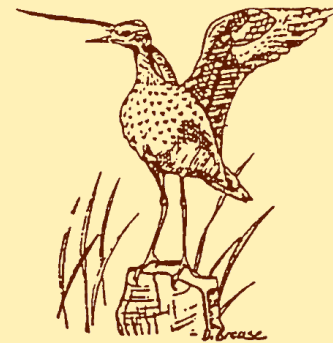


# The Upland Plover

Newsletter of the North Country Bird Club, Inc. Since 1948

March-April 2023

Volume 64 No.2



## 2023 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE NOW DUE

PLEASE FILL OUT THE INCLUDED FORM SOON AND FORWARD IT WITH YOUR DUES

### SPRING MEETINGS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10

All Meetings at 7:00 PM

Stone Presbyterian Church  
140 Chestnut St, Watertown

### SPRING BIRD CENSUS

Again this year, seeking to create a more complete picture of the great variety of birds which can be seen in our area, the Club will conduct a Spring Bird Census. Join us in this combined effort of members and other interested birders to survey the bird life in our area during the spring season. All birders are invited and urged to participate. The Census will extend from Monday, March 20 (the Vernal Equinox) through Tuesday, June 20 (the last day of spring). **The Census Form is included with this issue.** Please follow the procedure on the form to record and submit your sightings. **Note: All sightings must be from Jefferson, Lewis, or St. Lawrence County (NYSOA Region 6).**

### MARCH MEETING

Wednesday, March 8

7:00 pm at Stone Presbyterian Church  
140 Chestnut St, Watertown

Program: *The Zoo Project*

A representative from Zoo New York will join us to discuss upcoming birding programs and events at the Zoo, as well as the ongoing cooperative efforts with the Club to promote birding and bird conservation among Zoo patrons.

### FIELD TRIPS - 2023 SEASON

St. Lawrence River Parks: Saturday, April 22 - 8:30 am

Southwicks Beach: Saturday, May 6 - 8:30 am

Red Lake: Saturday, May 20 - 8:30 am

Limerick Cedars: Wednesday, June 7 - 8:00 pm

Marlowe Camp, Beartown: Saturday, June 17 - 8:30 am

Annual Picnic (Brouse Preserve): Sunday, July 9 - 1:00 pm

Perch River WMA: Saturday, August 26 - 8:30 am

Montezuma NWR: Saturday, October 21 - 8:30 am

We meet for all field trips, except the Limerick Cedars evening trip and the Annual Picnic, at 8:30 am in the parking lot of the Arsenal St Wal-Mart, across the entry drive from Red Lobster.

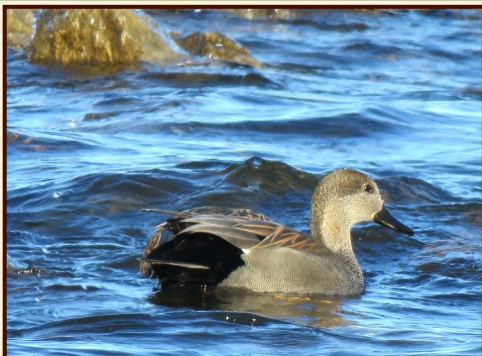
Bring insect repellent & water on all field trips.

A field trip may be cancelled due to bad weather.

Call Dick Brouse at 788-6778 with any questions about our field trips.

After all local field trips, participants are invited to join for lunch at a nearby restaurant, if their schedule permits. These gatherings are always most enjoyable (and entertaining).

**Note: Our ANNUAL MEETING & ELECTIONS will be held at the MAY MEETING (Wednesday, May 10)**



GADWALL

Cape Vincent

February 11, 2023

Photo by  
Robin Booth

### PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

Cornell Lab's **Project FeederWatch** extends from November to April each year. Anyone interested in birds can participate. This year's FeederWatch season continues through Sunday, April 30. You may sign up and begin counting at any time during the season. There is an \$18 annual fee to cover materials, staff support, and data analysis. For more info or to join: [Project FeederWatch](#)

## OFFICERS

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315-782-4705

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Mike Shepard

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**On The Web:  
NORTH COUNTRY  
BIRD CLUB  
ON FACEBOOK**

For detailed info about birds,  
visit the website of  
the Cornell Ornithology Lab:  
[Cornell Lab](#)

Track **bird migrations** at the Cornell Lab's [Cornell Birdcast](#) Maps show patterns of migration across the United States. Regional forecasts of migration dates are given for individual species.

Access the Cornell Lab's Birdcams to watch a variety of birds nesting and feeding, and to view the feeders at the Lab:

[Cornell Lab Birdcams](#)

**eBird Essentials** is a free online course which shows you how to use the eBird app to record and submit sightings. Access the course at:

[Cornell Lab Academy - Courses](#)

## FIELD TRIP: ST. LAWRENCE RIVER PARKS

**Saturday, April 22** - Meet at Arsenal St Wal-Mart at 8:30 am

We will visit state parks along the St. Lawrence River, as well as other birding sites in northern Jefferson County, to observe migrating waterfowl and arriving songbirds. This is a driving tour, with only minimal walking involved. Lunch at an area restaurant will follow.

## FIELD TRIP: SOUTHWICKS BEACH NATURE TRAILS

**Co-sponsored by the Henderson Historical Society**

**Saturday, May 6** - Meet at Arsenal St Wal-Mart at 8:30 am  
(or meet us along the entrance road to Southwicks Beach State Park at 9:00 am)

Join us to explore the nature trails at Southwicks Beach State Park. A walk of about one mile on well-groomed trails provides the opportunity to see a wide variety of spring birds in a beautiful setting.

## FIELD TRIP: RED LAKE

**Saturday, May 20** - Meet at Arsenal St Wal-Mart at 8:30 am

This is a *must* trip for adding birds to your Spring Bird Census list. The setting, near the village of Theresa, includes woodlands, fields, wetlands, and the lakeshore environment, so a wide variety of species is possible. This always rewarding field trip is an easy walk along a level gravel road.

## FIELD TRIP: LIMERICK CEDARS

**Wednesday, June 7 at 8:00 pm** - Ransom Road

We will meet in the evening along the Ransom Road in the Limerick Cedars to look and listen for Whip-poor-wills, American Woodcock, Prairie Warblers, and other spring birds. Enjoy the enchanting sights and sounds of twilight in the Cedars.

(The Ransom Road is on the left, one mile north of Limerick on NY 180.)

## FIELD TRIP: MARLOWE CAMP (Beartown Rd)

**Saturday, June 17** - Meet at Arsenal St Wal-Mart at 8:30 am

We will travel to Club President Corky Marlowe's camp in the Town of Croghan to look for warblers and other woodland birds. This event, a moderate walk along a gravel road, will conclude with lunch at the camp. Please bring a **dish to pass**. *Salad, dessert, and tableware will be provided.*



**MERLIN**

Millens Bay Rd February 17, 2023

Photo by Robin Booth

## RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER

Three Mile Bay  
February 14, 2023

Photo by  
Lynn Chavoustie



A beautiful set of bird-themed notecards is given to members of the Club by random selection each time the *Plover* is issued, to provide an incentive to keep memberships current. We offer congratulations to this issue's recipients, Steve and Vici Diehl of Antwerp.

**The NYS Bluebird Society is looking for volunteers to monitor bluebird nesting boxes in our area. For more information or to assist, call Corky at 315-782-4705.**

## INFORMATION SOURCES FOR REGIONAL SIGHTINGS AND RARE BIRD ALERTS

A list of **birding listserves** and of sites issuing **rare bird alerts** for New York is available from the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA) at [NYSOA Sightings](#). Note especially eBird Alerts, Oneidabirds, Cayugabirds-L, and Northern\_NY\_Birds. Oneidabirds reports sightings from the Syracuse area and the Montezuma region, and some sightings from our area. Cayugabirds-L reports sightings from the Montezuma region as well, and from the eastern Finger Lakes region. Northern\_NY\_Birds reports sightings mainly from the Adirondacks and the Champlain Valley.



## NORTH COUNTRY BIRD CLUB SIGHTINGS

Please forward notable sightings for the next issue by April 15 (contact info on page 6).

Three groups of sightings in our area have been especially notable during the past few weeks. First, a Boreal Chickadee, an infrequent visitor to our area, appeared at Grass Point State Park, "hanging out" with a group of Black-capped Chickadees. Lynn Chavoustie reported sighting the bird on Jan 7, then again on Jan 15. At that time, it had already been seen and reported by several others. At the time this issue went to press, the bird was still being seen, so it has been at the Park for at least two months. The Boreal Chickadee has been seen by a number of Club members over that time, including Lee Ellsworth, Dick and Marion Brouse, Rachel Lewis, Robin Booth, and Peter VanEenaam. As his photo attests, the bird is not at all shy around people and will take seed from a patient observer's hand.

The second set of sightings of special significance also came first from Lynn, who reported that a Red-winged Blackbird had appeared at her feeder in Three Mile Bay on Feb 13. This is a remarkably early return of this species to our area. Russell Lee reported a Red-winged Blackbird at his home on the Airport Road on the next day, Feb 14. He then noted in a second report on Feb 27 that a pair of Red-winged Blackbirds had come to his feeders every day from Feb 15 on. Russell noted that the species had arrived at his home two weeks earlier than in any previous year.

The third especially notable set of sightings began with a report from Malcolm Jones on Feb 21. Malcolm reported seeing a very large flock of Snow Geese virtually covering a large field on the south side of Coffeen Street Rd, not far west of the I-81 interchange. A notification was sent out that evening by the Club, which resulted in several responses from others who had seen the Geese there, as well as finding sizable flocks in other locations. Marie Steinbeck reported seeing Snow Geese on Community Drive near Rt 126 on Feb 20, then a flock on Rt 283 near Fort Drum on Feb 21. Marie estimated that there were at least 1,000 birds in each flock. John and Marie Smith sighted another flock of similar size near the north shore of Pillar Point on Feb 20. Marie and Robin both saw the flock along Coffeen Street Rd on Feb 21. Corky Marlowe reported that Bill Griffith had seen Snow Geese along Sulphur Springs Rd on Feb 21. Snow Geese have not come through our area in flocks nearly this size in recent years, with reports of major flights moving down the Champlain Valley over that time. It would be interesting to know what factors shifted the migration pattern and whether Champlain had a reduced migration this year.

Other reports for this issue show a great variety and, as a result, have been arranged for the most part in order of date. On Dec 27, a



**SNOW GOOSE**

Old Rome State Rd February 19, 2023

Photo by Jauri Jantzi

Cooper's Hawk visited Robin's home in Cape Vincent. On the same day, she saw 40+ Snow Buntings on Mason Rd, an American Kestrel on Crystal Springs Rd, and 48 Wild Turkeys, as well as 8 Horned Larks, on Favret Rd. On Jan 7, Robin was visited by 60+ Cedar Waxwings and 2 Pileated Woodpeckers at her Cape Vincent home. 40+ Cedar Waxwings

appeared there on Jan 8, then 32 on Jan 21. A Pileated Woodpecker was there again on Jan 15 and 21. On Jan 7, Lynn sighted a male Northern Harrier on Favret Rd. On Jan 8, Robin sighted 5 Gadwalls on the St. Lawrence River at Cape Vincent and 16 Wild Turkeys on the Cemetery Rd.

Robin reported that regular visitors to her home through January included Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Dark-eyed Junco, Downy Woodpecker, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Common Raven, American Robin, Northern Cardinal, American Tree Sparrow, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, and House Sparrow. Robin's regular sightings on the St. Lawrence River at Cape Vincent during January included Mallard, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Long-tailed Duck, and Bufflehead. Regular January visitors on Sam Adams Rd included White-breasted Nuthatch, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Northern Cardinal, and Mourning Dove.

Glen Snell reported that a female Yellow-shafted Northern Flicker came to his home in Watertown on Jan 19. On Jan 21, Robin sighted a Bald Eagle along Rt 12E and an American Kestrel on Millens Bay Rd. On Jan 27, she saw 4 American Robins and a Hairy Woodpecker on Sam Adams Rd. Robin had a very good day of birding on Jan 28, sighting a Bald Eagle, a Rough-legged Hawk, 6 Horned Larks, and 8 Snow Buntings on Favret Rd, then 100+ Snow Buntings, 50+ Horned Larks, 2 Northern Harriers, a Red-tailed Hawk, and 7 American Tree Sparrows on Mason Rd. On Jan 29, Lynn saw a Short-eared Owl on Bedford Corners Rd and a flock of ~50 Snow Buntings on Swamp Rd. On the same day, Robin saw 6 Horned Larks and 42 Snow Buntings on Favret Rd, then 6 Horned Larks and 200+ Canada Geese on Branche Rd. On Jan 31, she saw a Bald Eagle along Rt 12E, just south of Cape Vincent.

On Feb 1, Robin saw a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at her home in Cape Vincent and 2 Bald Eagles along Stony Point Rd. She saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a Purple Finch on Sam Adams Rd on Feb 4. On Feb 5 at the WMA on Point Peninsula, Lynn watched an American Kestrel grab its dinner, then found a group of ~90 Snow Buntings on Hardscrabble Rd, most perched on wires. On the same day on Mason Rd, Robin saw 30+ Snow Buntings, 2 Rough-legged Hawks, 2 Northern Harriers, a Red-tailed Hawk, an American Kestrel, and 2 Horned Larks. Dick sighted a Short-eared Owl on Mason Rd on Feb 6.



**BOREAL CHICKADEE**

Grass Point SP February 11, 2023

Photo by Peter VanEenaam



**BOREAL CHICKADEE**

Grass Point SP January 17, 2023

Photo by Lee Ellsworth

(continued at the bottom of page 4)



We are again including the list of average dates of return to our region for spring migrants. This list, which was first published in last year's early spring issue, is derived from one on the Onondaga Audubon website which was compiled by Bill Purcell. The list is included again for ready reference as birds return to the area. It will be especially helpful for the Spring Bird Census, giving an idea of which species to be on the watch for as participants record sightings. The original list, somewhat longer and in taxonomic order, can be accessed at <https://onondagaaudubon.com/birding/spring-arrival-dates/>. The arrival dates are approximate, of course. Mr. Purcell notes the following:

*With very warm weather, some species may arrive a week earlier than shown and, after a prolonged cold spell, some will be delayed a week. For many species, only a few might be seen during the week indicated, with higher numbers arriving the following week. A few of the species may winter locally, so the date given is for apparent migrants.*

<b>February - 4th Week:</b> Red-winged Blackbird	<b>April - 3rd Week:</b> American Bittern Broad-winged Hawk Virginia Rail Chimney Swift Blue-headed Vireo Bank Swallow Cliff Swallow House Wren Ruby-crowned Kinglet Blue-gray Gnatcatcher Brown Thrasher Yellow-rumped Warbler Pine Warbler Palm Warbler	Black-throated Green Warbler Blackburnian Warbler American Redstart Ovenbird Common Yellowthroat Scarlet Tanager Grasshopper Sparrow Rose-breasted Grosbeak Bobolink Baltimore Oriole
<b>March - 1st Week:</b> Turkey Vulture Killdeer Common Grackle	<b>April - 4th Week:</b> Green Heron Sora Common Gallinule Solitary Sandpiper Spotted Sandpiper Least Sandpiper Common Tern Eastern Kingbird Nashville Warbler Black-and-white Warbler Northern Waterthrush White-crowned Sparrow	<b>May - 2nd Week:</b> Black-bellied Plover Semipalmated Plover Dunlin Black-billed Cuckoo Eastern Wood-Pewee Yellow-bellied Flycatcher Alder Flycatcher Willow Flycatcher Red-eyed Vireo Blue-winged Warbler Golden-winged Warbler Northern Parula Magnolia Warbler Cape May Warbler Prairie Warbler Blackpoll Warbler Cerulean Warbler Mourning Warbler Indigo Bunting
<b>March - 2nd Week:</b> American Woodcock Eastern Meadowlark	<b>May - 1st Week:</b> Black Tern Whip-poor-will Ruby-thr. Hummingbird Great Crested Flycatcher Yellow-throated Vireo Warbling Vireo Marsh Wren Veery Wood Thrush Gray Catbird Yellow Warbler Chestnut-sided Warbler Black-throated Blue Warbler	<b>March - 3rd Week:</b> Wilson's Snipe Belted Kingfisher Tree Swallow Brown-headed Cowbird
<b>March - 4th Week:</b> Eastern Phoebe Fox Sparrow Rusty Blackbird	<b>May - 3rd Week:</b> Sanderling Semipalmated Sandpiper Yellow-billed Cuckoo Common Nighthawk Olive-sided Flycatcher	<b>April - 1st Week:</b> Osprey Greater Yellowlegs Lesser Yellowlegs Bonaparte's Gull Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Winter Wren Field Sparrow Vesper Sparrow Savannah Sparrow
<b>April - 2nd Week:</b> Pectoral Sandpiper Caspian Tern Purple Martin N. Rough-winged Swallow Barn Swallow Hermit Thrush Eastern Towhee Chipping Sparrow Swamp Sparrow White-throated Sparrow		

*(Sightings continued from page 3)* On Feb 7, Lynn saw a pair of Bald Eagles perched near the Moffatt Rd nest. Robin reported that her cousin had sighted a pair of Bald Eagles at the Tibbetts Point Lighthouse. On Feb 11, Robin was birding near the Fish Hatchery in Cape Vincent and sighted a raft of Redheads, 6 Long-tailed Ducks, a pair of Gadwalls, a raft of mixed Greater and Lesser Scaup, and Red-breasted Mergansers. Lynn saw a Short-eared Owl and a dark phase Rough-legged Hawk on Mason Rd on Feb 12. On Feb 14, a Red-bellied Woodpecker visited Lynn's feeder in Three Mile Bay. Birding in the Town of Cape Vincent on Feb 17, Robin sighted 5 Rough-legged Hawks, 5 Northern Harriers, and a Merlin. On Feb 18,

she saw a Northern Harrier and 2 Common Ravens on Mason Rd, a Red-tailed Hawk on McKeever Rd, and 3 Mute Swans on the river in Cape Vincent. Dick sighted a Turkey Vulture at his home in Watertown on Feb 19, then a Black Vulture there on Feb 20. On the same day, Robin saw a Bald Eagle flying over the Chaumont bridge. On Feb 22, Robin saw 2 Gadwalls, both Lesser and Greater Scaup, 3 Herring Gulls, and a raft of Redheads in Cape Vincent. Sue Gwise reported that an Evening Grosbeak visited her feeder in Rodman on Feb 26. On Feb 27, Russell reported that a half-dozen Snow Buntings had made daily visits to his home on the Airport Rd for over a week.

## NEWS FROM WELLESLEY ISLAND

*Sue-Ryn Burns is certainly the best-known Wildlife Rehabilitator in our area. At her facility on Wellesley Island, she works to save a wide variety of sick or injured animals and return them to the wild. Sue-Ryn recently sent the following message, which includes information for birders seeking to explore Wellesley Island State Park as well as a summary of the work she has done during the past year.*

Looking at the bird sightings and listings, it occurred to me some might not know their way around for winter birdwatching at Wellesley Island State Park. Usually the ice edge of Eel Bay is viewable from the Nature Center. There are a few good bird viewing spots in E Area, and frequently the roadways are plowed. I know there were a number of Mergansers there the last time I drove through. If the roadways aren't plowed, there's always the marina parking lot. A Area can provide good viewing of the Canadian channel, and the roadways are sometimes open because the Border Patrol has a few watch sites on that side.

After sending in my state and federal logs for 2022, my count was 195 critters helped. 171 were wild birds. Uncounted for the federal logs were 6 domestic ducklings, dumped near a pond on Fort Drum, most likely after it was discovered they couldn't be kept as pets. They went to Jeff Garnsey's Feral Acres. where they grew into Khaki Campbells.

*(Note: Khaki Campbells are one of the most popular domestic duck breeds in the United States.)*

For info about Wellesley Island State Park:

[Wellesley Island State Park](#)



### NORTHERN HARRIER

Three Mile Bay February 14, 2023

Photo by Lynn Chavoustie



## HARBINGERS OF SPRING

The March-April 2023 issue of *Bird Watcher's Digest* includes an article proposing an interesting viewpoint regarding the coming of spring. *Black Is The True Hue Of Spring*, by Scott Weidensaul, notes that several of the birds which are often seen as significant signs of the arrival of the spring season have one thing in common: the dominant color of their plumage.



**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS**

Antwerp March 12, 2022

Photo by Steve Diehl

The following concludes with the core idea of the article after offering some added thoughts by the Editor.

While many think of the American Robin as the bird which heralds the arrival of spring, that species actually remains in our area year-round. The Robin population shifts southward in winter, but Robins do not migrate. So the Robins here in winter are those that summer in Canada. Since the population is not as dense in the northern part of their range, there are fewer Robins here in winter. In addition, when lawns are snow-covered, Robins feed in scrubland and wooded areas. We are much less likely to see the species near our homes during winter, but the Robins are still around.

The bird which may well serve best as the first harbinger of spring is that most familiar species, the Red-winged Blackbird. Its arrival near the end of February usually provides the first hope (at least for birders) that spring is on the way. The bird also gives some indication of the shifting climate, as Red-wings now arrive in our area as much as two weeks earlier than was true several years ago.



**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD PLUMAGE**

Antwerp February 2018

Photo by Steve Diehl

In the article mentioned above, Weidensaul notes that, in addition to Red-winged Blackbirds, other species which are often seen as signs of the coming of spring include Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Turkey Vulture, and Double-crested Cormorant. One thing these birds have in common, of course, is that black is their principal plumage color, leading to Weidensaul's conclusion that "Black Is The True Hue Of Spring" (again, at least for birders).



**SHARP-SHINNED HAWK**

Sackets Harbor February 4, 2023

Photos by Kathy Killeen



**EVENING GROSBEAK & WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH**

Watertown October 30, 2022

Photo by Jauri Jantzi

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Year: 20 \_\_\_\_\_



**PILEATED WOODPECKER**

Sackets Harbor November 21, 2022

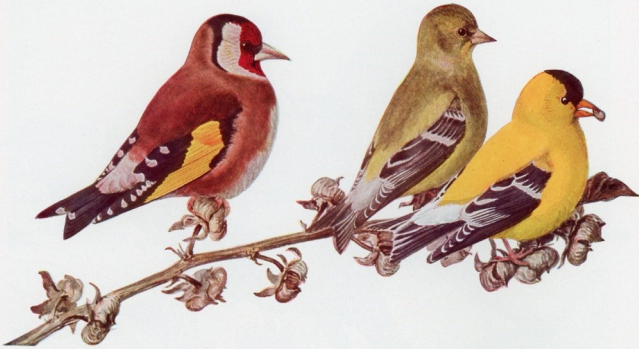
Photo by Jauri Jantzi

**PLEASE FILL OUT BOTH SIDES OF THE FORM**



## FUERTES PAINTING

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH AMERICAN GOLDFINCH  
EVENING GROSBEAK



### WILD TURKEY

Antwerp  
February 2023

Photo by  
Steve & Vici  
Diehl



### REDHEAD

Cape Vincent  
February 11,  
2023

Photo by  
Robin Booth

All birders are urged to assist in gathering data for New York's third **Breeding Bird Atlas**, a definitive resource for bird conservation efforts.

Begin at the How To Atlas page: [BBA3 - How To Atlas](#) For a map of Atlas blocks: [BBA3 - Blocks](#)

For further info and to submit checklists: [BBA3 - Checklists](#) (you will be asked to sign in to or to create an eBird account)

**Website Links:** All links in the electronic issue of the *Plover* are in "live" format. Clicking on the link will automatically open its website in your browser.

To be added to our **E-mail Notification List** for news of select sightings and events in the area, contact the Editor at [haldex@twcny.rr.com](mailto:haldex@twcny.rr.com)

To subscribe to e-mailed information from the DEC (select from over 100 topics), go to the subscription page at [DEC Subscriptions](#)

Join the **New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA)**. Membership includes both quarterly journal and newsletter. Info at [NYSOA](#)

### N C B C ACTIVITIES

**Meetings / Programs:** March, April, May, September, October, November (2nd Wed)

**Field Trips:** Spring - Summer - Fall

**Spring Bird Census**

**Audubon Christmas Bird Count**

**Newsletter: *The Upland Plover***

The North Country Bird Club, Inc., is a charter member of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc.

### RECEIVE *THE UPLAND PLOVER* ONLINE

The same as the printed version, but in **COLOR!** (Viewed with Adobe Reader)

Contact the Editor ([haldex@twcny.rr.com](mailto:haldex@twcny.rr.com)) to sign up.

### ITEMS FOR THE NEXT *PLOVER* ARE DUE BY APRIL 15

Please send sightings, photos, or other items to the Editor by April 15.

Contact info: Bill Haller, Editor - Mail: P. O. Box 6, Dexter, NY 13634

E-mail: [haldex@twcny.rr.com](mailto:haldex@twcny.rr.com) - Phone: (315) 639-6848 or 778-1484

### NORTH COUNTRY BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Membership is for the calendar year. Dues are *per individual*. Renewals are due by January 1st. To ensure that you receive Club materials, please give your correct *mailing* address below.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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