebook posts.

The New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) has begun holding online meetings, enabling them to meet more frequently. NYSARC is planning to

begin accepting eBird records of certain species if they are accompanied by photo or sound recording documentation, and accepted by the eBird reviewer. The committee has recently reached out to the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, which is already accepting certain eBird records, to discuss the difficult issues involved. The plan will enable the inclusion of records that are never reported directly to NYSARC. This will only apply to species that have been determined not to pose difficult identification problems. There will also be a list of species that will continue to require full NYSARC review before acceptance.

Kathy Schneider reported on the status of planning for the third New York Breeding Bird Atlas (NY BBA III). The steering committee is in the process of hiring a project coordinator for the atlas, and working out a governance structure. The atlas is a joint project of NYSOA, the New York Natural Heritage Program, New York State DEC, Audubon New York, eBird/Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the Cornell Cooperative Research Unit, and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). The committee is also beginning a search for regional coordinators. A federal grant has been obtained to cover a significant portion of the cost of NY BBA III, but additional fundraising will be needed over the coming years.

Finally, elections were held. The following officers were elected for 2018-2019:

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

The following directors were elected for 2018-2020:

Joseph Brin  
Doug Futuyma  
Richard Guthrie  
Shirley Shaw  
Bob Spahn

In addition to the above directors, Brian Dugan, Brendan Fogarty, Lucretia Grosshans, and Carena Pooth will be continuing for the second year of their current terms on the board.

Bob Adamo (Chair), Kathy Schneider, and Dominic Sherony were elected to the Nominating Committee.

Stephen Chang (Chair), Tom Burke, and Peter Capainolo were elected to the Auditing Committee.

The Friends of the Washington County Grasslands IBA was approved as a new member organization of NYSOA.

The 2019 annual meeting will take place in the Kingston area. See more information elsewhere in this issue.

*- John Kent*