



# THE OSPREY

Winter 2024/2025 – Vol. XLVIII – No. 4

## How To Find Out About Birds Being Reported

*Especially here on Eastern Long Island*

Eileen Schwinn

**H**ave you ever wondered how some folks know about rare birds arriving locally, and you only find out about them much later? There’s no “secret club”, no “in-crowd network” – not at least as far as I know! OK, a lot of birders, after spotting a rare bird, may call a couple of close birding friends, or send them a text message. That will never change, but here are a couple of easy to use ways to be alerted if a rare – or Good Bird - shows up!

Long-time birders will remember calling into a state – or county – Hot Line (think land-lines, answering machines, taped messages). And then, the Internet was invented! Emails, usually sent as the result of someone receiving a phone call, were sent out a group of people who asked to be notified. Sometimes, a daily or weekly summary was sent to those folks – around here there was the East End Bird Report, sent out by Hugh McGuinness, an East End resident. That’s no longer in existence....

### **The Grandparent of notifications**

Around that time, Cornell Lab of Ornithology stepped up and started the New York State Rare Bird Report, the Grandparent of alert notification methods. It’s still around, and still used

by many birders – a good number of whom are here on Long Island. You receive a real-time notification via email, usually sent by the person seeing the bird, when a note-worthy bird is spotted. Basic info is conveyed and the email is signed – you can always contact the sender, if you wish more details. It’s not a chit-chat sort of notification system, just a “Just the Facts”. Signing up for this is free, and very easy – you can even, by following directions, take a break from the notices, if you wish. Admittedly, it’s not the Number One posting site lately – there are a number of other players out there, but here’s the info, should you wish to join this method:

Google: NYSbirds

Click on “NYSbirds-L Welcome and Basics”

Scroll to “Subscription Creation” – Follow the directions of sending a message, addressed to: [NYSBirds-L-Request@cornell.edu](mailto:NYSBirds-L-Request@cornell.edu)

Read this whole intro page by NYS – it takes about 3 minutes. The site is Cornell Lab, and administered by Christopher Tessaglia-Hymes ([cth4@cornell.edu](mailto:cth4@cornell.edu)) and it’s free. Over 500 folks are currently on this site.

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### WHAT’S INSIDE...

Vagrant Hummingbird  
visits LI home

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Photos from  
The Annual Dinner

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## The President's Corner

# The Year in Review!

**Byron Young**

**A**s 2025 looms ahead of us, it is time to recap 2024 or at least attempt to do so.

Continuing our tradition of Bird Walks and we had many, January started with a search for overwintering waterfowl in the Lakes around Patchogue. The winter of 2024 was unusually warm in the Northeast with many of the interior lakes lacking ice cover. This appeared to keep many of the expected waterfowl further north. In February, we visited Shinnecock looking for sea ducks, and other winter migrants. Unfortunately, the Snowy Owls did not make an appearance along Dune Road in 2024. March saw us visit the Morton Wildlife Refuge for a very pleasant walk around the Refuge finding birds and early spring plants beginning to develop. It is always fun to watch people's reactions when a local chickadee or nuthatch lands on their hand to accept an offering of food. With spring in the air, we visited the North Fork Preserve in April. The local birds kept us entertained as we walked around the Preserve.

With the arrival of May, ELIAS hosted a series of walks, despite the newly instituted Spring Turkey hunt on Long Island. We began with a walk at EPCAL, followed by a visit to Bayard Cutting Arboretum, then Hubbard County Park, Terrell River County Park, Hunters Garden, Manorville Hills County Park, and ending with our Annual Eric Salzman Memorial Walk at the South Fork Natural History Museum. With that we took a bit of a break before exploring Dune Road for migrating shorebirds in July. August saw us visiting the sand flats at Cupsogue County Park again looking for south bound migrating shorebirds. The September walk was at the Suffolk County Farm as we searched around the farm fields edges the birds played hide and seek with us. We made a return visit to the Suffolk

County Farm in October as our scheduled Fire Island Hawk Watch trip was canceled due road closures for the Long Island Marathon. Our change of schedule was rewarded by the presence of a Western Kingbird. Everyone got real good looks at this rare visitor.

**W**e will conclude 2024 with our participation in the 2024 Christmas Bird Count. Look for ways you can participate in this Annual Nationwide event locally. (More info on the next page.)

In summary, ELIAS sponsored sixteen bird walks and participated in several of the Christmas Bird Count surveys around Eastern Long Island. Our walks attract a steady number of participants including new birders, our regulars and visitors from afar. If I remember correctly, we had one visitor from Washington State.

ELIAS participated at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge's Annual Earth Day Event in April. We had a centrally located display table and led two bird walks for interested parties around the Refuge. This is always a fun day, interacting with people and introducing them to birding.

**D**uring 2024 we made tremendous progress with our Library Birding Backpack program. After several years of slow progress one of our new Board Members picked up the project and has successfully completed fourteen Birding Backpacks. The following libraries are hosting an ELIAS birding backpack:

Center Moriches Library  
Cutchogue-New Suffolk Library  
Hampton Bays Library in Bridgehampton  
Quogue Library  
Riverhead Free Library  
Southold Free Library  
South Country Library, Bellport  
Montauk Library

Amagansett Free Library  
Southampton Library  
(Rogers Memorial Library)  
East Hampton Library

On October 23rd, ELIAS hosted our first Annual Dinner since 2019. The event was held at the Rock Hill Country Club in Manorville it was well attended given the length of time since the last one. The Dinner Committee did a fabulous job setting this event up. We all had to search our records to find clues that aided us in making this event a success. Two of our long time Dinner Committee members who possessed the Institutional memory of dinners past were unavailable to help this year. However, with the help of three new Board Members and those of us recalling most of what needed to be done, we succeeded in hosting a return to our Annual Dinner. We are looking forward to hosting one again in 2025 and beyond. Pictures from the dinner are on page 10.

November saw our Annual Seed sale with the Quogue Wildlife Refuge take place. This is a fund raising event for the Refuge and ELIAS.

Members by now should have received their copy of the 2025 ELIAS Calendar with their membership renewal. Thank you to all of the Member Photographers who submitted photos for consideration in this calendar. There were so many great photographs submitted by members it was difficult to choose, we hope you enjoy the 2025 Calendar and keep taking photos for the upcoming edition, remembering that all photos must be by members and taken in Suffolk County.

Thank you all for your support during 2024 and we look forward to another great year in 2025.

Good Birding!

Byron

# BIRDS OF A FEATHER: A GUIDE TO WINTER BIRD FLOCKS

**Megan Hart, Lake Metroparks Park Biologist.**

Why do birds form mixed flocks?

Birds form mixed foraging flocks in the winter to help them survive during the season when their normal food preferences are in short supply or nonexistent. Have you ever noticed when you put bird seed out at your feeder, the Blue Jays or maybe the chickadees, start calling? They're communicating with other birds the location of food. You might think they want to have that seed buffet all to themselves but announcing the location also helps with predator avoidance. Calling others to the table lowers the chance that the hungry Coopers Hawk will target the one bird, and more eyes on the watch helps protect all.

Imagine you are standing in a winter forest. The trees have lost their leaves except for the deep green of the hemlock trees nearby. It is quiet as snow blankets the floor and the only sound you can hear is the wind through the trees. As you stand there reveling in the utter stillness a winter forest can provide, you hear the hint of a bird call in the distance. As it gets closer, you hear a familiar "chickadee-dee-dee." Suddenly, a group of birds seem to appear out of nowhere. They flit back and forth, working their way along the trunks and branches in search of food. They seem to be all around you in the trees above. Then as soon as they came, they move through the forest. You just experienced a mixed winter flock.

## **Black-capped Chickadee**

If you took a minute to look closely at what was in the flock, you would probably notice several different species of birds. Leading the pack are dapper Black-capped Chickadees. Black-capped Chickadees usually stick together in groups of a dozen or more in the winter and lead these multi-species flocks on their quest for food throughout the forest. Among them (and equally as active) are small

gray Tufted Titmice, who get their names from the pointy crests at the top of their heads. If you turn to the trunks of the nearby trees, you will likely see White-breasted and Red-breasted Nuthatches climbing down trees in search of insects and cached seeds among the bark. Near them, Downy Woodpeckers may be climbing up the trees and tapping at the beetle larvae just beneath the bark. In this group of climbing birds, you might see the well-camouflaged Brown Creeper as it zigzags its way up the tree trunk probing with its curved bill between the cracks in the bark for tasty insects. Look in the low bushes for Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets.

## **White-breasted Nuthatch**

I'm sure you're wondering why so many different bird species would travel and search for food together. It boils down to a life lesson that proves true for many species: there's safety in numbers. Birds of prey are always on the prowl for their next meal and a distracted foraging bird seems like an easy way to get some food during lean times. The benefit of a flock is that all individuals scan for danger. However, the main glue that brings different bird species to the mixed flock group are Black-capped Chickadees. They are not only flock leaders, but they are also the alarm system of the forest. Chickadees have a wonderful adaptation to alert other birds to the presence of a predator: the chickadee-dee-dee call. The more dee notes in the chickadee-dee-dee call, the higher the threat level of the predator. That's right—not only are they able to warn their own species of danger, but many other wildlife species as well.

## **American Robin and others**

There are other bird species that flock together during the winter. You may

notice flocks of American Robins and Cedar Waxwings that go from fruiting tree to fruiting tree in search of any of last year's fruits that may be left over. American Goldfinches often form flocks that go from patch to patch of dead wildflowers and grasses to look for seeds. Mixed species flocks of sparrows like White-Throated sparrows, American Tree sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Song Sparrows often feed together by scratching through the dirt and snow for food. If you watch these sparrows closely, you can see different individuals turn their heads to the sky and search for any looming predators that they may need to hide from. If you're very lucky, you may be out in a grassy area and see a flock of Snow Buntings foraging on the ground for food. These winter visitors are admittedly easier to spot when they are actively flying away from you and not as camouflaged with their surroundings. Ducks and geese also flock together in mixed flocks while feeding. If you've ever been present when an eagle or peregrine falcon flies toward a flock of waterfowl, you know how well the tactic of flocking works, as the entire flock of sometimes hundreds of waterfowl rocket skyward and away from the ground in a flush of wings and a thunder of honking and calling



It is usually the Chickadees that leads the flock. Photo: Mick Thompson

# ELIAS Field Trips

**W**ith most of our birding in December taken up with Christmas Bird Counts, we will be starting the New Year off with the traditional trips:

**Lakes of Patchogue Field Trip,** January 18, 2025. Meeting at 8:00 am, Swan Lake, East Patchogue. Rosemary Valente will be leading this trip. Please contact Ro to register and for questions, hobbesmom4ever@gmail.com

**Dune Road, Hampton Bays,** February 8, 2025. Meet at the Hampton Bays side of the Shinnecock Inlet. Eileen Schwinn will be leading this trip. Please contact Eileen to register and for questions, beachmed@optonline.net

**In February we will take to the seas on a Seals and Seabirds Boat Trip!**

Participants will need to register directly with CRESLI. Here's the direct link to register for the boat trip: <https://www.cresli.org/common/Events/event-profile.cfm?QID=30929&ClientID=12000> - there is a link on the website.

Meet at 8:30 am, at the Stony Brook Marine Station, 8 Little Neck Road, Southampton, NY 11968. The cost of the trip is \$40.pp. Please also contact Eileen Schwinn, beachmed@optonline.net to let her know you will be attending. The trip is approximately 2 hours. Dress accordingly and bring a snack.

**Elizabeth A. Morton NWR – Noyac,** March 8, 2025, Meet at 8:30 am in the parking lot, 2595 Noyac Road, Sag Harbor. Always a favorite spot, where you never know just who will be eating right out of your hand! Please contact Eileen Schwinn to register and for questions, beachmed@optonline.net.

*Please remember to register with the leaders of these trips, just in case the weather does not cooperate and plans have to change!*

*Hope to see you there, starting your birding year off with friends, feathered and two-legged!*

Eileen Schwinn  
Field Trip Leader,



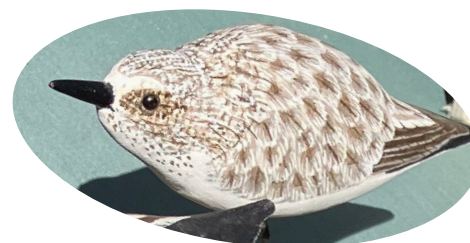
**Seals and Seabirds Boat Trip.** The RV Peconic is part of the Stony Brook School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences Program. CRESLI sponsors winter weekend trips out of Southampton. We will join the trip on February 22nd.



## QWR & ELIAS Seed Sale

**E**ileen Schwinn, Gigi Spates and Sally Newbert help out at the Seed Sale, a fundraiser for both ELIAS and the Quogue Wildlife Refuge. Fortunately it was a beautiful fall day so being outside and greeting people was a very pleasant experience. The cars rolled in and volunteers loaded their pre-purchased seed into the vehicles.

Meanwhile, the bird carver, Matthew DiBernardo, sold his carvings and discussed his work with visitors.



# Upcoming Programs

*Just a reminder - there is no program in January.*

**MONDAY EVENING FEBRUARY 3 AT 7 PM**

## TRAIL CAM PRESENTATION

**Luke Ormand** will join us. He is the Environmental Analyst at The Division of Land Management (DLM) in the Town of Brookhaven's Open Space Acquisition Program. He has had the opportunity to set up trail cams in a variety of locations around the county. He will let us know what he has discovered

**MONDAY EVENING MARCH 3 AT 7 PM**

## NIGHT SOUNDS

**J**oin Nadia Trejo, Quogue Wildlife Refuge Environmental Educator, on a slideshow presentation journey of the sounds from local wildlife that you may hear out in the forest at night!



*Nadia Trejo with a chameleon*

Nadia is a graduate of Delaware Valley University where she earned a Bachelors of Science in Conservation and Wildlife Management, with a minor in Secondary Education. Nadia began working as an intern in 2015 through the Southampton Broader Horizons program and after college returned to the Refuge in 2023 as the educator for Little Naturalists Summer Camp. As one of our environmental educators, she enjoys sharing her passion for birding and protecting natural habitats with visitors.

## Camp Scholarship Available

ELIAS would like to restart a program that has been offered over the years.

We would like to offer a camp scholarship to a child from 8 to 16 years-old to spend a week at a sleep away camp on Long Island. As a suggestion, there are two 4H camps on Long Island that offer children the opportunity to do this.

Dorothy P. Flint Camp in Riverhead offers canoeing, farming, horsemanship, kayaking, and ropes courses. Weekly sessions for kids entering grades 4-10.

At the Peconic Dunes Camp in Southold Campers learn environmental stewardship, kayaking and marine sciences. Weekly sessions for ages 8-16.

Both camps are 4 H camps run by Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Other camps would be considered. This ELIAS scholarship is available to a Suffolk County student\* from age 8 to 16. The potential camper should write to the Camp Committee at ELIAS, Box 206, East Quogue, NY. 11942 telling the committee what he or she hopes to learn from the camping experience. The parent

should also include a letter to express their willingness to take the camper to camp and pick them up. The parent also must take care of any medical requirements that the camp may have.

\*Our area of Suffolk County runs from Brookhaven to Montauk on the South Shore and onto the South Fork of Long Island. A detailed list including the zip codes will be on the web site.



# Those That Wander

## Vagrant Hummingbirds

Darlene Massey

Once again, I have been “gifted” with a late arriving vagrant western hummingbird in my backyard!

In November of 2022 a very rare adult male Calliope Hummingbird, (*Selasphorus calliope*), spend 18 days in my yard, much to the delight of over 300 birders who stopped by to see him. The story is on the website in *The Osprey* in the Winter 2023 issue.

This year, on November 2nd, a female/immature Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) buzzed by just as I sat down for lunch, making this

the second time a vagrant hummingbird from the west chose my yard as its temporary residence.

I have so many questions! After speaking with many other people, both birders and non-birders, I found that nearly everyone had the same questions. I don't have the answers, but will attempt to summarize my findings from the information I was able to find from the resources available to me.

Many of us learned that the only species of hummingbird in our area is the Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*). It typically arrives on Long Island in late April to early May,

spending the next few months raising their young only to leave again in late June through early September on its way back to Florida and Central America. If you want to attract them with sugar water feeders, put them up in early April and them taken down in September, traditionally around Labor Day.

Several years ago, experienced birders suggested I leave my feeders up until later in the fall, even early winter to help out any vagrant hummingbirds. Also carefully check-out any late arriving birds. Apparently, it worked!

### **What are vagrant hummingbirds?**

The word vagrant can be defined as “one who wanders”, “a wanderer” or even “a drifter”. A vagrant bird is any bird found outside of their normal range. In the Eastern and Central United States and southern Canada, a vagrant or winter hummingbird is any hummingbird seen between Oct 15th and March 15th. Although occasionally a vagrant western hummingbird can show up as early as August, and must share resources with our local Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. In our area, most of the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are gone by October 15, so it is important to take a good look at any hummingbirds seen after that date!

### **If I forget to take my feeders down at the end of the summer, will it cause the hummingbirds to delay their migration?**

Some people think that leaving sugar water feeders up past Labor Day might cause birds to remain or delay migration. This doesn't appear to be the case, since birds get their cue to migrate mainly from changes in the length of daylight, not from food availability. As the days get shorter, they instinctively know to feed more and store fat in preparation for their long migratory journeys. If keeping feeders up later in the season did cause them to stay, most of the vagrant hummingbirds would be our Ruby-throats, not the



Photo by Kay Intemann

western species being documented in increasing numbers. On Long Island, the Rufous Hummingbird is the most commonly reported vagrant, followed by the Calliope Hummingbird, although both are rare.

In the United States we have about 17 breeding species of hummingbirds, many of these species are found close to the Mexican border. Only the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds breed east of the Mississippi. The number and rate of documented sightings of vagrant hummingbirds in the east has been increasing dramatically. Every year dozens of Rufous Hummingbirds have been reported in the east, perhaps as high as 25-75 each year according to some ebird numbers.

***Why are the number and rate of vagrant hummingbird sightings increasing in our area?***

Hummingbirds that breed in the northern parts of our country migrate to warmer climates at the end of the summer. They then make the long return journey back again in the spring, often flying 1000s of miles. Hummingbirds do not travel together, but make the trip individually. If they are following their traditional routes, the western species should not be found this far east.

Many people question why some hummingbirds deviate from their normal migration paths and end up in the east and why these numbers are increasing. Scientists are still working on getting answers to these and many other questions. It's complicated!

Some say the vagrant birds were "blown off course or are just lost," especially since most vagrant hummingbirds appear to be young, inexperienced birds. Weather patterns may be a factor in some cases, but not most. Another possibility is that since hummingbirds have a curious, inquisitive nature, they are exploring and possibly expanding their range. Ruby-throated, Rufous, and Allen's hummingbird population are in decline due to a variety of environmental factors, including loss of habitat, in both their breeding and wintering areas. If they don't have the resources needed to survive within their normal

range, they may try to seek them elsewhere.

Global warming may be a factor. We know that agricultural growing zones are shifting, affecting their food sources. Many nectar producing flowers are now blooming at different times and may no longer be in sync with migration dates.

Birds must turn to other sources of food, perhaps in areas not traditionally within their range. In recent years, more people are adding bird and pollinator friendly gardens, planters or leaving small patches in their yard to grow wild flowers and other native plants. Those, together with roadside plantings of wildflowers are creating corridors that provide food and shelter in areas previously inhospitable to migrating birds. Hummingbird feeders have also become very popular. If left up after the end of summer, these feeders are welcomed sources of food for late migratory birds, allowing them to "fatten up" before continuing on to their wintering grounds.

***Is it possible that these vagrant hummingbirds have been here all along, but no one saw them or reported them?***

I was just lucky, in the right place at the right time when I spotted both of the vagrant hummingbirds in my yard. Perhaps they had been in my yard for weeks, maybe there were other birds that I just never noticed.

It makes sense that if more people are looking at and for birds, more will be reported! Many more people are watching birds, especially after the Covid pandemic. Hummingbirds are especially fascinating. With more people intentionally trying



*This is photo that shows the distinctive tail feathers used to ID the bird. Photo by Daryl Ramrattan*

to attract them with feeders and flowers there are more "eyes" on the lookout. Additionally, Citizen Science activities provide opportunities for children and adults to participate in organized projects that observe, collect and share valuable data with others and encourage observation and a love of Nature.

The internet is another factor in the increase in reports. It allows for instant communication and sharing of data between individuals and researchers. Once again, if more people are looking for and reporting these vagrant birds, we see the numbers increasing. Today, you can instantly check out or share bird sightings on eBird (launched in 2002) or other online platforms, prior to this it was much more difficult.

Regardless of the reasons why vagrant hummingbirds are being reported more frequently, it is always exciting to see one. Unfortunately, not all will survive, but some do and there are even a few reports of them returning to the same location in subsequent years!

***Which species of vagrant hummingbirds might show up in our area after October 15th?***

Look closely at any hummingbird seen after the first week in October. Our

*Continued from page 7*

local Ruby-throated should be gone by then, although some do linger. I found reports in eBird and on the NYSARC website for Suffolk County, NY listing the following species of vagrant hummingbirds. These have been reported since 1980, although these may not be complete.

Allen's hummingbird: 2023  
Riverhead (eBird)

Calliope Hummingbird: 5 reports  
in Suffolk County, NY

Ruby-throated hummingbird  
(seen late in season)

Rufous Hummingbird or Rufous/  
Allen's Hummingbird (unable  
to tell which species)

Additionally, these species  
have been reported other  
areas of New York State,

Anna's Hummingbird

Black-chinned Hummingbird-  
Randall's Island (2023)

Broad-billed Hummingbird

**I**n Suffolk County our most common vagrant hummingbird is the feisty little Rufous Hummingbird. I found records of fewer than 30 birds reported since 2000, according to eBird and NYSARC. This is an estimate, since it is difficult to accurately count the number of individuals. The same bird may have been reported at different locations on different dates. Additionally, some birds were listed as Rufous/Allen's, not enough data was provided to determine the species. It is nearly impossible to identify some of the female/immature birds without help from experts and sometimes they don't even agree! The vagrant adult males are much easier to identify. Rufous Hummingbirds usually are reported from October to December and most are immatures.

**Rufous hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) "Boss" of the hummingbirds, is a very hardy bird.**

*Catching a few insects, the Rufous Hummingbird supplements its diet. Photo: Darlene McNeil.*

- Feisty, the most aggressive of all hummingbirds around food and territorial.
  - Adapted to cool temps (15-20°F at night), will go into a state of torpor in subfreezing temps, although winter survival is not always possible in our climate.
  - Size- about the same size as our native ruby-throated (3 ¾ in.), but weighs less than a paperclip!
  - Sexually dimorphic
    - ◆ Male: rufous/orange/copper upper parts, flanks and sides of face, white breast patch, and an iridescent orange-red throat (gorget)
    - ◆ Female green with rusty patches and speckled throat, paler than males and they lack the gorget.
  - A western species, but most common vagrant hummingbird sighting on the east coast
  - Longest migratory journey for a bird, relative to body size. Up to 4,000 miles, which can take months.
    - ◆ Summer: Breeds in northern most regions of any hummingbird species living today regions include the Pacific northwest, Canada, western US up to Alaska
    - ◆ Spring: can be found in California as it migrates northward to breeding grounds
  - ◆ Fall: begins return journey to wintering ground, travels through the Rockies
  - ◆ Winter: in the mountainous regions of Mexico and Central America
  - New York vagrants have been reported October through February
  - Rufous hummingbird populations have declined about 67% between 1966 and 2019, according to the *North American Breeding Bird Survey*. Rufous Hummingbirds are included on the *Yellow Watch List* for birds most at risk of extinction without significant conservation action to reverse declines and reduce threats. (All about Birds)
  - They are easily confused with Allen's Hummingbird, which is much rarer in our area. Experts should be consulted for definitive identification.
- Calliope Hummingbird Smallest bird in the United States**
- Small, (3.25") even for a hummingbird!
  - Sexually dimorphic
    - ◆ Male unique throat feather pattern of magenta stripes that fork down sides of throat
    - ◆ Female plain green, spotting on throat, peachy tinted underparts
  - Western bird that migrates to tropics
    - ◆ Summer: breeds in Pacific





northwest and western Canada

- ◆ Winter: Central America
- ◆ Relatively stable population

**How can I increase the chance of attracting a western vagrant hummingbird to my yard?**

- Maintain clean & freshly filled sugar-water feeders through December
- Use BRIGHT RED feeders, Do Not add red coloring to the liquid or buy red-colored sugar water.
- Make the sugar water at a 1:4 ratio. This would be 1-part white granulated sugar to 4 parts water, for example 1 cup of sugar to 4 cups of water. In really cold temperatures it can be increased to a 1:3 ratio.
- Maintain at least 5 feeders, that are highly visible to birds migrating high overhead.
- Plant late-season nectaring flowers, to attract hummingbirds even without using feeders. Try to incorporate more native plants in your yard. Hummingbirds are especially attracted to red, orange, pink or purple flowers that have trumpet shaped or tubular flowers.
- Have a water source, such as shallow bowls, birdbaths, or misters available. Keep them clean.
- Promote insects! These are needed in their diet to provide protein.
- NO PESTICIDES!
- Nature is messy, not tidy! If you want your yard to attract more wildlife, leave the stems, stalks, seed heads, and leaves instead of doing a “fall cleanup.” Have less mowed areas of grass and more native plantings.

**What do I do if I see a late season hummingbird in my yard?**

If you are fortunate to spot a late season hummingbird, first try to identify what species it is. If possible, take photographs, especially the spread tail, when you suspect it may be a rufous or possibly an Allen’s Hummingbird. Contact other birders to ask for help and confirm your sighting. If you are not sure who to ask for help,

*Continued on page 10*



## Order Your 2025 ELIAS Calendar

***It makes a great gift! All photos were taken right here on Long Island by members of ELIAS.***

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ calendars @ \$10 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping is \$5 for up to 3 calendars \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to renew or join ELIAS (\$20 per year) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make a additional donations \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**My check is enclosed for** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send to:**  
**ELIAS**  
**PO Box 206**  
**East Quogue, NY 11942**

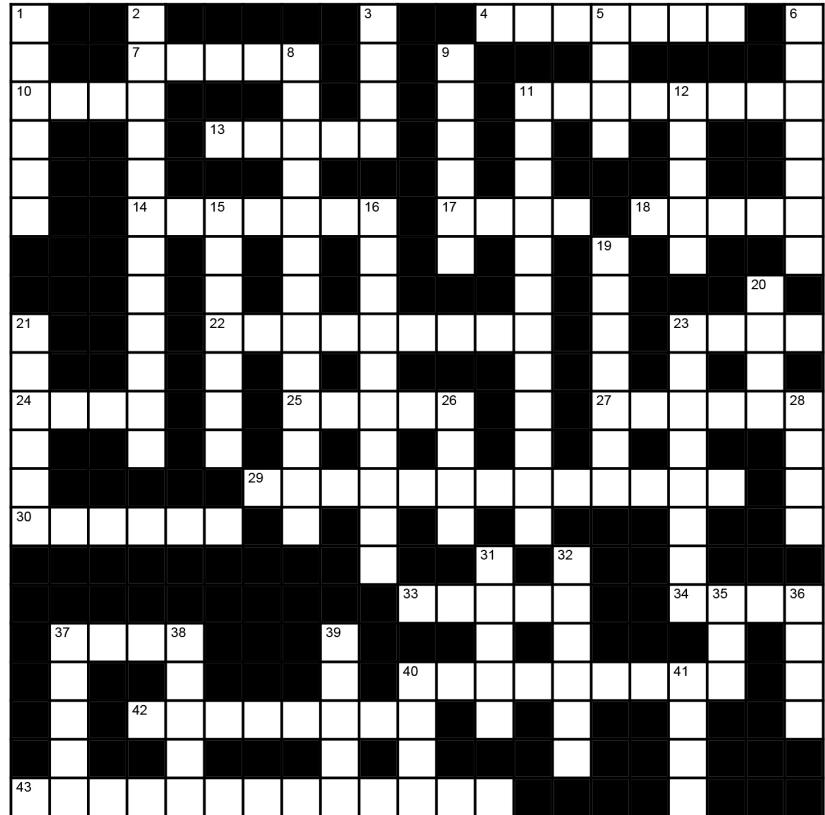
Continued from page 9

contact someone at ELIAS, or another local Audubon Chapter, who can either help you directly or steer you toward someone who can. Female/immature hummingbirds are very difficult to identify and often require an expert to determine the species, if it is possible. I must thank Darlene McNeil, who stopped by, photographed the hummingbirds in my yard, then sent the images to Karen Theodorou in Georgia for positive identification. She also explained to me what hosting a hummingbird entailed.

**Share your sighting.** To help researchers understand vagrant hummingbird behavior it is important to report ALL sightings of vagrant and winter hummingbirds. I have reported the vagrant birds in my yard through eBird and also to the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC), a committee of the New York State Ornithological Association.

If you do attract a late bird, and choose to be a “hummingbird host,” you take on the responsibility of providing food for the bird until it departs. It’s a big job, and the hosts I have spoken to all agree that you get attached to these amazing tiny birds. If you left up feeders late into the season, you need to keep the feeders filled and clean, especially since other food sources may not be available. The feeders must also be protected from freezing in cold weather. Suggestions include, bringing the feeders inside periodically throughout the day and switching them out with ones that have been indoors, using heated feeders and heat lamps, placing at least one feeder near a dense conifer to provide shelter between feedings and bringing the feeders inside at night. The hummingbirds start feeding before sunrise, so you must make sure at least one feeder is available in the early morning hours. Their chances for survival increase if they find abundant food resources at migration stop-over points. Hopefully, the vagrant bird will rest, re-fuel and continue their journey. ■■■

### Winter Birds, Recent Sightings Tom Moran



**Across**

- 4 Brown-headed \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ Grebe
- 10 32 Down Black-backed \_\_\_\_\_, West Point gray back and adult has yellow legs.
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_ Marina a good place to see 10 Across
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_ 37 Down
- 14 Exciting May migrant
- 17 Wood \_\_\_\_\_
- 18 36 Down \_\_\_\_\_
- 22 \_\_\_\_\_ Falcon
- 23 Not Black or White-winged Scoter
- 24 Bird of peace
- 25 \_\_\_\_\_ Point County Park, 3 Down seen here as well as Robert Moses
- 27 American \_\_\_\_\_, seen at same spot as 42 Across
- 29 Yosemite Sam insult “You \_\_\_\_\_ Sapsucker”
- 30 Northern \_\_\_\_\_, a plunge diver
- 33 7 Across \_\_\_\_\_, but could be Horned, Red-necked, or Pied-billed
- 34 \_\_\_\_\_, paper, scissors or 1 Down
- 37 *uh, uh, not cow*
- 40 Red \_\_\_\_\_, maybe at Paumanok Trail/Jones Pond
- 42 Pink \_\_\_\_\_, a popular lawn ornament, seen at Georgica Pond
- 43 \_\_\_\_\_ Sparrow, *Oh, Canada*

**Down**

- 1 Rock \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Warbler, Audubon’s or Myrtle?
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Thrasher, recent visitor from the west
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Eagle, not Golden
- 6 Least \_\_\_\_\_ seen at Wertheim, Arshamomaque and elsewhere
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_ Cormorant
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_ 14 Across. Necklace.
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_ Plover, with wingpits
- 12 American \_\_\_\_\_, look in farm furrows
- 15 Hoary or Common \_\_\_\_\_, go upstate
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_ Gull, smallish
- 19 A dabbling duck without duck in the name. Male gray backed with black in the rump
- 20 \_\_\_\_\_ Swallow
- 21 What some birds that forage in the water are doing
- 23 Northern \_\_\_\_\_, groups paddle in circles straining food with impressive honkers
- 26 Red-tailed \_\_\_\_\_
- 28 Blue or Green-winged \_\_\_\_\_
- 31 An Egret is usually white but a \_\_\_\_\_ is usually gray or blue
- 32 Not Great Black-backed Gull, smaller
- 35 Great-horned \_\_\_\_\_
- 36 \_\_\_\_\_ 18 Across, or Billie Jean \_\_\_\_\_, who beat Bobby Riggs in tennis
- 37 House or Purple \_\_\_\_\_
- 38 \_\_\_\_\_ Landing Rd
- 39 Dark-eyed \_\_\_\_\_
- 40 American \_\_\_\_\_, You old \_\_\_\_\_
- 41 \_\_\_\_\_ Sparrow, seen at Robert Moses

## Word Search - the Bird Version

## Sudoku

E	G	G	R	E	B	E	H	F	O	X	U	O	W	L
H	A	U	B	E	L	M	O	N	T	F	I	E	L	D
R	F	G	L	A	U	C	O	U	S	S	M	I	T	H
E	W	I	L	L	E	E	D	J	R	O	B	I	N	A
D	O	V	E	E	E	I	E	N	O	R	T	H	U	W
B	O	J	Y	S	O	D	D	M	O	N	T	A	U	K
R	D	O	U	X	U	E	U	Z	U	W	E	S	T	R
E	D	O	W	N	Y	R	A	N	K	T	E	S	F	K
A	H	U	R	B	C	R	F	C	E	O	E	C	N	M
S	A	G	E	A	K	O	T	E	A	L	N	A	T	T
T	D	U	N	L	I	N	G	H	E	O	H	U	I	Y
E	R	U	D	D	Y	N	S	E	O	P	W	P	A	S
D	R	O	C	K	I	I	R	L	A	O	I	J	N	O
B	L	A	C	K	F	T	B	Y	N	P	K	I	A	N
B	E	L	L	P	O	R	T	S	W	A	N	S	O	G

7		6	4				8	
			1					3
	3					9	4	
								6
		9		2		3	5	8
3	8						1	2
			9					
1	6	4		5				
		7						

- |          |             |         |
|----------|-------------|---------|
| BALD     | HOOKS       | SMITH   |
| BELLPORT | HOUSE       | SNOW    |
| BELMONT  | JAY         | SOD     |
| BLACK    | JONES       | SONG    |
| BLUE     | JUNCO       | SURF    |
| DOVE     | KING        | SWAN    |
| DOWNY    | LOON        | TEAL    |
| DUCK     | MONTAUK     | TIANA   |
| DUNE     | MUTE        | TREE    |
| DUNLIN   | NORTH       | WEST    |
| EAGLE    | OWL         | WOOD    |
| EIDER    | PIPIT       | WREN    |
| FIELD    | RAZORBILL   | YAPHANK |
| FISH     | RED-BREAST- |         |
| FOX      | ED          |         |
| GLAUCOUS | ROBIN       |         |
| GREBE    | ROCK        |         |
| GULL     | RUDDY       |         |
| HAWK     | SAGE        |         |
| HOODED   | SCAUP       |         |

*What type of bird works at a building site*

*A Crane*



*Why couldn't anyone see the bird?*

*Because it was in da skies (disguise)*

# The Annual Dinner

The annual dinner took place on October 23rd at Rock Hill Country Club in Manorville. There were lots of happy smiling faces as the tradition was reignited. Everyone enjoyed the speaker and the food and the camaraderie shared by all the attendees.

Our speaker, Heather Wolf spoke about finding birds wherever you happen to be. She is the author of *Finding More Birds*. She signed and sold books at the dinner. Her patch is in Brooklyn in the newish park under the Brooklyn Bridge. For the most part they seem to get many of the same birds that we have here. So it was a good match. The next day Eileen Schwinn took Heather on a quick tour of our “patch” including Dune Road to look for some sparrows Heather wanted to see. The wind that day kept the sparrows in hiding. See the last picture on the next page as a more relaxed Heather handles the wind on Dune Road.

I was pleased to accept the Osprey Award, upper left on the next page.  
Sally Newbert





*The next day Eileen Schwinn (left) took Heather Wolf (above) on a quick tour of our “patch” including Dune Road to look for some sparrows. Unfortunately, the wind kept the sparrows down.*

*Continued from page 1*

**WhatsApp Bird Finders**

About 5 years ago (at least locally), another method of sending notifications out arrived, using a chat-type method. WhatsApp Bird Finders: This system is also free, and is Administered by the site “owner”. It does send real-time notices out, but it does have, at times, a bit more chit-chat. Lots of emojis started popping up about 2 years ago, which can sometimes be judgmental and, in my opinion, unnecessary. You can turn the “ping” off, so each emoji, chit-chat doesn’t chime in and make you crazy. To join this notification system, send a text to Andrew Bakish at 917-968-7412 and ask to be added to the Community List. Currently there are almost 260 folks who receive the real-time notification, mostly Nassau/Suffolk and some NYC contributors.

**New York Birding on Discord**

The latest edition of notifications is called New York Birding, on Discord (originally a gaming site, but expanded into a way to contact your friends and share info). Started in February of 2024 by a community of birders at Cornell Lab, this state wide – and local area – method is “interesting”, and probably the way of the future (until something else comes along...) You join the nearly 2,000 or so others on this program either by “invitation” from a current member, or you can Google NEW YORK BIRDING DISCORD. An extremely helpful 24 minute YouTube instruction, put there by Steve Rappaport of Cornell, and Saw Mill River Audubon Society, will walk you through the free installation and use of this site. It’s not super easy, but you eventually get the hang of the site – my one complaint is there are “channels”, such as Nassau-Suffolk-chat, Nassau-Suffolk-rba (rare bird alert) and ny-statewide-rba – there are often cross-postings by people and threads, which occasionally involve more time looking at the phone than looking for the birds! This may – or may not – be confusing. Or, it may – or may not – be just me! The chat channel does allow questions, and by

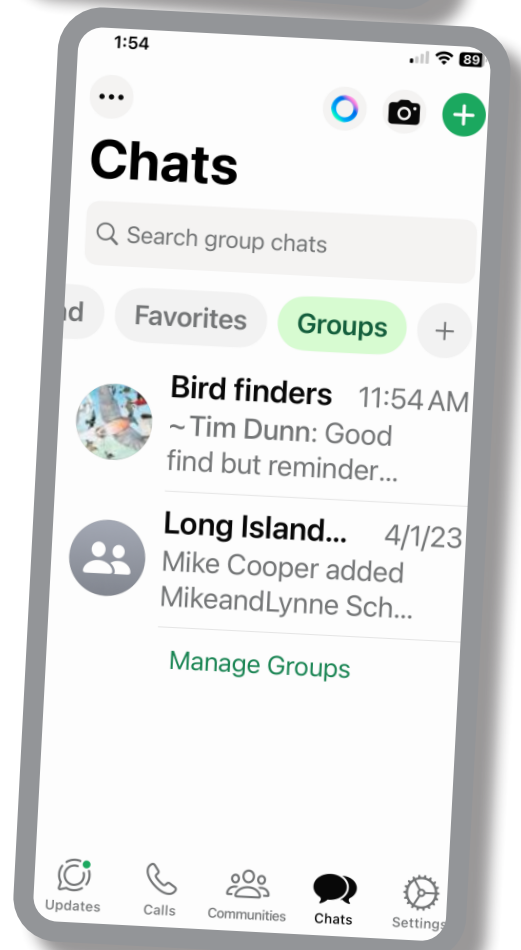
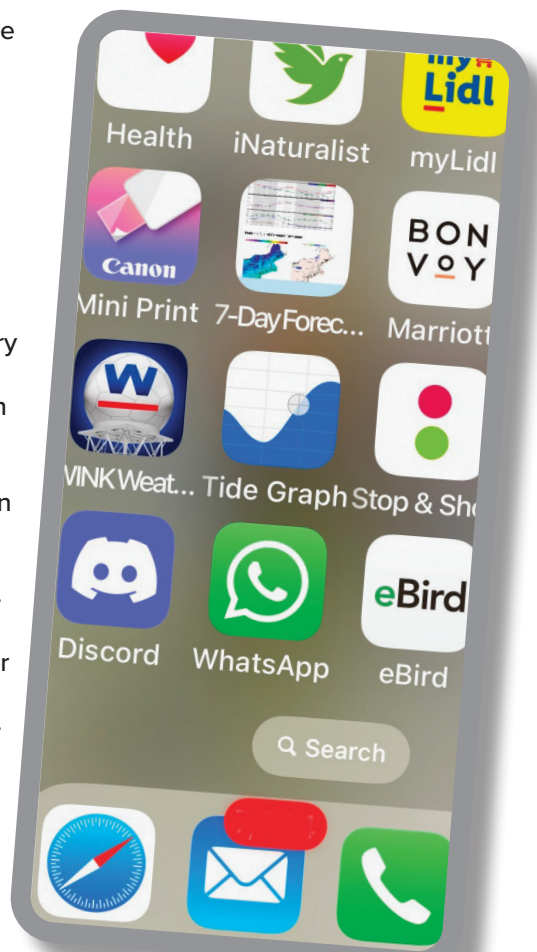
separating those from the actually rare bird reports, and is helpful. But there are occasions where Chat questions are posted on the RBA Channel... It’s a work in progress, and for the most part, the rarest of the rarities in the Nassau-Suffolk-rba are posted.

**eBird**

Last but certainly not least – eBird! The free, community-based app is very useful to all, and is even more useful if you learn to maximize it to your own needs in the settings! You can learn of ALL the birds seen in a designated area (like Suffolk County), and you can even set your NEEDS for birds you may be searching for – life or year. Free, started, monitored and administered by Cornell Lab of Ornithology, you can download the app from either the AppleStore or Google Play. You can have a desktop, laptop, iPad, tablet or smart phone edition. As far as Rare Birds or Needed birds, you can use the Manage Alerts tab to receive notifications at the end of the day – or even hourly. What you receive depends on what others submit to their personal eBird accounts. There’s no way to contact the person, and there’s no 100% guarantee the sighting is accurate, but at least it’s the broadest way to get a snap-shot of birds in your general area. Not real-time, but, set on the hourly Alert, you are pretty close to real-time.

Once you are comfortable in following any or all of the above notification methods, you can post your own rare bird sightings! There’s no need to depend on someone else to report and answer questions about the Rare Bird you may have in your yard, or you see while out birding. You can be proud of finding a truly rare bird, and announcing it to the local birding community! And, hey, I hope to see you at the next rare beauty who decides to show up close to home!! ■■■■

*Top screen shows the Discord icon, the second screen once you have entered the app.*



**Happy Birding in  
The New Year!**

**Remember to go see the ducks and  
waterfowl. They are usually abundant**

**January through March**

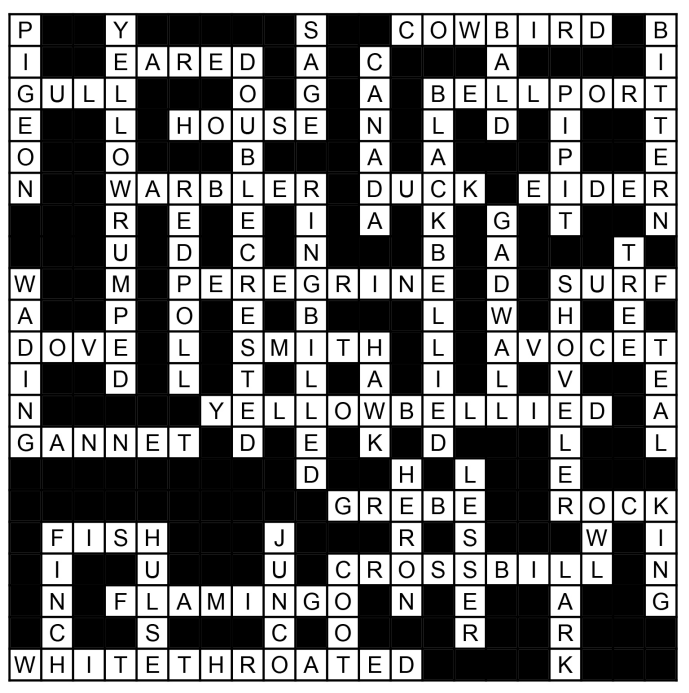
**Some good spots for ducks:**

**Eastport Pond**

**Lakes around Patchogue**

**Montauk Point**

**Answers to Crossword  
Winter Birds - Recent Sightings  
on page 10  
Puzzle by Tom Moran**

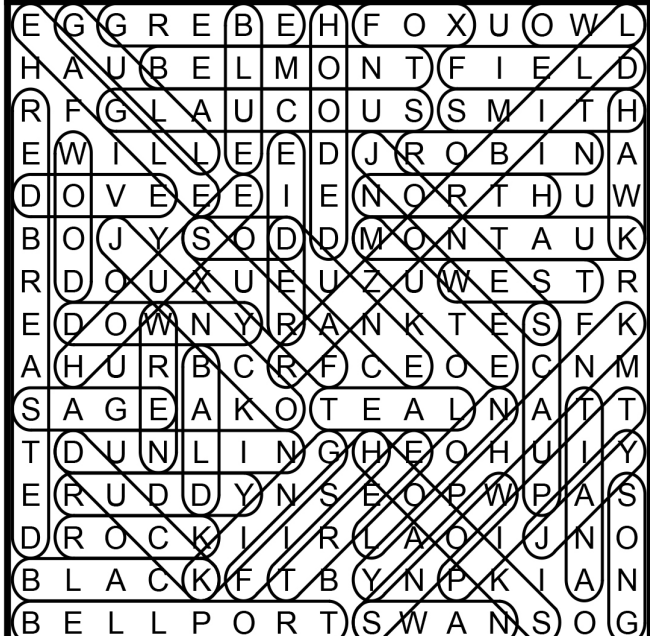


The crossword puzzle grid contains the following words:

- Across: COWBIRD, BELLPORTRAIT, HOUSE, ENLAP, WARBLER, DUCK, EIDER, REEIA, AKGTN, PEREGRINE, SURF, SMITH, LAVOCET, YELLOWBELLIED, DEKDL, GREBE, ROCK, FLAMINGO, NERAG, WHITETHROATED.
- Down: YEARED, GULL, OGBELL, OOB, AWAR, UD, MPE, APOEB, DVEL, IDL, GANNET, FISH, IU, CS, HURB, SAGEAK, DUNL, RUDDYNS, ROCK, BLACKFTBYNPKIA, BELLPORTRAIT.

*Answers to puzzles on page 11*

7	1	6	4	9	3	2	8	5
4	9	2	1	8	5	6	7	3
5	3	8	2	7	6	9	4	1
2	7	1	5	3	8	4	9	6
6	4	9	7	2	1	3	5	8
3	8	5	6	4	9	7	1	2
8	2	3	9	1	4	5	6	7
1	6	4	3	5	7	8	2	9
9	5	7	8	6	2	1	3	4



The crossword puzzle grid contains the following words circled in the original image:

- Across: FOXUOWL, BELMONT, FIELDF, GLAUCOUS, SMITH, WILLEED, JROBIN, NORTHUW, BOJYSODD, MONTAUK, DOWNY, RANKTESFK, HURB, CRFCEOE, SAGEAK, OTEALNATT, DUNL, RUDDYNS, ROCK, BLACKFTBYNPKIA, BELLPORTRAIT, SWANSOG.
- Down: GREBE, HAUBELMONT, WILLEED, BOJYSODD, DOWNY, HURB, SAGEAK, DUNL, RUDDYNS, ROCK, BLACKFTBYNPKIA, BELLPORTRAIT.

# THE OSPREY

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please include your email to receive reminders of programs, trips, or weather related cancellations.

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