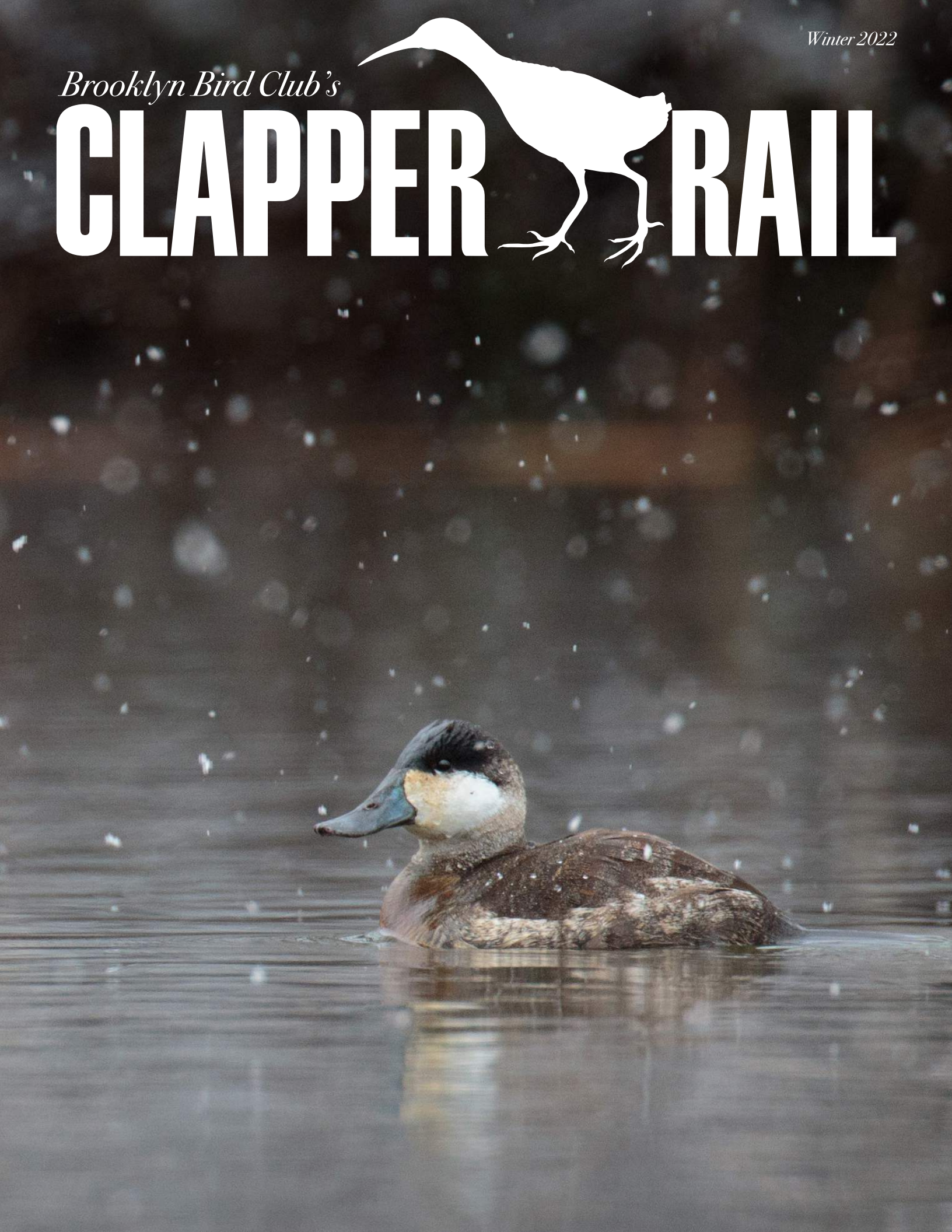
Winter 2022

Brooklyn Bird Club's

CLAPPER RAIL



Inside This Issue

4
Editor's Note: In Memory of Janet Schumacher

6
The 2021 Christmas Bird Count

10
Mr. Big Year: Interview with Sandy Komito

15
The Hummingbird

17
Sparks!

19
Photo Gallery: Michelle Talich

22
Chasing an Uber-Mega-Colossal Rarity in Maine

26
Field Sketches: Nicole Peyrafitte

28
Skuas, Petrels and Penguins: My Final Weeks at McMurdo Station

32
2021 Christmas Bird Count Appendix

Cover: Ruddy Duck in Prospect Park. Photo by Marc Brawer.

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Rusty Blackbird, in memory of Janet Schumacher. Gouache on paper by Toni Simon.

Editor's Note: In Memory of Janet Schumacher

By Ryan Goldberg

It is with a heavy heart that I send out this issue. Janet Schumacher, our deputy editor, and a dear friend to many of us in the birding community, died on February 3, of pancreatic cancer. Janet was 76. Janet loved birds, the Brooklyn Bird Club, and the Clapper Rail. It was Janet who, five years ago, led a small group of us who brought back the newsletter after a short period of inactivity. I still remember our first meeting, which Janet had organized at the central branch of the Brooklyn Public Library. There were four of us, and we each shared ideas about what this new newsletter might look like. Like many things I would only learn later about Janet, she had studied science and environmental journalism in graduate school, so this was close to her heart. I was in my first year of birding and feeling my way into the club, but I already had this strong sense of not wanting to let Janet down, even though I hardly knew her. When it came time to finalize the next steps, there was a long silence. I finally broke it and said I could be the editor. Janet, looking down, said quietly, "I was hoping you'd say that."

I'm very glad I did, too. Our team formed quickly, with Angie Co and Tina Alleva joining as our art and design heads. Luckily, many wonderful contributors followed. We had a ball. As friends of Janet, we were now on the receiving end of her unmatched generosity – great meals (Janet was an excellent chef), field guides from her birding library, goodies from the Park Slope Food Coop. Best of all, it also meant emails about her travels – photos of sunsets and landscapes, especially from her late-summer trips to Canada – and literature recommendations and musings on the Clapper Rail.

Northern Cardinal in Prospect Park. Photo by Marc Brawer.

Like any good editor, Janet was always looking ahead. Even in the last month of her life, she corresponded with one of our regular writers about a story for this issue.

Janet told few people about her prognosis, which she knew was not good, but it was her nature to put others before herself. Her trademark wryness was evident until the end. She said the scene in her hospital room, where she was hooked up to various machines, reminded her of a Stephen King novel. She tried to get permission to run a poem in this issue but was annoyed by the response of the publisher: that she should call the poet to ask his permission. The poet, she had already told them, was dead. Most of all, though, in those final weeks, Janet spoke about birds, the friendships she had made because of them, and the wonderful places they had taken her, over 30 countries in all, from Antarctica to Bhutan.

Janet was a private person, and I continue to learn more about her now, which almost makes me feel like she's still with us. I think the sad reality will set in when the colorful songbirds return this spring, but even now, I smile when I think about Janet. About her unmistakable laugh, a four-noter that gained an octave or two, about her occasionally dark sense of humor, about her unannounced exits from a birding group. I never heard Janet complain about her comfort, and indeed, many memories of her within the club seem to revolve around her toughing out a bitterly cold field trip. I imagine this was a product of her upbringing. Janet grew up on a dairy farm in Clyman, Wisconsin, without indoor plumbing. The farm was on Eagle Road. For primary school, she attended a one-room schoolhouse. Her father, she told me before she died, would relax at night cracking hickory nuts from the big productive tree at the end of their driveway. They used the nuts in making chocolate chip cookies. Red-headed Woodpeckers became a favorite bird of Janet's because they nested in that tree. But as an adult, her spark bird was the American Coot. We never could convince her to write about that.

After Janet graduated from the University of Wisconsin she joined the Peace Corps, serving for three years in Ethiopia. The extreme poverty and hunger she witnessed eventually led her down the path of food justice. She traveled through Asia, taught English in Japan, and then moved to Brooklyn. She was one of the 25 or so people to get the Park Slope Food Coop off the ground, and in 1975, she helped lay the foundation for its survival and success. She returned in a full-time capacity in 1989, as a general coordinator, and became responsible for ordering 75-80 percent of what the Coop sells. She retired in 2015. An obituary in the Coop's newspaper, the Linewaiters' Gazette, speaks to her dedication and impact there. One of her colleagues said no one loved the Coop more than Janet.

Birds and birding were another love, no doubt, I'm sure, because of the people she met in this welcoming community of ours. I often think about how birding allows you to meet people whom you would never find otherwise. In Janet's final days we spoke about bird-friendly plantings at Green-Wood Cemetery, a place she loved and a project which she hoped to support. Maybe some hickory trees, she said. "But no azaleas! Are those real flowers?" Janet is survived by her longtime companion, Mike Eakin, a former general coordinator at the Coop, and her ashes will be buried in Mike's plot at Green-Wood. Janet asked our Clapper Rail team – me, Angie, Tina – to inquire about having a plaque placed nearby, bearing not her name but Emily Dickinson's poem, "Hope is the thing with feathers." In how she lived, Janet gave us hope. Our newsletter won't be the same without her.

Mourning Dove in Prospect Park. Photo by Marc Brawer.

The 2021 Christmas Bird Count

By Mike Yuan

Susan Axelrod and Catherine Quayle in Breezy Point. Photo by Mike Yuan.

The Brooklyn Christmas Bird Count (CBC), one of the most urban counts in the state, was conducted on Saturday, December 18, 2021, and compiled on Zoom. The count circle includes most of the borough of Brooklyn, western Jamaica Bay, and the western end of the Rockaway peninsula. On a gray and occasionally spitting day that turned out much nicer than feared, over 100 participants in 12 areas within the count circle recorded 50,021 individuals, representing 129 species. These totals exceeded our average totals of 43,897 individuals and 123 species.

We established all-time high counts of Sanderling (1,121), more than doubling our average sum. Our intrepid team of kayakers who explored the inner regions of Jamaica Bay's islands contributed the bulk of the Dunlin (907) count. Great Blue Heron (38) flourished in Prospect Park and along the Brooklyn coast. Perhaps helped by successful, undisturbed breeding in the borough, Great Horned Owls (4) were detected in several locations. Tree Swallows (1,100), composed mainly of one 1,000-strong flock that has roamed the western Rockaways for well over a month, obliterated the previous high count of 180. Mild temperatures in late autumn assisted in the high counts of Gray Catbird (48), Brown Creeper (18), and American Robin (564).

The same mild temperatures that keep numbers of herons and half-hardy passerines around also keep waterfowl well north of our area. Continuing a downward trend, counters tallied an all-time low of Greater Scaup (483), which have wholly disappeared from Dead Horse Bay, where they once amassed in the thousands in winter. We are curious if this flock has shifted elsewhere, and if nearby count circles have seen an uptick in this species. Sharp-shinned Hawks (2) were poorly represented, which corresponds to a notably weak flight of them along the coast this fall. A count of three Common Ravens seemed low, as they've profoundly settled into urban areas, but their presence on this year's count promoted their frequency status to Regular (seen eight or more times in the last 10 years). It's terrific to see increased sightings in the field reflected in the count's moving average method of monitoring species' presence and frequency.

The Brooklyn CBC compilers deem rare species as those seen zero to three times in the last 10 years. Topping the rarities, Emily Peyton and former Brooklyn CBC compiler and database mastermind, Rick Cech, spotted a Lark Sparrow at Hendrix Creek, rare for winter in New York and a count first. An Ash-throated Flycatcher, seen at Owls Head Park the day before the count, benevolently stayed the night and became the second occurrence of this species on the count.

Orange-crowned Warbler in Brooklyn Bridge Park. Photo by Janet Zinn.

Counters in Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge and on the west side of Cross Bay Boulevard noted a Yellow-crowned Night Heron, the fourth record and first seen on the count since 2004, a Great Egret, a single Semipalmated Plover, a drake Eurasian Wigeon, and three flyover dowitchers over the West Pond, likely Long-billed due to the date, but ultimately left as a "sp.," as Short-billed Dowitchers linger in the Northeast. Rounding out the other rarities, Floyd Bennett Field counters and Jamaica Bay kayakers tallied a 10-year high count of 74 Red Knots. The north shore of Brooklyn, including Brooklyn Bridge Park, contributed sightings of Bald Eagle and Laughing Gull

to the rare list. Perhaps classified as rare for the last time, an Iceland Gull was spotted over Prospect Lake and Lesser Black-backed Gulls (6) were seen on Breezy Point beaches, and will be promoted to Irregular (seen 4-7 times in the last 10 years) for next year's count. Increased distribution of gulls in the area, and increased interest in gulls among birders will hopefully make them regulars on the count.

It was tough to miss Common Grackle, a species seen on 85 percent of our counts, and tougher to see eBird reports of large flocks of them in Brooklyn on adjacent days. We suffered a harsh about-face in missing Bonaparte's Gull, scarcer in the last 10 years but seen on 90 percent of our counts, including an all-time high of 2,789 in 2020.

This compiler has a sweet and sour feeling towards "count week" birds, those species not seen on Count Day but seen on the three days before and after Count Day. While it's nice to see a variety of species in the area, the sightings are a stinging reminder of what could have been. This year, a number of species were not seen on count day, but before and after, such as a potential count first Northern Parula, and Rusty Blackbird. Thanks to a recent AOS split, a Short-billed Gull, first seen on Tuesday, would have been a count first. Other count week birds include Turkey Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, House Wren, Nelson's Sparrow, and Yellow-breasted Chat.

Thank you to the National Park Service-Gateway Recreation Area and the New York Department of Environmental Protection for granting access to typically off-limits areas within the count circle. Special thanks to co-compiler Chris Laskowski for keeping everyone honest, and teams coordinator Bobbi Manian for always finding a place for everyone. Much gratitude to the participants, area leaders, and the Brooklyn Bird Club for making the count truly amazing year after year, no matter what we see and total.

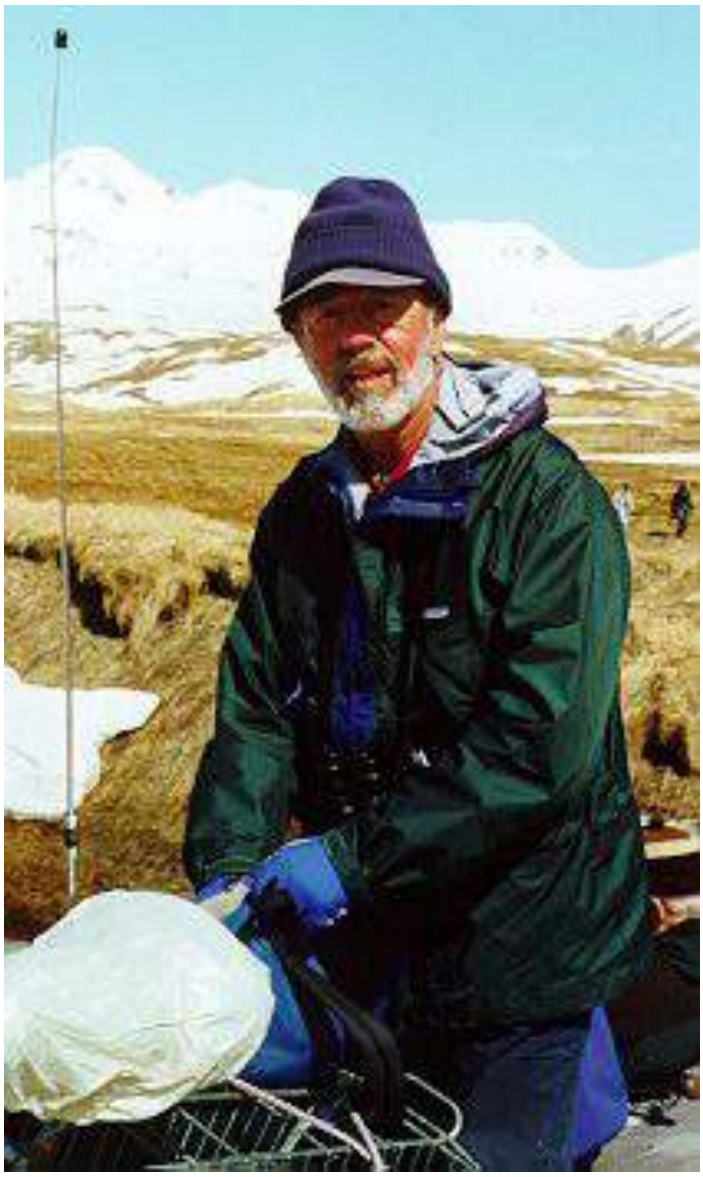
Snowy Owl at Breezy Point. Photo by Mike Yuan.

2021 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT BROOKLYN

12	120	129	50,021
TEAMS	PARTICIPANTS	SPECIES	TOTAL BIRDS COUNTED

Mr. Big Year: An Interview with Sandy Komito

By Daniel K. Smith



"There's no such thing as an ordinary bird." Sandy Komito started a recent conversation with this fundamental truth that birders often forget. It was an unexpected comment coming from a man known for his pursuit of rare birds. Most people would know Sandy as Kenny Boswick, a character from the movie The Big Year that was loosely based on Sandy.

Birders know him because of his bird-listing records. Twice he broke the American Birding Association's North American area record. In 1987 he listed 722 species and in 1998 he had 748. The last time he tried to sort out his life list total it was over 900. "I did things nobody else did," he says. "For example, for something like 30 years my North American year list was 500 or more. Every year." During his working years he would fly out Friday night to chase a rare bird. "Sometimes I would get there before the locals."

Sanford Komito was born in the East Bronx on July 13, 1931. "We were dirt poor," he says. The Komito family lived in concession apartments during the depression so that they would move every six months, often leaving in the middle of the night. He had one shirt his mother made from one of his father's discarded shirts that he washed every night.

His father, Saul, was Austrian and served in WWI fighting for the German army. "In the first battle, he gets wounded, captured, and will spend the rest of the war in a POW camp. They kept moving the camp further and further towards Siberia. He was one of the few prisoners to survive because he was young and strong. He never wanted to talk about it, it was much too terrible to discuss. When he tried his eyes would well up in tears. He was a very kind and wonderful man and maybe the nicest human being I had ever known."

The partnering of birds and competition started at age six with a family game his father created. The contest called for each person to name a different bird. The winner was the one that could name the most birds. He used Webster's Dictionary with pictures next to the entry to make sure he would win. "I was so competitive – I had to win. I never forgot the names of those birds."

He started a list of bird species at eight and by 12 he earned a Boy Scout merit badge for bird study. At 15, he was chasing rare birds. He heard about an American Avocet at Jones Beach and the next day he

Sandy Komito on Attu. All photos by Monte Taylor.

took a subway, several buses, and finally hitchhiked the final leg to see the bird. He missed the avocet but discovered excitement in the chase.

"My first guide book was Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds of the East, which I had to get repeatedly out of the library because I didn't have enough money

to buy a copy. I would return it and take it out again as soon as it was back on the shelf," he says. Years later, he would go birding with Roger Tory Peterson several times.

Growing up he worked for nickels and dimes delivering groceries. He was paid a nickel a trip and hoped for a tip on top of that. Some customers would pretend not to be home to avoid seeing the delivery boy and feeling obligated to tip. Sandy would stomp on the stairs as if he was leaving. He would wait for the person to open the door to retrieve the groceries and run up, gasping as if he was out of breath and say he came back to make sure nobody was stealing their food. "They would feel so guilty, I usually got a dime tip."

Sandy is retired now and lives in a 1,000-acre planned community in Florida. At 90 years old his voice and eyes are strong and so is his love for birds. He gets out most days to do his "regular birding as I've done for decades. Big year birding was work. See 'em, count 'em, and get out of town," he says. His community is considered a bird sanctuary, but Sandy says, "It's no more a bird sanctuary than your bathroom or mine."

Eighty-two years of observing birds has made him an advocate for the avian life in his community. Excessive tree trimming by the landscaping company allows the bird's predators to see in. "Crows, grackles and jays eat other bird's eggs and they can get away with it because they're bullies. They [tree trimmers] don't distinguish between palm and deciduous trees. A tree is a tree to them. They cut the fronds…which happen to be roosting places for our owls, Eastern Screech Owls. When you eliminate the nesting and roosting spots, they go away. Now, you have rats and mice living at the base of the tree because the owls aren't around to eat them. It doesn't take an 8-year-old to figure it out."

The day we spoke he saw a Barred Owl that's been in the same spot for a few weeks. It was surrounded by photographers. He used slide film to shoot many of his rarities. Film was too precious to waste but "with digital cameras now the birders can linger and annoy the bird. There's no longer the film you have to pay for. If you've taken a dozen [photos] of every angle, leave it alone, you're done."

He had considered becoming a Game Warden. It looked like a perfect job but there was another side of him that needed more material success. He grew up poor and wanted to take better care of his family than what a Game Warden salary would afford. "I wanted to make a buck." So he went into sales. "Every sale starts with a no. I pretended to be hard of hearing."

Eventually Sandy started his own business, Industrial Resurfacing, got married and raised three children in the New Jersey suburbs. But the inspiration he got from reading Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher's Wild America never died. He made notes about the birding locations they visited while the pair traveled the perimeter of the United States in a Ford station wagon in 1953. He hoped one day to follow their path.

In the 1980s, Bob Odear's North American Rare Bird Alert (NARBA) was the best and most efficient tool to find rare birds. The NARBA subscriber received a phone call when a rarity was discovered anywhere in North America. Yearly subscriptions were $25 and Sandy started using it around 1984. One of the first alerts he got was a Purplish-backed Jay in Clint, Texas. It was the first record of the jay in North America. The next day he flew from his home in New Jersey to El Paso.

At the location provided by NARBA, he met two other birders, Dwight Lee and Benton Basham. Basham had just broken the ABA North American record with 710 birds listed in 1983. Lee had a North American life list over 750. Sandy was enthralled with their stories of chasing rarities and they were happy to encourage this

Left to right: David Narins, Monte Taylor, and Sandy Komito on Attu, 1993.

eager newcomer that would soon be outpacing them. They convinced him to buy a Questar scope, join the ABA, and, if he acted fast, Basham could pull some strings and get Sandy on the next trip to the Alaskan island of Attu. Sandy left without seeing the Purplish-backed Jay but with a clear picture of how much fun doing a big year could be.

After that meeting Sandy began training for a big year. His plan was to use 1987 as a dry run for an attempt to break Basham's record in 1988. The travel company that ran the yearly trips to Attu, Attours, usually had one spring trip to Attu but in 1988 an additional fall trip was scheduled. Nowhere else can you get more Eurasian bird species in North America than Attu. Two trips to the remote island at the end of the Aleutians would make a record-breaking year much easier.

His plans changed in the late summer of 1987. A Ferruginous Owl in Arizona's Chiricahua Mountains was number 669 for the year and he knew he had a good chance to get the record. After a discussion with his wife Bobbye, he decided to go for Basham's record right then. He finished 1987 with a list of 722 species, breaking the ABA North American record by 12.

During a rainy day on Attu, Larry Balch of Attours mentioned to Sandy that El Niño years produced the greatest number of bird species on Attu. That fact stuck with Sandy and he looked up research by Dr. Mark Crane of Columbia University's Lamont Observatory. His forecasting said that in 1998 El Niño's effect would be the strongest.

Debi Shearwater and Sandy Komito on a pelagic trip, 2013.

At 66 Sandy felt he didn't have much physical stamina left for big years, so he decided to try it once more in 1998. Also Attours' last trip to Attu would be in 2000.

Other birders also saw the opportunity in 1998's El Niño. Greg Miller, a software coder in Maryland, had his divorce finalized on the last day of 1997 and needed a distraction. Al Levantin, a Bronx-born CEO, had been flirting with retirement before, but in 1998 he was committed to birding.

Both Al and Sandy were devoted husbands. Al's wife was a marriage counselor that recognized that this was something he had to do. Sandy knew this was a big ask from his wife. He spent 220 days away from home during his 1987 big year. Bobbye had one condition – he had to call her every night.

In 2002, Denver Post reporter Mark Obmascik was in Washington D.C. covering the Colorado Senate race. He was part of the staff that had won a Pulitzer Prize for their reporting on the Columbine High School massacre. Now he was covering a political contest between two guys that really didn't like each other. Looking for a respite from his normal beat, he called the ABA and asked if they had any interesting birding stories.

That phone call resulted in a book in 2004: The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature and Fowl Obsession. It was well received by critics and birders alike. Mark was fascinated by the three men – two wealthy guys from the Bronx and another still working full-time. The author reconstructed the men's 1998 big year and cast it as a hard-fought competition, but the race was more friendly than fierce.

There was no real contest because Al Levantin and Greg Miller couldn't compete with Sandy. Sandy had already done a big year, he had better resources, and he knew you had to make every day count.

As an example, Sandy cites the first day of 1998. He was chasing Nutting's Flycatcher in Arizona while Levantin and Miller stayed home. "I should have been running into them all the time. I got birds they didn't know about. I spent 270 days on the road." He finished that year with a list of 745 species (three birds were later added bringing the official total to 748), Greg Miller had 715 and Al Levantin had 711.

Eventually, Al and Greg both knew they weren't going to catch Sandy that year. They decided that they would work together and help each other to get as many birds as possible.

Obmascik interviewed Sandy for many hours for the book. He felt the book was filled with deliberate misrepresentations and the portrayal of him was "awful." He objects to Obmascik's characterizations that all big year birders are highly competitive and withhold important information from other birders. Sandy says the book's liberties undermine his reputation so much that a reader might ask, "How do we know this guy really saw what he said he saw?"

Sandy concedes that the writer's job is to create a compelling narrative. "Mark is a good writer and to make a good story you have one guy wearing a white hat, one guy in a black hat, and one guy you feel sorry for. I was the guy in the black hat. Greg was the nice guy that probably shouldn't have tried a big year. He neither had the money; he, as he put it, went to the bank of Dad."

In the later editions of the book, a section was added, "A Conversation with Mark Obmascik." It's eight questions and one of them is "What about cheating? How does anyone really know that Sandy Komito, Al Levantin, and Greg Miller really saw all those birds?" Obmascik spends the most amount of time answering this question. He explains that he gave the men of the Big Year "the once-over twice." He called witnesses, checked the weather conditions listed in their field journals against the National Weather Service, and checked hotel and car rental receipts. He queried the men about the other's lists. Instead of fraud he found "awe-inspiring" honesty. He concludes by saying the contest was as much about honor and integrity as about winning.

The movie, The Big Year, based on Obmascik's book, was released in 2011. It starred Steve Martin (Stu Preissler), Jack Black (Brad Harris), and Owen Wilson (Kenny Boswick), based loosely on Levantin, Miller and Komito. Like Sandy, the Kenny Boswick character is a New Jersey roofing contractor and currently owns the ABA North American record. They're both also brash and outspoken. As a way of giving Boswick some gravitas, the film's narrator (John Cleese) tells us Boswick broke Sandy Komito's record.

Because of his disappointment with the book, Sandy refused to have anything to do with the movie. While Al and Greg enjoyed fame from the film, Sandy didn't see it until it was shown on an overseas flight. He even considered suing the studio for using his name.

Greg Miller was hired as bird consultant for the film and he highlights that connection in promoting his guiding business. He likes to say, "I talk about contests I didn't win and sign copies of a book I didn't write." Al Levantin visited the set with his kids and had their pictures taken with the stars.

The movie got mixed reviews but remains a must-see for birders. In the book, Mark Obmascik used the competition to create tension, whereas the movie focuses on Kenny Boswick's character – or lack of it. There's a scene early in the film where a fellow birder claims Boswick is "in violation of all the unwritten rules for decorum and civility." Harris, Jack Black's character, replies that maybe that's what it takes to be the greatest birder in the world. He is then told that Boswick might be adding birds to his list that he never saw. "Are you saying Boswick is a cheater?" Harris asks. He's given an enigmatic answer, but the innuendo that Sandy found in the book is now writ large in a major Hollywood movie.

Anybody that meets Sandy doesn't forget him. He's a ham, a great storyteller, and most importantly he knows birds and their field marks. Sandy received a lot of support from the birding community that's not represented in the movie.

Big Year Birders: Jay Lehman, Sandy Komito, and Neil Hayward, 2013.

Neil Hayward broke Sandy's record by one bird in 2013. Sandy contacted Neil to congratulate him. "I told him I wish I had a crown so I could hand it to you," Sandy says.

In 2016, the American Birding Association amended bylaw 8(b) by adding Hawaii to the official ABA description of "North America." This decision distressed many birders that had lists of "Birds of the ABA area" going back decades. Many had earned those lists participating in an American birthright – the road trip. The image of driving down an open road is part of our mythos and birders shared that mystique since

the publication of Wild America. Realistically, plane travel was essential to serious big year attempts since the '70s, but adding Hawaii put a big year attempt out of reach for many birders.

For Sandy it was deeply personal. "I think it was done for mean-spirited reasons. They thought, 'We know how to fix this wise guy,' and that wise guy was me. If I have something to say, I'll say it. I had things to say and people didn't like it."

Sandy still finds peace in birding, but it's tinged with sadness with the loss of so many birds. "When you go back to some of the areas that you once knew, they no longer exist. The birds you used to experience are no longer there."

He's known for finding rare birds and he has advice for people when they ask him how to find a rare bird. "Well, you can pray, that might work. But if you don't know what you're looking for, your prayers won't be answered." He advocates getting to know the common birds to find the rare ones. "You want to look at the common 'probables' because you want to look for something different. That's the joy for many of us."

What did he do after seeing over 750 bird species in his second big year? "I went out birding to start a new year list for 1999. I was just back to birding because I enjoy birding. All of sudden I'll look at a robin and I'll say, 'Gee I don't remember white on the tail.' I realized I wasn't looking carefully enough at them. And that's what I started to do again, look more carefully at the ones I thought I knew."

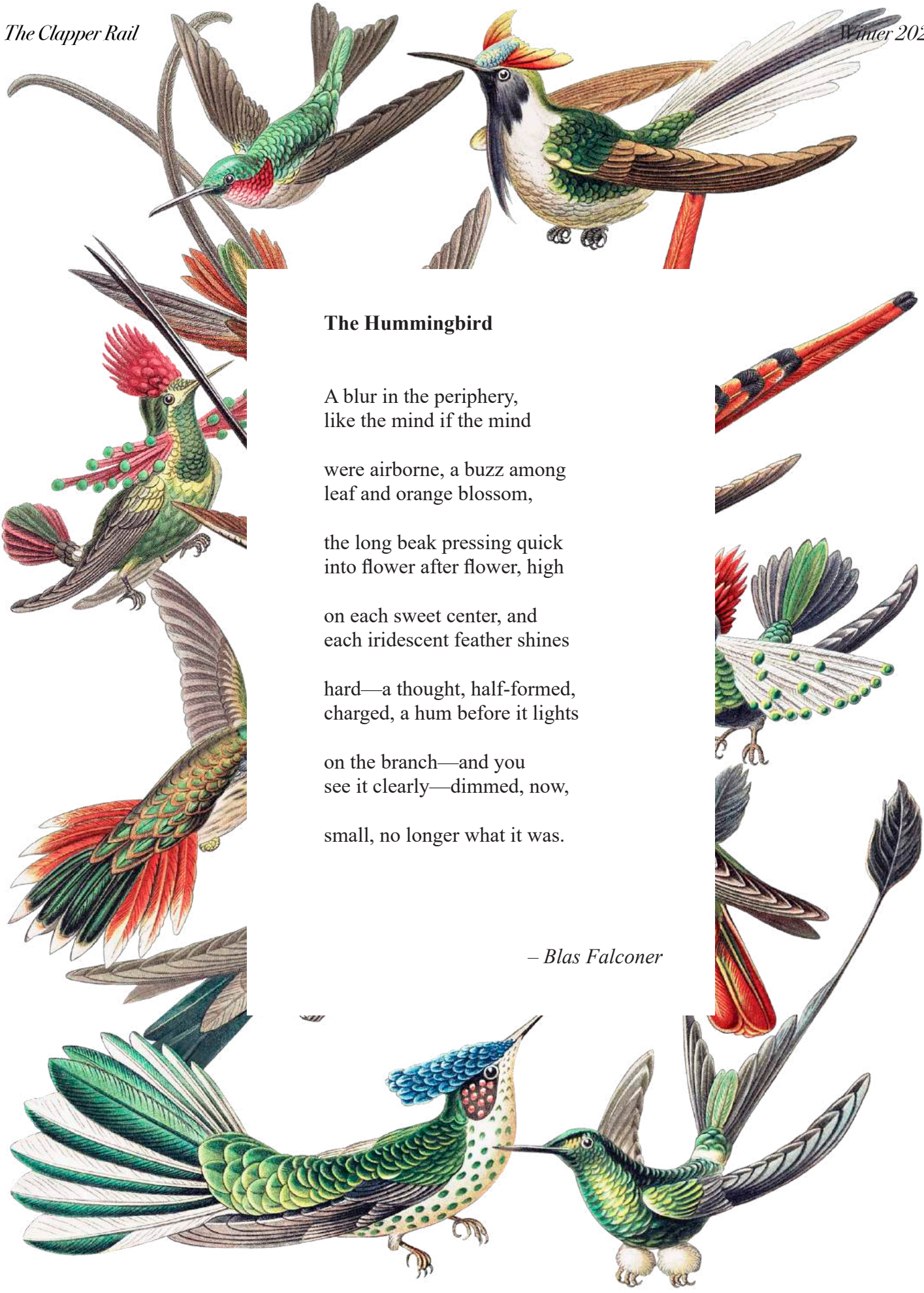
After all, there's no such thing as an ordinary bird.

Sandy Komito has copies of both of his books available for sale. They are hard to find and often priced at over $100 from rare book dealers. He will sign the books for club members. If interested, please email me at ppbirder@gmail.com

"Birding's Indiana Jones, A Chaser's Diary," 1990. Self-published. $79. The story of his first big year in 1987 when he listed 722 species. Four copies remaining.

"I Came, I Saw, I Counted," 1999. Self-published. $59. His account of his second big year in 1998 when he listed 748 species. This was the year portrayed in the book and movie The Big Year. 12 copies remaining.

Ring-billed Gulls. Photo by Karen O'Hearn.



The Hummingbird

A blur in the periphery,
like the mind if the mind

were airborne, a buzz among
leaf and orange blossom,

the long beak pressing quick
into flower after flower, high

on each sweet center, and
each iridescent feather shines

hard—a thought, half-formed,
charged, a hum before it lights

on the branch—and you
see it clearly—dimmed, now,

small, no longer what it was.

– Blas Falconer

Janet Schumacher sent us this poem in her final days. It is reprinted here with permission of the poet.
Kunstformen der Natur (1904), plate 99: Trochilidae (Hummingbirds). Illustration by Ernst Haeckel.

Dickcissel. Gouache on paper by Toni Simon.

Sparks!

By Michelle Talich

Every autumn when I was a kid, my parents would pack my sister and me into the car, along with what seemed like most of our worldly possessions, plus a cooler full of sandwiches, and make the long drive from Englewood, Colorado to visit family in Kimball, South Dakota.

Upon my dad's insistence, these visits were timed to coincide with pheasant hunting season. Within a couple days of our arrival at my grandparents' house, he would disappear before dawn with a truckful of male relatives and return around lunchtime, dirty and triumphant, freshly-killed pheasants in hand. I used to sit with him in the backyard as he plucked them, fascinated by the coppery feathers cascading down to cover the grass.

I always begged him to take me along on a hunt and he would always say no, until finally one day he agreed. That night after dinner he made me pick out warm clothes for the following day before going to bed, telling me to sleep fast.

It felt like as soon as I had closed my eyes he was waking me up, and it was dark outside as I bundled up in the clothes I'd left sitting on the dresser. We both ate a hurried bowl of cereal before rushing from the house, beckoned by sharp honks from a pickup truck idling on the corner. My dad passed a thermos of coffee and his rifle to one of my uncles inside the cab, then squeezed in himself while I scrambled into the bed of the truck. As soon as everyone got settled, we drove off in search of a field with a narrow ditch running along the border between it and the road, because those ditches were likely to contain pheasants. The sun was starting to tint the sky a pinkish grey when we found a spot that looked promising. The truck coasted to a stop and the men got out, creeping towards the ditch with rifles ready, doing their best to not make a sound until they were right at the edge.

There was a moment of intense stillness, then a sudden, powerful burst of sound and movement as the birds spooked from the underbrush of the ditch and took flight in a big, frantic blur of pumping wings and panicked squawks. As they scattered across the sky, rifle shots boomed amidst exclamations of joy and curses as my dad and uncles hit or missed their targets. When the bulk of the flock disappeared out of range, the men lowered their guns and began to wade through the tall grasses of the field, faces folded in concentration, searching for the unlucky pheasants they had killed.

When all the fallen birds had been gathered up, my uncle tossed them by their feet into the bed of the truck and gave me a wink. I rearranged the lifeless pile into a neat row, making sure to turn them bloody side down. Then I softly touched each one, admiring the feathers which looked so beautiful in the early morning light.

Those limp pheasants are the first birds I remember being enchanted by, but it wasn't until many years later, after I'd been living in New York City for several years, that I found my spark bird.

One morning in Midtown, I was weaving my way through the rush-hour crowd when I noticed a shape on the sidewalk near a building, strange and still in that swirl of motion. Stopping to get a closer look, I was surprised to discover that it was a bird. Tiny, completely yellow and perfect in every way, it lay on its side, dead. It was sad to see but it was also sort of familiar, a call back to the pheasants lined up in the truck bed. I picked it up and carried it until I found a planter to lay it in. After that, my gaze was focused on

White-throated Sparrow in Green-Wood Cemetery. All photos by Michelle Talich.

the ground every time I walked around the city, on the lookout for more. I found black and white ones, olive-y brown ones with speckles across the chest, and, once, a slightly larger bird that had crimson on top of the head and a yellow wash across its belly, all completely intact, all dead. My favorite find had a black face and was blue on top with white underneath. All of them were completely unlike the ubiquitous city birds I knew – house sparrows, pigeons, starlings. Not having any understanding of what was killing the small, colorful birds, I started looking in parks for more bodies.

And so I was walking through Bryant Park one spring day, scanning the path in front of me when I noticed a little brown bird scratching in the dirt near some bushes. It appeared to be a bit bigger and rounder than the standard house sparrow and it had a pattern of alternating black and white stripes on the head which made me think of a bike helmet. When the bird turned, I could see a square-shaped patch of white feathers beneath the beak and a bright yellow spot in front of each eye as if someone had daubed them on with a hi-lighter – a field mark I would later learn is called the lores. The bird hopped up into a bush and settled on a branch. Suddenly, it threw back its head and sang. The song, a series of clear, reedy whistles that sounded something like "Oh sweet Canada, Canada, Canada," made me smile and shiver at the same time. I stood there until I heard it sing again. And again.

I had just met my spark bird. I didn't realize it at the time, but that White-throated Sparrow was a gateway bird and I would soon become hooked.

Over the next weeks and months, I slowly transformed into a birder. I watched "The Central Park Effect." I learned about the Atlantic Flyway and spring and fall migrations. I went on a bird walk and borrowed binoculars from the leader. I bought a copy of Sibley's Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America and used it to identify all the dead birds I'd found: Yellow Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Black-throated Blue Warbler. I went on more bird walks and went out on my own. I jotted down everything I saw (and everything I thought I saw) in a tiny notebook, carefully noting the date and location. I joined the Brooklyn Bird Club and asked for a pair of binoculars for Christmas.

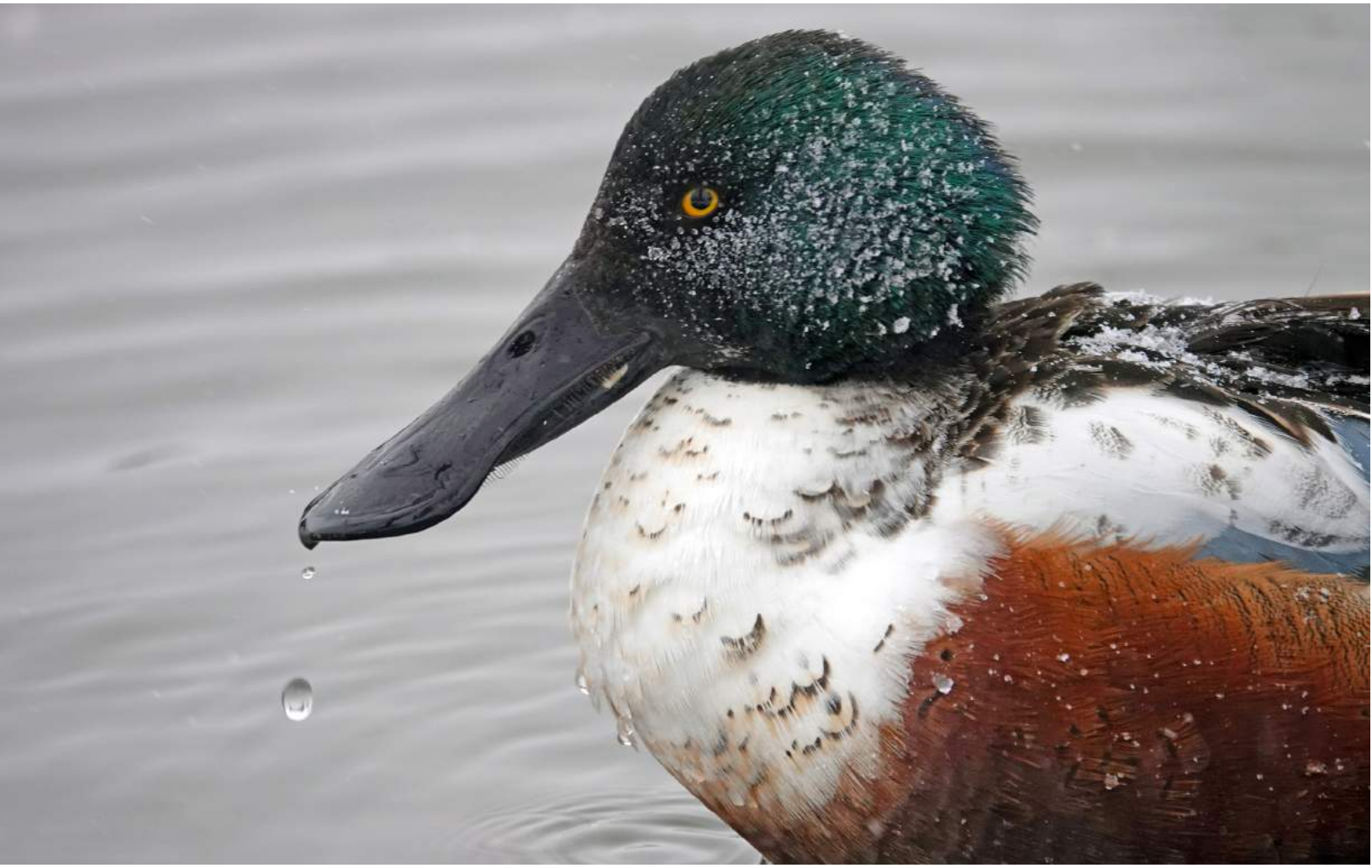
That December, a male Painted Bunting turned up near the LeFrak skating rink in Prospect Park. He lingered for weeks, gorging himself on seeds. I teared up when I caught my first glimpse of him through my brand-new bins. He was like a creature from a fairy tale, a living rainbow, and I was overwhelmed by his beauty. That evening I set my alarm for 5 A.M. so I could rush to the park before work the next morning and have another chance at seeing the bunting. I laid out my clothes for the next day on my dresser and pulled down a box of cereal and a bowl in the kitchen. I went to bed early and tried to sleep fast.

Years later, one late April day, a friend and I went birding in Marine Park. As we walked along the trail that hugs Gerritsen Creek, we saw Song Sparrows, Killdeer, and a Carolina Wren. Two American Crows cawed urgently at each other as they flew overhead. Mallards and Brants clustered on the water while Clapper Rails taunted us, calling kek-kek-kek from within the phragmites, daring us to find them. We crept around a curve, trying to quiet the crunch of gravel so we could better hear the birds around us. Then suddenly we stopped in our tracks. I sucked in a breath and held it in wonder. To the left of the path, gleaming amid the pale fringe of dried out grasses, stood a male Ring-necked Pheasant – regal, magnificent, and gloriously alive.

Ring-necked Pheasant in Marine Park.

Photo Gallery: Michelle Talich

Peregrine Falcon in Green-Wood Cemetery.

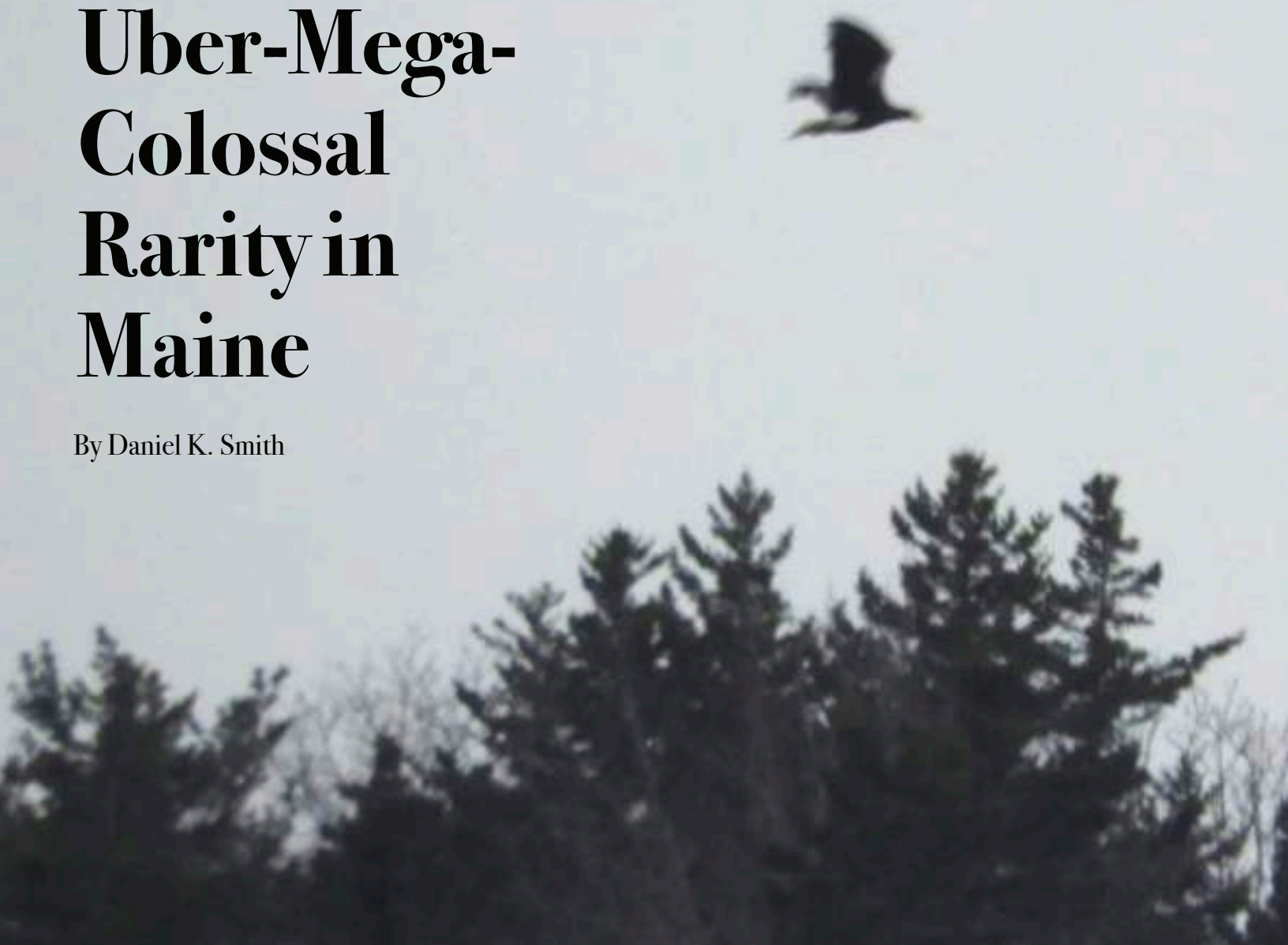


Top and bottom: Great Cormorant at Floyd Bennett Field and Northern Shoveler in Prospect Park.

Top and bottom: Henslow's Sparrow and Palm Warbler in Green-Wood Cemetery.

Chasing an Uber-Mega-Colossal Rarity in Maine

By Daniel K. Smith



There's no FOMO like birding FOMO. During last year's BBC Christmas Bird Count, a Northern Lapwing created a dilemma for many participants. Stay with the count or drop everything to get a rarity?

Nothing can upset your birding zen more than the urge to chase. Each activity has its own satisfactions and one doesn't exclude the other, but the fear of missing out can be acute.

I've minimized my birding FOMO by making a rule to only chase rare birds in the New York City area. This way, enjoyment of my local patch of Prospect Park isn't interfered with by a vagrant 50 miles away.

But there was a big dark bird on the horizon that was about to test my patience. That bird was the Steller's Sea-eagle. In January, I left my comfort zone to chase the mega-rarity in Maine, the first Steller's to be seen in Canada or the lower 48 states.

By all accounts, the Steller's Sea-eagle is a stunning bird with an eight-foot wingspan, large head and massive yellow beak. It weighs about twice as much as a Bald Eagle. The bird mostly feeds on fish, alive or dead, scavenges on seal carcasses, and is capable of taking water birds and even Arctic foxes and hares. An estimated 4,000 are left in its native range of Asia and eastern Siberia.

This individual Steller's in Maine can be identified by a unique white spot on its left wing. The bird was

Steller's Sea Eagle in Boothbay, Maine.

spotted first in Alaska in August 2020, then in Texas in March 2021 (not positively IDed as the same individual but highly likely), Quebec three months later, Nova Scotia in November. In December it spent a few days on the Taunton River in Massachusetts. Just before New Year's it turned up in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, and, unlike the earlier locations, it settled in there and sparked a rush of birders to the Pine Tree State.

The Steller's and its journey has attracted national attention. Journalists avoided using crazy birder cliches in their story narratives and seemed to grasp the majesty of the creature. The stories in the New York Times, Smithsonian, the Associated Press, and NPR were filled with superlatives – "unreal," "colossal," "mind-boggling," "one-in-a-million."

My urge to see it grew with every rare bird alert. Getting time off from work and timing it with favorable weather was difficult. It wasn't until mid-January, when I had to travel to Connecticut, that I saw my opportunity. I left Brooklyn early, armed with a motel reservation and a strategy.

During the bird's residency in Boothbay Harbor, some patterns and routines emerged. In the morning, the eagle was often around Spruce Point, then to Tumbler Island or nearby Mouse Island, and then in the afternoon to early evening, it could be seen over Townsend Gut, where it would find a roosting spot. In the middle of these locations is the Maine State Aquarium with a perfect view of the upper harbor. I planned to be at the aquarium at first light.

There was a chance I could see the bird going to its roosting spot over Townsend Gut if I could get there before dark. My Google Maps destination was set to Robinson's Wharf, a restaurant that was closed for the season and sits right next to the bridge over Townsend Gut. The arrival time was estimated at a little after 4 p.m., just as it was getting dark.

The GroupMe app was the best online resource for the latest sightings. The conversations contained detailed locations of sightings. The exuberance and excitement of those who were on the bird drowned out the ones who missed it. The drive to Maine was the first chance I had to calculate my chances of seeing the bird and I had to acknowledge the fact that more than a few birders had missed it entirely. In fact, I didn't know when and where it had been seen since two days prior. There was no guarantee of a sighting and this 300-mile drive could end in disappointment. I resisted the temptation to pull over to check my phone for updates.

It was getting dark by the time I crossed the river over Townsend Gut. A loud clanging sound was made every time a car went over the metal grating on the bridge. It's a swing bridge that requires an operator to turn the roadway to allow a large fishing boat to pass. The bridge attendant greeted me as I approached. He seemed happy to have the company and reported the eagle hadn't flown over yet and directed me to a group of six or seven people staking out this location. The folks were very friendly and had seen the bird from this location going to its roosting spot over the past week. It had kept a regular routine and a woman on the bridge had seen it the night before.

Boothbay Harbor is a seasonal tourist town. January isn't the season. The town was desolate with little traffic or any activity at all, except on this bridge, where there was a constant stream of cars. Most would stop to ask if we'd seen the eagle. Men in pickup trucks and families in minivans with children, amazed at the attention focused on their little town, wanted to share their sightings and any news. This bridge on the outskirts of town was the busiest place in Boothbay Harbor.

Most locals had seen it the day before and it

Birders at a construction site at the Linken Bay Resort.

was distressing to hear, "You should have been here yesterday."

People left the bridge as it got darker until a couple from New Jersey and I remained. When they found out I was from Brooklyn they asked, "Did you get the Gray-breasted Martin in Prospect Park?" I suspected that I was going to encounter a different kind of birder here.

The Steller's had broken its routine and it was a no-show at Townsend Gut that night.

I passed an open restaurant and peeked in the window. In a town as small as Boothbay Harbor, visitors stand out like a sore thumb. I ignored the turned heads when I walked in and took a seat at the boat-shaped bar. The bartender gave me the menu and returned to chatting with the regulars. At which point I learned someone named Alex was in a coma and his three ex-wives had lunch there today.

The bartender asked a guy sitting a few stools down if he saw the Steller's. I wasn't the only birder at the bar. The guy's name was Jim and he had been in Boothbay Harbor for two days. He got some great views yesterday but today he got skunked. He was from New Jersey and finished 2021 with a list of 625 bird species for the ABA North America area.

The bartender wanted to know how far I came for the bird. I told him Brooklyn and Jim asked, "Did you get the Gray-breasted Martin?" Jim had a good story about going for the martin on Easter and missing the bird by a day.

I was at the Maine State Aquarium at 7 a.m. It was in the 20s and windy with overcast skies. The parking lot filled quickly and there were cars from Tennessee, California, and Florida. A crowd of 20 to 30 people were lined up with cameras and scopes along the split-rail fence facing the harbor. Jim was there and I set up my scope next to him.

A woman in a brightly-colored Pendleton coat showed us a photo she had taken with a point-and-shoot camera of the Sea-eagle perched on the spruce tree next to us. It was taken the week before. "You should have been here last week," she said. Ouch. A man dressed in camo with an elaborate camera and tripod setup got into a detailed conversation with Jim about bird photography. Scanning the harbor, I recognized some locations from photos posted on social media and I projected an imaginary Steller's Sea-eagle into each spot.

The sky was dark, but there was enough light to see two Bald Eagles and a raven on Tumbler Island a half-mile away. There were Surf Scoters, Common Eiders, and Long-tailed Ducks to divert our attention and sometimes a Common Loon or Red-breasted Merganser popped up close to shore and we all could get some nice photos.

Jim departed. "I have a marriage I need to get back to," he said.

The cold wind and inactivity eventually forced many to seek protection next to the building. The aquarium is closed for the season but there was staff inside with binoculars looking for the Sea-eagle.

Checking in the night before at the motel, the front-desk person said she was used to one customer a night, but since the Steller's had arrived, the place has filled up. She seemed to read my mind and told me if I wanted to extend my stay they needed to know by 11 a.m. By 10 it looked like I was going to need another night. I struck out again.

There are no amenities at the aquarium and a cup of coffee and a chance to warm up sounded good. My room secured, my warm car was more appealing than standing in the cold, so I drove to scout some other

Stakeout at 7 a.m. at the Maine State Aquarium.

locations the bird had been known to frequent. While walking around the seasonal Spruce Point Inn a van pulled up and the driver asked if that was my truck blocking the road. The truck wasn't mine, but I had seen the person who left it had binoculars. The inquisitor was a caretaker of the homes in the area and explained the whole road is private, although there were no signs indicating that. Some locals complained about having their driveways and roadways blocked by erratically and haphazardly parked cars. He emphasized that not everyone is as friendly as him.

This was going into the third week of the Steller's visit, which provided an unexpected bounty to local businesses but traffic headaches for residents.

Back at the motel room, I regrouped and prepared for another frigid stakeout at the aquarium. I checked the GroupMe app and someone was on the bird. They posted GPS coordinates and the spot was five minutes away from my motel.

The location was a construction site for the Linken Bay Resort. I didn't see anybody as I drove up and rolled slowly down an unpaved road. Off to the left, a group of three or four people huddled around a scope and one of them beckoned me to come over. Juggling my scope, bins and camera I trotted over. The Steller's Sea-eagle was perched on an island about a quarter of a mile away, but the visual directions they gave me didn't make sense. "It's in the wedge-like space on the treeline about 10:30."

After a few seconds that seemed like an eternity, I got on the bird. It had its back to us but its white chevrons were clearly visible. The bird was enormous. It flapped its wings as it turned to face us, its eyes close together, and seemed to be keenly aware of its status as apex predator. Its beak was giant and yellow. The Steller's allowed us a moment to glory in its presence before it took wing, flying off as it looked like something out of a '50s Godzilla movie. I took a deep breath.

A construction worker came over to our growing group. "Who's got the grey Honda with NY plates? You're blocking my truck," he said. I apologized for my erratic parking. "Didn't you see the construction equipment?" he asked. Next to my car was a big backhoe filling a dump truck. I said, "No, sorry," and it was the truth. On the verge of seeing the sea-eagle, I hadn't noticed anything going on around my car. I was grateful he was only incredulous and not angry. Now he's another local with a crazy birder story.

I drove out the way I came in, through a dirt parking lot with a couple of port-a-potties for the workers that was now filling up with a jumble of cars. The license plates were from Illinois, Delaware, Texas, Vermont. When I passed this spot not more than six or seven minutes ago, there was one car, now there was over 20, with more lined up trying to park.

Some folks jogged down the road with tripods and cameras with telephoto lenses. But the bird had flown. I watched it head east until it flew behind the treetops. The newcomers all wanted to know where it was last seen. I pointed to the location where it dipped beyond the horizon and in my head I thought, "You should have been here 10 minutes ago."

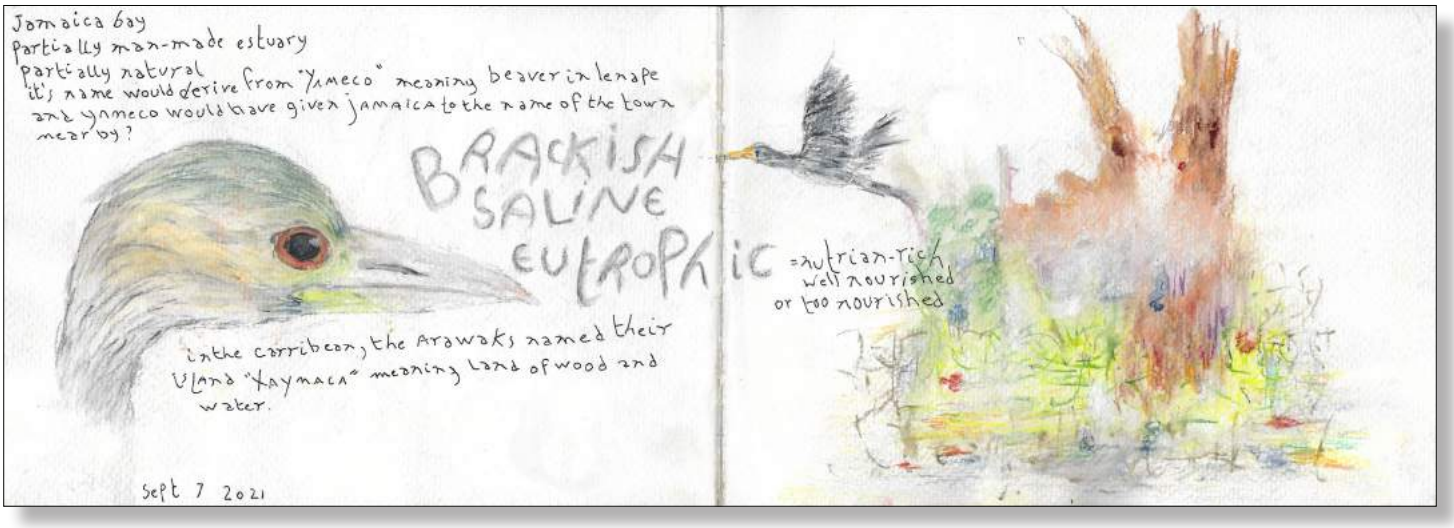
Steller's Sea Eagle in Boothbay. Maine.

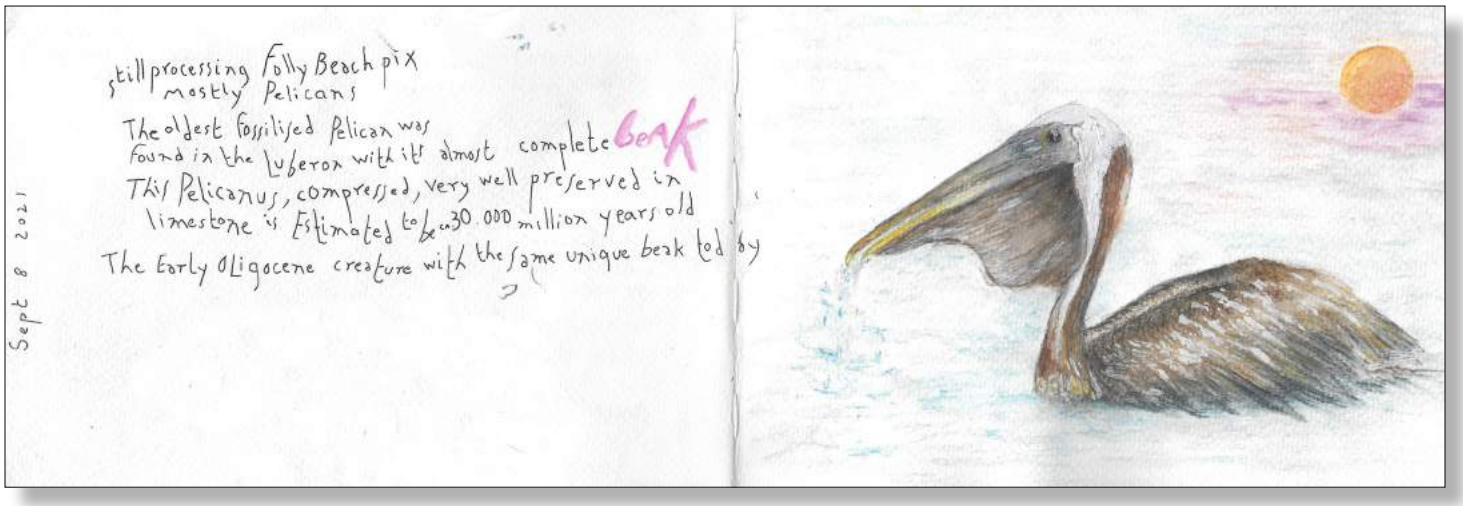
Field Sketches

By Nicole Peyrafitte




Left to right: Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Brown Pelican, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Horned Lark. All photos by Nicole Peyrafitte.



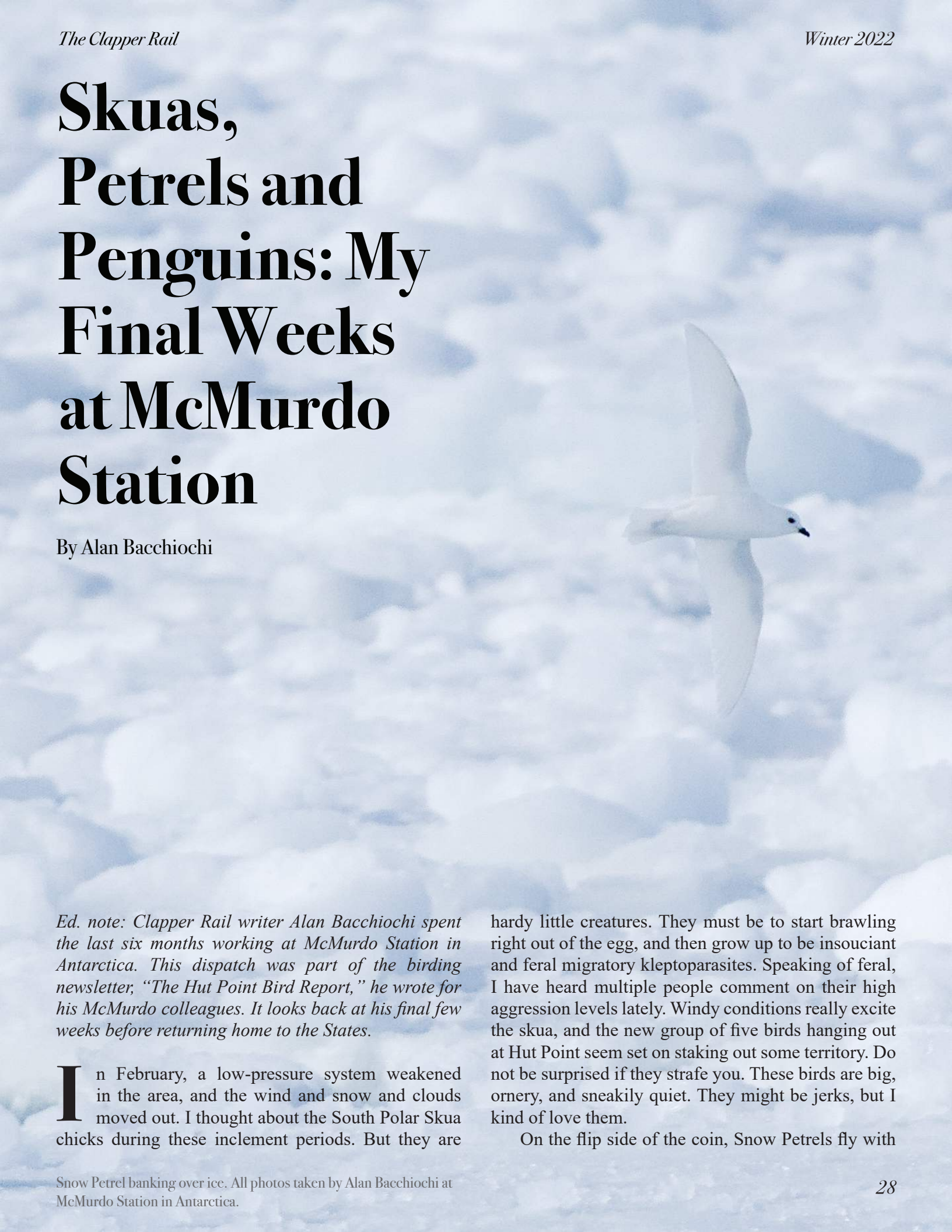



January 1 2022
"être du monde" via d. haraway et v. despret
Raconter des histoires à l'aide des seuls faits
connection en
mille-feuille
displaced
more complex
to care about
Ash Throated Flycatcher
Myiarchus cinerascens
Mega rarity in New York
les espèces compagnes s'accompagnent
your western home and head East
the right place at the right time?
is it our business or is it not?
nous contemplons dans le miroir animal poli par nos soins" D.H.
La culpabilité
démoraliser


Horned Lark Alauda Bird = avelella = "self suspended" in Lenâpe
La Question
Eremophila alpestris
Alouette hausse-col cornue
the only native lark in north america
je te plumerai pas
Mashtekola
Lakota

Skuas, Petrels and Penguins: My Final Weeks at McMurdo Station

By Alan Bacchiochi



Ed. note: Clapper Rail writer Alan Bacchiochi spent the last six months working at McMurdo Station in Antarctica. This dispatch was part of the birding newsletter, "The Hut Point Bird Report," he wrote for his McMurdo colleagues. It looks back at his final few weeks before returning home to the States.

In February, a low-pressure system weakened in the area, and the wind and snow and clouds moved out. I thought about the South Polar Skua chicks during these inclement periods. But they are hardy little creatures. They must be to start brawling right out of the egg, and then grow up to be insouciant and feral migratory kleptoparasites. Speaking of feral, I have heard multiple people comment on their high aggression levels lately. Windy conditions really excite the skua, and the new group of five birds hanging out at Hut Point seem set on staking out some territory. Do not be surprised if they strafe you. These birds are big, ornery, and sneakily quiet. They might be jerks, but I kind of love them.

On the flip side of the coin, Snow Petrels fly with

Snow Petrel banking over ice. All photos taken by Alan Bacchiochi at McMurdo Station in Antarctica.

South Polar Skua.

an elegant, long, swooping glide. Skuas sprint and muscle their way through the air. Snow Petrels seem more a part of the atmosphere. I find them enchanting. I was lucky to watch one for 20 minutes when the pack ice last clustered around Hut Point. Looking back at the photos, I realized why the leading edge of their wing's underside is a darker gray/silver. Snow Petrels favor pack ice. That darker curved area makes for great camouflage blending in with the darker sections of broken ice.

I was also left with a question from that sighting. What did it catch and eat? Is that a jellyfish of some sort?

Snow Petrel with mystery prey.

On Thursday evening, a flock of 12 Snow Petrels put on a big show dive fishing right off Hut Point. I wish I had been there. But the number of birds did stick in my head. This round of Snow Petrel movement through the area has been characterized by small numbers. Usually no more than five birds. However, an interesting picture has been emerging. Based on reports from observers in helicopter trips to me, it seems possible a large flock has made its way from the Dailey Islands to McMurdo Station. I cannot say with certainty that this is the same group, but it is something to consider.

Do you ever find yourself confused by a bird you saw? Did you ever try to make an American Redstart into a hummingbird? With only four common species of birds, and two of them flightless, I managed to really tie my head into a knot. I had been hearing some Adélie penguins calling to each other. Then I saw something large in the distance, around 400 yards away, that was not a penguin.

Not a penguin...but two.

Is that an albatross? A really lost albatross? Is that a long tube-nosed bill coming out to the right? Could that giant bird have been making those calls? Nope. It could not have been because it was two Adélie penguins. One was standing and one was lying on its belly facing left. That bill was a flipper.

Besides creating optical illusions, the penguins have been scarce this past week. With the sea ice gone, the Emperors cannot wander by the station anymore. The large numbers of Adélies that we had last week

have gone elsewhere as well. You can still see a few Adélies with binoculars across the water on the sea ice, but not a century of them like a week ago. We'll see what next week brings.

Back to the South Polar Skuas. I thought it would be interesting to continue the photo series of the growth of the chick at nest two. (The chicks at the other six nests were all doing fine, but I plan on making the rounds tomorrow and Tuesday to see how they held up through the recent wind and snow. I am also curious to see how close the chick at nest eight is to fledging.)

Yes, skua chicks eat rusty iron! Because of course they do. (I have seen Red-tailed Hawk chicks in the nest do a similar "beaking" behavior with green branches brought in by the adults.) You can also see the tail feathers coming in. Skua chicks should fledge by day 50. The local chicks seem to be developing slowly though, maybe because of the quality and amount of food? This chick (nest two) and the one at nest eight are exercising to fly though, leaping into the wind and flapping their wings.

I saved the best for last. On Friday, a Wilson's Storm-Petrel was spotted off Hut Point. It was foraging and did not stay long. I hope we see more when the weather settles. Look for a small dark bird with a white rump and a swallow-like swoop. This sighting places us within one species of setting an "official" record for the area. The species we are looking for is an Arctic Tern, and it is distinct from our two other airborne locals. Look for a white bird with long, pointed wings and two streamers, it will be flying in a more direct manner than the fluttering Snow Petrels. They are about a foot long with a two-and-a-half-foot wingspan, a little smaller than Snow Petrels. An Arctic Tern at this time of year will also have a horseshoe of black around its head like an open wreath.

Next week's report will be the last bird one of this season. The resupply vessel Ocean Giant will be arriving, and the resupplying activity will curtail access to Hut Point. This season I think we have demonstrated what can be achieved when you get a lot of eyes out in the field. We have painted a great picture of the bird scene for the station so far this year. I would love to complete the image. I'm leaving at the end of February, but the birds won't be leaving just then. The skua will be around at least through March, and I hear the Emperors might have a massive convention over at Scott Base.

Growth Series at Nest 2: South Polar Skua chick

11 days

22 days

31 days

37 days

44 days

53 days

Clockwise from top: Eastern Meadowlark in Shirley Chisholm State Park. Photo by Valerie Masten.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Red-tailed Hawk in Prospect Park. Photos by Radka Osickova.

Brooklyn Christmas Count Annual Report: 2021

Species	Total Seen	NS	PP	GW	OH	MP	FB	BB	SC	JB	RP	BP	BT
Snow Goose	750					1			250	249			250
Brant	14,695	21			344	322	549	1490	2900	6825	275	443	1526
Canada Goose	2,060	21	230	346	200	224	225	117	111	269	10	2	305
Mute Swan	117		7		82	2				14	9	3	
Wood Duck	2		2										
Northern Shoveler	351		305						20	26			
Gadwall	335	22			3		3	3	14	282			8
Eurasian Wigeon	1									1			
American Wigeon	142	21			8	16			26	60	5		6
Mallard	569	30	233	26	24	69	5	40	64	70		8	
American Black Duck	713	37	12		97	48	3	23	69	110	14	6	294
Northern Pintail	10									6			4
Green-winged Teal	324						3		300	21			
Ring-necked Duck	4		4										
Greater Scaup	483	33			6	11	13	25	250	142		3	
Lesser Scaup	63	26			14				14	9			
Surf Scoter	12										6	6	
White-winged Scoter	8											8	
Black Scoter	33										4	29	
Scoter (sp.)	12											12	
Long-tailed Duck	184				1	8	24	2			45	104	
Bufflehead	939	113			127	36	49	48	259	127	19	30	131
Common Goldeneye	28						2	4	11	5			6
Hooded Merganser	69					1		7	23	38			
Red-breasted Merganser	522	21			16	68	68	68	113	100	14	24	30
Ruddy Duck	359		68						175	116			
Ring-necked Pheasant	2					1			1				
Pied-billed Grebe	20		2			1			15	2			
Horned Grebe	63				1	4	6	1	35	15			1
Rock Pigeon	1,316	451	72	146	407	37	12	28	18	66	65	14	
Mourning Dove	623	246	119	14	56	41	24	77	2	7	16	21	
Clapper Rail	3					1				2			
American Coot	68	1	12		1			1	7	46			
American Oystercatcher	9										1		8
Black-bellied Plover	53						46						7
Killdeer	1							1					
Semipalmated Plover	1									1			
Ruddy Turnstone	34												34
Red Knot	74						26						48
Sanderling	1,121					200	2		2		210	653	54
Dunlin	907						90			65	30	54	668
Purple Sandpiper	44				3						3	38	
Dowitcher (sp.)	3									3			
American Woodcock	4						1		1	2			
Greater Yellowlegs	8									7			1
Laughing Gull	6	3										3	

Species	Total Seen	NS	PP	GW	OH	MP	FB	BB	SC	JB	RP	BP	BT
Short-billed Gull	0	cw											
Ring-billed Gull	8,844	5065	250	10	2215	222	324	227	262	24	25	209	11
Herring Gull	1,634	305	40	5	374	18	80	70	105	141	160	221	115
Iceland Gull	1		1										
Lesser Black-backed Gull	9										3	6	
Great Black-backed Gull	388	39	3		88	7	15	14	11	23	27	142	19
Red-throated Loon	104	1			4	5	4	1	1		21	67	
Common Loon	109				17	6	13	1	2	3	13	51	3
Northern Gannet	1,750										150	1600	
Great Cormorant	34	1			1		14		11		1	6	
Double-crested Cormorant	152	18	1		7	10	12	15	4	52	4	28	1
Great Blue Heron	48	1	4	3	8	4	1	8	5	10	1		3
Great Egret	1									1			
Black-crowned Night-Heron	8							2	5	1			
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	1									1			
Turkey Vulture	0			cw	cw				cw				
Bald Eagle	1	1											
Northern Harrier	25					1	4		5	5		3	7
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2						1			1			
Cooper's Hawk	16		3	4	1	1	1	2	1	1	2		
Red-shouldered Hawk	0						cw						
Red-tailed Hawk	22	1	3	7	2		6	1		1			1
Barn Owl	3						1			2			
Great Horned Owl	4			1			1		1		1		
Snowy Owl	6								2			3	1
Northern Saw-whet Owl	2										2		
Belted Kingfisher	3								2	1			
Red-bellied Woodpecker	37		17	14	4		1		1				
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	18	1	5	6	2		2	1		1			
Downy Woodpecker	64	1	24	4	4	4	7	6	5	4	4	1	
Hairy Woodpecker	2		1		1								
Northern Flicker	50	3	3	1		8	4	10	4	7	2	8	
American Kestrel	11	3		1	2	2		1				2	
Merlin	8	1	1	1		1			1	2		1	
Peregrine Falcon	12	2	1			1		1	2	3	1		1
Monk Parakeet	20			17				3					
Eastern Phoebe	1			1									
Ash-throated Flycatcher	1				1								
Blue Jay	223	7	103	77	12	8		2	13			1	
American Crow	83	8	16	6	5	4	14	10	6	1	4	9	
Fish Crow	208	2	70		1			9	120	6			
Common Raven	3						1			1		1	
Horned Lark	8						8						
Black-capped Chickadee	9	1	6							1	1		
Tufted Titmouse	5		4							1			
Tree Swallow	1,100					8		5		32	30	1025	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	19		4	2	2	3		1	4	2		1	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	22		4	11		3			3	1			
Cedar Waxwing	138	9	27	7			68		6	14	2	5	

Species	Total Seen	NS	PP	GW	OH	MP	FB	BB	SC	JB	RP	BP	BT
Red-breasted Nuthatch	10			3			1				6		
White-breasted Nuthatch	6		5	1									
Brown Creeper	18		14	1	1	1		1					
House Wren	0								cw				
Winter Wren	5		2			1			1	1			
Marsh Wren	1					1							
Carolina Wren	77		9	2	6	3	10	5	9	13	15	5	
Gray Catbird	48	18			1		6	3		13	6	1	
Brown Thrasher	0											cw	
Northern Mockingbird	136	11	8	16	9	5	17	11	10	15	24	10	
European Starling	3,236	422	183	27	168	65	520	23	150	382	950	346	
Hermit Thrush	18	3	4		1			1		4	4	1	
American Robin	564	201	54	49	37	25	83	13	38	6	52	6	
House Sparrow	559	239	54	87	52	2	24	10	20	45	3	23	
American Pipit	2									1		1	
House Finch	155		30	41	5	2	3	4	5	3	8	54	
Purple Finch	1		1										
European Goldfinch	1		1										
American Goldfinch	39		26				5	3	3			2	
Snow Bunting	162											162	
Lark Sparrow	1								1				
Chipping Sparrow	6			3		1			2				
Field Sparrow	8					1	4		1		1	1	
Fox Sparrow	41	1	11	8			1	8	7	4	1		
American Tree Sparrow	23							1	14	4		4	
Dark-eyed Junco	95	3	34	39		6	2	1	4	3	1	2	
White-throated Sparrow	1,066	122	224	46	25	12	88	128	98	193	73	57	
Nelson's Sparrow	0					cw							
Savannah Sparrow	46					2	12		26	2		4	
Song Sparrow	354	7	19	10	13	22	32	32	101	54	38	26	
Swamp Sparrow	33	7				2		2	17	4	1		
Eastern Towhee	9	2							1	3		3	
Eastern Meadowlark	2						1		1				
Baltimore Oriole	4			2		1				1			
Red-winged Blackbird	80		14	26	25		2	1	8	2		2	
Brown-headed Cowbird	103				3	1	80		15		4		
Rusty Blackbird	0		cw										
Common Grackle	0		cw						cw				
Boat-tailed Grackle	16								10	6			
Orange-crowned Warbler	4	1				1			1	1			
Northern Parula	0		cw										
Palm Warbler	1						1						
Pine Warbler	2		1	1									
Yellow-rumped Warbler	531	22			2	21	90	64		99	146	87	
Northern Cardinal	217	15	61	32	17	6	9	16	15	25	17	4	
Species Count:	129	49	54	41	52	59	62	56	74	83	54	60	28
Number Seen:	50,021	7,590	2,411	1,104	4,506	1,588	2,724	2,652	5,820	9,913	2,530	5,640	3,543