



MUCKRACE MUSINGS

Volume 22 September 2018

The 22nd Annual Muckrace

The Montezuma Muckrace is a team-birding fundraising event that started back in 1997 and continues to challenge and entertain birders in the Montezuma Wetlands Complex. On Friday September 14th at 7:00 pm, 141 birders (a new record - previous high was 135) from 30 teams stormed the Complex for a 24-hour period and successfully rustled up good looks at a diverse mix of 184 species (4 above the 5-yr average). Tallies included 25 warblers, 19 species of waterfowl and 21 shorebirds.

Muckracers also continue to step up their fundraising efforts. As of this writing, we have surpassed our goal of raising \$10,000 in support of bird conservation, habitat improvement and public access in the Complex. Sponsorships of the event have also been strong from community and conservation minded companies and individuals. Over \$4,400 in funds and prizes from 30 sponsors were donated.

Good looks and listens of Sandhill Cranes in the early-morning fog were a highlight for many teams. Broad-winged Hawks, in good numbers, made a good impression on several teams, including the one feeding on a frog that the Bobolinks ran over with their car. The Tanagers picked up a rare grand slam on all 5 species of vireos.

The teams collectively identified 103 bird species that have been seen in every Muckrace! Only one species was missed that had been perennially claimed – Cliff Swallow. While no new species were added this year -- Canvasback, Northern Goshawk, Prairie and Orange-crowned Warblers, and Buff-breasted Sandpiper were relatively rare pickups. The most commonly seen birds (seen by all 30 teams) totaled 14 species in all, and included the 25+ Killdeer that claimed the MAC driveway as home.

Competition among teams is one enjoyable part of the event. Besides a better choice of cool prizes, you can also take home bragging rights; maybe even get your name on one of the 3 Muckrace trophies. In the Competitive Division,



2018 Quick Stats

Teams registered:	30
Total species seen:	184
Cumulative total for all Muckraces:	243
Funds raised as of September 26th:	\$11,000

Funds will support:
Bird conservation, wildlife habitat improvement and public access in the Montezuma Wetlands Complex.

Winning Competitive team: Lawrence's Warbler Chasers – 126 sp.
Winning Low-carbon team: Terns and Conditions – 56 species
Winning Recreational Team: Birds R Us – 122 species
Winning Family/Mentor team: MAC Daddy and the Chicks – 91 sp.
Winning Photo team: Shutterbirds – 77 species

Most memorable team birds:
Broad-winged Hawk, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Merlin, Sandhill Crane

New species: none.

Notable Species NOT seen: We got almost all except: Black-bellied Plover, Cliff Swallow, Black-billed Cuckoo, Canada Warbler, Saw-whet Owl, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruddy Duck

Warbler species recorded: **25**
Shorebird species recorded: **21**

14 species seen by all teams; 18 seen by only 1 team; 9 species were seen by all but one team - we'll keep that team name secret!



Top Competitive Team was "Lawrence's Warbler Chasers": Tiffany Clay, Jon Podoliak, Mike Wasilco and Greg Lawrence.

"Lawrence's Warbler Chasers" took home top honors for the second year in a row with 126 species. Orange-crowned Warbler, Redhead, American and Least Bittern, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Sora, Chimney Swift and Hermit Thrush were some of their rarer finds. 122 species were identified by the RBA/GVA sponsored "Birds R Us" team to give them a repeat win in the Recreation Division. The Low Carbon Division was won again by "Terns and Conditions". The "Shutterbirds" again took home the honor of Photo Division Champions. Congratulations also to Family/Mentor Division winners "MAC Daddy and the Chicks" who completed the run on repeat winners for this year's Muckrace with 91 species identified. Team Sittidae has the lead, at this writing, for the Fundraising Trophy, but they are getting stiff competitions from the Cayuga Bird Club's Arrogant Bustards.

Top business sponsors for this year's event were: Wild Birds Unlimited, Nucor Steel, Seneca Meadows, Ducks Unlimited, and Ernst Conservation Seeds. Over 30 additional sponsors provided funds and prizes.

Teams have until October 15th to do their pledge drives. Donations on behalf of any team, or for the Muckrace in general, can be made through the Friends of Montezuma website (friendsofmontezuma.org) or via mail at Friends of Montezuma, c/o Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, 3395 Rt 5 & 20 East, Seneca Falls, NY 13148.

Top 5 fundraising teams for last year were: Team Sittidae (\$2,865), Bobolinks (\$1,135), Arrogant Bustards (\$873), DEC Crane-iacs (\$610) and the Hawkeyes (\$606).

In the 22-year Muckrace history, over \$145,000 has been donated in support of wildlife habitat restoration, research or public access. Recent projects have included: Monarch Butterfly research and management, Virginia Rail research, Hidden Marsh and Loop Road wetland restoration, construction of several observation decks, Motus Radio Telemetry deployment, and support for American Black Duck winter banding. For many grant-funded projects, Muckrace Funds can be used as a critical source of 'matching' funds.



"MAC Daddy and the Chicks" (Kyah, Chris and Kirsten Lajewski) placed first in the Family/Mentor category with 91 species.

Many thanks to the 26 good folks who volunteered to help pull off the event, and to Kyle Gage who rounded up and organized that crew.

Save the date of September 6th and 7th for next year's Muckrace. It doesn't follow the exact framework that we've used recently due to a scheduling conflict with an important NYS Ornithological Association meeting.

Enjoy the great camaraderie and time afield... and support the good work of the Friends of Montezuma Wetlands Complex. We know 'birding' is a great life-long pastime; make birding the Muckrace the same. For more information on the Muckrace and the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, check out our websites: friendsofmontezuma.org, ny.audubon.org/Montezuma, fws.gov/refuge/montezuma/, and dec.ny.gov/outdoor/31112.html.



"Birds R Us" (Chan Nam, L. Culbert, Robert Buckert, Nick Kachala and Ty Carey) placed first in the Recreational category with an outstanding 122 species.

22nd Annual Muckrace Results:

Competitive

1. Lawrence's Warbler Chasers	126
2. L & B Farm Windbirders	115
3. Mad-Capped Chickadees	101
4. Hawkward Timberdoodles	94
5. The Loon-A-Tics	91
6. Mottled Mucks	85
7. The Buffleheads	80

Family

1. Mac Daddy and the Chicks	91
2. Mucky Ducks	67

Low Carbon

1. Terns & Conditions	56
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Photo

1. Shutterbirds	77
2. Blurgansers	43

Recreational

1. Birds R Us	122
2. Arrogant Bustards	115
3. DEC Crane-iacs	106
4. The Tanangers	104
5. Tyrannus Tyrannus	96
6. The Hawkeyes	95
7. Aix and Cranes	91
8. Team Duck	90
9. Lime Howlers	89
10. Bob-o-links	86
11. Team Sittidae	77
11 Koo-Koo-Ka-Cho Kaburras	77
11. Bleary-eyed Vireos	77
14. Brown Thrashers	76
15. Fuddy Ruddies	70
16. Team Fonzie	68
17. Stony Point Littorals	64
18. FLCCers	52

Thanks to all of our 2018 Donors and Sponsors, especially...



A Note from the Planning Committee

(Steve Benedict, Chris Lajewski, Jim Eckler, Chuck Gibson, Linda Ziemba, Josh Bacon, and Kyle Gage)

We want to say thank you to the following generous sponsors for their financial support or prize donations:

- Barry Stevens of **Wild Birds Unlimited** for being our top sponsor, once again;
- Nucor Steel of Auburn, Ernst Conservation Seeds, Inc., ISEI Corporation (Seneca Meadows Landfill), Ducks Unlimited, Montezuma Winery, Galens Pharmacy, Reliant Community FCU, Community Bank, Vortex Optics, Circle K, Mary Tatem designs, and Cayuga Lake Creamery for their generous donations;
- Additional local support from: Old Lyons Hardware, LandPro, Parker's Grill and Tap House, Lake Drum Brewing, Magee Diner, Kinney Drugs, Cayuga Bird Club, Runnings, Thorn Farm, Seneca White Deer, Brick Oven, Ravine's Winery, Charlie Rouse, Wolffy's Grill and Marina, Dunkin Donuts, and, last but not least...
- The Friends Nature Store at the Refuge Visitor Center and the MAC Gift Shop.

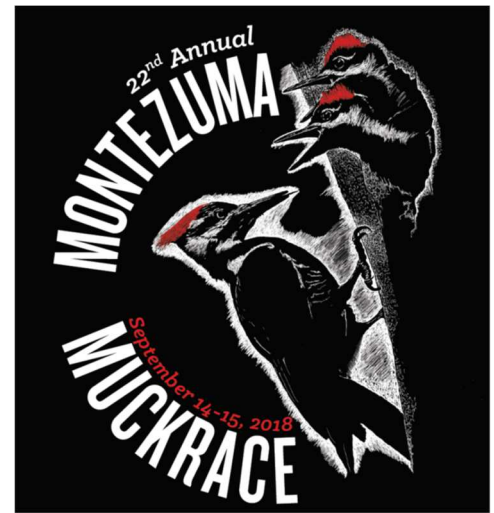
Thanks also go to artist Jody Benedict for providing a wonderful t-shirt design, and to Becky Bly of Woman Made Products for her generosity in screening the shirts.

We also appreciate all team sponsors: L & B Farm, Old Duck Inn B & B (Clyde), Jack Bear Stamps, The Bird House, 3 Oaks Enhancements, Chemung Valley Audubon Society, Ben Harvey, Eaton Birding Society, Audubon NY, RBA/GVAS, and the Cayuga Bird Club.

We could not have done it without all our great event volunteers: Ruth & Don Kalen, Dorothy & Gary Colvin, Donna Richardson, Gretchen Schauss, Tiffany Clay, Leona Lauster, Margaret Gage, Ellen Reynolds, Amelia Otis, Linda Potter, Susan DiCriscio, Jim Johnston, Meena Haribal, Dan Parsons, Poppy Singer, Maureen Parsons, Mike and JoAnn Tetlow, Josh Snodgrass, Janet Akin, and Linda Mott. Special thanks to Kyle Gage for organizing this great group.

Final thanks also go to: The Montezuma Audubon Center for hosting the festivities; NYSDEC, FOTMWC and the MAC for printing and mailing costs; Jim Johnston, Meena Haribal and Susan DiCriscio for their photography; and Jim Eckler for emceeding the final ceremony.

- Please submit suggestions and comments to a Planning Committee member.



Highlights of the Day

Being in an air-conditioned car driving around Howland Island.

4 Cranes in the fog at Carncross Rd at 7AM.

Broad-winged Hawk eating a frog we just ran over with our car.

Breaking 100 sp.

Tent City at the MAC.

Finding a pigeon after working like crazy all day to get one.

Quotes of the Day

There's nothing conclusively interesting.

Wow, it's quiet. Isn't it quiet? It's soooo quiet.

What's that plant? It's white snake route...it killed

Abe Lincoln's mother. Look it up.

Not enough bug dope. Never enough bug dope.

Lowlights of the Day

The long walk down Towpath.

Heat and mosquitoes.

Lack of seed in bird feeders.



Mark your calendar!
Muckrace 2019 (#23)
is Friday-Saturday
September 6th-7th,
7PM-7PM
That's the first
Friday after Labor Day