

Spring 2023

Brooklyn Bird Club's

CLAPPER RAIL



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Coming Together

By Arabella Pajoohi (age 11)

Many kids celebrate their birthdays with parties; my journey into the world of double digits was in part celebrated by eagerly awaiting an email welcoming me to the New York State Young Birders Club (NYSYBC). (Truthfully, I celebrated with a party as well.) I was so eager to go birding with others my age that I reached out to the NYSYBC before I turned 10 (the minimum age for membership) and patiently waited for the day when I could join the club. I saved the email that was sent on my birthday from Carena Pooth, the adult chair of the NYSYBC, officially welcoming me as a member.

Before joining the NYSYBC, I had largely spent my time in the field with adults, incredible birders and naturalists like Charlie Roberto (a retired New York City fire captain who knows more about nature than anyone I've ever met), Steve Ricker (conservation director of Westmoreland Nature Sanctuary who birded with me on my first Christmas Bird Count when I was just five), and Anne Swaim (director of the Saw Mill River Audubon who invited me as a guest to an NYSYBC event when I was just seven). They all fostered my love of birding and nature and encouraged me to join the NYSYBC. Although I love birding

with people of all age groups, and I learn the most from older experts and mentors like Steve, Anne, or Charlie, it is also nice to share this passion with someone closer to my age, a person who is still excited by the sight of a Bay-breasted Warbler or even a more common Yellow-rump.

Once a month, and if we're lucky, sometimes more frequently, young birders from across the state, from the Lake Placid region to the borough of Brooklyn, gather to bird together. Members vary in age from 10 to 19, but despite the age differences, the club fosters a sense of community and belonging with the love of birds connecting us all. The club has always centered around connection – young birders connecting to other young birders. In 2007, Hope Batcheller, then 14 and residing in upstate New York, was inspired to create a club that resembled that of the Ohio Young Birders Club, which began the year before. She felt young birders, who can sometimes feel “isolated in a world of older birders,” she told me, needed a group they could call their own. Within a year of starting one, she went before the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA) to ask for sponsorship. NYSOA enthusiastically agreed

to support the effort, and in July of 2008, the New York State Young Birders Club was hatched with Hope Batcheller, now 15, as its first president. Since that time, over 170 young birders have joined its ranks.

Sixteen years later, the club presently has over 40 members and continues to grow, with the pandemic having acted as a catalyst for this growth. Those of us who are veterans of the club eagerly welcome new members, happy to help them in identifying species they might still be unfamiliar with or sharing details of great birding adventures. For many of us, birding is about sharing our



passion. Oftentimes, when we share our excitement with non-birding friends – the first warbler sighting of the season, an uncommon duck like a Canvasback seen close to home – we’re met with blank expressions. Many of us have been asked by our peers to explain what it is we do when we go out birding and then to further explain why we like this. As a member of the NYSYBC, there’s never a need to explain. In fact, it’s the opposite. When one of us spots an interesting bird and posts about it, others respond with words of excitement and requests to hear or learn more. Lifers are met with congratulations. Details of trips that took us to remote destinations in New York are greeted with unbridled enthusiasm.

This can make birding more fun and meaningful. Eliza Wein, an adult advisor to the NYSYBC and an undergraduate at Cornell University who joined the club in June of 2017, noted that before she joined, she didn’t realize that others her age shared her love of birds. “Having new friends to go birding with was really important for me,” she said, “because it meant that my interest was shared by other people I could relate to, which gave me confidence. It was also just a lot of fun to talk with everybody.”

As NYSYBC has grown, the scope of the trips has expanded too. This past January, the club embarked on its first pelagic (for those who may not know, a pelagic’s a boat trip into the open ocean). On this adventure, we traveled roughly 20 miles out into the Atlantic Ocean

where we saw Black-legged Kittiwakes, a personal favorite of mine. For 10 hours on rough oceans, we crisscrossed the boat deck attempting to photograph Laughing and Bonaparte’s Gulls, Razorbills, and much more. All that time together gave us a chance to bond and learn more about one another; but if I’m honest, we mainly talked about birds. In June, NYSYBC will organize its first camping trip, spending three days of atlas-ing in the Catskills for the breeding-bird survey. The data that we collect will be used to help scientists track changes in breeding populations and behaviors. For club members like me who are aspiring scientists, this trip can’t come soon enough.

Citizen science plays a prominent role in the club for those who are interested in events like the Christmas Bird Count or with technology and apps like eBird. When the club began, eBird was nowhere near as popular as it is today, but over the years its use has become widespread, with almost all members keeping lists of some sort. According to Adam Vinson, an undergraduate at Cornell University who joined the club in 2014 and now serves as an adult advisor, eBird gave him and other club members the opportunity to “contribute to something bigger” while birding. Vinson also shared that the club, in part, helped him find his way to Cornell.

For him, Eliza Wein, and others, NYSYBC has played a significant role in shaping their futures. Dr. Benjamin Van Doren, another adult advisor to the club, who became interested in birding when he was eight and joined the club in 2008/2009, now works as a postdoctoral associate at Cornell’s Lab of Ornithology, where he focuses on bird migration. He and Eliza and Adam serve as important mentors for those of us who aspire to follow in their paths. They remind us that perhaps one day, if we choose, we too can use our knowledge and birding skills to conserve avian species or make a difference in the natural world.

Of course, none of what we do in the NYSYBC could happen without our adult advisors, all of whom spend countless hours coordinating field trips, sending out and collecting permission slips, updating the website, and helping us find and identify birds. And then there are the parents. It’s a special parent who’s willing to wake up at four in the morning (or sometimes earlier) to make sure we make that field trip. I should say, however, that not every trip requires this level of dedication – so parents of aspiring young birders, please don’t be scared away!

As a female birder, I remain hopeful that we’ll



Boreal Chickadee in the Adirondacks.

add females to this flock. There are currently seven female members – our largest total yet – and we're keen to grow that number. Carena Pooth said that she believes there are more male than female birders because being outside in general is still considered to be more of a male activity. Dr. Van Doren sees the lack of female birders as an ongoing cycle: there are fewer female adult birders in the field and thus very few female birding mentors, all of which leads to fewer younger generations of female birders. Creating greater visibility and leadership opportunities for young female birders should help change this, as would spreading the word that girls are interested in birding, too. Recognizing that we engage with it differently might also make a difference: for instance, amongst the female birders I know, most of us tend to be less interested in the numbers or seeking out rare species and keener to observe birds and their behaviors. Competition is not our priority.

In 2022, under a moonlit sky on a chilly July morning, a group of us from across New York gathered at the base of Whiteface Mountain in the Adirondacks. Cameras and binoculars at the ready, our mission was to spot some of New York's rare boreal birds. We all shared a passion for waking up early to explore the outdoors and to discover birds



of all types, from the common to the uncommon. On that day, we found several Bicknell's Thrushes, an elusive alpine bird whose spruce-fir forests are under grave threats, from logging, climate change, and pollution, thereby pushing the Bicknell's to the edge of extinction. Although it was a treat to see this rare bird, its plight reminded me that our world is changing quickly before our eyes. Not everyone is fortunate enough to experience the beauty that nature holds, and even fewer our age has the chance to talk about and share these experiences. This is in part why I and so many other young birders join the NYSYBC – the chance to come together to experience nature, the chance to make a difference, and the chance to connect with others who understand. 🐦







A Day at Nickerson Beach

Paintings by Carol Page &
Photos by Tom Stephenson



Yellow-crowned Night Heron.
All photos taken on a BBC field trip on June 3.



Clockwise from top left: Sanderling, Black Skimmer, and American Oystercatcher.



Seaside Sparrow.



Razorbill

The colonial seabird seems to be alone today.
 I am literally chasing *le petit pingouin* up & down the Narrows
 & barely keeping up on my bicycle.
 I am counting how long it stays under water to be able
 to catch a shot between dives.

It's cold, it's crisp, it's bright,
 we both love it, both having grand fun.
 Our playful dispositions don't reveal any concerns regarding our status:
 it, as the only extant member of the genus *Alca* of the family *Alcidae*,
 & I, as a *homo sapiens*, a juvenile species 30 million years its junior.
 These moments hold neither despair, nor hope, but a sense of co-presence,
 an awe-filled moment with a companion species.

—Nicole Peyrafitte

Excerpt from field journal by Nicole Peyrafitte, from Bay Ridge Shore Rd. Promenade.

For more poetry, please see "A Flock of Poets reading Avian works: A Rail Reading, curated by Nicole Peyrafitte," May 31, 2023.

Video recording available [here](#).

For the Plovers: The 2023 Birdathon

By Ryan Goldberg



This spring, May 13 was International Migratory Bird Day, which means the annual Birdathon for Kings County birders. Participation continues to grow, no doubt due to the rising number of birders in the borough as well as the extremely worthy causes that are the beneficiaries of the funds raised by participants. This year's was the NYC Plover Project.

The NYC Plover Project began in March 2021 with one goal – to help protect an endangered shorebird in our city that has been largely been left to fend for itself. Fewer than a hundred Piping Plovers breed on the Rockaway Peninsula each year, out of the six to eight thousand which remain in the world. The nonprofit's nearly 200 volunteers engage and educate beachgoers in person and work with the National Park Service on nest monitoring, improved signage near nest sites, and data collection of nesting outcomes. In 2022, they were named national volunteer group of the year for the entire National Park Service. With the funds raised this year through the Birdathon – close to \$20,000 – the group is planning to launch an educational program for primary school children in the Rockaways, in concert with BirdsCaribbean and local civic and primary

education partners in Andros, Bahamas, where many Atlantic population Piping Plovers spend their winters.

On a warm, slightly humid day, 10 teams (an unofficial 11th was the Introduction to Birdwatching group which split into multiple teams and raised over \$2,500) scoured the borough to varying degrees of intensity, compiling a total of 146 species – at least 10 more than last year. A few of the highlights were three male Cerulean's Warblers in Prospect Park, a Bicknell's Thrush and pair of Blue-winged Teal there as well, and Cliff Swallows at Canarsie Beach Park. The winning team was A Solitary Beer, Yo! (Josh, Heydi, Michael, Spencer, Richard, and Tom), whose members saw or heard all but 17 of those species, 129 in all. The team which raised the most money was Northern Paralyzed (Jeremy, Radka, Valerie, Michele, Crystal, and Maggie), sending \$3,570 to the NYC Plover Project. Both teams have Bird Collective swag coming their way.

The team No Egrets stuck to the park and recorded 92 species: an all-time high for everyone on the team. With 70 participants, Intro to Birdwatching split into three groups led by Tina, Mike, and Jay and traversed different areas of Prospect Park. Together, the groups



One half of the Introduction to Birdwatching team, led by Tina Alleva, Mike Elfassy, Paul Keim, and Jay Ackley.

tallied an impressive 63 species in a short amount of time, showcasing the diverse bird life in this venerable park.

The team Everybird Everywhere All at Once had a “terrific” day around Brooklyn, reported Mike Yuan. “A sunless and stark morning at Prospect Park was salvaged by thrilling concurrent discoveries of Cerulean Warbler and an obliging Bicknell’s Thrush by the Third Street playground. After Plumb Beach (less charismatic Semipalmated Plover) and pizza at Lucia Pizza of Avenue X” – highly recommended – “we visited Canarsie Beach Park (did any other team get Cliff Swallow?). At Green-Wood, we finally saw our first Canada Goose of the day, and were momentarily pumped to conclude the day at a cool total of 111 species with a Hooded Warbler before seeing two Northern Rough-winged Swallows skim the Sylvan Water. 112 species and a ton of Birdathon fun!”

The Altacocka-toos aka The Venerable Veerys spent a leisurely and enjoyable day at Green-Wood, they reported. “We were happy to reach a total of 64 species (though there were at least three other species only one of us managed to see). Early on the birds tortured us by being very high up in trees that seemed to be backlit

no matter where we stood. At Sylvan, Bambi got us on a Red-tailed she had just seen catch an unfortunate squirrel.”

The team that covered the least ground was Lord of



the Wings II, which decided to do a mostly stationary watch at Prospect Park’s Butterfly Meadow. A majority of their 75 species were heard in the walk to Lookout Hill at daybreak, before settling beside the meadow at six. “This initial rush was followed by a slow drip of birds,” they reported, “but we made brief forays onto the lower paths of Lookout to net a Cerulean (thanks to the Northern Paralyzed team for the tip) and Hooded Warbler. One of the best birds was one of the last: a singing male Cape May right as we packed up to depart.” Their group was supplemented by two-year-old Anna, one of the BBC’s youngest members and a regular on the weekly Intro to Birdwatching walks. She brought kid-sized binoculars and chalk. The group’s first beer was cracked before noon. It was, by all accounts from around Brooklyn, a great Birdathon. 🐦



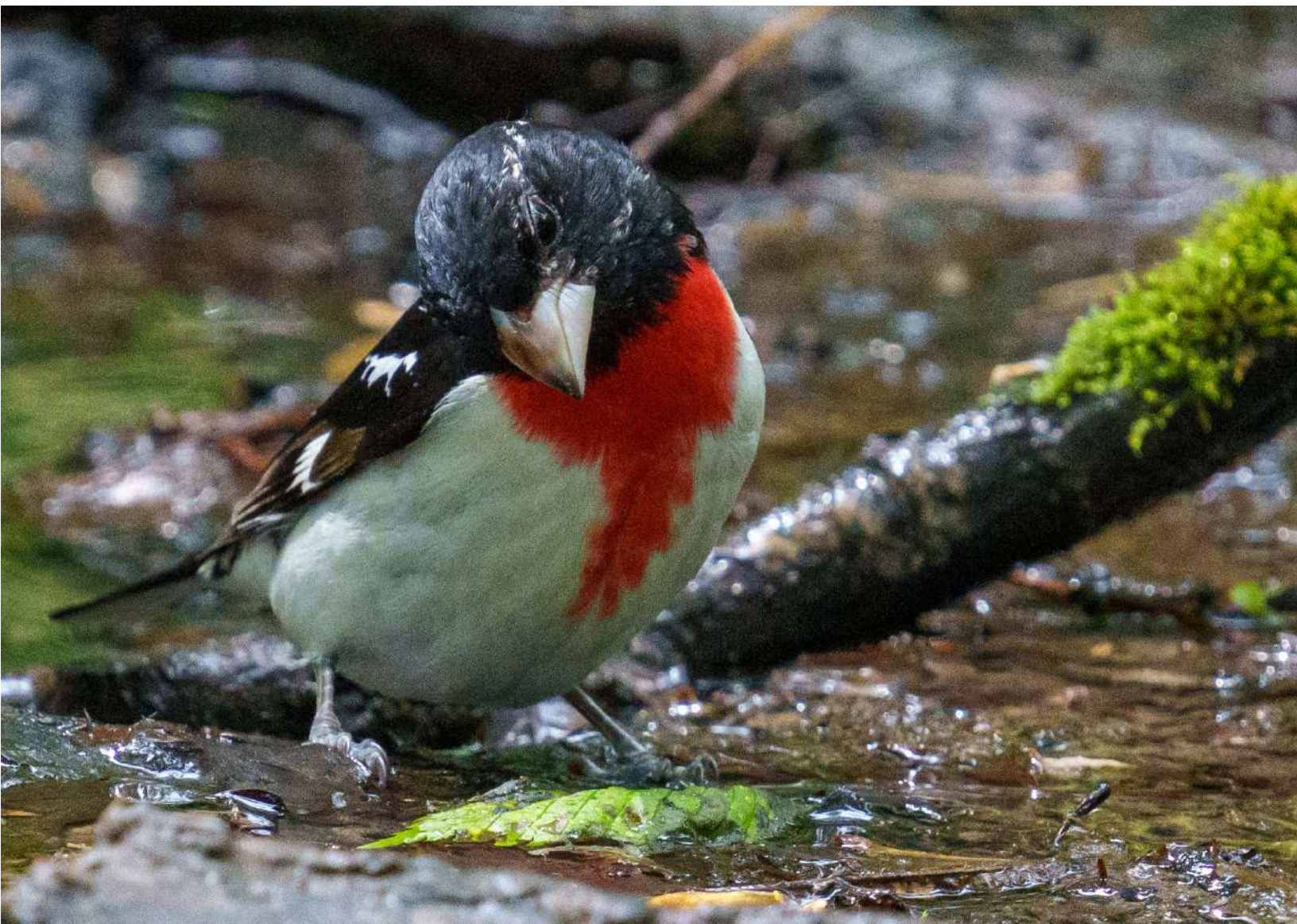
Top and bottom: Team Northern Paralyzed, fundraising champions. Juvenile Carolina Wren in Prospect Park. Photo by Radka Osickova.



Top and bottom: Piping Plovers at Breezy Point. Photos by Michelle Talich.



Photo Gallery: Jeremy Nadel



Clockwise from top left: Bicknell's Thrush, Prothonotary Warbler, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Prospect Park.



Top and bottom: Hooded Warbler in Green-Wood Cemetery and
Scarlet Tanager in Prospect Park.



Top and bottom: White-eyed Vireo and Worm-eating Warbler in Prospect Park.



Cave Creek Canyon Ranch

By Daniel K. Smith

Birders can put up with a lot of punishment in the field – sore feet, aching back, sunburn, frostbitten noses, mosquitos, and more – and yet still call it a great day. For urban birders, we can add to this list: mean people, passive-aggressive birders, loose dogs, and feral cats. We endure all this and more to catch a bit of Zen we call birding.

I recently came across a place where there's more quail than cars, more doves than dogs, more woodpeckers than people. Where you can spot over 30 species over your morning coffee or evening cocktail. A place where feeding birds is a civic responsibility, a practice that dates to the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration.

This spot is along a narrow two-lane road between Onion Saddle and Portal in the Chiricahua Mountains of southeast Arizona. The tree-lined road follows Cave Creek, a rocky stream banked by cottonwood trees and sycamores. Rising on either side of the creek are the towering remnants of

ancient volcanoes which form Cave Creek Canyon, also known as the Yosemite of Arizona.

Isolated by grassland and desert, this is the largest of Arizona's Sky Islands. What makes this area so hospitable to birds is the variety of habitats provided by the changes of elevation. Cactus Wren, Curve-billed Thrasher, and Gambel's Quail are found in the grasslands. Higher elevations are home to Virginia Warbler, Western Screech Owl, and Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher. At the highest elevations are the boreal species, including Mexican Chickadee. What makes it great for birders is the convenience of having mountain species up the road from grassland species.

Last February, I found myself in this avian Shangri-La while on a birding excursion in southeastern Arizona with my friends Karen and Sjoerd. We left two days open during an otherwise carefully planned trip in case there was a bird we wanted to chase.

The area where we were staying, Patagonia, was cold and



wet. The idea of going to Cave Creek Canyon came from a birding guide. “Go to Cave Creek,” he said. “It’s not to be missed.” Also, one of our target species, the Blue-throated Mountain Gem, had been spotted there.

Cell phone reception and internet connections were frustratingly spotty in Patagonia. We found there were only two places to stay in the canyon, but making reservations online wasn’t in the cards for us. I finally was able to talk to someone at Cave Creek Ranch and she said their Ranch House was available for a couple of nights. They would waive the three-night minimum.

The four-hour drive to Cave Creek included some stops to get target species. We got a tip that one of them, Scaled Quail, could be spotted in someone’s yard on Bobcat Lane in Hereford. It took a little searching in a cold and biting wind, but we found the house and the quail.

We had two cars and we leap-frogged each other as we stopped for an interesting site or bird. The last agreed upon stop had to be somewhere in New Mexico so I could add another state on my eBird list. Fortunately, our route to Cave Creek veered into New Mexico and my vanity was satisfied with some Vesper Sparrows and a Common Raven just outside of Rodeo.

The town of Portal is located at the eastern entrance to Cave Creek Canyon. It’s a tiny community centered around the Portal Cafe Country Store and Lodge. The Lodge contains the town’s only grocery store and cafe. Farther down a gravel road is a post office, then a library. The closest gas station is 25 miles away in Animas, New Mexico.

I was anxious to get to the ranch and see where

we were staying, hoping we made a good choice. Wisely, Karen and Sjoerd stopped first at the store for provisions.

The driveway to Cave Creek Canyon Ranch was long, steep, and twisting. It leveled off and circled a grassy veranda in front of the main office. In the center was a huge old Arizona sycamore. There were bird feeders everywhere. They hung from the trees and the building eaves. A 50-foot wire running from the tree to the office building was strung with grape jelly

jars, fresh oranges, and suet holders. The seed feeders ranged from fragile Calder-like contraptions to substantial troughs mounted on four legs. I was as astounded as Dorothy when she opened the farmhouse door in her black-and-white world to a brilliant technicolor Oz.

The porch in front of the office had several chairs and I joined a few fellow birders to take in the activity while waiting for my companions. Two stone cliffs in the distance provided the dramatic backdrop for a busy display of avian life. Wild

Turkeys pecked at the ground, to my left Bridled Titmouse devoured dried mealworms, Bushtit and Lesser Goldfinch fed off peanut butter smeared on the trees.

“Wow!” Karen said as she got out of the car. One of the first birds she saw was perched behind a small shrub next to the office: a Blue-throated Mountain Gem.

Laura, who worked the desk, showed us the Ranch House where we would be staying. We had booked the largest place possible that the three of us could share. On the main floor was one bedroom, a fully-furnished kitchen, and a big living room with a fireplace.





Upstairs were three more bedrooms. There are no TVs or phones in the rooms, but there's Wi-Fi in the office. There's a strict no dogs policy at the ranch.

We were giddy with delight at our good fortune. We were prepared to sacrifice to see some great birds but we weren't prepared for the comforts of the Ranch House. I put my bags down in an upstairs bedroom and saw a Spotted Towhee from the window, a lifer for me.

Cave Creek Canyon Ranch has been hosting guests since 1913. The current owner, Reed Peters, bought it in 1998 when it was in disrepair and better known as Caved-in Ranch. The place needed major renovations to make the accommodations more attractive – and still, many of the regular visitors begged him not to change a thing.

He upgraded the grounds and guest houses while respecting the history and ecology of the ranch. He pointed to the great sycamore in the veranda. "Roger Tory Peterson got his lifer Spotted Owl in that tree," he said.

A checklist of the birds of the area runs to 375 species. Twelve species of hummingbirds reside here



Top and bottom: Acorn Woodpecker and Arizona Woodpecker.



in the summer and Elegant Trogons nest in the spring and summer. During a short walk to the main road looking for Montezuma Quail, my checklist had 34 species in under an hour. No quail, but I added two lifers, Black-throated Sparrow and Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay.

Naturalists and scientists discovered the great diversity of the canyon in the 1940s and soon birders and nature lovers followed. In 1955, the American Museum of Natural History set up its Southwestern Research Station in the canyon.

The appreciation for the remarkable habitat and animal life spread through the community and many residents have maintained feeders for decades. Next to benches or picnic tables at those feeders,

there is often a small box requesting donations to help cover the cost of the seed.

Birders have been traveling this area for generations. In 1953, Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher drove through in their journey across the United States chronicled in their book “Wild America,” and a 19-year-old Kenn Kaufman spent New Year’s Eve here before starting his big year in 1973. The canyon is a reliable spot for the Mexican Chickadee, a must for anyone doing a Birding Big Year.

Our visit ended without any injuries or indignities, just great birds and a determination to return next spring. We weren’t on the highway long before we were back to snowy weather and howling wind. I passed a tractor-trailer that had slid off the road and I held the steering wheel tightly while the winds buffeted my little rental car. 🐔



Top and bottom: Wild Turkey and the road to the Cave Creek Canyon Ranch.



Mallard. Fabric collage, by Marisa Hernandez.



Photo Gallery: Radka Osickova





The Amazon to Machu Picchu: A Peruvian Birding Adventure

By Ed Crowne

When Princeton University Press published “Birds of Peru” in 2007, 1,792 species were found between its hardbound covers. Two years later, the soft-cover edition contained 1,817 species. Today, Peru’s list, at 1,869, or more than twice as many species as are found in all North America, is second only to Colombia’s and represents about 15 percent of all bird species found on Earth. Clearly, birds love it there. And, if you are a birder, you will too.

We arrived in Lima, Peru’s capital, in late February, a few days before the official start of our trip with Wildside Nature Tours. The sun was shining, the air soothingly warm. Our hotel, in the Miraflores neighborhood, was minutes from the Pacific and the narrow city parks edging the cliffs that overlook the ocean. Long-tailed Mockingbirds, Scrub Blackbirds, and Amazilia Hummingbirds were among the easily seen species in these littoral parks. And, even from the clifftops, it was possible to see the Peruvian Pelicans





that scanned the sea. In the evening we dined with Inca Terns that seemed to enjoy the seafood almost as much as we did. The terns perched and fished from the awnings at our restaurant on a Pacific pier.

We made a pre-tour, introductory birding trip to Pantanos de Villa, a wonderful marsh and beach refuge less than an hour from our hotel on the southern edge of Lima. Here we had our first encounters with the Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, Peruvian Meadowlark, and Peruvian Booby. Gray and Gray-hooded Gulls occasionally appeared overhead.

Our first tour trip was to Lomas de Lachay National Reserve, a desert site over an hour's drive north of Lima. The Burrowing Owls and Peruvian Thick-knees, so well blended with this sand and rock landscape, seemed as inquiring about us as we were of them. In this parched setting, the sun was unrelenting. Before returning to Lima we left our air-conditioned van to better see and photograph Coastal Miners and Least Seedsnipes.

Very early the next morning, our now complete tour group flew from Lima to Iquitos, in the heart of northern Peru's Amazon region. Iquitos is bordered



Top and bottom: Inca Tern and Many-colored Rush-Tyrant.

on one side by Rio Amazonas, the Amazon River. Here we boarded a very cool and comfortable bus to our next destination, Nauta. About halfway there we stopped to bird a white-sand forest site (Allpahuayo-Mishana National Reserve). The soil here retains fewer nutrients, leading to a narrower and somewhat different plant and animal profile. The few hours of observation here yielded 142 species of birds, among them Yellow-billed Nunbird, Gilded Barbet, White-eared Jacamar, and Yellow-tufted Woodpecker (in the same genus as our more local Red-headed Woodpecker).

Once we reached Nauta, we boarded Zafiro, a large riverboat on Rio Marañon and home for the next several days. Besides our comfortable cabins, we had a roomy dining room where many excellent meals were enjoyed and a large meeting room—equipped with a bar. The forests along the waterways included varzea (seasonally flooded) and terra firma forests. Two skiffs



in tow conveyed us to smaller rivers, tributaries, creeks, and marshes. They also brought us to villages and served as viewing platforms when stationary, immersing us in this aquatic habitat. For many species whose habitats are aquatic plants, a boat is the ideal perch from which to view them. By boat we were able to obtain close views of White-headed Marsh-Tyrants, Yellow-hooded Blackbirds, and Pied Water-Tyrants. Tour participants most focused on capturing great

photographs occupied one boat while those more inclined to see and hear many birds filled the other boat. It was the always-excellent Edison Buenaño who led on the birding boat and who kept the lists that were eventually added to eBird. Supporting Edison was our local all-things-birds expert Tom Stephenson.

In addition to birds, our wonderful local guides pointed out insects, plants, and mammals of particular interest. One member of our tour group purchased



Top and bottom: Peruvian Thick-knee and guide Edison Buenaño with the group.

a rudimentary fishing pole at one of the villages we visited. A close encounter with a piranha ensued. Every day, Large-billed and Yellow-billed Terns patrolled the rivers while Pink and Gray Dolphins and even sloths splashed about.

Over several days we explored for riparian birds along Rio Yarpa, Yanayaquilla Creek, and Pucate Creek. We visited villages where we witnessed a shaman ceremony, shared meals with local Indigenous families and purchased some local crafts for sale. The hospitality extended to us included close-up experiences with anacondas, poison dart frogs, uakari monkey, Great Potoo and Sunbitterns. Stretching out over several days we enjoyed the company of hundreds of bird species, some more charismatic than others, of course. One evening, as darkness fell, we searched among the bats from our boats for nightjars. Our last evening on Zafiro concluded with a not-to-be outdone musical and dance performance by our affable, expert, and talented boat crew.

Our return trip from Nauta to Iquitos included a healthy pause at the Amazon Rescue Center for assorted rescued animals: anteaters, macaws, manatees and more. After rehabilitation, release when possible follows.

Over the Andes again and back in Lima, we ventured south for one more boat excursion. This time the water was the salty and, on this morning at least, relatively placid Pacific. At Puerto Pucusana, we circled an island, observing from our boats. Cormorants and boobies in the hundreds, even thousands, occupy the cliffs. A few Blue-footed Boobies were spotted among the far more numerous Peruvian Boobies. The Red-legged Cormorant must rank among the most distinguished of their family, far outnumbered here by Guanay Cormorants. Present too were smaller birds,





the Blackish Oystercatcher and Surf Cinclodes. Sadly, we did not see the humble Humboldt Penguins often seen here too.

The last tour stop for most of us was at Pantanos de Villa. On this return visit, we added White-tufted Grebe and White-cheeked Pintail. Once more we saw at close range the delightful Many-colored Rush-Tyrants, competing with the Peruvian Meadowlarks for attention.

From our base at Lima, most of the group headed home, while a few of us continued to Cusco. Getting to Cusco from Lima requires either an 18-hour drive or a 90-minute flight. At over 11,000 feet above sea level (half the height of the highest point in Peru), this former Inca capital requires acclimatization or medication for easy breathing. For sightseers, Cusco offers churches and remnants of Inca civilization. It also affords ready access to major nearby Inca sites. On our van and rail journey to Aguas Calientes, at the base of Machu Picchu, we stopped first at Pisaq and then at Ollantaytambo National Archeological Park. Both are stunning remnants of Inca civilization. One wonders how the Incas described the conspicuous Giant Hummingbirds found here.

The Rio Urubamba roils through Aguas Calientes, attracting Torrent Ducks, White-capped Dippers, Black Phoebe, and Fasciated Tiger-Herons, among others. Towering above the river is Machu Picchu, UNESCO



Top and bottom: Plain-breasted Piculet and Red-capped Cardinal.

World Heritage Site, once home of Inca royalty and now home of the endemic Inca Wren. On the hiking trail and road from Aguas Calientes to Machu Picchu there are birds to be seen and heard. If you are willing and able, a birding hike from Machu Picchu down to Aguas Calientes is worth the effort. Resident and wintering warblers join mixed-species flocks that incorporate flycatchers, grosbeaks, and spinetails on this steep slope. Less gregarious and found nearer the base of the paths to Machu Picchu are the Masked Fruiteater, Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, and Andean Motmot.

The trains connecting Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes follow the route of the Urubamba. And it is possible to bird from the train as it ambles on its way. Once we reached Ollantaytambo, we made a short stop in town at a hotel whose gardens attracted the endemic and monotypic Bearded Mountaineer.

From Cusco we were destined for Amazonia Lodge near Atalaya, climbing in elevation to over 12,000 feet before finally arriving at Rio Madre de Dios at 750 feet above sea level. We paused during our long descent at Wayquecha Biological Station, an entrance to Parque Nacional del Manu and Cock of the Rock Lodge, seeing along the way Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager, Red-crested Cotinga, Moustached Flowerpiercer, Grass Wren, and Tufted Tit-Tyrant. A Red-throated Caracara welcomed us at Atalaya, where



once again we boarded a slim, shallow boat and rode about 20 minutes downriver to the lodge where a Laughing Falcon greeted us as we moved our luggage from boat to shore.

Our local guide for this part of our trip was the highly recommended Juan Jose Falcon. For the next few days he was careful to keep us out of trouble and in sight and sound of some amazing avifauna. Around the lodge itself are found many antbirds (more than 20 species of antbirds in two days for us) and other rainforest specialists, such as the [Peruvian Recurvebill](#). Tawny-bellied Screech Owls (austral) tooted at night.

As we left the lodge to board our rustic water taxi,





we saw tapir tracks on the beach and heard a report about a Harpy Eagle nest two hours further downriver. Maybe next time. The climb back to Cusco was no less mesmerizing than the ride down. This time we made two stops, not counting the short delay while landslide boulders were cleared away by a road crew. Our first stop, at a still relatively low elevation, was at Mirador Pico de Hoz: Centro de Observacion y Fotografia de Aves. Besides White-necked Jacobins and Gray-breasted Sabrewings, at least one Sapphire-spangled Emerald managed a brief appearance at the flowers and feeders. Below the feeders and flowers was a small pond where Hoatzins and White-banded Swallows sat in surveillance. Into our stillness a Rufous-sided Crake appeared on the trail. Once the crake departed, so did we.

Pied Water-Tyrant.

Our final stop was on the outskirts of Cusco, at Huacarpay Laguna. An Andean Gull or two sailed over the water as we approached. In a marsh at the water's edge we saw three Yellow-winged Blackbirds, while adjacent to the lagoon was a xeric landscape of cacti and agave. Here a White-crested Elaenia posed briefly and a Rusty-fronted Canastero moved stealthily among the thorns and then said goodbye.

After a short flight from Cusco to Lima's airport we were airborne for Brooklyn, where spring would soon be underway.

Q&A between Ed Crowne and Anita Haravon, Brooklyn birder and trip participant:

Anita: Can you describe a memorable experience from our trip to Peru?

Ed: Yes, while riding the rails from Machu Picchu to Ollantaytambo, about midway, as I was dozing off, I was awakened by “Ed! Ed! Condor! Condor!” I looked into the sky and there they were, two condors floating majestically in the thin Andean air. Thanks, Tom!

Ed: What bird made the greatest impression on you or best evokes your experience?

Anita: For me, simply the experience of being on the Amazon River and being in the jungle. Before this trip I had never been so completely immersed in nature, in places that had not been touched by technology. It felt as if the river and the jungle went on forever. I think the Red-capped Cardinal was my favorite bird. They seemed to be everywhere and I was always happy to see them.

Ed: What surprised you most about birding in Peru?

Anita: As someone new to birding, I was amazed by the huge number and variety of birds.

Anita: Which bird would you most prefer as a resident Brooklyn bird: the Hoatzin, the Black-collared Hawk or the Horned Screamer? Why?

Ed: I’m going with the [Black-collared Hawk](#) for its vocal commentary.

Ed: Did you have a bat experience in Peru? Please describe.

Anita: The guides showed us these small bats that were camouflaged on a tree trunk. I was at the front of the boat and closest to the bats when suddenly they flew in my face!

Ed: How did it feel to have a Uakari monkey for a hat?

Anita: Yes, that was an experience. We were visiting a local family who had adopted the monkey. The monkey was in a tree branch and suddenly jumped on my head! 🐒



Long-nosed Bats.



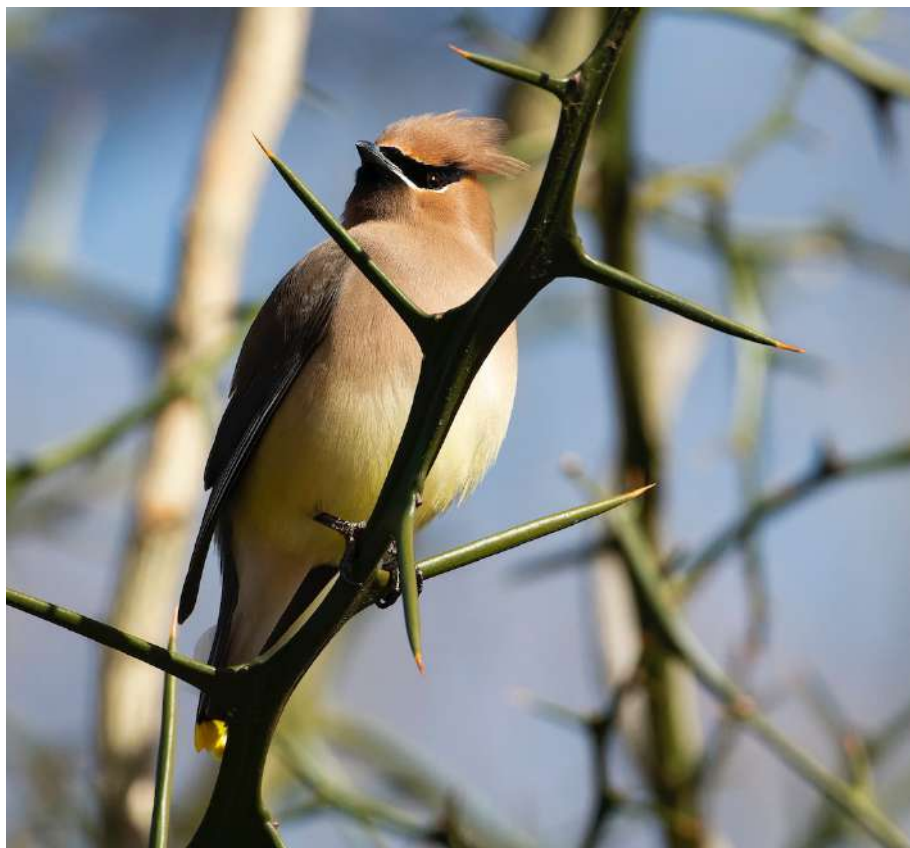
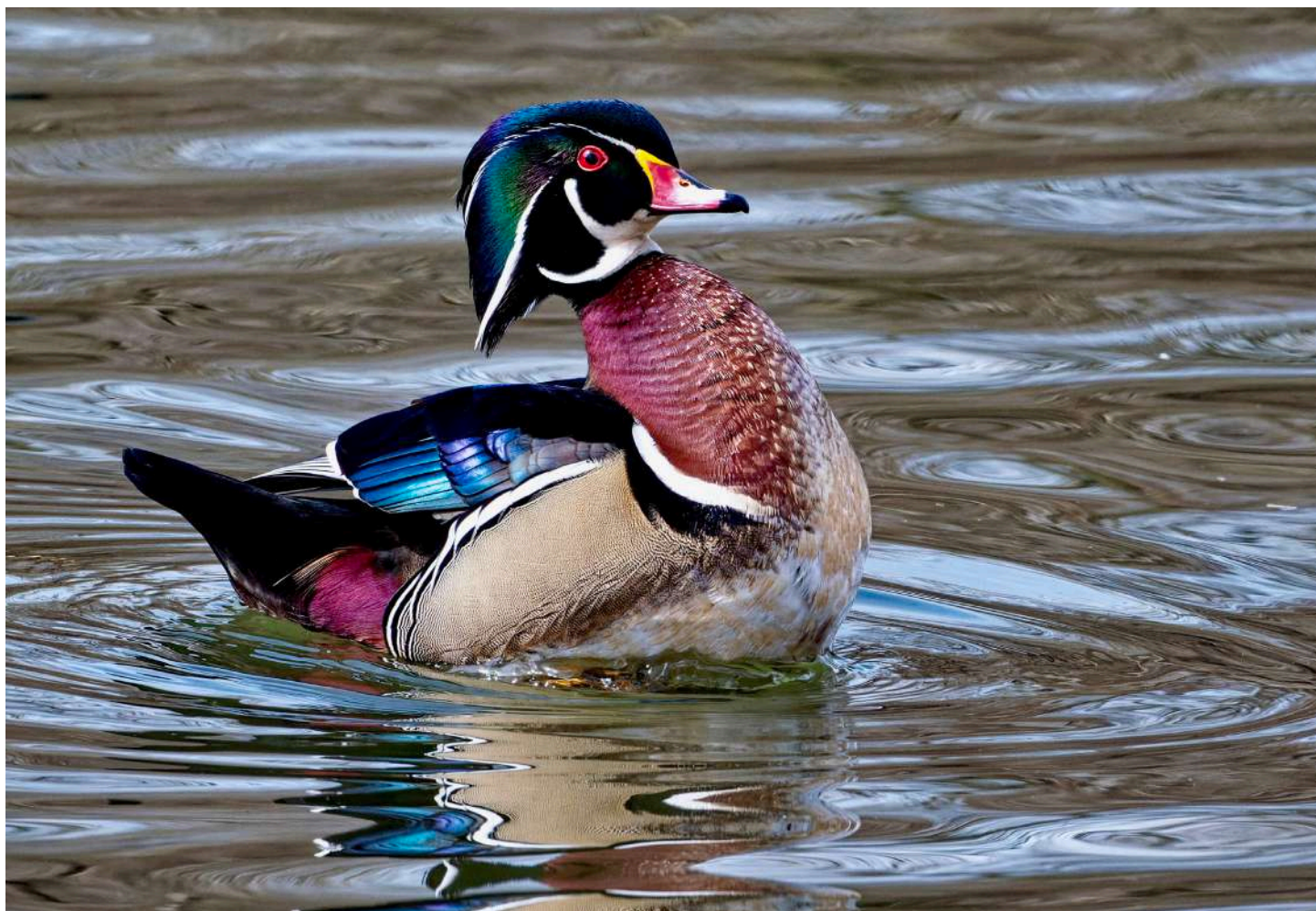


Photo Gallery: Michael Robinson



Brooklyn Bird Club Financial Report

By Dennis Hrehowsik, president and treasurer

We began 2022 with \$20,989.15. This is the combined total of funds in the checking and PayPal accounts. Money added to the two accounts throughout the year came entirely through annual membership dues of \$25 per person and small donations totaling \$10,489.79. We ended 2022 with \$25,524.84, which gave us a working budget of \$31,478.94.

Our expenses were as follows:

General liability insurance: \$2,104.58 (renewed annually)

Donations to the following organizations: Brooklyn Public Library (\$250), Prospect Park Alliance (\$250), Green-Wood Cemetery Historic Fund (\$250), New York State Ornithological Association (\$150), the New York State Young Birders Club (\$100). Total: \$1,000.

Separately, in May of 2022, members raised \$20,000 for International Migratory Bird Day, funds which were given directly to the Green-Wood Historic Fund to plant a native meadow in memory of club member Janet Schumacher. The club paid all the fundraising fees so that Green-Wood would receive the full amount. These fees are included in

the PayPal fee total below.

Speakers received \$300 in honorariums as part of our monthly program series. (Several local speakers donated their time.) Additionally, we incurred costs this year to support our virtual programs on Zoom (annual subscription: \$153.51) and its closed-captioning services (\$240). We also paid \$913.30 to purchase new binoculars for the Saturday beginners' walks. Total: \$1,606.81.

Events: \$283.38. These includes supplies for the Christmas Bird Count dinner and tips to Boathouse staff.

Feeders: \$509.09. Birdseed and new equipment for the Prospect Park feeders.

P.O. box annual rental fee: \$391.95.

Website maintenance and web hosting: \$299.79.

PayPal fees: \$671.53.

Our total expenditures for 2022 were \$5,954.10. The club remains in excellent fiscal health going into 2023. This is due largely to our current roll of close to 400 members. 🐦

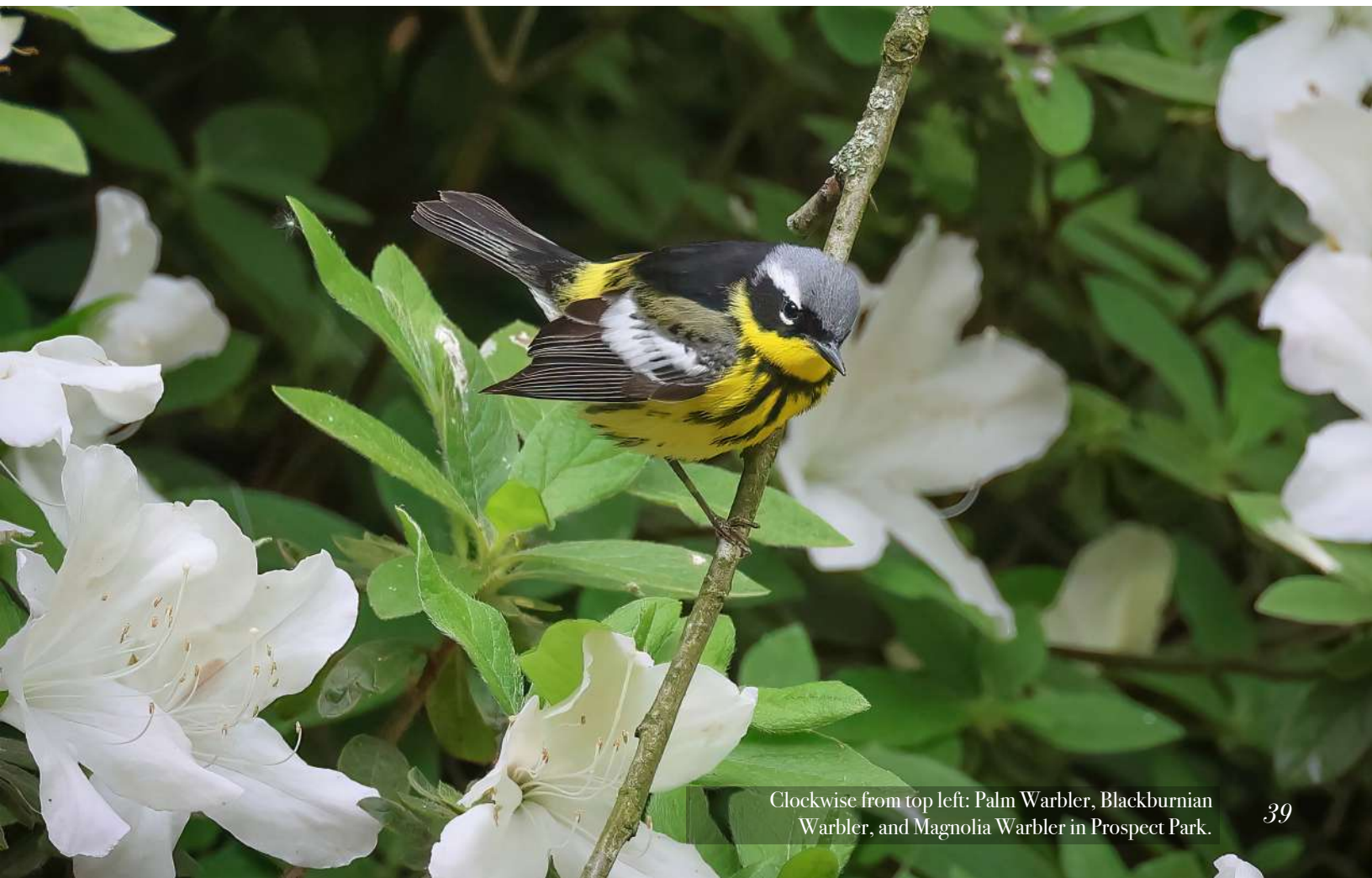


Blue Jay in Prospect Park. Photo by Marisa Hernandez.

Photo Gallery: Marisa Hernandez



Eastern Towhee in Jamaica Bay.



Clockwise from top left: Palm Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, and Magnolia Warbler in Prospect Park.



Clockwise from top: Wood Duck mother and young, Blue Grosbeak in Prospect Park, and Eastern Kingbird in Bed-Stuy.