

Northern New York Audubon

Serving the Adirondack, Champlain, St. Lawrence Region of New York State

Mission: To conserve and restore natural ecosystems in the Adirondacks, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity.

Volume 41 Number 1

March-May 2013



NNYA 2012/13 Conservation Grant (\$2,500)

Dr. Susan K. Wilson

Bird-friendly Hayfields as Refugia for North Country Grassland Birds

Dr. Wilson's research project, which began in 2010, continues to investigate the impact of farming practices on grassland bird species, which have been declining more dramatically than any other group of birds. Over the last forty years, land use patterns and agricultural practices have translated into an 80% to 90% decline in grassland birds breeding in NYS.

Dr. Wilson suspects that haying practices on small farms inadvertently provide population sources, with a net gain in numbers, of grassland species, whereas more intensive, large farm modernized practices produce population sinks, areas where numbers decline. She proposes gathering sufficient data to support her thesis that either an early or late haying mow (early July or mid-August) provides many species with a breeding window.

The NYSDEC currently provides financial incentives to small farmers to adjust their hay mows to grassland species breeding patterns, and some small farmers take advantage of these opportunities. Dr. Wilson thinks strong evidence of agricultural practices and grassland species refugia will motivate both NYSDEC and small farmers to adjust incentives and agricultural practices to enhance grassland bird species breeding in New York State.

NNYA 2012/13 Ecosystem Grant (\$1,000)

Dr. Tom Langen

Avian Biodiversity Indicators to Diagnose the Health of Estuarine Wetlands in the Massena Great Lakes Area of Concern

Dr. Langen proposed a marsh bird monitoring intended to assess the integrity of marsh bird populations and serve as an indicator for ecological quality and ecosystem services of unmanaged, mitigated and restored wetlands in the Massena Area of Concern along the St. Lawrence River. The research followed the Standardized North American Marsh Bird Monitoring Protocol and sought to determine populations of Black Rail, Sora, American Coot, Marsh Wren, Sedge Wren, Common tern, Common Moorhen, and included the Species of Greatest Conservation Need—American Bittern, Least Bittern, King Rail, Yellow Rail, Pied-billed Grebe, Black Tern, Common Loon and Blue-winged Teal.

NNYA 2012/13 Avian Research Grant (\$700)

Jacob L. Berl

Red-Headed Woodpecker Breeding Ecology and Nest-Site Selection at the Northern Limit of its Distributional Range

Mr. Berl conducted a survey of the red-headed woodpecker population at the Fort Drum military facility, focusing especially on their nest-site selection and habitat associations, their nesting success and productivity and its correlation to habitat and environmental variables.

Though widely distributed, red-headed woodpeckers have declined dramatically in the northeast, with the result that the Fort Drum population provides an ideal study area for these birds at the northern extreme of their range.

1	NNYA Research Grants
2	Santanoni Farm—Field Trip President's Message
3	Arbutus Lake—Field Trip Derby Hill Hawk Watch—Field Trip
3	Huntington Wildlife Forest— Field Trip Hulls Falls Road—Field Trip
4	NYSDEC Northern Harrier Wintering Study—Look out for color-marked Northern Harriers
5	Deadline For Grant Applications—March 21st & 31st
5	Great Adirondack Birding Celebration—May 31st—June 2nd
5	Hamilton County Birding Festival—June 7th—9th
5	Crown Point Bird Banding Station—May 4th—May 18th
6	Elizabethtown Christmas Bird Count
6	Ferrisburgh Christmas Bird Count
7	Plattsburgh Christmas Bird Count.
7	Saranac Lake Christmas Bird Count
8	Editor's Note

NNYA

Northern New York Audubon, Inc.

Board of Directors**Charlotte Demers**
President

Newcomb (518) 582-2157

Larry Master, PhD
Vice-President

Lake Placid (518) 645-1545

Leslie Karasin
Treasurer

Saranac Lake (518) 891-2193

Mary O'Dell
Secretary

Bloomingdale (518) 354-8235

Alan Belford *Saranac Lake*
 Joan Collins *Long Lake*
 Jorie Favreau, PhD *Tupper Lake*
 Glenn Johnson, PhD *Potsdam*
 Brian McAllister *Saranac Lake*
 Melanie McCormack *Keene*
 Peter O'Shea *Fine*
 Angelina Ross *Canton*
 John Thaxton *Keene*
 Pat Thaxton *Keene*
 Leah Valerio *Tupper Lake*
 Mary Beth Warburton *Potsdam*
 Eileen Wheeler *Canton*
 Kathleen Wiley *Keene*

Northern New York Audubon, Inc.
 A chapter of National Audubon Society
 serving the Adirondack, Champlain and
 St. Lawrence regions of northern New
 York, including Clinton, Essex, Franklin,
 Hamilton and St. Lawrence counties.

**Correspondence and Membership
Information**

Northern New York Audubon
 PO Box 488
 Keene Valley, New York 12943-0488

John Thaxton, Newsletter Editor
 PO Box 488
 Keene Valley, NY 12943-0488

NNYA Web Site: www.nnya.org
 Charlotte Demers, Web Master

Northern New York Audubon Newsletter is
 published by Northern New York
 Audubon, Inc.

Vol. 41 No. 1

Sunday, March 2nd, 2013

Santanoni Farm

Newcomb, NY

Time: 10:00**Meet:** At the Adirondack Interpretive Center, 5922 St Rt 28N, Newcomb, NY**Leader:** Charlotte Demers**Registration:** Contact Charlotte by email: cdemers@frontiernet.net.

Snowshoe the lovely trails at the AIC. The trails lead through lakeshore, river, forest and wetland ecosystems. We will snowshoe the Rich Lake Trail and Peninsula Trail, which offer great views of Rich Lake and Goodnow Mountain. The old-growth hemlocks along the trail provide excellent habitat for kinglets, chickadees and juncos. The trail also passes some large glacial erratics and interesting rock outcrops. Showshoes will be available for those that need them. Plan on two hours of snowshoeing.

President's Message

This year's Christmas Bird Count results were a study in contrast and change. Some of our regional CBCs, like Saranac Lake, had record breaking highs in both numbers and number of species, while others, like Elizabethtown, had an almost all time low of both number of species and number of individual birds. The contrast of these two circles, located less than thirty miles apart, is an excellent example of the importance of long term monitoring. With these single shot type counts, variables, such as temperature and wind and precipitation, can have a huge impact on the "success" of any given day.

The strength of the Audubon CBC lies in its 113-year history, which makes it the longest-running wildlife census of its kind. With this extensive a data set, it is easier to determine if something is an anomaly or if it is an indicator of real change.

A big thank you to everyone who participated in this year's count.

And speaking of change, the Board of Directors will be working over the next few months to make some changes to our bylaws. Geographically, we are a large organization that stretches from the St. Lawrence river to Lake Champlain to the southern High Peaks. Your Board of Directions come from all across this large landscape to meet six times a year and all our travel and gas are done at our own expense. The Board would like to make use of available technology to hold some of our meetings via conference calls and Go-to-Meeting type web facilitation. This will require changes to our current bylaws and we would also like to amend some confusing language regarding the terms of office for both Officers and Board members. A copy of our current bylaws can be found on our web site (www.nnya.org).

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding our bylaws, please contact me. Once the Board approves the changes, the membership will need to vote on adopting them. We will be mailing printed copy of the bylaw revisions along with a postcard that you will need to sign and return, indicating either your support or rejection of the changes.

We hope to have this done by mid-May so that the new bylaws can go into effect at the start of our new fiscal year, which begins on July 1, 2013.

I greatly appreciate your taking the time to complete the postcard and help us make these needed alterations.

—Charlotte Demers

Look for NNYA on Facebook—We maintain an active Facebook Page with events, membership information, links and all kinds of other cool stff!



Saturday, April 6th, 2013
Arbutus Lake
Newcomb, NY

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Meet: Adirondack Interpretative Center, 5922 St Rt 2N, Newcomb, NY

Leader: Charlotte Demers

Registration: Email Charlotte: cdemers@frontiernet.net

Participants will hike a 2-mile loop around the shore of Arbutus Lake in the Huntington Wildlife Forest. This flat trail goes through mostly softwood and mixed wood forest. There is the possibility that red- and white-winged crossbills will be in the softwoods along the trail. Plan for three hours of hiking or snowshoeing depending on conditions.

Saturday, April 27th, 2013
(rain date April 28th)
Derby Hill Hawk Watch
Texas, NY

Time: Call to arrange for car-pooling

Bring: Lunch, optics, lawn chair; dress in layers.

Leaders: Eileen Wheeler & MaryBeth Warburton

Registration: Contact Eileen @ 315.386.2482 or Marybeth @ 315.268.0150.

Derby Hill is one of the best places to watch spring hawk migration. When winds are favorable, thousands of hawks fly over Derby Hill as they make their way around the southeast corner of Lake Ontario. Broad-winged hawk migration will be in full swing. The two major lookouts and a network of trails through woods and old farm fields are owned by the Onondaga Audubon Society. As it is over two hours from Canton and over three from Saranac Lake, we will plan to arrive between 10:30 and 11:00 a.m. Call early to arrange car-pooling.

Rough-legged Hawk John Thaxton

Saturday, May 4th, 2013
Huntington Wildlife Forest
Newcomb, NY

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Meet: Adirondack Interpretative Center, 5922 St Rt 28N, Newcomb, NY

Leader: Charlotte Demers

Registration: Email Charlotte: cdemers@frontiernet.net

A beautiful 3 mile walk in the privately owned Huntington Wildlife Forest. We will be walking along a level dirt road that parallels a lovely marsh at the west end of Rich Lake. The walk continues to a small pond and includes both conifer and hardwood habitats. Plan on two hours of walking

Saturday, May 18th, 2013
Hulls Falls Road
Keene Valley, NY

Time: 7:30 a.m.

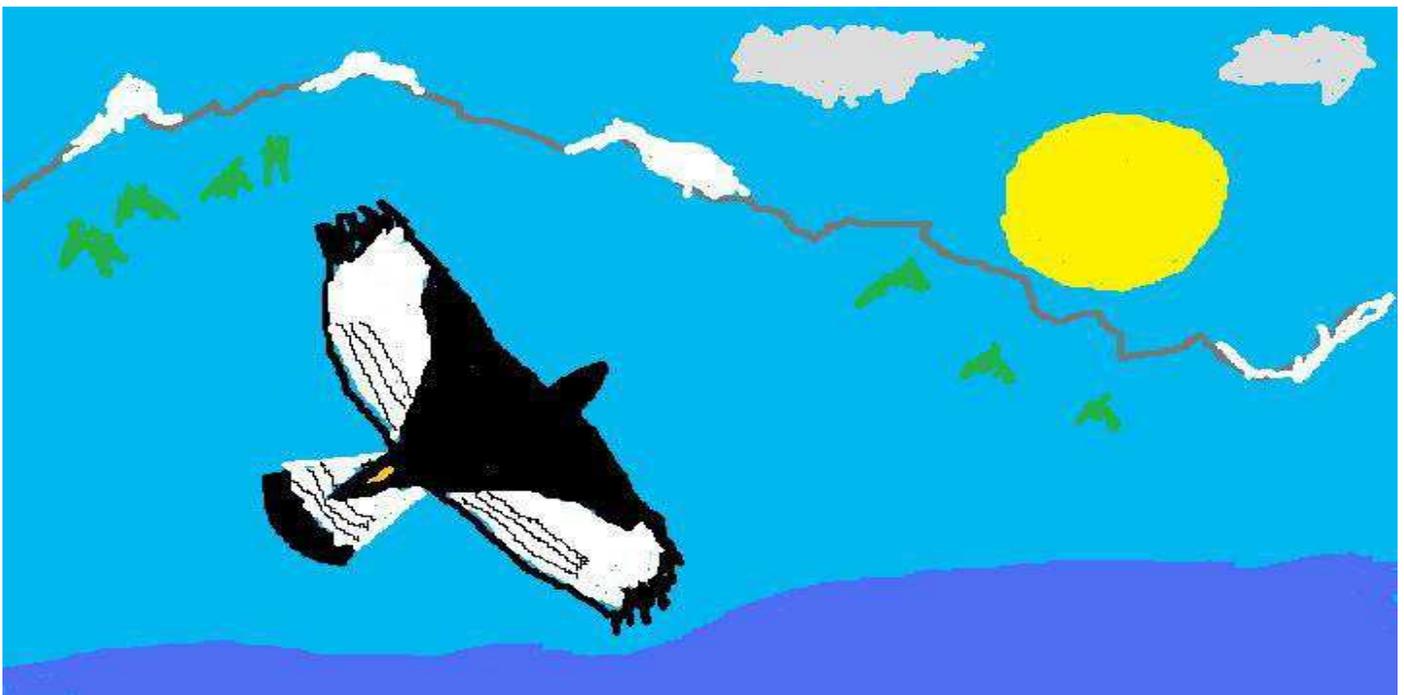
Leaders: Ruth Kuhfahl, Pat & John Thaxton

Meet: Hulls Falls Road @ Marcy Field

Registration: No need to register—just come.

The annual Hurricane ADK/Northern New York Audubon bird walk with Ruth Kuhfahl and leaders Pat and John Thaxton, will meet at the Keene Valley end of Hulls Falls Road. No need to register—just come. We have always had sightings of an interesting variety of species. On a previous year's May walk in this diverse, riverside habitat we found nesting pine warblers, solitary sandpipers and bay-breasted warbler. The walk consists of a leisurely mile –and-a-half to two miles, and several of us will have spotting scopes to bring in birds determined to stay beyond binocular reach.

The trip traditionally attracts quite a few birders, as well as non-birders, and usually breaks up just in time for a slightly late breakfast or a slightly early brunch, both readily available in Keene & Keene Valley



NYSDEC Northern Harrier Wintering Study

In conjunction with a study of wintering raptors, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Bureau of Wildlife is color marking a small number of northern harriers in eastern New York State this winter. Harriers are being color-marked at three locations: Washington County Grasslands Important Bird Area; Cocksackie Flats area in Green Country; Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge in Ulster County. The marked harriers will have color dye on the underside of their primary and/or secondary flight feathers or the underside of their tail, in combinations that will allow for recognition of individual birds regardless of the site they were marked at. Most individuals will also have a color leg band with a single white letter and number.

The purpose of color marking is to gain information on the local movements of harriers in these important winter raptor concentration areas. The NYSDEC would appreciate receiving reports of any color marked northern harriers at these wintering sites or elsewhere. Please report the color and location of the underwing marking, color and alphanumeric for color leg band (if possible), sex of bird (adult male or adult female/juvenile), date and exact location of the observation.

Report color-marked northern harriers to:

Mark%20NOHA@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

Attention 11- to 17-Year Olds Attend a DEC Summer Camp for Free

Northern New York Audubon seeks to sponsor a teen 11 to 17 years of age for a week at the DEC's Camp Colby in Saranac Lake or Camp Pack Forest in Warrensburg.

In addition to ecology workshops and field study in various habitats, campers may enjoy canoeing, swimming, hiking, or hunter safety, games, and other optional activities such as archery and fishing. Full information is available at: www.dec.state.ny.us/website/education/edcamps/html

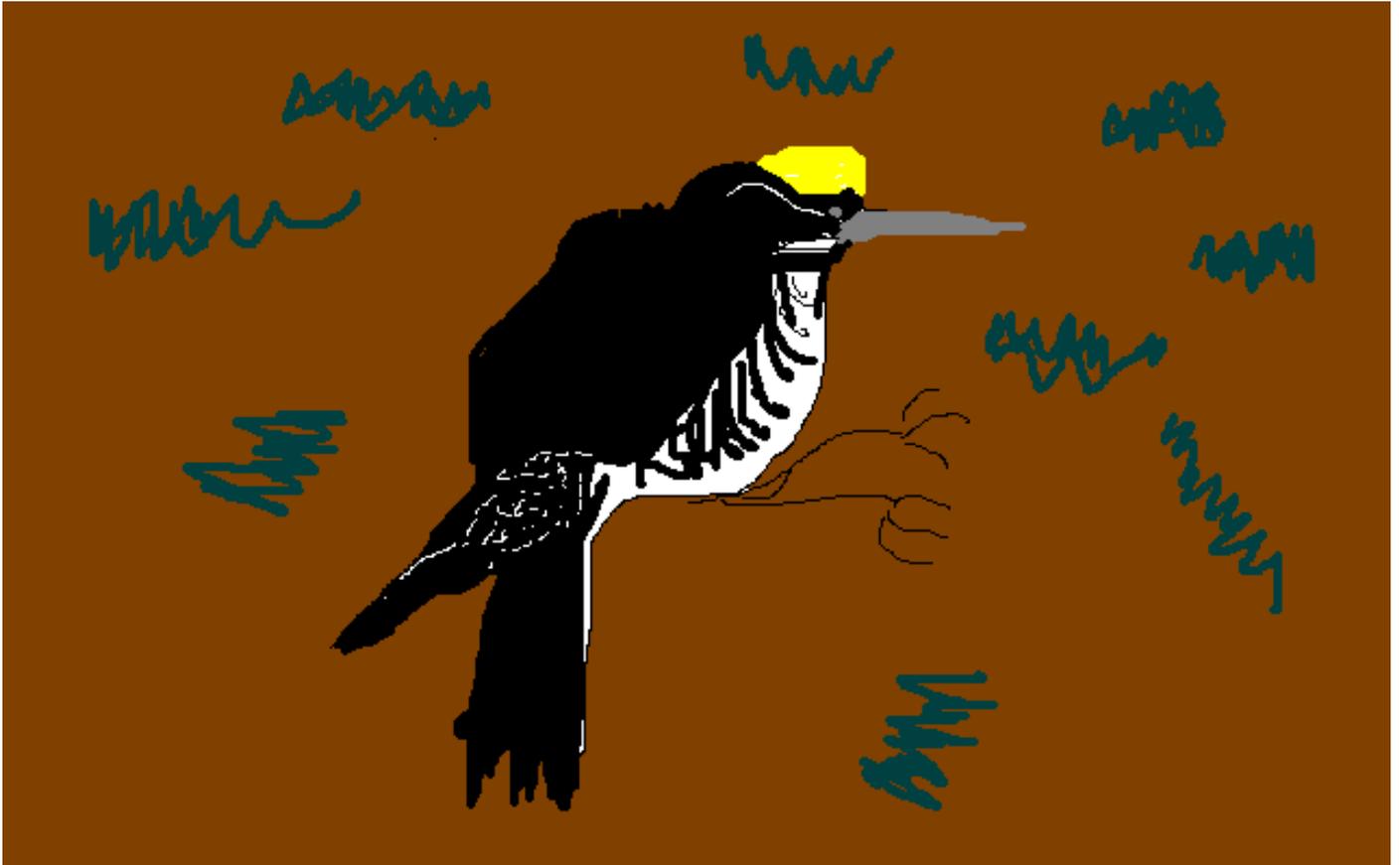
For a great time enjoying the outdoors and learning about nature and the environment, send us a paragraph about why you would like to go to camp. Include your name, address, age, and phone number. You may send it online or to NNYA Scholarship, 585 Pink School Road, Canton, NY 13617. The deadline for applications is March 31st. Good luck!

For more information about the contest contact:

Brian McAllister at (518) 637-1773, (e-mail: birder64@yahoo.com) or Eileen Wheeler at (315) 386-2482, (e-mail: eiwheeler@yahoo.com).

Northern Harrier John Thaxton





Black-backed Woodpecker John Thaxton

Deadlines for Grant Applications

Northern New York Audubon (NNYA) is now accepting applications for the 2013/2014 NNYA Environmental and Conservation Grants. Projects that support the conservation ideals of NNYA, either through research or education, are eligible for this grant. Eligibility includes, but is not limited to, environmental organizations, teachers, graduate students, and research project managers

This year's projects ranged widely, from studies of red-headed woodpeckers and rusty blackbirds to extensive analyses of bird-friendly hayfields as refugia for North Country grassland birds and management recommendations for golden-winged warbler habitat along utility rights of way.

Applicants should submit a description of their project, a time frame for doing the work and an overall budget. Although most of the work we fund tends to involve studying birds and their habitats, we have given grants for research into acid rain and its effects on aquatic ecosystems, for lectures delivered at both the Paul Smiths Great Adirondack Birding Celebration and the Hamilton County Birding Festival. We also allocated funds to pay half the salary of a naturalist intern at The Wild Center.

Application procedures and forms can be downloaded from the Northern New York Audubon web site here - <http://nnya.org/conservation/cullman/>

The email deadline is March 31, 2013; the USPS deadline is March 21, 2012.

Save the Dates

Great Adirondack Birding Celebration

May 31st-June 2nd

www.adkvic.org/birdcelebration.html

Hamilton County Birding Festival

June 7th-9th

www.adirondackexperience.com

From their inceptions, eleven and nine years ago, respectively, the Great Adirondack Birding Celebration and the Hamilton County Birding Festival have relied almost exclusively on NNYA members to design and lead field trips, provide funding for first-rate speakers and, well, help with organization from beginning to end.

The two events have taken place on sequential weekends, with the result that quite a few participants spend the entire week between in the Adirondacks, the better to take advantage of both festivals, which offer a stunning variety of habitats and North Country specialty species—Bicknell's thrush, black-backed woodpecker, gray jay.

Crown Point Bird Banding Station Saturday May 4th-Saturday May 18th, 2013

The Station will be open to the public on Friday, May 4th and will be in full operation through Saturday, May 18th. The Station will pack up and leave on Sunday, May 19th.

—Gordon Howard

2012 Christmas Bird Counts Elizabethtown CBC

Elizabethtown NY – 44° 13' N 73° 36' W centered at Essex County courthouse. The 2012 count was held on Saturday December 22 from 6:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eighteen observers participated in the count for a total of 96.1 party-hours, covering 17 miles on foot and 267 miles by car. Temperatures ranged from 8° F in the morning and warming to 35° F by the afternoon. It was cloudy with winds ranging from calm in valley to 45 mph on the top of Hurricane Mountain. Snow cover ranged from 0" in the valley up to 10" in the woods and on the trail to Hurricane. Still water was frozen while moving water was open. Light snowfall occurred on count day with just over 2" falling by the end of the day.

Graylag Goose 11, Canada Goose 3, Mallard 35, Hooded Merganser 1, **Common Merganser 3**, Ruffed Grouse 2, Wild Turkey 46, Bald Eagle 1, Northern Harrier 1, Red-tailed Hawk 4, Rock Pigeon 107, Mourning Dove 94, Eastern Screech-Owl 1, Downy Woodpecker 10, Hairy Woodpecker 11, Pileated Woodpecker 3, Northern Shrike 2, Blue Jay 31, American Crow 151, Common Raven 14, Black-capped Chickadee 268, Tufted Titmouse 17, Red-breasted Nuthatch 7, White-breasted Nuthatch 19, Brown Creeper 7, Golden-Crowned Kinglet 7, European Starling 122, American Tree Sparrow 14, White-throated Sparrow 1, Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco 98, Snow Bunting 2, Northern Cardinal 7, Common Redpoll 168, American Goldfinch 46, House Sparrow 1.

Elizabethtown NY – 44° 13' N 73° 36' W centered at Essex County courthouse. The 2012 count was held on Sunday December 22 from 6:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eighteen observers participated in the count for a total of 96.1 party-hours, covering 17 miles on foot and 267 miles by car. Temperatures ranged from 8° F in the morning and warming to 35° F by the afternoon. It was cloudy with winds ranging from calm in valley to 45 mph on the top of Hurricane Mountain. Snow cover ranged from 0" in the valley up to 10" in the woods and on the trail to Hurricane. Still water was frozen while moving water was open. Light snowfall occurred on count day with just over 2" falling by the end of the day.

Totals: 35 species, 1,315 individuals

Participants: Becky Bosley, Robin Brown, Eric Damour, Charlotte Demers, Beth Edmonds, Lisa Godfrey, Denise Griffin, Fuat Latif, Melanie McCormack, Dan Nickerson, Carole Slatkin, Eric Teed, John Thaxton, Pat Thaxton, Eve Ticknor, Pat Tivinen, Amy Valentine and Kathleen Wiley.

—Charlotte Demers

Ferrisburgh CBC

The 53rd Ferrisburgh Christmas Bird Count took place on Saturday December 15, 2012. A record 55 field observers plus 3 feeder watchers participated. We recorded 24,362 birds of 82 species plus one (N. mockingbird) count week. By comparison, our running 10 year average is 21,446 birds and 80 spe-

cies. 18 species were found on every territory: Canada goose, red-tailed hawk, northern harrier, rock pigeon, mourning dove, hairy woodpecker, downy woodpecker, blue jay, common raven, American crow, black-capped chickadee, tufted titmouse, white-breasted nuthatch, European starling, American tree sparrow, dark-eyed junco, house finch, and house sparrow. 19 species were found on only one territory: Charlotte: Red-throated loon, white-winged scoter, red-breasted merganser, greater scaup, lesser scaup, Bonaparte's gull, Thayer's gull, black-legged kittiwake, Iceland gull Button Bay: American widgeon, American pipit, Bohemian waxwing. New York: wood duck, belted kingfisher Dead Creek: merlin, short-eared owl, purple finch (also one feeder bird). Kellogg Bay: brown-headed cowbird Vergennes: pine siskin (18!).

Three of those species were found for the first time in the history of the count: Thayer's gull, black-legged kittiwake, and much to my surprise American pipit. On a species by species look, the number of most birds was generally low, but the average was high largely because of the more than 7,000 Canada geese, a number topped only by last year's 10,000. The 2,000 snow geese also helped; 10 fold fewer than last year, but this is a species that is more frequently seen in single or double digits.

We found nineteen species of **waterfowl**. In addition to the birds noted from one territory each, other good finds included five green-winged teal and three Northern pintail. There were more horned grebes (65) than any count since 1999. We saw a record number of mallards (1303,) topping the previous high from 2000 (818). American black ducks also did well (319) with the most since 2001. Common goldeneye numbers were way down (299); the fewest since 1998. A record number of hooded mergansers (130) topped the 2005 high (89). It was a good year for **gulls** with above average numbers of the three common species. Herring gulls were particularly abundant with 242 being the highest number since 1996.

Among the **raptors**, Northern harriers continue to take advantage of the lack of snow. The 38 birds found topped the record set just last year by 10. We found more red tails (81) than any time since 2000. Peregrines are now our most regular falcon having appeared on five consecutive counts (eight if you include the count period bird in 2007). On a related note, the 11 barred **owls** were the most ever.

Our berry-eating birds were around in only small numbers. We had double digit numbers of American robins (43) and cedar waxwings (61); the last time we had fewer than a hundred of these birds was 1999 and 1995 respectively. But for that count week bird, we would have missed mockingbirds on three of the last four counts, after having recording them on 25 consecutive counts (albeit always in low numbers). On the other hand, 101 Eastern bluebirds topped our record set just last year (82).

Some winter **finches** made an appearance. We saw our first pine grosbeaks since 2007 and a good count of 910 common redpolls. We had about average numbers of our more common finches and also of **sparrows**.

Thank you everyone for your participation. Mark your calendars for next year's count on December 14th, the earliest possible day of the count period.

New York Participants: Eric Damour, Gary Chapin, Ellie George, Aran & Stuart Hutchins, Melanie McCormack, Carole Slatkin, John & Pat Thaxton

—Mike Winslow

Plattsburgh CBC

2012 Christmas Bird Count summary for the Plattsburgh, NY/VT (NYPL) circle 44°39'N 73°29'W as described in 1986 with the center at the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base. The 2012 count was held on Sunday, December 16, 2012 from 7:00a.m. to 16:45p.m. with temperatures ranging from 22°F to 35°F and cloudy. The day was calm with wind from the southeast from zero to about 12 mph. Thirty-two field workers logged 75.5 party hours and a total of 557.85 miles of which 6.25 miles and 7.25 hours were on foot. The 16 feeder watchers spent 27.5 hours at feeders. There were 62 species recorded and 11961 individuals. An additional 2 species were found during count week.

Snow Goose 5, Canada Goose 2905, American Black Duck 14, Mallard 601, Canvasback 1, Redhead 1, Ring-necked Duck 12, Greater Scaup 2, Harlequin Duck cw, Bufflehead 4, Common Goldeneye 633, Hooded Merganser 41, Common Merganser 110, Red-breasted Merganser 16, American Black Duck x Mallard (hybrid) 4, Ruffed Grouse 4, Wild Turkey 141, Common Loon 14, Horned Grebe 10, Great Blue Heron 3, Bald Eagle 5, Northern Harrier 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Cooper's Hawk 3, Red-tailed Hawk 18, Rough-legged Hawk 1, Peregrine Falcon 1, American Coot 1, Ring-billed Gull 543, Herring Gull 17, Great-blackbacked Gull 22, Gull sp. 59, Rock Pigeon 636, Mourning Dove 296, Barred Owl 1, Belted Kingfisher cw, Downy Woodpecker 38, Hairy Woodpecker 29, Pileated Woodpecker 12, Northern Shrike 1, Blue Jay 145, American Crow 3044, Common Raven 3, Black-capped Chickadee 490, Tufted Titmouse 17, Red-breasted Nuthatch 10, White-breasted Nuthatch 64, Brown Creeper 3, Eastern Bluebird 1, American Robin 34, Northern Mockingbird 1, European Starling 658, Bohemian Waxwing 62, American Tree Sparrow 73, Chipping Sparrow 1, Song Sparrow 1, White-throated Sparrow 2, White-crowned Sparrow 12, Dark-eyed Junco 278, Snow Bunting 25, Northern Cardinal 119, House Finch 46, Common Redpoll 440, American Goldfinch 115, House Sparrow 147.

The participants, including feeder watchers, were Derek Allan, Tom Armstrong, Alan Beaubriand, Alan Belford, Helen Booth, Bob Booth, John Brown, Robin Brown, Michael Burgess, Gwen Cateenwalla, Joy Cayea, Walter Coryea, Eric Damour, Joe Demko, Julie Dumas, Keitha Farney, Cornelia Forrence, Judith Heintz, Euclid Jones, Joanne Kennedy, Harold Klein, Bill Krueger, Linda LaPan, Julie Lattrell, Betsy Laundrie, Larry Master, Melanie McCormack, Brian McAllister, Janet Mihuc, Charlie Mitchell, Bonnie Myers, Jack Myers, Nancy Olsen, Paul Osenbaugh, Jim Otto, Carol Pinney, Alex Reid, Mary Roden-Tice, Carole Slatkin, Michelle Snyder, Janet Stein, Jacob Straub, Gary Sturgis, Nora Teeter, Willian Teeter, Irma Teittinen, Eve Ticknor, Lynn Valenti, Dan Vogt.

—Judy Heintz

Saranac Lake CBC

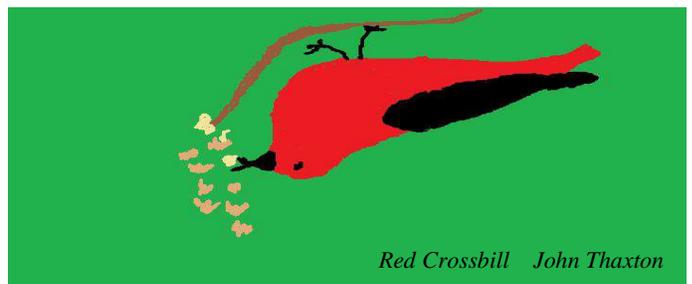
The final tally for the Saranac Lake CBC was 4134 individuals of a record 51 species plus two additional count period birds (rough-legged hawk & northern goshawk) plus one new subspecies (Oregon Junco) for the count. The previous record for the 57 years of this count was 47 species in 1994. Individual records were broken or tied for 7 species, including 4 raptors, American tree sparrow (122; previous record was 65), and hoary redpoll (8; previous record was 3). We were just shy of the record for common redpoll with 1527 individuals (record is 1594).

With no mast cone crop, some of us were expecting a mediocre count at best. What accounts for the records? I suspect the records are a result of a combination of the large number of observers (46) coupled with mild weather prior to the count, good counting weather on count day, and a good crop of raptor food (redpolls and voles) this fall and early winter.

Totals: Canada goose 7, wood duck 1, American black duck 9, mallard 347, hooded merganser 18, common merganser 7, ruffed grouse 3, wild turkey 31, great blue heron 1, bald eagle 4, sharp-shinned hawk 2, Cooper's hawk 1, northern goshawk 1 (*count week*), red-tailed hawk 3, rough-legged hawk 1 (*count week*), hawk sp. 1, herring gull 2, rock pigeon 244, mourning dove 90, great horned owl 1, barred owl 1, belted kingfisher 1, downy woodpecker 30, hairy woodpecker 43, black-backed woodpecker 3, pileated woodpecker 4, northern shrike 2, gray jay 10, blue jay 79, American crow 184, common raven 39, black-capped chickadee 764, tufted titmouse 3, red-breasted nuthatch 69, white-breasted nuthatch 31, brown creeper 2, Carolina wren 1, golden-crowned kinglet 8, European starling 277, bohemian waxwing 4, American tree sparrow 122, white-throated sparrow 4, dark-eyed (Oregon) junco 1, dark-eyed (slate-colored) junco 38, snow bunting 11, northern cardinal 12, pine grosbeak 1, red crossbill 5, white-winged crossbill 4, common redpoll 1527, hoary redpoll 8, pine siskin 25, American goldfinch 16, evening grosbeak 1, house sparrow 22.

Totals: 51 species, 4124 individuals.

Participants: John Brown, David Buckley, Joan Collins, Sally Conyne, Joe Demko, Pat Demko, Tom Dudones, Andrew Egan, Jen Egan, Bob Garrett, Tricia Garret, Frank Gill, Ed Grant, Denise Griffin, Andrea Grout, John Hart, Terese Hart, Audrey Hyson, Penny Jacques, Peter Jerdo, Debbie Kanze, Ed Kanze, Ned Kanze, Tassie Kanze, Leslie Karasin, Steve Langdon, Linda La Pan, Fuat Latif, Ted Mack, John Marshall, Larry Master, Brian McAllister, Thom McClenahan, Melanie McCormack, Sean O'Brien, Mary O'Dell, Carol Pinney, Derek Rogers, Lew Rosenberg, Bill Schoch, Nina Schoch, Janet Stein, Rosaria Visata, Eileen Wheeler, Tom Wheeler.



Red Crossbill John Thaxton

Editor's Note

My neighbor told me that it rained redpolls all morning, that the skies opened up and they poured down in sheets and skeins of feathered precipitation, percolating up and down through bare branches and blue sky, swarming about the feeder perches like a cloud of starving black flies, displacing each other, fighting, calling relentlessly, covering the ground and alighting on the deck and deck railing and the eaves for a beakfull of snow between sunflower or nyger seeds, only to blast off as suddenly as they showered in, like a murmur of starlings in perfect synch, peppering bare branches and blue sky with an isolated gust of Morse code dots and dashes.

For the first time in the twenty-three years we've had our house I made good on a twenty-three-year-old-vow to attach trip lines to the bird feeders, the better to eject the gorgeous rodents from their luxuriously lazy saturated fat sojourns, only to discover, please forgive me for my surprise, that one squirrel thoroughly enjoyed finding itself inexplicably airborne in mid-gnaw. It got to the point that when I went onto the deck other than to yank one of my trip lines, the squirrel suddenly appeared on its favorite feeder, daring me to eject it, which I did, on one occasion a dozen times in three minutes. My last and most energetic yank ballistically propelled the vile vermin in a wild trajectory under the deck, and I heard the submarine, hollow, metallic, *gabong* of a soft projectile ricocheting off one of the propane tanks.

Haven't seen the squirrel since. Hope it's okay...

We have a great line-up of field trips scheduled for spring, including a trip to Derby Hill, one of the premier hawk-watching venues in the northeast, over which raptors, notoriously bad swimmers, elect to fly when they encounter Lake Ontario—the prevailing westerlies rise when they hit the hills along the lake and provide a convenient updraft for hawks migrating north to their breeding grounds. And did I mention the three-mile hike through the privately-owned Huntington Wildlife Forest?

I dedicated the front page to research projects partially funded by NNYA grants, including a study of marsh birds in the Massena Area of Concern along the St. Lawrence River, an analysis of grassland bird habitats and how to manage them, and work on documenting and enhancing red-headed woodpecker populations and habitat on the Fort Drum military complex, the northernmost limit of the species' range.

As always, I included details of the Christmas Bird Counts, one of which, Saranac Lake, recorded a record number of species while another, Elizabethtown, weighed in with less than average results. While doing the New York side of the Ferrisburgh, VT Christmas Bird Count, Pat and I birded for an hour with a ruffed grouse, which followed us so closely we worried about stepping on it—it refused food we offered because it didn't want food, it wanted to hang out, maybe do a little birding. Go figure...

And watch out for the Paul Smiths and Hamilton County birding festivals—schedules to come. —**John Thaxton**
