



The Fledgling

Newsletter of the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society, Inc. (SAAS)

Vol. 39 No. 4, June — August 2022

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthernAdirondackAudubonSociety/>

Website: <https://www.southernadirondackaudubon.org>

Featured birding trails:

Dean Farm Heritage Trails in Stony Creek

By John Loz
SAAS Program Chair & Past President

In upcoming issues, we're featuring birding and nature trails that cater to the mobility-impaired in our Southern Adirondack Mountains and Foothills region.

Our chapter is scouting and documenting several trail systems within our area, to highlight all-accessible locations for wildlife viewing for people of all abilities.

The Dean Farm Heritage Trails in the Town of Stony Creek is a relatively new trail system maintained by First Wilderness Heritage Corridor and the Town of Stony Creek. Almost half of the four miles of trails are deemed accessible by standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

This expansive and peaceful trail system not only caters to the mobility-impaired, but also features some more challenging trails.

The packed crushed stone trails and boardwalks pass through a variety of field, forest, and wetland habitats. Each season reveals aspects of nature in different ways: migrating birds in the spring, loads of butterfly species in the summer, and various wildflowers in bloom as the year progresses.

Most of the trail network is relatively flat along the "Easy" trails indicated in green on the information kiosk

Right: Dean Farm Heritage Trails offer a range of bird-rich habitats. Photo: Joyce Miller.

Below: A kiosk offers a trail map at the Murray Road parking lot. Photo: John Loz.



[Dean%20Farm%20-%20Stony%20Creek.pdf](#)

You'll find some amenities along the trails, including picnic tables, kiosks and signs featuring information on animals and plants. A new ADA-accessible compostable restroom

with grab bars is located near the parking area. Many benches along the trails offer spots to rest and enjoy the sounds of the natural surroundings.

To learn more about this location, go to www.birdability.org and click on the interactive Birdability Map.

Enjoy your trip! This is a very quiet place away from busy roads where one can feel away from it all.

See Page 4 for more photos of Dean Farm trails.

trail map at the main parking lot on Murray Road. The map shows the original trail system on either side of Murray Road, but it does not show the new 1/3 mile "Easy" green loop trail on the other side of Lanfear Road. This newly packed crushed stone trail across Lanfear Road is very flat, winding through a small old orchard and along a creek near the Stony Creek town park.

To view a map of the roads and trail locations, see: <https://public.warrencountyny.gov/gis/maps/>

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Southern Adirondack Audubon Society

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Education: OPEN
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(membership@southernadirondackaudubon.org)
Newsletter: Joyce Miller (editor@southernadirondackaudubon.org)
Programs: John Loz (Interim chair)
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Chapter memberships are \$15. Renew at <https://southernadirondackaudubon.org/membership/>, or send a check using the form on the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society (SAAS) website. Contributions support SAAS's education and conservation activities in our region.

SAAS is a certified local chapter of the National Audubon Society. SAAS has approximately 600 members in Warren, Washington, northern Saratoga and southern Hamilton counties in New York State. SAAS's primary goal is to protect the environment by preserving natural habitats and promoting environmental education. Contact a board member to learn about SAAS volunteer opportunities.

Meet our board members

Deb Ferguson

Deb Ferguson of Altamont is the new SAAS board secretary.

She has lived in the Capital District since 1989. Ferguson's interest in birds and birding didn't take off until she began working as a librarian for the N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). Having grown up in the rural mid-west, game birds were of most interest to locals and riding her quarter horse was more her thing. Birding as a spectator sport became a passion of Deb's while working with Division of Fish and Wildlife staff and others at the NYSDEC who were very knowledgeable about birds and birding.

Spring and fall migration can be a great opportunity to see mixed-species flocks, including warblers, which were her spark birds. She remembers the first time she was hiking and saw her first of many warblers. During the summer, she especially enjoys observing breeding birds, their behaviors and contributing data to the N.Y.S. Breeding Bird Atlas (<https://ebird.org/atlasny/about>).

Spending time with her son, his wife and their two children is another joy in her life. Ferguson feels very lucky to have them near. It's true that maybe her binoculars are strapped on a



SAAS board secretary Deb Ferguson is pictured here enjoying time with friends and birds on Sunset Beach, Tarpon Springs, Florida.

bit too much for their liking, but they put up with it. Traveling afar to observe new birds has been on hold of late, but Deb is excited about getting back into eco-travel. For now, she's been happy to bird with friends in Florida and Maine and will be going back to Florida in the fall with her family.

She previously served as secretary of the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club. She is looking forward to exploring the Southern Adirondack region and working with the SAAS board, especially continuing to further SAAS's alignment with Audubon New York and National Audubon to protect birds and their habitats.



Andean Cock-of-the-rock
(Photo: Dan Ion, 2020 Audubon Photography Award, Audubon DAM Photo Repository)

Ecuador trip deadline: July 22

SAAS is traveling to northwestern Ecuador this fall with Holbrook Tours: "Birding the Chocó-Andes Region with SAAS," October 25 to November 3.

The land cost price of the trip is \$2,750 per person, plus round-trip airfare. A deposit of \$200 is due by **July 22**. A single room supplement is \$365. Meals are included.

Among the birds that could be seen are Andean Cock-of-the-rock, Rose-faced Parrot, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Moss-backed Tanager, and Indigo Flowerpiercer. See Holbrook Tours' description of this trip: <https://www.holbrooktravel.com/where-we-travel/central-and-south-america/ecuador/ecuador-birding-choco-andes-region-saas>.

Upcoming events

The next SAAS monthly program will be in September.

If additional membership events or walks are scheduled over the summer, they'll be announced in these places:

- the [SAAS website](#)
- SAAS Facebook page ([Southern Adirondack Audubon Society | Facebook](#))
- SAAS email [announcement list](#).

Miss a program?

Program chair John Loz scheduled many popular SAAS programs in recent months that were offered on Zoom, courtesy of the Saratoga Springs Public Library and Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls. More than 50 people attended some of these lively, informative programs by subject experts.

Several recorded talks are posted on the [Southern Adirondack Audubon Society](#) home page for viewing.

Here's a sampling:

- "Ospreys: The Revival of a Global Raptor," by Dr. Alan Poole



An American Robin feeds chicks in its nest.
Photo credit: file:///netx/audubon/data/repository/NAS and Chapter Users/Photos/Birds/Audubon Photography Awards/2017/APA-2017_American Robin_A1_3201_1_Tom_Warren_KK.jpg.

(April 2022)

- "Female Birds & Mothers of Ornithology" by Bridget Butler (March 2022)
- "American Woodcock Ecology and Management in the Northeast" by Roger J. Masse and Colby Slezak (Feb. 2022)
- "Bird Architecture: All About Bird Nests" by Anne Swaim (March 2021)
- "The Joy of Atlasing" by Julie Hart, Coordinator New York State Breeding Bird Atlas III (March 2020).

Accessible trails

These local accessible trails will be featured in upcoming issues:

- Betar Byway in South Glens Falls
- Spring Run Trail in Saratoga Springs
- Carter's Pond Trail near Salem, Saratoga County
- Sacandaga Byway Trail in Speculator.

Details about each trail and photos are listed on the Birdability Maps page (<https://gis.audubon.org/birdability/>). The map lists birding locations around the world that can be enjoyed by those with mobility, visual or other accessibility issues. SAAS past president John Loz is working on adding more local sites.

The Birdability Map is one of the programs offered by the non-profit organization Birdability. Birdability strives to ensure that birding is available to everybody, regardless of disability or other health concerns. For more about Birdability, see <https://www.birdability.org/>.

NYSDEC offers more accessible areas

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) maintains a website with a list of accessible recreation areas for people with disabilities.

President's Message

Sounds of summer

By Rob Snell, SAAS President

The song of the American Robin is one of the delightful harbingers of spring. Their melodious, bright song brings enjoyment to even the most novice naturalist.



Rob Snell

According to Jennifer

Ackerman in her book *The Bird Way*, American Robins make at least twenty different types of sounds. These variations are mostly a mystery with regard to their significance, and are under-appreciated by even the most experienced birder.

In our area, we are privileged to have an abundance of songbirds that migrate through and nest here. Their colors and behaviors give us entertainment throughout the year.

This spring and summer, try to learn the voices of some of the birds you love to see. Learning their songs will help you find more birds and enhance your birding experience.

If you need help, try using phone apps like BirdNET or Merlin's Sound ID, from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. I have found them to be very accurate and quite helpful. You can find apps through Google Play or Apple's App Store.

Open a new window to the birds and try birding without binoculars.

These areas are available for camping, picnicking, fishing, boating, hiking and nature viewing.

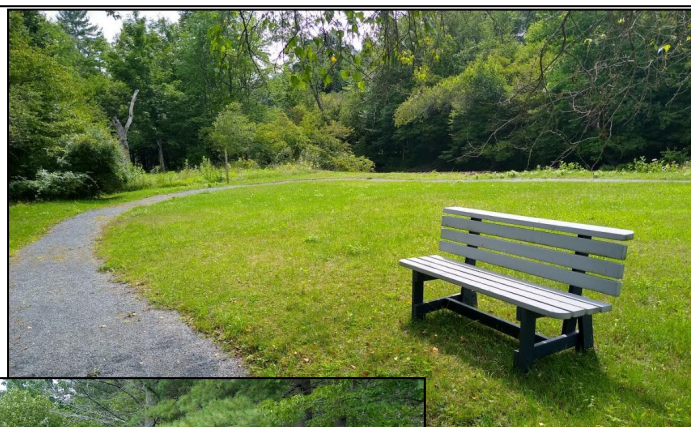
The website can be searched by county: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/34038.html>.

Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Production of this issue of *The Fledgling* newsletter is provided by Edward Jones, 34 Congress Street, Suite 102, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Dean Farm Heritage Trails

Here are more photos of the Dean Farm Heritage Trail in Stony Creek, described on page 1. Much of the trail is accessible to people with mobility issues. Photos: John Loz.



Left and above:
Trails offer easy
access to natural
areas to observe
birds, wildflowers,
butterflies and other
flora and fauna.



Left and below:
A wooded trail
leads to a
peaceful seating
area overlooking
Stony Creek.



Above: The parking lot kiosk shows a map with color-coded trails.
Below: An accessible composting toilet is located near the parking lot.



For more information about the Dean Farm Heritage Trails, see:

- Warren County offers a printable Trail Key: [Dean Farm - Stony Creek.pdf \(warrencountyny.gov\)](#).
- AllTrails has photos and comments: [Dean Homestead Heritage Trail - New York | AllTrails](#)

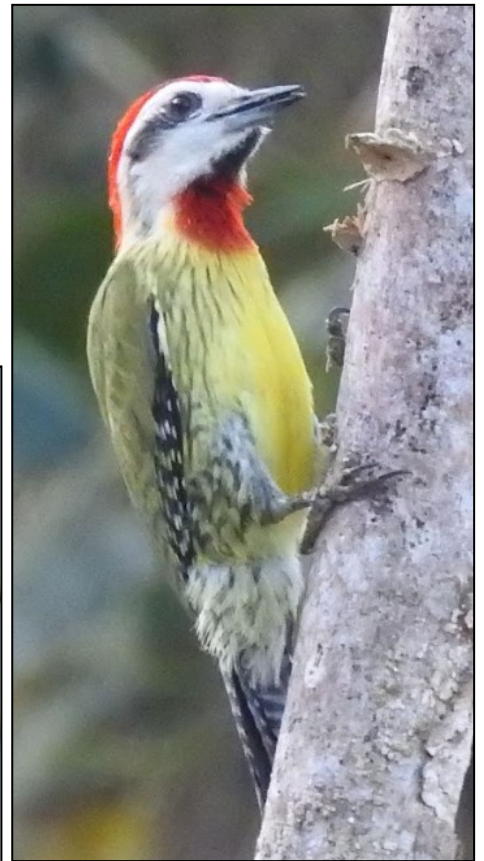


Here are some of the birds seen and photographed in Cuba by Barbara Putnam in March, 2022.

Left: Bare-legged Owl peeks from its nesting hole.

Right: The colorful Cuban Green Woodpecker searches for insects.

Below: The Bee Hummingbird (2.25 inches long) is the smallest bird in the world.



Birding in Cuba

By Barbara Putnam
Past SAAS Board Member

When I started writing this, the first thing that came to mind for a title was “I thought I was going to Cuba for a birding trip but it turned out to be so much more!”

Obviously, an editor would not like that for a title. Yes, the birding was very good. During our two week stay on the island in March of this year, we saw almost all the endemics (birds that have a range limited to Cuba), more birds that are only in the Greater Antilles, and many more that can be found in the states, the Caribbean, Central and South America. The trip was organized by Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT).

Our group was comprised of eight birders from all over the U.S. and two full time guides (one a VENT birding guide and one a Cuban tour guide) as well as our bus driver. The word of the trip was *complicado*, which you can guess means “complicated” in Spanish. It seems a lot of things are complicated between the U.S. and Cuba: rules, rules, and more rules. Fortunately, our two leaders took care of all the details. Those details included where we stayed, where we ate, and where we went.

Groups from the United States are not allowed to stay in the big hotels. We stayed in private homes that were certified by the Cuban government, limited to four rooms per

house. They are called *hostales* or *casas particulares* (*particular* basically means “private”). These were similar to bed and breakfast lodges here in the U.S. with private bathrooms and air conditioning, but we were basically in someone’s house. We stayed in six different *hostales* during our trip and that was one of the best parts of the non-birding experience. Our accommodations were clean, the breakfasts were unbelievable, and the people were so very nice. As a side note: I am learning Spanish and the contact with all the Cuban people was extremely positive. I loved it.

Our travel visas stated that we were “supporting the Cuban people.” Therefore, we stayed in private residences and participated in other cultural activities while there, such as visiting a small art gallery. In a few small cities, we had walking tours of the main square. We visited a tobacco farm, a botanical garden and a cathedral. We went to the home of one of the authors of the book *Birds of Cuba*. He is in his 90s and was a delight to meet. We also met local

birders throughout the trip. The last day we spent touring Havana including riding in the old cars, visiting the old part of the city, and seeing a Spanish ballet. Of course, we visited Hemingway’s house as well.

Our Cuban tour guide spent a lot of time with paperwork — no matter where we went or stayed, there was paperwork. He gave us lectures on the bus as well as in the cities. He was so gracious and answered all our questions. His tours were interesting and I got to practice my Spanish with him. He turned out to be quite the dancer, as well! In the restaurants a small group of singers and instrument players serenaded us and invited some of our group to dance or play a rhythm instrument with them. It was fun.

I must mention the food. We ate almost all our lunches and dinners in restaurants. Almost all of these meals were three to five courses, including drinks. Yes — who would have thought of having a couple of Cuba Libres (basically a rum and coke) for lunch while birding?

Continued on next page

Species Spotlight

Yellow-rumped Warbler

By Joyce Miller, SAAS Newsletter Editor

Yellow-rumped Warblers (*Setophaga coronata*) are one of the most common warblers in our area. They sport bright yellow rump patches, prompting some birders to nickname them “butterbutts.”

There are two subspecies of this bird. In the eastern United States, Myrtle Warblers have a white throat. In the west, the Audubon’s form has a yellow throat.

Myrtle Warblers usually winter along the East Coast and in central and southern North America. In the winter, they’ll eat grapes and berries from Virginia creeper, dogwood, poison ivy, juniper, and bayberry. Because they can eat wax-coated berries, they can winter farther north than other

warbler species.

According to Cornell’s online checklist eBird, these birds are reported in our region between April and October. They often breed in habitats with coniferous forests and bogs, raising two broods a year.

The male Myrtle has a crisp plumage pattern, with flashes of yellow on the crown, sides, and rump. In the field, look for a white throat, black mask and chest patches, and white half-circle under the eyes. The female has

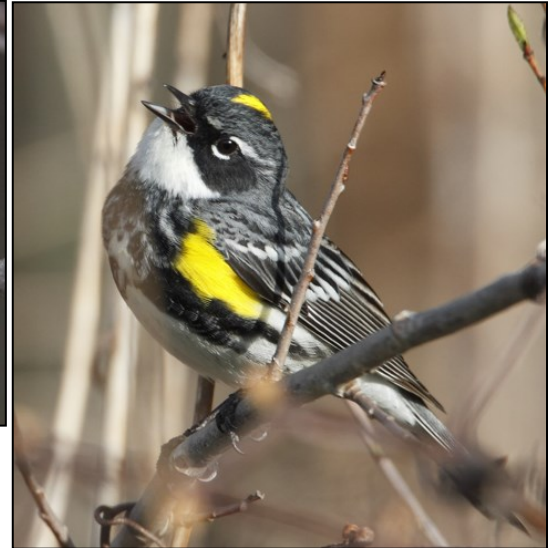
more muted markings.

These five-inch birds are usually spotted flitting around treetops to grab caterpillars, beetles, wasps and spiders. They will eat spruce budworm larvae. This native pest can damage and kill balsam fir and spruce trees.

For more about these colorful warblers, see Cornell’s *All About Birds* site: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Yellow-rumped_Warbler/overview.



Dr. Gordon Ellmers took these photos of a female (above) and singing male Myrtle Warbler (right). These are the eastern subspecies of Yellow-rumped Warblers.



Cuba

Continued from p. 5

The drinks were included and we didn't bird during the heat of the day – so, why not? The food was perfect for my palate. It wasn't spicy and there was a good variety of foods including lots of fresh seafood (lobster, fish, shrimp) as well as chicken, pork and beef. I must have had a large plate of shrimp for at least eight meals! I learned to love guava juice.

So what about the birds? Cuba is very hot, so we got up quite early every day to bird while it was comfortable. The endemic species, unique to Cuba, were our targets. Our guide had places to find them and local people to help us. No, we did not go after the rumored Ivory-billed Woodpecker!

The most memorable birds for me were the Cuban Tody (adorable), the Bee Hummingbird (smallest bird in

the world), the Cuban Green Woodpecker (so handsome), and the Bare-legged Owl (peeking at us from its nesting hole). I also took a fancy to the very common Red-legged Thrush, which is a relative of our American Robin.

How can I summarize all the birds on the trip? We had more than 140 species, including more than 20 endemics. There were many Cuban Emeralds (hummingbirds), a number of Great Lizard-Cuckoos, three species of owls, three kinds of Quail-Doves, two endemic hawks, two endemic warblers, flamingos, five flycatchers/kingbirds (four of which were new to me), and various other cool birds. I must mention the Cuban Trogon, the national bird of Cuba, sporting the colors of the Cuban flag. We saw several of these stately birds.

A word about COVID-19. We all had to have PCR tests prior to departing. We wore our masks in the bus even

though it was the size of a Greyhound bus with just the 10 of us all spread out, all with a window. Cuba had a mask mandate and everyone there was wearing one – even out in the countryside. We did pull them down for pictures and if we were totally alone out in the field we took our masks off. We were squeezed into 1948 vintage trucks a couple of times to go down a birding trail and we happily all wore our masks.

Almost 50 of the birds were new species for me. One day I birded from a cart pulled by a horse! (Long story that will remain untold for now.)

I loved the trip in every way: the birding was great fun; the Cuban people were so hospitable. Our group members were all pleasant folks. Our cultural activities were very interesting and I got to see my favorite birding guide (David) again. I also got to practice my Spanish and I didn't get COVID!

About Wildflowers

The Tale of the Frustrated Bee

By Diane Collins

The secret of Pink Lady's Slipper's attraction to bees is its sweet fragrance and bright color. Bees are lured into the flower pouch through the front slit expecting to find nectar. Once inside however the bees find no reward: "Hey, no fair. I followed the nectar guides. Where's the good stuff?"

But nectar is not produced by Pink Lady's Slippers. Once inside the flower, the bees discover that getting out is a struggle. The bees can't exit the same way they entered because the edges of the entryway are curved inward. They are trapped until they find the snug passage past the plant's reproductive parts leading to the top exit. Bees may bring in pollen from another Pink Lady's Slipper that is deposited on the stigma as they squeeze out. As they brush past the anther, new pollen is picked up.

Pink Lady's Slippers (*Cypripedium acaule*) are unable to self-pollinate. They "pollinate by deceit." Could the reason that these plants don't flower every year be due to false advertising, and the bees catching on? Pink Lady's Slippers can live for 20 years, but most produce seeds only four or five times during their lifetime.

Seed pods form after the blooms have faded. The seeds are tiny and in the thousands. It can take a decade or longer for a plant to bloom for the first time. Once the bloom has opened, it lasts about two months.

In order to survive and reproduce, Pink Lady's Slippers interact with a fungus in the soil, Rhizoctonia. The threads of the fungus open and attach to the seeds, passing on the required nutrients. In return, when the plant is mature enough, it will provide symbiotic payment to the fungus in the form of carbohydrates.

Pink Lady's Slipper is a native perennial found throughout the eastern United States and most of Canada. Large and showy, it has two opposite



Pink Lady's Slipper. Photo: Diane Collins.

basal leaves with conspicuous parallel veins.

It is one of the largest native orchid species. It favors acidic soil. It's capable of sending up additional shoots from its underground stem, and can be found in colonies, usually under pine trees. Locally, however, Pink Lady's Slippers are a rare find in Cole's Woods. The plant grows 6 to 15 inches tall and flowers between May and July.

The species name *acaule* is Latin, meaning "stem less," referring to the plant's leafless flowering stem. The genus name *Cypripedium* is derived from ancient Greek *Kupris*, a reference from Greek myth to Aphrodite, and *pedilon*, meaning *sandal*. The sandal, or slipper, is the *piece de resistance* of this lovely wildflower, giving it several common names: moccasin flower, slipper orchid, and Venus's shoe.

Be still and wait a while if you find one in the woods. When a bee shows up, watch carefully and be amazed.

Wildflower photographer Diane Collins is the author of Trailside Wildflowers in Cole's Woods; see <http://www.wildflowersinyourownbackyard.com>. Collins sells her booklet for \$10. Proceeds go to The Friends of Cole's Woods and our Audubon chapter. Cole's Woods is located in both the City of Glens Falls and the Town of Queensbury, next to Crandall Park. She is working on a new guide to flowers and birds of the Betar Byway in South Glens Falls.

Summer feeding tips

Many birders enjoy keeping feeders up for the summer —unless bears are common, of course. Just make sure to clean feeders regularly.

- Sugar water in hummingbird feeders should be changed every three to five days, and more often in hot weather. This prevents mold and fermentation that can harm hummingbirds.
- Scrub seed feeders with a mild bleach solution every two weeks to avoid spreading salmonella and other infections.
- For tips, see Cornell's page [How To Clean Your Bird Feeder](#).

Many birders have expressed concern about the role of feeders in spreading avian flu. This disease affects poultry, waterfowl and some other birds. See this All About Birds page: [Avian Influenza Outbreak: Should You Take Down Your Bird Feeders?](#)

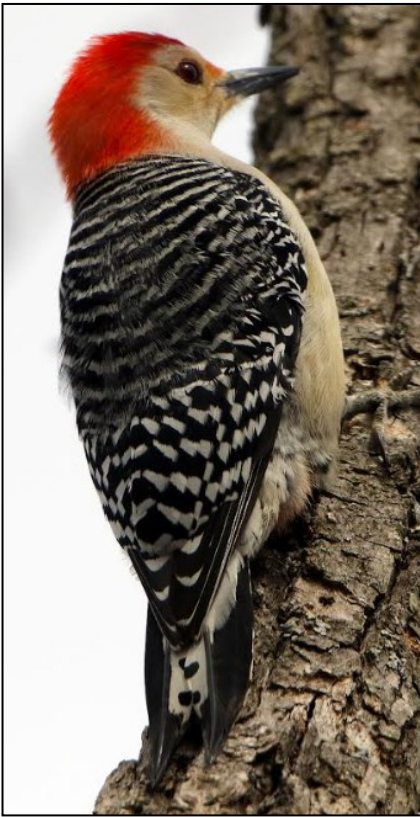
Bird Atlas continues

The N.Y.S. Breeding Bird Atlas (NYSBBA) project continues in 2022 for the third of five years.

Birders monitor priority areas, searching for evidence of bird breeding activity. This can include observing a pair of birds in likely nesting habitat, carrying food back to a nest, or feeding fledglings. Current NYSBBA results are posted on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's [Atlas Effort Map](#).

This is the third time that New York has done an atlas project. The second atlas project, held 20 years ago, found evidence that 251 bird species were breeding in the state.

To see which bird species breed in our area, see the [N.Y. Breeding Guideline Bar Chart](#). Bird breeding time periods are shown in green.



Summer bird quiz!

Queensbury wildlife photographer and past SAAS president Don Polunci snapped these photos of some of his favorite summer bird species. You're likely to see these birds in your yard or along a trail this summer.

Can you match the names with the photos?

- *Gray Catbird*
- *Northern Mockingbird*
- *Red-bellied Woodpecker*
- *Savannah Sparrow*
- *Common Yellowthroat*
- *Pine Warbler*
- *Cedar Waxwing*

Check your answers by looking up these species on Cornell's site All About Birds website (<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/>).

To identify birds in the field, download Cornell's Merlin app. The app's Sound ID feature also helps you to identify bird songs, if the bird is close and loud enough.

