



# THE OSPREY

March/April 2015 — Vol. XL No. 2

## The Universal Laws of Birding

Used with permission of Arie Gilbert and the Queens County (NY) Bird Club

In the early days of the Internet, before various websites, NYSbirds, and the networking sites scattered across the World Wide Web, there were the CompuServe Forums. A group of birders “met” on the Birding Forum, where they discussed the burning birding issues of the day and developed what is now known as The Universal Laws of Birding. These laws have been scattered around the Internet, appearing in various guises, and have now been revised, modified for conciseness, or otherwise updated by one of the original creators and contributors.

### THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB LAW.

On a stakeout for a rarity, the bird will only show up after the “sacrificial lamb” needs to use the rest room, get hot chocolate, or has to leave. The “lamb” should be spared the bad news, and instead be presented with a jar of mint jelly. (See YSHBH Constant)

### THE SPITEFUL AVOIDANCE LAW.

If you don’t see the bird within a certain amount of tries, it becomes insulted and deliberately avoids you from then on, becoming your “Nemesis Bird” or Oiseau de Malheur. (Arie Gilbert)

### THE CASUAL INCANTATION LAW.

This takes place by the offhand mentioning of a bird and then the bird appears. (Arie Gilbert)

### THE PHOTOGRAPHIC PARADOX.

Your best photographic opportunities occur when you leave your camera behind. (Arie Gilbert)

### THE COAST IS CLEAR LAW.

The birds will only come out after you have begun to leave. Sometimes you can trick the birds into coming out by loudly announcing that you are leaving and starting to move in that direction. (Jim Frazier)

### THE RARE BIRD ALERT RAZOR.

Never assume the rare bird line has been updated, or that everyone going to see a bird will in turn post a message. Just because the bird has not been reported doesn’t necessarily mean it’s not still there. (Ann Johnson)

### THE LAW OF IRONIC ABUNDANCE.

You may look for a particular bird for 20 years without finding it, but once you do find it, they will be everywhere and robin-like in their numbers. (Carolyn Hoffman)

### THE LAW OF INDIRECT OBSERVATION.

You will learn more about the variation in Herring Gulls in 30 minutes of looking for a Thayer’s Gull than you will in a lifetime of looking at Herring Gulls. (Jim Bangma)

### THE LAW OF PROPORTIONAL OBSERVABILITY.

If there are two or more birds in a tree and one is a rarity, the only one you can’t see is the rarity. (Bill Elrick)

### THE LUCK OF THE DISINTERESTED LAW.

At any stakeout for a rare bird at which a large number of birders have assembled, one birder will usually have dragged along an uninterested, non-birding friend or relative. The non-birder almost inevitably will be the one who looks the other way or wanders off and finds the sought after bird. (Joe DiCostanzo)

### THE YSHBH CONSTANT.

Upon arriving late at the site of a bird reported on the RBA and finding a group of birders already there you will be told “You Should Have Been Here xx minutes ago. The bird just flew.” (Joe DiCostanzo)

### THE INVERSE DISTANCE WATERFOWL LAW.

The rarer the duck or goose, the further from shore it will be. On an enclosed body of water, it will always be on the diametrically opposite shore from you and this shore will always be private land or otherwise inaccessible. (Joe DiCostanzo)

### THE LAW OF AVIAN FIELD MARK MODESTY.

Whenever you are without a field guide and cannot ID a bird, the field marks you think are important are not. When you do have a field guide, and there is an important field mark, the bird never lets you see it. (Carolyn Hoffman)

### THE YELLOWLEGS CONSTANT.

If a Lesser Yellowlegs and a Greater Yellowlegs are next to each other, someone invariably comments: “There’s a good size comparison.” (Jim Frazier)

### THE MATERNAL CONSTANT.

Whenever a group of birders finds a cluster of new ducklings, goslings or any other cute and adorable group of young birds, you’ll always hear a chorus of *aaawwww-whhhhhhh*. (Jim Frazier)

Continued on page 8



## The President's Corner

# Butterflies and Hummingbirds

Byron Young

As I write this column, it is snowing again, the temperature is hovering around 20 degrees and I am thinking about spring. Having just returned from a way-too-short trip to the Caribbean with a stop on Saint Maarten and the Butterfly Farm on the French side of the Island I am thinking about how to design a butterfly and Hummingbird friendly flower garden for my yard. I had some success last year attracting Hummingbirds and butterflies with a few *Salvia* plants that provided nectar producing blooms and a splash of color throughout the gardening season.

Butterflies and Hummingbirds like nectar producing flowers especially ones that flower throughout the season. Food is important for both butterflies and Hummingbirds but equally important for butterflies are the plants necessary for butterflies to lay their eggs on and the plants for the larvae to feed on. One plant that should be in every garden looking to support the Monarch butterfly is the milkweed plant that provides the perfect egg laying and larval habitats for the Monarch Butterfly. Last year ELIAS provided packets of milkweed seeds during Earth Day and I hope many of you planted some of these seeds around your yard. If not you can obtain free packets of milkweed seeds from The Live Monarch Foundation, their contact information can be found at the end of this article.

New York has some 65 species of butterflies so one has to decide which species or grouping of species they want to attract. Many of these species are disappearing due to the loss of natural habitat. Creating small havens for butterflies in your yard as well as creating a beautiful yard landscape to enjoy is important to the well being of butterflies. For the more adventurous gardeners you can research the various species of butterflies found in New York and then design your garden to suit their specific needs, for the rest of us your garden needs to provide "Nectar plants", those plants that butterflies like to feed on. Then you should consider "Host Plants",

which are the plants that butterflies lay their eggs on and their caterpillars like to eat.

When designing your garden for butterflies try to mix the plantings of host plants and nectar plants so they are not too far apart. Butterflies like to lay their eggs near plants that their young will feed on. Remember that those caterpillars eating your plants will grow into butterflies so do not use insecticides on your butterfly garden.

Hummingbirds and butterflies seem to go together as they both like those nectar producing plants. Should you have the available food sources and a population of hummingbirds nearby, I suspect they will pay your garden a visit. Hummingbirds construct a very tiny nest made out of spider webs and lichens, laying two eggs. Incubation is about two weeks depending upon the weather but may take up to three weeks. One thing that will help attract Hummingbirds to nest near your yard is water. Hummingbirds do not require a big water supply so a small bubbler or mister would be adequate. You can also

attract early migrating Hummingbirds with brightly colored feeders.

There are a number of resources available on the web to aid you if you choose to make your yards more butterfly and Hummingbird friendly. If you do choose to develop a butterfly and Hummingbird friendly garden have fun with your gardens, experiment with combinations of plants to see which ones work best and enjoy the results.

It has stopped snowing for the time being however the temperature could use some improvement, "Think Spring" and your flower gardens and our returning birds and butterflies.

Below is the link to obtain a free package of milkweed seeds for your yard:

Send a self addressed, stamped envelope for FREE seeds to: Live Monarch Foundation – Seeds 3003-C8 Yamato Road #1015 Boca Raton, Florida 33434 OR visit their website: <http://www.livemonarch.com/free-milkweed-seeds.htm>. *There may be a small shipping charge.*



## Earth Day Celebration

Sat., April 18, 11:00 am - 3:00 pm

Come and celebrate nature &

our lovely planet at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge

during this all-day affair! The day will include guided nature walks, live animal presentations, crafts for children, environmental exhibitors, and self-guided kayaking and canoeing on Old Ice Pond.

This free celebration is offered by Quogue Wildlife Refuge and Eastern Long Island Audubon Society.

A great day for all ages! Check website for schedule of events.

No reservations necessary. Rain or shine.

# ELIAS Meetings

Meetings are held at Quogue Wildlife Refuge at  
3 Old Country Road in Quogue, NY. All are welcome, there is no charge.

Monday, April 6, 2015 at 7:15 pm

## Trip to the Dominican Republic

Bob Adamo

RuthAnn and I, joined by our whole family, celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary in the sunny Dominican Republic this past year, I was quite surprised with the diverse *Ava fauna* found at our all-inclusive resort. Besides getting 7 “lififers,” I was able to get nice photos of many of the Dominican Republic’s birds, as well as of, some of the natural wonders found in this part of the Caribbean Island, that was once called Hispaniola.



Two endemic species found on Hispaniola.  
Photos by Bob Adamo.

Monday, May 4, 2015 at 7:15 pm

## Nature: A gift from our Creator

We are pleased, once again, to have John Brokos as our guest speaker. John is an accomplished nature photographer, whose work we have had the pleasure to view on at least 5 occasions in the past 20 years. This presentation deals with nature in general, and includes close-up work of mammals, birds, reptiles and other animals, as well as some of the flora found in our area.

This program will start after the nature chat and before the meeting.

### GET INVOLVED

Would you like to an give a program,  
write an article  
or a submit a photo?

We would like to hear from you.  
Email: [eliasosprey@optonline.net](mailto:eliasosprey@optonline.net)

## Nature Walk & Field Trips

Saturday, March 7, 2015, meet at 8:30 am

### Morton National Wildlife Refuge

Meet at the Parking Lot at Morton NWR, off Route 38 (Noyack Road), North Sea.

Whose heart doesn’t melt when a tiny little bird lands on your fingertips to grab a bit of bird seed?? Even the most hard-core birder will smile and giggle! Join Eileen Schwinn and other birders of all levels at our local national treasure, where generations of birds have become tame enough to eat out of your hand! A hike of between a mile and a mile and a half will give ample opportunities to see are over-wintering birds, including woodpeckers, sparrows and occasionally Pine Siskins and Nuthatches. Dress warmly, and bring kids and adults who have never birded here before! Contact Eileen at [beachmed@optonline.net](mailto:beachmed@optonline.net) to register, and call (516) 662-7751 the day of the trip if there are questions. Birdseed will be provided!



Saturday, April 18, 2015, meet at 8 am

### North Fork Preserve

The North Fork Preserve, located off Sound Ave. in Jamesport, is a former hunting club/Christmas tree farm, which currently hosts a wonderful selection of resident and migratory birds. The Preserve, which is one of the largest intact swamp forests left on Long Island, has woods, fields and ponds, and all the makings of an excellent birding location. Come prepared for an approximately three mile walk – on cut trails – and bring binoculars! Parking is on the north side of Sound Ave., approximately 6 houses EAST of the sign indicating North Fork Preserve. You will be parking in a small lot, just off Sound Ave, with a small wooden cabin just beyond the fence. For more details, contact Eileen Schwinn at 516-662-7751 or email her at [beachmed@optonline.net](mailto:beachmed@optonline.net).

May – watch for the schedule of  
Warbler Madness  
in our next edition of The Osprey!



**T**he Third Long Island Natural History Conference sponsored by Long Island Nature Organization will take place Friday and Saturday, March 20-21, 2015 at the U.S. Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory in Upton, NY. In conjunction with the conference field trips will be offered on Sunday, March 22.

This conference promises to be the largest regional forum for researchers, natural resource managers, students, and naturalists to present current information on field biology and natural history. It will serve as a premier venue to identify research and management needs and encourage a greater region-wide interest in Long Island's natural history. New this year are the Saturday programs set up to offer naturalists and educators an opportunity to attend. Arrangements have been made for educators to receive professional development points for attending.

A poster session for students doing research on Long Island's flora and fauna is also scheduled.

Three field trips are offered on Sunday. Byron Young, ELIAS President will be leading the Alewife Spawning trip.

You must be registered at the conference to attend the field trips.

Complete information is available on the web site: [www.longislandnature.org/2015\\_conference/LINHC\\_2015.shtml](http://www.longislandnature.org/2015_conference/LINHC_2015.shtml)

The cost of the conference is \$30 per day or \$40 for both days, the field trips are extra, \$5 for the seal walk, \$12 for the Alewife Spawning, and \$130 for the all day tracking program. Go to the web site to register.

### Friday's topics include:

#### **Effects of excessive nitrogen loading on coastal ecosystems**

Dr. Chris Gobler, SUNY Marine & Atmospheric Sciences

#### **White-tailed deer and their influence on forest vegetation**

Thomas Rawinski, USDA. Forest Service

#### **Long Island lichens: an exploration of a hidden world**

James Lendemer  
New York Botanical Garden

#### **Establishing phenology monitoring sites**

Kerry Battle, President  
CEO Community Greenway

#### **The Role of ctenophores (comb jellies) in Long Island estuaries**

Dr. Marianne E. McNamara  
Suffolk Community College

#### **Novel ecosystems: a threat to wildlife**

Dr. Marilyn Jordan  
The Nature Conservancy

#### **Bald Eagles nesting on Long Island**

Michael S. Scheibel  
The Nature Conservancy

#### **New York's newest immigrants: coyotes in the metropolitan area**

Chris Nagy, Mianus River Gorge Preserve

### Sunday's Field Trips

**ALEWIFE SPAWNING RUN**, Little Peconic River 10 am – noon

**SEAL OBSERVATION WALK**, Cupsogue Beach County Park from 1 pm–3 pm

**READING WILDLIFE TRACK & SIGN EVALUATION**

Manorville area 8:30 am–4:30 pm

### Saturday's topics include:

#### **Harbor seals at Cupsogue Beach: population trends and site fidelity**

Dr. Arthur H. Kopelman, SUNY, CRESLI

#### **Cybertracker conservation track and sign certification**

George Leoniak, Cybertracker Conservation

#### **Status of orchids on Long Island**

Dr. Eric Lamont, Long Island Botanical Society (LIBS) and Tom Nelson

#### **Management, urbanization, and isolation on grassland biodiversity**

Polly Weigand,  
Suffolk Soil & Water Conservation

#### **Breeding birds of Long Island: past, present, and future**

Eric Salzman, Board member, South Fork Natural History Museum (SoFo)

#### **Sharks and rays of the New York seascape**

Merry Camhi, Director, NY Seascape

#### **Coyotes on Long Island: a participatory framework for planning**

Dr. Mark Weckel, American Museum of Natural History

#### **Falcons on FIRE (Fire Island Raptor Enumerators)**

Drew Panko, Trudy Battaly, Fire Island Hawk Watch



*The Universal Laws of Birding*  
continued from page 1

#### **THE LAW OF AUGMENTED RETURNS.**

AKA Eric's Observation: Extremely rare birds are often initially misidentified as common birds, so few birders look at them twice, let alone once. Eventually, someone correctly identifies the bird, opening the flood gates to scores of birders coming to see it. (Eric Miller)

#### **THE LESS IS MORE LAW.**

When birding in a group someone may stay behind because they are tired etc. Upon return of the group they are informed that most or more birds were seen right from that location.

#### **THE METEOROLOGICAL PARADOX.**

Whenever the weather is unseasonably nice, the birds you are seeking are also enjoying the good weather. Elsewhere. (Ian Resnick)

#### **THE PATAGONIA PICNIC TABLE EFFECT.**

The persistence of a rarity at any location leads to more and more rarities being discovered there because of the increased coverage by birders.

#### **THE LAW OF REQUISITE COSTA RICAN INQUIRY.**

If you tell someone you are going on or have just returned from a birding trip, they will enthusiastically ask: "Have you been to Costa Rica?"

#### **"ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE LAW": THE CASUAL INCANTATION LAW.**

This takes place by the offhand mentioning of a bird and then the bird appears. (Arie Gilbert)

#### **THE OUT OF TOWN LAW.**

Whenever you travel away from your local patch (usually on some exotic, expensive birding trip), the local Rare Bird Report has observation submissions – the entire time you are away – of State Firsts or Seconds, of any number of species. And they all take wing, never to be seen again, one day before your return. (Eileen Schwinn)

## Montauk Trip

*After being postponed, the Montauk trip finally found a break in the weather on February 14.*

#### **From Eileen Schwinn**

It turned out to be a pretty good day out there – temp was mid to high 20's, hardly any wind – and that was just from the south and not biting cold. Four other people joined me and we birded the Montauk area until about 12:30 – highlights being Razorbills, and expected ocean birds, and a Bald Eagle on the way home in Watermill. Felt great to be out – I even went to EPCAL after Montauk had the time and the snow held off till later in the afternoon.

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renewable in January.  
Please renew your membership  
to keep our club strong.**

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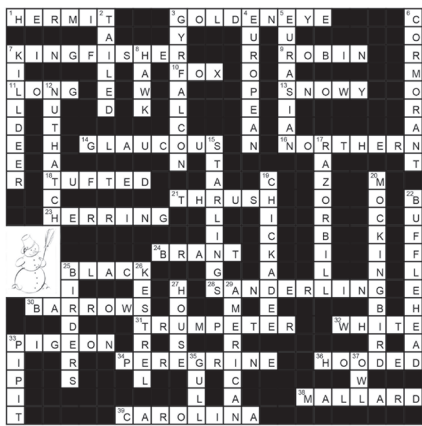
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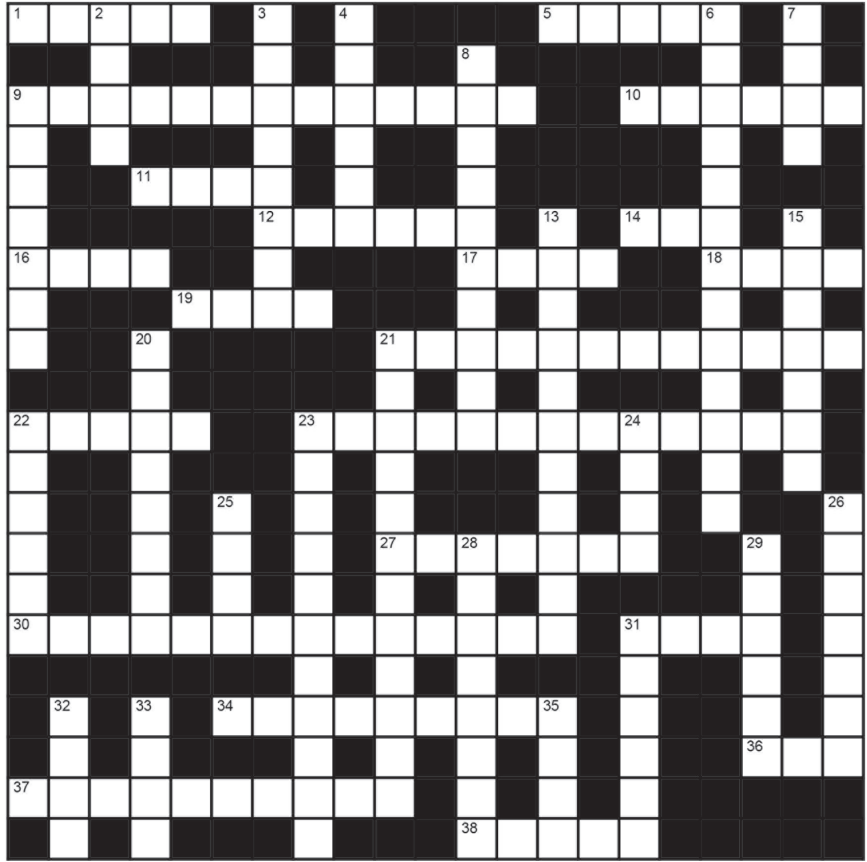
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## Answers to last issue's puzzle Winter Visitors by Tom Moran



## Spring, Finally! Tom Moran



**Across**

- 1 The larger woodpecker look alike
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Turnstone
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_ Sparrow
- 10 Peregrine, Kestrel, Merlin
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_ Warbler, a tail bobber
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_ Bunting
- 16 Common, Red-throated,,
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_ Gull, seen shopping at BJs Wholesale Club in Brooklyn this winter
- 16 Common, Red-throated...
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_ Duck, a beautiful but secretive fellow
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_ Swallow, deeper fork in tail
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_ Warbler, greenish olive, long tail, no streaking
- 21 \_\_\_\_\_ Plover, but only in breeding plumage
- 22 \_\_\_\_\_ billed Murre, seen at the Montauk Marina this winter
- 23 \_\_\_\_\_ warbler, three words, not to be confused with a Blackpoll
- 27 Meow, an oxymoron?
- 30 \_\_\_\_\_ Vireo or Warbler two words
- 31 There were 2 or 3 Short-eared \_\_\_\_\_ at EPCAL this winter
- 34 \_\_\_\_\_ Thrush or Hawk, thrush not to be confused with Gray-cheeked
- 36 Common \_\_\_\_\_ poll, sighted along south shore this winter
- 37 Black and white bay duck commonly seen in winter
- 38 \_\_\_\_\_ Fest, some exhibits are at Croton Point County Park. Takes place in February.

**Down**

- 2 White-faced \_\_\_\_\_, sighted at Captree last year
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Waxwing spotted in Miller Place and Jones Beach this winter
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Merganser, flashy but I don't think it helps the bird stay warm
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ Sapsucker
- 7 American \_\_\_\_\_, runs on water
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_ Lemon, member of the Harlem Globetrotters. The Eastern version may be seen at EPCAL grasslands
- 9 This species causes birders to get a pain in the neck
- 23 "To Kill a \_\_\_\_\_", a sequel to Harper Lee's newly discovered "Go Set a Watchman"
- 20 \_\_\_\_\_ Sandpiper, streaking on breast, white belly
- 21 \_\_\_\_\_ Night Heron
- 22 \_\_\_\_\_ Vulture, a fairly new arrival on LI
- 23 \_\_\_\_\_ Cowbird, leaves eggs in other birds' nests
- 24 \_\_\_\_\_ Turkey
- 25 \_\_\_\_\_ Bunting, at Jones Beach mixed flock with 26 down this winter
- 26 \_\_\_\_\_ Longspurs, see 25 down
- 28 Tufted \_\_\_\_\_, backyard feeder bird
- 29 \_\_\_\_\_ Black-backed Gull, look for those yellow legs
- 31 Baltimore \_\_\_\_\_, makes a hanging basket nest
- 32 \_\_\_\_\_ Grosbeak, chestnut wingbars
- 33 Seen at Jamaica Bay in 2013 and at West Marina Timber Point Oakdale in 2013
- 35 \_\_\_\_\_ Sparrow, has a familiar sound

# Feeder Survey for April & May

The first full week of each month, October to June

## John McNeil

The Survey will be conducted the first full week of the month starting on Sunday and ending the following Sunday. This survey takes place from October to June.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR FEEDER SURVEY

- Define an area containing feeders that you can see all at once from a window. The area should be one you glance at frequently during your daily routine.
- Don't include birds seen off premises.
- Predators perching in or swooping through the count area (not just flying over) may be counted if you feel that they were attracted by the birds at the feeder.
- Record the largest number of each species that you see in your count area during the eight-day count period.
- Do not add counts from previous days together. Be specific with the species name, e.g. we can't use just the name Sparrow, Blackbird or Gull.
- At the end of the count period, record your final tallies and send in the form immediately.

Personal observations and comments are welcome as are suggestions to improve the surveys and reports.

Please send your report to:

John McNeil  
168 Lexington Rd  
Shirley NY 11967-3212



COOPERS HAWK, SUZI STEWART

#### Survey Dates:

Sun., April 5 to Sun., April 11

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Town \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Mourning Dove
- \_\_\_\_\_ Northern Cardinal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Blue Jay
- \_\_\_\_\_ House Finch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Black-capped Chickadee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tufted Titmouse
- \_\_\_\_\_ Downy Woodpecker
- \_\_\_\_\_ White-throated Sparrow
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dark-eyed Junco
- \_\_\_\_\_ House Sparrow
- \_\_\_\_\_ White-breasted Nuthatch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Song Sparrow
- \_\_\_\_\_ Red-bellied Woodpecker
- \_\_\_\_\_ American Crow
- \_\_\_\_\_ European Starling
- \_\_\_\_\_ Common Grackle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Carolina Wren
- \_\_\_\_\_ Northern Mockingbird
- \_\_\_\_\_ American Goldfinch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Red-winged Blackbird
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hairy Woodpecker
- \_\_\_\_\_ Common Flicker
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rufous-sided Towhee
- \_\_\_\_\_ American Robin
- \_\_\_\_\_ Brown-headed Cowbird
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rock Dove (pigeon)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gray Catbird
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- \_\_\_\_\_ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

#### Survey Dates:

Sun., May 3 to Sun., May 9

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Town \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Mourning Dove
- \_\_\_\_\_ Northern Cardinal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Blue Jay
- \_\_\_\_\_ House Finch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Black-capped Chickadee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tufted Titmouse
- \_\_\_\_\_ Downy Woodpecker
- \_\_\_\_\_ White-throated Sparrow
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dark-eyed Junco
- \_\_\_\_\_ House Sparrow
- \_\_\_\_\_ White-breasted Nuthatch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Song Sparrow
- \_\_\_\_\_ Red-bellied Woodpecker
- \_\_\_\_\_ American Crow
- \_\_\_\_\_ European Starling
- \_\_\_\_\_ Common Grackle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Carolina Wren
- \_\_\_\_\_ Northern Mockingbird
- \_\_\_\_\_ American Goldfinch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Red-winged Blackbird
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hairy Woodpecker
- \_\_\_\_\_ Common Flicker
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rufous-sided Towhee
- \_\_\_\_\_ American Robin
- \_\_\_\_\_ Brown-headed Cowbird
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rock Dove (pigeon)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gray Catbird
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- \_\_\_\_\_ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

# The OSPREY

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