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THREE LUCKY MINUTES

By Robert P. Yunick

This is a bad luck/good luck story about the serendipitous finding of a proverbial needle in an ornithological haystack.

On November 30, 2004 I went out with Tom Palmer and Roger Miller for a day of raptor banding in Montgomery County. We started out catching, banding and releasing the second Red-tailed Hawk we tried for. Then as I turned north onto Bulls Head Road from Thayer Road, ahead of us on our left 200-300 yards away was another perched Red-tail behind the houses at 829 and 843 Bulls Head Road. I drove by the bird, turned around and came back for Tom to place our mouse-baited bal-chatri trap near the hawk on its side of the road at 08:46. I then proceeded toward Thayer to again turn around to park at a distance facing the trap and hawk to monitor the hawk's behavior, as we typically do.

While positioning ourselves, and focusing primarily on the Red-tail, Tom saw a bird on the roof of the house at 829 which by size and behavior he thought to be either an Eastern Bluebird or Eastern Phoebe. We passed it by as we drove on while our attention remained riveted on the Red-tail, hoping it would launch toward our mouse and get caught. We waited until 08:53 without any show of interest from the Red-tail (sometimes they react within seconds or at least a minute or two, but after seven minutes, we figured this bird to be a lost cause). That was the bad luck.

I drove to the trap, got out, picked it up, while the unperturbed Red-tail remained perched only 70 yards away. Normally, I would have simply put the trap in the car and driven away – another failed drop, and this story would not have been written. But in this instance, plain dumb luck was about to intervene.

As I picked up the trap, I noted that the door on the bottom of the trap needed another tie, because one had fallen off. I went to the back of the car to make the replacement, and while doing so, sharp-eyed Tom took the opportunity to scan the area (he rarely misses a chance to look at a bird – any bird) and commented that there was a bird now on the roof of the house at 843, apparently the same bird he only glimpsed at earlier about 100 yards down the road when the Red-tail held our attention.

I looked up from what I was doing with the trap and sure enough there was a

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phoebe/bluebird-like bird flying from roof to ground foraging for what appeared to be insects. After a few more seconds of viewing, Tom calmly stated he thought the bird was a **Say's Phoebe**. Oh, wow!!

As soon as I could put down the trap without fear of the mouse escaping from the insecure door, I put my binocular on the bird and there was no doubt about it, a Say's Phoebe! It was not as brightly colored as depicted on page 331 of the Sibley guide, but matched the photo on page 233 of the Kaufman guide. We noted its size (ever so slightly larger than that of an Eastern Phoebe); dark bobbing tail; grayish appearance, though slightly browner than depicted by Kaufman; and distinctive rusty appearing under parts, all of which field marks seen while having both field guides in hand for confirmation.

We had the bird in binocular view for just three minutes as it worked its way north on Bulls Head foraging from the house roof, a stone pile on the front lawn, and various shrubs on the lawn to locate food items on the ground. At its closest, the bird was 30 yards from us in the front yard of the house at 843, and by time it worked north and crossed

the road at the next house at 854, where it disappeared into denser cover, it was perhaps 50 yards away.

Tom is familiar with Say's Phoebe from the West, and I from Alaska, but for both of us it was a New York state bird. For Roger, it was a lifer, all caused by an odd sequence of events involving a reluctant Red-tail and an unexpected pause to make a small trap repair.

We moved on; there were more raptors to chase. Within nine minutes, we had our second bird, an American Kestrel just over a quarter mile south on Bulls Head Road. We spent the rest of the day banding a total of six raptors, and spotted (and tried for) but did not catch our first Rough-legged Hawk of the season. I thought how ironic it was that within a few miles of one another here in Montgomery County were a Say's Phoebe and a Rough-leg - two species whose breeding ranges overlap in ever so small an area in Alaska, but whose normal wintering ranges are so separated from one another, not just in miles but so vastly by climate.

But, that's birding.

New Bird for Five Rivers found on Albany County CBC

By Scott Stoner

On December 19, 2004 the Sector "A" group (consisting of Denise Hackert-Stoner, Tina Markopoulos, Patti Packer, and me) had completed our coverage of Five Rivers' grounds on foot, and were spending a few minutes indoors checking out the birds at the Center's many feeders (in addition to warming up and drinking hot chocolate!). At about 10:40, we all suddenly noticed a very unusual bird at one of platform feeders. Denise was the first to call out, "this is something different!" It was about the size of a House Spar-

row, but with a longer, pointed, light bill, yellow lines above and below the eye, a rusty patch on the wing, and a yellow breast with a couple of spots of black. We all knew we had something "really good"! After watching it for a few moments, I decided to start writing its field marks, while Denise, Tina, and Patti kept watching it and describing it to me. It then flew off, and we began checking the books. Dickcissel seemed possible, and a check of several field guides confirmed that. The bird reappeared several more times over the next hour,



giving us more good looks at it, and an opportunity to confirm our identification.

It was great fun that evening, keeping mum about it at the compilation until the compiler. Alan Mapes, completed the list of species already seen in the 20 years of the count. Following that, we added our Dickcissel as a new species for the Albany County CBC as well as for Five Rivers. Alas, it wasn't rare enough to even require documentation for the CBC, let alone as a NYS record, but it was the best bird we had ever found, and it was fun to

share it with others through Birdline. It has stuck around for a couple of weeks since, offering the chance for many HMBC members to see it. Looking for it the next day, Alan even got to see a Northern Shrike fly in and take a chickadee! Alan returned the following day and took some digital photos of "our" Dickcissel. We'll always remember last year's CBC for the heavy snowstorm that clogged the roads and ended the count around noon, but this one will stand out forever for the Dickcissel.

Troy Christmas Bird Count *By Larry Alden*

The 58th Troy Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, January 1, 2005. This count was first held in 1925 and 1926, and has been held continuously since the winter of 1949-50. Eighteen birders participated in seven field parties covering all or parts of the Cities of Troy, Mechanicville, Watervliet, and Cohoes; Towns of Brunswick, Schaghticoke, Pittstown, Halfmoon, Clifton Park, and Colonie; and Villages of Valley Falls, Schaghticoke, Stillwater, and Green Island. Major water bodies included the Hudson, Mohawk, and Hoosic Rivers and the Tomhannock Reservoir.

The temperature went from a high of 45 F to a low of 38 F. Moving water was open, but standing water (most notably the Tomhannock) was frozen. Winds were 5-15 mph from the northwest. It was partly clear in the morning and cloudy in the afternoon.

Our combined effort found 17,426 birds representing 61 species. Two other species were seen in the period three days before and three days following the count. Warm weather immediately preceding the count and lack of snow cover seemed to keep the bird numbers down. Lack of ice in the rivers

meant that waterfowl were not concentrated anywhere in the count circle, and no waterfowl were on the frozen Tomhannock.

The 61 species represents the lowest species total since the winter of 1982-83, when 56 species were found. Since then, the count has averaged 66 species. There were low numbers of Great Horned Owls, Blue Jays, American Tree Sparrows, and Song Sparrows and we missed Great Blue Heron, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Screech-Owl, and odd ducks. However, there was a record number of Red-bellied Woodpeckers, further documenting the northward expansion of this species. Also a surprise was a single Yellow-rumped Warbler and two Purple Finches in a CBC season which locally saw few warblers and winter finches. An even bigger surprise was a count week American Pipit seen at Cohoes Falls the day before the count. Unfortunately, the bird could not be relocated on count day. This species has never occurred on this count, so it would have been a good bird, indeed.

Next year's count will be held on Saturday, December 31, 2005. Let's hope for a better turnout from the birds.

Feathers



105th CBC (Winter 2004—2005) results for Southern Rensselaer County
Compiled by Phil Whitney

Sector	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Circle
Canada Goose	696	368	18	22	450	35	37	113	1739
Wood Duck								2	2
Am. Black Duck	6	2		4				4	16
Mallard	3	160		30	2			170	365
Common Merganser	8								8
Bald Eagle	1							2	3
Northern Harrier	2				2	1		2	7
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1				2		1	1	5
Cooper's Hawk	2	1						2	5
Red-tailed Hawk	5	9	1	14	5		1	10	45
Rough-legged Hawk		2							2
Merlin*								1	1
Peregrine Falcon				2				1	3
Ruffed Grouse				1					1
Wild Turkey	32		34	1				8	75
Ring-billed Gull	28	20		80				11	139
Herring Gull	12	5	1	10				5	33
Great Black-backed Gull	3			12				1	16
Rock Pigeon	370	14	10	500	50	25		107	1076
Mourning Dove	25	2	38	500	50	10	12	79	716
Eastern Screech-Owl	1			1					2
Red-bellied Woodpecker	4		3	2	2		1	3	15
Downy Woodpecker	8	1	11	10	15	4	14	7	70
Hairy Woodpecker	1	2	2	10	1	2	3	1	22
Northern Flicker	3	1		3		1		1	9
Pileated Woodpecker	1								1
Horned Lark					60				60
Blue Jay	2	1	11	30	15	17	6	12	94



Feathers

Sector	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Circle
American Crow	721	160	36	200	350	86	13	1713	3279
Common Raven						1	2		3
Black-capped Chickadee	17	7	55	80	35	65	130	25	414
Tufted Titmouse	18	7	18	20	10	16	39	14	142
Red-breasted Nuthatch			2		1	1	1		5
White-breasted Nuthatch	7	2	5	5	8	6	11	4	48
Brown Creeper	1			2			1		4
Carolina Wren	2			2			3		7
Winter Wren								1	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1						1		2
Eastern Bluebird	4	8		5				20	37
American Robin	850	16	184	500		2	2	290	1844
Northern Mockingbird		1	1	2				1	5
European Starling	790	95	70	30	40	36	65	158	1284
Northern Cardinal	8	4	6	50	4	5	10	4	91
Am. Tree Sparrow	5	1	7			4	4	85	106
Chipping Sparrow*				3					3
Song Sparrow								3	3
White-throated Sparrow	8	1		40				8	57
Dark-eyed Junco	24	16	32	60	15	11	53	81	292
Snow Bunting								40	40
Red-winged Blackbird			4						4
Common Grackle				1					1
Purple Finch			1						1
House Finch	12	2	12	60	15	9		15	125
American Goldfinch	6	2	16		15		4	8	51
House Sparrow	65	8	20	15	20	14	39	164	345
total individuals	3753	918	598	2307	1167	351	453	3177	12724
total species	39	29	26	35	23	22	24	40	55

Feathers



105th CBC (Winter 2004—2005) results for Troy
Compiled by Larry Alden

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
Snow Goose		1	4					5
Canada Goose	419	313	2129	275	1690	75	300	5201
Mute Swan				cw				cw
Wood Duck			2					2
American Black Duck	2	14	19	28	3	16	2	84
Mallard	68	237	170	126	90	92	9	792
Mallard hybrid		1		1				2
Lesser Scaup			1					1
Common Goldeneye		30	66	17	25			138
Hooded Merganser			3	1	2			6
Common Merganser		26	12	65	78	1		182
Bald Eagle *		2	2					4
Northern Harrier	1				1			2
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1			3		1	5
Cooper's Hawk		1				1		2
Red-tailed Hawk	8	9	9	10	15	10	5	66
Rough-legged Hawk	1		2				1	4
American Kestrel							1	1
Ruffed Grouse	1		4					5
Wild Turkey		56					15	71
Ring-billed Gull	1	23	9	37	57	70	74	271
Herring Gull		6	23	805	44	6	153	1037
Iceland Gull				4				4
Lesser Black-backed Gull				2				2
Glaucous Gull				1				1
Great Black-backed Gull		9	12	402	66	1	136	626
Rock Pigeon	67	82	65	30	153	245	67	709
Mourning Dove	41	125	48	6	112	31	16	379
Great Horned Owl			1					1
Barred Owl						1		1
Belted Kingfisher			1					1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	4	6	2	3	1		2	18
Downy Woodpecker	11	13	11	8	7	8	3	61
Hairy Woodpecker	1	5	3	2		2	1	14



Feathers

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
Northern Flicker		2	3		5			10
Pileated Woodpecker							2	2
Blue Jay	8	18	14	2	3	4	14	63
American Crow	57	1400	75	735	462	417	32	3178
Fish Crow					2			2
Common Raven	1		1					2
Black-capped Chickadee	62	105	53	52	37	107	37	453
Tufted Titmouse	20	23	17	4	1	6	9	80
White-breasted Nuthatch	6	15	12	5	15	13	6	72
Brown Creeper		1		1		1	1	4
Carolina Wren		2			1			3
Golden-crowned Kinglet	3		1					4
Eastern Bluebird	18	10	7		4			39
American Robin	4	33	4	17	97	53	122	330
Northern Mockingbird		3				1	1	5
European Starling	578	775	111	200	175	488	115	2442
American Pipit	cw							cw
Cedar Waxwing							34	34
Yellow-rumped Warbler						1		1
American Tree Sparrow	5	2	40	8	15	7	10	87
Song Sparrow		2	2					4
Swamp Sparrow			1					1
White-throated Sparrow		16	8	4		6	5	39
Dark-eyed Junco	10	31	58	1	21	13	6	140
Northern Cardinal	8	16	5	9	5	2	9	54
Brown-headed Cowbird	5							5
Purple Finch			2					2
House Finch	3	12	5	7	28	22	23	100
American Goldfinch	21	18	8	6	6	15	19	93
House Sparrow	15	128	42	33	154	44	63	479
Total Birds	1449	3572	3067	2907	3378	1759	1294	17426
Total Species	30	39	44	33	33	31	34	61 + 2 cw

Groups:

A: Will Yandik, Steve Yandik
 B: Joan Cipriani, Peggy Rudis
 C: Phil Whitney, Marjorie Whitney
 D: Timothy & David Gorman, Nicholas Riano

E: Gary Goodness, Bernice Fiske, Paul Branigan
 F: Gregg Recer
 G: Frank Murphy, Steve Chorvas
 H: Bill Lee, Gene Vermilyea



OF WARBLERS AND VIREOS

By Richard J. Patrick

Gentle readers, I hope you had the opportunity to ponder Making a Last Stand in Texas in the Jan/Feb 2005 Bird Watcher's Digest. The article details the work of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to protect the habitat of the Federally endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Black-capped Vireo. Both birds are very choosy about their nesting sites. The warbler will only nest in Ashe juniper and the vireo insists upon scrubby regrowth of oak and juniper which is dependent on fire. Both birds are plagued by Brown-headed Cowbirds.

This article really touched me, having recently received a correspondence from this very same Texas Parks and Wildlife Department updating me on their progress in encouraging the recovery of the Attwater race of the Greater Prairie Chicken as well as the Whooping Crane.

Perchance you recall my screed in the December 2004 Feathers where I outlined the Department's work with these birds and also told you of Patsy and my run-ins with these two species on our first pay-per-view trip with Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours. On that same 1987 trip we were also introduced to the warbler featured in the BWD story.

We arrived in San Antonio a few days before the beginning of the tour and set out to discover Texas. You should know we liked the state immediately; all the bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush from Lady Bird Johnson's highway beautification programs and the "Don't mess with Texas" signs along the road. I have to tell you though seeing all these ranches stocked with exotic African antelopes for "canned" hunts and taxidermy shops at every crossroads was more than a little weird. Another curiosity that you don't see back in New York is the stream crossings. Back here we have the quaint habit of building a bridge when you come to a watercourse. In Texas, just the opposite, the road goes right down across the stream bed and if perchance the water is flowing with a dangerous vigor you either trust to luck, go somewhere different, or wait a little while until driving across is less exciting. We were never inconvenienced.

I figure Patsy, who was not brought up with a gang of bird watching brothers, is pretty much just along for the ride. Then my passenger spots her first Roadrunner and yelps "it is running along aside of us at 100 miles an hour just like in the cartoons." I get the feeling I may have to share my binoculars. Then right in my ear another howl, "What is that?" Yes, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher has made its appearance. Rather than a personal body-servant, there is now another bird watcher in the car.

We are cruising along the Edward Plateau (more commonly known as the Texas Hill Country) when we see a sign for Lost Maples State Park so we get out to see what is there. We are greeted by a flock of warblers and your correspondent being a trained bird watcher with more than 15 minutes experience as compared to Mrs. Johnny-come-lately announces here we have your Black-throated Green Warbler. Ah yes, I received extra credit in ninth grade for a scientific paper I authored on a flock which invaded my street one lunch hour back home in Oneonta. No mistaking them.

Eventually we hooked up with the Victor Emmanuel tour under the batons of Barry Zimmer and Kenn Kaufman (yes, that Kenn Kaufman). I quickly found out how little I really did know about birds.

After an absolutely amazing week where we saw the Prairie Chicken and the Whooper we were back at Lost Maples and my Black-throated Greens had morphed into Golden-cheeked Warblers, which even back in 1987 was a bird, you would go a hundred miles or more out of your way for a chance of seeing which they did.

To bring the tale full circle next year we were back in Texas with Barry Zimmer, who I have to believe is one of the world's best birders, this time to explore Big Bend National Park.

If you haven't been to Big Bend let me tell you it is a forever drive from El Paso. When we first got into the park we were greeted by a sign informing us that earlier in the year on that spot a mountain lion had eaten a father and two of his children. There is a message you don't forget!



The road kept climbing until it reached the Chisos Mountain basin where we were staying. All I can say about the site is that it is another example of what God can do when He wants to show Off for His children. If you haven't been there yet it is more than worth the effort.

The first full day in the park we took a five and a half mile hike in the July heat through the desert to a landmark known as The Window, which framed a view across the Rio Grande into the most forbidding appearing mountains I have ever seen. Starting back, we were suddenly surrounded by Javelinas - all sizes. If you grew up staring at a painting of these small hairy hogs in the family "animal book"- that we never in our lives thought we would live to see, you can understand how any bird on the rest of

the hike would be anti-climatic. In my notes from that long ago Saturday morning I have Javelina herd underlined but on the next line is mention of the Black-capped Vireo. I am still blessed with the picture of it in my memory and I do recall the bird being the main purpose of the hike, but at the time Patsy, the new bird aficionado, was more interested in surviving the hike. When she got back to our room she tipped over on the bed, her feet still on the floor, moaned "Don't tell the buzzards where I am." and was out.

The point of all this is that here were three birds plus the Whooping Cranes that we saw without realizing how special they are. So, thank you, Texas, for your efforts in looking after them for the benefit of all of us.

Upcoming 2005 HMBC Programs

Monday March 7, 7 PM, Colonie Library
***Impressions of Bhutan*, David Martin**

Bhutan, a small, isolated Himalayan kingdom, is a nature traveler's paradise. Bhutan's isolation and rich Buddhist culture has preserved huge tracts of unspoiled wilderness. Splendid mountain views and pristine forests extend as far as the eye can see. From warm, moist lowlands to rhododendron forests high in the mountains, Bhutan offers amazing biological diversity in a small area. The woods ring with bird calls. This program will highlight photographs and original audio recordings of life and wildlife in Bhutan.

David Martin, a member of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, is a life-long birder and an amateur photographer and nature-sound recordist.

HMBC's Annual Literary Night

Monday April 4, 7 PM, Five Rivers,
HMBC Literary Night

If you enjoy literature with a natural history theme, if you like to read or listen to nature poetry or prose, if you love sharing luscious desserts with friends on an evening in early spring, then this is the event for you! Come to Five Rivers on Monday, April 4, 2005 at 7:00 PM, and enjoy the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club's Literary Night. Bring your favorite nature poems, essays, or sections from fictional works to share. They may be original pieces or works by published authors. Or come to listen to others read. Feel free to bring a dessert to share. This is a unique, annual event for our Club, and all are invited to attend!



Upcoming 2005 HMBC Programs (continued)

HMBC Annual Dinner

Monday April 11, Moscatiello's in East Greenbush,
Searching for Birds (and the Meaning of Life) in the American West, Mark Garland

Mark Garland is Senior Naturalist for NJ Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory. He has worked for independent Audubon Societies in New Jersey and the Washington DC area for 20 years. He started his career as a seasonal naturalist for the National Park Service, working for 5 summers in the western US and often wandering throughout that region in the spring and fall. The talk, "Searching for Birds (and the Meaning of Life) in the Western US" looks back at his travels around the west during those years and more recently, a time when he was learning about birds (and life) while visiting natural areas both famous and obscure.

Monday May 2, 7 PM, Five Rivers
NYS Breeding Bird Atlas Project: The fieldwork is done... now what?, Kimberley Corwin,
co-editor of the Breeding Bird Atlas

As many of you know, the fieldwork for New York's second Breeding Bird Atlas project has been completed. Since January 2000, birders across the state have been patiently visiting wetlands, fields, forests, and roadsides to document the distribution of NY's avian residents. At our meeting on May 2nd Kimberley Corwin will provide a slide presentation that illustrates the results of five years of data collection. Kim will show the most current species distribution maps and discuss changes since NY's first Atlas project in 1980-85. She will also give us a sneak peak at drafts and outlines for the Atlas publication, which is expected to be available in 2007.

Kim's interest in ornithology began when she was an undergrad at Hartwick College and had the opportunity to spend a January semester studying birds in Costa Rica. She began working for the DEC's Division of Fish and Wildlife in 1991. In 1999 she completed the M.S. program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University at Albany. Kim has worked as the Project Coordinator for the Atlas since it began in 2000. In January 2005, she transitioned to the position of Co-Editor of the Atlas publication. She and Co-Editor Kevin McGowan will work together to complete the manuscript for publication

Monday June 6, 7 PM, Five Rivers
Malaysian Borneo, Lillian Samuelson



Upcoming 2005 Capital Region Audubon Programs

Thursday March 10, 7PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library
***The Canadian Atlantic*, Denise & Scott Stoner**

From the Gannets of Bonaventure, the tides of Fundy, and the highlands of Cape Breton, across the sea to the fjords, bogs, and icebergs of Newfoundland and Labrador, this great and diverse land is filled with scenery, wildlife, and culture. This slide and music program shows the wonders that draw visitors again and again to these special places.

Scott is past president of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. Denise is a past officer and director of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club. Together they enjoy exploring, photographing, and sharing the natural history of North America.

Program Reports

December Meeting *Birding Acadia*,

Rescheduled from earlier in the month due to snow and travel conditions, the Holiday Party and Program was held on a bitterly cold night at Five Rivers and amazingly attended by 35 people! Local photographer Tom Lindsay presented "Birding Acadia" -describing the multitude of different habitats - as well as their close proximity, within this national park on the coast of Maine. He also showcased some of its birds and other wildlife, while providing a good picture of the places for the visitor to see. From Sand Beach and Bass Harbor Head Light to the top of Cadillac Mountain, and remote Schoodic Peninsula and Isle au Haut, Tom's great slides illustrated the beauty and diversity of this great park. Many thanks to Tom for his pictures and insight as well as to the many folks who brought delicious desserts to share!

— *Scott Stoner*

January Meeting *Adirondack Birds and Natural History*

Returning to the Colonie Library in January, we kicked off the New Year with HMBC member and photographer Warren Greene's showcase of birds and other natural beauty of the Adirondacks. With an emphasis on birds, Warren's talk went like a photo workshop, teaching us about each slide. The slides were each taken with great effort, some involving extensive waiting in the field, and elaborate elevated setups to get at eye level with the birds. Some (of many) notable pictures included Pileated Woodpeckers, with a young male about to fledge, a Wood Thrush on its nest, many nesting warblers, an incredible Brown Creeper nest with young, baby Whippoorwills on the ground, and bluebirds at the nest. In addition to birds, Warren included a few shots of deer, orchids, stunning fall foliage, and moths: luna, cecropia, and polyphemous in various stages of development. He concluded the show with a collection of owls, from tiny Saw-whets to Great Horned, Snowy, and Great Gray. The quality of the photos left the audience of 70 in awe, and hoping that we will invite Warren back again (we will!).

— *Scott Stoner*



Upcoming Field Trips

MAR 5 COHOES-WATERFORD **TRIP RESCHEDULED TO MAR 13**

MAR 6 WATERFOWL OF THE HUDSON RIVER SOUTH (Green County; morning)
SUN Coordinator: **Bill Cook** **851-2678**

On this spring morning waterfowl trip, we will search the Hudson River from Coxsackie to Catskill where the waterfowl usually congregate on their way north. Expect to see Canvasback, goldeneye and many more species. There is also a good chance of seeing Bald Eagle. Meet at 8 AM at the Coxsackie boat launch site. Take the NYS Thruway to Exit 21B (Coxsackie – Route 9W), follow 9 W south for about 2 miles to Route 385, go left (east) on 385 (Mansion Street) and continue straight to the Hudson River where the road bears left into the boat launch site.

MAR 12 HUDSON RIVER ABOVE TROY & HOOSICK RIVER ON KNICKERBOCKER RD
(Rensselaer & Washington Counties; full day)
SAT Coordinator: **Joan Cipriani** **374-3729**

Early migrating waterfowl will be our target, but Bald Eagles and Snow Geese are also likely in this area. Last year, we were treated to a Gyrfalcon. We plan to bird until early afternoon, so you may want to bring a lunch with you. Plan to meet at 8:00 a.m. by the chain link fence at the Hannaford Plaza parking lot. The supermarket is located at the east end of the North Troy-Waterford Bridge, Route 4).

MAR 13 COHOES-WATERFORD – LOWER MOHAWK RIVER (Albany & Saratoga Counties; morning)
SUN Coordinator: **Gerry Colborn** **237-3898**
(orig sched for Mar 5) **gcolborn@nycap.rr.com**

This trip will focus on waterfowl, gulls and raptors along the Lower Mohawk river near Cohoes and Waterford. We'll hope to see Iceland, Glaucous and Lesser Black-backed Gulls as well as Bald Eagles. Meet at the Dunkin' Donuts on the corner of Rtes 32 and 470 in Cohoes at 8:30 a.m.

APR 9 VISCHER FERRY
SAT *****INSTRUCTIONAL TRIP (Saratoga County; morning)*****
Coordinator: **John Hershey** **371-3114**

This is a great time of year for beginners to learn about birding at Vischer Ferry. Many of the newly arrived ducks will be in full breeding plumage, making them easier to see and identify; and the greatest rush of migrant songbirds will not take place for a few more weeks. We'll take a relaxed walk around some of the ponds and woodland areas where we should be able to find and identify a few species of migrant songbirds as well as some of the common, year-round residents of the Preserve. Meet at the main entrance at 8 am.

APRIL 15 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR GREAT ADIRONDACK BIRDING FESTIVAL (JUNE 2 –5)

APR 23 FIVE RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
SAT *****EARLY SPRING INSTRUCTIONAL TRIP (Albany county; Morning)*****
Coordinators: **Patti Packer** **patti.packer@Thomson.com**
Tina Markopoulos



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

A great place for beginning birders to explore the differing habitats associated with various birds. We'll explore woodlands, fields and ponds in search of early migrants and arriving breeding species. Bring binoculars and field guides if you have them. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Interpretive Building.

APRIL 26 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR UTICA MARSH (APRIL 30)

APRIL 28 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR ROUND LAKE & ANTHONY KILL #1 (MAY 1)

APR 30 UTICA MARSH (Oneida County; full day)
SAT Coordinator: Joan Cipriani, for HMBC 374-3729
This will be a joint trip with Nature Club of Central New York.
Reservations due by April 26

On this day trip, we will be joined by the Nature Club of Central New York. The marsh has a number of trails and a observation tower overlooking the two main marshes. We hope to find some early spring migrants, as well as waterfowl, waders and early passerines. American Bittern is likely and Least Bittern is possible. In previous years we've found Virginia Rail, Sora, Purple Martin and Osprey as well. Call the coordinator for details.

MAY 1 ROUND LAKE AND THE ANTHONY KILL PADDLE TRIP #1 (Saratoga County)
SUN Coordinators: Scott and Denise Stoner 785-6760
Reservations due by April 28

We will paddle around the edge of Round Lake and Little Round Lake before exploring the Anthony Kill. The highlight will be the Great Blue Heron rookery along the Anthony Kill; in 2004 there were about 20 nests. We will also look for Belted Kingfisher, Double-crested Cormorants, Green Heron, Pileated Woodpecker, and early arriving songbirds. Plan to paddle about 5 miles. Everyone must bring and wear a PFD at all times for safety. Participants should also bring water, snack, warm clothes, rain gear and a spare paddle. Call the coordinators for details.

MAY 4 RENSSELAER TECHNOLOGY PARK (Rensselaer County; evening)
WED Coordinator: Frank Murphy thrush@nycap.rr.com

Join us for an evening walk in this 1,250-acre Tech Park along the Hudson River in North Greenbush. Expect to see a variety of resident and migrant songbirds. Meet at 5:30 PM at the visitor center parking lot, which is the first left after entering the park. From Albany take I-90 East to Exit 8, then north on Route 4 for about 2 miles to the Tech Park entrance.

MAY 7 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR FERD'S BOG & RAQUETTE LAKE AREA (JUNE 19)

MAY 7 GREENPORT CONSERVATION AREA (morning)
SAT Coordinator: Gerry Colborn 237 - 3898

Study up on your songbirds and join us in this new HMBC field trip to look for migrants in the



HMBC BOARD FOR 2004-2005

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East Greenbush, NY 12061
477-2980

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Rensselaer, NY 12144
577-8005

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765-4982

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355-0818

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Birdline:	John Saville	399-5959
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Patsy Patrick	456-4007
Ellen Pemrick	452-4384
Beverly Relyea	adkmountaingirl@hotmail.com
Donna Zimmerman	869-6624



HMBC Contact Information

BIRDLINE of E. NEW YORK: (518) 439-8080

Email: contact@hmbc.net

HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

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 that would inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the address at right.

Newsletter Submissions

Please send all *electronic* submissions *via e-mail* to:
Bob Miller at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net

Send all submissions to:
Bob Miller
1994 15th St.
Troy, NY 12180



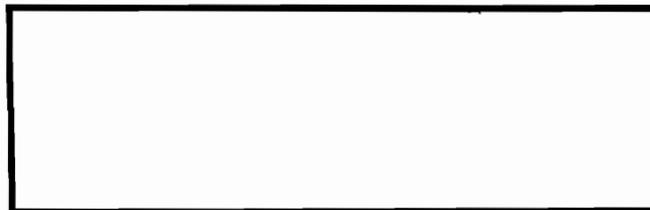
Workshop for New and Prospective Field Trip Leaders
March 28 at Five Rivers

The Club will conduct a workshop for field trip leaders at 7:00 PM at Fiver Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar on Monday, March 28 2005. The workshop will be an opportunity for new field trip leaders and people who might be interested in leading trips in the future to ask questions and get guidance from many of the Club's most experienced field trip leaders. We will discuss issues ranging from the basic expectations of people who coordinate HMBC field trips, working with novice birders on the basics of locating and identifying birds to logistic issues such as managing groups of birders, organizing extended field trips and birding in car caravans. Many Club members have a wealth of experience running field trips and several of them will be available at the workshop. If you're interested in learning more about leading trips, join us and take advantage of this opportunity.

FEATHERS
Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club
c/o Five Rivers EEC
Game Farm Rd.
Delmar, N.Y. 12054

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RED PINE CHIPPING AT THE H. G. REIST SANCTUARY

By Carl George

It all began in the spring of 2004 with a walk through of the Reist Sanctuary conducted by the local chapter of the New York Forest Owners Association. Several members of the group (Michael Greason and Jim Beil) expressed concern about the condition of the two Red Pine (*Pinus resinosa* Soland) plantations. Many of the trees were dead, most were gangly, weak crowned and a few showed tiny shot holes in the bark, the first signs of attack by the Ips Engraver Beetle (*Ips cf. pini* (Say)). Clearly, the Red Pines of the Sanctuary were "stressed" and Mike Greason, former Chief Forester with the Bureau of Private Land Services, NYSDEC, warned that our two groves might become shambles five years from now, victims of crowding, wind and the tiny IEB.

Rather worried, I invited Mr. Greason back to the Sanctuary a few weeks later and we discussed the best course of management. There weren't enough quality trees to make the effort commercially worthwhile and, besides, hauling the cut trees to a loading site at the edge of the Sanctuary would certainly prove awkward. On the other hand leaving the groves without attention would demonstrate poor management and thus be contrary to the agreement with the donor of the land, Margaret Reist, wife of Henry Gerber Reist. The outcome was the recommendation that the dead and selected stressed trees of the northern grove be

chipped *in situ* and the chips dispersed throughout the plantation. The south plantation, about 700 feet away, would be left alone to establish a controlled experiment designed to show the results of the management effort. The idea was endorsed by the HMBC board and, after lengthy discussion, the effort was funded (\$2,500). The owner of a chipper, Mr. Richard Reed of Duanesburg, was brought to our attention by Mr. John Gorsin and contracted to perform the work. The trees to be cut and chipped had been squirted with blue blazes by Mr. Greason and inspected by Mr. Reed as preliminaries.

The great chipping machine* was delivered by trailer at the Morgan Ave trailhead and work began at 8:00 A.M. on Monday, January 31st. (I had called selected neighbors to alert them of the proceedings to reduce

In This Issue....

NYSOA Announcement

Extensive Collections Book Sale

Best Field Trip Schedule of the year

Feathers



their concerns and red "danger" tapes were strung across the trails passing through or near the site.) The 8-foot wide chipper, on its 16-inch wide steel tracks, marched down the Morgan Ave. trail to the Hidden River Trail and then west to the Yellow trail for the final leg north into the plantation. It was essential that the ground be well frozen and the bitter cold days preceding had created amazingly strong support for the wide tracks of the 15,000 pound machine.

Working conditions were ideal for the four days, 8 inches of well frozen ground, air temperature between 10 and 30 degree F, 6 to 10 inches of powdery snow, little or no wind, and a wondrous lack of concern from the neighborhood. Perhaps the telephone calls in advance were of value.

The chipping machine is a monster macerator! The felled tree is lifted by a control arm at the head of the machine and fed into the maw where it is engaged by a pair of steel ridged rollers that pull the tree into the chipping head at the rate of about one foot per second! Imagine a 50 foot tall Red Pine with a 14 inch trunk diameter being completely chipped in less than one minute! The chips are spit out on the forest floor to a distance of 50 feet by a continually shifting port. The operator sits in a small, windowed chamber providing both protection and warmth. The sawman, working outside on the ground, completes the team. His primary tool is a well-sharpened chain saw.

Both men wear a hard-hat, ear muffs to protect against the sound, chaps to guard against chain-saw accidents, heavy gloves, and shatter-proof glasses - all required by current insurance standards.

Plantation felling requires Jobian patience.

As I watched, roughly 75% of all cut trees lodged against their standing neighbors thus requiring additional cutting and chain pulling to bring them down. The wonder and importance of frozen ground was again accented. Each tree weighed one to two thousand pounds and thus when felled it stabbed at frozen ground but with little or no penetration; and when pulled at the base of the trunk, there was little or no plowing up of the forest soil. I had no real appreciation of how strong frozen ground is until this experience.

Movement of the 8-foot wide chipper through the plantation is another special skill because the remaining trees must not be scarred. Mr. Reed had a special talent for this and only a dozen or so tree bear nicks commemorating the event.

The operation was completed on Thursday at 11:30 A.M. Daily work of this type usually ends mid-afternoon for safety reasons. Most accidents occur when a worker is tired and Mr. Reed and his sawman, Floyd Doherty, were exceedingly responsible in this respect. So much can go wrong. Cutting conditions are important too. There must be minimal wind and air temperatures must be well above zero Fahrenheit because metal fails more frequently at low temperatures. In total 124 trees (93 live, 16 dead standing, 15 dead fallen) were cut. Of the 93 live trees cut 17 ft. sections of 15 were saved for use in the Sanctuary. Everything else was chipped.

As you might expect the north plantation is now carpeted with a lumpy, ridged layer of chips. These must be raked out in the spring after the snow has melted and removed from the base of each trunk to reduce further insect infestation and fungal



attack. Jim Beil also suggested the dusting of the stumps with Boraxo to accelerate breakdown and reduce the spread of root rotting fungi. A number of small, battered wooden stems of undergrowth will also need pruning in the spring. Remarkably, most of the young White Pine survived suggesting special rapport with the chipping team and the importance of this species at the site in the future. Several patches of Pipsissiwa (*Chimaphila umbellata* (L.) Bart.) were pointed out for avoidance and they remained unscathed.

Cutting allowed a close search of the crown foliage for cones. Less than 5% of the terminal "brushes" carried cones and many of these were small and poorly developed, and no young Red Pines have thus far been found growing in the Sanctuary, i.e. the plantations, although nearly 70 years old have not reached reproductive competency.

The 15 stems preserved to make small bridges for use elsewhere in the Sanctuary now rest on stringers for drying. Small sections of the trunks were also saved to make benches. "Cookies" were collected from 3 living trunks near the ground for study of the growth annuli. These demonstrated 67, 66 and 64 annuli suggesting a planting date of c. 1937 close enough to reported planting dates of 1934 and 1936 by Paul Schaefer and his associates. They also demonstrated good growth for the first 25 years and then growth of about 1/32" per year for the last 25 or more years. Many photographs were taken for the Club's archives. A small amount of chips have been saved and piled for trail maintenance. The next series of tasks will be the description of the site as it recovers from its surgery and, of

course, comparison with the untreated southern plantation. Confirmation of the species of the offending beetle(s) is also needed.

There is an important message here: establishment of a plantation implies a commitment to proper long-term management. The plantations should have been thinned about 1970 with some possibility of sale of still vigorous stems. This was not done and thus crowding, suppression and stress ensued resulting in the beetle invasion, much mortality and the costly chipping program described. Perhaps in 20 to 30 years from now the some 200 surviving trees comprising the northern plantation will be ready for harvest providing some income for the Club. In contrast, it is likely that very few of the trees of the southern plantation will even be alive.

Very special thanks are extended to Michael Greason, now retired forester from DEC after 29 years of service, but continuing as a private consulting forester. Mike provided all of his services *gratis*. Appreciation is also extended to Mr. Richard Reed and Mr. Floyd Doherty who served well beyond the terms of their contract in this first real management effort of the Reist Management Committee in the history of the Reist Sanctuary. Mr. John Gorsin is also thanked for his assistance in locating the chipping crew.

*1998 model 1400, 200 h.p., diesel, Performance First, Inc., Remus, Michigan; cost new: c. \$175,000.



HMBC Field Trip Reports

Hudson River above Troy February 20, 2005

The Feb. 20 Hudson River field trip started with a high point: three BALD EAGLES - two adults, one immature - posed together in the same tree at Lock Five in Schuylerville.

This Saratoga County spot was also productive for smaller birds. Five birders also saw EASTERN BLUEBIRDS, AMERICAN GOLD-FINCHES, HOUSE FINCHES, DARK-EYED JUNCOS and a drumming DOWNY WOODPECKER in the scrubby areas along this dead-end road.

The group continued north on Route 4 on the Washington County side of the Hudson towards Fort Miller. Along the river were several small flocks of COMMON MERGANSERS, courting COMMON GOLDENEYE, AMERICAN BLACK DUCKS, MALLARDS, a few HOODED MERGANSERS and a BUFFLEHEAD. Along Blackhouse Road, a hunting ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was a life bird for one member. A RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER flew down the road in Fort Miller. A small flock of HORNED LARKS was flushed by a passing car on Cary Road.

The crisp, sunny day reached a high of 20 degrees at noon. The group saw a total of 27 species.

— Joyce Miller

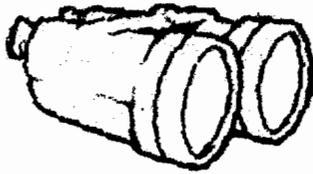
Waterfowl Of The Hudson River South March 6, 2005

Waterfowl get fewer and fewer every year but eagle numbers continue to increase. We saw 7 BALD EAGLES, 5 at Coxsackie and 2 at Catskill. The Catskill birds may have been repeats. The best ducks were a male NORTHERN PINTAIL and female GREATER SCAUP at Coxsackie and a male BLUE-WINGED TEAL at Catskill. There were also RING-NECKED DUCKS at Coxsackie and COMMON GOLDENEYE in Catskill.

Jocelyn, Erin and Amy went back to Coxsackie after the field trip was over and added BUFFLEHEAD.

The participants were Joyce Miller, Joan Cipriani, Carl George, Tom Phillips, John Hershey, Rich and Gale Nord, Elle Diemann, Megan Govel, Jennifer Rodger, Debbie Lund, Cari Nedwell, Hank Stebbins, Jocelyn Cole-Calkins, Erin and Amy Willsey. Despite a diligent search in the cold wind in Athens, no lingering aliens were discovered at the recent site of the War of the Worlds invasion.

— Bill Cook



set your sights on the
58th Annual Meeting
NYS Ornithological Association

SEPTEMBER 23-25, 2005

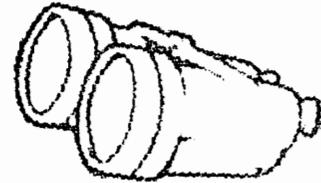
FEATURING

Saturday's Keynote Speaker

David M. Bird, Ph.D.

of McGill University

"How Birds Do It!"



Accommodations at the Albany Marriott Hotel, Wolf Road

Hosted by The Hudson -Mohawk Bird Club, Inc.

Hotel Reservations 518-458-8444

Contact the convention committee at lynnh123@earthlink.net



Upcoming 2005 HMBC Programs

Monday May 2, 7 PM, Five Rivers

NYS Breeding Bird Atlas Project: *The fieldwork is done... now what?*, Kimberley Corwin, co-editor of the Breeding Bird Atlas

As many of you know, the fieldwork for New York's second Breeding Bird Atlas project has been completed. Since January 2000, birders across the state have been patiently visiting wetlands, fields, forests, and roadsides to document the distribution of NY's avian residents. At our meeting on May 2nd Kimberley Corwin will provide a slide presentation that illustrates the results of five years of data collection. Kim will show the most current species distribution maps and discuss changes since NY's first Atlas project in 1980-85. She will also give us a sneak peak at drafts and outlines for the Atlas publication, which is expected to be available in 2007.

Kim's interest in ornithology began when she was an undergrad at Hartwick College and had the opportunity to spend a January semester studying birds in Costa Rica. She began working for the DEC's Division of Fish and Wildlife in 1991. In 1999 she completed the M.S. program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University at Albany. Kim has worked as the Project Coordinator for the Atlas since it began in 2000. In January 2005, she transitioned to the position of Co-Editor of the Atlas publication. She and Co-Editor Kevin McGowan will work together to complete the manuscript for publication

Monday June 6, 8 PM, Five Rivers

***Malaysian Borneo and Kuala Lumpur*, Lillian Samuelson**

NOTE THE TIME— *The program will follow a book sale, described on the next page*

Borneo has rain forests, mountains, birds, botany, orangutans and other critters. Many will be included in the presentation, as well as Kuala Lumpur on Peninsula Malaysia. The country aims to leave its Third World status behind before 2020 and to preserve its endangered wild things at the same time. We will look at the countryside and cities, and show you some facets of it, via slides.

Lillian Samuelson and husband Dale visited there in April 2000. They have spent much of their time since retirement visiting distant and not-so-distant parts of the world, learning about the areas, with seeing birds as a major objective."

Thursday September 8, 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library
***Trinidad & Tobago – A Birder's T 'n' T*, Sue Adair**

NOTE SPECIAL DAY AND DATE— Joint meeting of HMBC and Capital Region Audubon.

Join Sue Adair on a January photo tour of these two Caribbean islands. Your first stop will be the Asa Wright Nature Centre on the island of Trinidad where you'll sit a spell and watch the



Upcoming 2005 HMBC Programs

fantastic feeder activity, tour the grounds, and even take a night walk. You won't have to work hard to find hummingbirds, honeycreepers, trogons, toucans, motmots and much more. During your stay you'll take a few day trips to other island locales like the Nariva and Caroni Swamps for raptors and waterbirds including the spectacular Scarlet Ibis, the Aripo Savannah and Arena Forest for many open area birds, and day and night trips to the abandoned air base at Waller Field.

Leaving Trinidad behind, your next stop is the island of Tobago and the Blue Waters Inn. Here you'll enjoy Bananaquits on your breakfast table, Ruddy Turnstones in the bar, a hike on Little Tobago Island and a day trip to the island's central ridge not to mention a stop at the local sewage ponds! While on Tobago you'll enjoy excellent views of Tobago specialties such as Rufous-vented Chachalaca and Blue-backed Manakin as well as many other migrants and resident birds. Your photo journey ends as you reluctantly board your plane back to the cold and snow of a northern January, but listen, the islands are calling

Monday October 3, 7 PM, location TBA.
Shorelines, Denise and Scott Stoner

From the vast, sandy beaches of our Atlantic shore to the dramatic ocean-side cliffs and sea stacks of the Pacific coastline, and taking in some of our Gulf and Great Lakes shores in between, this slide and music program explores the scenery, birdlife, and other natural history of America's seashores. This program also highlights some of America's island beaches, such as Florida's Dry Tortugas and the sandy and lava shorelines of Hawaii.

Monday December 5, 7 PM, Five Rivers, holiday party and program.
Birding South America, Frank Murphy

Member Collection Book Sale

Two long-time, beloved HMBC members, Bill Gorman and Bob Kirker, passed away in the past year. The families of both men have decided to donate their book collections to the Bird Club.

This vast accumulation of bird and nature books will be made available at a special book sale, the proceeds to benefit our Club.

Please join us at **Five Rivers on Monday, June 6, at 6:30 PM** for this special event. Feel free to browse, and add to your own collection.

We as members of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club extend our great thanks to these families for their generous donations of these valuable books.

The book sale will be followed at 8:00 by our final program of the year, as Lillian Samuelson presents: "Malaysian Borneo and Kuala Lumpur



Upcoming 2005 Capital Region Audubon Programs

***** Refreshments will be served *****

***** As always, we encourage you to bring your friends and family. *****

Thursday May 12, 7PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library
***Chincoteague: Natural History of a Barrier Island*, Bob Budliger**

Bob Budliger will present an illustrated talk on the nature of the Virginia barrier island at Chincoteague. He will explore the origins of the island, its history, its plants and animals, and its famed wild ponies. Bob is the retired Director of Education for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and has taught five coastal ecology workshops for Cornell University at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

Thursday, June 9, 7PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library

***The Natural History of Bats*, Al Hicks**

First of all, they do not fly into your hair. They are not flying mice. And they are not all dangerous rabid blood-suckers. Join us for an evening with Al Hicks to learn some of the amazing things that are true about bats. For example, they are important parts of a balanced ecosystem; they navigate with "sonar"; and they are a lot more common than you'd expect.

Al is the mammals specialist with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's endangered species unit and has spent a large part of his career studying bats and developing plans to protect them. Al's work takes him into the realms of darkness-- out in the forests at night and into the deepest of caves and old mines - perennial backdrops for all good stories.

Web Item of Interest

An intriguing web site was announced in the April 2005 issue of *Adirondack Life*. By going to www.adkscience.org/loons one can access information on NYS loons. By clicking on "Follow The Fall Migration" then on the "USGS Loon Study Project" hotlink, one can access some fascinating information on radio telemetry studies on Common Loons from the North Central US, the Adirondacks and Maine/New Hampshire.

Loons from Wisconsin and Minnesota have been tracked to the Gulf and Atlantic coasts of Florida and other locations in the Southeast. Maine loons have wintered on the Maine coast. Last year's Adirondack loon wintered on the Atlantic near Atlantic City; while this year's Adirondack loon went from its western Adirondack breeding lake to Lake Champlain, back to its breeding lake, then again to Lake Champlain, then migrated to Cape Cod Bay staying there until in early February it moved on briefly to Martha's Vineyard, and as of this writing is in Rhode Island.

Very fascinating stuff to see where they go and how they return to their breeding lakes.

— Bob Yunick



Upcoming Field Trips

MAY 1
SUN **ROUND LAKE AND THE ANTHONY KILL PADDLE TRIP #1 (Saratoga County)**
Coordinators: Scott and Denise Stoner **785-6760**
Reservations due by April 28

We will paddle around the edge of Round Lake and Little Round Lake before exploring the Anthony Kill. The highlight will be the Great Blue Heron rookery along the Anthony Kill; in 2004 there were about 20 nests. We will also look for Belted Kingfisher, Double-crested Cormorants, Green Heron, Pileated Woodpecker, and early arriving songbirds. Plan to paddle about 5 miles. Everyone must bring and wear a PFD at all times for safety. Participants should also bring water, snack, warm clothes, rain gear and a spare paddle. Call the coordinators for details.

MAY 4
WED **RENSSELAER TECHNOLOGY PARK (Rensselaer County; evening)**
Coordinator: Frank Murphy **thrush@nycap.rr.com**

Join us for an evening walk in this 1,250-acre Tech Park along the Hudson River in North Greenbush. Expect to see a variety of resident and migrant songbirds. Meet at 5:30 PM at the visitor center parking lot, which is the first left after entering the park. From Albany take I-90 East to Exit 8, then north on Route 4 for about 2 miles to the Tech Park entrance.

MAY 7 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR FERD'S BOG & RAQUETTE LAKE AREA (JUNE 19)

MAY 7
SAT **GREENPORT CONSERVATION AREA (morning)**
Coordinator: Gerry Colborn **237-3898**

Study up on your songbirds and join us in this new HMBC field trip to look for migrants in the varied habitats of the Greenport Conservation Area in Columbia County. Open fields, brushy edges, woodlands of varied ages, leafy slopes and the open water and freshwater tidal marshes of the Hudson River will provide us with the opportunity to look for just about anything that moves through in spring. Contact the coordinator for starting time and directions.

MAY 8
SUN **VISCHER FERRY MIGRANTS (Saratoga County; morning)**
Coordinators: Gregg Recer & Cathy Graichen **899-2678**

This is one of the Club's most popular spring trips. Since Mother's Day is early this year we'll have more opportunities to find a lot of "ticks" for participants' year lists. We



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

sharp. From Middleburgh drive 6 miles south on State Route 30; the park entrance is on the right. There may be a state park entrance fee. Restroom facilities are available.

**MAY 19
THURS**

**ANN LEE POND (Albany county; evening)
Coordinators: Philip and Marjorie Whitney**

477-9050

This evening walk at the peak of spring migration should produce a variety of transient warblers, vireos, thrushes and flycatchers in addition to many resident species. Meet at 6 PM at the parking area on Route 155, at the North end of the pond. Directions — Take I-87 (Adirondack Northway) to Exit 2E. Proceed north on Wolf Road 0.75 miles. Turn left (west) onto Sand Creek Road to its end at 1.8 miles. Turn right onto Watervliet-Shaker Road and go 0.4 miles. Turn right onto Airline Drive for 0.1 miles and then turn left onto Heritage Lane. The two parking lots for Ann Lee Pond are on the right at 0.2 and 0.3 miles. Park at the first lot.

**MAY 21
SAT**

**CENTURY RUN (all day !)
Compiler: Bob Yunick**

377-0146

1527 Myron St., Schenectady, NY 12309

See how many species you can find in 24 hours in the 11-county Hudson-Mohawk Region. Join a group or form your own and cover all your favorite locations. Each group must stay together and jointly identify species reported. Reports must be mailed to the compiler by May 31 in order to be counted. Also, please call Birdline with the total species and highlights for your group.

**MAY 21 - 22
SAT—SUN**

**ADIRONDACK SPRUCE GROUSE TRIP (Franklin & Essex Counties)
Coordinator: Bill Lee
Joint trip with NYSOA and High Peaks Audubon.
Reservations due by May 13**

374-3426

Spruce Grouse should be virtually guaranteed with radio-tagged birds tracked under the guidance of local leader Glen Johnson and his graduate students. There may also be an option to try for Bicknell's Thrush up at Whiteface Mountain. Call the Coordinator for further details as early as possible to reserve a place on this trip, as space may be limited.



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

**MAY 29
SUN**

**CARTER POND NATURE TRAIL (Washington County; morning)
Coordinators: Scott and Denise Stoner**

785-6760

We will WALK the nature trail at Carter Pond WMA in Washington County. This trail passes through mixed woods, along a stream, and past the southern end of Carter Pond. We will look for songbirds including Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Northern Waterthrush, Scarlet Tanager and Baltimore Oriole, along with flycatchers. We'll scope the south marsh and pond edges for herons and waterfowl. Expect to walk about 1 mile. Bring a picnic lunch if you want, to enjoy after the trip (or between the walk and the afternoon paddling trip (see below) if you are doing both).

Meet at 8:30 AM at the first (southern) entrance.

**MAY 29
SUN**

**CARTER POND PADDLING TRIP (Washington County; afternoon)
Coordinators: Scott and Denise Stoner
Reservations due by May 26.**

785-6760

On this afternoon trip, we will paddle the edges of Carter Pond, and explore the south and north marshes. We will seek songbirds along the edges, but our primary focus will be on marsh species, including Virginia Rail and (possibly) least bittern. Bring your own canoe or kayak, and PFD, which must be worn at all times. Participants should also bring water, snack, warm clothes, rain gear and a spare paddle. Bring a picnic lunch if you want, to enjoy before the trip (or between in and the afternoon paddling trip if you are doing both). Call the coordinators for details and reservations.

**JUNE 2-5
THURS-SUN**

**GREAT ADIRONDACK BIRDING FESTIVAL (Franklin & Essex Counties)
Coordinator: Donna Zimmerman dzimmerm@nycap.rr.com**

869-6624

*******Reservations due by April 15*******

The Great Adirondack Birding Festival is an annual event sponsored by Paul Smiths VIC and the High Peaks Audubon Society. Events include speakers as well as field trips and a bird walk at Paul Smiths VIC among other activities. Field trips are led by High Peaks Audubon Society members & included Madawaska, Massawepie, Bloomingdale Bog, Whiteface Mountain, Hurricane Mountain & Spring Pond Bog in 2004. Come & spend all four days or just the weekend. We will book motel rooms in either Saranac or Lake Placid.

Details other than the dates for the festival have not yet been set at this time, so call



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

the coordinator in early April. Festival field trips require pre-registration & there is a limit on the number of participants for each trip.

**JUNE 9
THURS**

ROUND LAKE PADDLE TRIP #2 (Saratoga County; evening)

Coordinator: Al Mapes aamapes@nycap.rr.com

439-4086

Bring your canoe or kayak to the launch on Round Lake. We will paddle around the south shore to the Anthony Kill, the outlet of the lake. Marsh and swamp areas along the outlet hold a good variety of wetland birds, including a nesting rookery of Great Blue Herons - there were at least 20 nests last season. This will be an easy paddle of about 4 miles. Everyone will be required to wear their PFD at all times for safety. Please register for this trip by calling the coordinator - more details will be supplied, including directions to the launch. Recommended items to bring along include binoculars, water bottle, warm clothes, flashlight, rain gear and an spare paddle.

**JUNE 11
SAT**

HUNTER MOUNTAIN (Greene County; full day)

Coordinator: Steve Chorvas schorvas@verizon.net (845)246-5900

Located in southern Greene County, Hunter Mountain (4040 feet) is the Catskills' second highest peak and home to an extensive balsam fir/red spruce forest. We will hike to the boreal summit via the Spruceton Trail - an old jeep road on a moderately uphill grade (7 miles roundtrip/1950 ft elevation gain). Numerous species of warblers and six species of thrush breed on the mountain and mid-June is an ideal time to explore the summit area for high-elevation specialists, including Bicknell's and Swainson's Thrush, Blackpoll and Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Woodpeckers, Vireos, Winter Wren, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Scarlet Tanager are typical on the lower elevations. New York State's highest fire tower and an open rock ledge just south of the summit provide exceptional scenic viewing opportunities. Directions: From I-87 (NYS Thruway) exit 20 (Saugerties); take Rt. 32 north to junction of Rt. 32A, bear left on Rt. 32A to junction of Rt. 23A in Palenville; bear left on Rt. 23A and continue to village of Hunter and entrance to Hunter Mountain Ski Bowl on left; meet in the parking lot at 6:00 AM for carpooling to the trailhead in Lexington. Bring a lunch, plenty of fluids, good hiking footwear, and insect repellent (black flies may be quite numerous).



HMBC BOARD FOR 2004-2005

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HMBC Contact Information

BIRDLINE of E. NEW YORK: (518) 439-8080

Email: contact@hmbc.net

HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

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 that would inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the address at right.

Newsletter Submissions

Please send all **electronic** submissions **via e-mail** to:
Bob Miller at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net

Send all submissions to:

Bob Miller
1994 15th St.
Troy, NY 12180

Feathers



The Steward—An Epitaph *by Carl George*

*He walked with firm stride through the Sacred
grove.*

*He knew each tree and marveled at the great
oaks.*

*He had concern as well for the smaller plants
and birds.*

*His mind was open, curious and with good
memory.*

*He was the concerned protector of the
Sanctuary*

*As many cared not or knew not of its calm and
grace.*

*But to help them and to engage them in its
charm*

*He marked the trails and boundaries in
guidance.*

*He built bridges and walks to traverse the
swamplands.*

*He watched the hubbub of the outer lands with
concern*

*And convinced each builder to show true respect
For the Sanctuary by providing buffering lands.*

*But, Joe is gone now, off to tend other Holy
Places*

*And we are blessed, for those who will join him
Will find happy forests filled with birds and
flowers*

*And company of a fine man who cared and
acted.*

*It was my joy and privilege to be in his presence
And I am sad as he, a beloved, uplifting friend, is
gone.*

*It is now even more our task to carry on his good
ways*

*In caring for the Sanctuary, a place of awe and
delight.*

FEATHERS
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c/o Five Rivers EEC
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BIRDING THE VALLEY

By Scott Stoner

The Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, or simply "the Valley," is a "must-see" North American birding destination. The Valley has species simply not found in other parts of the U.S. – species that are largely Mexican and whose range barely pokes into the U.S. Such "specialties" include the colorful Green Jay and the larger Brown Jay, the diminutive Least Grebe, the surprisingly colorful Olive Sparrow, Audubon's and Altamira Orioles, Green and Ringed Kingfishers, Tropical Parula, raucous Plain Chachalacas, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, and the elusive Hook-billed Kite. In addition, nearly every winter, these specialties are complemented by one or more true rarities! (The winter of 2005 had about 10 true rarities, but more on that later!)

Not aesthetically beautiful, but definitely interesting and full of birds, the Valley (as described herein) extends upriver from the mouth of the Rio Grande to Laredo. The irrigated portion of the Valley extends north to about Raymondville, and west to between McAllen and Rio Grande City. Heading northwest, upriver, the Valley becomes progressively drier, and rich riparian habitat gradually changes to more desert vegetation.

I have been to the Valley three times: midsummer 1984 (yes, it was hot), December 1987, and most recently, with Denise, in February 2005. It will not be our last visit. There has been a lot of change over the past 20 years, and a lot of growth. Some new birding areas have opened while others have reduced access. There still a lot of poverty. Thankfully, there are still a lot of birds. This year, I noticed

a significant increase in Border Patrol presence all along the Valley; we generally saw several Border Patrol vehicles in nearly every area we were birding.

My first trip (midsummer 1984) was with my birding buddy Steve from Long Island. We had first gotten acquainted in 1975 when a group of students from high school traveled up to Newburyport, MA to see the Ross's Gull. That was a bitter cold but thrilling trip. Our midsummer trip to the Valley was hot but thrilling as well. I flew into Houston, where Steve was then in graduate school. We only got about a mile from the airport when the water pump in his car died, and we were just able to get it fixed before the weekend. Losing only half a day, we headed south. Mostly, we camped. It was hot and very humid; although we drank some beer, we mostly consumed Gatorade, by the gallon! To save money, we bought a can of the powdered green stuff, and mixed it ourselves. We worked out a deal – Steve would carry the Gatorade jug

In This Issue...

NYSOA Annual Meeting

Dick Patrick Artwork & Article

More Al Palmer Limericks



if I carried the scope two thirds of the time! We hit the major birding hotspots, including Santa Ana NWR, Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park, Santa Margarita Ranch, and Falcon Dam (at least some of which is now closed for security reasons). All the Valley specialties were new; we marveled at Green Jays, Plain Chachalacas, Golden-fronted Woodpeckers, Green Kingfisher, and White-tipped Dove. We encountered a Ringed Kingfisher at one point, but it was on the Mexican side of the river (what matters is where the bird is, not where the birder is)! Later in the trip, below the spillway at Falcon, we would see one on our side. At Santa Margarita Ranch, then open to the public for birding, we saw our first Brown Jays. By the end of the trip, we had a lot of life birds, and were saying, "just another Golden-fronted..."

In December 1987, I went on my first commercial birding tour; it started in San Antonio and included a boat trip to see Whooping Cranes at Aransas NWR in the Rockport area along the TX coast. Then we headed south to the Valley for several concentrated days of birding. Hitting the major hotspots, we saw virtually all of the Valley specialties, including several Hook-billed Kites, at close range at Bentsen, and White-collared Seedeaters at San Ygnacio! I marveled at the extensive knowledge the leaders had of the area, bringing us to an area for Tropical Parula and pointing out the tree where they had nested. Some folks got to see Clay-colored Robin, and a Buff-bellied Hummingbird zoomed by, but I did not get a countable look at either. Thus, they were my two wish birds for our 2005 trip!

Last spring, Denise and I signed up for a week-long, mid-February tour that would just focus on the Valley (the same one that John Hershey took two winters earlier). When we booked it, we were thinking Valley specialties (Denise had never been there), and I was thinking of the robin and hummingbird...little did we know that the winter of 2005 would bring rarities in epic variety and numbers!

Our first stop (on a pre-tour extension) was at El Canelo Ranch, about 30 miles north of Harlingen. After enjoying great looks at White-tailed Hawk, White-tailed Kite, and Black-bellied Whistling Duck on the way, we were thrilled to see a Common Black-Hawk near the road soon after we pulled into the ranch. After enjoying great looks at this unusual Valley sighting, we met up with one of the proprietors, and continued on to the house and yard. The major draw here is Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, a species that has a limited range in the U.S., restricted to a little bit of the Valley and a small piece of south-east Arizona. Birders can either pay a fee for a half-day of birding at El Canelo, or stay overnight (as Bob Budliger did previously). A pair of these owls lives (make that lived, see below) in the yard, and one is usually seen in a tree there, sometimes quite quickly and sometimes less readily. This time it took some searching, and the searching led to a finding of great concern: the feathery remains of one of the owls in the back yard! It had evidently been consumed by an accipiter! Photographing those feathers as perhaps the only evidence of what we come there to see, we continued the search, with the odds of success diminished by the 50% reduction in the population of this species in the yard! Shortly before we had to leave, one of our sharp-eyed leaders found the remaining bird in the front yard, near the door to the house. We got great scope and binocular views, and took pictures. A trek across the fields was rewarded with great looks at Sprague's Pipit. By the time we added Great Kiskadee and Plain Chachalaca outside the restaurant at dinner in Harlingen, Denise had 11 life birds!

Over the next several days, based in Weslaco, we birded the lower part of the Valley, from the coast at South Padre Island to Mission (just west of McAllen). We hit a number of hotspots, some of them more than once.

Santa Ana NWR was our first major stop, and this "jewel" of the NWR system did not disappoint. Clay-colored Robin was in the trees



around the parking lot upon our arrival, and we had a great look at a Buff-bellied Hummingbird at the flowers at the old Manager's Residence. With these two under my belt, everything else on the trip was pure gravy – and this year, there was sure a lot of gravy! It took two visits to Santa Ana to find Green Kingfisher, but we finally got a good look at this, and also picked up our first Ringed Kingfisher. This great refuge also offered a variety of shorebirds, waterfowl, and passerines, including Altamira Oriole and the recently re-split Black-crested Titmouse.

Frontera Audubon, a small patch of woods formerly known as Chapman's Woods, seemed to be a focal point: Frontera is an independent (of National) Audubon society, with several acres of vegetation and a small visitor center. The feeders had a male Crimson-collared Grosbeak (8 previous U.S. records), but we soon had to tear ourselves away to go and see an Elegant Trogon (5 previous TX records) up the trail. The place was swarming with birds – and with birders, some better behaved than others. After getting a look at a partially-obscured trogon in the scope, it was time to move to a different trail for the robins! There were both Clay-colored and White-throated (3 previous U.S. records), and we saw the latter, a very beautiful bird, nearly filling the scope! It was a four-lifer day for me (and 12 for Denise!) Back near the visitor center, where I was waiting for the rest of the group to return, I saw a female Tropical Parula come down to a water bath. Alas, it had moved on before Denise or the others in our group could see it. A return visit to Frontera a couple days later revealed sadly that the vegetation had been trampled, and the trail edges now cordoned off with yellow tape. Like I said, some birders were better behaved than others...

One evening in McAllen, we got a look at a group of (countable) Green Parakeets on a wire, staging to roost for the evening; in Weslaco we had great looks at another countable species, Red-crowned Parrot; we also heard

Common Pauraque near our motel in Weslaco.

Sabal Palm Sanctuary is a National Audubon preserve near Brownsville, where perseverance yielded a distant but decent view of another rarity, the Gray-crowned Yellowthroat (6 previous U.S. records since the 1920's), along with a close look at a Groove-billed Ani. The same morning, we stopped at a woodlot overlooking a wet area at the University of Texas - Brownsville, where we were rewarded with a good look at another rarity: Golden-crowned Warbler (less than 20 previous U.S. records)!

Enroute to South Padre Island from Brownsville, we picked up a wide variety of shorebirds. The beach at the Island itself offered a look at the Gulf and some immature Northern Gannets. Clapper Rail and Sora were highlights of the Laguna Madre Trail at the SPI Convention Center.

Anzalduas County Park in Mission offered a look at the Rio Grande and a Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, and lots of American Pipits in the grass. In nearby Pharr, we visited the feeders and woods at Alan Williams' place, a friendly and productive private pay-for access (\$10 good for 30 days) birding site. It was great to relax and watch the many Valley specialties come and go to the feeders, but the best rarity was the Rose-throated Becard, of which we had fabulous views on our second visit to this property.

The final two days of the trip were spent in the upriver, drier area from Saleneno to San Ygnacio area (we stayed in Zapata), more than 100 miles from Brownsville. It was drier and the vegetation was more desert-scrub in nature. It was also less populated, and the amenities went from barely acceptable to downright marginal. However, this was another avian highlight of the trip. San Ygnacio has long been a site for White-collared Seedeaters; unfortunately, they were scarce this trip. However, a much rarer Roadside Hawk (4 previous U.S. records) was being seen at San Ygnacio, and a stakeout along the bluff overlooking the Rio



Grande our first evening was rewarded with a quick but satisfactory look as the bird flew in near dusk, enroute to its evening roost.

Daytime birding in the upriver area was good as well; morning at Santa Margarita Ranch (the tour company had made arrangements for access) was very pleasant, with great views overlooking the Rio Grande, and at least some folks got to see the Hook-billed Kite, otherwise elusive this year. We all enjoyed views of Red-billed Pigeon, which can be hard to find in mid-winter.

The DeWinds feeders at Salineno, just a block from the river, were a treat, with Valley specialties including Green Jay, Olive Sparrow,

Hooded, Audubon's, and Altamira Orioles, and McCall's Eastern Screech-Owl to put in escrow in case it is split. We were just heading out when we got word that the Brown Jays had finally arrived, so we rushed back up the hill for looks and photos of these large, gregarious birds. Life along the border can be exciting for more than birds however, as the DeWinds showed us the bullet hole in their trailer from a massive gunfight at the river one night late last Fall!

In summary, this was a great trip, as I got 8 life birds, and Denise a whopping 45. I am sure that we will return there again, as one never knows what is going to come across the border!

A STRANGE PLACE TO SEE WIGEONS

By Dick Patrick

"Look at the head on that bird," Patsy hooted. We were checking out the bird life or lack of same at Montezuma Castle National Monument in Arizona when Patsy spied a Bridled Titmouse. It does have a distinctive snoot - the bird I mean. We had observed most of the local suspects. Other than the ever-present Ravens the first birds we saw were Cassin's Kingbird and Cassin's Finch which prompted the question of who might Cassin be? John Cassin (1813-1869) was Curator of Ornithology at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia and one of the first Americans with a broad knowledge of foreign birds.

We were admiring a juniper just filled with Bushtits when the park ranger noticing that he was in the presence of trained bird watchers suggested we drive over to Montezuma Well, a separate section of the national monument, to see the Wigeons.

Why not, as long as we were in the vicinity? Montezuma Well is a small "lake" in a limestone sink formed long ago by the collapse of an underground cavern. Down there a hundred or so feet below the surrounding desert floating contentedly in the green pond scum really were twenty or more Wigeons. This was February and we didn't think to ask the ranger if the ducks were there year around.

Montezuma Castle is a five-story, 20 room dwelling built by Southern Singagua farmers early in the 12th century. It stands in a cliff recess about 100 feet above the valley.

If you care to go, Montezuma Castle National Monument is located about 50 miles south of Flagstaff. Be sure to stop at Crickets in McGuireville to sample the orange cream pie. Maybe you too will see the Black-chinned Hummingbirds at the feeder.



58TH ANNUAL MEETING
NEW YORK STATE ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
 September 23-25, 2005 at the Marriott Hotel 189 Wolf Rd. Albany NY 12205
REGISTRATION FORM
You must be registered to attend

1. Name _____
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2. Name _____
 Delegate? Atlas Volunteer? Name of Club _____
 Are you interested in non-birding activities?

Address _____
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 Phone(day) _____ Phone (evening) _____
 Email address _____

Confirmations will be sent by Email. Check here ONLY if you would like a mailed confirmation:

Registration Fees:	Cost per person:	How many?	Total:
Registration postmarked on or before August 1 2005:	\$35.00		
Registration postmarked after August 1 2005:	\$45.00		
Student registration:	\$10.00		
Total Registration:			A.

		Cost per person:	How many?	Attendee 1 or 2:	Total:
Friday evening buffet:		\$30.00			
Saturday evening dinner- Choose one:	Sole Chardonnay	\$25.00			
	Adirondack Chicken	\$25.00			
	Vegetable Lasagna	\$25.00			
Total Meals:					B.

Hudson River Cruise fee:	Cost per person:	How many?	Total:
7:00-9:00am Sunday morning - includes breakfast	\$15.00		
Total Cruise:			C.

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED - ADD BOXES A, B AND C: \$

REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 1:00PM FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 23

Room reservations:

A block of rooms has been reserved for attendees of the NYSOA Annual Meeting at the Albany Marriott Hotel for \$119.00 plus tax per double room occupancy. Reserve your room by calling 1-800-443-8952. Rooms are not guaranteed for those reserving after August 1. Please mention the NYSOA Annual Meeting for the special rate. For directions to the Albany Marriott, go to www.albanymarriott.com.

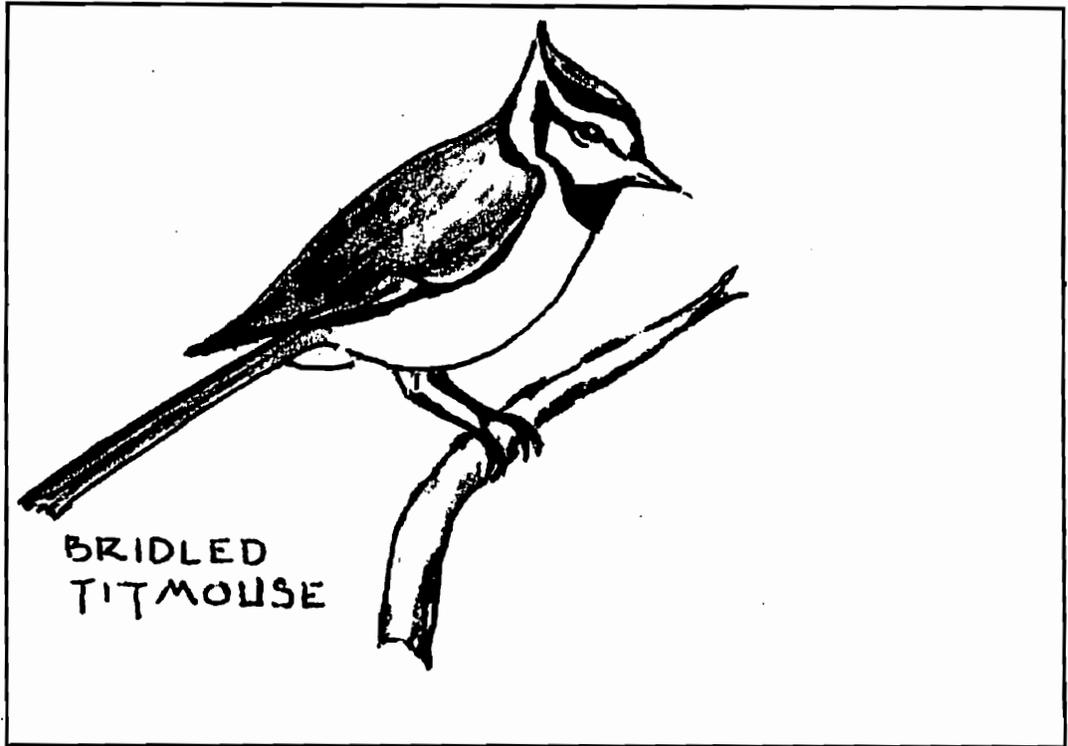
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Jo Shultz
 2101 Campbell Ave.
 Schenectady NY 12306





Feathers



Original artwork by Dick Patrick



HMBC Field Trip Reports

Instructional Field Trip— Vischer Ferry Preserve April 9, 2005

There was an excellent turnout of 25 birders for this instructional field trip. The majority of the participants described themselves as either “complete” or “relative” beginners. We started by working our way down the towpath west of the main entrance and checking out as many species of ducks as we could with the scopes. RING-NECKED DUCKS turned out to be the most common species present, easily exceeding the smaller numbers of MALLARDS and CANADA GEESE. The highlight of the morning was getting excellent views of many gorgeous, dabbling ducks including BLUE-WINGED TEAL, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, AMERICAN WIGEON, and NORTHERN SHOVELER. Working our way back to the main entrance we spotted a pair of EASTERN BLUEBIRDS along the towpath.

As we continued walking toward the river, Bill Cook’s well-trained ears picked up the call of a SORA which most of the rest of us had missed. As we made a loop east, we came upon a group of RUSTY BLACKBIRDS which provided an excellent lesson in identification. They were surprisingly elusive visually, but their distinctive, squeaky-gate songs continued unabated for a good 15 minutes until we all had them firmly implanted in our memory. We also were able to compare them with similar-looking BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS and COMMON GRACKLES nearby. Other high-

lights of the trip included TURKEY VULTURE, WOOD DUCK, AMERICAN BLACK DUCK, TREE SWALLOW, PILEATED WOODPECKER, NORTHERN FLICKER, and RED-TAILED HAWK.

— *John Hershey*

HMBC Field Trip to Five Rivers Environmental Education Center April 23, 2005

Despite light rain and the threat of thunderstorms, five of us braved the weather and hiked the grounds of Five Rivers. We saw a total of 29 species, including DOWNY, HAIRY, and RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, SONG, SWAMP, and WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, MALLARD, EASTERN PHOEBE, TREE SWALLOW, FISH CROW, RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, and a pair of WOOD DUCKS. We observed a goose turning the eggs at the nest. The highlight, however, occurred when Tina, Joan and Ron spotted two VIRGINIA RAILS at the Beaver Pond! This sighting was promptly added to the Bird Observation Board at the Visitor Center!

In addition to birds, we watched a muskrat paddle back and forth across a pond. And with Jocelyn’s guidance, we observed many interesting plants such as Colts Foot, Skunk Cabbage, and Adders Tongue.

The early, rainy morning turned out to be very productive and time well spent!

— *Patti Packer & Tina Markopoulos*



HMBC Field Trip Reports

Birds and Breakfast May 14, 2005

After a long winter followed by a cold April, it was with great anticipation that I looked forward to this year's Birds and Breakfast, one of the milestones of mid-spring. When the mid-week forecast predicted high temperatures of 50 degrees and rain, my hopes began to fade. Ever optimistic, however, I contacted the wonderful group leaders and made my annual shopping trip for breakfast supplies.

When Scott and I arrived at Five Rivers at 6:30 on Saturday, May 14, Jocelyn Cole-Calkins' 6AM group was already in the field. The day was remarkably unrainy, and only improved as the morning progressed. Armed with hot coffee, Alan Mapes' and Bob Budliger's 7 AM group hit the trail. By the time I got out, tagging along with Gregg Recer's 8 AM group, it was obvious that the unpredictable spring weather had fooled the forecasters, and we were in for a lovely day for birding.

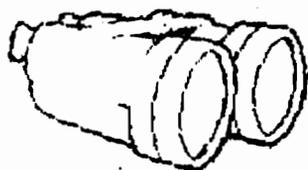
Not only did the weather cooperate, but so did the birds, as our more-than-respectable compilation of 81 species included such birds as RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, both SPOTTED and SOLITARY SANDPIPERS, LEAST FLYCATCHER, BOBOLINK, SWAINSON'S THRUSH, WOOD THRUSH, BLUE-WINGED, NASHVILLE, YELLOW, CHESTNUT-SIDED, MAGNOLIA, YEL-

LOW-RUMPED, BLACK-THROATED GREEN, PINE, PRAIRIE, and BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS, as well as AMERICAN RED-START, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, and NORTHERN PARULA. We had EASTERN TOWHEE, CHIPPING, FIELD, SONG, SWAMP, WHITE-THROATED, and WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS, as well as lingering DARK-EYED JUNCOS. BALTIMORE ORIOLES were singing actively and were very visible, but the Orchard Orioles found by Bob Budliger earlier in the week were not to be found.

Gregg's 8 AM group was favored with a fabulous look at the mysterious and secretive BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO. After a brief call that brought our attention to it, it sat in utter stillness as our group enjoyed long looks at it. Many remarked that it was the best look they had ever had of this remarkable bird, myself among them.

My thanks go out to all of the group leaders, as well as the many happy springtime birders who attended this fun morning, which did not bring rain.

— *Denise Hackert-Stoner*



set your sights on the
58th Annual Meeting
NYS Ornithological Association

SEPTEMBER 23-25, 2005

FEATURING

Saturday's Keynote Speaker

David M. Bird, Ph.D.

of McGill University

"How Birds Do It!"



Accommodations at the Albany Marriott Hotel, Wolf Road
Hosted by The Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, Inc.

Hotel Reservations 518-458-8444
Contact the convention committee at lynnh123@earthlink.net



About the NYSOA Annual meeting hosted by your bird club, HMBC

We have a weekend packed with field trips, outings, social activities, workshops and more. Arrive early on Friday to take advantage of nearby field trips followed by a cocktail reception, dinner, poster sessions and an ongoing slide presentation of the nearby areas including the Adirondack and Greene Mountains.

After dinner, you can choose any two workshops out the four that are on tap for the evening, including "Digiscoping" and "Bird Population Monitoring Techniques in Important Bird Areas". Vendors will be available with interesting products including a binoculars/scope repair clinic by Dan Rubino of Mirakel Optical (bring those battered and abused binocs along).

Saturday will be filled with the Annual meeting, paper sessions, numerous field trips including some for nonbirding spouses, plus the vendors will be on hand. Prepare to win a fabulous prize in the raffle offerings.

How Birds Do It! will be the topic of our keynote speaker on Saturday night. Ever wonder how birds are equipped to produce those warm, fuzzy chicks in the nest? Not all is as it seems. Join Dr. David M Bird as he takes you on a humorous "bird's eye view" of the seemingly indecent world of avian reproduction involving the Mile-High Club, incest, homosexuality, sex changes, divorce and infidelity. It simply puts television soap operas to shame! You may never look at birds the same again.

We will wrap up our last day together with Breakfast on the Hudson. Join us for an early morning cruise complete with continental breakfast. The Dutch Apple with a large covered area will be our hosts as we sail south for a two hour voyage. A final field trip to the nearby Helderberg escarpment should yield a weekend capping look at some migrating hawks.

About the keynote speaker, **Dr. David M. Bird**: As a professor of Wildlife Biology and Director of the Avian Science and Conservation Centre of McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Dr. David Bird has published over 150 scientific papers on birds of prey, supervised 30 graduate students, and teaches several university-level courses, including one on scientific communication. He has written and/or edited several books, including *City Critters: How to Live with Urban Wildlife*, *Bird's Eye-View: A Practical Compendium for Bird-Lovers*, and *The Bird Almanac: A Guide to Essential Facts and Figures on the World's Birds*. Dr. Bird is a past-president and current vice-president of the Raptor Research Foundation Inc. (an international organization devoted to birds of prey), former vice-president of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, an elected Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, a member of the Board of Directors of the American Birding Association, and an elected member representing Canada on the prestigious International Ornithological Committee. Besides his innumerable public lectures and radio and television appearances, Dr. Bird is a regular columnist on birds for *The Gazette of Montreal* and *Bird Watcher's Digest* magazine.



Upcoming 2005 HMBC Programs

Thursday September 8, 7 PM, Five Rivers
Trinidad & Tobago – A Birder's T 'n' T, Sue Adair

****NOTE LOCATION CHANGE FROM APRIL****

NOTE SPECIAL DAY AND DATE— Joint meeting of HMBC and Capital Region Audubon.

Join Sue Adair on a January photo tour of these two Caribbean islands. Your first stop will be the Asa Wright Nature Centre on the island of Trinidad where you'll sit a spell and watch the fantastic feeder activity, tour the grounds, and even take a night walk. You won't have to work hard to find hummingbirds, honeycreepers, trogons, toucans, motmots and much more. During your stay you'll take a few day trips to other island locales like the Nariva and Caroni Swamps for raptors and waterbirds including the spectacular Scarlet Ibis, the Aripo Savannah and Arena Forest for many open area birds, and day and night trips to the abandoned air base at Waller Field.

Leaving Trinidad behind, your next stop is the island of Tobago and the Blue Waters Inn. Here you'll enjoy Bananaquits on your breakfast table, Ruddy Turnstones in the bar, a hike on Little Tobago Island and a day trip to the island's central ridge not to mention a stop at the local sewage ponds! While on Tobago you'll enjoy excellent views of Tobago specialties such as Rufous-vented Chachalaca and Blue-backed Manakin as well as many other migrants and resident birds. Your photo journey ends as you reluctantly board your plane back to the cold and snow of a northern January, but listen, the islands are calling

Monday October 3, 7 PM, location TBA.
Shorelines, Denise and Scott Stoner

From the vast, sandy beaches of our Atlantic shore to the dramatic ocean-side cliffs and sea stacks of the Pacific coastline, and taking in some of our Gulf and Great Lakes shores in between, this slide and music program explores the scenery, birdlife, and other natural history of America's seashores. This program also highlights some of America's island beaches, such as Florida's Dry Tortugas and the sandy and lava shorelines of Hawaii.



Upcoming 2005 HMBC Programs

Monday November 7, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library

Avian Magic: Bird Photography Journeys, Jeff Nadler

Jeff will present a digital slide program with music that features an assortment of locations and bird species where Jeff has recently ventured for photography. Wildlife and scenic images will also be included. Journey to Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the pothole prairies of North Dakota, wetlands in Florida, the California coast, the New England coast, Vermont, boreal bogs of the Adirondacks, and the Hudson-Mohawk region. See Boreal birds, wading birds, hawks & owls, warblers, shorebirds, ducks & geese, loons & grebes and much more!

Jeff is a part-time freelance nature photographer who specializes in avian photography. His published credits include Audubon New York's IBA book, the new Hudson-Mohawk Bird Guide, Adirondack Life, the Conservationist, Adirondack Explorer, and the Hamilton County birding guide. He is a regular contributor for Natural New England magazine, based in Portland, Maine. Jeff's work is used by the Cornell Ornithology Lab, the Boreal Songbird Initiative, the Wilderness Conservation Society, National Wildlife Federation, Lake Champlain Birding Trail, and NatureServe. He lives in Saratoga County and is employed by GE Energy.

Monday December 5, 7 PM, Five Rivers, holiday party and program.

Birding South America, Frank Murphy



YOU MIGHT BE A BIRDER IF...

Someone yells "Duck!", and you look up and shout "Where?"

Vacations are planned to maximize the number of life birds.

You criticize television programs and commercials that depict a bald eagle but play a red-tailed hawk call.

Your kids are named Buteo and Accipiter.

People stop and stare when you pish at the shrubbery at the local mall.

Lunch breaks find you driving to check out your favorite hot spot.

Your spouse says, "It's either me or the birds," and you have to think about it.

On sunny days you hop in the car, crank up your tape of bird calls, and drive like crazy to the nearest mountain where the thermals are great for soaring hawks.

You pay a neighbor kid \$20 to roll on a carcass and lay still while you search the sky for vultures.

You try to talk your kid into going to college in Belize so that you have an excuse to go and bird there.

It's a nor'easter, the rain is horizontal, a small craft advisory has been issued, but it's birdathon and you need to up the day's list.

Clouds take on the shape of birds, and you can distinguish male from female, and adult from immature plumage.

A machine squeaks at work and you describe it to maintenance as sounding like a black-and-white warbler.

The first time you meet your future in-laws you demonstrate the courtship dance of the woodcock, replete with sound effects.

You spend fifteen minutes preparing dinner for your family, and thirty minutes mixing and placing seed for your birds.

You wake up your spouse at 5:30am and exclaim, "Is that a phoebe I'm hearing outside the window?"

Preparing for trips to visit out-of-state relatives involves contacting local birders, securing local bird lists, and buying the appropriate Lane's Guide.

You identify calls of birds in the soundtracks of television shows and movies.

You're willing to fight with anyone who criticizes your optics.

You participate in hours-long discussions about the pros and cons of using a certain field guide.

You lose friends, and perhaps even your spouse, from fighting over the pronunciation of "pileated."

Submitted by Ann D'Attilio,
author unknown,
found repeatedly on the internet



Upcoming Field Trips

JULY 9 **HANNACROIX RAVINE (Albany County; morning)**
SAT **Coordinators: Jocelyn Cole Calkins & Ron Calkins 768-2911**

This morning trip to southern Albany County will be spent hiking along the Hannacroix Creek in search of Scarlet Tanager, finches, warblers, thrushes and other summer residents. Meet at 7:00 AM in the Bethlehem Central High School parking lot on Delaware Avenue in Delmar.

JULY 10 **Emma Tredwell Nature Center (Albany County; morning)**
SUN **Coordinator: Ellen Pemrick 452-4384**

Opened in 2001, the Emma Tredwell Nature Center is located near Thompson's Lake in the Town of Knox, Albany County. The property offers trails through diverse habitats including woodlands, meadows, and fields. We will walk the trails in search of such species as House Wren, Cedar Waxwing, Common Yellowthroat, Black-Throated Green Warbler, Black-Billed Cuckoo, Eastern Towhee, Indigo Bunting, Bobolink, and Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker. A list of birds found on the Nature Center trails can be found at <http://www.nybirds.org/RecordsChecklists.htm>. Meet at 8:30 am in the parking area.

Directions: From Albany, take exit 4 (Route 85) off I-90, continue on 85 west for approximately 12 miles to Route 157. Bear right on onto 157 and continue through Thacher Park. After leaving the park, turn right on Ketchum Road (Route 256). Drive 1 mile to Nature Center Way on left.

JULY 31 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR JAMAICA BAY (AUGUST, DATE TBA)

JULY 31 **HOLLYHOCK HOLLOW SANCTUARY (Albany County; morning)**
SAT **Coordinator: Gary Goodness 862-9260**

Join us for birding, wildflowers and butterflies at the Audubon Society's Hollyhock Hollow Sanctuary at 46 Rarick Road in Selkirk. We will explore the trails of this 140 acre sanctuary of woodland, meadow, creek and garden habitats in search of local breeding birds. Bring your camera as the sanctuary provides a perfect setting for photographing flowers, hummingbirds and butterflies. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Sanctuary.

AUG TBA **JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE (Queens County, New York City; full day)**
SAT or SUN **Coordinator: Bob Budliger 439-0006**
Reservations due by July 31



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

A large diversity of migrating shorebirds are the main attraction this time of year at this wildlife refuge in the New York City area. Many rarities can and do turn up here every year. Also expect to see herons and egrets, and possibly Clapper Rail and Boat-tailed Grackle.

Detailed arrangements for this trip were not available when the schedule went to press. Call the coordinator for details.

SEPT 3 **PEEBLES ISLAND STATE PARK (Saratoga County; morning)**
SAT **Coordinator: Joan Ciplani** **374-3729**

Peebles Island State Park is a easily-birded undeveloped State Park that provides a good variety of habitats. This morning trip is timed for the peak of fall songbird migration and should present many opportunities to puzzle out those "confusing" fall warblers plus many other passerine migrants such as vireos, thrushes, kinglets and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Migrant water birds along the Mohawk River may also be found. Meet at 7:00 AM at the main parking area.

SEPT 10 **VISCHER FERRY NATURE & HISTORIC PRESEVE (Saratoga County;**
morning)
SAT **Coordinators: Bernie & Chris Grossman** **399-9159**

Join us once again for this popular local trip. Herons and egrets should still be present and a good variety of shore birds can usually be found. There is also a possibility of migrant warblers, vireos and flycatchers. Meet at the main entrance at 8:00 a.m.

SEPT 17 **HELDEBERG ESCARPMENT WARBLER WALK (Albany County; morning)**
SAT **Coordinator: Gary Goodness** **862-9260**

We will bird an area of the Heldeberg Escarpment at an elevation about 1500 feet above the Capital region. This elevation, with a drop in temperature of ~ 10 degrees compared to the lowlands, makes it an ideal place for small flocks of Neo-Tropical migrants. Migrating hawks are also a common feature on the escarpment at this time of year under the right weather conditions. On breaks from raptor observing in 2004, Cape May, Pine and B&W Warblers were sighted as well as kinglets, vireos, grouse, thrushes and a variety of woodpeckers. Meet at the bank on the corner of Rt.20 and 155 (Star Plaza) in Guilderland at 7:30 AM.



Feathers

HMBC BOARD FOR 2005-2006

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134 Normanskill Rd.
Slingerlands, NY 12159
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Secretary:
Frank Murphy
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Birdline:	John Saville	399-5959
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John Hershey	371-3114
Patsy Patrick	456-4007
Donna Zimmerman	869-6624



HMBC Contact Information

BIRDLINE of E. NEW YORK: (518) 439-8080

Email: contact@hmbc.net

HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

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 that would inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the address at right.

Newsletter Submissions

Please send all *electronic* submissions *via e-mail* to:
Bob Miller at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net

Send all submissions to:
Bob Miller
1994 15th St.
Troy, NY 12180

Feathers



Limericks by Al Palmer

I saw the Uppy, first time at Pelee,
In a Parking Lot, with my SideKick and Me.
Another, on a Telephone Pole
And one, on the ground – near a Vole!
We don't Know where the next one will be!

The Veery is seen, before he is heard!
He's a friendly and vocal, Kind of Bird.
His Songs, are the same –
As he advertises his name!
Besides that, he usually has, the last word!

The Wren makes his announcement, "I'm
here!"
Constant chatterings, will tell you – he's near!
Sometimes, is hard to spot.
You may see him – or not!
If you get a good look – he disappears!

Why, do most Birders make, such a fuss?
While they're observing, the Lovely X-antus?
If they were ugly – and drab –
With the faces – of Crabs!
Then why would those Beauties – thrill US?

The Lone Ranger 'could be his name',
With his facial marks, a part of his game
The Little Bandit he is Known as
With a black Mask – they all have!
It's all part - of the Yellowthroat's Fame!

The Zenaida Dove's, as rare as can be –
Just because – he's a Lifebird for Me!
Now my Limericks, are done!
As you Know – it's been fun
I've enjoyed every Rhyme – A to Z!

FEATHERS
Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club
c/o Five Rivers EEC
Game Farm Rd.
Delmar, N.Y. 12054

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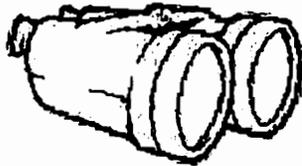




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2005

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set your sights on the
58th Annual Meeting
NYS Ornithological Association

SEPTEMBER 23-25, 2005



FEATURING

Saturday's Keynote Speaker

David M. Bird, Ph.D.

of McGill University

"How Birds Do It!"



Accommodations at the Albany Marriott Hotel, Wolf Road
Hosted by The Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, Inc.

Hotel Reservations 518-458-8444



About the NYSOA Annual meeting hosted by your bird club, HMBC

Surrounded by water with the mighty Hudson River to the East and the Mohawk River to the North, you will visit an area steeped in history. We have a weekend packed with field trips, outings, social activities, workshops and more.

Arrive early on Friday to take advantage of nearby field trips followed by a cocktail reception, dinner, poster sessions and an ongoing slide presentation of the nearby areas including the Adirondack and Greene Mountains.

After dinner, you can choose any two workshops out the four that are on tap for the evening, including "Digiscoping" and "Bird Population Monitoring Techniques in Important Bird Areas". Vendors will be available with interesting products including a binoculars/scope repair clinic by Dan Rubino of Mirakel Optical (bring those battered and abused binocs along).

Saturday will be filled with the Annual meeting, paper sessions, numerous field trips including some for nonbirding spouses, plus the vendors will be on hand. Prepare to win a fabulous prize in the raffle offerings.

"*How Birds Do It!*" will be the topic of our keynote speaker on Saturday night. Ever wonder how birds are equipped to produce those warm, fuzzy chicks in the nest? Not all is as it seems. Join Dr. David M Bird as he takes you on a humorous "bird's eye view" of the seemingly indecent world of avian reproduction involving the Mile-High Club, incest, homosexuality, sex changes, divorce and infidelity. It simply puts television soap operas to shame! You may never look at birds the same again.

We will wrap up our last day together with Breakfast on the Hudson. Join us for an early morning cruise complete with continental breakfast. The Dutch Apple with a large covered area will be our hosts as we sail south for a two hour voyage. A final field trip to the nearby Helderberg escarpment should yield a weekend capping look at some migrating hawks. Golden Eagle is one of the possibilities in this location with great fall foliage.

Late registration is still available, a registration form was in the June newsletter.

About the keynote speaker, **Dr. David M. Bird**: As a professor of Wildlife Biology and Director of the Avian Science and Conservation Centre of McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Dr. David Bird has published over 150 scientific papers on birds of prey, supervised 30 graduate students, and teaches several university-level courses, including one on scientific communication. He has written and/or edited several books, including *City Critters: How to Live with Urban Wildlife*, *Bird's Eye-View: A Practical Compendium for Bird-Lovers*, and *The Bird Almanac: A Guide to Essential Facts and Figures on the World's Birds*. Dr. Bird is a past-president and current vice-president of the Raptor Research Foundation Inc. (an international organization devoted to birds of prey), former vice-president of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, an elected Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, a member of the Board of Directors of the American Birding Association, and an elected member representing Canada on the prestigious International Ornithological Committee. Besides his innumerable public lectures and radio and television appearances, Dr. Bird is a regular columnist on birds for The Gazette of Montreal and Bird Watcher's Digest magazine.



HMBC Field Trip Reports

Carter Pond May 29, 2005

The day of the Carter Pond trip was fine; cloudy with a few light showers, and temperatures in the 60's and 70's. We explored the nature trail in the morning with a group of 8 participants, and enjoyed the scenic, almost "fairy-land" appearance of this beautiful place. We were surrounded by birdsong every step of the way, especially LEAST FLY-CATCHER, WARBLING, YELLOW-THROATED, and RED-EYED VIREOS, VEERY, GRAY CATBIRD, AMERICAN REDSTART, OVENBIRD, and BALTIMORE ORIOLE. The forest being in full leaf, viewing birds was not as easy as listening. However, we did have great views of the VEERY and a pair of SCARLET TANAGERS. We were also treated to views of LEAST FLY-CATCHER and YELLOW-THROATED VIREO, both on nests (thank you, Pam, for your keen eyes!).

After a very quick lunch break, we headed out in our boats. Although some participants from the morning could not join us for the afternoon, others came along, and we still had a group of 8. The exploration of the North and South Marshes of Carter Pond was quite productive, with views of OSPREY, BELTED KINGFISHER, DOWNY and PILEATED WOODPECKERS, NORTHERN FLICKER, WILLOW FLY-CATCHER, CEDAR WAXWING, GREEN and GREAT BLUE HERONS, among others. We also heard BROWN CREEPER and BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO.

The trip to Carter Pond was a great way to experience the emerging life of the pond and marsh and to become immersed in the breeding birds of the spring forest. Thanks to all who joined us for this wonderful morning and afternoon.

— *Denise Hackert-Stoner*

Hunter Mountain June 11, 2005

Participants: Tom Williams, Kim Leo, Tim O'Connor, Steve Chorvas – leader.

Weather: Hazy, hot (85-92 ° F), and very humid; overcast skies with an occasional light southerly breeze.

Hunter Mountain (4040 feet) is the Catskills' second highest peak and host to New York State's highest fire tower. Located in southern Greene County, we met for this field trip at 6:00 a.m. at the Hunter Mountain Ski Center and carpooled to Lexington, briefly observing a black bear by the roadside en route to the trailhead.

We ascended Hunter's western slope via the Spruceton Trail, a moderate, but steady incline on an old jeep road. Initially following, and then crossing Hunter brook, we were able to hear the call notes of a LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH coursing the streambed and the songs of several species of WARBLERS, RED-EYED VIREO, SCARLET TANAGER, and ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK in the adjacent deciduous forest.

Mountain wildflowers were fairly numerous, including several impressive colonies of dozens of gorgeous Pink Lady's Slipper orchids in bloom, and good comparative looks at blooming Solomon's Seal and False Solomon's Seal. BLUE-HEADED VIREOS were frequently heard singing in the stands of hemlock, providing a good side-by-side comparison with the similar sounding RED-EYED VIREO, and we passed an active YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER nest cavity containing very vocal young begging for food at the entrance hole.

Gaining elevation, we stopped briefly to partake the cool, crystal clear spring water flow-



HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

ing rapidly from a hillside pipe, splashing down into a wooden barrel, a refinement established for the benefit of equestrian climbers. Soon after achieving the 3500 foot elevation, we heard our first BICKNELL'S THRUSH calling and then singing in the dense spruce/fir forest, the first of six on the day. BLACKPOLL WARBLERS, YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHERS, SWAINSON'S THRUSH, and WINTER WRENS vocalized and occasionally provided a visual as we made our way to the summit clearing, traversing some of the most picturesque boreal habitat in the Catskills.

After the traditional climb to the top of the fire tower to take in the distant views and record a few digital images, our small group decided to have lunch on the open rock ledges a quarter-mile south of the summit, enjoying the mountain vistas and bird song emanating from Diamond Notch and the adjacent West Kill range.

Despite the sultry weather conditions and a fair amount of annoying insect activity, everyone in our field party agreed that this rather long hike was worth the time and effort, and all expressed pleasure at having had the opportunity to visit this remarkable wilderness.

Birds seen/heard: WILD TURKEY, TURKEY VULTURE, MOURNING DOVE, CHIMNEY SWIFT, BELTED KINGFISHER, YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, DOWNY WOODPECKER, HAIRY WOODPECKER, YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (6), ALDER FLYCATCHER, BLUE-HEADED VIREO, RED-EYED VIREO, BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, BARN SWALLOW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, WINTER WREN, GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET, EASTERN BLUEBIRD, VEERY, BICKNELL'S THRUSH (6), SWAINSON'S THRUSH (8), AMERICAN ROBIN, CEDAR WAXWING, CHEST-

NUT-SIDED WARBLER, MAGNOLIA WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER, BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER, BLACK-POLL WARBLER, BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER, AMERICAN REDSTART, OVENBIRD, LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH, SCARLET TANAGER, CHIPPING SPARROW, WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, DARK-EYED JUNCO, ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK, INDIGO BUNTING, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, PURPLE FINCH, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH. TOTAL SPECIES: 46

— Steve Chovvas

Hannacroix Ravine

9 July 2005

Two brave souls, Jennifer Hamilton and Peg Clement, joined Ron Calkins and myself for a trip up the Helderberg escarpment to walk along the edge of the Hannacroix Ravine in search of birds in a drizzly rain. Although the weather was conducive more for ducks (though ducks were not seen), we were not denied exceptional looks at a variety of birds, including a BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO preening itself in a small tree not more than 10 feet away from us. As we busied ourselves looking for birds in the canopy of the woods, we also had to watch our step all along the path, as there were numerous red efts in many different sizes and shades of red, crawling about the forest floor.

Many different warbler species were either seen or heard in a variety of habitats of the preserve. We were only able to glimpse a MAGNOLIA WARBLER and a BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER, while we had good looks at a pair of OVENBIRDS scolding us, and a pair of LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSHES hopping along the



HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

rocks in the creek bed. All three of the resident thrushes (WOOD THRUSH, VEERY, and HERMIT THRUSH) were heard singing in the forest.

As our trip was nearing the conclusion, the rain stopped, the clouds began to clear and the sun started to shine. Even though earlier in the walk, a SCARLET TANAGER was seen through the rain drops and still was quite striking, we observed a male and female SCARLET TANAGER flitting in the limbs of some oaks. The male SCARLET TANAGER would sit in a patch of sunlight and the scarlet feathers exploded with brilliance.

Birds seen/heard: RED-TAILED HAWK, MOURNING DOVE, BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO, RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, DOWNY WOODPECKER, HAIRY WOODPECKER, EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE, BLUE-

HEADED VIREO, RED-EYED VIREO, BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, TREE SWALLOW, BARN SWALLOW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, TUFTED TITMOUSE, RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, BROWN CREEPER, GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET, VEERY, HERMIT THRUSH, WOOD THRUSH, AMERICAN ROBIN, GRAY CATBIRD, CEDAR WAXWING, CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER, BLACK-BURNIAN WARBLER, AMERICAN REDSTART, OVENBIRD, LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, SCARLET TANAGER, CHIPPING SPARROW, SONG SPARROW, NORTHERN CARDINAL, BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH. TOTAL SPECIES: 40

— *Jocelyn Cole-Calkins*

Dead Bird Reporting Hotline

1-866-537-BIRD

If you see a dead bird on your property or in a public place in your community, please call.

Birds give us vital information about West Nile Virus and other environmental health concerns.

During this year's mosquito season, the USDA is asking for your help in reporting dead birds.

This toll free number is provided by the USDA.

More information on the West Nile Virus can be found at
<http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/westnile/education/2746.htm>



Upcoming 2005 HMBC Programs

**Thursday, September 8, 7 PM, Five Rivers
Trinidad and Tobago: A Birder's T & T, Sue Adair**

NOTE SPECIAL DAY AND DATE — Joint meeting of HMBC and Audubon Society of the Capital Region

Join Sue Adair on a January photo tour of these two Caribbean islands. Your first stop will be the Asa Wright Nature Centre on the island of Trinidad where you'll sit a spell and watch the fantastic feeder activity, tour the grounds, and even take a night walk. You won't have to work hard to find hummingbirds, honeycreepers, trogons, toucans, motmots and much more. During your stay you'll take a few day trips to other island locales like the Nariva and Caroni Swamps for raptors and waterbirds including the spectacular Scarlet Ibis, the Aripo Savannah and Arena Forest for many open area birds, and day and night trips to the abandoned air base at Waller Field.

Leaving Trinidad behind, your next stop is the island of Tobago and the Blue Waters Inn. Here you'll enjoy Bananaquits on your breakfast table, Ruddy Turnstones in the bar, a hike on Little Tobago Island and a day trip to the island's central ridge not to mention a stop at the local sewage ponds! While on Tobago you'll enjoy excellent views of Tobago specialties such as Rufous-vented Chachalaca and Blue-backed Manakin as well as many other migrants and resident birds. Your photo journey ends as you reluctantly board your plane back to the cold and snow of a northern January, but listen, the islands are calling.

Note: Please join us after the program for an informal reception and book signing with Bob Budliger, who recently co-authored the great new guide *The Birds of New York State*. Bob and his charming wife Carole moved to Vermont this summer, so make it a point to come celebrate a truly remarkable career which has enriched all of us.

**Monday, October 3, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library
Shorelines, Denise and Scott Stoner**

From the vast, sandy beaches of our Atlantic shore to the dramatic ocean-side cliffs and sea stacks of the Pacific coastline, and taking in some of our Gulf and Great Lakes shores in between, this slide and music program explores the scenery, birdlife, and other natural history of America's seashores. This program also highlights some of America's island beaches, such as Florida's Dry Tortugas and the sandy and lava shorelines of Hawaii.



Upcoming 2005 HMBC Programs

Monday Nov 7, 2005, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library

***Avian Magic: Bird Photography Journeys*, Jeff Nadler**

Jeff will present a digital slide program with music that features an assortment of locations and bird species where Jeff has recently ventured for photography. Wildlife and scenic images will also be included. Journey to Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the pothole prairies of North Dakota, wetlands in Florida, the California coast, the New England coast, Vermont, boreal bogs of the Adirondacks, and the Hudson-Mohawk region. See Boreal birds, wading birds, hawks & owls, warblers, shorebirds, ducks & geese, loons & grebes and much more!

Jeff is a part-time freelance nature photographer who specializes in avian photography. His published credits include Audubon New York's IBA book, the new Hudson-Mohawk Bird Guide, Adirondack Life, the Conservationist, Adirondack Explorer, and the Hamilton County birding guide. He is a regular contributor for Natural New England magazine, based in Portland, Maine. Jeff's work is used by the Cornell Ornithology Lab, the Boreal Songbird Initiative, the Wilderness Conservation Society, National Wildlife Federation, Lake Champlain Birding Trail, and NatureServe. He lives in Saratoga County and is employed by GE Energy.

Monday December 5, 7 PM, Five Rivers, holiday party and program.

***Birding South America*, Frank Murphy**

Upcoming 2005 Capital Region Audubon Programs

Thursday, October 13, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library

Program to be announced. Please see the website for the Audubon Society of the Capital Region at <http://www.capitalregionaudubon.org> for details on the program.



Program Reports

June Meeting *Kuala Lumpur and Malaysian Borneo*

Scheduled for 8 PM at Five Rivers to follow our book sale, the program was nearly postponed altogether due to a power outage. Heavy thunderstorms had rolled through the area during the late afternoon, knocking down limbs and knocking out power in part of Albany County. The book sale was changed to outside the building (at which point the power came back on!), but the program, luckily, was held as scheduled.

The many folks who stayed were treated to another fine show by Lillian Samuelson, as she recounted her and Dale's trip to Kuala Lumpur and Malaysian Borneo in March of 2000. After a brief stay in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur, the Samuelsons spent 15 days in the state of Sabah on Borneo: Kota Kinabalu, followed by "A Rain Forest Adventure" out of Sandakan.

A note of caution to trans-Pacific travelers that the speakers learned the hard way: double check your reservations to make sure the international date line is accounted for! Malaysia is pushing toward its goal of leaving the Third World and becoming an industrialized nation by 2020, when they hope to host the Summer Olympics. Efforts are underway to increase both housing and education. Kuala Lumpur also has the Petronas Towers, in 2000 the tallest buildings in the world.

Moving on to Kota Kinabalu, the capital city of Sabah and just 5 degrees north of the equator, they saw a variety of birds including Intermediate and Chinese Egrets, Black-headed Munia, White-breasted Woodswallow, White-throated Fantail, and beautifully named birds such as Large Green Pigeon, Emerald Dove, and Green Imperial Pigeon!

Part of the modernization was a transition to indoor plumbing, clearly a new experience for a lot of people. Large highway billboards used cartoons to let people know the do's and don't of using it!

Moving on to Sandakan, and from there to the Sukau River Lodge, where they enjoyed a cabin in the wilderness and a chance to get out on the water. Birds encountered include Crested Serpent-Eagle, White-bellied Fish-eagle, Asian and Rhinoceros Hornbills, and Storm Stork. Other animals added to the experience: a man-eating crocodile, Yellow-Ringed Cat Snake (directly overhead), and several species of monkey.

Separating from their tour group but hiring a bird guide (who had to walk two miles to meet them at 6 AM), they learned that such early hours were nearly unheard of among tourists in living memory there!

With a mix of slides of birds, other fauna, beautiful flora, and a strong background of culture that always highlights the Samuelson's shows, the audience was treated to a most enjoyable and informative evening. We again thank Lillian and Dale for sharing their world-travels with us.



Feathers

HMBC BOARD FOR 2005-2006

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Donna Zimmerman	869-6624



HMBC Contact Information

BIRDLINE of E. NEW YORK: (518) 439-8080

Email: contact@hmbc.net

HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

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 that would inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the address at right.

Newsletter Submissions

Please send all *electronic* submissions *via e-mail* to:
Bob Miller at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net

Send all submissions to:
Bob Miller
1994 15th St.
Troy, NY 12180



New Zealand Trip Opportunity

Bill Cook and Joyce Miller are seeking a few birders to join them on a 20 day NEW ZEALAND birding trip this Christmas. The tour has been arranged through Manu Tours in New Zealand, and will cover both the North and South Islands. The dates are DEC. 23 2005 to JAN. 11 2006. They will be leaving on the 20th of December and returning on the 12th of January to fit into the school vacation. The cost is roughly \$6-7000 each plus about \$2200 air fare. The maximum number of participants is 7. So far it's just the two of them on the trip. They would like to get a couple other participants to reduce costs. More details of the trip can be found on the Manu web site: www.nzbirding.co.nz. Contact Joyce (justlookitup@yahoo.com, 792-7861) or Bill (cook@sunycgcc.edu) for details.

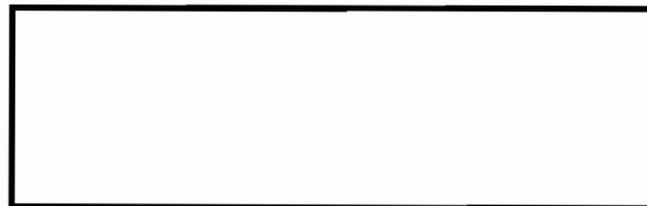
Club Members — HELP!

Please note that this edition of your newsletter contains no feature articles and not many field trip reports. Don't feel bashful about submitting articles you want to share and descriptions of field trips you have conducted. They are always welcome (and make my job easier!). Information about how to submit them are on the previous page. The results of this year's Century Run will be in October's newsletter.

FEATHERS
Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club
c/o Five Rivers EEC
Game Farm Rd.
Delmar, N.Y. 12054

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Vol. 67
No. 5

October
2005

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CENTURY RUN, 60 YEARS OLD, NETS 148 SPECIES

By Robert P. Yunick

The Club's Guy Bartlett Century Run, held on May 21, 2005, was the 60th consecutive staging of the event, begun May 12, 1946 (historically, there were three prior trial counts in 1932-34). Four field parties totaling 16 participants were a field from 0300 to 2115 tallying a total of 148 species, with the highest group total at 122 species. No new species were added to the composite list which stands at 252 plus three subspecies.

The weather of the day was clear and fine for birding in the morning, then cloudy and breezy in the afternoon with brief rain or hail showers, depending on location. The Albany Weather Service reported a temperature range of 46 to 68 deg. F, though 37 deg. F was recorded early in Montgomery County. Following the afternoon showers, the evening was cloudy in the 50's.

There were 67 species seen by all groups, 23 species noted by only one group (listed below by group); and as of this 60th year of the Century Run, there are 60 species that have been reported on every one of these counts. Overall, the results were average or below. The 148 composite species total ranks 37th over 60 years, the single-group maximum of 122 ties 27th, with 16 participants ranking 55th, and four field parties 56th.

The best finds were Great Egret at Cohoes and Dunlin in the Town of Glen, Montgomery Co. These were the 11th and 20th sightings, respectively, for these species. Certain

relatively "new" species to the area continue to prosper. Red-bellied Woodpecker was recorded for the 14th consecutive time since 1992 (out of a total of 19 Century Run appearances), Fish Crow for the 19th time in the past 21 years, and Common Raven for the 15th consecutive time out of 19 times beginning when it first appeared in 1986.

On the down side, no owls were reported for only the third time, previously in 1947 and 2002. There were reports of only eight species of waterfowl, and nine species of diurnal raptors (no Osprey reported for the fourth consecutive year, even though this species has appeared in 50 of the 60 years). Lack of rain in May appeared to create more mud flats offering 11 species of shorebirds.

The field parties are listed below with an asterisk indicating the group's reporter. Species listed by Group below are those seen only by that Group. While not doing an official Century Run, I added two species to the list at my Jenny Lake feeders as "Group E."

In This Issue....

2005 Century Run Results

Birding Crossword Puzzle

New Publications

Feathers

2004 Century Run Species/Group List

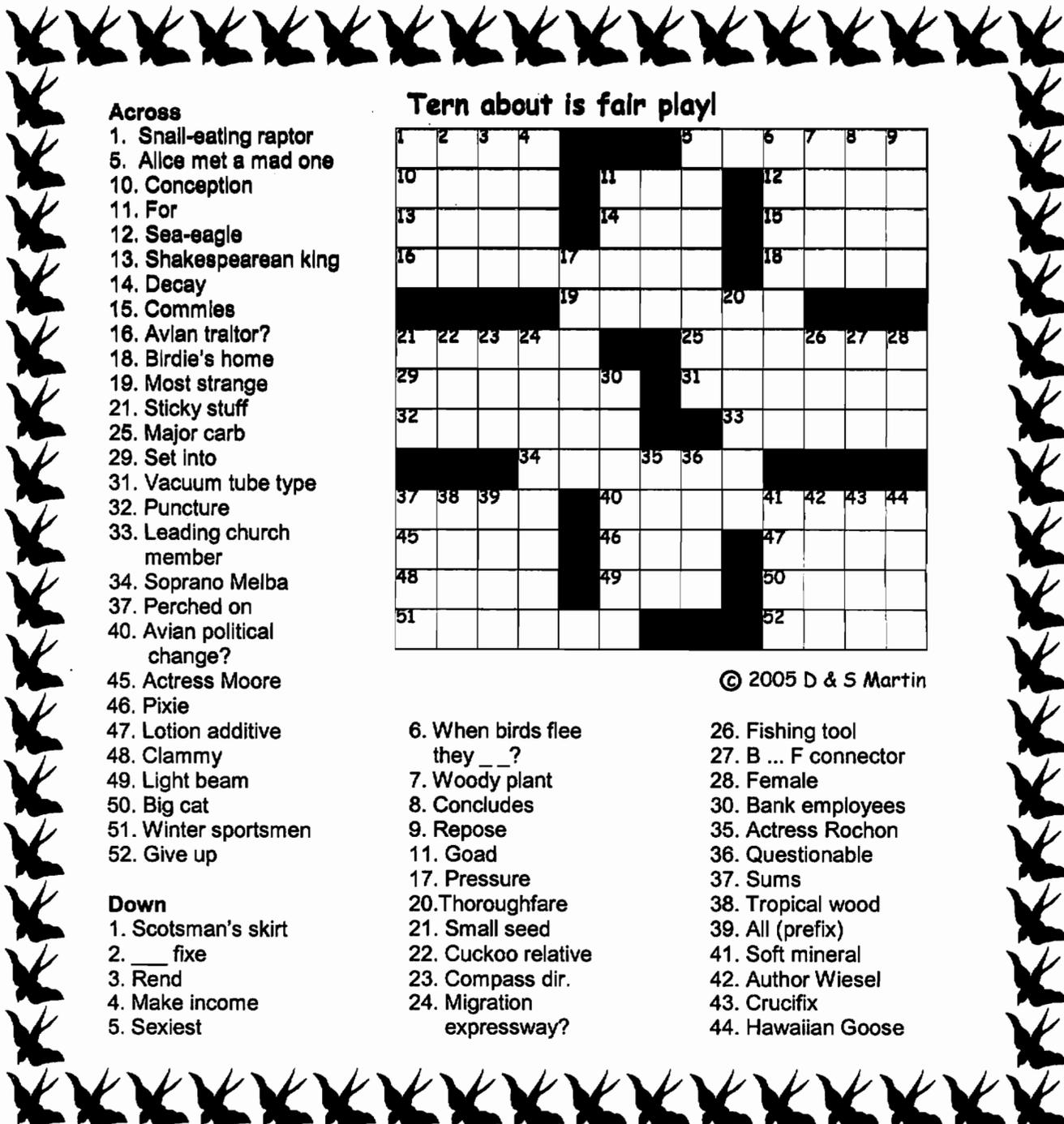


Species	Teams 2004 3 2					
Red-throated Loon					Y	
Common Loon	a		c		Y	Y
Pied-billed Grebe			c			
Double-crested Cormorant	a		c	d	Y	Y
American Bittern	a		c	d	Y	Y
Least Bittern	a			d	Y	
Great Blue Heron	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Great Egret	a				Y	
Green Heron			c	d	Y	Y
Mute Swan			c	d		Y
Brant						Y
Canada Goose	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Wood Duck	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Green-winged Teal					Y	
American Black Duck	a		c	d	Y	Y
Mallard	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Blue-winged Teal			c		Y	Y
Gadwall					Y	Y
American Wigeon						Y
Ring-necked Duck					Y	Y
White-winged Scoter					Y	
Hooded Merganser				d		
Common Merganser	a				Y	Y
Red-breasted Merganser					Y	
Ruddy Duck						Y
Turkey Vulture	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Bald Eagle	a		c	d	Y	Y
Northern Harrier		b			Y	Y
Cooper's Hawk		b		d		Y
Red-shouldered Hawk		b			Y	
Broad-winged Hawk	a		c	d	Y	Y
Red-tailed Hawk	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
American Kestrel	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Peregrine Falcon	a		c		Y	Y
Ruffed Grouse	a			d	Y	Y
Wild Turkey	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Virginia Rail	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Sora	a				Y	Y
Common Moorhen	a			d	Y	Y
American Coot				d		Y
Semipalmated Plover	a		c			Y
Killdeer	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Greater Yellowlegs	a		c			Y
Lesser Yellowlegs		b	c			Y
Solitary Sandpiper		b	c	d	Y	Y
Spotted Sandpiper	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Semipalmated Sandpiper			c		Y	
Western Sandpiper					Y	
Upland Sandpiper						Y
Least Sandpiper	a	b			Y	Y

Species	Teams 2004 3 2					
Pectoral Sandpiper						Y
Dunlin		b				
Common Snipe	a				Y	Y
American Woodcock	a			d	Y	Y
Bonaparte's Gull						Y
Ring-billed Gull	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Herring Gull	a		c		Y	Y
Great Black-backed Gull	a		c	d	Y	Y
Common Tern						Y
Black Tern						Y
Rock Pigeon	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Mourning Dove	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Black-billed Cuckoo	a	b		d	Y	Y
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	a					Y
Eastern Screech-Owl					Y	Y
Barred Owl					Y	
Common Nighthawk	a		c		Y	Y
Chimney Swift	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	a	b		d	Y	Y
Belted Kingfisher	a	b	c		Y	Y
Red-bellied Woodpecker	a		c	d	Y	Y
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Downy Woodpecker	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Hairy Woodpecker	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Northern Flicker	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Pileated Woodpecker	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Eastern Wood-Pewee	a	b		d	Y	Y
Alder Flycatcher	a					Y
Willow Flycatcher	a	b		d	Y	Y
Least Flycatcher	a	b		d	Y	Y
Eastern Phoebe	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Great Crested Flycatcher	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Eastern Kingbird	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Horned Lark			c		Y	Y
Purple Martin			c		Y	Y
Tree Swallow	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Bank Swallow			c		Y	Y
Cliff Swallow		b	c		Y	Y
Barn Swallow	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Blue Jay	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
American Crow	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Fish Crow			c		Y	Y
Common Raven	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Black-capped Chickadee	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Tufted Titmouse	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Red-breasted Nuthatch	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
White-breasted Nuthatch	a	b	c	d	Y	Y
Brown Creeper	a			d	Y	Y
Carolina Wren						Y



BIRDING CROSSWORD By David L. Martin



Tern about is fair play!

Across

1. Snail-eating raptor
5. Alice met a mad one
10. Conception
11. For
12. Sea-eagle
13. Shakespearean king
14. Decay
15. Commies
16. Avian traitor?
18. Birdie's home
19. Most strange
21. Sticky stuff
25. Major carb
29. Set into
31. Vacuum tube type
32. Puncture
33. Leading church member
34. Soprano Melba
37. Perched on
40. Avian political change?
45. Actress Moore
46. Pixie
47. Lotion additive
48. Clammy
49. Light beam
50. Big cat
51. Winter sportsmen
52. Give up

Down

1. Scotsman's skirt
2. ___ fixe
3. Rend
4. Make income
5. Sexiest

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
10				11			12			
13				14			15			
16				17			18			
21	22	23	24		25		26	27	28	
29				30		31				
32							33			
37	38	39			35	36				
45				40			41	42	43	44
48				46			47			
48				49			50			
51							52			

© 2005 D & S Martin

6. When birds flee they ___?
7. Woody plant
8. Concludes
9. Repose
11. Goad
17. Pressure
20. Thoroughfare
21. Small seed
22. Cuckoo relative
23. Compass dir.
24. Migration expressway?
26. Fishing tool
27. B ... F connector
28. Female
30. Bank employees
35. Actress Rochon
36. Questionable
37. Sums
38. Tropical wood
39. All (prefix)
41. Soft mineral
42. Author Wiesel
43. Crucifix
44. Hawaiian Goose

Solution on page 72



HMBC Field Trip Reports

**Ann Lee Pond
May 19, 2005**

It seemed at first that the birders, 21 in all, would outnumber the birds, but this soon changed, although we had to work for our 37 species. BALTIMORE ORIOLE songs could be heard everywhere, and the brilliant orange singers were easy to find. Not so the WARBLING VIREO that sang from somewhere within a high cottonwood, but patient binocular work finally located him and his mate, a life bird for one of the company. Even less cooperative was a RUBY CROWNED KINGLET deep within an apple tree, completely surrounded by birders who saw nothing but movement in the foliage for several minutes, finally getting enough split-second looks to get an agreed ID. On the pond, a MALLARD pair tried to keep two playful ducklings under control, TREE and NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOWS and CHIMNEY SWIFTS stitched the air overhead, and a GREAT BLUE HERON perched and preened on a branch over the water. A barely visible blue lump on a distant fallen tree turned out to be a BELTED KINGFISHER. EASTERN PHOEBE, EASTERN BLUEBIRD, GRAY CATBIRD, CEDAR WAXWING, YELLOW WARBLER, several AMERICAN REDSTARTS, and WHITE-THROATED SPARROW put in brief appearances, while GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER, VEERY, WOOD THRUSH, and ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK were audibly but not visibly present. As the crowd dispersed at dusk, the four remaining birders were treated to a quick look at a SCARLET TANAGER, a fitting ending to a fine Spring evening.

— *Phil Whitney*

**Grafton Lakes State Park
May 28, 2005**

A perfect bright, cool day at Grafton Lakes State Park brought out six birders, a nice variety of feathered critters (52 species seen or heard), and innumerable black flies. As we assembled a first-year male AMERICAN REDSTART had us momentarily baffled, and a RUFFED GROUSE drummed in the distance. The grouse (or another one) later startled everyone by flushing loudly as we searched for a singing NASHVILLE WARBLER in the blueberry patch. Also seen in the patch were WILLOW FLYCATCHER, GRAY CATBIRD, YELLOW WARBLER, CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER (elusive but eventually well seen), COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, and several WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS; VEERY and SWAMP SPARROW were heard. Irregular drumming in the woods along the Gartler Trail signaled a YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER that was well seen by all. At the bog on Long Pond Road, two NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES were lustily singing and one was finally spotted, a "lifer" for one of the group. A BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER could be heard, and high pitched singing well off the road precipitated a long chase that finally resulted in split-second views of a BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER. At the parking area for the Long Pond boat launch, we added EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE, RED-EYED VIREO, the first of two resplendent SCARLET TANAGERS, and a pair of PURPLE FINCHES in courtship display. On the Wildwood trail, COMMON RAVEN, WOOD THRUSH, and ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK were heard, along with several OVENBIRDS, one of which eventually appeared. At noon, as the trip ended on Shaver Pond Road, a second SCARLET TANAGER put on a good show for the last act.

— *Phil Whitney*



HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

Vischer Ferry September 10, 2005

Fifteen sharp-eyed birders and a dog walked around the big loop at Vischer Ferry on an absolutely beautiful morning. There was a lot of activity along the tow path and at other hot spots in the wooded areas. A total of 46 species were seen including 9 species of warblers. Surprisingly, only one SPARROW, a SWAMP, was spotted. Also plentiful were VIREOS.

Species:

PIED-BILLED GREBE, DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT, GREAT BLUE HERON, WOOD DUCK, MALLARD, BLUE-WINGED TEAL, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, NORTHERN HARRIER, MOURNING DOVE, RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, RED-BELLIED

WOODPECKER, DOWNY WOODPECKER, HAIRY WOODPECKER, NORTHERN FLICKER, PILEATED WOODPECKER, EASTER WOOD PEEWEE, GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER, YELLOW-THROATED VIREO, WARBLING VIREO, RED-EYED VIREO, BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, TUFTED TITMOUSE, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, AMERICAN ROBIN, GRAY CATBIRD, CEDAR WAXWING, MAGNOLIA WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER, BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER, BLACKPOLL WARBLER, AMERICAN REDSTART, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, SCARLET Tanager, SWAMP SPARROW, NORTHERN CARDINAL, ROSE-BREASTED GROSBECK, RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD, COMMON GRACKLE, HOUSE FINCH, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

— Chris and Bernie Grossman

Dead Bird Reporting Hotline

1-866-537-BIRD

If you see a dead bird on your property or in a public place in your community, please call.

Birds give us vital information about West Nile Virus and other environmental health concerns.

During this year's mosquito season, the USDA is asking for your help in reporting dead birds.

This toll free number is provided by the USDA.

More information on the West Nile Virus can be found at <http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/westnile/education/2746.htm>



Upcoming 2005 HMBC Programs

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HMBC HOLIDAY PARTY

**Monday December 5, 7 PM, Five Rivers Environmental Education Center
Birding South America, Frank Murphy**

Join Frank Murphy for a presentation on birding South America. Frank has visited many countries in Central and South America during the past 25 years and will offer tips on his favorite places, favorite birds, birding economics, not speaking Spanish, and near death experiences. Emphasis will be on the South American countries including Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, compared to Costa Rica and Panama, and the Everglades.

Join the HMBC for its annual holiday party, discussion of upcoming Christmas Bird Counts, and Program!

Desserts to share are welcome. Free and open to the public.



Upcoming 2005 Capital Region Audubon Programs

Thursday, December 8, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library
***Celebrate Audubon's Centennial*, Richard Haley**

For one hundred years, the National Audubon Society has been without question America's pre-eminent conservation organization. Come celebrate Audubon's centennial as Richard Haley, Audubon NY's Director of Centers and Education, recounts Audubon's many accomplishments, from the passage of the "Audubon Model Law" in 1901 protecting water birds from plume hunting, to the recent Important Bird Areas and Smart Growth initiatives.

New Zealand Trip Opportunity

Bill Cook and Joyce Miller are seeking a few birders to join us on a 20 day NEW ZEALAND birding trip this Christmas. The tour has been arranged through Manu Tours in New Zealand, and will cover both the North and South Islands.

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www.nzbirding.co.nz

Contact Joyce or Bill for details:

Joyce Miller
justlookitup@yahoo.com
792-7861

Bill Cook
cook@sunycgcc.edu

Thanks! Think about joining us!! We can provide details if interested!



Recent Publications of Local and HMBC Interest

Birding New York's Hudson-Mohawk Region

This publication of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club has been completely revised and expanded to include more than 70 sites in and around the Capital Region.

This 423 page edition is designed to guide both novice and advanced birders to the best birding sites in the Hudson-Mohawk Region of eastern upstate New York. Nearly seventy birding areas, in an eleven county area centered on the State Capital of Albany, are described in this guide. The site accounts include detailed directions and maps, site descriptions, birding highlights and birding strategies. The guide also features an annotated checklist and a monthly relative-abundance bar graph for all species known to occur in the Region. Also, new to this edition is a detailed index for easy reference.

The cost for nonmembers is \$25.00 plus \$3.50 for shipping/handling. The cost for members is \$20.00 plus \$3.50. Please contact Jackie Bogardus to obtain a copy.

Birds of New York State by Bob Budliger and Gregory Kennedy

This outstanding field guide features 320 of New York state's most abundant or notable bird species. Each account includes a full-color illustration, as well as detailed notes on habitat, nesting, feeding, voice, similar species, best sites for viewing, and a range map. A Quick Reference Guide organizes all birds in the book into color-coded family groupings and the back cover features a color-coded guide to the bird groups. You'll also find a map of the best birding sites and descriptions of a number of the state's most notable viewing locations. The book includes a glossary of terms, birder's checklist and separate indexes for scientific and common names. **The book is available from Lone Pine Publishing.**

Robert Budliger has been teaching people about birds since he was a 16-year-old Boy scout camp counselor. He holds a degree in biology from Cornell University and has taught biology and worked as a National Park Service ranger. Since his retirement from New York's Department of Environmental Conservation, where he was director of education, he has been involved in a wide range of bird conservation and nature activities. Robert is a consultant for the National Audubon society, served on the advisory committee for the Important Bird Areas program and is currently on the Breeding Bird Atlas steering committee. He is a past president of two Audubon chapters, a bird club and the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs. Birding remains his passion and he can most likely be found in some park or wildlife refuge sharing his enthusiasm and knowledge with whomever may be around.

Gregory Kennedy has been an active naturalist and adventurer since he was a young boy. He is the author of many books on natural history and has produced film and television work on environmental issues and indigenous concerns in southeast Asia, New Guinea, South and Central America and the high Arctic. His involvement in numerous research projects around the world range from studies in the upper canopy of tropical and temperate rainforests to deepwater marine investigations.



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

NOV 11-13 DELMARVA PENINSULA
FRI—SUN **Coordinators: Scott and Denise Stoner** 785-6760
Reservations due by October 1.

We'll take advantage of the holiday weekend to explore the waterfowl spectacle on the Delmarva Peninsula. Based in Dover, DE, we will focus our attention on birding nearby Bombay Hook NWR - and possibly other locations. This will be a slow-paced trip to enjoy the sights and sounds of the thousands of snow geese. We will also look for other waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors. Contact the coordinators for details.

DECEMBER 1 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR CAMPFIRE & OWLING (DEC 4)

DEC 4 CAMPFIRE AND OWLING AT FIVE RIVERS (evening)
SUN **Coordinators: Al Mapes** 439-4086
Scott Stoner & Denise Hackert-Stoner 785-6760
Reservations due by December 1

In early December, Great Horned Owls should be calling at dusk; Eastern Screech Owl is a good possibility as well. We'll meet at the visitor center at 4:00 PM and walk together to the north woods (about 1 mile one way) to listen (and hoot) for the owls. Following that, we will gather around a blazing campfire to warm up and enjoy some hot chocolate and hot dogs (courtesy of HMBC). The owls may still be calling while we eat. Joint offering of HMBC Field Trip and Social Committees.

2005 HMBC-sponsored Christmas Bird Counts:

- DEC 17 (Sat) SCHENECTADY 2005
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
- DEC 24 (Sat) SOUTHERN RENSSELAER 2005
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
- DEC 31 (Sat) TROY 2005
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Answer

Tern about is fair play!

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48	D	A	N	K				49	R	A	Y			50	L	I	O	N			
51	S	K	I	E	R	S								52	C	E	D	E			



HMBC BOARD FOR 2005-2006

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HMBC Contact Information

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Email: contact@hmbc.net

HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

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 that would inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the address at right.

Newsletter Submissions

Please send all **electronic** submissions **via e-mail** to:
Bob Miller at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net

Send all submissions to:
Bob Miller
1994 15th St.
Troy, NY 12180



**President's
Corner
David L. Martin**

In one week this September HMBC successfully completed two very large and important projects – we hosted the annual meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA), and we published a new edition of *“Birding New York’s Hudson Mohawk Region”*. Each project was a huge, multi-year effort that involved a large number of Club members.

The NYSOA meeting was a three-day affair attended by more than 160 birders from every part of New York. It included meals, talks, workshops, poster presentations, a reception, a banquet, field trips, on-site sponsors and vendors. Basically, NYSOA gives the huge job of organizing their annual meeting to a local bird club. Our Club’s team was initially led by Lynn Huntington, who just weeks before the meeting was diagnosed with breast cancer and had to step down as committee chair. Fortunately, Kim Corwin and Kathy Schneider stepped in as co-chairs, and the meeting went off as smooth as silk. By the end of the meeting I had received many compliments on it, and now I want to pass these compliments on to Lynn, Kim, Kathy and the rest of team. Everyone is grateful for the great job you did.

When *“Birding New York’s Hudson-Mohawk Region”* first appeared nine years ago, I was impressed that the Club could produce such a terrific bird-finding guide. But as time passed, it became clear that an update was needed. The new book includes many new sites especially in our region’s less well birded counties, beautiful new art, great new maps, an index, a new cover and terrific cover photo, and a new typographic look. More than fifty club members, led by committee chair Jackie Bogardus, contributed to this monumental effort. Take a look at page ii in the book to see who they are. Thank you to you all.

***Pat yourselves on the back, HMBC members. You do a lot.
Your talent and enthusiasm make the HMBC a wonderful bird club.***

FEATHERS
Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club
c/o Five Rivers EEC
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A STORY OF FOUR BEGINNINGS

By Robert P. Yunick

This is the text of a talk given by Bob on November 19, 2005 at a celebration of the Reist Sanctuary which was held at the Center for the Forest Preserve of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks on St. David's Lane in Niskayuna.

I am privileged to be here today to relate to you some history on the creation and acquisition of the Reist Sanctuary. I call this presentation "A Story of Four Beginnings," the first three of which are historical recountings of the past, and the fourth, a hope for the future. I resisted using the term momentous occasions, and settled instead for the term Beginnings.

The first of these Beginnings occurred on a mild evening in May 1968, with the air alive with the fragrances of spring blossoms and full of springtime expectations. It was one of those rare spring days wedged in between a Schenectady winter and the heat of summer. My wife, Anne, and I met with a realtor to view a house for sale on Morgan Avenue in the Town of Niskayuna. It was the last house on the left at the end of Morgan, abutting a woodland.

As realtors are wont to do, this one extolled the virtues of the house and property, pointing out it was located next to a sanctuary. My immediate inquiry was, "What sanctuary?" She replied, "This bird sanctuary

owned by Mrs. Reist."

Within a very few days I was in contact with Mrs. Reist, first by phone, then in person at her stately house at 1166 Avon Road in the GE Plot in Schenectady where she lived alone as a widow. I explained to her the Schenectady Bird Club's goal of acquiring a sanctuary property, and expressed an interest in her land.

She was a most refined, gentle person: soft and well spoken, and frail from age, but obviously a person who had lived a full, productive life. I learned how she and her husband had bought this property "out in the country" in 1909. At that time, rural Niskayuna was indeed out in the country, compared to the rapidly growing City of Schenectady where her husband was prominently affiliated with General Electric.

She and her husband would drive to their

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*HMBC Local Birding Guide,
How to Purchase*

2006 Field Trips

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property out in the country on weekends to observe nature as they hiked and rode horseback on the bridal trails that were maintained on the property for that purpose. She had fond and loving memories of this land she and her husband preserved for years.

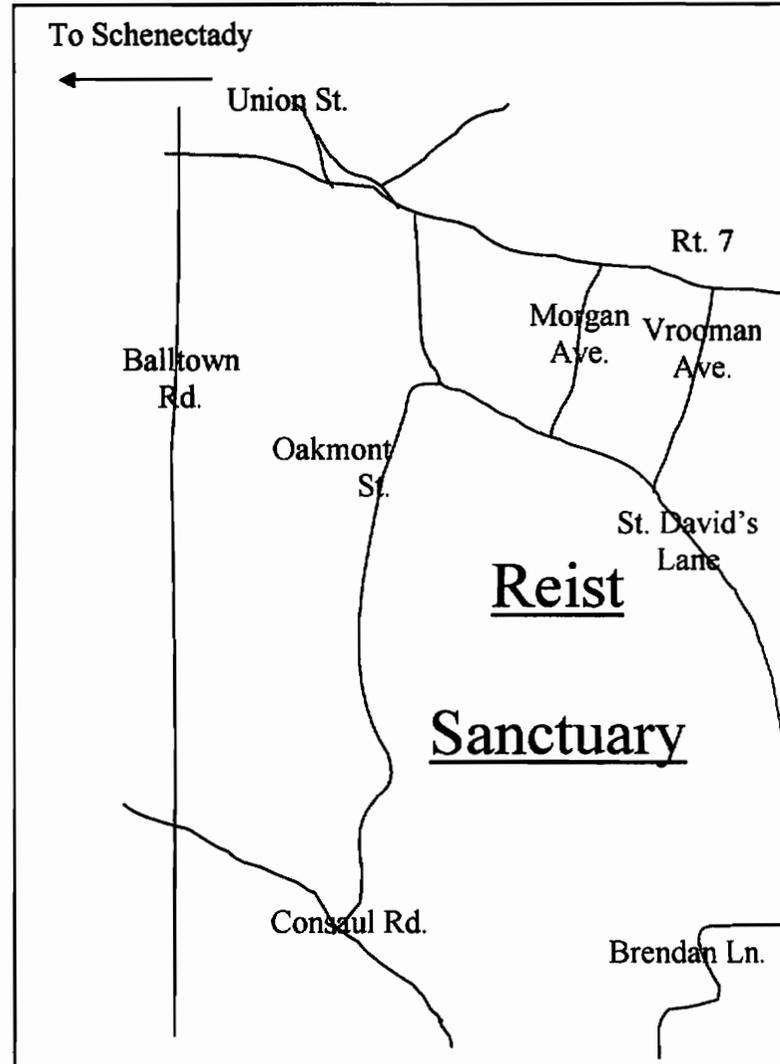
Thus began a process of establishing credibility with her that the Club's intentions, which I expressed, were indeed sincere and legitimate. For all she knew, I could have been some charlatan trying to con here out of her property, for the Club lacked the financial resources to pay her fair market value for it. Real estate developers had indeed been at her door before me seeking to buy it to develop. But so deep was her affection for this land that she would hear nothing of their offers, and further, the money she would realize from such a sale meant nothing to her, despite its then-assessed value of \$140,000 (those were 1968 dollars, today estimated worth about \$1million).

That process of building credibility was facilitated greatly by two people without whose efforts we might not be here today for this commemoration. The first was Phillip T. Alger, a GE employee, active for many years in Schenectady civic affairs, and a longtime personal friend of Mrs. Reist's. He lived only several blocks from her on Wendell Avenue, was a personal advisor to her; and in 1964 happened to join the Bird Club as a sustaining member. Phil put his imprimatur on what I was telling Mrs. Reist, allowing negotiations to continue.

The second person whose role was so critical was Samuel R. Madison. Sam was a respected lawyer for the Public Service Commission in Albany, who had joined the Club in 1948 and played a very constructive

role in its activities for years as board member, president, vice president and legal counsel.

It was Sam's legal efforts that led first to a written offer of October 30, 1968 to Mrs.



Reist for the property, then the February 1969 decision of the Club to change its name to Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, Inc. These were followed by the April 1969 reincorporating as such, followed finally by a favorable filing with the IRS making us a tax-exempt organization in August 1969. These



changes paved the way for Mrs. Reist to donate her land to the newly reincorporated Club at no cost to the Club.

On December 2, 1969 the Town of Niskayuna Zoning Board approved a petition

as vividly as that poignant May evening in 1968, Phil Alger brought Mrs. Reist to the office of her attorney, Roy Peters, at 28 Jay Street (note the bird name for the street) to meet with Sam Madison (then president), Walt Sabin (then immediate past president) and me (then vice-president) for the purpose of transferring the property deed to the Club.

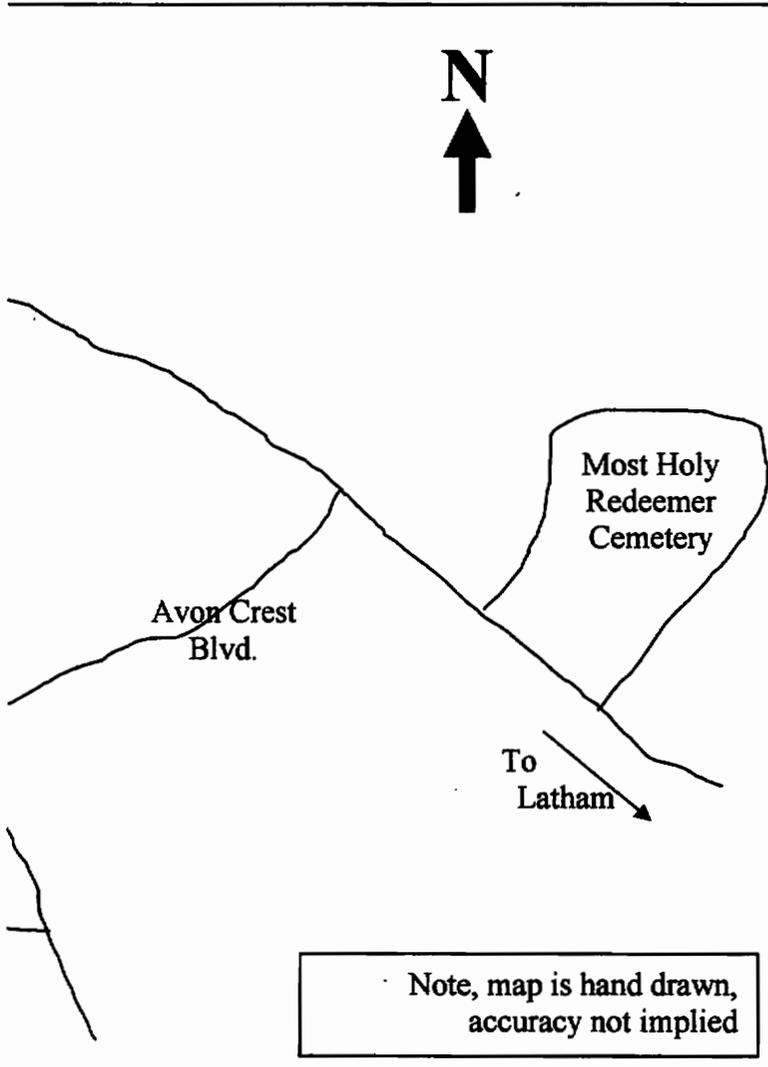
Ed Schultz of The Schenectady Gazette was there to snap a picture for the December 24th issue of the Gazette. It was reproduced along with the Gazette news article of the event in the January-February 1970 issue of the Club's publication FEATHERS, which I had edited for the five years preceding this issue.

At this meeting in Attorney Peters' office, Sam presented Mrs. Reist a framed resolution, passed by the Club at its December 8, 1969 Christmas Bird Count meeting, thanking her for the gift of her property, and establishing thereon the "Margaret B. Reist Lady Slipper Trail." This trail began right off the entrance path at Morgan Avenue to a woodland patch of lady slippers favored by Mrs. Reist.

Sadly, Mrs. Reist died a little over a year later; and forest succession has changed the lady slipper habitat, so that, I am told, they no longer flourish there. How unfortunate it is that this cherished remnant on her property no longer exists; but how fortunate we are that this land was secured, through her generosity, for future generations to enjoy.

to rezone the land from "residential" to "Land Conservation District," followed by Town Board approval of the zoning change on December 11th, which approval required ten days to take effect. On the eleventh day, December 22, 1969, a snowy mess of a day in downtown Schenectady that I remember

Now, you might be thinking, why did the Club seek to acquire a sanctuary in the first place? This leads me to the next two Beginnings of the four I referred to at the start. I shall deal with these in chronological order starting in the 1920's. At the time, GE was growing rapidly and Schenectady was a bustling





place.

In 1929, some members of a family named Schaefer, about whom you in this Association know a great deal, formed the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club. Many of its early members were GE employees and members of their families.

Within the Hiking Club, there was a nucleus of bird watchers, as they were called then, who decided to split off and form in 1939 the Schenectady Bird Club. Prior to the coming together of this group within the Hiking Club, birding in this area was an individualistic, essentially unorganized activity. Through the coming together of this devoted group there was more sharing of information on sightings and improvement of identification skills, as well as scheduled, organized field trips and a Club publication.

Thus, the second of my four Beginnings was the May 22, 1939 formation of the Schenectady Bird Club which served to unify local birders. Its original management organization consisted of seven directors, from whose ranks the directors elected a chairman of the board, several committee heads and a secretary, but no president. That secretary was Nelle G. VanVorst. Nelle was a very active birder, organizer and field trip leader on behalf of the Club. She led in a very authoritarian fashion.

The war years of the 1940's were lean years with long work weeks, a scarcity of tires, rationing of gasoline and various foodstuffs, and little time for much birding. Following the war, circumstances changed for the better. The Club incorporated in 1948, no doubt with Sam Madison's assistance, the year he joined the Club. It was now the Schenectady Bird Club, Inc., and with incorporation came by-laws and officers and all that good stuff.

Since Nelle VanVorst had been such a moving force in the Club as its secretary for ten years, she was elected its first president on the occasion of the newly incorporated Club's first meeting on September 26, 1949. She served as president for 13 years.

Just as Nelle was the embodiment of so many positive activities of the Club, as Nelle aged, so did the Club. A stroke in November 1961 led to her death on March 20, 1962. Her latter years were years of decline, but no one in the Club saw fit to replace her as president, given all she had done for the Club.

Following her death, Walton B. Sabin became president and Sam Madison vice-president. This brings me to the third of the Four Beginnings. Sam saw this as an opportunity to breathe new life into the Club with expanded activities, more field trips and in general a revised mission for the Club. He, Betty Hicks and I were appointed by the board to a committee to create a "Statement of policy and a plan for future progress of the Club" which led to our submitting a nine-page report to the board on March 9, 1964, which was approved by the membership at a special meeting on June 15, 1964.

In that plan was the vision of a sanctuary property, and even a club house headquarters for the Club. Numerous Club members began scouting locations for a possible sanctuary site. One that I looked at and recommended was a gorgeous woodland along River Road in Colonie, extending south to Route 7 at Albany-Shaker Road. The asking price was far beyond the Club's reach and today that Troy Road frontage is solid car dealerships and the River Road side is solid houses. Gone is the beauty of that woods.



The fate of that property only serves to underscore the value of Mrs. Reist's commitment and generosity to the preservation of the property adjoining where we are today.

Now, this brings me to my Fourth Beginning, which as I said earlier is a hope rather than a historical recounting. And my hope is that as a result of the relocating of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks to this St. David's Lane location, as a neighbor of the Reist Sanctuary, a new era of

cooperation, a new beginning if you will, between the Club and the Association will see increased public use of the Sanctuary, development of its educational potential primarily for youngsters to foster an appreciation of conservation of our natural resources, as well as to foster in all people some of the values the Reist's held in owning and protecting this property which is no longer "out in the country."

Thank you for this opportunity to share these Beginnings with you.

HMBC Field Trip Reports

SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK October 29, 2005

On a cool but sunny morning, 15 birders walked the Wilkinson Trail through field and woodlands of the Saratoga Battlefield. We tallied a total of 31 species, including several hundred each of SNOW and CANADA GEESE overhead. Other birds of note included AMERICAN KESTREL, SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, and five RED-TAILED HAWKS, a RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, seven EASTERN BLUEBIRDS, GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET, and four YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS. There were flocks of assorted blackbirds as well, including EUROPEAN STARLINGS, COMMON GRACKLES, REDWINGS, and COWBIRDS. Near the end of the trip, we even had a RAVEN (thanks to Robert).

— *Scott Stoner and Denise Hackert-Stoner*

Tomhannock Reservoir November 5, 2005

Twenty-three birders took to the field for about four hours to circle Tomhannock Reservoir on a beautiful fall day. Temperatures were in the 50s and low 60s and the skies were mostly sunny. We began at the south end of the reservoir and saw GREAT BLUE HERON, BELTED KINGFISHER, RUDDY DUCKS, COMMON GOLDENEYE, and HOODED Mergansers plus a smattering of other ducks. In general, it seemed like numbers of species and individuals were down - perhaps due to the increased human traffic and fishermen who were also taking advantage of the nice weather. Many of the corn fields on the way to the reservoir had flocks of CANADA GEESE feeding in them, so numbers on the water were lower than they might have been.

Back at the parking area, we were able to see at least three COMMON LOONS and a few DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS to the north before we car-pooled for the remainder of the



HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

trip. Our caravan continued counter-clockwise around the reservoir, stopping at places with views of the reservoir and adequate parking. At a stop along the east shore, we encountered two COMMON RAVENS and a good showing of smaller birds, including RED- and WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES and about six YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS.

At Otter Creek, we had HOODED MERGANSERS and a large flock of RING-NECKED DUCKS. A sharp-eyed birder picked out a female GREATER SCAUP in the mix. Several flocks of CEDAR WAXWINGS flew overhead, too. At the spillway, we got good views of a PIED-BILLED GREBE and five more cormorants.

Stops on the west shore brought a few WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS, and one sharp-eared young birder briefly heard a kinglet, but could not positively pin down which species. One group of birders had to leave early, but were treated to a male NORTHERN HARRIER hunting in the fields. The final leg of the trip was on Lakeshore Drive, where we had NORTHERN CARDINAL, DARK-EYED JUNCO, and a female PURPLE FINCH for a total of forty-one species.

Species seen: Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, American Black Duck, Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, kinglet, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing,

Yellow-rumped Warbler, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch.

— Larry Alden

DELMARVA PENINSULA November 11-13, 2005

Four birders, including sisters Honey Hollen and Susan Smith, and the two of us, spent the Veteran's Day weekend between Bombay Hook NWR in Delaware and Blackwater NWR in Maryland (we were based in Dover, DE). Although we did tally about 70 species over the trip, a high total was not a major objective. Observation of large flocks of SNOW GEESE, however, was a major goal of the trip, and we were not disappointed. Parts of Bombay Hook were closed on the 11th due to deer hunting, but we still got to see several thousand SNOW GEESE overhead along with a splendid sunset (and deer near the roadway!). We had AMERICAN AVOCETS, BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS, LESSER YELLOWLEGS and KILLDEER, along with both GREAT EGRET and GREAT BLUE HERON. The avian highlight of the day, though, was the two AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS in the salt water across from Shearneck Pool.

We drove down to Blackwater on the 12th, toured the newly renovated visitor center, and took the wildlife drive and one trail. CAROLINA CHICKADEES were at the trailhead, as were several BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCHES feeding on the cones of loblolly pine. They were persistent and scopeable, providing excellent views of this southern pine woods specialist. We also had Carolina Wren, both



HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

species of kinglet, and FORSTER'S TERN. Five BALD EAGLES and at least one GOLDEN EAGLE (of the 3 reportedly on the refuge) were seen along the wildlife drive, along with a variety of waterfowl. We also got into one good patch of songbirds in a burned area along the drive, including EASTERN BLUEBIRD and several species of warblers.

We went back to Bombay Hook for the final morning of the trip. Just south of the refuge, we encountered thousands of SNOW GEESE in the farm fields along the west side of DE 9, including some blue morphs. At Bombay Hook, we enjoyed birding in the sun and nearly 70 degree weather. We started out with a distant Red Fox in the "Cottman Pool" area field, along with RING-NECKED PHEASANTS and HORNED LARKS. The light was much better (than Friday) for observing waterbirds in Raymond pool, and we enjoyed great looks at more than 200 AMERICAN AVOCETS facing into the wind, with one MARBLED GODWIT among them. Waterfowl included RUDDY DUCK, AMERICAN BLACK DUCK, NORTHERN SHOVELER, MALLARD, CANADA GOOSE, several hundred NORTHERN PINTAIL, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, and several thousand SNOW

GEESE. We did not get the hoped for, single eruption into flight, but there was one fly-up of perhaps a thousand that had a group of photographers madly clicking away... The waterfowl highlight that morning was a long TUN-DRA SWAN, in Shearness Pool, a life bird for Denise. Other waterbirds included PIED-BILLED GREBE, AMERICAN COOT, and GREAT BLUE HERON. One or more NORTHERN HARRIER was visible much of the time; we also had AMERICAN KESTREL and RED-TAILED HAWK. SPARROWS were many, and presented some challenges in identification; we ultimately tallied SONG, SAVANNAH, SWAMP, and WHITE-THROATED. Shorebirds were present as well, including a group of DUNLIN, GREATER YELLOWLEGS, and a few peeps. Another highlight was the GREAT HORNED OWL in a tree, near Raymond Pool, that we discovered because someone had a scope set up along the side of the road (thanks to Honey for her perseverance in checking this out). The final bird of the trip was BLACK VULTURE, recorded by Honey and Susan on their way out from the Refuge

— *Scott Stoner and Denise Hackert-Stoner*



Book Review

Birds of New York State

by Bob Budliger and Gregory Kennedy

Review by Dana C. Rohleder

Originally written for NNYBirds (Northern New York Birds) and reprinted here with the kind permission of Dana Rohleder.

I just thought I'd give you my impressions of the new field guide, "Birds of New York State" (BONYS) written by Budliger & Kennedy. A few other members have commented on it but not in a lot of detail. It is true field guide dedicated strictly to birds that are likely to be seen in NYS - not necessarily breeders or common birds. It includes roughly 350 species, with an entire page dedicated to each species.

The first few pages are something quite welcome in a field guide - a brief Table of Contents immediately followed by a GREAT Reference Guide that has illustrations of virtually every species crammed very neatly into 12 pages broken down into rough taxonomic orders/families. These pages include under the picture the common name, the size, and the page number. This is very similar to the way Sibley did his Family plates at the beginning of each section, but instead, all placed in the front of the book - much more convenient for a beginner that doesn't know where to look in a field guide. The sections are then color coded to match the page "tabs" for quick field location.

The Introduction is similar to most of the newer guides, with the addition of major birding areas and Top 100 Hotspots Birding Sites with a locator map showing major

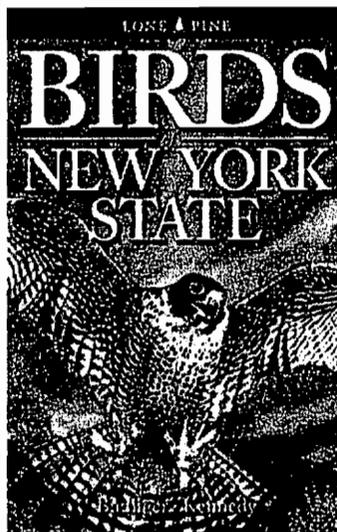
ecological zones within the state.

Species accounts are quite detailed with excellent, plain-language descriptions and "Best Sites" section to help narrow your search, as well as perfunctory (?) range maps. Typically, one or two large, painted illustrations for each species (usually male/female) and many species have some smaller illustrations of the bird in flight. The

illustrations are superb and color quite accurate and natural, which was one of my few complaints with Sibley's guides that make the bird a little too "cartoonish". My biggest criticism of the plates in this guide is that they were not all painted by the same person. Accordingly, from plate-to-plate and species-to-species, there are rather pronounced style differences in the illustrations. On illustrator favors smooth, soft feathering, and another prefers almost to tease the feathers out for a roughed-up appearance - like the bird just

emerged from a vacuum cleaner. Both are quite attractive, but I favor the former, because that is typically the way a bird looks in the field at even a slight distance. But my complaint is that if you are trying to distinguish very similar species, such as Acadian and Alder Flycatchers, the illustrations make them appear very different, even though we know the differences are slight. But I can find few faults with the accuracy of either style - each has their own merits.

The species text I feel was reminiscent of





Book Review (continued)

Peterson's early field guides, but more elaborate. Interesting and informative bits of birdlore and natural history makes reading the book from cover-to-cover an enlightening and entertaining endeavor.

The end of the book contains a glossary, checklist, and both scientific and common-name indices. The back cover includes yet another, more condensed, color coded & tab indexed "Quick Guide" with page numbers - yet another outstanding feature.

Although positioned as a state field guide, I would say it would adequately cover the northeast, with the exception of some regional specialties. I don't believe I have ever seen a regional field guide that even comes close to this volume and I would like to see a guide in the same format for North America. For \$21.95, it is an outstanding bargain!

— *Dana C. Rohleder Port Kent, NY*

This book is available at:

www.lonepinepublishing.com — the publisher

www.amazon.com

At local bookstores, including the Book House at Stuyvesant Plaza



Program Reports

Fall 2005 Program Reports of HMBC and Capital Region Audubon Programs

It was a great season with programs on birds and locations both near and far. **Sue Adair** kicked things off at the *September 8* joint meeting of the HMBC and Capital Region Audubon, with *Trinidad and Tobago: A Birder's T & T*. Starting on the larger island of Trinidad, Sue described their stay at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, where some of the best tropical birding is right there at the feeders and grounds. Hummingbirds, toucans, trogons, honeycreepers, motmots, and more, all there! Day trips to other Trinidad hotspots such as Nariva and Caroni Swamps yielded raptors and waterbirds including Scarlet Ibis.

At the smaller island of Tobago (and based at the Blue Waters Inn), one enjoyed Bananaquits on the breakfast table and Ruddy Turnstones right there in the bar! Other birding venues there include Little Tobago Island, the local sewage ponds, and the island's central ridge. Tobago specialties such as Blue-backed Manakin and Rufous-vented Chachalaca were seen well, along with many other species.

After the program, Bob Budliger was available to sign his new guide, *The Birds of New York State*. He had been "lured" back from Vermont by the request for the signing, but in reality, it was for a surprise opportunity to thank and honor him. Capital Region Audubon president Craig Thompson and members of their board presented Bob with an Audubon print in recognition of his decades of service to the Chapter (including president), and to his dedicated efforts to further environmental education and bird conservation. Well deserved, Bob!

On *October 3*, **Denise Hackert-Stoner and Scott Stoner** presented *Shorelines*. Starting with Denise's artistic introduction about why we are drawn to the waterline, the speakers then took us on a virtual tour of the coastline and its inhabitants from Florida (sunrise over Sanibel) to Maine's rocky coast, across the Great Lakes and Gulf Coast, up the Pacific coast from California to Washington, to Alaska's Bering Sea, and finally to Hawaii. Featuring birds, mammals, sea creatures, and plantlife, and sites of intense human activity as well as remote beaches and refuges, the show illustrated the beauty and diversity of America's shorelines, and concluded with a series of sunrises and sunsets set to music.

On *November 4*, at one of (if not the) highest attended programs in Club history, **Jeff Nadler** presented a digital and music portrayal of *Avian Magic: Bird Photography Journeys*. With the sharpest digital photos I have ever seen, and beautifully choreographed to music, Jeff took us on a virtual journey to a variety of locations, from



Program Reports (continued)

Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the prairie pothole country of North Dakota to the great wetlands of Florida, to California co and new England coasts, Vermont, boreal bogs of the Adirondacks, and finally brought it back home to the Hudson-Mohawk region. The show features wading birds, hawks, owls, warblers, waterfowls and many others. In just three years of serious digital photography, Jeff has clearly mastered this art, and put together an outstanding show. If you missed it, check out the cover photo on the Club's new book! We look forward to seeing what he will do next!

At our annual **Holiday Party** on *December 5* at Five Rivers, **Frank Murphy** spoke on ***Birding South America***. Covering the great diversity of both habitat and avifauna in this continent, he related photos and experiences from Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. With both humor and experience from 25 years of travels to the tropics, he painted a vivid picture effecting travel where he did not speak the language, where he suffered from altitude sickness, air sickness, car sickness and seasickness! From Magellanic Woodpecker at the south to Woodcreepers in the north, he described and depicted birds that most of us only long to see.

Frank particularly liked Argentina, with its the Glacier National Park, Ushuaia, Valdez Peninsula, and Iguazu Falls (along with some great birds). In Peru, they discovered the nesting grounds of Markham's Storm Petrel on the Atacama Desert at Paracas along the coast (if you missed the show, please ask Frank for the details!), and also visited Machu Picchu. The visit to Ecuador included not only the fascinating La Selva, but also a boat ride to Isla de la Plata (the poor man's Galapagos) off the southern coast of Ecuador (where we they thought they were going to be shot to death at sea) ended instead with a hot and dry hike on the islands. Finally, Venezuela, Frank's favorite, with its great Llanos wetlands that rivals (ok, exceeds!) the Everglades! Junglaven in Venezuela was a favorite, a very wild and remote area that hosts lots of rarities such as Agami Heron and Amazon Umbrellabirds.

Frank has graciously offered a return engagement, to cover Central America, and I am happy to report that this program has been scheduled for September 14! Mark your calendars!

— *Scott Stoner*



Upcoming 2005 HMBC Programs

Monday, January 9, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library
Birds of Upstate New York: Loons, Owls, Bluebirds, and Warblers, Warren Greene

Noted photographer Warren Greene will present a selection of his renowned slides of birds of Upstate New York. Warren is known for his close-up photographs of nesting birds, including warblers and bluebirds, as well as his fantastic pictures of local owls - including some of the less common winter visitors. His work was featured on the cover of the HMBC's first edition of *Birding New York's Hudson-Mohawk Region*, and in numerous regional publications and venues.

This is also an HMBC open house and new member night. Club info and books available. Refreshments served, bring your friends; public and new members (as always) are welcome!

Monday, February 6, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library
Four for Florida - A slide program, photographer Tom Lindsay

The list of National Wildlife Refuges in Florida is long and impressive. Photographer Tom Lindsay has chosen four of the best for this presentation: Merritt Island NWR (northeastern Florida), Arthur Marshall Loxahatchee NWR (southeastern Florida), St. Mark's NWR (northwestern Florida), and the J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR (southwestern Florida). Many of Florida's natural habitats and bird species are presented in these refuges.

Tom Lindsay has given numerous presentations to the HMBC and Audubon, including east coast national wildlife refuges, Acadia National Park, Moose, and Cape May. Join us tonight as he treats us to this great sampling of some of Florida's best birding sites!

Monday, March 6, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library
Birdscaping your Backyard, Francis Groeters of Catskill Native Nursery

Many homeowners have recently become interested in turning their lawns and overly fussy landscapes into natural, wild landscapes that provide food, water and shelter for wildlife. Birds are probably our most popular type of wildlife and songbirds are one of the easiest types of birds to attract to the backyard. In this slide presentation, learn about the food preferences of many of our songbirds and how to birdscope your backyard by planting the native plants that our songbirds depend on.

Francis Groeters has a Ph.D. in Ecology. He has worked as a biologist in California, Hawaii, South Carolina and Australia. Originally from the Hudson Valley, he returned 10 years ago to create Catskill Native Nursery in Kerhonkson. He is an avid birder, hiker and nature photographer.



Upcoming 2005 HMBC Programs (continued)

Monday, April 3, Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar
HMBC Annual Literary Night

Treats for the body and soul.

Monday April 10, HMBC Members will receive a mailing with details

HMBC Annual Banquet and Business Meeting

Boreal Birds of the Adirondacks, Joan Collins

Some of the most exciting birding locations in New York State can be found in the boreal habitat of the Adirondack Park. Joan Collins will present "Boreal Birds of the Adirondacks", a multimedia presentation using photographs, video, audio, and slides of the wonderful bird species that nest in the North Country. Species such as Spruce Grouse, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Bicknell's Thrush, Tennessee Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbird will be presented along with details of their nesting habitat.

Personal Biography: Joan Collins is a former President of High Peaks Audubon Society, a member of the Board of Directors for the Audubon Council of New York State, Editor of High Peaks Audubon Newsletter, year-round bird walk leader in the Adirondacks, a New York State licensed guide, and an Adirondack 46er. Her journal and magazine articles have been published in *The Kingbird*, *The Conservationist*, *New York Birders*, and *Peaks Magazine*. She is a volunteer for several Citizen Science projects including Mountain Birdwatch, the NYS Breeding Bird Atlas, the North American Breeding Bird Survey, the Adirondack Cooperative Loon Program's annual census, and many Christmas Bird Counts. Joan, her husband, and two sons, have lived in Long Lake for eight years and now reside in both Potsdam and Long Lake.

Monday, May 1, 7:00 PM at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar
***Mute Swans*, Kevin Clarke and Bryan Swift of NYSDEC**

Monday, June 5, 7:00 PM at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar
***Botswana/Zambia and Shoebill*, Don and Donna Traver**
7:00 PM at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center



Upcoming 2005 Capital Region Audubon Programs

Thursday February 9, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library
***Touring South-central Alaska*, Gregg Recer**

Gregg will share slides of his family's recent adventure exploring a small slice of the largest state. As a first taste of Alaska's vast diversity of parks, scenery and wildlife, Gregg, Cathy and Bryce traveled to Anchorage in August, 2005 and explored the area from Denali National Park and Preserve south to the Kenai Peninsula. In a relatively compact region, they experienced habitats ranging from alpine tundra and boreal forest to tidewater glaciers, rugged coastline and the Pacific Ocean. Gregg will share pictures of mountain and coastal scenery, grizzlies, whales and seabirds.

Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen have been Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club (HMBC) members since 1988. They have led numerous birding field trips in New York State, New England and elsewhere and have enjoyed birding and natural-history travels to a variety of locations in the US, Canada, Mexico and Central America. Gregg is an HMBC past president and works as a research scientist for the New York State Department of Health.

Please help our club!

We are searching for somebody to take responsibility for assembling this newsletter. I have done it for 3 1/2 years and it is time to bring new life into the publication's arena. It takes me about 6 +/- hours every other month to assemble the newsletter from the submissions of club members. You will not be required to prepare articles, all material is provided by others.

A personal computer is required, a scanner is desirable. Familiarity with Microsoft Publisher would be helpful, but I will assist the new editor in learning this software and in assembling the newsletter. The club will supply the software needed.

Once complete, the newsletter is to be delivered to Guilderland Printers. Currently Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen retrieve the printed newsletter and prepare it for distribution.

If you are ambitious and want to expand the club's reach, the new editor may want to consider:

- Creating an email version, to save on mailing expense
- Creating a CDROM with past editions
- Posting a copy on the HMBC website

Please contact me if you are interested: Bob Miller at 274-2670 or at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net



Recent Publications

Get your copy of
HMBC's New Birding Guide
(September 2005):

Birding New York's Hudson-Mohawk Region

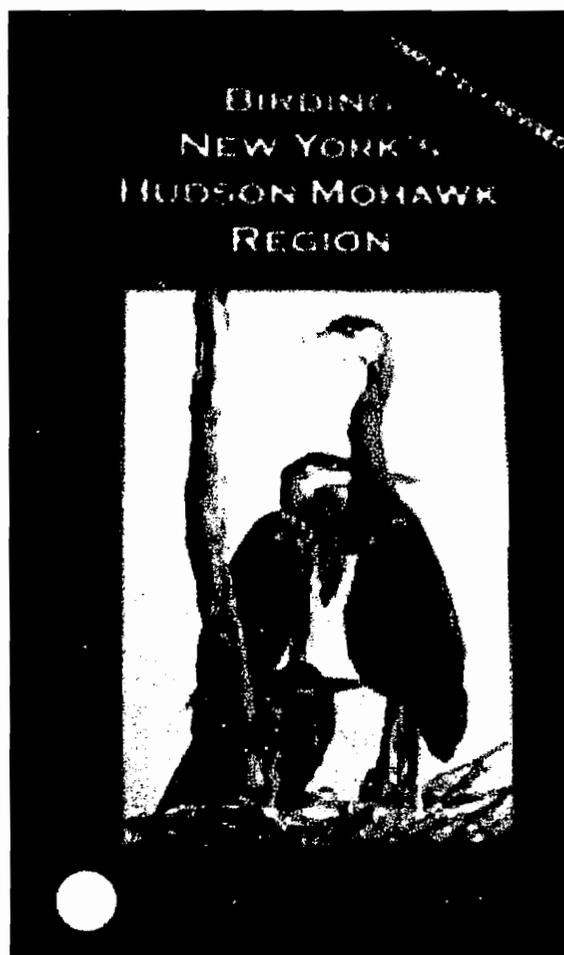
Our guide has been completely revised and expanded to include more than 70 sites in and around the Capital Region.

This updated, 423 page edition is designed to guide both novice and advanced birders to the best birding sites in the Hudson-Mohawk Region of eastern upstate New York. More than seventy birding areas, in an eleven county area centered on the State Capital of Albany, are described in this guide. The site accounts include detailed directions and maps, site descriptions, birding highlights and birding strategies. The guide also features an annotated checklist and a monthly relative-abundance bar graph for all species known to occur in the Region. Also, new to this edition is a detailed index for easy reference.

The cost for members is \$20.00 and the cost for nonmembers is \$25.00 Please add \$3.50 for shipping/handling.

To order, contact Jackie Bogardus at:
jackieb@nycap.rr.com

For additional information, go the club's website: www.hbmc.net





Upcoming Field Trips

JAN 1 **NEW YEAR'S DAY BIRD COUNT AT FIVE RIVERS** (Albany Cty; morning)
SUN **Coordinator: Craig Thompson (Five Rivers Center) 475-0291 (daytime)**

For the past 20+ years, Five Rivers has been welcoming in the New Year with an organized effort to identify all the bird species present on January 1. This also marks the start of their annual bird list. Again this year, HMBC joins the event and encourages members to participate. Groups will go out at 9:00 a.m. from the Interpretive Building (visitor center), but birders are welcome to arrive earlier to get a head start. Call ahead to Five Rivers in case of inclement weather.

**JANUARY 10 - CALL ASAP TO INQUIRE ABOUT POSSIBLE COSTA RICA TOUR
(FEB 24—MAR 5)**

JANUARY 20 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR WINTER RARE BIRD TRIP (JAN OR FEB)

JAN or FEB WINTER RARE BIRD TRIP
Coordinator: Bill Lee bileej@hotmail.com 374-3426
*******Reservations due by January 20*******

If any especially rare bird is reported in our general area, we plan to take a trip to look for it. This is usually a day trip, but sometimes requires an overnight stay. To get on the notification list for alert and trip details, call the coordinator. In recent years, trip participants have seen Ivory Gull, Bar-tailed Godwit, Yellow-billed Loon, Gyrfalcon and Tufted Duck.

JAN 21 **ANNUAL STATE WATERFOWL COUNT** (morning/full day)
SAT **Coordinator: Gary Goodness goodness@nycap.rr.com 862-9680**
(JAN 22, Alternate weather date)

On the local segment of this statewide event, participants will count waterfowl and other winter birds on the Hudson River between North Troy and Hudson Falls. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the Hannaford Supermarket on the east end of the North Troy-Waterford Bridge (Route 4).

JAN 28 **STISSING MOUNTAIN/THOMPSON POND PRESERVE** (Dutchess Cty; full day)
SAT **Coordinator: Bill Lee bileej@hotmail.com 374-3426**
(JAN 29, SUN, Alternate weather date)

Golden Eagles have been wintering on Stissing Mountain (elevation 1403 ft.) for many years. As the morning sun warms the eastern-facing slope, the birds can often be seen rising on a thermal to begin the day's hunting, or, with diligence and some luck, can be found at their overnight roosts perched in huge white



HMBC BOARD FOR 2005-2006

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Vice-President:

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Niskayuna, NY 12309
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Birdline:	John Saville	399-5959
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Publications:	Bob Miller	274-2670
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Sanctuary:	Carl George	393-0629
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Jr. Activities:	(vacant)	

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Denise Hackert-Stoner	785-6760
John Hershey	371-3114
Patsy Patrick	456-4007
Donna Zimmerman	869-6624



HMBC Contact Information

BIRDLINE of E. NEW YORK: (518) 439-8080

Email: contact@hmbc.net

HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

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 that would inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the address at right.

Newsletter Submissions

Please send all **electronic** submissions **via e-mail** to:
Bob Miller at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net

Send all submissions to:
Bob Miller
1994 15th St.
Troy, NY 12180



**President's
Corner**
David L. Martin

The H.G. Reist Sanctuary in Niskayuna is unquestionably the HMBC's most valuable asset, but paradoxically, it also is our most undervalued asset. I think it is fair to say that for many years the Club expended little energy on it, and I have sometimes wondered how many of our members have actually birded the Sanctuary. A few years ago, primarily through the efforts of Gregg Recer, Lynn Huntington and the late Joe Cottichio, the HMBC Board commissioned a survey to establish the Sanctuary's boundaries and worked with our neighbors to address a number of potential concerns. Joe also encouraged Carl George to take an active interest in Sanctuary issues, and Carl eventually succeeded Joe as Chair of the Sanctuary Committee. Carl quickly began a vigorous program to manage and improve the Sanctuary. He recruited volunteers to mark the boundaries and trails, put up signs at entrances, build bridges over wet areas, root out invasive honeysuckle, and much more. Carl also found funds to support the Sanctuary and began a biological inventory. Now, thanks to Carl's efforts, we can point with pride to the Reist Sanctuary.

On November 19th several of the HMBC's officers and board members met at the *Center for the Forest Preserve* of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks (AfPA) to celebrate the Sanctuary with Carl and many of the volunteers that he had recruited. The *Center* was the perfect place to meet, as it is adjacent to the Sanctuary in the Paul Schaefer house on St. David's Lane. From there Carl led a tour of the Sanctuary, and afterwards we met for refreshments and a short program. Not only did we get to thank the volunteers and Carl for their efforts, but we heard Bob Yunick's fascinating history of the acquisition of the Sanctuary property (published in this issue of *Feathers*). And, lastly, we got to know a little about the AfPA and to begin to consider ways that our two organizations could cooperate.

Why not take some time and visit the Sanctuary – perhaps next spring when the birds have returned. I think you will be pleased to discover what a nice place we have.

FEATHERS
Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club
c/o Five Rivers EEC
Game Farm Rd.
Delmar, N.Y. 12054

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