

Feathers

MADAGASCAR

by Steve Mesick

Madagascar. The end of the world. I never ever thought I would get a chance to go to Madagascar. But here I was with my son Jackson, not only in Madagascar, but in the remote southwestern tip of this one thousand mile long island in the Indian Ocean. I guess that makes this place “the end of the end of the world”! I mentioned that to Jackson as we were standing in the middle of a dusty road in the midst of a completely barren landscape of euphorbia scrub vegetation that led right down to the ocean. We had stopped here because it is the only known location of the recently discovered RED-SHOULDERED VANGA.

Jackson quibbled with my description, reminding me that he spent over a week on a (literally) deserted island off the coast of Madagascar. I told him that I felt that his island qualified as “the end of the end of the end of the world” and we decided to agree on that.

We were standing here because Jackson had decided to take the spring semester of his junior year at Bates College in Madagascar studying ecology and habitat preservation. He had spent three and a half months here with 10 other college students from around the country traveling and studying the unique habitats, flora and fauna of this vast island. I had come at the end to spend a week birding with him. Even so, it was hard to believe that I was really here.

There are 265 species of birds that occur at least occasionally in Madagascar. Breeding species number 204, and of these, 120 (59%) are endemic! There are

at least three (and possibly six) endemic families. These include such oddities as the birds of the Mesite family which have been variously considered to be rails, cranes, pigeons and passerines, and the CUCKOO-ROLLER, a large raptor-like bird with a strange looking large head. The fauna is spectacularly odd as well. From the spiny forest of the southwest to the rain forest of the east coast much of the native vegetation is as striking as the birds. And of course there are the lemurs – 30 some species spread across the country in every habitat.

Jackson had spent three and a half months in Madagascar traveling the entire country already and he had seen 129 species including 114 lifers and 79 endemics so I had some catching up to do. After settling into our hotel in the capital city we went out for a walk. Antananarivo is not a very birdy city but we managed to see a few commoners out on our walk. Except for the COMMON MYNAS they were all endemics. (It is great to be in a big city where there are no House Sparrows)!

Madagascar is basically a huge plateau surrounded by a strip of lowland of varying widths. Due mostly to human pressure the lowlands (and much of the interior) are mostly deforested but the slope of the eastern edge of the plateau is still covered with primary rain forest for most of its length. About sixty per cent of the forest endemics can be found in this one thousand mile long strip of forest habitat.

Within three hours of the capital are two excellent eastern rain forest reserves so that is where we headed the

next morning. It is not easy to drive in Madagascar – in fact, it is strongly recommended that you hire a car with a driver. Jackson’s program director had recommended a driver to us and he ended up being a big help.

We had pouring rain for much of the trip and when we arrived at our lodge in the late morning it looked as if the day was a bust. But after lunch it cleared up almost completely and we had a great afternoon. The lodge we stayed at had an open area for eating and we found it very suitable for birding. In fact sitting at breakfast or lunch we had our best views of MADAGASCAR MALACHITE KINGFISHER, MADAGASCAR COUCAL, MADAGASCAR WAGTAIL, LONG-BILLED GREEN SUNBIRD, and MADAGASCAR MANNIKIN.

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President's Corner




The leaves are changing and the hawks are gliding over Pinnacle Mountain. The goals and objectives of the Board are falling into place. Mike Gann and Peter Trevilino have completed four of the five new footbridges in the Reist Sanctuary and they are outstanding. They have greatly improved the safety and they have added continuity to the aesthetics of the trails. The last and largest bridge will be built in late spring.

An important project is near completion for October. David Martin and his committee are completing our new and improved web site. You will love it when you see it.

On September 25 a workshop meeting will be used to define the policies, job descriptions and expectations for the officers and chairpersons. The information will be put in a handbook and be used by current and future officers and chairpersons.

Enjoy the fall and prepare your backyard for the winter feeding season.

Best Regards,
Gary Goodness, President 

HMBC Contact Information

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HMBC Board Meetings

HMBC Board meetings are open to all Club members. Meetings are held at Five Rivers Center or other local venues at 7:00 PM, usually on the second Monday of odd-numbered months.

Newsletter Contributions Desired

- Have anything you think other birders would be interested in?
- Have a favorite birding spot you want to share?
- Are there any stories or photos that would inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the addresses below:

Please send all *electronic* submissions *via e-mail* to: Chris Grossman at bgrossman@nycap.rr.com

Send **all** paper submissions to:

Chris Grossman

7 Nott Rd.

Rexford, NY 12148

That first afternoon we spent in Perinet-Analamazaotra Special Reserve. Noted as a sure spot for Indri – Madagascar’s largest lemur species – it is also excellent for birds. I had had some anxiety about trying to bird in Madagascar in May – essentially the southern hemisphere’s November – but there were lots of birds around and they were very active – even in the afternoon. Birding highlights included the MADAGASCAR PARADISE FLYCATCHER – an improbably long tailed and very attractive flycatcher, and a close view of a MADAGASCAR BUZZARD flying right above our heads. We were also successful in seeing Indri but the mammal highlight really were the Bamboo Lemurs which were hopping around in the trees right next to the trail and seemed just as interested in us as we were in them.

The next day we were up before dawn for a 20 km drive up a dirt track to Mantadia National Park. We had hopes of seeing a Ground-roller – an endemic family of birds that are very hard to see when not breeding. Jackson had seen representatives from all the other families and genera of endemics – except for the Ground-rollers. These birds remain motionless for long periods of time when hunting and are very secretive. We had brought along a guide from the day before and he had stressed that we had to get to the forest very early to even have a chance to see a Ground-roller.

Our guide knew what he was doing though. After 30–40 minutes of creeping along paths through the forest he froze and pointed – ahead of us there was a SCALY GROUND-ROLLER on the path – also motionless. Other highlights included my first COUA (an endemic genus of chicken-like birds with bright colorful facial markings – this one was a RED-FRONTED COUA) and 5 of the 15 VANGAS (another endemic genus).

The next day was a travel day to the southwestern coast, primarily to bird in the dry spiny forest. Jackson had spent a week here earlier but had not done much birding because they were studying marine ecology when they were here. It is the second best area for birding in Madagascar in terms of endemics.

The spiny forest is called that because virtually every plant has thorns of some kind. There are many cactus-like plants but the deciduous trees and bushes have thorns as well and even some of the leaves have thorns. You have to be careful walking in this area and forget about bushwhacking. There is no going off the trail!

The birds are not bothered by the thorns, though. Our first day was spent birding around the spiny forest near our lodgings and then at the local botanical gardens. Highlights included close views of a MADAGASCAR NIGHTJAR perching quietly in the undergrowth, a group of MADAGASCAR BUTTONQUAILS and a RED-CAPPED COUA which was wandering around in the open. The couas are chicken-like and endemic to Madagascar and there are nine species. Normally they are pretty skittish (due to human predation) but we managed to get excellent views of this one.


The next morning we drove down to the mouth of the Onilahy River (the “end of the world” mentioned above). We did not see a Red-shouldered Vanga but we did see several other birds – mostly waders or shorebirds. That afternoon we drove up the coast to Ifaty where the some of the best spiny forest habitat remains. We got to see several waterfowl and shorebirds including KITTLITZ’S, THREE-BANDED and WHITE-FRONTED PLOVERS.

The next morning we found that the spiny forest did not disappoint. We saw multiple new species including two couas, two warblers, and a MADAGASCAR

JACANA. We had hoped for a Sub-desert Mesite but this is another family of birds that are very hard to see outside of breeding season. In fact they are pretty hard to see even in breeding season without a guide.

We wound up our trip with another day of birding around our lodgings in Toliara, another try for RED-SHOULDERED VANGA (heard but not seen this time) followed by a travel day. Travel is definitely a hassle in Madagascar and it limited us. Three of our eight days there were tied up with traveling (with a little birding around the edges). There are many other parts of Madagascar to visit but if you want to see a lot more you should consider a guided trip or plan at least two and a half to three weeks if you are going independently. Both of our in country flights were delayed and if I had not booked the second one with lots of time to spare we would have missed our departure flight for South Africa (where we had a three day layover – a story for another day). Also in order to see larger numbers of species I would definitely suggest going in breeding season (November through January).

On the other hand despite the travel difficulty, the birds are striking, the scenery is like nothing you have seen before, the lemurs are fascinating and there was another surprise that was quite welcome – the food was quite good. The restaurants were mostly quite simple but due to the colonial history the cooking was French and REALLY GOOD! The culturally Malagasy food was also tasty.

And in spite of not being there during breeding season, Jackson managed to see 144 species including 90 of the 120 endemics. In just a week with him as my excellent guide I saw 91 birds with 63 endemics. 

HMBC Trip to Jamaica Bay NWR August 15, 2010

Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge along the south shore of Long Island is a premier stopping place for shorebirds on their southward migration. Activity begins around mid-July and peaks in the middle of August. It is amazing to think that these birds arrived on their breeding grounds in mid-June; established territories; mated; and bred in about a month's time before starting south again.

The adult birds typically leave first. They are followed later by the juveniles who generally are hatched quickly able to fend for themselves on the tundra. They spend their time feeding and maturing in preparation for the long flight.

The Refuge is split in two by the Cross Bay Boulevard. The nice Visitors Center is located on the west side with access to the marsh and pond areas generally on good trails. The East Pond on the other side of the road is an impoundment

whose water level is lowered prior to migrations start. Here birding is done from the dried mud flats that are exposed. The pond is surrounded by high grass or invasive bamboo, and, while a few access paths through have developed, it is sometimes necessary to bust through on informal routes.

Nine birders met at the Visitors Center art 10:30 AM and birded until a bit after 2:00 PM with a lunch break. Most of the time was spent at the southern end of the East Pond. After lunch we drove to the north end parking area and spent a bit of time at the north end.

The flats at the south end were covered with small peeps, mostly LEAST and SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS. Other shore birds seen included GREATER and LESSER YELLOWLEGS, LONG- and SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS, and WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS. A WHITE PELICAN was the day's most unusual bird. It is typically found in the central and western parts of the continent.

Species (38): DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT, GREAT BLUE HERON, GREAT EGRET, SNOWY EGRET, BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON, GLOSSY IBIS, MUTE SWAN, CANADA GOOSE, BLACK DUCK, MALLARD DUCK, GADWALL, OSPREY, BALD EAGLE, RED-TAILED HAWK, SEMIPALMATED PLOVER, AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER, GREATER YELLOWLEGS, LESSER YELLOWLEGS, SANDERLING, SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER, LEAST SANDPIPER, WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER, STILT SANDPIPER, SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER, LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER, LAUGHING GULL, HERRING GULL, GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL, COMMON TERN, FORSTER'S TERN, TREE SWALLOW, BARN SWALLOW, CAROLINA WREN, NORTHERN CARDINAL, RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE, BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH.

Also seen on the drive to and from Jamaica Bay NWR: AMERICAN CROW, TURKEY, and TURKEY VULTURE.

— *Bernie Grossman* 

Birding Costa Rica

Greg Recer

Monday, October 4, 2010

7:00 p.m. at the Colonie Library

Costa Rica is a small country -- about the size of West Virginia -- but the birding opportunities there are huge, with over 800 species of birds. The country stretches from the Caribbean to the Pacific, crossing the continental divide at around 10,000 feet in the process, and has an amazing variety of habitats including lowland rain forest, cloud forest, beaches, mangroves, dry sub-tropical forest and high-elevation *paramo*, among others. The program will feature photos from national parks and lodges across the middle of the country highlighting the diversity of Costa Rican birds and scenery.

Gregg Recer is a former HMBC president. He and his wife, Cathy Graichen, have been birding for over 20 years and have developed a strong interest in tropical birding, traveling with their son Bryce to several locations in Central America and the Caribbean over the past few years.

The Birds of Fort Drum

Jeff Bolsinger

Monday, November 1, 2010

7:00 p.m. at the Colonie Library
(details to follow)

Fort Drum is widely recognized as being among the best locations in the northeastern United States for grassland birds. Grasslands account for only a small percentage of the military installation, however, and Fort Drum also has large populations of nightjars, Golden-winged Warblers, and many other species of conservation concern. In this presentation, Jeff Bolsinger will discuss some of the important bird habitats on Fort Drum and the species that they support, as well as ongoing efforts to monitor and manage these bird communities.

Jeff Bolsinger caught the birding bug while attending Oregon State University, where he received a bachelor's degree in zoology. After graduating, he spent seven years roaming around the United States working wherever he could find anybody that would pay him to watch birds. A job working with Golden-cheeked Warblers at Fort Hood, Texas led to a graduate project at the University of Massachusetts studying the vocal behavior of this endangered species. Jeff received his masters degree in biology in 1997, the same year he was hired as a full-time biologist on Fort Drum, where he continues to monitor birds.

HMBC Holiday Party and Program *Neophyte Wanderings in Southern Africa: Two weeks in Uganda, Madagascar and South Africa*

Steve Mesick

Monday, December 6, 2010

7:00 p.m. at Five Rivers Environmental
Education Center

Steve Mesick, a physician practicing in the Albany area, has been involved in birding for about ten years, beginning when he and his son participated in bird walks at the Five Rivers Environmental Education Center. Steve's affiliation with HMBC began eight years ago as the adult leader for the HMBC Merlins, a youth team that participated in the New Jersey Audubon Society's World Series of Birding for six of the last eight years. For five of those years, he was the Youth Coordinator for the club.

In May of 2010 Steve and his family spent 18 days in Uganda, Madagascar and South Africa and got to survey a little of each country. Join us as Steve shares pictures and stories from the trip!

Happy Holidays; bring a dessert to share if you wish.

Ornithological Research at the New York State Museum

Dr. Jeremy J. Kirchman, Curator of Birds, New York State Museum

Monday, January 3, 2011


7:00 p.m. at the Colonie Library

Dr. Jeremy Kirchman grew up in Illinois. He caught the ornithology bug as a college student when he worked on a field crew of bird surveyors in the Ozark Mountains. He earned a BA in Biology from Illinois Wesleyan University in 1994, and a MS in Zoology from Louisiana State University in 1997, where he studied the population genetics of the Cave Swallow species complex. It was at LSU that Jeremy first became interested in museum specimen-based ornithology. From 1997–2000 he worked at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, and from 2000–2001 taught biology at Chicago's St.

Gregory High School. In 2001 Jeremy returned to grad school and earned a Ph.D. in Zoology at the University of Florida in 2006. His advisor was Dr. David Steadman, Curator of Birds at the Florida Museum of Natural History, and his dissertation research was on the speciation and extinction of flightless rails on Pacific islands. Since 2006 Dr. Kirchman has been the Curator of Birds at the New York State Museum in Albany, NY, and Affiliate Assistant Professor in the Department of Biology at the State University of New York at Albany.

His research focuses on historical questions concerning the biogeography and evolution of birds. His goal is to document patterns of bird diversification and extinction over the last few million years and to understand the evolutionary processes that affect bird

populations. He primarily makes use of DNA sequencing technology, including “ancient DNA” techniques, to examine genetic differences among populations. Since coming to the NYSM in 2006, he has worked to modernize the Ornithology Collection and to establish research projects on extinct North American bird species, and on birds that breed in isolated habitats such as the pitch pine-scrub oak barrens near Albany, and the boreal forest “islands” at high elevations in the Catskills and Adirondacks.

His talk on January 3rd, entitled “Ornithological Research at the New York State Museum” will be an overview of ongoing research projects by himself, his students, and other collaborators. The talk will also include a behind-the-scenes look at the labs and the research collection at the NYSM. 

On August 10, Mike Gann and Pete Trivilino, with help from Gary Goodness and Don Gresens, completed construction of two new bridges on the St. Davids Lane Entry Trail to the Reist Sanctuary. These bridges are constructed of native hemlock beams and planks purchased for the purpose by HMBC last fall. Additionally, Mike and Pete also completed the new bridge on the Southern Blue Trail near its juncture with the Brendan Lane Entry Trail. The work was completed over the three-day period from August 31st through September 2nd, 2010. 🪵



When I was a young birder on the south shore of Long Island in the 1970s, it seemed that spring songbird migration was always special. During May, there was always a day when the trees were full of warblers. A Northern Parula here, Chestnut-sided there, even Bay-breasted! There were times that the big trees in our backyard held multiple species as my parents and I excitedly looked from one to the next. We even had Indigo Bunting in the yard, a special treat to see this bright blue songbird. We would also drive about 10 miles to a place in the middle of the Island that we called “Yaphank Woods.” There we would see and hear other warbler species in that extensive deep woods. In recent years, this kind of a migration seemed just a distant memory. Either the populations had so dwindled, or the migrants did not stop off here, or we were just somehow missing them.

Then it was 2010. Our bird club’s annual “birds and breakfast” at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar began with a cold, windy rain. The leader of the 6 a.m. group texted us with a message of cold, rain, few birds and no birders. The rain stopped, and folks were able to get out again around mid-morning. Back at the building for

breakfast and compilation, we realized that some of the folks had yet to return. We heard that they were waylaid by a wave of warblers! The trees between the building and the parking lot were literally hopping with them! There was a CAPE MAY, and even a BAY-BREASTED! It was almost like I remembered from home more than 30 years ago. People poured back out of the building as food had to wait for birds!

The next week was even better, as we went up to Point Pelee National Park in Ontario. This long peninsula juts south into Lake Erie, providing a stopping point for birds that have flown across the lake from Ohio.

We lucked into one of the greatest warbler fallouts in recent years! We had MAGNOLIA practically at our feet, and BLACKBURNIANS, with their fiery-orange throats, practically at eye level! OVENBIRD song filled the woods. NORTHERN PARULA, CAPE MAY, YELLOW (building a nest), COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, BLACKTHROATED GREEN, CHESTNUT-SIDED and even BAY-BREASTED (a favorite as you can probably guess!) were easily seen, among the 21 species of warblers we tallied in our three days there. Other songbirds were common as well, including ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEEK, BALTIMORE – and

ORCHARD ORIOLES, several species of VIREO, WOOD THRUSH, and many more. It was a great experience, a birding abundance as of old.

The place was full of birders, with about 5,000 per day combing the many trails for migrants. Often the main parking lot overflowed, necessitating a farther walk. The “Tip” was only accessible by foot, but a free tram brought us partway. That is where the migrants tend to first land, resting and feeding and working their way north for several days before continuing their flights north. Intelligence was freely shared by the many birders, as sightings were recorded in a logbook and posted on a huge map-board inside the visitor center. Birds of that day were in one color, those from the day before in another. The Friends of Pt. Pelee were selling breakfasts and lunches to the hungry birders, and a grilled hamburger and giant “bird seed” cookie sure tasted great after hours at the Tip!

It was three days of the best birding in many years, and we already have plans to ‘migrate’ back up there for a few days next May as well!

— Scott Stoner 

The Catbird Seat

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I don't know where this expression came from, but there really is a Catbird. Not a cat, but a bird that sounds like one; this slim gray bird with a black cap and a rusty patch under the tail makes a meow-like sound. Actually, that is just a small part of its great repertoire of sounds. The catbird is one of the group of "mimic thrushes" along with the better-known Northern Mockingbird and the less-seen Brown Thrasher. The Mockingbird is a conspicuous bird of neighborhoods; we often find "ours" on the Christmas Bird Count in a friend's multiflora rose bushes. It too has black and gray, but also a good deal of white, flashes of which are noticeable when the bird flies. Brown Thrashers are, as the name implies, mostly brown and

have a very long tail; they are seen in very brushy habitats; the Albany Pine Bush is a good local area to find one.

Catbirds also like brushy places but sometimes venture into suburban yards. They were a welcome presence in my yard growing up on Long Island, frequently visiting our back deck for their handout of raisins. If none had been put out for them, they would loudly meow as though demanding that we respond to them! They were very tame, and several of them would readily eat raisins from our outstretched hands. They seemed to return year after year to the same place, with the same expectation and the same willingness to be hand-fed.

Until recently, Denise and I had lamented about the lack of Catbirds in

our yard. For years, we only had one on our "yard list" and that had an asterisk, "* deceased." That poor Catbird we had found dead near the large window in our back porch door. Several years later we happily replaced that with a sighting of a single live Catbird in our back yard. This year however, we have happily noted a Catbird on many occasions. We think the reason might be habitat. They tend to like dense brush, and breed in dense shrubbery or tangles. We have intentionally let the back part of the backyard continue to grow in a tangle of vines and small trees. While we have not had them eating raisins out of our hands yet, nor seen any young, we are encouraged that they have shown interest in our suburban yard!

— Scott Stoner 

The Apple and the Bee


As I bite into a crisp, fall apple, I am transported back in time several months to a sunny day in early May. We were birding at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar. We were in the old orchard, a good place to find newly-arrived warblers, orioles, and other songbirds, hopping around among the blossoms. Stepping under the heavily-flowered boughs, and looking up for bird movement, I was amazed to discover a world that was completely new to me.

I was struck first by the sound of their loud buzz, and then their constant motion and singularity of purpose, as hundreds of honey bees pursued

their task of nectar-gathering, moving from flower to flower, unknowingly pollinating as they went. I never noticed any individual bee at rest. They all seemed to be moving, all the time. I was awed by their enterprising nature, the determination that each individual seemed to bring to the task at hand, and to the apparent spirit of cooperation with which so many workers were able to bring to this, their work-place.

I don't remember many details of that birding trip, other than the disappointingly low numbers of warblers. But the world of the honeybees remains vividly in my memory. As the weeks passed and blossoms fell, I did not think

much about apple trees, being busy with my own gardening projects and other summer pursuits. But now, as I gaze at my bowl of Macintosh, Golden Delicious, Macouns, and Empires, I marvel at the elegant and efficient process that made these wonderful, crispy, sweet-tart fruits possible, and the thousands of tiny, winged-workers, intent and undistracted, that carried it out. Hours from now, as we enjoy thick slices of apple pie on this chilly fall evening, I will again think of those bright blossoms, filled with the buzz of those industrious bees, and I will almost feel the May breeze on my face.

— Denise Hackert-Stoner
and Scott Stoner 

Upcoming Field Trips

OCTOBER

WOODLAWN PRESERVE

(Schenectady County; morning)

Saturday, October 2

Coordinator: Don Gresens

370-3923

dgresens@nycap.rr.com

The Woodlawn Preserve is located in the Southeast corner of Schenectady County, abutting the western edge of the Pine Bush. The area contains a flood control pond, forested sand dunes and general wetland habitat. Birds found in the preserve include duck species, Great Blue and Green Herons, American Bittern, Eastern Bluebirds, Great-crested Flycatchers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Migrating warblers include Palm, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green and Common Yellowthroat. Swamp Sparrows, Marsh Wrens and Carolina Wrens are on the list of species seen here. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in front of Barnes & Noble in Mohawk Commons, on the corner of State Street (Route 5) and Balltown Road in Niskayuna. We will carpool the short distance to the preserve.

FIVE RIVERS

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

(Albany County; morning)

Sunday, October 10

Coordinator: John Kent

426-7919

jwkent@verizon.net

We'll walk about 2 miles over generally flat terrain with some small hills, passing through a variety of habitats. Previous trips have come up with 6 species of sparrows and 5 species of woodpeckers, as well as both species of kinglets. Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Wood Duck and perhaps other waterfowl may be present. Wet grass and muddy spots may be encountered. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot by the visitor center.

RESERVATIONS FOR FALL SOCIAL

Wednesday, October 13

SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND BATTLEFIELD

(Saratoga County; morning)

Saturday, October 16

Coordinators: Scott Stoner & Denise Hackert-Stoner

785-6760

scottjstoner@aol.com

This popular mid-fall trip features beautiful foliage and a good chance of hawks, woodpeckers, sparrows, bluebirds and late migrants as we walk the woods and grasslands of the battlefield. Over the years on this trip we have found Fox Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Pine Warbler and Common Raven, so no one knows what will turn up. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot near the park's visitor center off Route 32. A fee is charged to walk the Wilkinson Trail, payable at the visitor center. Bring a lunch if you would like to join us for a picnic with us in back of the visitor center after the walk. Please wear bright clothing, as there may be hunting on land adjacent to the park.

HMBC FALL SOCIAL- BIRDING AND COOKOUT AT FIVE RIVERS

(Albany County; afternoon)

Sunday, October 17

Coordinators: Denise Hackert-
Stoner & Scott Stoner

785-6760

denisehstoner@aol.com

We will begin the “Fall Social” by birding the varied habitats of Five Rivers looking for hawks as well as a variety of passerines. Then we will convene at the Pavilion at 4:00 for a hot dog cookout, compilation and social. HMBC will provide hot dogs and hot chocolate. If you wish, you may bring a dish or dessert to share. Meet at the Interpretative Building at 2:00 pm. Sign up by Wed. Oct. 13 by calling or emailing Denise.

NOVEMBER

TOMHANNOCK RESERVOIR (Rensselaer County; morning)

Saturday, November 6

Coordinator: Larry Alden

861-6087

overlook@nycap.rr.com

Join us for a morning trip that circles the Tomhannock Reservoir. We should find a good variety of waterfowl as well as resident and migrant passerines and possibly shorebirds. Rarities such as Ross’ Goose and Gray Kingbird have turned up at the Tomhannock in the fall and we often find a Bald Eagle or two. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the parking area at the intersection of Lake Shore Drive and NY Route 7 at the west end of the causeway. Bring a scope if you have one.

COLLINS LAKE

(Schenectady County; morning)

Saturday, November 13

Coordinator: Don Gresens

370-3923

dgresens@nycap.rr.com

We will observe Collins Lake for late migrating waterfowl from the beach and the east side of the lake, and also take a walk along the east side of the Mohawk River for fall sparrows. Foliage will be off of the trees to make finding LBJs a bit easier. Meet at Jumping Jack’s in Scotia at 8:00 a.m. Bring a scope if you have one.

DECEMBER

NIGHT OWLS AND HOT DOGS Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

Saturday, December 11, 3:30 p.m.

This is a joint trip of Five Rivers, HMBC and the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. Field parties will visit likely owl roosts along Five Rivers trails, then gather at a roaring campfire to compare findings. Complimentary hot dogs and hot drinks will answer the question “who cooks for you?” A hot fire, hot dogs and hot chocolate are always guaranteed; last year the owls were a distinct bonus! Please call the Center at (518) 475-0291 to register by Wednesday, December 8, 2010.

SCHENECTADY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Saturday, December 18

Coordinator: Bill Lee

SOUTHERN RENSSELAER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT


Monday, December, 27

Coordinator: Philip Whitney

JANUARY 2011

TROY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Sunday, January, 2, 2011

Coordinator: Larry Alden 

Feathers

Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club
c/o Five Rivers EEC
Game Farm Road
Delmar, NY 12054

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