

New York State Young Birders Club



Almost two years ago, I started an online Yahoo! group for the young birders of New York State. Because young birders often feel isolated in a world of older birders, my initial goal was to encourage and connect them. After the group had been established for a year, I approached the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA) about sponsoring an official young birders club. They agreed, and graciously extended their services for this important effort.

This idea was inspired by the Ohio Young Birders Club (OYBC), which was started in May 2006. Geared for ages 12-18, the OYBC offers field trips, a newsletter, an annual conference, and scholarships for camps and events, all based on input from the young birders. Similarly, young birders aged 12-19 will largely run the NYSYBC, with the support and assistance of adults. The NYSOA board of directors has worked hard to start the club, and Annette Lehner will soon join as our adult coordinator. Thanks to Carena Pooth, Annette, and others on the NYSOA board of directors, we will shortly be opening official memberships and scheduling regular field trips.

Key to these field trips are NYSOA's member clubs, which are encouraged to join the NYSYBC as partner organizations. In this role, they will sponsor field trips and attract local young birders, which will benefit both clubs. If your local bird club is interested in joining, please contact us.

Though the club is still in its fledgling stage, we have already held our first field trip – a visit to Jamaica Bay in mid-August, 2008. With a turnout of nine high school-aged kids, excellent leadership by Shai Mitra and Doug Gochfeld, finding a White-faced Ibis, and many bird jokes, the trip was a blast!

The NYS Young Birders Club provides chances for young birders to meet, learn, and bird together in an effort to encourage the next generation of naturalists. As the club continues to grow, we will need adult help and support. If you're interested, please let us know! In the meantime, if you know any young birders, take them birding and tell them about the club!

More information:

NYS Young Birders Club website:

www.nysyoungbirders.org

Here you will find information about the club, links to the NYSyoungbirders listserv, the OYBC, and the ABA's young birder programs, plus much more.

Email: ybc@nybirds.org

*By Hope Batcheller, age 16
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NYS Young Birders Club at Jamaica Bay