

Volume 49, Issue II

# Northern New York Audubon

June - August 2021 Newsletter

Dear Readers,

I am sure I am not alone when I say that the sounds of Spring are soothing to the soul. It is so nice to retreat to my backyard and listen to the calls of Hermit Thrush and Red-eyed Vireos singing in the distant woods. While we are lucky to have a variety of winter birds, there is nothing quite like the excitement that comes with Spring migration.

As bird lovers, we are often tempted to do what we can to help. We put food out for the birds to eat or we may even provide nesting material in our yards. Of course, we have good intentions for our feathered friends. Sometimes, though, this is not only in our own backyards, but in places that we like to visit.

What are the impacts of these actions? For example, what is the harm in adding a bird feeder or two in a popular birding area to attract more birds?

Many in the Saranac Lake and Lake Placid region are familiar with the amazing diversity found in the Bloomingdale Bog. Likely with no intent to do wrong, numerous feeders were put up along these state trails. This abundance of food attracted a large number of birds, including the interruption of redpolls found this past winter. What started as a single platform feeder turned into a plethora of tube and sock feeders, makeshift platforms in the form of tin pie plates nailed to stumps, and food strewn about.

NNYA is not aware of these feeders being maintained or cleaned throughout the winter. I heard of at least 2 dead redpolls found on the trail near the feeders. How many more dead birds were not reported? And, while the cause of their death was undetermined, one cannot help but think that it could be the result of unmaintained bird feeders. In addition, erecting items such as bird feeders in a wild place may be counter to the rules, regulations, and guidance of local land managers like the NYS DEC.

We are all involved with Audubon because we care about birds, but we need to be sure that our efforts truly are helping. The next time you are thinking of hanging a feeder, buy a native plant and put it in your yard to provide food and help the pollinators. If you are thinking of providing nesting material, research a nesting box for the common birds found in your yard. And if you hear of a friend that enjoys feeding the birds, remind them to keep their feeder clean to stop the spread of disease and keep our birds healthy. Together, we can make a difference.

All the best and happy birding,  
Shelly Cihan - President, NNYA



Northern New York Audubon is dedicated to conserving and restoring natural ecosystems in the Adirondacks, focusing on habitat of particular importance to birds, other wildlife, humanity, and the Earth's biological diversity as a whole. As one of National Audubon's 27 local chapters in New York, NNYA's mission is "to promote the protection and proper management of birds, wildlife, and the fragile ecosystems throughout Northern New York."

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# News

## Online Donations and New Hats!

In the spirit of all-things-virtual we've recently added online membership to our site. Here, you'll be able to become a member, make a donation, and order a cool hat. We now have two hat colors available: grey and khaki. Visit the site at: <https://nnya.square.site/>



### Contact Information

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### Northern New York Audubon

#### Executive board

Shelly Cihan – President  
Tom Langen - Vice President  
Liz DeFonce – Treasurer  
Kristel Guimara – Secretary

#### Board members

Joan Collins  
Russ DeFonce  
Hyla Howe  
Janelle Hoh  
John Thaxton (Director Emeritus)  
Pat Thaxton (Director Emeritus)

Whether you're near or far, stay connected with us virtually! Like us on Facebook ([www.Facebook.com/NNYAudubon](http://www.Facebook.com/NNYAudubon)) to keep up-to-date on future events, outings, local bird news, and information from the greater birding community.

## Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Update

Northern New York Audubon established a Diversity and Inclusion Committee in the Spring of 2021. We believe that birding should be a pastime that all can enjoy and we are working to make our chapter more welcoming and accessible to members of the BIPOC, AAPI, and LGBTQ+ communities, as well as members with disabilities.

We added our board members' pronouns to our website, and we will be using them when we make introductions to ensure that transgender and nonbinary birders are not misgendered at our events.

We are also happy to introduce our Book Club, which will meet for the first time on June 17 at 7 p.m. We will be discussing the Planting Sweetgrass section of *Braiding Sweetgrass*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer. *Braiding Sweetgrass* is beautifully written and seamlessly weaves Indigenous wisdom with scientific knowledge to give readers a deeper knowledge of the natural world as well as a new perspective on their place in it. Written by a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation who spent time in the Adirondacks throughout her life, it feels like the perfect book to kick off our Book Club with.

The Book Club will meet monthly to discuss the intersectionality of birding, conservation, recreation, and racial and social justice. We intend to create a safe and welcoming space where we can learn, share, and together become better allies against systemic racism and homophobia in the North Country.

These steps are only the beginning, and Northern New York Audubon is committed to growing our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives. If you have questions or would like to join our Diversity and Inclusion Committee or Book Club, email us at [nnya@nnya.org](mailto:nnya@nnya.org)! We would love to hear from you!

# Birding Outings and Field Trips with NNYA

We are thrilled to announce that we are bringing field trips back in 2021! More info can be found on our Facebook page or on our website, and more outings may be added in addition to those listed here. Check online to get the latest updates.

## Saturday, June 19, 2021 California Road Morning Birding

**Meeting time:** 7:30 a.m.

**Meeting location:** Intersection of California and Run roads (coordinates: 44° 40' 59.3" N 74° 12' 02.1" W)

**Bring:** Binoculars, bug spray, water, a snack, sunscreen, hat, camera if desired

**To Register:** Fill out this Google Form (<https://forms.gle/GXy5MZtyTrr5VHvU7>) that will be sent to Janelle Hoh

**Limit of 15 participants.**

**Brief description:** California Road is a gravel road that traverses some fine wetlands and interesting forests. We will be parking and walking. The road is essentially level, with only small rolling hills here and there. All in all, the road runs 2.5-miles between County Route 27 and Studley Hill Road near Duane, NY. The forest varies from boreal to deciduous along the way, which is perfect for seeing and hearing a wide variety of species, including many warblers!

## Saturday, June 26, 2021 Morning Birding in Long Lake

**Meeting time:** 6 a.m.

**Meeting location:** Long Lake Town Beach – parking along the road and public restrooms by the bridge over Long Lake

**Bring:** Binoculars, water, food (options later to pick up lunch at the Adirondack Trading Post – Panini sandwiches!), sunscreen, hat, and insect spray.

**To register:** Email or call Joan Collins at: [JoanCollins@ADKAvian.com](mailto:JoanCollins@ADKAvian.com) or 518-624-5528 (home) or 315-244-7127 (cell)

**Limit of 15 participants.**

**Brief description:** We will visit Shaw Pond first – a large shallow wetland and marsh with nesting pairs of Virginia Rails, Pied-billed Grebes, Wood and Ring-necked Ducks, American Bitterns, and many more species. Sabattis Road will be our next destination. There are 18 warbler species that nest along this road with habitats that include: deciduous, mixed, and boreal forest, marsh, bog, and recently logged habitat (with Indigo Bunting and Mourning Warbler). There are also friendly Canada Jays and many flycatcher species. If there is time, we may add additional stops – possibly in Tupper Lake.

## Sunday, June 27, 2021 Morning Birding at Bloomingdale Bog

**Meeting time:** 7 a.m.

**Meeting location:** Bloomingdale Bog, County Route 55 entrance

**Bring:** Binoculars, water, food, sunscreen, hat, and insect spray

**To register:** Use this Google Form - <https://tinyurl.com/u6xrzyxt> - that will be sent to Hyla Howe

**Limit of 15 participants.**

**Brief description:** The Bloomingdale Bog is a multi-use recreation path that runs along an old railroad bed. The ground is mostly level, but is essentially just like a wide hiking trail. The habitats found here are many, and range from boreal to wetland to deciduous. That said, the expected species list can include: many warblers (Palm, Blackburnian, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green, Yellow-rumped, Nashville, Ovenbird, and more!), Least Flycatcher, Black-backed Woodpecker, Canada Jay, White-throated Sparrow, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Swamp Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird.

*Birding outings continued*

Tuesday, June 29, 2021  
Driving Safari (some walking) at Perkins Clearing, Speculator

**Meeting time:** 7 a.m.

**Meeting location:** Mason Lake parking area on the west (left) side of Route 30, north of Speculator. GPS WAYPOINT: 43.5991366° N, 74.4163017° W

**Directions:** From South: Take Route 30, 8 miles north of Speculator. From North: 16 miles S. on Route 30 from Indian Lake. The parking area is on the west side of Route 30, and overlooks Mason Lake. You'll see several picnic tables at the rest stop.

**Event length:** 4-5 hours

**Bring:** Bug repellent, (netting or bug shirt suggested), water, snacks, and binoculars.

**To register:** Email Michael & Wanda Moccio at [mjmoccio@gmail.com](mailto:mjmoccio@gmail.com) . **Limit of 15 participants.**

**Brief description:** NYS licensed guides Michael & Wanda Moccio will lead the driving safari into the Perkins Clearing area to see Mourning, Canada, Blackburnian, and other warblers. There will be many stops along the way to observe birds along the road. Also possible to see Olive-sided, Yellow-bellied, and Alder Flycatchers, and many other mixed woodland species, including Indigo Bunting and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks.



## 2021 Cullman Conservation Grant Awardees

We are so pleased to report that again in 2021 we are able to award grants to organizations, teachers, students, and researchers working to promote conservation across our Northern New York Audubon territory. Below you'll find the press release sent to media outlets across the North Country.

Northern New York Audubon (NNYA) is pleased to announce that funds will be awarded to several regional organizations as part of the annual Joseph & Joan Cullman Conservation Grants.

Joseph and Joan Cullman owned the Kildare Club just north of Tupper Lake, New York and loved the Adirondacks. The Cullman Foundation allows Northern New York Audubon to distribute funds to support projects occurring in the Adirondack, Champlain, or St. Lawrence region of Northern New York that are beneficial to birds.

“We are incredibly grateful to the Cullman Foundation and their continued effort to conserve habitat and species in our region,” Shelly Cihan, NNYA President, said. “There were a lot of great applications this year and it’s wonderful to see widespread interest in conservation and education efforts for birds in our NNYA territory.”

The projects approved by NNYA were submitted by the following non-profits, local environmental organizations, and higher education institutions: Adirondack Interpretive Center at Newcomb, Ausable River Association, Wildlife Conservation Society, Adirondack Watershed Institute, St. Lawrence Land Trust, SUNY ESF Adirondack Ecological Center, Dr. Alyssa Gleichsner of SUNY Plattsburgh, and Jesse Rock of Paul Smith’s College master’s program.

Total funds awarded amount to \$15,416.00 for the following projects:

Adirondack Interpretive Center - \$700  
Bird Feeding Station Enhancements

Ausable River Association - \$2,500  
Planting Native Trees and Shrubs to Enhance Songbird Habitat on the Ausable River

Jesse Rock, Paul Smith's College - \$2,416  
An Investigation into the Vulnerability of Stream/Riparian Communities to Road-Salt Pollution Within the Adirondack Park

Wildlife Conservation Society - \$1,250  
Understanding Mechanisms of Avian Community Change around Residential Development

Dr. Alyssa Gleichner, SUNY Plattsburgh - \$2,500  
Feeling Blue: The impact of nest parasites on Eastern Bluebird Fitness

Adirondack Watershed Institute - \$1,250  
Understanding Mechanisms of Avian Community Change around Residential Development

St. Lawrence Land Trust - \$2,300  
Avian Surveys, Habitat Enhancement, and Improving Public Awareness of Birds at the Hart's Falls Preserve in Canton, NY

SUNY ESF Adirondack Ecological Center - \$2,500  
Love Your Lake: Drivers of Change, Loons, and Fish in Protected Watersheds

“From real science driven projects to substantial outreach efforts, these projects all embody NNYA’s mission,” Tom Langen, NNYA Vice President, said. “We wish we could fund everything, but the NNYA board feels the projects selected best aligned with the goals of the Cullman Grants. When determining which projects to award funds, we looked at overall values for conservation, science, and outreach.”

More information on Cullman Conservation Grants and to see past years’ awardees, visit [www.nnya.org/cullman-grants](http://www.nnya.org/cullman-grants). Eligible organizations include, but are not limited to, environmental organizations, teachers, graduate students, and research project managers.

If you’d like to inquire about future grant opportunities or make a donation, please visit [www.nnya.org](http://www.nnya.org) or email [nnya@nnya.org](mailto:nnya@nnya.org).

Northern New York Audubon’s mission is to promote the protection and proper management of birds, wildlife, and the fragile ecosystems throughout Northern New York. As one of National Audubon’s 27 local chapters in New York, NNYA endeavors to “promote the protection and proper management of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through advocacy and education.”

###

# NNYA Member Profile

Our work at NNYA is not possible without the hard work and dedication of countless supporters, volunteers, and board members. As a way to say thank you and to highlight the unique individuals who make up NNYA, we are starting a Member Profile section published in our quarterly newsletters. If you know someone who you think should be featured, please reach out to [nnya@nnya.org](mailto:nnya@nnya.org).

For our second installment, we sat down (virtually) with one of NNYA's newest board members, Jeff Biby.



Photo by Joan Collins

## **How long have you been a member of NNYA?**

I've been a member of NNYA for just about a year.

## **When did you start birding?**

I've always been interested in birds – observing them, feeding them, and so on. But I didn't get “serious” and start keeping a list until March of last year. So yes, I'm a Pandemic birder!

## **What is your favorite bird?**

It's hard to pick a favorite bird, but if I were forced to choose just one I'd have to say the Canada Jay. I love their intelligence, their curiosity, and their “personality.”

## **What has been your most exciting find while birding?**

My most exciting find to date (actually two finds) were the Red-faced Warbler and Elegant Trogon that I saw on the last hike of the last day of a five-day birding trip I took to Southeast Arizona recently.

## **Where is your favorite place to go birding, or your favorite habitat?**

My favorite place to bird is probably the VIC in Paul Smiths. It's close to where I live, plus it has a variety of habitats, so you never know what you might see there.

## **What would you like to do for bird conservation in Northern New York?**

One thing I'd like to do for bird conservation in Northern NY is to get more people interested and involved in birding. Birding really brings in to focus just how interconnected everything is and how we humans impact the environment, both positively and negatively. Birding makes you more aware.



*Photo provided by Jeff.*



## Editor's Note

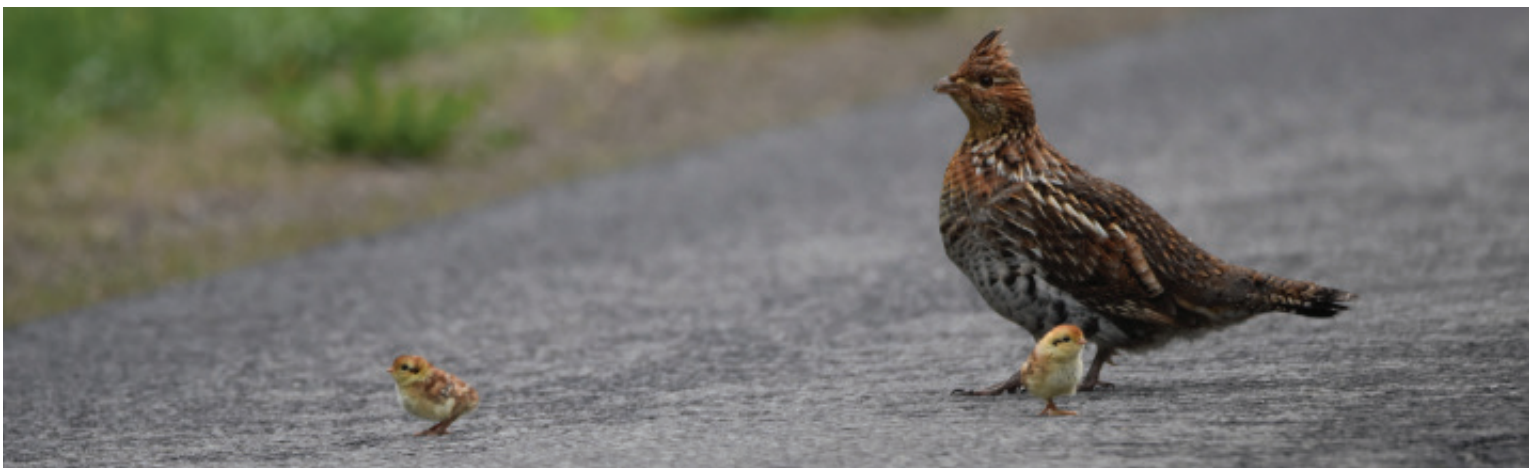
By: Janelle Hoh

As I was driving the other day, I noticed a small dot in the road ahead. I slowed down, realizing right away it was a Ruffed Grouse. The closer I got, more "dots" began to appear. Could it be? Indeed, it was true. I had happened upon a momma grouse and five chicks crossing the road. Truth be told, I had never seen a grouse that small; they couldn't have been more than a few days old. Using my car as a blind, I was able to snap a few photos with my telephoto lens.

Unfortunately, after just a few clicks of the shutter, another car came along. This individual driving zoomed by quite fast, narrowly missing the adult grouse. I'm not here to target anyone or call anyone out, but I think it's timely to remind everyone that we are not alone on the roads. Besides Ruffed Grouse, we might encounter moose, fox, or porcupine. Slow down, appreciate your surroundings. Chances are the grouse and other animals are just trying to cross the road quickly and get back into the woods. Keep your eyes open and binoculars at the ready - you never know what you're going to see!

Ruffed Grouse aren't the only ones with young right now. I've seen more goslings in the last few days than I can count. While these babies might seem like perfect models for photos, it's important to remember to maintain a respectable distance. In the case of Canada Geese, the parents are likely to let you know just how far that distance is. At a small pond near my house in Malone I watched a mother and father Canada Goose pair chase several Mallards away, complete with hissing! Meanwhile, the goslings continued to meander through the grass as if nothing was happening. No one ever said spring birding wasn't entertaining!

Next time you're out birding, be sure to hold a quiet and distant moment of silent appreciation for all the bird mothers and fathers working tirelessly to protect their young.



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