

Northern New York Audubon

JUNE - AUGUST 2022 NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends of Northern New York Audubon,

We have so much going on this spring and summer including bird walks, birding celebrations, bike rides, fundraising events and our annual meeting. We hope that many of you will come out to participate in one or all of the upcoming events!

If you became a fan of our collaborative special release Spruce Tip IPA brewed by Raquette River Brewing, we have good news! The IPA will be available in early June during the Great Adirondack Birding Celebration at Paul Smith's VIC, the Hotel Saranac and Raquette River Brewing. NNYA board members and volunteers will be present at the VIC to assist and engage with visitors. Please stop by our table for information and to pick up a NNYA hat as well as our popular spruce grouse t-shirt! A portion of the proceeds from NNYA apparel and Spruce Tip IPA sales support our chapter.

Online registration is open for the many birding events planned at the VIC as well as bird walks and great events the following weekend at Hamilton County's Adirondack Boreal Birding Festival. And, please join us for our annual meeting on August 6 in Newcomb!

We are extremely pleased to acknowledge that our participation at the Great Adirondack Birding Celebration is funded in part by a sponsorship from Explore Adirondack Frontier!



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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Northern New York Audubon Online Donations and memberships

Interested in helping birds in the northern Adirondacks? Please consider making a donation to NNYA! Membership renewal, donations and purchasing NNYA merchandise can be done by visiting our website at NNYA.org.

Hog Island

This year, Northern New York Audubon offered a scholarship for an Educator to attend Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine. We are excited to offer this as a way to help fulfill our goal connecting youth with the important role birds play in our communities. We received several very qualified applications and it was a difficult decision. After much discussion, we awarded the scholarship to Vanessa Rojas from the SUNY ESF Ranger School. Vanessa will be attending camp in July and will have an article in the next newsletter sharing her experience for us to enjoy. Congratulations Vanessa!

Annual Meeting

The NNYA annual meeting will be held on August 6, 2022 in Newcomb and includes birding fields trips, a bring-your-own-picnic lunch at Overlook Park and an afternoon guest presentation.

We are very excited to have Stacy McNulty from ESF's Adirondack Ecological Center as our speaker! Please see Page 6 for more information.



Eastern Kingbird by Larry Master

Newsletters

If you receive a paper newsletter and would like to reduce your environmental impact, please feel free to contact us at nnya@nnya.org and let us know you'd like to update your newsletter preference to email.

Have you moved recently? Please help us keep our membership information up to date by sending your new mailing address to nnya@nnya.org.



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Is Mothing as Good as Birding?

Moth-watching, or mothing, can be as challenging and fulfilling as birding. National Moth Week, which takes place each year during the last week of July, is meant to raise awareness about moth biodiversity and provide an opportunity for citizen science. Mothing is a challenging pursuit because there are hundreds of species. Moth species outnumber butterfly species by nearly 10 to 1. Each moth species is often present in its adult form for only a week or two, creating a constant turnover of species to see from May to October. No special equipment is needed to begin observing moths, just a porch light and perhaps a light-colored sheet to hang under the light. Peterson's field guide to moths is very helpful but there is a learning curve, just as there is with birding.



Large Tolyte, Janet Mihuc

Mothing can be a fulfilling pursuit if you appreciate the intricate beauty found in moth wing patterns. These insects are prey items with patterning that disguises them, as a dead leaf or a broken twig or even a bird dropping. Forested areas support some of the highest diversity of moths because trees provide so much food for caterpillars. Why should birders care whether there are lots of moths? Because caterpillars are a critical food source for woodland songbirds. A study on Carolina chickadees documented nesting pairs feeding over 9000 caterpillars to a clutch of chicks before they fledged. Birders should think of caterpillars as one conduit for getting the sun's energy into the bodies of woodland birds. More information on this topic can be found in the March 2020 Audubon article "An ode to nature's hot dogs: moth caterpillars".

If you want to know more about mothing, the National Moth Week website is a good place to start. You will see that an important part of National Moth Week is to encourage the submission of moth photos to online databases such as iNaturalist. This type of documentation is critical to help us understand where moths might be declining, which could affect food availability for certain bird species. Moth (or caterpillar) photos with known location and date information can be submitted anytime to iNaturalist.

The Paul Smith's VIC will be hosting a blacklighting event on July 30 from 8-10 pm, unless there is a rainstorm. I will be leading the event. We will be using a mercury vapor light and sheet setup on the VIC deck. You can look closely at the moths as they land on or near the sheet and we will try to identify as many as possible.

Janet Mihuc, Co-president, NNYA chapter

A New Perspective

Spring is here. Birds are returning. Time to get out in the field. This year is different for me. I suffered a ski injury in March requiring hip replacement. I am healing well but cannot walk far off the beaten path. I am now in the shoes of a physically handicapped birder. Many of my favorite birding spots involve a walk in the woods on uneven ground. Or long walks on old roads. Bushwhacking at times. None are feasible for me at this point. I cannot get in my canoe to study the loons as they choose their nesting spots. Car birding is possible but as we all know it is difficult to locate birds without stepping out and walking a bit. I wish I had a golf cart.

However, I am fortunate that this is a temporary condition for me. What a challenge it must be to pursue this interest without mobility. I plan to do a lot of quiet birding...sitting in one spot to see what flies my way. Yesterday I had a FOS pair of Yellow Bellied Sapsuckers in the birch tree above my head. They were squawking up a storm! I know they will nest nearby. I also saw my FOS Yellow Rumped Warbler. I would not have seen it had I not been sitting out with my eyes open! It was not singing. Each day brings a bit more life to my outdoor world. Waiting for the first Ruby Throated Hummingbird to arrive!

Mar Bodine, NNYA Board Member

Help us to catalogue accessible birding locations in our territory! Visit <https://www.birdability.org> / to learn more about their initiative to increase inclusive and accessible birding, and download their Site Review Checklist for the next time you go out! It will help others in your community and beyond to enjoy our special birding areas.

Birding Festivals Return after a Pandemic Hiatus!

18th Great Adirondack Birding Celebration

June 3, 4, and 5, 2022

Sponsored by Paul Smith's Visitor Interpretive Center (VIC), and in partnership with Hotel Saranac, Raquette River Brewing, and Northern New York Audubon, the 18th Great Adirondack Birding Celebration features field trips, workshops, and speakers for this 3-day event.

Field Trips (0 to \$125):

Whiteface Mountain

Madawaska Flow

Bloomington Bog

Spring Pond Bog

Little Clear Pond Loon Paddle

All day field trip to the Lake Champlain Valley

All day field trip to the Saint Lawrence Valley

Beginner Birding at the VIC

Accessible Beginner Birding at John Dillon Park



Golden-winged Warbler by Larry Master

Programs/Speakers:

Mark Manske - Adirondack Raptors Program at the VIC

Angie Ross - presentation on Spruce Grouse at Raquette River Brewing

Three 20-minute presentations at the VIC:

Tim Neilson - his film highlighting warblers north of the Rio Grande to Canada

Jesse Rock - will introduce the new Paul Smith's College Adirondack Bird Observatory

Dr. Michale Glennon - will present her long-term research on Boreal Birds in the Adirondacks

Website: <https://www.paulsmithsvic.org/gabc/>

Phone: 518-327-6241 **Email:** vic@paulsmiths.edu

Adirondack Boreal Birding Festival

June 9, 10, 11, and 12, 2022

Sponsored by Hamilton County Department of Tourism, Audubon New York, and Northern New York Audubon, the Adirondack Boreal Birding Festival features free field trips across 4 counties, a presentation, and two social dinner events. Here are some of the events:

Field Trips - Driving/Safari/Walk:

Perkins Clearing
Sacandaga Pathway
Massawepie Mire
Hitchins Pond
Powley Road
Dillon Road
Forked Lake Road
Sabattis Circle Road and Round Lake Trail
Roosevelt Truck Trail
Fiddlers Pond
John Dillon Park – accessible field trip
Spring Pond Bog
Driving Safari/Walk: Hayes Flow/Robbs Creek
Northville-Placid Trail
Sacandaga Pathway – slow birding field trip



Canada Jay, photographed by Larry Master

Presentation:

Bridget Butler: “Reimagining Our Connection with Birds” at Adirondack Experience in Blue Mt. Lake

Social Dinners:

W.W. Durant Scenic Dinner Cruise on Raquette Lake (Friday)
Adirondack Hotel Dining Room in Long Lake (Saturday)

Website: <https://www.adirondackexperience.com/events/adirondack-boreal-birding-festival>
(schedule link at bottom); Phone 518-548-3076 to register.

Annual Outing & Presentation for Members: Saturday, August 6, 2022 (rain date August 7)

Come spend a fun day (or any part of the day) with fellow Northern New York Audubon members and other birders this summer! This year's outing will feature morning birding in the Newcomb – Minerva area, with an optional early morning start at Shaw Pond in Long Lake. Lunch will be at the Pavilion at Overlook Park in Newcomb including chapter updates. A presentation from Stacy McNulty titled, "What's New in Newcomb: Research and Stewardship at ESF's Adirondack Ecological Center" will follow lunch. Here are more details:

Field Trips

Optional dawn birding in Long Lake: Meet Joan Collins at the parking area for Shaw Pond (1 mile east on Route 28N from the intersection of Route 30 and Route 28N by Stewart's in Long Lake) at 6 a.m. for early morning birding at this lovely wetland. (Please feel free to arrive anytime between 6 and 7 a.m.! We will be stationary at the pond for an hour!) Shaw Pond is a scenic location famous among photographers and artists. The pond is shallow and full of wildlife. Pied-billed Grebes, Ring-necked, Wood, and American Black Ducks, Virginia Rails, American Bitterns, Great Blue Herons, and Common Loons are some of the many species that can be found at Shaw Pond and its marshes. Northern Waterthrush nest along the inlets. River Otters and Beavers are often observed in the pond and along its edges.

Main Field Trip: Meet Joan Collins at Overlook Park in Newcomb at 7:30 a.m. Overlook Park is located at the intersection of Route 28N and Santanoni Drive. Participants can car-pool from Overlook Park if they'd like. There are restrooms located at this parking area. Our first stop will be the railbed in Minerva off Route 28N where we will walk south a short distance to a small pond, marshes, and Vanderwhacker Brook. Flycatchers abound at these wetlands, often including an Olive-sided Flycatcher family at that time of year! Also, sparrows, warblers, waterfowl, and more can be found here and there are often pleasant surprises – including a young male Moose in Vanderwhacker Brook on my last trip! After we finish at the railbed, we will hike on the Roosevelt Truck Trail up the hill from the railbed. The Roosevelt Truck Trail is a road-sized mossy trail that runs for 2.5 miles between Route 28N and the Blue Ridge Road. Most of the trail is in boreal habitat. We will likely walk as far as the accessible camping areas (about half-way) for a short break before turning around. There are large, accessible outhouses at the camping areas. The trail is hilly in places, but not steep.

Lunch

Meet at Overlook Park in Newcomb at noon for a social lunch in the covered Pavilion with picnic tables – and a spectacular view of the High Peaks! You can bring your own lunch or order ahead from the Newcomb Café at 518-582-8999 (<https://www.newcombcfeandcampground.com/cafe-and-general-store>). (Stacy McNulty adds that the Newcomb Café food is tasty and copious!) Again, there are restrooms at this location.

Speaker

Stacy McNulty, "What's New in Newcomb: Research and Stewardship at ESF's Adirondack Ecological Center (AEC)" at 1 p.m.

Registration for the Annual Outing

To register please contact Joan Collins at JoanCollins@AdirondackAvianExpeditions.com or 518-624-5528. The event will only be moved from Saturday, August 6, 2022, to Sunday, August 7 in the case of a complete rain-out on 8/6/22. (Any change in the date will also be noted on the NNYA Facebook page.)

Winging it with Betsy

I am an avid birder, some would say obsessed. I am not an expert but I would describe myself as an intermediate birder that is always trying to learn and improve. I am always looking for areas that would be fun to check out and sometimes they turn out to be very productive. I am planning on sharing some of these spots with you in future newsletters. I live in Vermontville and my Mother lives near Schuyler Falls so I drive on the Burnt Hill Road in Clinton County at least once a week and it has become one of my favorite places to bird. There are 2 wetland areas on the road that can have lots of birds to see and hear. Coming from Route 3, you turn right on to Hardscrabble Road. From there you make a right on to Burnt Hill Road. The first wetland area is partway up the steep hill on the left. It is a cattail marsh that often has Mallards, Red-Winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles. It also, every year, has had one of the birds that taunts me with his song but does not want me to see him.....the Northern Waterthrush. I cannot adequately count the time I have spent trying to catch a glimpse of him. Maybe this year! For birder's hope springs eternal. This is also an area where I tend to see a lot of fall warblers migrating through.

The second wetland area is larger and down the road about 1-1/2 miles. This area is interesting to me since years ago when I first started birding there, the water level was lower and I would often hear Virginia Rail . A few years ago, a beaver moved in and has dammed it up making the water too deep for the marsh birds. Now there are Wood Ducks, Pied-Billed Grebes and Mallards. Every summer I see the Grebe and chicks swimming around and they are adorable. There are also Eastern Kingbirds, Tree Swallows, Red-Winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, Cedar Waxwings, Common Yellowthroat, Swamp Sparrows, and Song Sparrows. At times there are surprises that show up like a Great Crested Flycatcher or a Brown Thrasher.

As always, please respect private property. There are areas to pull over near both of these spots but it can be a busy road.

Betsy Miner



Painted Trillium by Andy Foster

Purchase Power

What can you do for birds in the North Country? A good place to start is at home and in your bathroom. Many of the birds that migrate through the Adirondacks each spring end up in Canada's boreal forest - 'the largest remaining intact forest on the planet' according to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

NRDC reports that more than one million acres of Canadian boreal forest is clearcut each year with a large amount of that wood processed into toilet paper. It's dubbed the tree-to-toilet pipeline and while the phrase is almost comic, imagining one-sixth of the Adirondack forest preserve clearcut in one year for toilet paper is anything but. Check NRDC's 'Issue with Tissue' scorecard for a vetted list of environmentally friendly brands of toilet paper, facial tissue and paper towels.

No question about it, the choices we make as consumers have a direct impact on our environment in more ways than one.

Catherine Smith



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Black-backed Woodpecker by Joan Collins

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