

Spend Memorial Day Weekend Birding Jefferson County

NYSOA is offering a spring birding workshop and field trip in Jefferson County on Memorial Day weekend 2013. Based in Watertown, the field trip will visit Perch River Wildlife Management Area and The Nature Conservancy's Chaumont Barrens Preserve. Perch River encompasses 7,862 acres that is dominated by open water and wetland habitats. Black Terns, Least Bitterns and Henslow's Sparrows have occurred here in the past and waterfowl are abundant and diverse. The Nature Conservancy describes Chaumont Barrens as one of the finest examples of an alvar grassland community in the world. In May the prairie wildflowers should be in full bloom making the viewing of Golden-winged Warblers, uncommon sparrows and other grassland and shrub land specialists a truly unique experience.

On Saturday, May 25th at 3:00 p.m. Jeff Bolsinger, a professional migratory bird biologist, will give a presentation on the birds of Perch River and Chaumont Barrens, focusing on sparrows, Golden-winged Warblers (and their hybrids with Blue-winged Warblers) and other uncommon species found in the area. Jeff has worked as a civilian employee on Fort Drum in several different positions monitoring birds and other taxa since 1997. An active member of NYSOA, he served two terms on the New York State Avian Records Committee. The workshop, which is free and open to the public, will take place in the classroom at the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park in Watertown. Find directions and more information about the zoo at <http://www.nyszoo.org>. Half price admission to the zoo can be arranged before the workshop. If you are interested in this discount please contact Kathy Schneider at fallline@nycap.rr.com to get on the list.

After sunset on Saturday, Jeff will lead a field trip to look for Whip-poor-wills and Common Nighthawks at Chaumont Barrens. He will also lead the main Sunday morning field trip on May 26th that will depart from Watertown at 6:00 a.m. and conclude around 2:00 p.m. The field trip is open to individual, student, family and life members of NYSOA and NYS Young Birders but limited to 20 participants. Field trip attendees must preregister for the field trip by calling Kathy Schneider at (518) 799-3457 or emailing her at fallline@nycap.rr.com.

Because this trip is scheduled to take place on a holiday weekend, NYSOA has arranged for a block of rooms to be held until April 25thth at the Best Western Carriage House Inn at 300 Washington Street in downtown Watertown. To arrange lodging at the Best Western, participants should call the motel at (315) 782-8000 and tell them you are with NYSOA. Directions and more information about the *Best Western Carriage House Inn* can be found <http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern/US/NY/Watertown-hotels/BEST-WESTERN-Carriage-House-Inn/Hotel-Overview.do?propertyCode=33097>. There are other motels and camping in the area but availability may be limited so those planning to stay overnight are urged to make arrangements as soon as possible.

Finally, if you follow NYSOA's field trip planning closely, you are probably aware that this trip to Perch River and Chaumont Barrens represents a change from our original plan to visit Fort Drum on Memorial Day Weekend 2013. We were notified in early March that the base would be unable to accommodate NYSOA because of "financial constraints imposed by sequestration."

We are extremely grateful that Jeff Bolsinger is willing to donate his time and expertise to this exciting alternative trip. Many thanks, Jeff.

Read more about the Nature Conservancy's Chaumont Barrens Preserve at
<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/newyork/placesweprotect/centralwesternnewyork/wherewework/central-chaumont-barrens.xml>

Learn more about Perch River WMA at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/46441.html>

Kathy Schneider

NYSOA VP