



## Annual Meeting Recap

**T**hank you all for welcoming our Southern Adirondack Audubon Society chapter into your flock as a first time NYSOA Annual Meeting host! Our chapter was excited to have an opportunity to experiment with a different virtual format for the meeting.



The two-day online Annual Meeting event began on Friday, October 1, 2021 with our Keynote Speaker, Dr. Jason Hill of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, who was well received by the annual meeting audience. Jason's dynamic and engaging presentation on "The Effects of Climate Change on Montane Birds of the Northeast" led to many excellent follow-up questions. Jason particularly remarked on what a great time he had presenting his latest research and findings to our organization.

The next morning at 9:00 a.m., a special talk and tour of the Kelly Adirondack Center and Adirondack Research Library was featured. Center Coordinator, Margie Amodeo, delivered a short slide presentation on the life and history of the noted Adirondack conservationist Paul Schaefer, whose former home in Niskayuna, NY is now an intimate exhibit space for artists who focus on the Adirondacks. Through the power of virtual video, Margie led our online Annual Meeting attendees on a walking tour of Paul Schaefer's house, which



**KELLY ADIRONDACK CENTER**  
AT UNION COLLEGE

*(Continued on page 3)*

features the 'Adirondack Room'. This room is a meeting space utilized by outside groups and features an impressive 14-foot-tall relief map of the Adirondack Park. The virtual tour then proceeded through an adjoining glass enclosed walkway to the modern Adirondack Research Library. Margie shared that the archives of the facility contain Adirondack policy, history, and artifacts. She displayed some historical photographs of prominent Adirondack surveyors and activists, as well as a few interesting documents from the archives. We ended our tour looking out the bay windows of the research library at the bird feeding stations the center maintains. To end the tour, Margie answered questions in real time via the online chat that our Zoom administrator, Anne Swaim, read off to us, while we watched and identified birds visiting the various feeders. A 15-minute break followed for online attendees to grab another cup of joe before NYSOA President Shirley Shaw took over as host of the Delegates Meeting.

Again, we can't thank the NYSOA board enough for allowing our chapter to host this virtual event! And we couldn't have made this come together so smoothly without Anne Swaim. She helped us immensely with the technical logistics of pulling this meeting together for everyone! We'll hopefully see you in person in Syracuse at next year's Annual Meeting hosted by the Onondaga Audubon Society!

– **John Loz**, President, and the Board of the **Southern Adirondack Audubon Society**

# Highlights of the 2021 Delegates Meeting

A quorum of member club delegates gathered online via Zoom on Saturday, October 2 for the 2021 NYSOA Delegates Annual Meeting. Thirty-one of 110 delegates were present from the following twenty-two NYSOA member clubs: Alan Devoe Bird Club, Buffalo Ornithological Society, Burroughs Audubon Nature Club, Cattaraugus County Bird Club, Cayuga Bird Club, Chemung Valley Audubon Society, Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, Eastern Long Island Audubon Society, Eaton Birding Society, Great South Bay Audubon, Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, John Burroughs Natural History Society, Kirkland Bird Club, Naturalists' Club of Broome County, New York City Audubon, Northern New York Audubon Society, Onondaga Audubon, Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, Rochester Birding Association, Saw Mill River Audubon, Seatuck Environmental Association, and Southern Adirondack Audubon Society. There are currently forty-two NYSOA member clubs.

To access the complete annual meeting documents, visit:  
<https://nybirds.org/docs2021/>

**President's Report.** Shirley Shaw noted that her full report is available at the above weblink and said she was honored to have served as NYSOA president over the past two years.

**Treasurer's Report.** The full text is available on pages 11-15 in the annual meeting documents. Mary Jane Dugan noted that the 2020 NYSOA Audit Committee report stated "We have examined the financial statements of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc., as of December 31, 2020, as provided to us by the Association's Treasurer, and in our opinion, these statements present fairly the financial condition of the Association on December 31, 2020, and the results of its operations for the year then ended." Members of the Audit Committee were Stephen Chang, Thomas Burke, and Peter Capainolo. Mary Jane summarized the Treasurer's Report highlighting the General Operating Fund Activity on pages 13-14. She noted that there was an approximately \$12K shortfall in budgeted income with \$18,684.97 received income compared with \$30,810.00 budgeted income. However, on the expense side, actual expenses of \$23,420.42 were less than the budgeted \$ 30,464.00 resulting in an excess of expense over income of \$4,885.45.

**Nominating Committee 2022 slate elected.** The Delegates elected the following slate:

## Officers

President: Pat Aitken  
Vice-President: Andy Mason\*  
Treasurer: Mary Jane Dugan  
Recording Secretary: Anne Swaim

\* In taking this 1 year position, Andy also indicated he will not be a candidate for president later.

## Directors (Terms ending in 2022):

Sean Camillieri  
Joan Collins

## Directors (Terms ending in 2023):

Greg Lawrence  
Benjamin Van Doren  
Craig Braack  
Mike Cooper

## Nominating and Auditing Committees Elected:

### Nominating Committee

Joan Collins, Chair  
Anne Swaim  
Bob Adamo

### Auditing Committee:

Stephen Chang, Chair  
Tom Burke  
Peter Capainolo

**NYSDEC Report to NYSOA.** Shirley Shaw noted that the full text of NYSDEC's report to NYSOA was listed as a separate document available at <https://nybirds.org/docs2021/>. Ashley Meyer reported on behalf of Matt Palumbo. The written report from Matt reviewed all the grant-funded projects underway in the Avian Unit including US Fish & Wildlife Service projects. Ashley offered some additional highlights and updates. The species listing status is still under review. To see which species are being considered for a change of status, review the DEC report. The grassland bird strategy is being finalized for a five-year period and will direct how DEC will undertake and approve grassland management and restoration along with its partners. Partners include USDA and USFWS as well as Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ducks Unlimited, and Audubon New York. To request copies of the grassland bird strategy, contact Ashley Meyer who is the DEC coordinator for this work. NYSDEC is reviewing energy siting projects with nearly 70 projects submitted. The endangered and threatened species mitigation bank fund allows for large-scale renewable energy projects to pay a fee to offset unavoidable impacts to listed species. These are largely in grassland habitats. The hope is that the mitigation funding will help NYSDEC meet goals for grassland habitat work as well as mitigate impacts to Golden Eagles. Nicole Campbell, another new avian biologist, will be working on these renewable energy projects. For follow up questions, email Ashley Meyer at [ashley.meyer@dec.ny.gov](mailto:ashley.meyer@dec.ny.gov).

**New York State Breeding Bird Atlas.** Kathryn Schneider, co-chair of the Atlas Steering Committee,

substituted for Julie Hart who was ill. Andy Mason reported first on the NYSOA Atlas Fund. Full report on pages 22-24. Andy Mason said that the Atlas 2020 Fund was established by NYSOA to accept and disburse funds for the Atlas that are outside of the funds that the Atlas receives from government sources. As of the end of June 2020 quarter, there was approximately \$30K in the Fund. Kathy noted that the complete BBA III written update is found on pages 16-24 of the meeting documents. Kathy gave highlights from this report including a screen share of the data table below found on page 16 of the written report.

Metric	2021	2020	% Increase
# Atlasers	2,330	1,510	54%
# Total person hours	4,405,997 (503 yrs)	2,595,470 (296 yrs)	71%
# Unique Hours	186,293 (21 yrs)	108,766 (12 yrs)	71%
# Complete checklists	248,289	104,746	137%
# Total observations	4,348,987	1,800,000	142%
# Species confirmed*	217	215	1%

**Atlas 2020 highlights are:** a 54% increase in Atlasers with 1,510 in 2019 and 2,310 in 2020; two new species confirmed breeding in NYS, and overall excellent participation by birders in New York. An online kickoff meeting was held in April with Zoom breakout rooms that were very popular, and this same technique was also used in the bi-monthly Atlas town halls. The outreach subcommittee set up themes for the year to focus on coverage gaps such as nighttime species, cryptic species, grassland species. The *Atlas Insider* has 2800 subscribers and comes out monthly between March and August. NYSOA members are encouraged to review these since there is great content on New York bird species and the Atlas project. A Big Atlas Weekend was held at the end of June in coordination with other state breeding bird atlases in Maine, North Carolina, and Maryland-DC. Over 1000 atlasers (435 in NY) participated in this weekend event and made 6169 confirmations (records of confirmed breeding.) Each state organized challenges that focused efforts on Atlas goals. Winners received a free course from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology Bird Academy. There was also an interstate competition to select an overall winner. The Maine BBA was awarded a trophy. Everyone involved thought it was a fun and successful event and we hope to expand to other Atlas projects in 2022. See the Atlas website for details: [www.ebird.org/atlasny](http://www.ebird.org/atlasny). Regional coordinators are working on 2022 plans for coverage gaps and training needs in their areas and developing block profiles to tempt birders to cover certain blocks. The sponsor-a-species project was very successful bringing in over \$30K in donations. (Kathy reminded everyone of the need to choose your sponsored species again for the 2021!)

Additional assistance with development and fund raising is still being sought. Two new BBA project groups are being formed. The Data Review Working Group will work during the winter to review data. Original observations will not be removed but breeding/behavior codes will be reinterpreted. A second group will be working on the final product: whether it will be a book and/or a website and how to fund it, in consultation with likely users of the Atlas data. Julie is available to answer questions by email at: [Julie.Hart@dec.ny.gov](mailto:Julie.Hart@dec.ny.gov). There is still a need for additional regional coordinators.

**New York State Young Birders Club.** Emily Van Gelder gave a summary of the complete annual report available online in the meeting documents. She noted that Fall 2021 is the thirteenth anniversary of the NYS Young Birders Club. Twenty-one NYSOA member clubs support the young birders with memberships. Half of all club youth members are under 16. Current youth leaders are:

- President: Robert Buckert age 18
- Vice President: Erik Brodsky age 17
- Secretary: Nina Vigil age 14

**Conservation.** In his written report on page 33, Andy Mason encouraged NYSOA member clubs to contact him if NYSOA can assist with advocacy on a local or regional issue affecting birds or bird habitats. Andy Mason may be reached at: [andymason@earthling.net](mailto:andymason@earthling.net)

**Checklists and County and State Listing.** Carena noted that AOS 67th supplement came out in June. The main change is Mew Gull is now split as Common Gull and Short-billed Gull. Passerines were reshuffled from shrikes to waxwings. Changes are already made on the online NYSOA checklist. NYSARC list of NYS birds added asterisk for Trumpeter Swan with breeding confirmed by Julie Hart. This was another record year with 132 county and state listing reports submitted with detailed compilation online at <https://nybirds.org/ProjCountyLists.html>. The overall life list record for New York State which has sat at 446 for years was finally broken by Gail Benson with a life list total of 450 species. Congratulations!

**Waterfowl Count.** Bill Ostrander reported that the Waterfowl Count was held January 16-26, 2021. More than 353 volunteers counted nearly 400,000 birds. The 2022 dates will be January 15-23, 2022. Regional coordinators are needed for Region 3 (Finger Lakes) and 9 (Lower Hudson Valley). Email Bill at [browncreeper9@gmail.com](mailto:browncreeper9@gmail.com). Data collection via Excel spreadsheets will be compiled regionally and then returned to Bill, as before.

- Anne Swaim



# NYSOA President's Report

It has been an honor to serve NYSOA as its president. When I was elected at our annual Delegates' Meeting in the fall of 2019, no one anticipated what was to come. We were looking forward to the beginning of data collection for the Breeding Bird Atlas III and activities for atlasers, field trips sponsored by NYSOA and our member organizations, and another great three-day get together at our next Annual Birders' Conference.

Despite two years of uncertainty brought about by the pandemic, NYSOA has adapted and moved ahead, through the efforts of many capable volunteers. You can read the reports of our committees in the meeting documents. It is their work that keeps NYSOA strong.

Data collection has been robust for BBA III, despite the pandemic's impact on organized field trips and block-busting events. Representing NYSOA on the Steering Committee are Kathy Schneider, who is co-chair, and Joan Collins. Greg Lawrence and Bob Spahn previously served on this group, as did NYSOA past president Mike DeSha. I have been attending SC meetings in my role as NYSOA president. Although most funding is through a grant obtained by the DEC, the launch of the Sponsor-a-Species Campaign brought in sizable donations. NYSOA is responsible for accounting for the donated funds, and Andy Mason stepped up to handle the record keeping for the donations account. His report is included in the meeting documents.

We continue to document the birds of our state through the work of the New York State Avian Records Committee and publication of our journal, *The Kingbird*. Willie D'Anna is the chair of NYSARC, and Shai Mitra and Pat Lindsay do an outstanding job with the editing and production of *The Kingbird*. In this age in which many people no longer see the need for the old organizations—relying on eBird, for instance, and on-line groups—New York's birders need the vital contribution NYSOA makes. eBird is a great resource, but the in-depth vetting of rarities is done only by NYSARC. Also vital is publishing a journal to disseminate knowledge of bird life, to document the ornithology of the state, and to promote conservation of natural resources. Is there any other organization that would take on all the work and cost associated with that publication?

NYSOA's support of the New York State Young Birders' Club is important for mentoring and supporting the future of birding in New York. The participation of the young people in our organization is inspiring: their articles in our publications, the papers that they present at our conference, and their attendance at our Birders' Conference. I urge you to support them by donating to NYSYBC or donating to NYSOA's Lillian Stoner Award. This award provides financial assistance to young birders who attend our annual conference.

Our County Listing Project provides a great way to have fun and familiarize yourself with the birds and birding hot spots throughout our beautiful state. It is administered by Carena Pooth, one of NYSOA's busiest volunteers. Her technology knowledge and communication skills have been used for

managing our website and Facebook page, and most recently she saved NYSOA the large expense of an outside consultant to set up our new membership system, Wild Apricot. Carena volunteered weeks of her time to move us from cumbersome and labor-intensive membership spreadsheets to a modern streamlined approach.

Promoting NYSOA to the birding community is important. A group from our membership and marketing committees—Pat Aitken, Brian Dugan, Brendan Fogarty, Carena Pooth, Anne Swaim, and I—met via Zoom to discuss strategies. Out of our discussions came an update to the message of the promotional card (the one that features an eye-catching photo of a Blackburnian Warbler), plans for additional use of social media, and merchandise with the NYSOA logo that can be purchased at Zazzle.com. All of this will help NYSOA's terrific ambassador, Brian Dugan, to make a case for becoming a NYSOA member in his outreach to schools, colleges, and individuals.

I especially regret that we have not had our in-person Birders' Conferences along with our annual meeting. Not being able to visit with our acquaintances from across the state is a loss, as is hearing about the latest research through our paper sessions, familiarizing ourselves with good birding locations across the state, and all the benefits an annual gathering holds. NYSOA is grateful to John Loz and Southern Adirondack Audubon Society for hosting this year's virtual meeting, featuring a presentation "The Effects of Climate Change on Montane Birds of the Northeast," by Dr. Jason Hill, Conservation Biologist with the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, and a virtual "field trip" to the former home of Paul Schaefer, a noted Adirondack conservationist.

Thank you for attending this 74<sup>th</sup> annual meeting and your ongoing support of NYSOA.

Wishing you good health and good birding,  
Shirley Shaw, President