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## A CASE OF FORENSIC ORNITHOLOGY

*By Robert P. Yunick*

Bill Lee called on January 6, 2006 asking if I wanted to join him to go look for three Long-eared Owls which had been discovered on December 30 and seen again on the New Year's day bird walk at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar. I agreed, and when we arrived at the Center we were greeted by overcast sky and a chilling incoming northwesterly air mass that was displacing one of the mild spells, so characteristic of this winter.

It was a bit of a hike over frozen shallow snow and ice to the far northeast corner of the property where the owls had been seen in a pine grove. Along the way we met two returning birders who had not found the owls, but reported one had been seen three days previously.

The grove was dense and consisted of relatively young white pines estimated to be 30-50 ft. tall, some of which still had dead branches near ground level, creating a congested understory. The ground was a patchwork of bare ground under the shielding trees, and snow only several inches deep in the occasional gaps between trees. In this setting we began our search for the proverbial ornithological needle in a haystack. We searched the ground for white wash and pellets, and scrutinized each tree trunk for a perched owl. It was slow, neck-straining work.

Then Bill found a scattering of feathers under

a pine. In an area no larger than 18-20 in. in diameter were some tail and body feathers as well as some outer primaries with the characteristic barbed leading edge which gives owls their nearly silent flight. I gathered up the flight feathers, and in looking about spotted another pile about 30 ft. away under another tree, gathering them as well. My first inclination was that a predator had caught an owl and while on the ground battled violently with it stripping some of its feathers, then attempted to carry it away and at this second location ended the struggle. But that proved ultimately to be a wrong conclusion.

We searched for clues of the would-be predator. There were raccoon tracks in the area, but it was very unlikely that a clumsy raccoon could silently enough approach a roosting owl to catch it. We continued searching; found no perched owl(s), nor

In This Issue....

*Many Spring Field Trips*

*Upcoming Programs*

*HMBC Local Birding Guide,  
How to Purchase*

*Sad Member News*

# Feathers



## A CASE OF FORENSIC ORNITHOLOGY (continued)

further clues, leaving us puzzled until we began to leave the grove, encountering Nancy Payne of DEC leading a group of volunteer naturalist instructors to the owl grove.

We paused to talk and I explained my handful of feathers, and returned to the grove to show these women the still remaining body feathers on the ground. Nancy provided a valuable clue when she told us she had seen one Long-ear in the grove being harassed by a large hawk three days before. Someone asked if it could have been a Red-Tailed Hawk (we had seen two of them and a Northern Harrier during our hike to the grove).

My feeling was that Red-tails which hunt mostly small mammals in fields, meadows and along wood's edges are not agile enough to hunt the dense cover of this grove. Instead, this was typical cover for woodland species such as Northern Goshawk and Cooper's Hawk. I have seen Goshawks on past occasions fly into thick cover, thrash about in it and even chase prey by running after it on the ground.

I took the feathers home, dried and sorted them to find I had some left wing and right wing primaries, but not from the same bird, because the barring pattern on the key eighth primary of the left wing was that of an adult, while on the right was that of an immature. The central pair of tail feathers on a Long-ear is distinctly differently marked than all the other tail feathers, and I had two sets of that central pair, one of an adult, the other of an immature, again indicating I was dealing with at least two birds. But I needed further definitive proof about the exact positioning on the bird of the 37 feathers I had in hand.

A visit to the NYS Museum bird skin collection in Albany provided that proof. Using spread-wing and spread-tail specimens of Long-eared Owl, I confirmed that I had nine of the ten left primaries and 11 of the 12 tail feathers of an adult Long-ear; and six of the ten right primaries (including the critical eighth) and 11 of the 12 tail feathers of an immature Long-ear. The fact that I had nine primaries from one bird and six from another indicated that the encounters these birds had were indeed violent. Tail feathers are easily lost as an escape mechanism for a bird grabbed by the tail, but primaries are very firmly anchored in a bird's wing and require considerable force to extricate.

This leads to the sad likely conclusion that Five Rivers' three New Year's day Long-ears were reduced to one by prior to January 6, perhaps even as early as January 3. The likely marauder, a Goshawk, but Great Horned Owl cannot be totally ruled out. It points out how even predators become prey in certain situations, and in this case how these secretive owls which seek seclusion and protection in dense groves are not immune from detection by other searching eyes seeking a next meal.

But, the story did not end there. On February 4<sup>th</sup> I learned by phone from Marilyn Fancher, one of the January 6<sup>th</sup> naturalist instructors, that on the 4<sup>th</sup> she had found another pile of feathers at the Center. I joined her there on February 6<sup>th</sup> to confirm that they too came from a third Long-ear, another immature. She had collected seven left wing and all the right wing primaries and nine of the tail feathers.

She took me to the spot of her discovery,



# Feathers

V68N1  
Page 3

## A CASE OF FORENSIC ORNITHOLOGY (continued)

under a dense pine, in an adjacent grove a little over 100 yards south of where the January 6<sup>th</sup> feathers were found. Thus, it appears that the three owls that visitors to the Center enjoyed ever so briefly in December-January met their demise at their roosts; and it causes speculation on whether there are

still other feather piles on the Center's grounds from earlier owls in residence possibly taken prior to this trio's discovery on December 30<sup>th</sup>.

## HMBC Field Trip Reports

**Sorry no field trip reports received in time for publication**



**It is with great sadness that we announce the deaths of  
two members who had been with the club for many  
years and contributed to its success**

**Harry Judge  
Arthur Long**

Harry "Doc" Judge passed away on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005,  
and Arthur Long on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

Harry's death was reported to Bill Lee by Tim Judge, Harry's son. He had passed away Albany Medical Center, and asked Bill inform HMBC. Harry had been a member of the Club for more than 30 years, and was a contemporary of Bill Gorman, Sam Madison and Walt Sabin. The obituary was published in the Albany Times-Union. It provides a very descriptive picture of his life, his accomplishments and his character.

Arthur's death was reported to by Debbie Miller, Arthur's daughter. His obituary was also in the Times-Union and shows Arthur's long-term loyalty to people and organizations, including HMBC.

Harry was 82 at his death and Arthur was 84.

For a link to the obituary, send an email to [RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net](mailto:RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net).



## Upcoming 2006 HMBC Programs

**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 birdscape 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.

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

Treats for the body and soul.

Join us at Five Rivers on Monday, April 3, at 7:00 PM for our annual Literary Night. Bring your favorite nature poem or short prose to share, or come to listen and enjoy! All are welcome to bring a dessert to share with the group.

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**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.

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



## Upcoming 2006 HMBC Programs (continued)

Adirondack 46er. Her journal and magazine articles have been published in *The Kingbird*, *The Conservationist*, *New York Birders*, and *Peeks 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.

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

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**Monday, June 5, 7:00 PM** at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar  
***Botswana's Okavango Delta and the Shoebill of Zambia's Bangweulu Wetlands***,  
Don and Donna Traver

This program is about a trip to South Central Africa in search of Shoebill. The Shoebill is a very unusual and uncommon bird that is found only in the dense swamps of Central Africa. As it has no close relatives it is taxonomically placed in a family all of its own. So as dedicated "family listers" we were compelled to go there in order to reach our goal of seeing a member of each of the world's bird families. Of the 204 families (Clements) this was to be 202.

The program starts with a stay at three tented camps in the truly remarkable and pristine Okavango Delta where we saw numbers of mammals particularly leopards, lions, cape buffalo, elephants and antelope that were virtually unthreatened by our presence in Land Rovers. Birds were also in great numbers and Pel's Fishing-Owl was spectacular.

Following two weeks in the Delta we arranged an extension for the two of us and went northward by bush plane to the immense Bangweulu wetlands of Zambia. Heading to a remote location known as Shoebill Camp we hoped to see at least one of the huge birds. That little three-day extension turned out to be one of the more memorable adventures of our birding lives.

The Travers are retired teachers -- Don from Webster, Donna from Pittsford -- who are on a quest to see a member of every bird family in the world. Two remaining are Rhabadornis in the Philippines and Rockfowl (*Picathartes*) in West Africa. Don and Donna have been well-received at their previous several programs to the HMBC, and we welcome their return to give this fascinating new show.

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**Thursday, September 14, 7:00 PM**, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library  
***Birding Central America***, Frank Murphy

The fall program schedule will begin with a joint program of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and Capital Region Audubon.



## Upcoming 2005 Capital Region Audubon Programs

**Thursday, March 9, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***New York's Dragonfly & Damselfly***, Audubon NY Staff  
Description of Program:

This spring, Audubon New York will be cooperating with the New York Natural Heritage Program in an ambitious project to inventory dragonfly and damselfly populations throughout New York State. The current state-wide distribution of these fascinating insects is poorly understood and Audubon New York, through its strong grass-roots network, will be playing a pivotal role in collecting data for this project. Come learn about these amazing insects and find out how you can get involved in this exciting citizen science initiative.

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

To order, contact: [jackieb@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jackieb@nycap.rr.com)

For additional information, go the club's website: [www.hbmc.net](http://www.hbmc.net)





## Upcoming Field Trips

MAR 5  
SUN WATERFOWL OF THE HUDSON RIVER SOUTH (Green County; morning)  
**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  
SUN HUDSON RIVER ABOVE TROY (Rensselaer; morning)  
**Coordinator: Joan Cipriani** **374-3729**

Early migrating waterfowl will be our target on both the Hudson & Hoosic Rivers, but we've seen Bald Eagles, Northern Goshawk, Barnacle Goose, Snow Geese (including Blue Morph) as well as Bluebirds & Killdeer. Plan to meet at 8 am by the chain link fence at the Hannaford Plaza parking lot located at the east end of the North Troy-Waterford Bridge (Rt. 4). Please call coordinator if you plan to attend.

MAR 19  
SUN WASHINGTON COUNTY WATERFOWL AND RAPTORS (morning)  
**Coordinators: Mona Bearor kinglet@adelphia.net 745-8637**  
**Joyce Miller justlookitup@yahoo.com**

Join us as we search the Hudson for migrant waterfowl such as Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Mergansers and maybe a Bald Eagle; then on to nearby Fort Edward for late winter specialties like Rough-legged Hawk, Northern harrier and maybe some Snow Buntings. Meet at 8 am at the Schuylerville Central School to carpool. From the Northway(I-87), take exit 14 and follow signs to Rt. 29 to Schuylerville. The school is on the north (left if coming from Saratoga) side of Rt. 29, on the hill sloping down into the village of Schuylerville. Please contact one of the coordinators if you plan to attend.

MAR 26  
SUN VISCHER FERRY  
\*\*\*\*\*INSTRUCTIONAL TRIP (Saratoga County; morning)\*\*\*\*\*  
**Coordinators: John Hershey 371-3114**  
**Bernie & Chris Grossman 399-9159**

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





## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

APR 29      UTICA MARSH (Oneida County; full day)  
SAT      **Coordinator:      Joan Cipriani, for HMBC      374-3729**  
**Joint trip with Nature Club of Central New York.**  
**Reservations due by April 24**

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.

APR 30      BLACK CREEK MARSH — WILD TURKEY PARCEL (Albany County; morning)  
SUN      **Coordinator:      Jennifer Hamilton      862-8202**

DEC and the Wild Turkey Federation maintain this parcel adjacent to the marsh which provides a different approach to the marsh and adjoining areas. Birds of interest seen and heard here include Golden and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Eastern Towhee, Ruffed Grouse, Brown Thrasher, Pileated Woodpecker as well as Field, Swamp, and White-crowned Sparrows. In addition to Wood Duck and Green-winged Teal, we'll also be watching for early migrating warblers. Blue-winged, Yellow-rumped, and Black-throated Green Warblers are found here, and on one occasion, a Hooded Warbler. Waterproof boots are recommended as the trail goes down to the edge of the marsh. Meet at 7:30 am at the parking lot approximately 1/4 mile west of the Voorheesville Public Library on the south side of School Rd. (County Rt. 209). Note: The parking area has a large sign, but it is somewhat hidden behind a row of trees.

### **MAY 1 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR ADIRONDACK BREEDING SPECIALITIES (JUNE 10—11)**

MAY 7      HUDSON & NANCY WINN PRESERVE (Albany County; morning)  
SUN      **Coordinator:      Jennifer Hamilton      861-8202**

This small, new Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy parcel in the town of Knox is rich with warblers as well as a good variety of other birds. Warblers previously seen or heard here include Ovenbirds (numerous), American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Prairie, Nashville, Blackburnian, Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Black and White, Chestnut-sided, and Blue-winged. Other species of interest encountered include Veery, Wood & Hermit Thrushes, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, Blue-headed & Red-eyed Vireos, Great-crested Flycatcher, Winter Wren, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Common Raven. Parking is extremely limited at the preserve, so please meet to carpool at the public parking lot on Rt. 146 in Altamont just west of the Altamont Enterprise offices on Maple Ave. at 7:30 am.



# Feathers

## HMBC BOARD FOR 2005-2006

### Officers

### Committee Chairs

**President:**

David Martin  
134 Normanskill Rd.  
Slingerlands, NY 12159  
765-4982

**Vice-President:**

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23 Scotch Mist Way  
Malta, NY 12020  
899-2678

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7 Finch Ct.  
Rensselaer, NY 12144  
577-8005

**Treasurer:**

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Niskayuna, NY 12309  
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Conservation:	Patti Packer	399-4843
Birdline:	John Saville	399-5959
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Field Trips:	Donna Zimmerman	869-6624
Membership:	Dan Welch	477-2980
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Publications:	Bob Miller	274-2670
Raptor Migration	Gary Goodness	862-9260
Records:	(vacant)	
Sanctuary:	Carl George	393-0629
Social:	Denise Hackert-Stoner	785-6760
Jr. Activities:	(vacant)	

### Directors

Larry Alden	861-6087
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](mailto: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:  
Chris Grossman at [BGrossman@nycap.rr.com](mailto:BGrossman@nycap.rr.com)

Send all paper submissions to:

**Bob Miller**  
1994 15th St.  
Troy, NY 12180



## LOOKING FOR YOUNG BIRDERS

Again this year, the club wishes to sponsor another youth team at the

### World Series of Birding

The event will be held on May 16th this year, as always at Cape May, NJ

More information on the event can be found at <http://www.njaudubon.org/WSB/>

Steve Mesick is looking for young birders that may be interested.  
He can be reached at [Yugruguru@aol.com](mailto:Yugruguru@aol.com)

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

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**SOME THOUGHTS ON THE BOOK, JOHN JAMES AUDUBON**  
*BY RICHARD J. PATRICK*

When I completed my six years on the Board of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County I was given Richard Rhode's book, *John James Audubon*. I appreciated the thought but I didn't think I needed another book about Audubon. After all, when we were kids in Oneonta we always had that big thick book of reproductions out of the Huntington Library, studying his drawings. And all of us birdwatchers pretty much know the basics of the artist's life. Well, I was wrong. I did need this book. So do you.

We all know that Audubon could draw better than any of us. He could also write better than most of us. I presume you have all read at least one review of this new book so I will just give you what I found to be the highlights.

We have all heard descriptions of the vast flocks of Carolina Paroquets, Passenger Pigeons, and Eskimos Curlews. Probably the description you read was written by Audubon. He was there. He was also there when Ivory-billed Woodpeckers could be easily found. He tells us of the wonders that, sadly, we will never see ourselves.

Do you know what the biggest earthquake to hit America was? It was the great earthquake of 1811-12, which destroyed much of New Madrid, Missouri Territory. The quake produces a number of "earthquake

Christians." Audubon was there to take the shocks for us. Like Woody Allen in the movie *Zelig* or Tom Hanks in *Forest Gump*, he was everywhere. If there was an event happening in the United States, Great Britain, or France, Audubon was there to describe it for us. If there was a person worth knowing in those countries, they were pleased to make Mr. Audubon's acquaintance. Let me give you an example from Audubon's own writing.

*Col. John J. Abert, the head of the Topographical Bureau and I walked together toward the President's House to present my letters... The next moment I was in the presence of the famed man (Andrew Jackson) and had shaken his hand. He read (one of my letters) twice with apparent care and having finished said, "Mr. Audubon, I will do all in my power to serve you, but the Seminole War, I fear will prevent your having*

**In This Issue...**

*Christma Bird Counts*

*Many Spring Field Trips*

*Upcoming Programs*



## **JOHN JAMES AUDUBON (continued)**

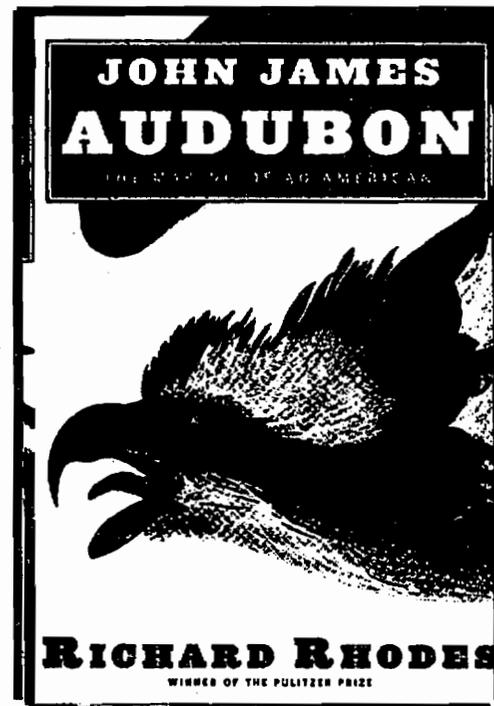
*a cutter – however as we will have a Committee at 1 o'clock this day we will talk of this and will give you an answer tomorrow.” ...He was very kind, and as soon as he heard that we intended departing tomorrow evening for Charleston, invited us to dine with him en famille.*

*At the named hour we went to the White House (which is the vulgar name for the President's residence) and were taken into a room where the President soon joined us. I sat close to him; we spoke of olden times and touched lightly on politics and I found him very adverse to the cause of the Texans... I dined from a fine young turkey, shot within twenty miles of Washington. The general drank no wine, but his health was drunk by us more than once; and he ate very moderately, his last dish consisting of bread and milk.*

There are certainly a lot of ways this experience could touch a person today; but for me personally, finishing the meal with bread and milk took me back to my childhood, tearing the Lady Betty white bread into long strips and dunking them into my milk glass at the end of supper.

Now who else besides Abert (who loaned his name to the Towhee that was always the first to greet us in the patio of my sister-in-laws' condo in Palm Desert) did Audubon know? Let's sing out the bird with the name associated with each of Audubon's friends' Bachman, Bell, Bewick, Bonapart, Clark, Harlan, Harris, Henslow, Lewis, Lincoln, MacGillivray, Nuttall, Say, Smith, Spague, Swainson, Townsend, Traill, and Wilson.

You Johny-come-latelies may have trouble with Thomas Stewart Traill and I, myself, wonder if, for instance, Thomas Nuttall resembled a woodpecker. But these people were his friends. One of many reasons, perhaps, is that he regretted his lack of formal education when compared with any of these gentlemen who were associated with the leading universities and scientific societies of his day. He did not come on as a “know-it-all.” The best reason for his many loyal friends, from everything I have read in Rhode's book, was that John James Audubon was truly a good guy!





## Troy Christmas Bird Count

*By Larry Alden*

Seventeen birders in seven field parties took part in the Troy Christmas Bird Count, held on Saturday, December 31, 2005. This count has been held annually since the winter of 1949-50, with two early counts in the 1920s. The 15-mile diameter Troy count circle is centered just north of Lock 1 of the Champlain Canal. It encompasses all or parts of the Towns of Colonie, Clifton Park, Brunswick, Schaghticoke, Halfmoon, Waterford; Cities of Troy, Cohoes, Mechanicville, Watervliet; and Villages of Green Island, Waterford, Schaghticoke, Valley Falls, and Stillwater. Major water bodies include Tomhannock Reservoir, the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers.

The weather was strange this year, perhaps presaging the rest of the winter. Two weeks prior to the count, ice was on the rivers and temperatures were in the single digits. Then it warmed up. By the time of this count, almost all the snow was gone and there was ice on ponds only. The Tomhannock was only partly open on the northeast side.

The day of the count was the first cool day we'd had in a week. There was a bit of wind in the pre-dawn hours, but it calmed down soon after sunrise. Light snow began from west to east across the circle, starting around 1:00 p.m. in the western sectors and around 3:00 p.m. in the east. At times, the snow was heavy, and about two inches had accumulated by sunset.

Despite these negatives, field parties beat the bushes and picked up a few of the rarer species like Savannah Sparrow (8<sup>th</sup> occurrence on this count), Peregrine Falcon (7<sup>th</sup>), Red-head and Greater Scaup (both 6<sup>th</sup>), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Gray Catbird, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet (all 5<sup>th</sup>), while adding American Pipit to the count. These efforts added up to a record high total of 74 species, beating the previous high of 73 species set on December 30, 1995!

We tied or set record high totals for Greater Scaup, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Common Raven, Red-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, and, of course, American Pipit.

What could we do to get a higher count next year? Well, there's nothing we can do about the weather, but having more eyes looking doesn't hurt. This is always the last of the three HMBC-sponsored counts, and cold weather usually limits the "half-hardy" species (this year may have been an exception.) Only two parties attempted any owling, and the numbers of owls reported reflects that.

Next year's Troy Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Saturday, December 30, 2006. Since this is not New Year's Eve or New Year's Day, you really have no excuses not to take part!

# Feathers

## 106th CBC (Winter 2005—2006) results for Troy



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
Snow Goose					1			1
Canada Goose	1225	251	400	15	2071	132	267	4361
American Black Duck	3	8	7	4	36	10		68
Mallard	23	244	39	9	377	20	1	713
Canvasback			1					1
Redhead			1					1
Greater Scaup			1					1
Lesser Scaup					1			1
Common Goldeneye			28	20	2	6		56
Hooded Merganser					3			3
Common Merganser		18	30	70	35	19		172
Bald Eagle*	1	1	2	1	1			6
Northern Harrier					3		2	5
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1	3		1			5
Cooper's Hawk		1	1	1	1		2	6
Northern Goshawk					1			1
Red-tailed Hawk	15	13	21	7	41	6	17	120
Rough-legged Hawk					2		5	7
American Kestrel	1				1			2
Merlin			1					1
Peregrine Falcon			2			2		4
Ruffed Grouse		4	1					5
Wild Turkey	31				51			82
Ring-billed Gull	10	19	15	22	58	63	9	196
Herring Gull		4	1	1500	42	17	45	1609
Iceland Gull				1	1			2
Lesser Black-backed Gull				2				2
Glaucous Gull				1	1	(1)		2
Great Black-backed Gull			2	414	15	4	22	457
Rock Pigeon	132	475	185	251	139	190	90	1462
Mourning Dove	94	88	130	1	93	23	89	518
Eastern Screech-Owl		1						1
Great Horned Owl	1							1
Belted Kingfisher		1						1



# Feathers

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
<b>Red-bellied Woodpecker</b>	2	6	7	1	4		2	22
<b>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</b>		2						2
<b>Downy Woodpecker</b>	16	24	13	8	19	14	8	102
<b>Hairy Woodpecker</b>	3	10	4	3	3		4	27
<b>Northern Flicker</b>	2	3	1	1	4	4	3	18
<b>Pileated Woodpecker</b>	2	3	1			1	1	8
<b>Blue Jay</b>	46	51	70	18	50	14	50	299
<b>American Crow</b>	378	1000	648	110	741	83	91	3051
<b>Common Raven</b>			2			1	1	4
<b>Horned Lark</b>		66	15	1				82
<b>Black-capped Chickadee</b>	143	166	89	42	21	66	62	589
<b>Tufted Titmouse</b>	19	40	13	13	1	8	12	106
<b>Red-breasted Nuthatch</b>	13	3	2	1	1	1		21
<b>White-breasted Nuthatch</b>	23	27	16	3	14	10	8	101
<b>Brown Creeper</b>	2		1					3
<b>Carolina Wren</b>		2		2				4
<b>Golden-crowned Kinglet</b>			4			3		7
<b>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</b>				1				1
<b>Eastern Bluebird</b>		4		4	4	7	11	30
<b>Hermit Thrush</b>		1						1
<b>American Robin</b>	100	204	6	1	15	73	9	408
<b>Gray Catbird</b>		1						1
<b>Northern Mockingbird</b>		1		1	1	2		5
<b>European Starling</b>	425	494	53	210	300	26	67	1575
<b>American Pipit</b>					1			1
<b>Cedar Waxwing</b>							56	56
<b>American Tree Sparrow</b>	35	79	36	3	30	14	19	216
<b>Savannah Sparrow</b>							1	1
<b>Song Sparrow</b>	1	10	3	5	3	1		23
<b>Swamp Sparrow</b>		1						1
<b>White-throated Sparrow</b>	18	32	20	13	5	3	4	95
<b>Dark-eyed Junco</b>	66	97	167	18	25	17	58	448
<b>Snow Bunting</b>		1						1
<b>Northern Cardinal</b>	16	30	21	8	12	13	16	116

# Feathers



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
Brown-headed Cowbird		49			50		40	139
House Finch	3	23	48	2	13	12	26	127
Common Redpoll	40	32						72
Pine Siskin	3							3
American Goldfinch	44	43	75	5	5	44	10	226
House Sparrow	94	134	80	147	127	132	60	774
Total Birds	3030	3768	2266	2940	4426	1041	1168	18639
Total Species	35	47	45	41	48	36	35	74

\* Notes: Bald Eagles - 5 adults, 1 immature

**Bold** = record number or tied record for the count

**Group A:** Frank Murphy, Andrew Mackie. 6:15 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (1 hour, 1 mile on foot; 6¼ hours, 65 miles by car. Also 1 hour, 10 miles owling.)

**Group B:** Larry Alden, Jackie Bogardus, Steve Chorvas. 5:30 a.m. - 5:15 p.m. (2 hours, 1 mile on foot; 8 hours, 68 miles by car. Also 1¾ hours, 11 miles owling.)

**Group C:** Rich Guthrie, Lin Fagan. 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (½ hour, 1 mile on foot; 6½ hours, 45 miles by car.)

**Group D:** Sue Adair, Ellen Pemrick, Beverly Relyea. 7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (4½ hours, 5 miles on foot; 3 hours, 44 miles by car.)

**Group E:** Bill Lee, Gene Vermilyea . 7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (5 hours, 4 miles on foot; 4½ hours, 73 miles by car.)

**Group F:** Norton Miller, Beth Waite, Howard Prescott. 7:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., 12:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. (2¾ hours, 2 miles by foot; 5½ hours, 84 miles by car.)

**Group G:** Joan Cipriani, Peggy Rudis. 7:00 a.m. - 4:15 p.m. (1¾ hours, 1 mile by foot, 7½ hours, 60 miles by car.)



## HMBC Field Trip Reports

### HUDSON RIVER (GREENE CO) March 5, 2006

We had almost as many participants (26) as bird species (31). Of the nine species of water birds only HORNED GREBE, SNOW GOOSE, RING-NECKED DUCK and HOODED Merganser seem worth mentioning. There was one of each of those and four COMMON GOLD-EYE on the river. A total of 6 BALD EAGLES made viewing more interesting. Rich Guthrie spotted a flock of WILD TURKEYS in Athens and a COOPER'S HAWK across the river in Hudson. The river was open. It never froze over this year.

The participants were: Kim Berrin, Krystal Bove, Candice Bruce, Mike Butler, Mona Cady, Bob, Margo and Sue Carroll, Joan Ciprianai, Jocelyn Cole-Calkins, Bill Cook, Sarah Goodwin, Don Grescens, Rich Guthrie, Honey Holler, Drew Hopkins, John Kent, Joyce Miller, Flora and Robert Ramonowski, Hank Stebbins, Diane Stewart, Susan Stewart, Emily Stone, Melanie Werenczaic and Erin Wilsey

— *Bill Cook*

## Upcoming 2006 HMBC Programs

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

Treats for the body and soul.

Join us at Five Rivers on Monday, April 3, at 7:00 PM for our annual Literary Night. Bring your favorite nature poem or short prose to share, or come to listen and enjoy! All are welcome to bring a dessert to share with the group.

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### ***HMBC Annual Banquet and Business Meeting***

**Monday, April 10, 2006**  
***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



## Upcoming 2006 HMBC Programs (continued)

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.

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 *Peeks 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.

HMBC Members will receive a mailing with details.

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

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**Monday, June 5, 7:00 PM** at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar  
***Botswana's Okavango Delta and the Shoebill of Zambia's Bangweulu Wetlands***,  
Don and Donna Traver

This program is about a trip to South Central Africa in search of Shoebill. The Shoebill is a very unusual and uncommon bird that is found only in the dense swamps of Central Africa. As it has no close relatives it is taxonomically placed in a family all of its own. So as dedicated "family listers" we were compelled to go there in order to reach our goal of seeing a member of each of the world's bird families. Of the 204 families (Clements) this was to be 202.

The program starts with a stay at three tented camps in the truly remarkable and pristine Okavango Delta where we saw numbers of mammals particularly leopards, lions, cape buffalo, elephants and antelope that were virtually unthreatened by our presence in Land Rovers. Birds were also in great numbers and Pel's Fishing-Owl was spectacular.

Following two weeks in the Delta we arranged an extension for the two of us and went northward by bush plane to the immense Bangweulu wetlands of Zambia. Heading to a remote location known as Shoebill Camp we hoped to see at least one of the huge birds. That little three-day extension turned out to be one of the more memorable adventures of our birding lives.



## Upcoming 2006 HMBC Programs (continued)

The Travers are retired teachers -- Don from Webster, Donna from Pittsford -- who are on a quest to see a member of every bird family in the world. Two remaining are Rhabadornis in the Philippines and Rockfowl (Picathartes) in West Africa. Don and Donna have been well-received at their previous several programs to the HMBC, and we welcome their return to give this fascinating new show.

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**Thursday, September 14, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Birding Central America*, Frank Murphy**

The fall program schedule will begin with a joint program of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and Capital Region Audubon.

## Upcoming 2005 Capital Region Audubon Programs

**Thursday, April 13, 2006, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Adirondack Nature*, Warren Greene**

Well-known for his published shots of loons, bluebirds, hawks, and owls, Warren Greene is making a return visit to the Capital District to share some of his favorite slides of Adirondack nature. Loons, owls, spruce grouse, bobcat, butterflies and moths, and the beautiful flowers and scenes of our great north country will be featured in this show. Come and enjoy Adirondack Nature with Warren Greene!

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**Thursday, May 11, 2006, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library** ***America's "Natural Parks"*, Scott and Denise Stoner**

From the rocky coast of Maine to Florida's Everglades, across the Great Plains, badlands, mountains, and deserts, to the West Coast, Alaska, and Hawaii -- America has preserved some of its greatest natural assets within the lands of its National Park Service. Come join Scott and Denise for a photo tour that highlights the scenic wonders, diversity, and wildlife of America's "natural parks".

Scott Stoner is past president of both the Capital Region Audubon and the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club. Denise is a Director of the Bird Club. Together, they have explored and photographed many of America's best - and least known - national park service sites.



## Upcoming Field Trips

### APRIL 14 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR DERBY HILL (APRIL 22—23)

APR 15  
morning)  
SAT

TWO SISTERS' "BACKYARD ACRES" — TOWN OF BALLSTON (Saratoga County;

**Coordinators: Honey Hollen 885-1202**  
**Susan Stewart 885-8497**

Join us for a "back acre" bird walk. We will cover various habitats between two roads in the back acres of suburban Burnt Hills. There will be pasture land, mature woods, overgrown fields, hedgerows, and wetlands. Please wear suitable footwear and bring bug repellent. We will meet in the driveway of 276 Scotch Bush Rd. Directions: From the traffic light on Rt. 50 in Burnt Hills, proceed north on Rt. 50 toward Ballston Spa. At the next traffic light, turn west (left) onto Charlton Rd. Come west to the third corner stop and turn left (south) onto Scotch Bush Rd. At approximately 1/4 of a mile, look for driveway on left (#276 or 274 or 272-all the same driveway). Come to end of driveway and arrive at Honey Hollen's house.

APR 20  
THUR  
(daytime)

WOODCOCK AT FIVE RIVERS

**Coordinator: Craig Thompson 475-0291**

During a meandering walk to the Woodcock site, we will look for other early spring birds. Woodcock flight time is expected around 8 pm. Bring binoculars and a flashlight if you have them. Meet at 7:00 PM at the Five Rivers interpretative building.

APR 22—23  
SAT—SUN

DERBY HILL HAWK WATCH (Oswego County; overnight)

**Coordinator: Joan Cipriani 374-3729**  
**Reservations due by April 14**

Derby Hill is the premier spring hawk-watching site in NY State. If weather is good for migrating hawks, it can be a fantastic day. Should the weather not be optimum for viewing raptors, there are several good options for spring birding in the area. Please call the coordinator for reservations.

### APRIL 24 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR UTICA MARSH (APRIL 29)

APR 29  
SAT

UTICA MARSH (Oneida County; full day)

**Coordinator: Joan Cipriani, for HMBC 374-3729**  
**Joint trip with Nature Club of Central New York.**  
**Reservations due by April 24**



## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

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.

APR 30  
SUN

**BLACK CREEK MARSH — WILD TURKEY PARCEL** (Albany County; morning)

**Coordinator: Jennifer Hamilton**

**862-8202**

DEC and the Wild Turkey Federation maintain this parcel adjacent to the marsh which provides a different approach to the marsh and adjoining areas. Birds of interest seen and heard here include Golden and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Eastern Towhee, Ruffed Grouse, Brown Thrasher, Pileated Woodpecker as well as Field, Swamp, and White-crowned Sparrows. In addition to Wood Duck and Green-winged Teal, we'll also be watching for early migrating warblers. Blue-winged, Yellow-rumped, and Black-throated Green Warblers are found here, and on one occasion, a Hooded Warbler. Waterproof boots are recommended as the trail goes down to the edge of the marsh. Meet at 7:30 am at the parking lot approximately 1/4 mile west of the Voorheesville Public Library on the south side of School Rd. (County Rt. 209). Note: The parking area has a large sign, but it is somewhat hidden behind a row of trees.

### **MAY 1 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR ADIRONDACK BREEDING SPECIALITIES (JUNE 10—11)**

MAY 7  
SUN

**HUDSON & NANCY WINN PRESERVE** (Albany County; morning)

**Coordinator: Jennifer Hamilton**

**861-8202**

This small, new Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy parcel in the town of Knox is rich with warblers as well as a good variety of other birds. Warblers previously seen or heard here include Ovenbirds (numerous), American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Prairie, Nashville, Blackburnian, Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Black and White, Chestnut-sided, and Blue-winged. Other species of interest encountered include Veery, Wood & Hermit Thrushes, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, Blue-headed & Red-eyed Vireos, Great-crested Flycatcher, Winter Wren, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Common Raven. Parking is extremely limited at the preserve, so please meet to carpool at the public parking lot on Rt. 146 in Altamont just west of the Altamont Enterprise offices on Maple Ave. at 7:30 am.





## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

highlights for your group.

NOTE: Please contact Larry Alden if you have any questions or need suggestions. Also let Larry know if you need people to fill out a group or are interested in joining a group; he may be able to make a match.

**MAY 21  
SUN**

**SCHODACK TOWN PARK (Rensselaer County; morning)**  
**Coordinator: Frank Murphy** **577-8005**  
**[thrush@nycap.rr.com](mailto:thrush@nycap.rr.com)**

Join us for a nice, easy walk along a hemlock-lined stream and adjoining woodland and fields in this beautiful gem of a town park, a new trip for the club. Louisiana Waterthrushes nest here as well as Indigo Bunting, Field Sparrow, and other specialties. Meet at 8 am at the parking lot near the stream (park at the dead end). From Albany, take I-90 east to exit 11, then left at the traffic light onto Rt. 150 for about 1 mile. Turn right onto Pioneer Dr.; park entrance is on left about a block away.

**MAY 27  
SAT**

**GRAFTON LAKES STATE PARK (Rensselaer County; morning)**  
**Coordinators: Phil and Marjorie Whitney** **477-9050**

Grafton Lakes State Park and the surrounding areas include deciduous and coniferous woodland, open fields, marshes, ponds, and a large, bird-rich patch of highbush blueberries. Seventy or more bird species are present in summer, including as many as 12-15 warbler species. Most of these should be present and staking out nesting sites by now. The trip will include several short walks totaling less than 2 miles. Black flies will be out, so bug repellent is strongly recommended.

Meet at 7:15 AM. Directions: Take State Route 2 about 14 miles east from Troy to about 1/2 mile west of Grafton Village. Turn right on the loop road that leads to the main park entrance and park off to the side before reaching the flashing light.

**MAY 28  
SUN**

**NOBLEWOOD PARK (Essex County; full day)**  
**Coordinator: Donna Zimmerman** **869-6624**  
**Field Leader: Matthew Medler**  
**Joint trip with High Peaks Audubon**  
**Reservations by May 14**

Located along the shore of Lake Champlain in Essex County, Noblewood Park offers great birding opportunities year-round. In late May, highlights should include shorebirds such as Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Dunlin and Ruddy Turnstone. Caspian Terns, Great Egret and Black-crowned Night-Heron nest on the Four Brothers. Other possibilities should include a nice selection of breeding forest birds, such as Pileated Woodpecker, Pine, Blackburnian and Yellow-rumped Warblers and Hermit Thrush. Barred and Great Horned Owls both nest. Additional birding outside of Noblewood with possibilities such as Golden-winged Warbler, Mourning Warbler, and even Boreal Chickadee can be planned based on participant interest. To learn more about Noblewood, visit the following web site: [www.noblewoodpark.com/](http://www.noblewoodpark.com/) Call the coordinator for reservations and details.





# Feathers

## HMBC BOARD FOR 2005-2006

### Officers

**President:**  
David Martin  
134 Normanskill Rd.  
Slingerlands, NY 12159  
765-4982

**Secretary:**  
Frank Murphy  
7 Finch Ct.  
Rensselaer, NY 12144  
577-8005

**Vice-President:**  
Cathy Graichen  
23 Scotch Mist Way  
Malta, NY 12020  
899-2678

**Treasurer:**  
Ellen Perrick  
298 Vly Rd.  
Niskayuna, NY 12309  
452-4384

### Committee Chairs

Conservation:	Patti Packer	399-4843
Birdline:	John Saville	399-5959
Programs:	Scott Stoner	785-6760
Field Trips:	Donna Zimmerman	869-6624
Membership:	Dan Welch	477-2980
Publicity:	Ann B'Rells	355-5615
Publications:	Chris Grossman	399-9159
Raptor Migration	Gary Goodness	862-9260
Records:	(vacant)	
Sanctuary:	Carl George	393-0629
Social:	Denise Hackert-Stoner	785-6760
Jr. Activities:	(vacant)	

### Directors

Larry Alden	861-8087
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](mailto: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:  
Chris Grossman at [bgrossman@nycap.rr.com](mailto:bgrossman@nycap.rr.com)

Send all paper submissions to:  
**Chris Grossman**  
7 Nott Rd.  
Rexford, NY 12148



## President's Corner

David L. Martin

With this issue Chris Grossman takes on the full responsibility of editing *Feathers*. She replaces Bob Miller who edited *Feathers* so ably for over three years.

Being the editor of a newsletter looks like an easy job from the outside. After all, anyone can see that *Feathers* is just a few pages long. But, the truth is that editing *Feathers* can sometimes be daunting. A deadline always seem to be looming just ahead, and there often seems to be too little material. Bob did a terrific job as editor, and the Club owes him a debt of gratitude. Thank you very much, Bob.

As editor, Chris will be looking for contributions from HMBC members. Let's make it easy for her by submitting articles, field trip reports, and even puzzles. I know Chris will do a great job. Let's all do our part.

FEATHERS  
Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club  
c/o Five Rivers EEC  
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## A BIRDING MILESTONE

By Scott Stoner

Denise approached last summer's long trip out west with hopes of two birding milestones: a long-sought species, and a significant numerical threshold. But these were only a small part of a great trip. Our journey would take us 6500 miles, through several state capitals, the *habitat* of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, the home of several musical giants, many national park service sites, visits with several friends and relatives, and some great Western scenery.

After quick stops to see the capitols in Charleston, WV, Frankfort, KY, and Nashville, TN, we spent our second night of the trip in Memphis. A drive past Graceland next morning offered a chance to get a picture of the sign on Lonely Street, "Elvis Lives"! (could we really leave Memphis without taking this picture?!)

Heading into Arkansas (a geographic milestone for Scott – his 50<sup>th</sup> state), we soon stopped at the habitat of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. I stress *habitat* here; with teams of searchers over many months getting only a handful of sightings, we knew that the chances of two people in a few hours seeing one was virtually zero. However, we did visit the Dagmar (state) wildlife area, and saw the "big woods," the Cache River, Prothonotary Warbler, Northern Parula, Indigo Bunting, and newly added signs depicting the rediscovery and hope for the

Ivory-bill.

What was most interesting was the ongoing transformation of the nearby town of Brinkley, AR. A motel was in the process of being renamed the Ivory bill Inn, there were ivory bill T-shirts for sale, an ivory bill gift shop opening up, and a sign that said "welcome birdwatchers – the bird is the word" (honest, we have a picture!) An article in ABA's magazine *Birding* from 2001 (before the rediscovery) was titled, "Ivory-billed Dreams, Ivory-billed Reality." Today's reality is not only that at least one has been found, but that the rediscovery is bringing much needed economic benefit to a section of Arkansas.

Continuing west along I-40, we made quick stops in eastern Oklahoma at both Checotah (home of American Idol winner Carrie Underwood) and Okemah (home of Woody

### In This Issue....

*Many Summer Field Trips*

*Upcoming Programs*

*HMBC Local Birding Guide, and  
other new publications*



## A BIRDING MILESTONE (continued)

Guthrie). We stayed in Oklahoma City, where the forecast' baseball-sized hail overnight fortunately did not materialize, then headed on to Albuquerque the next day. Petroglyph National Monument on the west side of the city was very hot, but the petroglyphs were interesting, and it offered a great view of the city and surrounding mountains.

The next day brought us to both El Malpais and El Morro National Monuments in northwestern New Mexico. El Malpais, which means bad lands, preserves a fascinating volcanic landscape. It yielded few birds other than Say's Phoebes and Mountain Bluebirds, but we did enjoy (hot) hiking on a lava trail. El Morro (where we saw a ranger friend from the Everglades) preserves Inscription Rock, a waypoint for travelers in the 1800s, some of whom carved evidence of their journeys.

Our next major stop was in Arizona, at Petrified Forest National Park, which is really two parks in one. The northern half features the Painted Desert, with its magnificent hues only slightly diminished by smoke from major forest fires in Arizona. The southern half contains the equally spectacular petrified wood, the mineralized remains of 200-million-year-old trees! Disappointed (but not surprised) to learn that 12 tons of petrified wood is stolen from that park every year, we sent the Superintendent our multi-point suggestions to combat wood theft.

We continued west to the Grand Canyon (south rim), where we saw five released (not countable) California Condors. These immense birds were understandably the subject of considerable visitor and interpretive attention. A lightning-caused

forest fire (that was being allowed to burn) on the north rim also drew a lot of attention; flames were visible from the south rim, and smoke filled the canyon during the night. It made for some interesting photos from along the rim trail the next morning. Birding along this trail was interesting as well, with Western Tanager, Rock Wren, Western Scrub Jay, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and Mountain Chickadee, along with Denise's first life bird of the trip, Pygmy Nuthatch!

Our next major area was northeast Arizona. A steep hike at Sunset Crater National Monument proved both very tough on the loose volcanic surface, and very hot. Denise also reinjured the toe that she had broken just before leaving on the trip! However, the view of the San Francisco peaks (in Northern Arizona) from the top was spectacular. At Wupatki (the first of several parks with the ruins of human habitation that we visited), we spent most of our time assisting a distraught visitor whose motorized wheelchair had broken down, down the hill in the hot sun. We did enjoy however seeing the ancient dwellings and a Black-throated Sparrow, and photographing the desert vegetation.

After a visit to friends in Flagstaff (who had Red Crossbills at their feeder!), we headed northeast to the Four Corners area. We visited Navajo National Monument, where we saw dinosaur tracks and more ruins, and learned about Navajo culture. Famed Monument Valley, a Navajo tribal park, is site of the great sandstone buttes, many Western movies, and one of the most scenic places in North America. After the obligatory pictures of Scott and Denise in four states at once (CO, UT, AZ, NM) at the Four Corners



## A BIRDING MILESTONE (continued)

monument, we headed on to Colorado's Mesa Verde National park (narrowly missing a Mule Deer near its entrance), where we spent the next three nights.

Mostly focusing on the remains of cliff and mesa top dwellings, we also did a fair amount of hiking at Mesa Verde. The Petroglyph Point trail was particularly interesting, with great views, good birding, and an impressive wall of petroglyphs. Birds seen in the park included Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Violet-green Swallow, Rock Wren, Canyon Wren, Lesser Goldfinch, Say's Phoebe, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager, White-throated Swift, Mountain Bluebird, and Denise's second life bird of the trip: Virginia's Warbler. Unfortunately, the above-average temperatures continued, making for hot hiking and tough sleeping in the non-air conditioned lodge. Encountering a family of Mule Deer in the road just as we left the lodge (another near-miss, and grim reminder of the roadway hazards from these hooved and antlered animals), Denise drove at a virtual crawl the entire 20 miles out of the park!

Finally we got into some cooler weather as we headed deeper into the mountains of Colorado. US 550 north from Durango was very scenic but also slow and winding, with steep drop-offs and no guard rails. Silverton offered a look at an old mining town. By the time we were driving north of Denver to Estes Park (at the east side of Rocky Mountain National Park), it was again nearly dark, in (another) high-risk deer area!

The next three days were cool and enjoyable, as we explored the high, and higher, habitats of Rocky Mountain National Park from our base in Estes Park. The "lower" elevations of 8 – 9,000 feet had lush meadows (glacial moraine) filled with wildflowers, forests, and mountain lakes. Birds included Red-naped Sapsucker (with hummingbirds attracted to the sap), Black-billed Magpie, and Green-tailed Towhee. Wyoming Ground Squirrels (like small prairie dogs) and Golden-mantled Ground Squirrels were common.

Of greatest interest was the alpine tundra, in the 11,000 – 12,000 foot elevation along Trail Ridge Road. Also known as US 34, this road traverses the middle of the park, and is only open during part of the year. Above treeline, we saw Yellow-bellied Marmot, Pica, Elk, and American Pipit. Lighting is a big danger up here, where people are the tallest objects on the tundra. As the ranger talk on lightning inside the Alpine Visitor Center concluded, a tremendous electrical storm struck – and kept people stuck in the safety of the building for a couple of hours! The temperature outside dropped to 46 degrees with that storm.

Of perhaps greatest interest in the tundra was the vast carpet of alpine wildflowers, most only an inch or so tall, that provided many photographic opportunities. So beautiful and delicate are these flowers, amplified by the backdrop of great snow-covered mountains.

The bird that had eluded us the entire trip was American Dipper. A denizen of flowing mountain streams, this small bird bobs and walks underwater. We checked mile after



## A BIRDING MILESTONE (continued)

mile of suitable habitat, both in the park and beyond, for this fascinating creature. We continued checking as we began our journey home, driving east from Estes Park along US 34. Along the Big Thompson Canyon (which had flooded in 1976 with a terrible loss of life), we stopped at a public viewing point, overlooking perfect dipper habitat. While Scott was taking pictures,

Denise carefully and deliberately scanned the waters for this bird. Suddenly, she yelled "I see one" – and there it was, an American Dipper, bobbing its way along under water downstream. Not only was this a very satisfying sighting of a long-time "wish" bird, but it was life bird # 500 for Denise! A great way to end the trip, as we prepared for our long drive home.

## HMBC Field Trip Reports

### SEARCH FOR GRAY PARTRIDGE (MALONE) March 23, 2006

We were successful in locating GRAY PARTRIDGE near Malone, NY. Five of us arrived



at Carla's at about 11:30 and scanned the field on the west side of Rt. 30. No luck, no birds. After 10 or 15 minutes, we moved over to Gleason Rd., hoping that a different angle

might provide a view if the birds were hunkered down behind cover or in a deep furrow. One of the group spotted movement at the edge between the rototilled field and the cover crop area. We got a spotting scope on it just in time to see the head and back of a partridge disappearing into the cover crop stubble. After a few minutes of scanning the area and not coming up with anything, we moved back to Rt. 30 and scoped the area

where the partridge had been. One of the group moved up the road to get a different aspect on the field, and after coming up with nothing, turned around to scan the field east of Rt. 30 toward Childs Rd. In the back of that field, she spotted a feeding cock partridge. After getting scopes on the bird, we realized we had a pair, a cock and hen. They were cooperative and allowed close enough approach for a few photos by John Hershey. Hard to believe, but Malone may be the last stand for Gray Partridge in New York. It was a life bird for everyone else in the group!

—Bill Lee

### VISCHER FERRY INSTRUCTIONAL FIELD TRIP March 26, 2006

There was an excellent turn-out of 20 participants for this trip, including some enthusiastic beginners. As expected, a variety of ducks was the main highlight of the trip. After crossing the Whipple Bridge we aimed our scopes to the west on the marsh area parallel to the towpath. Here we easily found CANADA



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

GOOSE, MALLARD, AMERICAN BLACK DUCK, AMERICAN WIDGEON, and RING-NECKED DUCK. Some of us could just barely detect a GADWALL and NORTHERN SHOVELER in the distance, though not everyone was able to see them. We proceeded toward the river and found a pair of elegant NORTHERN PINTAILS feeding in the back pond. Heading east on the road, we watched a pair of WOOD DUCKS land in a tree after performing a courtship flight. Next we stopped at a point with a view of the Mohawk River where we discovered COMMON and HOODED MERGANSERS. A SHARP-SHINNED HAWK and AMERICAN KESTREL were spotted in flight across the river, and a KILLDEER was heard.

Further along the loop back to the main entrance we spotted a number of GREEN-WINGED TEAL, A BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD, and a GREAT BLUE HERON. A recently-arrived TREE SWALLOW was seen flying over the marsh. Upon returning to the main entrance we compiled a final list of 38 bird species. Later in the day, many of us were surprised to find that a local photographer (not part of our field trip) had posted a message on the hmbirds Yahoo! Website asking for help in identifying some "Strange Birds at Vischer Ferry". He then provided a link to his photograph of the members of our field trip, happily engrossed in watching birds. This photo can be found on the internet at <http://www.through-my-lens.com/gallery/hmbirders.htm>

—John Hershey, co-leader

**FIELD TRIP TO FORT MILLER/HUDSON  
RIVER  
March 19, 2006**

A dozen birders spotted 42 species on the chilly March 19 morning trip along the Hudson River to Fort Miller in Washington County. A late-winter cold snap with highs in the twenties caused shallower marshes to ice over. Many ducks retreated to the edges of the deeper Hudson.

Along the dirt road bordering the Hudson between Schuylerville and Fort Miller, we enjoyed excellent views of several RED-HEADS, NORTHERN PINTAIL, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, LESSER SCAUP and an AMERICAN WIGEON and BUFFLEHEADS. We also enjoyed good looks at many RING-NECKED DUCKS, small flocks of GOLDENEYES, several pairs of HOODED MERGANSERS, about a thousand CANADA Geese, a few COMMON MERGANSERS as well as many BLACK DUCKS and MALLARDS.

The Fort Miller cemetery was brightened by several EASTERN BLUEBIRDS hawking insects from the tops of gravestones, as well an animated flock of CEDAR Waxwings, plucking small fruit from a tree. AMERICAN ROBINS dotted the lawns. Singing SONG SPARROW, many GRACKLES, RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS, a TURKEY VULTURE and KILLDEER were other signs of spring. Other notable species seen: RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, DARK-EYED JUNCO, NORTHERN CARDINAL, HAIRY AND DOWNY WOODPECKER, BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, TUFTED TIT-MOUSE, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH and a singing HOUSE FINCH.

—Joyce Miller and Mona Bearor



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

### **TWO SISTERS BACKYARD ACRES April 15, 2006**

We had 17 people attend the walk including several younger birders. It was a overcast, calm morning with a freshening breeze and close to 60F. With sharp eyes and ears, 31 species were seen or heard. The highlights would include an EASTERN TOWHEE, several drumming RUFFED GROUSE and one flying off from a low tree nearby, and a YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER - first of the season. We also spied an EASTERN PHOEBEE, and heard or saw CHIPPING, FIELD and SONG SPARROWS. An AMERICAN GOLDFINCH pair were observed inspecting an old Oriole nest. There is a variety of habitat intermixed thru out this area and the birds and other wildlife are able to "make a living" in the middle of suburban acres. At the end of the morning walk, four of us visited the Ballston Lake rookery and observed 4 GREAT BLUE HERON and many nests. A RED-TAILED HAWK was observed close by and landing in one of the rookery trees; Frogs (leopard?) were heard and spring peepers; A BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER raised a fuss on our way out.

—Honey Hollen and Susan Stewart

### **WOODCOCK SEARCH A REAL SNIPE HUNT FIVE RIVERS April 20, 2006**

As with much of early April, the weather on Thursday, April 20 was (again) sunny and warm. For the dozen or so assembled woodcock watchers, that suggested 2 things: twilight would be late and abrupt, delaying the evening's courtship antics, and some (maybe many) hens would already be on nest.

A few of the birders were eager to add the American Woodcock to their life and/or year lists. Knowing that prospects for actually seeing the bird very well are quite low, even on a good day, our trip leader, Five Rivers Director Craig Thompson, provided a thorough show-and-tell briefing with a mounted specimen and a tape recording of the male's remarkable courtship display.

Once afield, the party began logging many of the usual suspects, including a male EASTERN BLUEBIRD perched, fittingly, on the overhead wires along Bluebird Way. Active evening songsters included MOURNING DOVE, BLACK CAPPED CHICKADEE, AMERICAN ROBIN, CHIPPING SPARROW, Fi-Fi-Fi-Fi-Fi-FIEEEEEEEELD SPARROW, SONG SPARROW NORTHERN CARDINAL, RED WINGED BLACKBIRD, and AMERICAN GOLDFINCH. Others making a less musical appearance were CANADA GOOSE, WOOD DUCK, MALLARD, BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, and COMMON GRACKLE.

—Craig Thompson



## Upcoming 2006 HMBC Programs

**Monday, June 5, 7:00 PM** at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar  
***Botswana's Okavango Delta and the Shoebill of Zambia's Bangweulu Wetlands***,  
Don and Donna Traver

This program is about a trip to South Central Africa in search of Shoebill. The Shoebill is a very unusual and uncommon bird that is found only in the dense swamps of Central Africa. As it has no close relatives it is taxonomically placed in a family all of its own. So as dedicated "family listers" we were compelled to go there in order to reach our goal of seeing a member of each of the world's bird families. Of the 204 families (Clements) this was to be 202.

The program starts with a stay at three tented camps in the truly remarkable and pristine Okavango Delta where we saw numbers of mammals particularly leopards, lions, cape buffalo, elephants and antelope that were virtually unthreatened by our presence in Land Rovers. Birds were also in great numbers and Pel's Fishing-Owl was spectacular.

Following two weeks in the Delta we arranged an extension for the two of us and went northward by bush plane to the immense Bangweulu wetlands of Zambia. Heading to a remote location known as Shoebill Camp we hoped to see at least one of the huge birds. That little three-day extension turned out to be one of the more memorable adventures of our birding lives.

The Travers are retired teachers -- Don from Webster, Donna from Pittsford -- who are on a quest to see a member of every bird family in the world. Two remaining are Rhabadornis in the Philippines and Rockfowl (Picathartes) in West Africa. Don and Donna have been well-received at their previous several programs to the HMBC, and we welcome their return to give this fascinating new show.

**Thursday, September 14, 7:00 PM**, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library  
***Birding Central America***, Frank Murphy

The fall program schedule will begin with a joint program of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and Capital Region Audubon!



## Upcoming 2006 Capital Region Audubon Programs

**Thursday, June 8, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Important Bird Areas: Global Currency for Local Bird Conservation*, Jillian Liner**

In the mid-1990s, Audubon New York's Important Bird Area (IBA) Program was initiated with the goal of identifying sites within the state that are most important to birds and to protect and promote proper management of those sites for the long-term conservation of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. IBAs in New York are identified on the basis of criteria similar to those used throughout the world and pertain to at-risk birds, biome-restricted bird assemblages, and large congregations of birds. The network of 136 IBAs in NY has provided a solid foundation upon which to build conservation efforts aimed at protecting the full diversity of avian species in the state. Local community members can play a vital role in conserving IBAs. Through the Adopt an IBA initiative, a local group adopts an IBA and facilitates others to get involved at the site in an environmentally sensitive way. Involvement can include organizing an education program, monitoring effort, clean-up day, or habitat improvement project. There are nine IBAs in the Capitol Region where individuals could get involved. Come learn more about the IBA program and how you can make a difference in local conservation.

Jillian Liner has been the Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program Coordinator for Audubon New York since 2001 and is based in Ithaca at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. She has a BA in Biology from Skidmore College and a MS in Ecological Planning from the University of Vermont. Her interest in birds really took flight during an undergraduate internship with Pete Nye and the NYS DEC monitoring wintering Bald Eagles in the Hudson Valley. She continued pursuing her interest in birds by performing field surveys around the country and has worked for non-profit and state agencies performing landscape inventories and developing conservation plans.

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**Thursday, September 14, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Birding Central America*, Frank Murphy**

The fall program schedule will begin with a joint program of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and Capital Region Audubon.



## Recent Publications

### Birds of Franklin County, New York

Just in time for Spring migration, *Birds of Franklin County, New York* (1st Ed., 2006, 44 pp.), and an accompanying *Birding Trail Map* by John M.C. Peterson are now available FREE upon request from Franklin County Tourism by calling toll-free 1-800-709-4895. Please specify that you'd like copies of both the book and map. The book provides details of 280 species that have been found in Franklin County, of which 186 breed or have bred, together with a bibliography and list of field guides. This is an annotated checklist of the birds found in the county, providing the current status of each species, dates of arrival and departure, maxima, and other details. All records are documented by place, date, and observer, with a list of 75 initialed observers who contributed records. The map features site descriptions of a dozen of the best "Where to Find Birds" locations throughout the county, together with information on ecozones and habitats, as well as background on grassland and boreal birds, plus a map of canoe routes. Both the book and map also feature a reprint of the 1877 Roosevelt & Minot list of summer birds, rearranged for the first time into current phylogenetic ("A,O,U,") order, providing both modern names of species and those used in 1877. (Northern Parula was previously known as the Blue Yellow-backed Warbler, for example.) Color photographs of some 20 species on the book and map are by Jeff Nadler, while Ted Mack consulted on the birding sites and review of the records.

### Birding in Winter

Susan Edwards Richmond has a new book of poetry, *Birding in Winter*, just released by Finishing Line Press. Ms. Richmond is a graduate of Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake High School and Williams College, and has twice won the Academy of American Poets Prize. *Birding in Winter* draws on the imagery of birds in a series of poems spanning her childhood in upstate New York and her adult life in the northeast and other regions of the United States.

"Richmond's birds are emblems, but also their own mysterious selves," writes poet Lawrence Raab. Poet and critic Joan Houlihan offers this praise for *Birding in Winter*, "Biding their time with a precise imagery and carefully crafted line, these poems bring the natural world into focus, while staking their claim on joy."

Susan Edwards Richmond watches birds in all seasons from her current home in Massachusetts, where she lives with her husband and two daughters.

Her first chapbook, *Boto* (Adastra Press, 2002), is inspired by the mythology of the Amazon river dolphin. Her poems have appeared in *Blueline*, *Green Mountains Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *Maggid*, *The Saranac Review*, and many other journals.

To purchase and advance copy of "Birding in Winter" visit [www.finishinglinepress.com](http://www.finishinglinepress.com).





## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

**JUNE 17** NOTCHVIEW RESERVATION & MORAN WMA (full day)  
**SAT** Coordinators: **Phillip & Marjorie Whitney** **477-9050**  
Reservations due by June 15

Notchview Reservation is a 3000 acre preserve on the crest of the Berkshires in Windsor, MA, east of Pittsfield. It is managed by The Massachusetts Trustees of Reservations. There are a wide variety of habitats, including coniferous, mixed, and deciduous forests, open fields, old orchards, and small wetlands. Since it is used as a cross-country area in the winter, there is a good network of trails as well as a few unpaved roads. The birding possibilities include as many as ten warbler species, Red-eyed and Blue-headed Vireos, Hermit Thrush, Winter Wren, Pileated Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruffed Grouse, several raptors and Wild Turkey in the wooded areas. Open fields host birds such as Bobolinks, Eastern Kingbird, Killdeer and Eastern Bluebirds. Nearby Moran WMA has many of the same habitats, as well as marshes and an unusual wet meadow. This area is noted for the possibility (although not guaranteed) of meadow and grassland specialties including Lincoln's, Henslows and Grasshopper Sparrows and the Sedge Wren. Bring a bag lunch and comfortable walking shoes; we will probably walk up to two or three miles over moderately hilly terrain. June is black-fly season, so bring plenty of repellent and wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. There is a \$2 entrance fee at Notchview.

### JUNE 20 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR CARTER POND PADDLE TRIP (JUNE 24)

**JUNE 24** CARTER POND NATURE TRAIL (Washington County; morning)  
**SAT** Coordinators: **Scott and Denise Stoner** **785-6760**  
**scottjstoner@aol.com**

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.

**JUNE 24** CARTER POND PADDLING TRIP (Washington County; afternoon)  
**SAT** Coordinators: **Scott and Denise Stoner** **785-6760**  
**scottjstoner@aol.com**  
Reservations due by June 20.

On this afternoon trip, we will paddle the edges of Carter Pond, and explore the south and



## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

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.

**JULY 1  
SAT**

**CHERRY PLAINS STATE PARK (Rensselaer County; morning)  
Coordinators: Phillip and Marjorie Whitney**

**477-9050**

Cherry Plains is situated on the Rensselaer Plateau east of the Capital District. The relatively high elevation (up to 2000 feet), cool climate, and variety of forested and wetland habitats make this a good area for northern species. Nesting species include Least Flycatcher, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Scarlet Tanager, Common Raven, Broad-winged Hawk, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Black-and-white, Yellow-rumped, and Canada Warblers, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Veery, and Hermit Thrush. Evening Grosbeak, Swainson's Thrush, Northern Goshawk, and Mourning Warbler are rare but possible. An early start is important for midsummer birding, so plan to meet at 7:00 AM at the parking lot at Miller's (Hannaford) Market, on the right (south) side of Route 43 just past the intersection of Route 150 in West Sand Lake. Some walking is needed to get to the best habitats, so bring appropriate footwear.

**JULY 8  
SAT**

**HANNACROIX RAVINE (Albany County; morning)  
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 22  
SAT**

**HOLLYHOCK HOLLOW SANCTUARY (Albany County; morning)  
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.



## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

AUG 26—27 SOUTH SHORE BEACH, CHATHAM, CAPE COD MA (overnight)  
SAT—SUN **Local Coordinator: Donna Zimmerman** **869-6624**  
**Field Leader: Diane Silverstein**  
**Joint Trip with Cape Cod Bird Club**  
**\*\*\*\*\*Reservations due by June 1\*\*\*\*\***

The Cape Cod Bird Club looks forward to welcoming members of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club to Cape Cod in August for spectacular shore-birding on Chatham's South Beach. By late August, the shorebird numbers peak and it isn't unusual to have well over 20,000 birds on the flats. Expected species include: Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Black-bellied, Semipalmated and Piping Plover, Least, Semipalmated, White-rumped and possibly Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, Sanderling, Willet, Whimbrel, and Short-billed Dowitcher. Common Terns are truly common and other species including Black Skimmers, Roseate, Least and Black Terns are seen regularly. An Arctic or Sandwich Tern might show up as well! Shorebirds usually stage at the southern tip of the island, we typically arrange for a boat ride (approximately 10 minutes) to the tip. 2005 rates were \$20 per person, round trip. Room accommodations should be arranged as far in advance as possible as this is the height of the tourist season. Camping and possibly staying in the homes of local birders might be an option. For reservations and further information, please contact the coordinator.

### Alplaus Bird Line

The Alplaus, New York **Home Town News** features the *Alplaus Bird Line* by Shawna Thompson. If you live in the Alplaus area and would like to report bird sightings, call the Bird Line at 399-0490 (9 am to 9 pm).



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

## ***Birding New York's Hudson-Mohawk Region***

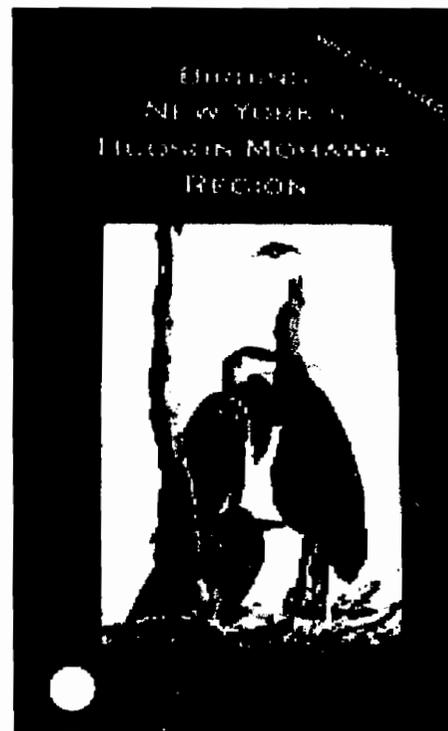
Our guide has been completely revised and expanded to include more than 70 sites in and around the Capital Region.

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

To order, contact: [jackieb@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jackieb@nycap.rr.com)

For additional information, go the club's website:  
[www.hbmc.net](http://www.hbmc.net)





## HMBC BOARD FOR 2005-2006

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899-2678

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Patsy Patrick	456-4007
Donna Zimmerman	869-6624



### HMBC Contact Information

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

Email: [contact@hmbc.net](mailto: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:  
Chris Grossman at [bgrossman@nycap.rr.com](mailto:bgrossman@nycap.rr.com)

Send all paper submissions to:  
**Chris Grossman**  
7 Nott Rd.  
Rexford, NY 12148



**Dead Bird Reporting Hotline**

**1-866-537-BIRD**

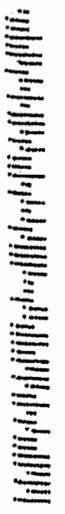
If you see a dead bird on your property or in a public place in your community, please call.

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>



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## Northern Shoveler and Cerulean Warbler Best Birds on Century Run

By Robert P. Yunick

Birders afield before dawn on the Club's 61<sup>st</sup> Guy Bartlett Century Run on May 20, 2006 were greeted with unfavorable wind, making listening for calls and songs difficult, only to be further inconvenienced by morning showers. The day's overcast sky, continued wind and air temperatures of 47-58F (at Albany) were not very spring like. Coupled with some earlier periods of very warm weather and excessive rain (3.77in. month to date, 1.43in. above normal; and 15.50in. year to date, 1.76in. above normal), foliage was nearly two weeks ahead of schedule in some areas.

Nevertheless, 23 observers in seven parties were afield between 0200 and 2130 amassing a list of 146 species with 115 species the best single-group effort. Best birds were a Northern Shoveler at Vischer Ferry for only its third occurrence (previously in 1996 and 2000), and Cerulean Warbler for the 18<sup>th</sup> time, last in 1994, at Papscanee Preserve on the east shore of the Hudson River south of Rensselaer. Many years ago this species was a regular in Schoharie County, but recently Papscanee appears to be the place to find it locally.

There were 37 species reported by all groups and another 24 by all but one group. Twenty-one species were reported by only one group and are noted later by group. Oddly, one of those 21 was Herring Gull which by the skin of its teeth with that one report maintained its status as having been reported on every Century Run.

Some misses included Fish Crow, no owls other than Barred, Golden-winged Warbler for the seventh consecutive year and Cape May Warbler for the ninth consecutive year. Whip-poor-will which was a regular in 54 of the first 56 years of the Century Run was

missed for the fifth consecutive year.

The field party participants are listed below with an asterisk indicating who reported on behalf of the group; and the species listed here are those found only by that group. The "x" for Evening Grosbeak in the column for Group G is a sighting of mine at Jenny Lake near Corinth where I was banding that morning. The species breeds in that area..

Here's to better weather next year.

**Group A** – Roger Miller, Carol Stack, Helen Penna and Tom Palmer\*. Montgomery and Fulton counties, 0430-1900, 84 species (another 20 found on a scouting run the week before were missed). Pine Warbler and Vesper Sparrow.

**Group B** – Steve Chorvas, Jackie Bogardus and Larry Alden\*. Entirely within Albany Co., 0300-2100, 114 species. American Black Duck.

### In This Issue...

*Century Run Report*

*Many Summer Field Trips*

*Upcoming Programs*

*NYSOA Announcement*

# Feathers



## CENTURY RUN (continued)

**Group C** – Jocelyn Cole-Calkins\*, Ron Calkins and Pattii Packer. Black Creek Marsh, Thacher State Park Nature Center, Huyck Preserve, Five Rivers Envir. Ed. Center and Cohoes Falls area, 0330-1930, 100 species.

**Group D** – Hope Batcheller\* and Mary Batcheller. Tomhannock Reservoir, Brunswick and Pertersburgh all in Rensselaer Co., 0430-0800 and 1200-1400, 53 species.

**Group E** – Scott Stoner\* and Denise Hackert-Stoner, joined part-time by Greg Recer, Cathy Graichen and Bryce Recer. Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, Five Rivers, Thacher Park and Thompson's Lake, 0600-1900, 84 species. Northern Shoveler, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Orchard Oriole.

**Group F** – Larry Rowland\* and Kathy Rowland. Towns of Bleeker and Caroga including Canada,

Caroga and Pine lakes all in Fulton Co.; Towns of Ephrata and Root in Montgomery Co.; Town of Sharon and Max Shaul State Park in Schoharie Co.; and Coxsackie, Greene Co., 0200-1915, 102 species. Northern Parula, Canada Warbler and Grasshopper Sparrow.

**Group G** – Kathleen LoGiudice, George Shaw, Bill Lee, Carl George\*, Hank Stebbins, John Hershey and Kurt Weiskotten. Watervliet Reservoir, Black Creek Marsh, Beaver Dam Rd., Thacher State Park, Cole Hill, Basic Creek and Alcove reservoirs, Stanton Pond and Ravena all in Albany Co.; Papscaenee Preserve, Dunn Memorial Bridge, Saratoga Co. Airport, Saratoga Lake and Vischer Ferry. White-winged Scoter, Cooper's Hawk, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Herring Gull, Black Tern, Common Nighthawk, Horned Lark, Purple Martin and Worm-eating Warbler.

## 2004 Century Run Species/Group List

Species	Groups						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Common Loon	a	b	c			f	g
Double-crested Cormorant		b	c	d	e	f	g
American Bittern		b	c			f	g
Least Bittern		b	c		e		g
Great Blue Heron	a	b	c		e	f	g
Green Heron	a		c		e		g
Canada Goose	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Wood Duck	a	b	c		e	f	g
American Black Duck		b					
Mallard	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Northern Shoveler					e		
Gadwall		b					g
White-winged Scoter							g
Hooded Merganser		b				f	
Common Merganser	a						g
Turkey Vulture	a	b	c			f	g
Osprey			c				g
Bald Eagle			c			f	g

Species	Groups						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Northern Harrier	a		c		e	f	
Sharp-shinned Hawk					e		
Cooper's Hawk							g
Broad-winged Hawk			c		e		g
Red-tailed Hawk	a	b	c		e	f	g
American Kestrel	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Peregrine Falcon		b	c			f	g
Ruffed Grouse		b	c			f	
Wild Turkey	a	b	c		e		
Virginia Rail	a	b	c		e	f	g
Sora		b	c			f	g
Common Moorhen			c		e	f	
Killdeer	a	b	c			f	g
Greater Yellowlegs							g
Lesser Yellowlegs							g
Solitary Sandpiper	a						g
Spotted Sandpiper	a	b	c		e	f	g
Pectoral Sandpiper							g



# Feathers

## 2004 Century Run Species/Group List

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

Species	Groups						
House Wren	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Winter Wren		b	c			f	
Marsh Wren		b	c		e	f	g
Golden-crowned Kinglet		b					g
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher		b	c		e	f	g
Eastern Bluebird	a	b	c		e	f	
Veery	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Hermit Thrush	a	b	c		e	f	g
Wood Thrush	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
American Robin	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Gray Catbird	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Northern Mockingbird		b	c		e		g
Brown Thrasher	a	b	c			f	g
Cedar Waxwing		b		d			g
European Starling	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Blue-headed Vireo	a	b	c		e	f	g
Yellow-throated Vireo		b	c		e		g
Warbling Vireo	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Red-eyed Vireo	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Blue-winged Warbler	a	b	c		e	f	g
Nashville Warbler		b		d		f	
Northern Parula						f	
Yellow Warbler	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Chestnut-sided Warbler	a	b	c		e	f	g
Magnolia Warbler		b				f	g
Black-throated Blue Warbler		b	c		e	f	g
Yellow-rumped Warbler		b	c			f	g
Black-throated Green Warbler		b	c		e	f	g
Blackburnian Warbler		b				f	g
Pine Warbler	a						
Prairie Warbler		b	c		e	f	g
Blackpoll Warbler		b				f	g
Cerulean Warbler							g
Black-and-white Warbler		b	c			f	g
American Redstart	a	b		d	e	f	g
Worm-eating Warbler							g
Ovenbird	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Northern Waterthrush		b				f	
Louisiana Waterthrush	a	b	c		e	f	g
Common Yellowthroat	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Canada Warbler						f	
Scarlet Tanager	a	b	c		e	f	g



## 2004 Century Run Species/Group List

Species	Groups						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Northern Cardinal	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Indigo Bunting		b	c	d		f	g
Eastern Towhee	a	b	c		e	f	g
Chipping Sparrow	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Field Sparrow	a	b	c		e	f	
Vesper Sparrow	a						
Savannah Sparrow	a	b				f	g
Grasshopper Sparrow						f	
Song Sparrow	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Swamp Sparrow	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
White-throated Sparrow	a	b				f	

Species	Groups						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Dark-eyed Junco	a	b	c		e	f	g
Bobolink	a	b	c		e	f	g
Red-winged Blackbird	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Eastern Meadowlark	a	b	c			f	
Common Grackle	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Brown-headed Cowbird	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Orchard Oriole					e		
Baltimore Oriole	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Purple Finch	a	b		d		f	g
House Finch	a	b	c	d		f	g
American Goldfinch	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Evening Grosbeak							x
House Sparrow	a	b	c		e	f	g

## HMBC Field Trip Reports

### Black Creek Marsh Wild Turkey Federation Area April 30, 2006

Beautiful spring weather brought 19 birders to the Black Creek March – Wild Turkey Federation area on April 30. We started off with a good look at a YELLOW BELLIED SAP-SUCKER from the parking are. Beginning our walk we were treated to excellent views of BROWN THRASHERS and an EASTERN TOWHEE at the top of a pine tree in the bright sunshine. As we proceeded, we saw a BELTED KINGFISHER overhead and numerous RUBY CROWNED KINGLETS. At the marsh edge we heard many SWAMP SPARROWS but were unable to get a look at one. Mixed in with the TREE SWALLOWS was one CHIMNEY SWIFT. One sharp-eyed birder spotted a carnivore skull along the trail and our trip biologist – Bill Sarbello- identified it as a raccoon's. The end of the trip produced our only sighting of a TURKEY. A few birders were lucky enough

to see a PEREGRINE FALCON flying back over the swamp, and those who stayed to the end got an excellent look at an OSPREY high overhead.

In all, we tallied 38 species. In addition to those already mentioned the list was composed of TURKEY VULTURE, CANADA GOOSE, WOOD DUCK, MALLARD, AMERICAN KESTREL, ruffed grouse, mourning dove, red bellied WOODPECKER, DOWNY WOODPECKER, NORTHERN FLICKER, EASTERN PHOEBE, BLUE JAY, CROW, CHICKADEE, TUFTED TITMOUSE, HOUSE WREN, EASTERN BLUEBIRD, ROBIN, SONG SPARROW, WHITE THROATED SPARROW, JUNCO RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD, COMMON GRACKLE, COWBIRD, GOLDFINCH and WHITE BREASTED NUT-HATCH.

— Jennifer Hamilton



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

### Hudson and Nancy Winn Preserve May 7, 2006

A cool, sunny morning greeted 26 birders who came to explore the Winn Preserve in Knox. At our meeting site in Altamont, a flock of cedar waxwings provided a good start to the day for the group. At the preserve, the birds did not disappoint us. The group got good looks at YELLOW RUMPED, BLACK THROATED BLUE, BLACK THROATED GREEN, and BLUE WINGED WARBLERS. Somewhat more elusive to the eye, but not to the ear, were OVENBIRD, BLACKBURNIAN, PINE, NASHVILLE, BLACK AND WHITE and PALM WARBLERS as well as VEERY, WOOD and HERMIT THRUSH. GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHERS and BLUE HEADED VIREO were heard but not seen and two WINTER WRENS singing very nearby proved impossible to see. As we compiled our list, a BROAD WINGED HAWK soared overhead, providing a perfect ending to our trip.

We had a total of 39 species at the preserve. In addition to those mentioned, we had TURKEY VULTURE, MOURNING DOVE, HAIRY and DOWNY WOODPECKERS, YELLOW BELLIED SAP-SUCKER, EASTERN PHOEBE, BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, BLACK CAPPED CHICKADEE, TUFTED TITMOUSE, WHITE BREASTED NUTHATCH, RUBY CROWNED KINGLET, ROBIN, GRAY CATBIRD, EASTERN TOWHEE, SONG SPARROW, CHIPPING SPARROW, AND WHITE THROATED SPARROW, JUNCO, NORTHERN CARDINAL, COWBIRD and AMERICAN GOLDFINCH.

— Jennifer Hamilton

### Schodack Town Park May 21, 2006

The Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club held a field trip at this little gem of a park this past Sunday morning. A group of 20 birders showed up under surprisingly sunny blue skies at 8 AM, until 10 AM when the two or three weeks of monsoons resumed. Highlights included a pair of LOUISIANA WATER-THRUSHES along the hemlock-lined stream-bank; a BLUE-WINGED WARBLER and a PRAIRIE WARBLER singing next to each other in the same tree; nice looks at CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER, YELLOW WARBLER, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT; WARBLING VIREO, EASTERN KINGBIRD, and BALTIMORE ORIOLE; a BROAD-WINGED HAWK soaring overhead; Red-BELLIED WOODPECKER; Ruby-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD; RED-EYED VIREO; BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER; SCARLET TANGER; VEERY; FIELD SPARROW; and a first of the season EASTERN WOOD PEWEE. We heard INDIGO BUNTING but no luck finding it. Later that day while pumping gas at North Greenbush station there was one singing at the top of a tree in plain view right along the busy highway.

Participants: Carl Gercennacy (?); Jonathan Hays; Jeanne Wein; Sheldon Wein; Renee Burgevin; Tom Phillips; Helen Rice; Don & Nancy Gresens; Gary Goodness; Judy & Pete Briscoe; David & Noah Trachtenberg; Kathy Brodsky; Jennifer Hamilton; Chris Kielb; Frank Murphy.

—Frank Murphy



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

### Grafton Lakes State Park May 27, 2006

Early morning fog lifted to reveal a partly cloudy sky as thirteen birders enjoyed seeing or hearing (mostly hearing) 51 species including 10 warblers. Starting on the Wildwood trail we had good looks at an OVENBIRD and were serenaded by a distant HERMIT THRUSH. Later, wading through wet grass in the blueberry patch on the Gartler trail, we were greeted by singing WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS and several were seen up close. RUFFED GROUSE, ALDER FLYCATCHER, GRAY CATBIRD AND BLUE-WINGED, NASHVILLE, and CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS were also present, a GREAT BLUE HERON flew over, and for at least ten or fifteen minutes we stared at a thicket that concealed a singing CANADA WARBLER who refused to show, although several in the group eventually saw parts of the bird through the brush. A tour along Long Pond Road yielded a brief look at a NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH at the swamp, and near the parking lot at the north end of Long Pond we had an excellent scope view of a LEAST FLYCATCHER on its nest, plus two unusually cooperative RED-EYED VIREOS. Other notable species seen or heard included RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, PILEATED WOODPECKER, EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE, WARBLING VIREO, BLUE-WINGED, YELLOW-RUMPED, and BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS, SCARLET TANAGER, SWAMP SPARROW, ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK, and BALTIMORE ORIOLE. Not one raptor was seen all morning!

— *Phil Whitney*

### Holt Preserve June 4, 2006

Eight intrepid and water resistant birders braved misty rain to visit the Holt Preserve in New Scotland. After a week of heavy rain, a prime birding trail along the base of the hill was essentially impassable and other trails, usually dry, were muddy. Although the birds seemed depressed by the weather, we saw or heard 41 species. A HOODED WARBLER, one of our targets, was very actively singing but was too far away to be seen. This is at least the eighth consecutive year that HOODED WARBLER has been found at this location. Undoubtedly the best view of the morning was a brilliant blue, male INDIGO BUNTING which posed cooperatively close by. We also found a 'talking tree' with a small hole containing a brood of DOWNY WOODPECKERS. Although it was, seemingly, a great day for ducks, we didn't see any.

— *David Martin*

### Notch View Reservation and Moran WMA June 17, 2006

Early on a gray morning at the top of the Berkshires, a brief stop at Moran WMA yielded at least a dozen CEDAR WAXWINGS and several each of YELLOW and CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS and COMMON YELLOWTHROATS. Also seen were BELTED KINGFISHER, EASTERN KINGBIRD, and Veery, but the hoped-for American Bittern failed to show.

We then drove around the corner to Notch View and were greeted in the parking area by a SCARLET TANAGER singing from a nearby treetop. At the visitors' center there was an un-



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

expected gathering of at least a hundred trail runners who were there for a charity fund raiser. We changed our planned route to avoid the trails they would be using but could not escape their PA system which blared obnoxious music along with announcements audible at least a half mile away. Starting out on Ant Hill Loop, we were serenaded by a WINTER WREN AND then spent at least 15 minutes trying to find a HERMIT THRUSH and BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER singing from a few yards away, well hidden in the foliage. About then a steady light rain began and most of the birds fell silent, except for the ubiquitous OVENBIRDS. Later, we took shelter in a lean-to overlooking Sawmill Field and watched three, briefly four, male BOBOLINKS singing as they repeatedly circled the field in what appeared to be an amicable songfest rather than a territorial dispute. Moving on as the rain let up, at one spot we stood beneath tall, dripping spruces watching many bird silhouettes against the gray sky and hearing MAGNOLIA, YELLOW-RUMPED, BLACK-THROATED GREEN, and BLACKBURNIAN WARBLERS singing along with EASTERN WOODPEWEE, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET, and DARK-EYED JUNCO but among these only the CHICKADEES stopped moving long enough to be well seen. As the weather continued to improve, we moved to the Hume Road section of the Reservation and had spectacular views of INDIGO

BUNTING and NASHVILLE WARBLER on the Hume Brook trail, then once again tried vainly to see HERMIT THRUSH and BLACK-THROATED BLUE singing in concealment a few yards off the trail. WOOD THRUSH and WHITE-THROATED SPARROW could be heard in the distance. The trip ended with good scope-assisted views of EASTERN BLUEBIRD and a singing SAVANNAH SPARROW in the fields near the end of Hume Road. Five birders recorded a total for the morning of 43 species seen and/or heard, not counting a well-seen but silent EMPIDONAX FLY-CATCHER at Moran.

— Phil Whitney

### Would you like to help plan & schedule next year's HMBC field trip schedule?

Volunteers needed for the HMBC Field Trip Committee. All that's needed is a small commitment of time. The committee meets at the beginning of October to discuss potential trips and each committee member is given a couple of months of the following year for which to contact leaders and schedule field trips. We then meet again in November to review the schedule and make any needed changes.

Please contact Donna Zimmerman at [fieldtrips@hmhc.net](mailto:fieldtrips@hmhc.net) or 869-6624 if you are interested in helping.

### Upcoming 2006 HMBC Programs

**Thursday, September 14, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Birding Central America*, Frank Murphy**

The fall program schedule will begin with a joint program of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and Capital Region Audubon!



## Upcoming 2006 HMBC Programs (continued)

Frank will give a talk on birding Central America, in particular Costa Rica, Belize, and Panama (not Iowa and Nebraska as some politicians would have you believe). Frank will highlight the special birds of the area like Quetzals, Toucans, etc., and offer tips on where and when to go and how best to travel, e.g. how roads can suddenly change direction of travel; how to avoid getting mugged by three young women; and how he named his dog Twister.

Frank Murphy is a past president of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and a current officer in the Capital Region Audubon. He has led many birding field trips in the Capital Region, but his true love and specialty is birding America's tropics. Frank's presentation in December 2005 on birding South America was both highly informative and entertaining. We are delighted that he has agreed to return to share his expertise and experience in Birding Central America.

**Monday, October 2, 2006 at 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Wet Feet: The Wild Life of America's Wetlands, Scott and Denise Stoner***

In this program we explore our wild, diverse, and exciting wetlands! From northern bogs to coastal marshes, from streams and lakes to great wooded swamps - each type is unique and beautiful. Plants such as orchids, airplants, sawgrass, and cypress are complemented by moose, elk, cranes, spoonbills, herons, and storks. Join us as we celebrate these vital places and the plants and animals that depend on them.

Scott Stoner is past president of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. His work has been published in "Birder's World" magazine. Denise is a past director and current Vice President of the Bird Club. Together, they have explored and photographed America from Maine to Hawaii, and have presented slide programs to this and many other groups on a variety of natural history topics.

**Thursday October 12, 2006 at 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Alaska: From the Mountains To The Sea, Fred and Barbara Nuffer***

Fred and Barbara Nuffer have both worked at the NYSDEC since the mid-1970's. They enjoy traveling and exploring the U.S. National Park System. Fred and Barbara are avid hikers. Barbara is an accomplished photographer and has an article, with photographs, on wildflowers, in the current issue of The Conservationist.

## Upcoming 2006 Capital Region Audubon Programs

**Thursday, September 14, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Birding Central America, Frank Murphy***

The fall program schedule will begin with a joint program of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and Capital Region Audubon.



## **BIRD SONG AND RAPTORS ON TAP FOR 59th ANNUAL NYSOA MEETING**

The 59th Annual Meeting of the NY State Ornithological Assoc. is scheduled for Sept. 29 and 30 and Oct. 1 at the Morris Conference Center at the State University of NY at Oneonta, NY. Hosted by the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Soc., the weekend will feature workshops, field trips, papers session, a picnic lunch at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, and a Saturday evening banquet with speaker Donald E. Kroodsma, Professor Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Located in the northern Catskill Mountains, along the Susquehanna River, the setting provides a great location for early fall scenery, birding and other outdoor activities. Field trips will include visits to Otsego Lake, the "Glimmerglass" of James Fenimore Cooper; canoeing/kayaking in a freshwater marsh; eagle and waterfowl spotting on Delaware County's reservoirs; and the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Soc. Sanctuary, home of the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch.

Non-birding opportunities include historic Cooperstown, known for its Farmers Museum, the Baseball Hall of Fame, historic Fenimore House and other attractions. The city of Oneonta has a revitalized downtown with cultural and entertainment venues.

Saturday night's speaker, Donald Kroodsma, has studied birdsong for more than thirty years and was recognized as the "reigning authority on the biology of avian vocal behavior" in the citation for his 2003 Elliott Coues Award from the American Ornithologists' Union. He is author of the critically acclaimed *The Singing Life of Birds. The Art and Science of Listening to Birdsong*, published last year by Houghton-Mifflin, accompanied by a CD with 98 selections of birdsong. Professor Kroodsma has been featured on radio shows and in articles in such publications as *Audubon*, *Scientific American*, and *Outside*. Dedicated to tropical birds, Professor Kroodsma donates proceeds from his appearances to conservation of these species.

The usual camaraderie and good spirit of the NYSOA meetings will also be in place—please join us for this special weekend! A registration form can be found at [www.nysbirds.org](http://www.nysbirds.org). Further information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net).



*Don Kroodsma*



## Upcoming Field Trips

**AUG 26—27** SOUTH SHORE BEACH, CHATHAM, CAPE COD MA (overnight)  
**SAT—SUN** **Local Coordinator: Donna Zimmerman** **869-6624**  
**Field Leader: Diane Silverstein**  
**Joint Trip with Cape Cod Bird Club**  
**\*\*\*\*\*Reservations due by June 1\*\*\*\*\***

The Cape Cod Bird Club looks forward to welcoming members of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club to Cape Cod in August for spectacular shore-birding on Chatham's South Beach. By late August, the shorebird numbers peak and it isn't unusual to have well over 20,000 birds on the flats. Expected species include: Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Black-bellied, Semipalmated and Piping Plover, Least, Semipalmated, White-rumped and possibly Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, Sanderling, Willet, Whimbrel, and Short-billed Dowitcher. Common Terns are truly common and other species including Black Skimmers, Roseate, Least and Black Terns are seen regularly. An Arctic or Sandwich Tern might show up as well! Shorebirds usually stage at the southern tip of the island, we typically arrange for a boat ride (approximately 10 minutes) to the tip. 2005 rates were \$20 per person, round trip. Room accommodations should be arranged as far in advance as possible as this is the height of the tourist season. Camping and possibly staying in the homes of local birders might be an option. For reservations and further information, please contact the coordinator.

**SEPT 10** PEEBLES ISLAND STATE PARK (Saratoga County; morning)  
**SUN** **Coordinator: Frank Murphy** **577-8005**  
[thrush@nycap.rr.com](mailto:thrush@nycap.rr.com)

This morning trip will take us to Peebles Island and nearby viewpoints to look for waterfowl, shorebirds, warblers, and many other migrants. The river area is good for Peregrine Falcon, Osprey, Bald Eagle, sandpipers, yellowlegs, herons, egrets, Chimney Swifts, and a nice variety of ducks. The woodlands on Peebles Island should be productive for many migrant landbirds, especially warblers and other tropical delights. The timing for this trip should be good-if the weather cooperates. Meet at 8 am across the street from the Golden Crust Bakery on Ontario St. in Cohoes. From there we can carpool to share the park entrance fee of \$6 per vehicle.

**SEPT 16** HELDEBERG ESCARPMENT WARBLER WALK (Albany County; morning)  
**SAT** **Coordinator: Gary Goodness** **862-9260** good-  
[ness@nycap.rr.com](mailto:ness@nycap.rr.com)

The Heldeberg Escarpment is significantly higher in elevation than much of the capital region; this makes it an ideal place for small flocks of neotropical migrants. Migrating raptors are also a common feature on the escarpment this time of year under the right weather conditions. The weather will influence the extent of time spent on passerines vs. raptors. Meet at the bank on the corner of Rts. 20 & 155 (Star Plaza) in Guilderland at 7:30 am.



## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

SEPT 22—24 CAPE MAY NJ & FORSYTHE (BRIGANTINE) NWR  
FRI—SUN Coordinators: Gerry & Tim Colborn Gerry 237-3898 [gcolborn@nycap.rr.com](mailto:gcolborn@nycap.rr.com)

\*\*\*\*Reservations due by July 1. \*\*\*\*

On this trip to Cape May, we'll visit well known birding hotspots like Higbee Beach, South Cape May Meadows, and the hawk watch at Cape May Point State Park. Our last day will include a visit to "brigantine" NWF just to the north. The timing of our trip will put us there at a prime time for raptor, shorebird, and songbird migration. Limited to 10 people.

SEPT 30 FIVE RIVERS ENVIRON. EDUCATION CENTER (Albany County; Morning)  
SAT Coordinator: Scott & Denise Stoner 785-6760  
[scottjstoner@aol.com](mailto:scottjstoner@aol.com)

On this roughly two-mile walk, we will visit several of Five Rivers' diverse habitat (field, woodland, wetland) in search of passerines, woodpeckers, raptors, and waterbirds. Meet at 8:30 am in the parking lot by the Visitor Center.

OCT 1 VISCHER FERRY (Saratoga County; morning)  
SUN Coordinator: John Hershey 371-3114

Fall migrants will be the main attraction for for this field trip. Species that breed further north or in higher elevations stop here on their way south, sometimes providing better opportunities to observe them than when they are in their breeding territory. We will search for waterfowl, raptors, thrushes, Winter Wren, vireos, kinglets, White-throated and Lincoln's Sparrows, Scarlet Tanager and a variety of warblers. Be prepared for trails that can become wet or muddy in spots. Meet at the main entrance at 8:30 am.

OCT 7 DEAD CREEK WMA, ADDISON VT (full day)  
SAT Local Coordinator: Scott Stoner 785-6760  
[scottjstoner@aol.com](mailto:scottjstoner@aol.com)  
Field Leader: Bob Budlger (802) 888-7787

This premier waterfowl site in the Champlain Valley of VT teems with up to 10,000 Snow Geese at this time of year. There's often a few Ross' Geese mixed in with them. Area ponds have an assortment of puddle ducks and the open fields of the area attract raptors of a variety of species. Bald Eagles have been hacked here, so are part of the avifauna now. We will spend much of the morning at Dead Creek, then travel to a couple of nearby spots offering a chance to bird Lake Champlain. Meet at the Goose Viewing Area at Dead Creek at 9:30 am (about 2.5 hrs. from Albany) Dead Creek is on VT Rt. 17 just west of Addison, VT. VT Rt. 17 is at the VT side of the Crown Point Bridge. Persons wishing to carpool should contact the local coordinator (Scott) and meet at the Park & Ride at Exit 9 of the Northway at 7 am.

# Feathers



## Scott Stoner Poems

Here are poems that Scott wrote, and presented at the HMBC literary night:

### "Wildflowers"

A trek to the native plant nursery  
Becomes a spring ritual,  
With a spending cap always exceeded.

We rush home to plant,  
despite rain, mud, and sore backs.  
Bloodroot, Trillium, Mayapple, and more,  
Each lovingly placed in the ground.  
Each one a new friend.

- Scott Stoner

### "King of the Forest"

Once widespread in southern swamps,  
The King of the Forest reigned.  
Shot by collectors; great forests destroyed, its numbers dwindled.

The Singer tract - Last stand for the Ivory-Bill.  
Trees quickly felled, and hope went out.  
The great bird was no more.

Over the decades, reports continued.  
Did the Ivory-Bill live still?  
Sightings discounted; enthusiasts scorned.

Then, in Arkansas, a bright new spark!  
Confirmed in secrecy,  
then announced - Rediscovery!

A second chance for the Lord God Bird -  
and - a second chance for us not to lose it again.

Does the Ivory-Bill exist?  
Can it recover?  
Only time will tell, but  
At least there is hope!

- Scott Stoner



## **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>

### **Alplaus Bird Line**

The Alplaus, New York Home Town News features the *Alplaus Bird Line* by Shawna Thompson. If you live in the Alplaus area and would like to report bird sightings, call the Bird Line at 399-0490 (9 am to 9 pm).



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

## ***Birding New York's Hudson-Mohawk Region***

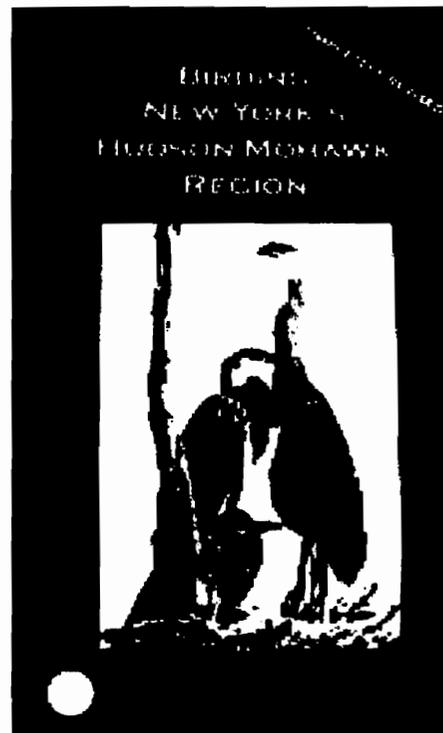
Our guide has been completely revised and expanded to include more than 70 sites in and around the Capital Region.

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

To order, contact: [jackieb@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jackieb@nycap.rr.com)

For additional information, go the club's website:  
[www.hbmc.net](http://www.hbmc.net)





# Feathers

## HMBC BOARD FOR 2005-2006

### Officers

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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](mailto: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:  
Chris Grossman at [cgrossman@nycap.rr.com](mailto:cgrossman@nycap.rr.com)

Send all paper submissions to:  
**Chris Grossman**  
7 Nott Rd.  
Rexford, NY 12148



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

Birds haven't evolved much recently, but birders have. Many of us have become avid users of email and the web, and the new capabilities of cell phones and similar devices are likely to change even more the way we pursue our avocation. Thanks to Barb Putnam, HMBC has an excellent website, but that's just one aspect of modern communication, and it has become painfully obvious that HMBC is not making good use of email. Birdline provides just one example. At present more than 75 percent of the reports to Birdline are submitted by email, and we put the summaries on the Club's answering machine and post them on our website (<http://hmbc.net>). The Club could easily send the weekly Birdline compilation and rare bird alerts to all members with an email address, thereby helping to keep them abreast of the latest bird sightings. The answering machine would still be there for members without email or web access and for visitors to the area.

There are many other possible uses for email, but HMBC can't do any of them, because we don't have our members' email addresses. Thus, we are going to ask for your email address when we send your dues notice this fall. We intend to publish it in our directory along with your telephone number and to use it to communicate with you. We hope it will help to make the Club stronger by making it easier for all of us to communicate with each other.

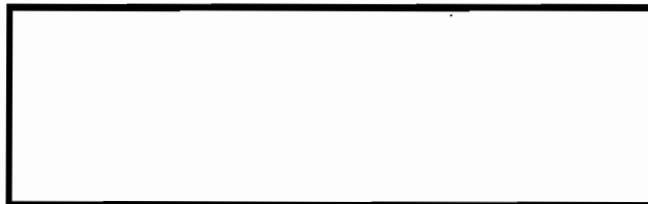
If you have any thoughts on this subject, please send me a note at [president@hmbc.net](mailto:president@hmbc.net) or give me a call (765-4982).

Wishing you good birding,  
David Martin

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

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## YOU JUST NEVER KNOW . . .

*By David L. Martin*

In June, my wife Sandy and I made a trip to Wisconsin, northern Minnesota and North Dakota to visit relatives and do some birding. One of our goals was to find a Connecticut Warbler, a bird of boreal bogs and, we had read, sometimes difficult to see well. Kim Eckert's excellent book "A Birder's Guide to Minnesota" led us to the Sax-Zim bog, a well known birding site some 30 miles northwest of Duluth. As described in the book, the Sax-Zim birding area is roughly 10 miles across, perhaps 20 miles long and crisscrossed by good roads. The book describes clearly where to look for the birds, and within an hour we heard a Connecticut Warbler singing vigorously from a hidden perch in the dense top of a black spruce tree. It stayed hidden until it flitted to another black spruce where it immediately disappeared among the branches. It repeated its disappearing act over and over and over, until finally we had a momentary sighting as it appeared briefly on the tip of a branch. Later, we followed a second one around that behaved just like the first. After almost two hours

of following the little fiends we probably had accumulated 5 seconds of viewing time – enough to see the field marks, but not really satisfying. These two birds completely lived up to this warbler's reputation as an invisible singer, but I did manage to make some nice recordings of their songs, which you can hear on my website (<http://naturebits.org>).

We continued on our trip, and on the way back east, we decided to revisit Sax-Zim to see if we could find some other boreal birds and perhaps get a more satisfying look at the Connecticut Warbler. We were stopped by the road eating lunch when a lemon-yellow

### In This Issue...

*Christmas Count Report*

*Many Fall Field Trips*

*Upcoming Programs*



## YOU JUST NEVER KNOW ... (continued)

subcompact car pulled up. A man and a woman got out, and he called to us "Having a good day?" It was hard to say yes, because it was very windy and the birds weren't showing themselves. Nevertheless, we had seen a couple of Mourning Warblers, and we had a good conversation about what we had seen and not seen. The man began to tell us where to find specific species in the area. At one point he noted that there was a good spot east of SR 53, which basically forms the eastern border of the Sax-Zim area in Kim Eckert's book. And then he said, "I don't understand why, but nobody birds east of 53; everybody goes west". And I replied, as though I actually knew what I was talking about, "That's because Kim Eckert's book sends them west of 53". The woman grinned and punched the man in the shoulder, and he said, "I'm Kim Eckert". You could have knocked me over with a feather. But we just continued with our conversation, and Kim told us about a place roughly ten miles away where we might find Black-backed Woodpeckers. They left. Sandy and I finished eating and then headed for the woodpecker site.

As we turned onto the woodpecker road we saw a teenager scanning a field with binoculars.

Naturally, we stopped and asked what he had. "Just a Savannah Sparrow" he replied, and we started up again. I said to Sandy "You know, that kid looked just like Jackson Mesick". Jack is one of HMBC's avid young birders, and for the last couple of years he and his father Steve have been the core of the Hudson-Mohawk Merlins, the team that HMBC sponsors in the World Series of Birding. Sure enough, Steve was sitting in the car parked up the road. Talk about a ridiculous improbability. I was beginning to think I was in an episode of *The Twilight Zone*. Who would show up next? After getting over our amazement, we all spent some time searching for the woodpecker. We didn't find it.

Five days later, Sandy and I were driving slowly along a dirt road through a spruce bog in Wisconsin's Nicolet National Forest when I saw some jiggling leaves on a roadside shrub. We stopped and watched. Out popped a Connecticut Warbler with a green worm in its beak. It perched there in plain sight less than 20 feet away for a few seconds and then disappeared into the bog. I may never get a better look at one.



# Feathers

## Southern Rensselaer December 26 2005 Christmas Count

### Participants:

**Group A** -Will Yandik and Rich Nord

**Group B** - Joan Cipriani, Peggy Rudis, and Robert Nash

**Group C + D** - Phil Whitney, Marjorie Whitney, Susan Stewart, and Honey Hollen

**Group E** - Gary Goodness, Paul Brannigan, and Bernice Fiske

**Group F** - Nancy Kern, Bill Ritz, and Debbie Shaw

**Group G** - Frank Murphy

**Group H** - Bill Lee and Gene Vermilyea

\*\* Sectors C and D were combined due to lack of volunteers familiar with the area

# In addition, 2 Mute Swans and 2 Great Horned Owls were recorded during the count week

## Southern Rensselaer 2005 Christmas Count Species/Group List

### Species

### Groups

Sector	A	B	C+D**	E	F	G	H	Circle
Canada Goose	1558	5	0	0	0	11	27	1601
American Black Duck	3	2	0	0	4	0	0	9
Mallard #	429	258	0	0	1	0	17	703
Common Merganser	63	0	0	0	0	0	0	63
Bald Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Northern Harrier	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	4
Cooper's Hawk	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3
Northern Goshawk	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Red-tailed Hawk	9	7	13	13	1	3	24	70
Merlin	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Peregrine Falcon	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ruffed Grouse	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Wild Turkey	70	0	30	0	37	0	61	198
Ring-billed Gull	80	21	0	0	0	1	24	126
Herring Gull	5	1	0	1	0	0	11	18
Iceland Gull	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Great Black-backed Gull	5	0	0	0	0	0	3	8
Rock Pigeon	352	38	67	250	2	0	85	792
Mourning Dove	113	38	69	70	13	12	95	408
Belted Kingfisher	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Red-bellied Woodpecker	6	2	2	0	0	0	5	15
Downy Woodpecker	13	11	17	2	2	4	11	60
Hairy Woodpecker	4	2	1	2	2	0	3	14
Northern Flicker	2	2	0	0	0	0	5	9
Pileated Woodpecker	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	5
Blue Jay	34	31	38	20	24	28	28	202
American Crow	1375	74	179	220	13	12	551	2424
Black-capped Chickadee	48	81	88	30	130	138	24	533
Tufted Titmouse	48	13	22	10	7	20	5	125



## Southern Rensselaer 2005 Christmas Count Species/Group List

Species	Groups							
Red-breasted Nuthatch	0	0	4	1	1	4	2	12
White-breasted Nuthatch	9	13	9	5	4	15	5	60
Carolina Wren	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	7
Golden-crowned Kinglet	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
Eastern Bluebird	10	0	1	0	0	22	15	48
Hermit Thrush	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
American Robin	86	1	22	0	0	23	32	164
Northern Mockingbird	3	0	5	0	0	2	1	11
Cedar Waxwing	6	0	9	22	0	18	0	55
European Starling	1233	320	475	200	12	102	483	2825
Northern Cardinal	6	12	8	4	4	6	7	47
Am. Tree Sparrow	5	5	32	4	5	29	17	97
Song Sparrow	2	0	0	0	0	0	35	37
White-throated Sparrow	8	6	11	0	0	0	1	26
Dark-eyed Junco	7	18	32	12	23	28	9	129
Purple Finch	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
House Finch	10	0	3	5	2	12	2	34
American Goldfinch	21	3	20	30	0	5	12	91
House Sparrow	32	39	60	14	15	62	54	276
Total	5670	1002	1218	917	304	557	1662	11328 #
Species	43	29	28	22	22	24	38	49 #

### HMBC Field Trip Reports

#### South Shore Beach, Chatham, Cape Cod May August 26—27, 2006

We left Friday, with rain and wind along our route. Tom Phillips was expert navigator, birder, and botanical expert rolled into one. We arrived in Chatham( with light rain and wind) in time to explore the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary- encompassing pine woods, salt marshes, moorlands, estuaries, and freshwater ponds. First, we checked-out the beautiful Nature Center, staffed by Mass Audubon volunteers. Highlights along the trail included: GREEN HERON, FISH CROW, and a NORTHERN WATER-THRUSH. Here we found nearly half of our total number of species for the weekend. With Tom's help we identified many plants unique to this habitat such as sweet pepper bush, dwarf chinquapin oak, sea lavender,

glasswort (Salicornia), & pinweed. With some daylight left, we drove to Coast Guard Beach and Nauset Light Beach for a look-see.

On Saturday we were joined by Lin Fagan, who suggested we visit the Harwich Conservation Area with old cranberry bog, woodland, freshwater pond, and tidal marsh. Highlights were: MUTE SWAN with Cygnets, HAIRY and DOWNY WOODPECKER, GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER, heard TUFTED TITMOUSE, a COMMON YELLOW-THROAT appeared. On our way out, an OSPREY was sighted. Lin and Tom ID'd many plants. Later that morning, we greeted Diane Silverstein( Field Trip leader) and her husband, Michael of the Cape Cod Bird Club. With sun, blue sky and a light breeze, 12 of us debarked ('wet-feet style') from our small craft onto the southern end of South Beach



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

which is east of and parallel to Monomoy Island. Right away, MARBLED GODWIT dropped-down to join a variety of resting and feeding shorebirds. Highlights also include: numerous AMERICAN OYSTER-CATCHERS, about 50 HUDSONIAN GODWITS, a CURLEW SANDPIPER, and 5 kinds of TERNS. Sought after, but missed was American Golden-Plover, and Buff-breasted Sandpiper (rare, but regular). A lone BRANDT GOOSE sparked our interest. About four hours, and six miles later, tired but HAPPY, our group looped back through sand, mud, birds, and beach plants to meet our 'water taxi'. Gazing toward distant Monomoy Island's (NWR), we wish to return to this special area in the future just as one of our group, a veteran birder, Cliff Tepper has done many times... After a stop at "The Bird-watcher's General Store" in Orleans, we shared a delicious dinner with our new Cape Cod friends. With kudos' all around for their capable, and careful guidance on our behalf, we retired to review our Checklist of The Birds of Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

On Sunday, with pleasant skies- Tom, Lin, Honey Hollen, and myself visited Cape Cod National Sea Shore- Salt Pond Visitor's Center - Highlights noted: visitors digging for Northern Quahogs (clams used in chowder), GREAT and SNOWY EGRET, RED-TAILED HAWK, our only duck- MALLARD, a vocal-CAROLINA WREN, and! Honey and Susan testing their shorebird and flora knowledge. Lin went her way, and we retraced our route back over the Cape Cod Canal... and into the rain.

We had a total of 68 species. In addition to those already mentioned we had: DOUBLE-

CRESTED CORMORANT, GREAT-BLUE HERON, TURKEY VULTURE, BLACK-BELLIED& SEMIPALMATED& PIPING PLOVER, GREATER& LESSER YELLOW-LEGS, SOLITARY SANDPIPER, WILLET, WHIMBREL, RUDDY TURNSTONE, RED KNOT, SANDERLING, SEMIPALMATED& LEAST& WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER, SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER, LAUGHING& RING-BILLED& HERRING& GREAT-BLACK-BACKED GULL, ROSE-ATE& COMMON& FORSTER'S& LEAST& BLACK TERN, ROCK& MOURNING DOVE, RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, BELTED-KINGFISHER, EASTERN WOOD-PEEWEE, EASTERN KINGBIRD, BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, TREE& NORTHERN-ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, AMERICAN ROBIN, GRAY CATBIRD, NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD, EUROPEAN STARLING, EASTERN TOWHEE, CHIPPING SPARROW, NORTHERN CARDINAL, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, HOUSE SPARROW.

Susan Stewart

### Carter Pond June 24, 2006

The day of the two-part exploration of the Carter Pond Wildlife Management Area started out pouring rain in the immediate Capital District, which diminished to only a light sprinkle by the time we met at the south parking lot at 8:30 - and improved to sunshine in the afternoon.

We explored the nature trail counterclockwise in the morning with a group of about



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

10 participants, where VEERY were with us nearly the whole time - very apparent both visually and vocally (singing and making their "Veer" call). We both heard - and saw YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER - including one at a nest hole along the first part of the trail! The forest being in full leaf, viewing birds was not as easy as listening. Of considerable interest were some calls heard from the South Marsh. We strove to see what was calling, suspecting Common Moorhen, but were never able to visualize the secretive bird (see below).

Others of the 34 total species for the morning walk included OVENBIRD, WOOD DUCK, GREEN HERON, GREAT BLUE HERON (being mobbed by REDWINGED BLACKBIRDS), and nesting WARBLING VIREO. We were treated to several hoots of a BARRED OWL from the woods across the pond, just barely audible from the viewing platform near the trailhead where we concluded the trip.

After saying goodbye to our morning birders, we took a break for lunch and moved up to the north parking area, we were joined by some new folks for the afternoon, and headed out in our boats (7 people in an assortment of kayaks and canoes).

Given the sounds we had heard from there in the morning, we focused first on a thorough exploration of the South Marsh. After several tantalizing sounds and glimpses, we were able to finally see, hear, and confirm that there were indeed, several COMMON MOORHEN in there! We turned our attention to the North Marsh, where the high water and lack of aquatic vegetation permitted exploration beyond what is often possible. We made it several bends of the stream north of the beaver dam, until it finally petered out. The group total for the afternoon was 22 species, including

BELTED KINGFISHER, EASTERN KINGBIRD, BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO, and PILEATED WOODPECKER.

The trip to Carter Pond was, as always, a great way to experience the life of the pond, marsh, and forest. Thanks to all who joined us for this wonderful day.

— *Scott Stoner and Denise Hackert-Stoner*

### Cherry Plains State Park and Wildlife Management Area July 1, 2006

On an ideal sunny, warm morning thirteen birders began with a walk to the pond on Jiggs Highway where two COMMON YELLOWTHROATS were heard counter singing, one in plain sight. Also seen were YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER and three very vocal COMMON RAVENS, while BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER and WHITE-THROATED SPARROW sang in the distance. At the swamp on the main road a SWAMP SPARROW trilled and posed on a snag as ALDER FLY-CATCHER and MAGNOLIA WARBLER could be heard but remained in hiding. We then moved to the clearing northwest of the pond where three male INDIGO BUNTINGS, brilliant in full sunlight, sang, fought, and chased one another for several minutes to the delight of all; also present were RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD and BLUE-HEADED VIREO. At the Park entrance we watched a singing LEAST FLY-CATCHER and heard YELLOW-RUMPED and BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS; then at the south end of the pond a pair of BELTED KINGFISHERS fishing near the far shore gave us good scope-assisted looks. The final segment of the trip was a drive along Dynamite Shack Road where the woods looked like early spring with most of the deciduous trees just putting out new leaves after early defoliation during the



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

caterpillar epidemic. A stop on the first hill yielded splendid views of a singing BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER; further on a female RUFFED GROUSE disappeared into the roadside grass as we drove by. At the end of the drivable road, we stopped to enjoy a concert by a hidden WINTER WREN, then walked back along the road for brief looks at BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER and ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK. A final stop on the return trip featured an active family of OVENBIRDS while a distant SCARLET TANAGER sang, bringing our total for the day to 39 species

— *Phil and Margie Whitney*

### HANNACROIX RAVINE FIELD TRIP July 8, 2006

After the many rainy weekends that we have all been experiencing, finally a beautiful sunny Saturday morning greeted 13 birders that arrived to hike along the Hannacroix Ravine, which is located in southern Albany County. Shortly after entering the woods we were treated with the bell-like song of the WINTER WREN. BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER, BLUE-HEADED VIREO, RED-EYED VIREO, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, OVENBIRD, RED-BREADED AND WHITE-BREADED NUTHATCH, WOOD THRUSH, VEERY, and HERMIT THRUSH were heard singing throughout the mixed deciduous and coniferous forest. Above our heads a pair of YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCK-

ERS was busy flying in and out of a nest hole while the young sapsuckers were loudly voicing their hunger. Along the trail, a pair of BLUE-HEADED VIREOS was observed bring caterpillars to a beautifully constructed nest. The group also had good looks at a pair of AMERICAN RED-STARTS and CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER. After trying to avoid getting our feet wet while crossing the swollen stream, the group made their way back up the hill and had an easy stroll along the bedrock road. As the walk was nearing the end, the group had glimpses of some BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS moving along the trunks and branches of trees. A total of thirty-eight species was seen or heard.

— *Jocelyn Cole-Calkins*

### Would you like to help plan & schedule next year's HMBC field trip schedule?

Volunteers needed for the HMBC Field Trip Committee. All that's needed is a small commitment of time. The committee meets at the beginning of October to discuss potential trips and each committee member is given a couple of months of the following year for which to contact leaders and schedule field trips. We then meet again in November to review the schedule and make any needed changes.

Please contact Donna Zimmerman at [field-trips@hmbc.net](mailto:field-trips@hmbc.net) or 869-6624 if you are interested in helping.

## Upcoming 2006 HMBC Programs

**Monday, October 2, 2006 at 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Wet Feet: The Wild Life of America's Wetlands, Scott and Denise Stoner***

In this program we explore our wild, diverse, and exciting wetlands! From northern bogs to coastal marshes, from streams and lakes to great wooded swamps - each type is unique and



## Upcoming 2006 HMBC Programs (continued)

beautiful. Plants such as orchids, air plants, saw grass, and cypress are complemented by moose, elk, cranes, spoonbills, herons, and storks. Join us as we celebrate these vital places and the plants and animals that depend on them.

Scott Stoner is past president of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. His work has been published in "Birder's World" magazine. Denise is a past director and current Vice President of the Bird Club. Together, they have explored and photographed America from Maine to Hawaii, and have presented slide programs to this and many other groups on a variety of natural history topics.

**Monday, November 6, 2006**

***Serengeti Ndege: Birds & Wildlife in Northern Tanzania* David Martin**

7:00 PM at Colonie Public Library

Northern Tanzania is famous for its immense national parks with their spectacular scenery, dramatic herds of large mammals, and big cats. But, it also has a great variety of wonderful, easily seen birds, ranging from the gorgeous Gray Crowned Crane to the tiny, duet-singing Hunter's Cisticola, HMBC President David Martin, a long time birder, amateur photographer and natural sound recorder, will present photos and recordings of birds and wildlife made during a two-week visit to five of Tanzania's best known parks.

**Monday, December 4, 2006**

***New Zealand - Land of the Long White Cloud* Lillian and Dale Samuelson**

7:00 PM at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

December is the HMBC Holiday Party and program:

New Zealand is a beautiful and fascinating land with no native mammals except bats and an entire bird population that had no predators, hence lived primarily on the ground, prior to the arrival of man, as you will see in this slide-and-discussion presentation.

The people, including the native Maori, are more ecologically oriented than any place we've ever visited, and are dedicated to preserving what they have, to the extent of making whole islands predator-free and building predator-free enclosures, at a cost of many millions of dollars to save birds primarily, in other areas near cities.

But this is only the beginning...A major plate fault runs the length of the islands, so there is Rotorua, an area much like Yellowstone NP, and minor earthquakes are common. Huge trees



## Upcoming 2006 HMBC Programs (continued)

the size of our redwoods covered the islands until sailing ships and people in need of wood discovered them. New Zealanders have preserved some of the remaining forests after citizens realized what was happening.

Long-time HMBC members and world travelers Dale and Lillian have had two three-week trips there, eighteen years apart, and look forward to telling us more about the land and its inhabitants, both man and "critters".

## Upcoming 2006 Capital Region Audubon Programs

**Thursday October 12, 2006, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***From the Mountains To The Sea*, Fred and Barbara Nuffer**

Fred and Barbara Nuffer have both worked at the NYSDEC since the mid-1970's. They enjoy traveling and exploring the U.S. National Park System. Fred and Barbara are avid hikers. Barbara is an accomplished photographer and has an article, with photographs, on wildflowers, in the current issue of *The Conservationist*.

**Thursday November 9, 2006, 7:00 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Adirondack Inventory*, Graham Cox**

Though we know much about the bigger critters as well as the trees and plants in the Adirondack Park, we now know there is much we do not know about all the other taxa that make the ecosystems work, from the bogs and river banks to the highest Alpine summits. Using the model of the citizen-science work in the Great Smokey National Park, a hard working group of scientists and educators are now embarking on what could be a ten-year, maybe longer, project to identify every species, from bacteria to moose, in the Park. With the emphasis on citizen science -- training young people and old, volunteers with an interest in science in the Park, to catalog and use DNA bar coding to make the ultimate list of living things in the six-million acre park. We will talk about what this inventory is, and also bring people up to date on other related science in the Park, including a brief overview of the Adirondack Research Consortium.

Graham Cox is a long-time activist and researcher on Adirondack Park issues. He worked on the staff of the Gov. Cuomo's 21st Century Adirondack Commission in 1989-90. He has been working for the last two years as a post-doctoral research associate with the University of Vermont, asking Adirondack and Tug Hill communities to envision their respective futures a generation from now and make their own priority lists for resource investment and action. He serves as a member of the DEC's Forest Preserve Advisory Committee and the DEC Region 5 Open Space Advisory Committee, representing Audubon New York.







## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

NOV 4      TOMHANNOCK RESERVOIR (Rensselaer County; morning)  
SAT      **Coordinator: Larry Alden**      **861-6087** over-  
look@nycap.rr.com

Join us for a morning trip that circumnavigates the Tomhannock Reservoir. We should find a good variety of waterfowl as well as migrant and resident passerines and possibly shorebirds. Rarities such as Ross' Goose and Gray Kingbird have turned up at the Tomhannock in the fall, and we often find a Bald Eagle or two. This trip is dedicated to the memory of long-time field trip chair Bill Gorman, who led this trip for many years. Meet at the parking area at the intersection of Lake Shore Dr. and NY Rt. 7 at the west end of the causeway. Bring a scope if you have one.

NOV 11      HUDSON RIVER SOUTH OF ALBANY (Albany and Green Counties, morning/mid-  
afternoon)  
SAT      **Coordinator: Gregg Recer**      **899-2678** gregg.recer@verizon.net

We will spend the morning, perhaps into early afternoon, scouring the Hudson river south of Albany for migrant waterfowl, gulls, late shorebirds and any other late migrants or early winter visitors that might be present. We should also have opportunities to observe numbers of Bald Eagles. Nearly all of the common puddle ducks and many diving ducks, including Canvasback are possibilities. Loons, grebes, comorants and possibly some white-winged gulls should round out the water bird possibilities. We will be largely car birding and so we'll try to consolidate riders into as few cars as possible during the trip. If you have one, a spotting scope will be a major asset. Bring a snack or lunch and meet at 8:00AM at the Coeymans Park boat launch in the Town of Coeymans, Albany County. To reach the meeting spot, take I-87 (NYS Thruway) south from Albany to exit 22 (Selkirk). Go south on SR 144 about 3 miles to Coeymans. Go left onto Westerlo St and follow it to the boat launch on the river.

DEC 2—3      NIAGARA RIVER AND NIAGARA FALLS  
SAT—SUN      **Coordinator: Bill Lee**      **374-3426** bileej@hotmail.com

The Niagara River, between Lakes Erie and Ontario, hosts thousands of gulls at this time of year. A wide variety of gull species will be present. We have a reasonable chance of finding Lesser Black-Backed, Little, Franklin's, Common Black-headed, Bonaparte's, California, and white-winged gulls, plus Black-legged Kittiwake. This is a very good time of year for rare gulls.

**DECEMBER 6 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR CAMPFIRE & OWLING (DEC 10)**



## Winter and Spring Program Reports

It was a great second half of the year with great programs on a very diverse list of topics. Continuing the spike in attendance from the fall, Warren Greene rung in the new year in January with Birds of Upstate New York: Loons, Owls, Bluebirds, and Warblers to a nearly packed house. As the featured speaker for the HMBC's open house and new member night, he made a very positive impression!

Next, in February, ever-popular photographer and speaker Tom Lindsay presented "Four for Florida" - a tour of four of Florida's many fine National Wildlife Refuges: Merritt Island, Loxahatchee, St. Mark's, and (of course) Ding Darling.

Switching gears from viewing and photographing birds to attracting them, Dr. Francis Groeters of the Catskill Native Nursery gave a very well researched and well-received program on "Birdscaping your Backyard." Attendance was once again near the century mark.

At our Annual Meeting on April 10, Joan Collins was the featured speaker after dinner, giving her renowned multi-media presentation, "Boreal Birds of the Adirondacks." Adirondack birding shows are always a big draw, and this was no exception - and was enjoyed by all.

Moving to Five Rivers in May, a highly interested crowd turned out to hear NYSDEC's Kevin Clarke's well-researched and informative talk on Mute Swans. Issues regarding large aquatic species (Canada Goose; cormorants; Mute Swans) are always controversial, and engender a lively discussion!

Finally, and again at Five Rivers, in June we capped off the year with a return engagement of the always popular Travers, the retired teachers from the Rochester area who are nearly finished with their quest to see one species of every bird family in the world. This time, Don and Donna presented "Botswana's Okavango Delta and the Shoebill of Zambia's Bangweulu Wetlands." A fascinating presentation about a fascinating journey. And, they have already agreed to come back to HMBC in June 2007!

- Scott Stoner

## PUBLIC LANDS IN PUBLIC HANDS

The City of Albany receives tipping fees for each load that trucks dump at the Albany landfill. Last year the City made \$13 million profit from this operation. The City now wants to expand the landfill into the Pine Bush Preserve and in wetlands in the Town of Coeymans. Members of conservation organizations, such as the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club are invited to join in the celebration of *National Public Lands Day* through the Sierra Club's **Public Lands in Public Hands** campaign on Saturday, September 30, 2006, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, at the Pine Bush Preserve on New Karner Road and the Albany landfill on Rapp Road.



## Sam Madison Award - Donations and Nominations Needed

The HMBC is seeking donations to continue the Sam Madison Award. Please look for the specific contribution line on the dues notice for 2007, that you will receive in December 2006. Alternatively, you can send a check payable to the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club to the HMBC Treasurer, Ellen Pemrick, at 298 Vly Rd., Niskayuna, NY 12309

We are also seeking nominations for the 2007 award, to be given at the HMBC Annual Meeting in April. To make a nomination, please send an email with "Sam Madison Award" as the subject of the message to [contact@hmhc.net](mailto:contact@hmhc.net) Thank you. - Scott Stoner, Chair, and Bill Lee, of the Sam Madison Award Committee.

Below is an article by former Sam Madison Award Committee Chair, Bob Budliger, originally published in Feathers, December 2001.

"The HMBC has established the Sam Madison Award to honor the man who led and advised the Club through much of its history. He served as President, was Nominating Committee chair for as long as anyone can remember, and led field trips to a variety of places. Sam's Delmarva Peninsula trip was legendary. With a military-like time schedule it was the "Bataan March" of the bird club. Perhaps Sam's signal accomplishment was his role in acquiring our Reist Sanctuary in 1970. We all have our favorite Sam Story. They all remember an inveterate birder, a caring and sharing friend, and a gentleman in the truest sense."

"The Sam Madison Award was established to encourage and enhance the education of students and teachers about birds, bird habitats, and bird conservation. This is a monetary award that will promote understanding and appreciation of birds and their biology, ecology, and conservation. It may be given to a student, a teacher or youth leader, or an organization. The award might be given to provide:

- scholarships for youth conservation camps or teacher ecology workshops
- funding and/or materials for classrooms in schools that promote education about birds
- funding and/or materials for scout camp programs related to birds
- specific bird-related books/publications for children's libraries

funds for pilot-projects at children's museums or nature centers that are bird-related"

"There are not restrictive and detailed criteria, and there is not a formal application format. A committee [Scott Stoner, Chair, and Bill Lee] will be happy to receive narrative nominations from any HMBC member for any student, teacher, organization, or program that meets the purpose of the Sam Madison award and merits our support."

### Sam Madison Award Recipients

2002	Five Rivers Environmental Education Center	long-term bird education efforts
2003	Deb Smith	development of a bird backyard at school and birding lessons for Junior High School students
2004	Will Aubrey	long-time efforts taking students in the field to study birds as an introduction to nature
2005	George Steele	development of a bird program with inner city schools in Albany and Schenectady
2006	Wood Road Nature Trail Committee	bird related projects



**HMBC BOARD FOR 2005-2006**

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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:  
Chris Grossman at [bgrossman@nycap.rr.com](mailto:bgrossman@nycap.rr.com)

Send all paper submissions to:

**Chris Grossman**  
7 Nott Rd.  
Rexford, NY 12148



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

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

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

To order, contact: [jackieb@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jackieb@nycap.rr.com)

For additional information, go the club's website: [www.hbmc.net](http://www.hbmc.net)

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## NORTHERN ADVENTURES

*By Chris and Bernie Grossman*

This article isn't about birds. It's about bears: *Ursus maritimus*, or polar bear, to be exact. We did see some birds on our trip, a total of five species of which the most numerous was the common raven. The others included two herring gulls, a common eider, a snowy owl and a hoary redpoll.

We have always been interested in the north, taking three hiking trips in the Canadian Rockies and a hiking trip in Norway. Here we have seen terrain that ranges from heavy forest to above the tree line to alpine meadows to above the grass line. In these areas, we have seen many species of birds and mammals as well as incredibly beautiful wildflowers, but lacking were sightings of the two large bear species, the grizzly and the polar. To correct this we planned a trip to Churchill, Manitoba to see the great white ones.

Churchill is located on the west shore of Hudson's Bay at the outlet of the Churchill River about 600 miles northeast of Winnipeg. Ecologically it is uniquely located at the conjunction of four regions: tundra, boreal forest, taiga, and coastal plain. Further, it is the only coastline of the Bay that has an east-west reach. These factors create an area rich in wildlife, caribou, birds, seals, beluga whales and marine life, and bears. It is also the land of the Inuit (formerly known as Eskimo).

The founders of the Hudson's Bay Company were the first European settlers building a large stone fort at the river's outlet. The area went quiet with the end of the fur trade, but a grain port and railroad were built around 1930. The Canadian and US militaries had a large base there for training and testing in the 1950s and 1960s, but the town has now dwindled to about 750 residents who work in the port, a regional medical center for the small northern Inuit communities, and

the tourist trade. There is no road access, so everything arrives by air, rail or sea.

Male polar bears can attain 1400 pounds and can reach up at least 8 feet. The females weigh about half as much. Both sexes are amazingly fast and strong, and they have evolved into efficient killers of ring and harp seals. The females bear triplets and twins, although triplets are now rare and twins less frequent as a result of global warming that has reduced food opportunities. Single cubs may now mean that one of the sow's twins has been lost. The cubs stay with the sow for two years and then are driven off to be on their own. She bears a litter every three years.

Polar bears live on the ice hunting seals, but because Hudson's Bay normally becomes ice-free in mid-July, the bears are forced onto land until the Bay re-freezes in mid-October to mid-November. This has created a sub-population of about 1000 individuals. These enter a period of "walking hibernation" during this time eating very little or nothing. They collect on the shore waiting for freeze-up, and this has created the

In This Issue...

*Field Trip Reports*

*Upcoming Programs*

*Winter Field Trips*



## **NORTHERN ADVENTURES** *(continued)*

bear-watching tourist industry. Finally, pregnant sows move in mid-winter into the boreal forest about 30 miles from shore to den up for birthing. They and the cubs emerge in March.

We arrived in Churchill on Monday morning, November 13, and we were met by our guide Steve Clabb of Churchill Nature Tours. While maximum group size is 16, there were only seven this time. We traveled around the area in an old school bus, stayed in a nice one star-type motel, and ate at the world famous Gypsy's Café.

Steve told us the rules: always be aware of what's around you, walk in groups, respond immediately to his commands, and never forget that there are bears everywhere. The province runs a 24/7/365 patrol of the town and posted signs warn of the perimeter beyond the patrol. Bears venturing near or into town are chased off with firecracker shells, but naughty ones are tranquilized and are kept in the bear jail until freeze-up. Like in the Adirondacks, the town has just closed its garbage dump and is storing the stuff in a large abandoned military building. Unfortunately, the problem of how and where to move it has not been solved, and the building is nearly full.

First Steve showed us the town and the old fort across the river which still had its original guns. Here we saw our first bird other than the numerous common ravens, an immature herring gull. We also saw an arctic fox close up. After lunch, we took an hour-long helicopter tour of the area east of town.

The tundra/taiga region around town is generally flat, but covered with lakes, ponds and streams. These are usually surrounded by a narrow band of low willow bushes. Trees are infrequent and scrawny, but clumps do grow in low, wind-sheltered places. At ground level the boreal forest appears as a distant dark line on the horizon. We never went into the forest. There is one spot known as the Moose Pasture where we saw five moose. More are usually present, but they had moved off into the forest. Later on the flight, we saw a red fox. All three color morphs (red, silver, and cross or bluish) are seen around town.

During the flight, we saw about fifty (yes, 50) bears. Essentially they were wandering everywhere through old military buildings, along the shore, and lying in seaweed thrown up on the beach. We saw individuals, sows and cubs, and groups of males and non-parenting females gathered and just waiting.

After the flight, we were driven out of town to visit some Eskimo sled dogs. Along the way, we passed an isolated house that had two young bears moving around the front door. These were our first close encounter. Steve let us leave the bus singly, since the bears were about 75 yards away. Suddenly the owner drove up and fired off several cracker shells. The bears started off in our direction, so we quickly got back into the bus.

Canadian Eskimo sled dogs are not malamutes or huskies, but are considered a separate breed. With the arrival of snowmobiles, the Inuit abandoned dogs, and the breed almost disappeared. A Churchill resident collected the remnants, and his pack now numbers about 500. Most of them are chained out on the tundra along the road. They live there all year long, since they are inured to the cold and snow.

Just before the dogs, we saw two big male bears about 100 feet off the road. They were facing off and soon reared up and began to wrestle. Steve explained that at this time of year, this was not aggressive behavior. Instead the bears were coming out of the walking hibernation and that they were strengthening and exercising their muscles. During the next two days, we saw many more pairs or trios wrestling.

The next morning, we drove to the tundra buggy garage out of town near the shore of the bay. The buggies were developed in the early 1990's, and there are now about twenty owned by the two companies that have concessions to run tours. Each company also has a lodge made up of several connected buggies out on the tundra. Each has sleeping, kitchen/dining, and lounge areas. No waste other than grey water is discharged on the ground, and the lodges are serviced by special buggies.



## **NORTHERN ADVENTURES** *(continued)*

The tundra buggy looks like a large grey school bus mounted on Oshkosh airport fire truck chassis. There are special wide tires allowing the vehicles to move over and through just about anything. In practice, they stay on old military roads, the beach, or gravel eskers. The side windows can be lowered for photography. The buggy also has a large porch with a steel mesh floor extending off the rear. We spent about seven hours each day out on the tundra looking for and viewing the bears. Gypsy's provided a great lunch, and we were introduced to the local hot drink, the Tundracino, a hot coffee and cocoa mix.

We began to see bears as the buggy moved along. They were walking across the snow covered tundra, lying in the snow asleep or hanging around the lodges. The most action seemed to occur around the lodges. The first day, we saw sixteen at one time including 4 mothers with twins and a mother with a single cub. We became practiced at separating this year's (COY, Cub Of Year) youngsters from a larger or second year cub. The bears were unafraid of the buggy and came right up to us. One mother brought her twins over, and then laid down right behind the buggy porch. We watched males wrestle and check out the lodge. More than one came under the porch and stood up on its hind legs. They pushed their noses up into the mesh so they could sniff our boot bottoms. We could hear them breathing, sniffing and snuffling. Our cameras were really busy. It was here that we also saw an adult herring gull and a common eider.

Polar bear mothers are fiercely protective, and they will charge a threatening male bear twice their size. The male usually retreats after a bit of challenge. The cubs are trained to stay on the far side and very close to Mom in what is almost a heel position. It was fascinating watching the cubs maintain position at her hind leg even as Mom moved rapidly to confront the male.

The Bay was freezing rapidly, although tide and wind could push the ice away from and back to the shore until a sufficiently cold spell froze the Bay completely. We could see bears crossing the more solid ice while two were seen swimming through slush. By the way, stories about drowning

bears as mostly urban legends. The bears float like a cork, and they can swim 150 km easily.

We covered slightly different terrain the second day. Much of the time was spent parked close to the second lodge, because the bear activity was so good. They were moving all around the lodge. Three males passed time by wrestling. While the buggy was backing up close to the lodge to park, we spotted a bear curled up asleep in the snow. The porch ended up about 15 feet from it. Its fur was a yellowish white, and it stayed asleep for about an hour. When it did awaken, it turned out to be a huge male who walked over to check us out and sniff our boots. Later a mother with a single COY walked through the action. We could hear the COY calling out to Mom to let it nurse. She had to move away to find a quiet spot where we were able to see the COY nursing. We also saw a mother nursing twins.

The most interesting birds were seen the second day. We were driving through a patch of the low willow bushes when Chris spotted a small bird moving through. It turned out to be a hoary redpoll. The breast was unmarked, while the back was fairly pale. While driving back to the garage, we heard another buggy call out spotting a snow owl over the radio. I saw it sitting on the top of a spruce tree about a quarter mile out on the tundra. We stopped to take a good look.

The trip ended with our seeing at least 150 bears. That evening we had a look at a spectacular northern lights display of green streamers flowing across the dark sky. We also visited a caribou skin covered tent of an Inuit couple who presented a brief cultural program.

The polar bears of Churchill are a spectacular sight as well as a humbling experience as you realize that we aren't at the top of the food chain. Churchill and SE Manitoba are also an important birding area where in summer you can see specialties such as Ross' gull, LeConte's and Baird's sparrows, singing Connecticut warblers and gyrfalcon. Chris and I plan to return to the area some June to see them. In the meantime, we hope to present a program of our pictures to the Club.



## HMBC Field Trip Reports

### **Peebles Island State Park September 10, 2006**

A congenial group of 25 tallied a modest 43+ bird species. The weather was nice but the birds were in short supply and difficult to spot. The water level was low and the habitat looked right, but shorebirds were sparse.

Highlights included two BALD EAGLES (two more were seen later); WILSON'S WARBLER; and NORTHERN PARULA WARBLER. Most of the warblers stayed high in the treetops, giving us all neck strain. Only one very cooperative BLACK & WHITE WARBLER had the courtesy to fly down to eye level and practically within arm's reach of the watchful crowd.

Most impressive was a young local student who was able to quickly and quietly find and instantly identify the birds, particularly a fall BLACKPOLL WARBLER and a female BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER. Maybe there's hope for our future after all?

Birds Observed: CANADA GOOSE; AMERICAN BLACK DUCK 2; MALLARD; BLUE-WINGED TEAL 10; GREEN-WINGED TEAL 6; DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT 20; GREAT BLUE HERON 4; TURKEY VULTURE 3; BALD EAGLE 2; RED-TAILED HAWK 2; LESSER YELLOWLEGS 2; SPOTTED SANDPIPER 1; LEAST SANDPIPER 2; RING-BILLED GULL 300; HERRING GULL 2; GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL 1; ROCK PIGEON; MOURNING DOVE; DOWNY WOODPECKER 2; HAIRY WOODPECKER 1; NORTHERN FLICKER 1; BLUE-HEADED VIREO 1; WARBLING VIREO 1; RED-EYED VIREO 1; BLUE JAY; AMERICAN CROW; BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE; TUFTED TITMOUSE 2; WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH 1; CAROLINA WREN 1; GRAY CATBIRD 1; EUROPEAN STARLING; CEDAR WAXWING 4; NORTHERN PARULA WARBLER 1; MAGNOLIA WARBLER 1; BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER 1; BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER 2 seen later; BLACKPOLL WARBLER 1; BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER 2; WILSON'S WARBLER 1; SCARLET Tanager 2; WHITE-THROATED SPARROW 1; NORTHERN CARDINAL 1; HOUSE SPARROW.

— *Frank Murphy*

### **Five Rivers September 30, 2006**

About a dozen HMBC members and friends enjoyed an early autumn bird walk at Five Rivers on September 30, 2006. We began at the Beaver Pond, where we enjoyed seeing a DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT, which appeared to be enjoying the company of a white domestic goose! BELTED KINGFISHERS were rattling their way across the pond, and a small group of MALLARDS were snuggled among its still vegetated marshy edges, where RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS were still active.

The wooded area along the Vlomankill was rich with the sounds of WHITE BREASTED NUTHATCH and DOWNY WOODPECKER, and we enjoyed a delightful look at a small group of EASTERN BLUEBIRDS.

On our way through the fields we heard GOLDFINCHES flying over, and enjoyed a look at a SHARP-SHINNED HAWK.

We also enjoyed some looks at PALM WARBLERS on the roof of one of the new shelters near the Goose pond, and some YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS. We also had some nice looks at RED-EYED VIREO in the area of the Goose pond, as well as a GREEN HERON, and we enjoyed an OSPREY as it flew above us.

— *Scott Stoner and Denise Hackert-Stoner*

### **Vischer Ferry Preserve October 1, 2006**

A steady rain just couldn't hold back 4 enthusiastic birders, plus the coordinator, who showed up for this field trip on Sunday morning. We waited patiently under the shelter of the kiosk for the rain to stop, but eventually gave up hope that it would. So, we started walking in the rain along the towpath to the west of the main entrance. Ducks would certainly be expected on a morning like this but not such a variety of songbirds as we began to see. We birded the towpath trail for less than an hour until a downpour forced us back to the parking lot. The highlights included 2 SWAINSON'S THRUSHES, several RUSTY BLACKBIRDS, BLUE-HEADED VIREO, RED-EYED



## HMBC Field Trip Reports *(continued)*

VIREO, and BROWN CREEPER. Several warblers were spotted but not seen by everyone. These included: NASHVILLE, YELLOW-RUMPED, MAGNOLIA, and BLACK-THROATED GREEN. A single AMERICAN WIGEON was the best duck of the morning. Our final list included a surprising 28 species.

— *John Hershey*

### **Vermont's Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area October 7, 2006**

About a dozen and half HMBers from New York trekked to Vermont's Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area on October 7, 2006 to enjoy a day of birding with Bob Budliger, formerly of Delmar and a past-president of HMBC.

It was a nice October day in the Champlain Valley with very light southerly winds, somewhat sunny skies, and temperatures in the 50s. Dead Creek is a major stopover for southbound SNOW GEESE, and some years there are as many as 10,000-15,000 in the open fields along State Route 17. We were disappointed this year that the main flocks were landing in fields to the south and out of view. We did see several large flocks overhead, among them no less than 6 of the blue morph.

This date was also VT Fish and Wildlife's large open house called Dead Creek Days, so there were exhibits, bird banding, and demonstrations as well as food and lavatories. We also visited nearby Lake Champlain to search for waterbirds, the best of which was a RED-NECKED GREBE.

Some 48 species of birds were observed among them SNOW GOOSE, ten species of ducks, an immature BALD EAGLE, a possible GOLDEN EAGLE, a PEREGRINE FALCON, both YELLOWLEGS and two PECTORAL SANDPIPERS, a smattering of songbirds including HORNED LARKS and AMERICAN PIPITS.

— *Bob Budliger*

### **Saratoga Battlefield October 21, 2006**

Raptors and Winter Wren were among the highlights of this trip. On a warm, sunny morning, with great late-season foliage, a brisk wind seemed to keep the passerines at bay but was conducive to raptors. Nearly 20 birders met at the Visitor Center at 9 AM (when it opened), then headed out on the Wilkinson Trail (and a portion of the tour road), traversing both field and forest. By the time we returned around noon, we had tallied 38 species.

We had all three accipiters with several SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS, at least one COOPER'S, and two folks had a quick look at a GOSHAWK! RED-TAILS were seen from the outset, an AMERICAN KESTREL flew by at fairly close range, and we enjoyed watching A NORTHERN HARRIER coursing low across a field. Another highlight was the RED-SHOULDERED HAWK that several people had in the distance on the way back along the trail!

Woodpeckers included both PILEATED and RED-BELLIED, and we had both AM. CROW and COMMON RAVEN. Although songbirds were a bit elusive, we did eventually get both SONG and WHITE-THROATED SPARROW. In fact, it was while looking for the white-throat that we discovered a WINTER WREN, along a portion of the tour road! In its typical mouselike fashion, it scurried along, at or near the ground for a good distance, allowing some (but unfortunately not all) the folks to get at least a brief look before disappearing altogether. EASTERN BLUEBIRDS eluded us for a while, but we eventually encountered a good half-dozen, some at fairly close range. As we returned along the trail through the woods, the songbirding picked up and some people were able to see RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, RUSTY BLACKBIRD, and SWAINSON'S THRUSH.

A special thank you to Bill Cook for his sharp eyes and help with some difficult identifications, and to all who participated in this most enjoyable trip!

— *Scott Stoner and Denise Hackert-Stoner*



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

### Tomhannock Reservoir Saturday, November 4, 2006

Nineteen birders gathered at the fisherman's parking lot on the west end of the Route 7 causeway on a cool, mostly sunny morning to see what could be found at and around the Tomhannock Reservoir. We had a good mix of beginners and seasoned birders to search the trees, air, and water. While waiting for the last people to arrive, a flock of CEDAR WAXWINGS flew in to feed on berries near the parking area. A HAIRY WOODPECKER, AMERICAN ROBIN, and a GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET also put in an appearance, and a COMMON RAVEN croaked from nearby. First we crowded the shore to look north to pick out a distant COMMON LOON, which was a species several people hoped to see. Sharp eyes picked out two PIED-BILLED GREBES along the west shore. Crossing Route 7, we scoped the waters, looking at a nice array of waterfowl plus two WILD TURKEYS and a SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, then carpooled up for the counter-clockwise trip around the reservoir.

Our first stop at Nortonville Road brought close views of HOODED MERGANSERS, and a third PIED-BILLED GREBE. Some of the group spotted an immature BALD EAGLE as it flew to the north across the reservoir. At our next stop, we had some good woodpecker action, with a PILEATED AND RED-BELLIED making appearances. Next, we walked out along a spit and observed an immature BALD EAGLE, probably the same one we saw before, perched on a nearby tree until it got nervous and flew off.

Otter Creek had a quartet of GREEN-WINGED TEAL and a closer COMMON LOON, as well as an adult DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT. We then moved on to the spillway at the north end of the reservoir. This was one of our best stops, with another immature EAGLE, SNOW GEESE, AMERICAN WIGEONS, and a HORNED GREBE. Then there was some talk about "red-neck". I figured they weren't talking about me, so it had to be our third grebe species of the day! We were also surprised to see a few TREE SWALLOWS flying far out over the water. A BELTED KINGFISHER flew along the lake shore right in front of us.

We rounded the spillway and continued around to the south onto Ford Road, stopping at the bridge near the pump station. Here we got our only SONG SPARROW, plus a pair of TUFTED TITMICE and a flock of STARLINGS. A little further on, we hit the jackpot when we played a

Screech-Owl tape. We were immediately surrounded by CHICKADEES, but found with them a late PINE WARBLER, a YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, and a RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH while an adult BALD EAGLE flew past over the water.

Traveling further along the west shore, we saw a couple EASTERN BLUEBIRDS fly by, so we stopped the caravan and padded our list with MOURNING DOVE, WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, and HOUSE FINCH. From there, the only bird of interest was an oddly-plumaged RED-TAILED HAWK that threw us off with a few white primaries. We concluded our very successful trip back where we started in about three-and-a-half hours with a very respectable total of 51 species. We saw many of the species people wanted to see, plus some lifers for our beginning birders.

— Penny and Larry Alden

### Franklin Mountain (Oneonta NY) Nov. 4, 2006

"The Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch" is located at the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society Sanctuary, overlooking Oneonta, NY. This site is particularly noted for late fall season flights of Red-tailed Hawks and Golden Eagles. Franklin Mountain provides a panoramic view of the Susquehanna River valley and the surrounding hills of Otsego and Delaware Counties. In addition to the hawk watch, the Audubon Sanctuary provides marked hiking trails through a variety of habitats (*For more details, see the website: <http://doas.us/franklinmt.htm>*).

The weather was calm, with northwesterly breezes throughout the day. It was partly cloudy, changing to cloudy conditions by end of the day.

Highlights were adult and immature BALD and GOLDEN EAGLES. A FOX SPARROW was seen at a feeder. Two LOONS and a GREAT BLUE HERON migrating were seen along with 57 raptors. The raptor count was: TURKEY VULTURE 1, BALD EAGLE 3, NORTHERN HARRIER 2, SHARP-SHINNED 1, COOPER'S HAWK 1, RED-SHOULDERED 2, RED-TAIL 40, ROUGH-LEGGED 1, GOLDEN EAGLE 5, PEREGRINE FALCON 1.

— Elayne Ryba



## Upcoming 2006/2007 HMBC Programs

**Monday, December 4, 2006, 7:00 PM, Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar**  
***New Zealand - Land of the Long White Cloud*, Lillian and Dale Samuelson**

December is the HMBC Holiday Party and program:

New Zealand is a beautiful and fascinating land with no native mammals except bats and an entire bird population that had no predators, hence lived primarily on the ground prior to the arrival of man, as you will see in this slide-and-discussion presentation.

The people, including the native Maori, are more ecologically oriented than any place we've ever visited, and are dedicated to preserving what they have, to the extent of making whole islands predator-free and building predator-free enclosures, at a cost of many millions of dollars to save birds primarily, in other areas near cities.

But this is only the beginning...A major plate fault runs the length of the islands, so there is Rotorua, an area much like Yellowstone NP, and minor earthquakes are common. Huge trees the size of our redwoods covered the islands until sailing ships and people in need of wood discovered them. New Zealanders have preserved some of the remaining forests after citizens realized what was happening.

Long-time HMBC members and world travelers Dale and Lillian have had two three-week trips there, eighteen years apart, and look forward to telling us more about the land and its inhabitants, both man and "critters".

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**Monday, January 8, 2007 7:00 PM at William K Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***The Flora and Fauna of the Upper Hudson River Sanctuaries*, Larry Federman**

(Call the library in event of inclement weather to make sure it is still on)

Larry Federman is the Assistant Warden/Educator for Audubon New York's Rheinstrom Hill, Buttercup Farm, RamsHorn-Livingston Audubon Centers and Sanctuaries.

His history with the Audubon family goes back over a dozen years when he first got involved in his local chapter. He has served his chapter in numerous capacities and is currently president, newsletter editor, council delegate, and field trip leader.

Prior to his employment at Audubon, Larry was a professional musician. His career afforded him the opportunity to travel the US, Europe, and Western Caribbean. While traveling and pursuing his musical endeavors, Larry always made time for birding and experiencing the marvels of nature.

In the course of his daily routines at the Audubon sites, Larry always has a camera with him. Discover the plants and animals that call these sanctuaries home through Larry's "incidental" photos.



## Upcoming 2006/2007 HMBC Programs *(continued)*

**Monday, February 5, 2007, 7:00 PM at William K Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Adirondack Birds - Views by Habitat*, Jeff Nadler**

A wide diversity of bird species are found in the Adirondack region, thanks to numerous habitat types. Jeff's new program offers an intimate look at over one-hundred seasonal and year-round residents, presented by a variety of habitats. Explore boreal coniferous bogs and woodlands, mixed and deciduous woodlands, wetland marsh and swamps, wild lakes and ponds, upper elevation spruce-fir, and open and disturbed spaces. Boreal birds, Common Loon, numerous warblers, wading birds, hawks, owls, and other songbirds are featured. This is a one-hour digital photo and music presentation. Jeff Nadler has specialized in avian photography, especially the Adirondacks. His images have frequently appeared in Adirondack publications including Adirondack Life, Adirondack Explorer, and The Conservationist. His images have been used by the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council, Adirondack Mountain Club, Hamilton County, Franklin County, Lake Champlain Birding Trail, Adirondack Cooperative Loon program, Wilderness Conservation Society, Great Adirondack Birding Celebration, and others.

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**Monday March 5, 2007, 7:00 PM at William K Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Arizona birding, Gregg Recer***

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**Monday March 26, 2007, 7:00 PM at Five Rivers**  
***HMBC literary night***

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**Tuesday April 17, mark your calendars for HMBC Annual Meeting and Dinner - at the Italian-American Community Center. Speaker: naturalist - photographer John Green, Jr. Program: Double Feature: "Quabbin: The Valley Filled with Water," and "Nature through the eyes of an Urban-born Naturalist". Members will receive a separate mailing with details about the dinner.**

## Upcoming 2006/2007 Capital Region Audubon Programs

**Thursday, December 14, 2006, 7:00-9:00 pm**  
**Grassland Bird Conservation, Mike Morgan**

Of the 20 bird species showing the steepest decline in New York State, almost 50% are grassland species. Come learn about Audubon New York's grassland bird conservation initiative and find out what research is showing about where grassland birds are concentrated in New York, what are their habitat requirements, how their habitat fits in to New York's landscapes, and what landowners can do to manage habitat for grassland birds.

Mike Morgan is Audubon New York's Wildlife Ecologist and the coordinator of Audubon's grassland bird conservation program. Prior to coming to Audubon in 2004, Mike worked for the NYS DEC and USFWS at Iroquois and Montezuma National Wildlife Refuges, and at Finger Lakes Community College. His outside interests include canoeing, camping, woodworking and training his Labrador retriever.





## Upcoming Field Trips *(continued)*

**JAN 21**                    **NEW YEAR'S DAY BIRD COUNT AT FIVE RIVERS**  
**SUN**                      **Coordinator: Craig Thompson**                    **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 Jan. 1st. 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 am 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.

**Jan 20**                    **Annual State Waterfowl Count**  
**SAT**                      **Coordinator: Gary Goodness**    **862-9680**    [goodness@nycap.rr.com](mailto:goodness@nycap.rr.com)

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 am in the parking lot of the Hannaford Supermarket on the east end of the Troy-Waterford Bridge (Rt. 4). Alternate Date: Sun. Jan 21 in case of inclement weather.

**JAN OR FEB**            **WINTER RARE BIRD TRIP**  
**Coordinator: Bill Lee**                    **374-3426**    [bileej@hotmail.com](mailto:bileej@hotmail.com)

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 & trip details, call or email the coordinator. In recent years, participants have seen Thick-Billed Murre, Eared Grebe, Cackling Goose & Boreal Owl.



**HMBC BOARD FOR 2005-2006**

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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: Chris Grossman at [bgrossman@nycap.rr.com](mailto:bgrossman@nycap.rr.com)

Send all paper submissions to:

**Chris Grossman**  
**7 Nott Rd.**  
**Rexford, NY 12148**



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

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

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

To order, contact: [jackieb@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jackieb@nycap.rr.com)

For additional information, go the club's website: [www.hmhc.net](http://www.hmhc.net)

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