

NYSYBC Annual Kickoff 2017 Meeting Minutes

Croton Point Park
and
Mariandale Conference Center

January 15, 2017

The meeting was led by President Kai Victor and called to order at 10:40 AM.

Introductions and a Thank You (10:41-10:47)

- A special thank you for Anne Swaim of Saw Mill River Audubon, a NYSYBC partner organization and guide for our earlier field trip. Thanks Anne!
- Introductions were made by all club affiliates, the following members and officials introduced themselves and asked what bird they'd most like to see-
 - Carena Pooth
 - Herb Thompson
 - Kai Victor (Snowy Owl)
 - Silas Hernandez (Cackling Goose)
 - Garret Van Gelder
 - Sean Ward (Barn Owl)
 - Brenden Murtha (Sabine's Gull)
 - Joe "the past prez" Hernandez (Barn Owl)
 - Truth Muller (Least Bittern)
 - Josh Cantor (Black-headed Gull)
 - Rion Yoshimura (Eagles and Hawks)
 - Isaiah Sigman (Black Rail)
 - Ryan Zucker (Henslow's Sparrow)
 - Hannah Mirando (Northern Bobwhite)
 - Jordan Spindel (Snowy Owl and Pink-footed Goose)
 - Filip Vujanic (Eagles, Falcons)
 - Avery Scott (Anything he hasn't yet seen!)
 - Ava Buzzeo (Bald Eagle)
 - Mary Batcheller
 - Max Kogut (Lapland Longspur)
 - Elizabeth Hayes (Birds of Prey)
 - Dominic Colucci
 - Eamon Freiburger (Red Crossbill)
 - Teresa Loomis (Loggerhead Shrike)
 - Sarah Freiburger (Redstart)
 - Sean Freiburger
 - Mack Meller

A Year in Review (10:47-10:54)

- 11 field trips were made in 2016, and club favorites were discussed.
 - Owl Banding, for the opportunity to pet owls
 - Whiteface Mountain, for its lifers, exclusive morning access, sunrise, and unique boreal habitat
 - Doodletown, for the Woodcock and Cerulean Warbler sightings.
 - Jamaica Bay, for the opportunity to observe aquatic birds and the mudflats as well as some unusual species such as Yellow-billed Cuckoo
 - NYSOA meeting, for the presentations
 - Bashakill, for a notable 9 Rusty Blackbirds
- At 10:51, potential repeat trip ideas were discussed briefly. The following were proposed
 - Bashakill
 - Owl Banding
 - Sterling Forest
 - Whiteface Mountain
 - Liberty Marsh

Bird Architecture: An Outlook on Bird Nests... and How Birds Develop by Anne Swaim (10:54-11:20)

- The Book *Avian Architecture* comes highly recommended.
- Most people, when thinking of nests, call to mind an archetypical “cup” nest, which is one of many varieties.
- Nests are used briefly by their creators, despite their difficult construction.
- Nests are created by bills and feet, without the aid of hands. Genetic knowledge and further experimentation and learning seem to be the basis of avian nest-building.
- Megapodes: a possible look at ancient nesting strategies. Eggs are buried and abandoned by parents, young emerge ready to fly.
- Emerging fully developed is known as being “precocial”. Eyes are often open, chicks leave nest within a few days, and have down feathering.
- Scrape nest, basic structure carved into the ground. Temperature is regulated by depth and heavy camo and pointed eggs are common.
- Cavity Nest, any hole or tunnel nest. Primary cavity nesters dig holes, secondary ones use pre constructed ones. Competition over abandoned nest holes is very common. Cavity nesters often have altricial young, which are helpless, naked, and often have closed eyes at birth. Different primary nesters prefer different types of trees in varying stages of decomposition.
- Mud Nests are constructed by layering small daubs of mud. Long construction periods.
- Dome Nests are constructed of woven grasses, and are common in ground nesters and in grassland species.
- Cup and Platform nests are similar in shape, but vary in size. Platform nests are often re-used. Species with this strategy may display strong sexual dimorphism, often in the form of a well camouflaged female. Semi-altriciality is also common.
- If one finds a nest, one shouldn't report its location. Not all photographers have scruples.

Club Records (11:20-11:21)

- Hannah is our current records chair
- This was a good year for the NYSYBC, the life list consists of 286 species, and a few lifers were added to the list this year.
- If you are interested in the position or are in some other way curious about the list, ask Hannah.

The Wild Bird Fund by Jordan Spindel (11:21-11:39)

- The Wild Bird Fund (WBF) is a rehabilitation center for injured birds in Manhattan.
- It was founded ~2011
- Operates in NYC.
- Deals with lots of collisions, as well as other avian injuries.
- The facility isn't very spacious.
- There is a reception room, ER, Clinic, and Flyway. A water fountain provided for ducks may lead to a few wandering in the reception room.
- Around $\frac{3}{4}$ of the incoming birds are Rock Pigeons, but lots of migrants come in during spring. Spring is also a season for baby birds. Some interesting specimens brought in include Canvasback and bitterns.
- Jordan began work there at his mother's suggestion, and though at first unsure ended up finding it quite interesting.
- One's work begins with cleaning the enclosures, but as one progresses more interesting jobs become available that more closely work with the animals.
- One must be fourteen or older to volunteer, and the application process is quite lengthy.

Events and Field Trip Discussion (11:39-11:45)

- The *Birding Architecture*, before the events discussion, was remembered and handed out.
- The importance of field trip logistics were covered by Eamon. Parents were reminded the importance of paperwork, as well as notifying the trip leaders if one might run late.
- Trips are planned with a partner organization, who provide a date and trip leader. At least one special trip is planned a year (that of 2016 was Whiteface Mountain).
- Preliminary plans for 2017 include a May Bashakill trip, a June trip to Doodletown, and a February trip to Jones Beach.
- The following suggestions were made-
 - Cupsogue in July
 - Montauk in December (tentative Feb 2018 plans)
 - Central Park in August or September
 - Liberty Marsh
 - Something to do with Raptors
 - A member-led trip
 - Randall's Island
 - Montezuma during late summer or fall
 - Riverhead Sod Farm during Winter or Summer
 - Bashakill in May

- The notion of shifting the kickoff from January to March, due to potential weather concerns, was raised, but voted almost unanimously against.

The meeting was adjourned from 11:45 to 1:50 for the book'n'stuff swap, lunch, and birding

Mixed Flocking in Birds by Garret Van Gelder (1:50-2:20)

- Mixed Flocks are common associations found worldwide that are formed between two or more bird species.
- Loose and strict occurrences are both common, semantics and terminology are in debate.
- Little is known about how mixed-flocks form in general, but those in Sri Lanka can be traced back to drongo mimicry.
- Mixed flock benefits may not be apparent at first, but generally members are either increasing foraging efficiency by copying/stealing from others or catching the insects they disturb, or protection from predators with numbers and group mobbing responses.
- Nuclear and satellite relationships reflect "leading" and "following" species, and while not concrete definitions are a helpful way to visualize flocking in NY.

Big Days and the World Series of Birding (2:20-2:22)

- Big days can raise funds for the club per bird sighting or with a flat rate provided by friends/family.
- Pair ups and teams are encouraged
- If one can organize a team of three, the club will support a World Series of Birding team representing NYSYBC.

The Scholarship Fund (2:22-2:30)

- The 3 top fundraisers for the scholarship fund were rewarded with a certificate of appreciation and a book.
 - Kai Victor- *Lost Among Birds*
 - Eamon Freiburger- *The Hidden Lives of Owls*
 - Josh Cantor- *The Narrow Edge*
- Those who conducted a big day were thanked and given certificates of appreciation.
 - Isaiah Sigman
 - Avery Scott
 - Aiden Perkins
 - Hannah Mirando
 - Teresa Loomis
 - Gabriel Loomis
 - Noam Klotz
- The scholarship program was founded in 2010 and helps fund the educational experiences of young birders. It is non-competitive and encouraged!
- To qualify one must fill out a form that includes what the program is and entails.

My Adventures at Camp Avocet by Theresa Loomis (2:30-2:45)

- This camp is sponsored by the ABA and is located in Delaware.
- Camp is noted for its great counselors, birders, birds, rooms, and food.
- 25 Birders attended the camp (a few from Europe).
- First day- Bombay Hook NWR (Avocet, Upland Sandpiper, Black-necked Stilt, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, and swarms of Bank Swallows roasting parasites off their bodies on hot pavement)
- Second day- Prime Hook NWR (Summer Tanager, Clapper Rail, Hudsonian Godwit, Stilt Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow).
- Third Day- Chincoteague (Sandwich Tern, Piping Plover, White-rumped Sandpiper, Marbled Godwit, Delmarva Fox Squirrel)
- Fourth Day- Cape May-Lewes Ferry (Wilson's Storm Petrel, Parasitic Jaeger) Into Cape May (Black Skimmer, Red Knot, Roseate Tern)
- The Big Green Hour- Split into two teams to see how many birds can be observed in an hour. Teresa's team, the Godwits, were the only to find a Peregrine Falcon.
- Cape Henlopen Nature Center (Brown-headed Nuthatch, Pine Warbler)
- 153 species, all told, observed by campers.

Birding by Ear by Herb Thompson and Carena Pooth (2:45-3:05)

- Many birders make the mistake of assuming it's too much trouble, but it can be quite important in parsing out common birds and finding rare ones.
- Three notable types of bird sounds-
 - Song
 - Chips
 - Flight Notes (especially difficult)
- Carena and Herb had a birding by ear "spark" when chasing a Gray Catbird and Red-bellied Woodpecker, respectively, chasing them to find they were common birds that might have been written off.
- Many tools are available to learn bird sound, such as-
 - Birding by Ear and More Birding by Ear CD sets
 - Field Guide to Bird Song
 - Stokes Field Guide to Bird Song
 - Phone apps iBird and Larkwire
- A handout with useful learning tools was provided.
- Repetition is stressed as the most important component in learning bird songs.

The Photo Quiz by Silas Hernandez (3:05-3:28)

1. Red-eyed Vireo
2. White-throated Sparrow
3. Least Bittern
4. Sanderling
5. Kingbird
6. Sharp-shinned Hawk and Starling
7. Black-bellied Plover and Sanderling
8. Cape May Warbler
9. Bobolink
10. Northern Waterthrush
11. Pickerel Frog
12. Fragile Forktail

Field Guides (3:28-3:29)

- Spare field guides were made available to any young birders without a field guide. None were needed immediately.

Leadership by Carena Pooth (3:29-3:45)

- Several benefits come from joining the leadership team, such as having a big say in club decisions, leadership experience, and an easier time getting a good recommendation letter.
- The three positions and their tasks were covered.
- President, head cheerleader, club support, thank you notes, kickoff meeting, and elections.
- Vice President, the project person. Responsible for a monthly club activity, such as a photo-quiz.
- Secretary, the meeting scribe. This person takes notes at the kickoff meeting.
- All of these positions are responsible for a post to the mailing list each month on a piece of birding or related news, information, or other educational item.
- Other leaders include the past president, responsible for helping the current president with his duties, the records chair responsible with the club life list and records, and the Gilded Flickr, in charge of the NYSYBC flickr group.
- Elections are held once a year and open to any club member that's paid their dues. Three elections are held in succession (president, VP, and Secretary), and one can run for multiple offices, though not an office they had just held the previous year. Bios are written by those who are running, and in case of a tie the winner is selected randomly.
- Three awards and books were given to the NYSYBC leaders
 - Kai- Leadership Award
 - Silas- The Great Idea Award
 - Garret Van Gelder- The Extra Mile Award
- The Unsung Hero award was given to Sue Freiburger, who has worked tirelessly coordinating field trips.

Bird Research by Kai Victor (3:45-4:02)

- Covers bird research he has partaken in
- Volunteer experience
- Lots of NYC opportunities, such as the WBF!
- The WBF wasn't as well organized back when Kai was there.
- Take the plunge! Look up potential opportunities, ask everyone, and take rejection in stride.
- Kai ended up with two research projects panning out.
- One of these was Quail reintroduction on Long Island
- NY Parks Department internship. Field work has its issues, like poison ivy, humidity, the sun, and mosquitoes. Lots of aquatic birds were observed, such as Clapper Rails.
- Huyck Preserve mist netting. Focus was finding methods to attract birds to mist nets, such as alarms, a taxidermy Red-tailed Hawk, and food. A native fish tank was also constructed.
- Swaner Preserve and Ecocenter, 12000 acre Utah wetland preserve. Sandhill crane present. Special access was a perk, pulling invasive plants was not.
- Invertebrate surveys conducted to monitor water quality.
- This sort of research adds to your resume.
- Cornell Young Birder Event- held Ivory-billed Woodpecker and Carolina Parakeet skins.
- Stick with a project!

Wrap-up (4:02-4:05)

Kai encourages birders to run for office, as it's not as hard as one might think. It was agreed it'd been a good NYSYBC year.

Anne Swaim and Saw Mill River Audubon were thanked again for leading the trip, making arrangements, and sharing the cost of the conference with NYSYBC.

After a big thank you to everyone, the meeting was adjourned at 4:05

~~Garret Van Gelder
NYSYBC Secretary