



NYSOA

New York Birders

New York State

Ornithological Association, Inc.

For the Birders and Birds of the Empire State Since 1948

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New York State Ornithological Association 72nd Annual Meeting
NEW YORK STATE BIRDERS CONFERENCE: Connecting Birders Throughout the State

NEW YORK STATE ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION 2019 ANNUAL MEETING

NYSOA held its annual meeting in Kingston, NY, September 13-15. This year the Catskill Center was our host organization and combined the meeting with its annual *Taking Flight* conference. Thanks to the organizing committee for providing such an enjoyable weekend.

Friday featured afternoon field trips, an evening cruise on the Hudson River, and a trivia workshop for those of us who did not take the cruise. Saturday's agenda included more field trips, the delegates' business meeting, a paper and poster session, workshops, and the banquet with keynote address by Nathan Pieplow, author of the *Peterson Guide to Bird Sounds*. Everyone enjoyed his informative presentation about the language of birds: how bird songs and calls communicate territory, relationships, presence of food, and danger. The conference concluded with field trips on Sunday morning.



Young Birders enjoy the Annual Meeting Banquet. Photo © Carena Pooth

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From the President

It is my honor to have been elected president of NYSOA, an organization I have been a small part of for 30 years.

I owe my appreciation of birds to my mother, who was not a birder, but who always noticed birds. It was not acceptable in my home not to recognize a Northern Cardinal, Blue Jay, or Northern Bobwhite—my mother's favorite birds. She kept a bird feeder stocked and always pointed out when birds were on it—including the birds she nicknamed "Mr. Pig," the Common Grackles that devoured everything in a short time.

When I had my own house, I had to put up a feeder. One day I noticed that one of the "sparrows" was blue, and with that sighting of an Indigo Bunting, I took a giant step to becoming a birder. What a great pastime birding has been for me!

I have lived in Rochester since 1975, and I have met wonderful people through my involvement in the Rochester Birding Association (RBA), Burroughs Audubon Nature Club (BANC), and NYSOA. I have served in a variety of ways in both RBA and BANC, including as president in both, as well as being the current BANC Vice President. I've often been a delegate to the NYSOA annual meeting. In 1988 I was on the organizing committee for the annual meeting in Rochester, and in 1998 and 2018 I served as co-chair of the annual meetings. I've been on NYSOA's board as a director since 2017.

The Board of Directors always wants to connect with birders across the state. We write articles about NYSOA for local newsletters, which hopefully you've read. We have been organizing field trips for some time now—a great opportunity not only for you to find great birds but also to become acquainted and make friends with people who live across New York. Encouraging participation in the NY Breeding Bird Atlas III project is now a top priority. Check out the Atlas website to learn more: ebird.org/atlasny.

2020 is the kickoff year for New York's third atlas. This major citizen science project will require the work of volunteers across the state to survey small blocks to find evidence of breeding by the birds of that area. This survey work is open to anyone who enjoys birding, and I hope large numbers of NYSOA members will participate. NYSOA's Kathryn Schneider is co-chair of the Steering Committee for this project, and our Vice President, Greg Lawrence, and Joan Collins are Steering Committee members. Director Robert Spahn has also served on the Steering Committee.

NYSOA plays an enormous role in two of the most important aspects of birding: documenting the birds of our

state and being a voice for conservation, especially on environmental issues that are critical to the well-being of birds. We cannot do this important work without financial strength. Fall is the time for dues payments, so please renew promptly, hopefully beyond the minimum amount due. You might also consider donating to NYSOA's [New York State Young Birders Club](#) or to the [NY Breeding Bird Atlas III project](#). NYSOA will be maintaining an account without management fees so that 100% of your donation to the Atlas goes to the needs of the project.

I cannot stress enough how important it is to be an active member of your local birding club or organization as well as a NYSOA member. No group survives without volunteers to organize programs, lead field trips, find meeting places, handle finances, keep records, and take care of business matters. Few birding organizations have the resources to pay staff to do the work to keep birds and birding thriving, especially at the local level. As we start the third decade of the 21st Century, find ways you can serve birds and birding by volunteering.

I ask you also to consider how you can help NYSOA continue its work well into the future. It's always important to have someone as an assistant or worker-in-training for a committee or project because you never know when a chairperson's circumstances may force her or him to abandon an important initiative. Back-ups are needed. Think about where you can serve. Opportunities are many. Visit nybirds.org, look at all NYSOA offers, and find an activity where your interests and talent can be put to good use. Then click on the *NYSOA Information* tab, choose [Contact Us](#) and let me know what you're willing to do. Thank you in advance for your help.

Good birding! - Shirley Shaw



Shirley Shaw, the incoming President, presents the Kingbird statue to the Michael DeSha, the outgoing President. Photo © Carena Pooth

Under NYSOA's bylaws, member organizations send delegates who, among other duties, hear reports of NYSOA's activities, elect directors and



Some of the young birders' parents enjoy the banquet.
Photo © Sora Baek

officers, and vote on business and other matters. This year, the following people were elected to serve NYSOA for 2020: Shirley Shaw, President; Greg Lawrence, Vice President; John Kent, Recording Secretary; Mary Jane Dugan, Treasurer; Patricia Aitken, Brian Dugan, Brenda Fogarty, and Lucretia Grosshans, Directors 2020-2021; Joe Brin, Douglas Futuyma, Richard Guthrie, Robert Spahn, Directors who served in 2019 will continue in 2020; and Gerald Thurn, Director to complete Shirley Shaw's term through 2020.

Outgoing President Mike DeSha reported on the year's activities, including our many conservation activities: endorsement of the American Bird Conservancy's letter to the Department of Homeland Security and U. S. Customs and Border Security opposing the environmental damage, and encroachment on natural areas by the building of the border wall; raising awareness about the need to find a solution to harassment of birds by people who are alerted to the location of rarities and nesting sites by postings on electronic media; and ongoing work to develop a stance with respect to large-scale solar farms' impact on birds.

A major initiative of NYSOA for this year and five years to come will be the organization's role in the survey work for NY Breeding Bird Atlas III. This major citizen science project will require the work of volunteers across the state to survey small areas to find evidence of breeding by the birds of that area. This survey work is open to anyone who enjoys birding, and I hope large numbers of NYSOA members will participate.

By far, though, the best part of any NYSOA Annual Meeting is the opportunity it gives to meet fellow birders from across our state, hear about the latest ornithological research through the papers session, learn lots about birds at the workshops, go on field trips in areas we don't visit frequently, and just have a good time!

Next year's meeting will be in the Syracuse area October 2-4, 2020, hosted by Onondaga Audubon Society. Please mark your calendars now. NYSOA's Annual Meeting and Birders' Conference should be a must-attend event on your calendar. I look forward to seeing you there!
- Shirley Shaw

2019 NYSOA AWARD WINNERS:

President's Awards:

- **Joan Collins**, to recognize her many years of service to NYSOA, particularly as editor of *New York Birders* and for volunteering to step into the role of Membership Manager after the passing of Berna Lincoln in 2017.
- **Kathy Schneider**, to recognize her many years of service to NYSOA, most recently by capably serving as co-chair of the NY BBA III Steering Committee.
- **Robert Spahn**, to recognize his many years of service to NYSOA, including about 40 years during which he took on roles of Regional Editor and Regional Reports Editor for *The Kingbird*.

The **2019 Emanuel Levine Award** was presented to **Waheed Bajwa**, for "West Nile Virus infection and other causes of Bird mortality in New York City," which was published in *The Kingbird*, Vol. 68, No. 3, September 2018. This award honors the author of the best *Kingbird* article for the year.



Shai Mitra presents the Levine Award to Waheed Bajwa.
Photo © Carena Pooth

In 1975 Lillian C. Stoner, a founding member of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs (now NYSOA), donated money to the organization to establish a fund to enable a student to attend the Annual Meeting each year. This year's Stoner Award winners:

- **August Davidson-Onsgard**, high school senior, Brooklyn, NY
nominated by the New York State Young Birders Club
- **Adam Vinson**, high school junior, New York, NY
nominated by the New York State Young Birders Club
- **Ryan Zucker**, high school sophomore, New York, NY
nominated by The Linnaean Society of New York

Highlights of the July 27, 2019 Board of Directors meeting

The Board of Directors met at Beaver Lake Nature Center in Baldwinsville on July 27, 2019. President Mike DeSha reported that planning for the New York Breeding Bird Atlas III (NY BBA III) has been occupying much of his time. Treasurer Andy Mason reported that he has created a new account for NY BBA III within NYSOA's finances. Donations received for the atlas will go into this account and will be used to cover expenses that can't be covered by research grants, such as promotional materials and meeting facilities.

The board then returned to a discussion from the previous meeting about the possibility of investing a portion of NYSOA's assets in stock and bond funds. These assets are currently kept in bank CDs that often don't keep up with inflation. Mary Jane Dugan, who was nominated at this meeting to take over as NYSOA treasurer, presented a proposal to invest approximately 20% of the assets in a diversified portfolio of stock and bond funds. The board discussed the plan and considered possible changes to the proposed asset allocation, but eventually approved the plan as presented by Mary Jane.

The board also finalized changes to the dues structure that were discussed at previous meetings. Starting next year, *The Kingbird* will be available electronically. For those who agree to receive *The Kingbird* and *New York Birders* electronically, dues will remain at their current levels. There will be an added \$10/year fee for individual, family, and supporting members who wish to receive hard copies. Those who join or renew at the Kingbird Club level will have the option to receive printed copies of both publications, in addition to a printed copy of *The Checklist of the Birds of New York State*.

Joan Collins reported that there is a significant irruption of Red Crossbills currently in the Adirondacks. Since there is an abundant cone crop, the birds are likely to remain in the area into the winter. Joan plans to work with Mary Beth Warburton to plan a NYSOA winter weekend field trip in the Adirondacks, concentrating on the crossbills.

Brian Dugan volunteered to chair the Marketing and Publicity Committee, a position which has been vacant for some time. Any members who have expertise in this field and are willing to help are encouraged to contact publicity1@nybirds.org.

Shai Mitra reported continued progress in getting *The Kingbird* caught up to its publication schedule. Patricia Lindsay has taken over the position of regional reports editor, with lots of help from Bob Spahn, who has served in that role for several decades. Pat has been extremely effective in working with multiple regional report editors

who have come on board recently. Mike Cooper has resurrected the "Highlights of the Season" feature, which has generated several positive comments from readers. Shai expects to complete three more issues of *The Kingbird* by the end of 2019.

Kathy Schneider, co-chair of the NY BBA III steering committee, provided the board with an update on overall planning for the atlas, and Bob Spahn reported on the activities of the methods subcommittee. Most of the regional coordinator positions have been filled, but coordinators are still needed for the Syracuse and Rochester areas. The committee is also searching for a fundraising chair for the atlas project. There will be significant ongoing expenses throughout the atlas period. Bob has been involved with the second Wisconsin BBA, which is currently in its final year of data collection. They are using eBird as a data portal, as will NY BBA III. Bob's experiences in Wisconsin are proving helpful in planning for New York's atlas. Greg Lawrence recommended that the board and anyone else who is interested get familiar with the websites of atlases that are currently in progress, such as Wisconsin and Virginia.

Andy Mason reported that the conservation committee will soon be developing a NYSOA position on large-scale solar power facilities. Among other issues they have looked into is the situation at Doodletown, one of the prime birding spots in the Lower Hudson Valley. A road race last year attracted crowds and prevented birder access to the site on a May weekend. Andy is looking for local birders in that area to work with the Palisades Interstate Park Commission to make changes to the race for future years. The goals are to facilitate birder access and to minimize disturbance to breeding birds and other wildlife. The committee is also looking into several other issues, including a development proposal at the EPCAL site in Suffolk County and the potential installation of large electrical infrastructure at Jones Beach West End in Nassau County.

- John Kent, Recording Secretary



Shai Mitra with young birders Elliot and Rion. Photo © Carena Pooth

Washington Attacks Birds

This column typically covers issues in NY State, but actions at the federal level over the past two years have greatly exceeded any in-state threat to our birds. One would think the Trump administration has it in for birds particularly if it were not for the breadth and depth of its all-out assault on the environment.

Of course many of these more general broadsides affect birds too, and can hardly be ignored. Just a few examples that impact birds and other wildlife:

- In July, the administration announced plans to weaken the Endangered Species Act by requiring greater consideration of economic factors in agency decisions on listing species, and pulling back on requirements for consultation with wildlife experts. In May, the administration rolled back safety measures for offshore drilling operations that were put in place following the BP Gulf oil spill. Obviously this exposes shorelines and sea life to future spills—now even more likely with proposed expanded offshore oil leasing.
- In February, the US Environmental Protection Agency proposed new rules that dramatically reduce the number of wetlands and streams that are protected under the 1972 Clean Water Act. This includes streams and wetlands that are only wet for part of the year, but are important habitat for marsh birds, waterfowl and other species.
- In January, the President issued an executive order dramatically increasing logging on federal lands. He directed the Departments of Interior and Agriculture to harvest more than 4 billion board feet of timber that will be put up for sale. That figure is 31 percent more than what the agencies logged in 2017.
- In December 2018, the administration reversed an Obama-era climate rule and lifted restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions from coal power plants.
- In April 2017, the administration announced a position on protecting migratory birds that is a drastic pullback from policies in force for the past 100 years. The Interior Department issued a legal opinion regarding the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that excluded incidental take—death or injury—to birds, from prosecution. Such prosecution had only been undertaken in gross cases of bird take or those where such take should have been anticipated. Now energy companies, industrial polluters, and others can escape responsibility for killing birds.

- In June 2017, President Trump pulled the US out of the Paris climate agreement, putting the country at odds with the 200 other nations who are parties to this hard-won commitment to cut greenhouse gases.

What you can do--There is much, much more, and it is equally difficult to know how to respond to these damaging and backward moves. One obvious action is to be sure to register to vote, and to get involved in the electoral process. Another is to support organizations that are challenging these actions in court; even legal delay could minimize the impacts until a change comes about in Washington.

- *Andy Mason*

Save the Date! Winter Weekend in the Adirondacks February 22-23, 2020

Come enjoy a weekend with other NYSOA members this winter! NYSOA's winter weekend in the central Adirondacks will feature field trips on Saturday and Sunday, and a late afternoon presentation on Saturday by Julie Hart, NY Breeding Bird Atlas III Project Coordinator, followed by a social, group dinner. Both the presentation and dinner will be held at the Adirondack Hotel in Long Lake. Red Crossbills nested in the central Adirondacks this past summer, and will likely be nesting again during the winter weekend, allowing members to begin adding Atlas data! More details will follow in the January issue of *New York Birders* and on the [NYSOA website](http://www.nysoa.org). To register early, contact Mary Beth Warburton at 518-268-0150 or msmarybeth.warburton@gmail.com.



Female Red Crossbill in the Adirondacks in October. Photo © Joan Collins

Atlas Corner: Owls

In the last issue I presented the Confirmed breeding codes. This was part 1 of a two-part series, but since the breeding season is over, I am going to postpone part 2 on the Possible and Probable codes until spring 2020. Instead, I thought it would be best to present additional details on how to atlas. The atlas kicks off in January 2020, which is right around the corner, and some of you may want to get out right away and record breeding Great Horned Owls or crossbills!

Fly on Over to the Atlas Website

The atlas website is full of useful information to help you get started atlasing. You'll find information on why we are conducting a third atlas, how to atlas and submit data, block maps, a full listing of upcoming events, and the latest news. You'll also find online tutorials to help you get started using eBird and a list of recommended books and apps to boost your bird identification skills and increase your understanding of bird behaviors and natural history. Starting January 2020, this is where you will be able to sign up for blocks and view data submitted to the project. Bookmark the website at ebird.org/atlasny.

Navigate Atlas Blocks

The atlas is designed to provide a statewide view of where each species breeds. In order to make this monumental task more manageable, we break the state up into smaller blocks and ask people to thoroughly survey each block. The tricky thing is to make sure that you stay within block boundaries when you are in the field. The traditional way to do this is to bring a printed map of the block in the field with you. You can download block maps from the website. If you use a smartphone or tablet in the field, you can download the map to your device and refer to it in the field. A more precise way to know your location within a block is to use a GPS or mapping app on your smartphone. You can download the block boundaries to your device from the website and import them into the app you prefer to use. Google Earth is free and popular, but you should use whatever program you are most comfortable with.

The PDF maps include public spaces like national wildlife refuges, state parks, state forests, and wildlife management areas. You will probably want to target these areas first since in most cases you don't need to get special permission to access the land. For some lands we will work to arrange special access for atlasers, but it is ultimately your responsibility to make sure that you are not trespassing. To aid in this process, we will be providing introductory letters you can take to landowners to request access, including a thank you letter and a placard to place on your windshield while you are surveying. If you discover that much of an atlas block is on private land and



Red Phase Eastern Screech-owl: Owls and other nocturnal birds require extra effort during the atlas. Photo © Ian Davies

you are unsuccessful in gaining permission from the landowner, please [contact me](#) or your local regional coordinator.

Check out the blocks and maps on the website: <https://ebird.org/atlasny/about/atlas-blocks>

January Atlasing

January is cold and snowy. Many of us are busy doing Christmas Bird Counts. The last thing on our mind is trying to find breeding birds. But some birds will be settling into their cozy nests even in the middle of winter!

Three species come to mind, Great Horned Owl and Red and White-winged Crossbills. Great Horned Owls were documented incubating eggs as early as January 22 during the previous two atlases. This means that they began courtship and nest building perhaps as early as December! Crossbills, on the other hand, will breed year-round. They are nomadic and move around from one area with lots of cones to another. If they find a particularly high number of cones, they settle in to breed. While it doesn't look like this winter will be a good finch invasion year, there are a lot of cones in the Adirondacks and Red Crossbills are currently breeding. It's possible they will stick around this winter for a second brood.

Who among you is going to report the first confirmed nesting record for the atlas and what species will it be? The Calendar of Early Breeders gives some idea of the birds you are likely to find in the early months of 2020. By early breeding, I mean species that breed before the heat of the summer when most songbirds are busy raising young. You'll notice that all the owls that live in NY are likely to be nesting by the end of April. Owls and other nocturnal species are notoriously underreported in atlas projects, so let's get out there early to look for them!

Finding Owls

Owls are nocturnal birds and it's easiest to find out which patch of habitat they call home by listening for them at night. You'll want to head out on a calm night during the peak breeding time for each species (see the Breeding Season Table for Owls) and target their preferred habitats (see the Owl Habitat Preferences chart). If you have limited time, aim for the first part of April, which falls in the breeding period for all the owls except Great Horned. Owls tend to call more frequently in the first half of the night, so try to be out between 30 minutes after sunset and midnight. Stop along roads or trails every half mile and listen quietly for 5 minutes. *We do not recommend using playback.* Playback disrupts courtship, foraging and nesting activities, and increases the risk of predation. If you don't hear any birds with passive listening, move on to another stop and try again. Owl calls serve the same territorial and advertising purposes as songs from songbirds, so record them with the S code on your eBird checklist.

The easiest way to upgrade the S code is to return a week later to the same places you heard owls on your first visit. If you hear a bird calling from the same place a week or more apart, use the S7 code to raise the species from a Possible to a Probable breeder. *We do not recommend seeking out the birds or their nests.* You may be able to upgrade the code further if you learn to distinguish the calls of males, females, and young birds. Use your favorite free app like Merlin or Audubon to familiarize yourself with owl calls. Use the P code when you hear a pair of birds duetting and the C code for non-vocal courtship sounds. Later in the season, the young birds become very vocal and you stand a good chance of upgrading to FL (recently fledged young) or NY (nest with young) if you recognize owlet calls.

While out atlasing during the daytime, listen for upset groups of songbirds and try to find the animal they are mobbing; it often turns out to be an owl. The other way to discover owls during the daytime is to keep an eye out for what looks like white paint dripping down a tree trunk and nearby vegetation. This is concentrated waste called whitewash and signals a roost or nest site. There are often undigestible pellets of regurgitated hair and bones on the ground as well. Even if you don't see a bird, you can usually identify the species from the pellet with the help of a field guide.

It is very important to minimize disturbance to nesting owls. Always keep your distance. Stay as far away as possible and minimize the amount of time you spend in the area. Refrain from spreading the word widely about the nest location. For some of the more sensitive species (Short-eared Owl, Long-eared Owl, and Barn owl), we have hidden all breeding records from public output on eBird. For other species, if you are concerned that entering your data in eBird would put the birds at risk, you can hide your checklist from public view, refrain from entering the observation until after the birds have left the area, or enter the data at a larger scale (for example, make a new personal hotspot in the center of the atlas block). The only thing we ask is that you *unhide* your data at a later date and/or report the details of your observation to the New York Natural Heritage Program (<https://www.nynhp.org/report-rare>).

Expect to hear other species on your nighttime surveys, including Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock, Killdeer, Common Loon, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow Rail, Black Rail, Northern Mockingbird, Veery, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Ovenbird, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Be sure to start a new eBird checklist for nocturnal visits (eBird defines this as 20 minutes after sunset to 40 minutes before sunrise) and record everything you can identify. Submit your checklist even if you hear no birds. The atlas wants to know where species are and where they are not. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, I recommend bringing a thermos of hot tea or cocoa to keep warm!

Owl Habitat Preferences

Species	Habitat
Barn Owl	Open habitats
Eastern Screech-Owl	Open deciduous forests, woodlots, orchards, residential areas
Great Horned Owl	Wide variety from forest to farmland
Barred Owl	Moist woods, wooded swamps, bottomlands
Long-eared Owl	Coniferous and mixed forest
Short-eared Owl	Grasslands
Northern Saw-whet Owl	Mixed moist woods with conifers

(Continued on page 8)

Breeding Season Table for Owls

Species	Information from Literature			Breeding Dates for NY		
	# Broods	Incubation	Nestling Period	Eggs	Nestlings	Fledglings
Barn Owl	1-2	32-34	Fly at 60, indep at 70	all months		
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	21-26	Lv nest at 35	3/23-7/8	4/9-7/15	3/25-9/18
Great Horned Owl	1	30-35	Lv nest at 31-35	1/22-7/24	2/15-7/9	3/25-12/21
Barred Owl	1	21-28	Fly at 6 weeks	3/20-5/4	4/14-7/4	5/4-9/11
Long-eared Owl	1, occ 2	21-30	Lv nest at 23-24	3/21-5/23	5/5-6/24	6/1-8/8
Short-eared Owl	1, occ 2	24-28	Lv nest at 12-17, fly @ 22-27	4/2-5/19	5/7-6/19	6/11-7/13
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	26-28	Lv nest at 36, occ longer	3/31-6/11	4/21-7/16	5/9-8/29

Calendar of Early Breeders

- **January:** Great Horned Owl, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill
- **February:** Horned Lark
- **March:** Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Red-tailed Hawk, Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, American Woodcock, Mourning Dove, Eastern Screech-Owl, Barred Owl, Long-eared Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Canada Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, American Robin, House Sparrow.
- **April:** Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, American Black Duck, Hooded Merganser, Northern Harrier, Osprey, American Kestrel, Ruffed Grouse, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Clapper Rail, Sora, American Coot, Killdeer, Wilson’s Snipe, Upland Sandpiper, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Barn Owl, Short-eared owl, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Hairy Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Eastern Bluebird, European Starling, Louisiana Waterthrush, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, Pine Siskin.

Atlas Opportunities

Are you looking to do more for the atlas? We are currently looking to fill several positions. We are looking for Regional Coordinators to galvanize volunteers in the Syracuse and Rochester areas, a Development Director to spearhead fundraising activities, a Campaign Manager for our Sponsor-a-Species program, and an Event Coordinator to help plan an atlas kick-off party next spring or summer. If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact Julie, Project Coordinator, at julie.hart@dec.ny.gov.

Get Your Atlas Swag On!

Head on over to Zazzle.com (<https://www.zazzle.com/store/nybbaiii/products>) to purchase swanky merchandise featuring the striking Pileated Woodpecker atlas logo. While showing your support for the project, 5% of the purchase price will be donated to the atlas!

- Julie Hart



NYSOA County and State Listing

A Fun Competition for Listers Since 1992

Your 2019 numbers must be received by March 1, 2020

Some birders have participated in this friendly competition since it began 27 years ago, but newcomers jump on board every year. To see what the annual compilation looks like, you can peruse the **archive of past reports** at nybirds.org/ProjCountyLists.html.

Here are the basics: You can report your **life list** for a single county if you'd like, or for all of the New York's 62 counties where you've kept track – even if you've tallied only a handful of species in some of them (I report single digit numbers for several county life lists each year). You can also send in your **NYS life and year totals** if these numbers are at least 200, and your life lists for each of the ten *Kingbird* regions where your list has at least 100 species. If you submit a 2019 report by March 1, 2020, your name and data will be included in the compilation to be published next April. For more details, visit nybirds.org/ProjCountyLists.html.

eBirders: For tips on using eBird to get your numbers together, go to nybirds.org/ProjCountyLists.html and click on the “**How-to**” link near the top.

2018 Results: 129 reports were submitted for 2018, the same number as for 2017. Once again, Gail Benson snagged the top spot among those submitting both life and year totals for NYS, with 443 and 330 respectively -- inching ever closer to P.A. Buckley's life list record of 446. Looking at counties, 20 observers reported from all 62 of them. Bill Purcell continues as the only one with at least 100 species in all 62 counties. Bill Cook, Bill Purcell, and Jane Graves were the only ones reporting 50 or more in all counties. For total county list ticks, the top 3 participants were Bill Purcell (8960), Richard Guthrie (7359), and Jane Graves (7109). 26 participants included a life total for the Pelagic Zone category, down from 28 PZ reporters last year (high record holder Dave Klauber has moved to Panama and is no longer submitting reports).

So let's do this! The form for reporting your 2019 numbers is included with this issue of the newsletter. If you prefer going paperless (or if you are online and would like to make this exercise as easy as possible for me), enter your data at nybirds.org/ProjCountyLists.html. Paper reports may be **mailed** (please note **NEW ADDRESS** on the form) or scanned & **emailed**. Remember, if you want your data to be included in the next compilation, you must submit a report, even if your numbers haven't changed since the last one.

Give it a whirl! Fair warning, though – you might get hooked!
– Carena Pooth

The Kingbird Goes Electronic! and other Membership Updates

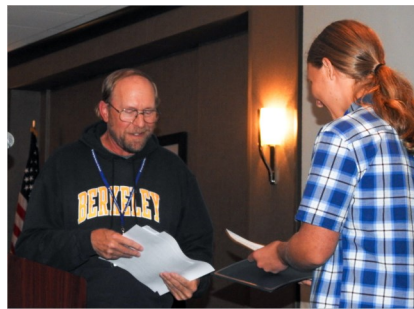
Starting in 2020, NYSOA's newsletter, *New York Birders*, and quarterly journal, *The Kingbird*, will be sent via email. There will be an option to receive these publications via postal service instead, for an additional charge of \$10 (for members within the U.S.). Kingbird Club members will have the option to receive paper publications at no extra charge.

NYSOA membership fees will remain the same in 2020 for electronic publications. Printing costs continue to rapidly escalate, and the board members researched how other states' ornithological organizations have dealt with these cost increases. Most states now offer electronic publications for their newsletters and ornithological journals with an additional membership fee to receive paper publications.

NYSOA will also be changing all memberships to calendar year terms (Jan.-Dec.). Members will be able to renew electronically or via paper postal service. Watch for renewal notices coming your way soon.

For members who prefer to cut down on paper publications in their homes, the new option to receive *The Kingbird* in electronic form is a welcome change!

– Joan Collins, Membership Manager



Bill Ostrander presents the Lillian C. Stoner Award to August Davidson-Onsgard. Photo © Carena Pooth



Adam Vinson and Ryan Zucker accept their Lillian C. Stoner Awards. Photos © Carena Pooth

President's Report 2018-2019

72nd Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association

This report is a summary of NYSOA activities over the past year beginning with the 2018 Annual Meeting. Highlights of the year include a highly successful 71st Annual Meeting jointly hosted by the Rochester Birding Association and the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club, and continuing intensive planning for the New York Breeding Bird Atlas III effort.

The October 2018 71st Annual Meeting in Henrietta, NY was hosted by both the Rochester Birding Association and the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club. The event was a total success even though rain dampened the initial field trips. There were 187 registrants. The attendees at the Saturday-night banquet enjoyed an entertaining talk by Greg Miller, one of the participants in a birding big-year three-way contest whose story is recounted in the book and subsequent movie, *The Big Year*.

The **Awards Committee**, chaired by Bill Ostrander, presented Stoner Awards to several outstanding young birders. The Gordon Meade Award, given to those individuals who have provided significant service to NYSOA, was presented to Tom Burke, *in absentia*, for his outstanding work as a long-standing NYSARC Committee member. The President's Award was presented to Carena Pooth for her long service in support of the Young Birders. Certificates of Appreciation were also awarded to the host clubs.

The **Bylaws Committee** chaired by Robert Spahn and ably assisted by Shirley Shaw and Tim Baird produced further proposed changes to our Bylaws to conform with New York State regulations on meeting notifications. The resulting changes were approved by the Board of Directors in regular session, for presentation and adoption at this annual meeting. Member Organizations were notified by email prior to this Annual Meeting in accordance with the Bylaws.

The **Conservation Committee**, chaired by Andy Mason and including Joan Collins, Brian Dugan, Gerry Smith, and Mary Beth Warburton, took on a variety of issues. Of particular note is NYSOA's endorsement of the American Bird Conservancy's letter to the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Customs and Border Security in opposition to the building of a border wall. An ongoing issue is developing with respect to e-bird posting of sites of nesting species, particularly owls and other raptors, and subsequent harassment by large numbers of people who are alerted to the location. The Committee is also working to develop a stance with respect to large-scale solar farms.

Carena Pooth compiles the **County and State Bird Listing Report** for those who are interested in keeping and comparing a list of species seen throughout the state and in the various counties. 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 has historically been without a Chair, but now Brian Dugan has responded and volunteered to head this important committee. We appreciate his volunteering. Mary Beth Warburton organized a wonderful field trip to the 1000 Islands area for NYSOA members. In an important new initiative, based upon the suggestion of Carena Pooth for increasing publicity, NYSOA Board members and others are providing NYSOA-related articles to our member organizations for inclusion in their newsletters.

Our **Membership Manager**, Joan Collins, has continued to provide the focus for interactions with the members and receiving membership renewals and applications. Joan and Pat Aitken, our **Circulation Manager**, along with Carena Pooth, work to make sure our publications reach the membership. Thanks to them for their help and particularly for Joan's taking over as Membership Manager. We really appreciate it.

The Kingbird, under editorship of Shai Mitra, is getting back to schedule, with the likelihood of the publication of five issues in 2019. A significant change is the appointment of Pat Lindsay as Editor for the Regional Reports, replacing Bob Spahn, who served in this capacity for many years. I particularly want to thank him for these years of service to NYSOA and *The Kingbird*. Joan Collins is on track to produce four outstanding issues of *New York Birders* and Carena Pooth keeps the print version of the **New York State Checklist** updated as changes are made by the AOS. Sales of the printed checklist are solid. Thanks to Carena, up-to-date additions, splits and lumps, and name changes are accommodated in the online version of the checklist almost as soon as they occur.

The **New York State Young Birders Club** thrived under the careful mentorship of Carena Pooth in the eleven years since its inception in 2008. It is almost impossible to imagine this organization without her, and it was clearly a labor of love on her part. We are grateful that 5 parents and another adult have stepped in to take over most of the functions formerly undertaken by Carena.

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.

NY Breeding Bird Atlas III Update 72nd Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association

In the U.S., breeding bird atlases typically provide data on the distribution and abundance of a state's breeding birds over a five-year timeframe. New York's first atlas was conducted from 1980-1985 and the second was done 20 years later from 2000-2005. Over the last 40 years these data have become invaluable tools for conservation planning, but because habitats and bird distributions change, the information needs to be updated periodically. Another 20 years have passed and we are poised to begin field work for our third New York State breeding bird atlas in 2020. Seven organizations (listed below) have come together to form the atlas Steering Committee, which guides and manages the project. The committee met quarterly during 2019, but much of the work was done by subcommittees that met between our quarterly gatherings and came to the Steering Committee with recommendations.

Julie Hart began work as our Atlas Project Coordinator in mid-January. She deserves much of the credit for keeping us on track. Julie has written articles for your newsletters, and reached over 250 people with presentations and workshops about the atlas. New York, along with Wisconsin, Maine, and Virginia, and New Zealand, has contracted with eBird to manage the atlas data and provide a portal for the atlas website. Julie has spent a great deal of time creating a user-friendly online platform for the atlas. I encourage you to visit ebird.org/atlasny and explore the site, which now includes survey instructions, the atlas handbook, a calendar of workshops and atlas presentations, the block maps, tutorials, a donation button, and the atlas online store. You can view the priority blocks and beginning in January 2020 you will be able to use the block sign up tool to commit to completing a block.

The Design and Analysis Subcommittee, chaired by Angela Fuller, has been working on the sampling design for this atlas to be sure that the data we gather can detect a 10% change in bird populations over a 20-year period. We have contracted with the New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit to do sampling design simulations to inform our decisions. Rather than gathering data from every block in the state, this atlas will use priority blocks to sample each topographic quadrangle. The Design and Analysis group will also decide how to address species that are difficult to detect either because they are present in low numbers, secretive, nocturnal or crepuscular, or found in rare or inaccessible habitats.

The Methods Subcommittee, chaired by Robert Spahn, has developed a list of sensitive species that need to be protected from disturbance. These breeding records will be hidden from ebird output, some year-round, some only during the breeding season, and some all the times, depending on the species. They have also developed a breeding guidelines chart and a table of acceptable breeding codes. The subcommittee is still working to define adequate block coverage criteria, which will include a minimum number of species based on the region, a minimum number of hours

The NY Breeding Bird Atlas III will continue to be the focus of research for the next six or seven years. While the previous two Atlases were directly under the control of NYSOA, this Atlas project is being administered by a collection of entities, among them NYSOA, Cornell Lab, Audubon New York, and EFS, which will be operating under DEC and receiving Federal Grant money for the project. As reported last year, 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 and things seem to be progressing well. NYSOA Atlas objectives are being accommodated. Kathy Schneider, appointed by NYSOA, continues as co-chair of the Atlas Steering Committee. Since I will be ending my term of office, I will no longer be a part of the Steering Committee because I view my participation as being in a NYSOA executive capacity. Joan Collins and Greg Lawrence are continuing as members of the Steering Committee, so NYSOA is well represented. Julie Hart has been appointed Project Coordinator. Most Regional Coordinator positions have also been filled.

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

Doug Gochfeld was appointed to another term on the **NYSARC Committee**. Derek Rogers and Jay McGowan were also appointed.

Again this year, I sincerely want to note that 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



Delegates Meeting, Photo © Carena Pooth



Delegates Field Trip, Photo © Carena Pooth

spent in the block, some percentage confirmed and/or probable codes, coverage of all habitats, and multiple visits during the breeding season. Stay tuned.

The Outreach and Engagement Subcommittee, chaired by Ian Davies, approved a public relations plan and worked to define the role of Regional Coordinators, which has changed substantially from previous atlases. For this atlas, we will be able to put maps and forms online, communicate by email, and track block coverage via eBird. As a result, our new Regional Coordinators are being asked to drum up enthusiasm for the atlas, recruit and train volunteers, help plan block busting events to fill coverage gaps, track progress, and review data. To date, the committee has identified twelve people to be Regional Coordinators based on their birding knowledge, eBird expertise, people skills, and connections to the birding community in various parts of the state. We are still looking for Regional Coordinators for the Syracuse and Rochester areas. Heritage has written contracts to provide the Regional Coordinators with a small stipend, and a retreat for Regional Coordinators is planned in the Albany area for early November.

At this time, we do not have a chair for the Development Subcommittee, but Julie and I have worked together to learn what it takes to fund a successful bird atlas in the 21st century based on Wisconsin's experience. Like New York, they had substantial support from federal aid money granted to their state agency. This was enough to support their project coordinator, another person half time, and some paid technicians. However, the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) raised and spent an additional \$675,000 over the five years of their project. It is clear to us that we must raise additional funds, largely from non-government sources, for our atlas to succeed. We have unbudgeted expenses that need to be funded in order to make the atlas experience a fun, exciting undertaking for our volunteers and enable us to produce a scientifically meaningful product. These include things like Regional Coordinator trainings and workshops, atlas kick off meetings, block busting events, volunteer appreciation gatherings, awards, donor premiums, PayPal fees, printing of brochures and fliers, etc.

To address this funding shortfall, we plan to launch a Sponsor-a-Species Program, similar to one that provided Wisconsin a steady stream of income and allowed them raise more than \$250,000 over 5 years. People pledge to sponsor a species for five years in order to have their name listed in the species account in the atlas product. There are four or five sponsorship funding tiers ranging from three or four highly desirable species in the \$2,000 a year range, to about 150 in the \$100 a year range. In Wisconsin, this campaign was spearheaded by a dedicated volunteer and they were able to find sponsors for every single species that breeds in the state, including nine new breeders identified during the atlas. We are looking for a Sponsor-a-Species campaign manager to head up this fun project. We would also like to find a volunteer to chair the Development Subcommittee; someone to think more broadly about the fundraising possibilities in New York State.

So, as you can see, if you've been looking to get involved in the atlas, we have finally gotten to the point where we can use your help. Julie has created a handout that identifies the volunteer positions that we need to fill to address our most immediate needs. We are planning a statewide atlas kick-off event for next spring and we're looking for a person to coordinate this affair. If

you've ever wanted to plan a party, here's your chance. If you aren't able to take on a leadership role, there are other ways you can support the atlas.

- Visit the [website](#) and learn about NY BBA III
- Organize a public talk or training workshop for birders in your area
- Talk to landowners and arrange access to private lands, especially in priority blocks
- Be an eBird mentor for your club
- Teach someone how use eBird mobile
- Choose a priority block and sign up for it in January 2020
- Use the [donation button](#) on the atlas website and donate to the atlas
- Buy some atlas gear and advertise the atlas
- Plan now to attend the statewide atlas kickoff in spring 2020

Respectfully submitted,
Kathryn Schneider, Co-chair
NY BBA III Atlas Steering Committee

Steering Committee

- New York Natural Heritage Program – Matt Schlesinger, Julie Hart
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation – Dan Rosenblatt, Matt Palumbo, Bonnie Parton
- New York State Ornithological Association – Kathryn Schneider, Mike DeSha, Robert Spahn, Greg Lawrence, Joan Collins
- New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit – Angela Fuller, Kelly Perkins, Andy Royle
- Audubon New York – Michael Burger
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology – Ian Davies, Chris Wood
- State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry – Jacqui Frair

NY BBA III Regional Coordinators

- Sue Barth (Buffalo area)
- Jeff Bolsinger (St Lawrence Valley)
- Brendan Fogarty (western Long Island)
- Matt Medler (Lake Champlain Valley)
- Dave Nicosia (Binghamton area)
- Molly Adams, New York City Audubon (New York City)
- Mike Scheibel (eastern Long Island)
- Zach Schwartz-Weinstein (Capital Region)
- Anne Swaim (lower Hudson Valley)
- Wendy Tocci (central Hudson Valley)
- Gale VerHague (Jamestown area)
- Tom Wheeler (Adirondacks)
- Vacant (Syracuse)
- Vacant (Rochester)

Atlas Website: ebird.org/atlasny
Atlas Project Coordinator: Julie Hart, Julie.hart@dec.ny.gov
or (518) 402-8965



Kid's-Eye View

Larkwire: an App Review

By Eliza Wein (age 16)

Currently President of the NYS Young Birders Club, Eliza writes and shares articles with her fellow club members.

Larkwire is a great app for learning bird calls – a definite recommend if you're interested in improving your song-ID. Larkwire is two separate apps: one for land birds and one for water birds. These apps cover most North American birds except for some limited-range specialties. The iPhone apps cost \$14.99 for land birds and \$12.99 for water birds (the web apps cost a little more).

What I believe makes Larkwire stand out best as a learning tool is that it makes learning bird songs into a game, with points for ones you get right. You can also filter birds by group, by level of difficulty, or create custom lists. Typically, it includes only songs for most songbirds, but it's still a terrific resource, if you're willing to put down the time for it.

This app is more focused on learning, while Merlin is more about identification. There are also quizzes on eBird, but I prefer Larkwire because it offers more customization.

Larkwire includes 394 sounds from 343 species in the land bird pack, and 253 sounds from 135 species in the water bird pack. More information is at larkwire.com, or on the [App store](#).



Pros

- Game format helps memory
- Contains hundreds of birds
- Can organize custom lists of birds by difficulty, groupings, or region
- Will highlight birds you miss and play them more often
- Descriptions of bird songs
- Can be a very effective learning tool
- High-quality recordings

Cons

- Does not have some limited-range or rare birds
- Does not have call notes for most passerines
- Cost
- Time-consuming
- Not available as an Android app (but the web app can be used on computers and Android devices)

The New York State Young Birders Club (NYSYBC) is a special project of the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA). Learn more about NYSYBC at nysyoungbirders.org and NYSOA at nybirds.org.

Spring Ornithology Course with Steve Kress

Interested in learning more about our local birds? The Cayuga Bird Club (CBC) is offering an 8-week Spring Ornithology course taught by Dr. Stephen Kress, March 24 to May 12, 2020. Topics will include bird identification; bird song; mysteries of migration, such as how and why birds migrate and some of their amazing migration feats; courtship, nesting, and rearing of young; bird conservation; and the best ways to attract birds to your yard through feeders, plantings, water, and landscaping.



Dr. Kress is well known for teaching a popular Spring Field Ornithology course through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for more than 40 years. His new course is perfectly timed to help people identify spring migrants and to better understand bird behavior. His dynamic lectures will feature photos and audio recordings of our local birds. Dr. Kress has served for many years as Director of the Audubon Seabird Restoration Program and Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine. He is the author of more than ten books and numerous articles about birds and wildlife conservation.

The class will be held Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 pm, March 24 to May 12, 2020, at the Foundation of Light, 3911 Turkey Hill Road, Ithaca, NY. There is ample on-site parking. The cost is \$125 for Cayuga Bird Club members and \$140 for non-members, which includes a CBC membership.

Registration for *Spring Ornithology with Steve Kress* is now open at: www.cayugabirdclub.org/spring-ornithology. For more information, email: cayugabirdclub.president@gmail.com.

Winter Finch Forecast 2019-2020

GENERAL FORECAST: This is not an irruption (flight) year for winter finches in the East. Most winter finches will stay in the north. There are abundant spruce cone crops across the boreal forest in Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland. Most conifers (except pines), birches and other seed crops are good to excellent in much of the Northeast. This should be a good winter to see finches in traditional hotspots such as Ontario's Algonquin Park, Quebec's Laurentian Mountains, New York's Adirondack Mountains, and northern New England states. For the details on each finch species, see individual forecasts below. Three irruptive non-finch passerines are also discussed. The forecast applies mainly to Ontario and nearby provinces and states.

PINE GROSBEAK: Most Pine Grosbeaks will stay close to the breeding grounds this winter because the mountain-ash berry crop is excellent in the north. The abundant cone crop and a large seed crop on black ash will provide additional food to hold grosbeaks in the north. A few Pine Grosbeaks may drift south to Algonquin Park where they are seen most winters.

PURPLE FINCH: Most Purple Finches usually migrate south of Ontario in the fall, but this winter many will remain in the province where tree seed crops are excellent. At feeders they prefer black oil sunflower seeds.

RED CROSSBILL: Red Crossbills are currently widespread in the East. Expect to see them where there are large cone crops. Red Crossbills comprise at least 10 "types" in North America. The types are usually impossible to identify without recordings of their flight calls. Recordings can be made with an iPhone and identified to type. Matt Young ([may6 at cornell.edu](mailto:may6@cornell.edu)) of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology will identify types if you email him your recordings or upload them to an eBird checklist. Recordings uploaded to eBird checklists are deposited in the Macaulay Library. Matt reports that Type 10 is the most common type now in the Northeast, but there are also some Type 3 from the West and a few Type 1 and 2.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: This crossbill is currently widespread and locally common in Ontario and Quebec where spruce cone crops are excellent to bumper. Expect to see White-winged Crossbills this winter in Algonquin Park. It feeds on native conifers with small cones such as white, red and black spruces and hemlock.

COMMON REDPOLL: Most redpolls will probably stay in the north this winter because seed crops on birches, alders and spruce are excellent this year. A winter trip to northern Ontario should yield redpolls. A few Common Redpolls may get south to Algonquin Park, but likely no farther.



Red Crossbill in Algonquin Park. Photo © Jean Iron

HOARY REDPOLL: Hoaries are not expected in the south this winter because it is not a redpoll irruption year. A road trip to northern Ontario is recommended to see Hoary Redpolls. Watch for them in flocks of Common Redpolls.

PINE SISKIN: Many siskins should winter in central and northern Ontario where cones crops are excellent to bumper on white spruce. Siskins relish nyger seeds in silo feeders.

EVENING GROSBEAK: Most Evening Grosbeaks should winter in the north because conifer and deciduous seed crops such as black ash are generally excellent to bumper. However, we may experience an echo flight after the considerable southward movement last winter. The best spot to see this striking grosbeak is the feeders at the Visitor Centre in Algonquin Park. At feeders it prefers black oil sunflower seeds. The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in 2016 listed the Evening Grosbeak as a species of *Special Concern* due to strong population declines in central and eastern Canada.

THREE IRRUPTIVE NON-FINCH PASSERINES: Movements of these three passerines are often linked to movements of boreal finches.

BLUE JAY: This jay moves south in varying numbers every fall. Expect a small to moderate flight along the north shorelines of Lakes Ontario and Erie because the red oak acorn, beechnut, hazelnut and soft mast crops are very good to excellent in Ontario. Good numbers of Blue Jays should visit feeders this winter in Ontario.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH: Boreal populations of the Red-breasted Nuthatch will not migrate south this fall. The excellent spruce and fir cone crops will hold Red-breasted Nuthatches on the breeding grounds this winter.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: The excellent native mountain-ash berry crop across the boreal forest should keep most Bohemians Waxwings in the north this



Pine Siskin in Algonquin Park. Photo ©Jean Iron

winter. Some, however, usually wander south into settled areas where they are attracted to European mountain-ash berries, ornamental crabapples and buckthorn berries.

Ron Pittaway
Ontario Field Ornithologists, Toronto, Ontario

From the Editor

The fall issue is packed! You will find several articles on the Annual Meeting with photos (thanks to Carena Pooth!) interspersed throughout the issue. The Annual Meeting articles include: an interesting summary of the weekend from our new President Shirley Shaw, a list of the 2019 award winners, the President's Report summarizing the year's activities from Michael DeSha, and an update on the NY Breeding Bird Atlas III from Kathy Schneider, co-chair of the Atlas Steering Committee.

Andy Mason provides another Conservation Column summarizing many of the disturbing actions by the federal government over the past couple years. We are fortunate to have another *Kid's-Eye View* column with a great app review on *Larkwire* by Eliza Wein. You will also find an interesting piece on the NYSOA County and State Listing competition from Carena Pooth. We provided a short piece with dates for NYSOA's winter weekend in February – look for more details in the January issue and on the website. I gave an update on *The Kingbird* going electronic and other membership updates. Cayuga Birds provided information on a spring ornithology course with Steve Kress. Julie Hart, NY Breeding Bird Atlas III, Project Coordinator, wrote another helpful and detailed Atlas Corner article focusing on owls. You will also find Ron Pittaway's yearly Winter Finch Forecast in this issue.

This issue also has the usual articles with highlights of the July board meeting from John Kent and a President's Message from Shirley Shaw. Watch for the "Profile of a NYSOA Volunteer" and "Poetry" columns to return in the January issue!

Thanks to all who sent articles for the newsletter!

- Joan Collins

NEW YORK BIRDERS

New York Birders is published four times a year by the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc.

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Please address newsletter correspondence to:

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Submissions for the January 2020 issue of *New York Birders* should reach the editor by December 15, 2019.

Web address: www.nybirds.org

Purposes

The purposes of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. are to further the study of birds, bird life and lore; to foster, inculcate and disseminate knowledge and appreciation thereof; to preserve and protect birds and other wildlife and their environment; and to educate the public in the need for conserving natural areas and resources.

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