

Cornell Cooperative Extension Columbia and Greene Counties



Extension Education Center

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Topics

- Birdwatcher vs. Birder
- Tools of the trade: binoculars, field guides and/or apps
- Using your binoculars and seeing what's important
- Identifying birds
- Citizen Science and the importance of keeping data
- Tips for Finding Birds
- Places to Go Birding
-

Birdwatcher vs. Birder

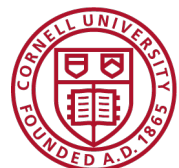
- Birdwatcher
- Watches birds
- Anytime
- Fewer tools
- Feeder lists maybe
- Pretty normal
- Privacy of their own homes
- Birder
- Seeks out birds
- Gets up early
- Many tools and toys
- Keeps records
- Dresses funny
- A little creepy or weird

Binoculars for Birding

- Magnification - 7x, 8x, 10x
- Field of view - the width of the area you see
- Brightness
- objective diameter in mm
- fully multi-coated
- Resolution and focus
- Eye relief
- Other considerations
- How to get them

Putting Knowledge to Work

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.



Getting on the Bird

- It takes practice!
- Bird feeders as a stepping stone to birding
- Keep your eyes on the bird, binoculars just below
- Raise binoculars and focus
- Practice on birds in cover

Birding 101: Moving Beyond the Bird Feeder

- Look for a landmark

Seeing What's Important

- Keep your eyes on the bird and take mental notes
- Size, shape, posture
- Study head to tail
- Color and field marks
- Habitat and behavior

Identification Guides

- Traditional field guide or phone app
- Considerations in choosing
- Geographic coverage
- Portability
- Organization and layout
- Traditional field guides as reference tools
- Apps – see resources below

Introduction to Merlin

- Free download from Cornell Lab of Ornithology, search Merlin Bird ID
- A photo or 5 questions to pictures of probable species
- Choose appropriate regional bird pack
- Now with sound ID

Keeping Track of Your Sightings

- It's not just birding homework
- Writing it down makes you a better birder
- Listing is fun
- Old school vs. eBird
- 2002
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society
- ebird.org

- help.ebird.org

Find the Food, Find the Bird

Learn to Recognize Habitats

Go on a Bird Club Field Trip or Join a Club Visit Birding Sites

Books and Apps

Traditional field guide books are widely available at local book and bird stores and apps can be found online through the App Store (iOS) and Google Play (Android). Some apps are free and others have “lite” versions that let you test out the program. As a starting point, here are a few widely used general field guides and apps to consider:

The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America (2016) by David Sibley. Packed with more and different kinds of illustrations, including birds in flight and season plumages. Sibley’s guide features remarkable artwork and rich text that makes for fascinating reading.

Peterson Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern and Central North America (2010) by Roger Tory Peterson. This book, first published in 1934, is best known for identification arrows that point to field marks that are useful in identification.

National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America (2017) by Jon Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer. Available in the smaller split eastern and western versions, this book covers all of North America and includes many rare species not found in other field guides.

Merlin Bird ID by Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Free and designed for the true beginner, this app arrives at an ID by asking questions about size, color, and habitat and using GPS location and date to create a photographic lineup of potential species. A great starting point for novices. It covers the species most likely to be seen in your area and the latest version can even identify birds from photos.

iBird Guide to Birds by Mitch Waite Group. The first bird app on the market, this popular guide now comes in five different versions with increasing levels of sophistication and cost.

Audubon Bird Guide: North America by National Audubon Society. This free app covers more than 800 North American species, includes a rich variety of vocalizations for each bird, and links to eBird data.

Where to Go Birding

Birding the Hudson Valley, by Kathryn J Schneider. Available at local bookstores and on Amazon.

Birding Organizations in the Hudson Valley

Statewide

New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA) www.nybirds.org

NYSOA is New York State's ornithological society. It has both member organizations and individual members.

Audubon New York www.ny.audubon.org

The New York state office of the National Audubon Society (NAS) has affiliated chapters and individual members statewide.

New York State Young Birders Club www.nysyoungbirders.org

A special project of NYSOA, this club provides a community for birders between 10 to 19 years of age.

Local Bird Clubs Near You

Bird clubs in our area offer field trips year-round that are free and open to the public. Check the field trip schedules on their websites and just show up with your binoculars. You won't find a more welcoming group than birders.

Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club www.hmhc.net

Geographic base is the eleven counties around Albany. Owns Henry Gerber Reist Sanctuary in Niskayuna.

Alan Devoe Bird Club www.alandevoebirdclub.org

Columbia County. Owns Wilson M. Powell Sanctuary in Old Chatham.

Ralph T Waterman Bird Club www.watermanbirdclub.org Dutchess County.

Alan Devoe Bird Club Upcoming Field Trips

May 21, 2022 DROWNED LANDS SWAMP w/NYSOA Young Birders. Meet 7:30 am at the visitor parking lot of Drowned Lands Conservation Area on Route 3 in the township of Ancram (about 3.5 miles north of Ancramdale Route 82.) We will be hosting the NYSOA Young Birders group. Spring migrants including Yellow-throated Vireo, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal, Nashville Warbler, Sora, and Virginia Rail have been seen or heard on this trip. Coordinator: Marian Sole, 203-710-9096.

June 11, 2022 CLERMONT (morning). Meet 8:00 am at the parking lot for the Clermont State Historic Site. One mile north of Tivoli off Route 9G. This event is free for ADBC and Clermont members. Fields, gardens, woods, and river views.
Coordinator: Chris Franks, 518-781-0204.

June 18, 2022 OVER MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION AREA (morning). Meet 7:30 am at the parking area west of Route 22 on Catalano Road before the intersection with Overmountain Road. Explore this newly opened and largest Columbia Land Trust property. Sparrows, Bobolinks, migrants, and a nice mix of habitats await our visit. Coordinator: Marian Sole, 203- 710-9096.

Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club Upcoming Field Trips

May 22, SCHODACK ISLAND STATE PARK (Rensselaer County; morning) Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Schodack Island State Park main parking lot at its south end. There is no admission fee before 8:00 a.m. Schodack Island State Park sits along the eastern shore of the Hudson River just south of Castleton-on-Hudson. Approximately seven miles of Hudson River and Schodack Creek shoreline bound the 1,052-acresite. A portion of the park shelters a Bird Conservation Area (BCA) that is home to Cerulean Warblers, and a Great Blue Heron rookery. Resident songbirds are plentiful. Previous Club trips have seen about 50 species, including a dozen or more warbler species. Keep your windows open as you drive along the park entrance, it is a very “birdy” stretch of road. Depending upon where the Cerulean Warblers are nesting, we will walk about 3- 4 miles along level paths. Coordinator: Naomi Lloyd 518-596-5964 naomi_kestrel@yahoo.com

May 29, BEGINNING BIRDER WORKSHOP -- SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND BATTLEFIELD (Saratoga County; morning) Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot near the park’s visitor center off SR 32. Saratoga Battlefield is a great location to learn many of the common grassland and open-country breeding species of the region such as Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Savannah and Field Sparrows, American Kestrel, Eastern Towhee, and several wood-warbler species. We will cover some of the park trails on foot, as well as bird from the one-way tour road, and can expect to spend the entire morning. This trip will be geared toward novice birders, but all are welcome. Coordinators: Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen 518- 330-4552 (GR, c) gregg.recer@gmail.com

June 5, CHERRY PLAIN SP (Rensselaer County; morning) Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Hannaford parking lot on the right side of Route 43, just past the intersection of Route 150 in West Sand Lake, to carpool to the park. Cherry Plain State Park is situated on the Rensselaer Plateau of the Capital District. The relatively high elevation, cool climate and a variety of forested and wetland habitats make this a good area for northern species. Nesting species include Least Flycatcher, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Scarlet Tanager, Common Raven, Broad-winged Hawk, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Black-and-White and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Veery, Hermit Thrush and Winter Wren also nest here. Coordinator: Naomi Lloyd 518-596- 5964 naomi_kestrel@yahoo.com