



# Cayuga Bird Club

## Newsletter

### January 2001

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#### President's Message

Peering out the window this afternoon, I noticed that the thermometer had not inched above 12 F. Along with the NW winds, it appears we are off to having a real winter. On an incredibly blustery, snowy, Christmas morning I ventured out to walk the dog and was surprised to find a Mockingbird right along the road feeding in a bush that had black berries. There were also hundreds and hundreds of Starlings swirling around, staying low, flying into evergreen trees and the thickets along the road, where they were also feeding on berries. Two Robins, I first heard before I saw them, flew out across the road. I am eager to get out and try my newly acquired snowshoes for winter hiking and birding. We still need more snow accumulation around here, or I need to travel North a bit where they have had lots of snow already this season. The forecast for the Ithaca Christmas count looks promising, if you can believe a forecast several days in advance!

Again this winter, there are numerous Red-tailed hawks in the immediate vicinity of the game farm (pheasant farm) that is located on the corner of Game Farm and Stevenson Road in Ithaca. (Game Farm Road is just north of the Cornell Campus off Rt. 366. Stevenson Road runs between Game Farm Rd. and Turkey Hill Rd.) People have counted from a few Red-tailed Hawks, up to 25 at any one time. The last several years have seen the most increase in their numbers. It is quite a sight to see, especially if you are lucky enough to find the Rufous morph Red-tailed that has been seen along with all the others now for 4-5 winters. An interesting question that area birders have been discussing is what attracted the hawks to the game farm in the first place. and why the numbers continued to increase. The Pheas-

ants are fed grain, which attracts rodents, and hence the Red-tailed Hawks would take notice. There are certainly Mourning Doves and Rock Doves around that also are attracted to grain. Someone ventured that the mass of live, moving pheasants may have first attracted the hawks as they flew over, and in turn the hawks quickly discovered the rodents. Although the hawks have been known to take a Pheasant, it has never been damaging enough to the pheasant population for the farm manager to take action on. It is certainly worth a trip over there if you haven't checked it out yet.

A retired neighbor recently told me about a strange bird he had banging at his house windows back in November. He at first thought it was "the Mockingbird," but he had to look it up. The masked bird turned out to be a Shrike. It stayed a few days and then was gone. Interestingly, one road to the east, another neighbor had a Northern Shrike strike her window, only it was killed (an immature bird). Possibly the same bird? She was saddened but thrilled to see this bird so close and made arrangements to get it to the Cornell Collections.

The December club meeting, at our new location on the Cornell campus went quite well, with parking on campus being quite easy. Our January meeting will feature Bill Evans who will offer a sound show on winter finches. Hopefully we will turn up winter finches in the area, there is still plenty of winter to go. Hope to see you there.

A Happy and Healthy New Year to All!

# Club Officers

PRESIDENT	Gladys Birdsall	257-0130 (H)
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## The Cayuga Bird Club

The Cayuga Bird Club meets at 7:30 pm in the Morrison Room (106) of Corson/Mudd Hall, Cornell Campus, on the second Monday of every month except July and August. Most meetings consist of a short business segment followed by a feature presentation. The Club also sponsors several field trips each month and publishes a monthly newsletter. Membership is \$10.00 per year and includes a one-year subscription to the CBC Newsletter. The year begins in September. To join, send a check to: Cayuga Bird Club, c/o Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850.

Call the **Finger Lakes Bird Line** for the latest in birding news...**254-2429**

## **Ithaca Area CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

Submitted by Christopher T. Tessaglia-Hymes

0 Common Loons	1 Barred Owl
7 Pied-billed Grebes	8 Belted Kingfishers
1 Horned Grebe	82 Red-bellied Woodpeckers
1 RED-NECKED GREBE (on Cayuga Lake)	5 YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKERS (feeders etc.)
6 Great Blue Herons	260 Downy Woodpeckers
1 SNOW GOOSE (on the Lake with Canada Geese)	82 Hairy Woodpeckers
10387 Canada Geese	18 Northern Flickers
197 American Black Ducks	21 Pileated Woodpeckers
3098 Mallards	42 Horned Larks
7 Northern Pintails	750 Blue Jays
1 BLUE-WINGED TEAL (on the Lake; write-up being submitted)	2026 American Crows
5 Gadwall	1 FISH CROW (DEC Game Farm in East Ithaca)
2 American Wigeon	7 COMMON RAVENS (Ellis Hollow and other areas)
8004 Canvasbacks	1858 Black-capped Chickadees
13412 Redheads	201 Tufted Titmice
26 Ring-necked Ducks	45 Red-breasted Nuthatches
25 Greater Scaup	208 White-breasted Nuthatches
75 Lesser Scaup	12 Brown Creepers
110 Scaup sp.	15 Carolina Wrens
3 LONG-TAILED DUCKS (Oldsquaw) (on the Lake)	1 WINTER WREN (in log pile at Renwick Sanctuary, adjacent to Stewart Park, downtown)
52 Common Goldeneyes	85 Golden-crowned Kinglets
8 Buffleheads	63 Eastern Bluebirds
6 Hooded Mergansers	1 HERMIT THRUSH (Six Mile Creek area)
60 Common Mergansers	161 American Robins
0 Red-breasted Mergansers	11 Northern Mockingbirds
2 RUDDY DUCKS (on the Lake; write-up being submitted)	258 Cedar Waxwings
1 BALD EAGLE (Flyover? location?)	2 NORTHERN SHRIKES (1 on Coddington Road; 1 at jcnct of Etna and Neimi Rds behind TC Airport)
3 Northern Harriers	8103 European Starlings
7 Sharp-shinned Hawks	367 Northern Cardinals
10 Cooper's Hawks	1 EASTERN TOWHEE feeder near Ellis Hollow)
0 Northern Goshawks	690 American Tree Sparrows
85 Red-tailed Hawks (including 1 dark-phase hawk frequenting the DEC Game Farm)	2 FIELD SPARROWS (locations?)
11 Rough-legged Hawks	53 Song Sparrows
1 American Kestrel	6 Swamp Sparrows
1 Ring-necked Pheasant	132 White-throated Sparrows
9 Ruffed Grouse	1 WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (Cayuga Heights)
33 Wild Turkeys	709 Dark-eyed Juncos
580 American Coots	1 LAPLAND LONGSPUR (Ferguson Road manure spread)
413 Ring-billed Gulls	33 Snow Buntings
130 Herring Gulls	0 Red-winged Blackbirds
42 Great Black-backed Gulls	14 COMMON GRACKLES
933 Rock Doves	12 Brown-headed Cowbirds
386 Mourning Doves	36 Purple Finches
9 Eastern Screech-Owls	456 House Finches
5 Great Horned Owls	38 COMMON REDPOLLS (over Sapsucker Woods and in trees)
	0 Pine Siskins
	373 American Goldfinches
	0 Evening Grosbeaks
	1134 House Sparrows

***Cayuga Bird Club***  
c/o Cornell Lab of Ornithology  
159 Sapsucker Woods Rd.  
Ithaca, NY 14850

**Agenda: January Meeting of the Cayuga Bird Club  
Monday, 1/8/01**

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

- a) Good bird sightings and stories (Christmas count results)
- b) Announcements from the floor
- c) Club donations
- d) Other discussions
- e) Reading of the Basin List,  
Matt Medler

8:15 p.m. Program: Bill Evans, *Flight calls of Winter Finches*

Ornithologist Bill Evans specializes in the nocturnal flight calls of migrating birds. For the past 15 years Bill has recorded birds in the Ithaca area and in locations all over the United States.

Join us as Bill presents a sound show that will feature the calls of the finches of winter.

Refreshments will be served after the program.