

# Feathers

## Hudson River Snowy Owl Rescue

by Richard Guthrie

*The following account of the rescue is from Richard Guthrie's blog in the Times Union, and is reprinted with the author's permission.*

### Snowy Owl Rescue

November 18, 2008 at 11:07 AM

Mid-Sunday morning, I received a call from Will Raup that a SNOWY OWL had been seen swimming in the Hudson River by the volunteers aboard the USS Slater. Will went through the usual routine questions to be sure they weren't watching a gull, goose, or even a swan.

Will was able to confirm that indeed it was really an owl swimming in the river! He went down to the Snow Dock to confirm all this and gave me a call.

I followed up with a few calls to licensed wildlife rehabilitators, who might have been able to respond. No luck there. One was too far away. Another's voice mail box was full and another was otherwise unavailable.

So I went up to Albany to see what I might be able to do.

Will was there and was able to point me to the owl crouched down on rocks over on the Rensselaer side. An Animal Control Officer, who had also been contacted in the meantime, was driving back and forth in his attempts to locate the owl as well.

So over the River I went. Through our cell-phones, Will was able to direct me to both the owl and the officer - both on the river's edge, below the dense riverside brush and out of sight to me on

the shore. He then directed us to the owl, still out of sight.

Long story short - the officer was able to drive the owl up to where I was waiting. I picked up the owl, being very careful not to get within reach of its huge, sharp talons.

The owl was very light in weight, despite being pretty wet from its dunking. I also felt the sternum bone which was very sharp and lacking any fat content indicating that the bird was thoroughly emaciated.

So the owl went over to proper care - first to a veterinarian then to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

The latest report is that the owl is weak, has a minor eye injury, but is otherwise healthy and likely to recover fully. It will be released back into the wild once it is deemed capable of resuming its journey.

So what happened to this owl anyway?

I suspect that the owl was just passing through when it was attracted to the pigeons that frequent downtown Albany. This sort of thing has happened in the past without incident. But now we have a few Peregrine Falcons residing there.

Peregrines and owls just don't get along.

I suspect that the Peregrines dive-bombed the owl to the point where it flopped into the water. Although owls are not known for their swimming ability, they are pretty light and can float. By flapping along, the owl made it across the river to the rocks on the other side.

Thanks to the crew of the Slater for bringing this to our attention and to Will for taking charge.

— Richard Guthrie

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Richard Guthrie's blog can be seen at  
<http://blogs.timesunion.com/birding/>

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*Editor's Note: This owl has been cared for by Kelly Martin, a NYS- and Federally-licensed rehabilitator, for almost two months now. The bird was found to have minor head trauma, and was slightly malnourished. She/he is now eating well, and will probably be released by the end of the month, in a less urban area.*

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## President's Corner



This winter has brought in its share of interesting visitors. Everyone has heard or seen the reports of the snowy owls in downtown Albany. It is sad that it was unable to survive, but many of the snowys pushed south each year are first year birds and are usually in poor condition from lack of food.

Other visitors include pine siskins and white-winged crossbills. The former were being seen in large flocks in wooded areas, but are now appearing in good numbers at local feeders. A few have shown up with the goldfinches at our feeders in Rexford where they have joined the throngs of sparrows, juncos, woodpeckers and others. The feeders also act as a drive-through for one or more sharp-shinned hawks.

I along with others made two attempts to see the northern hawk owl that has been hanging out near Peru, NY, south of Plattsburgh. Our first attempt was unsuccessful, because of a strong wind that grounded just about all the bird life. The second time, I was able to see it sitting out on a utility pole enjoying the bright sun. The owl will probably stay around for a few more weeks barring an accident or food shortage, so I urge you all to take the trip to see this rare find.

This issue of Feathers also includes the Club's annual dues notice. I ask you to send in your renewals quickly, so the Club can avoid a second mailing. I also ask you to consider an extra donation to the Club's general fund, the Reist Sanctuary or the Sam Madison Fund. The latter two support special Club activities and are funded only by donations. The Board has chosen to hold dues at the same level for the coming year, but rising expenses for printing, mailing, and other on-going Club services do cause a deficit. You can help alleviate this by donations, raising your membership level, or encouraging other birders that you know to join the Club.

Finally, many know that George Hanson, a long-time Club member passed away in 2008. We have received donations to the Sam Madison Fund in his memory. For the Club, I offer my thanks to the donors for their generosity.

— Bernie Grossman 

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### HMBC Contact Information

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

**E-mail:** [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 or photos that would inspire others?

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

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

Send **all** paper submissions to:

*Chris Grossman*

*7 Nott Rd.*

*Rexford, NY 12148*

## Atlas Exhibit at the NYS Museum

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We are delighted to announce that a special exhibition on our Breeding Bird Atlas opened on October 3 in the NYS Museum in Albany. The exhibit is called “Mapping the Birds of New York – The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State” (<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/exhibits/special/BreedingBirdAtlas.cfm>).

Kevin McGowan and Kimberley Corwin (the editors of the soon-to-be published book) provided information, maps, artwork and guidance to the museum staff as they designed the exhibit. It features original artwork from 15 artists, and professionally prepared display panels describing the Atlas project and showing a sampling of the results.

The description appearing on the Museum website follows:

“Of the more than 450 bird species that have been seen in New York, about 245 nest here. The New York State Breeding Bird Atlas projects have mapped where each of those species breeds in the state. The Blue Jay, for example, nests all across New York, but the Gray Jay breeds only in the Adirondacks. The second Breeding Bird Atlas project has just been completed, and the new distribution maps reveal how our breeding birds have fared in the 20 years since the first Atlas was printed. Is the distribution of the Purple Martin shrinking? Is the distribution of the Carolina Wren expanding? Learn the answers in this exhibition, which highlights the forthcoming publication, *The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State*. The exhibition includes original artwork from the book, bird mounts, and stories of how the Atlas fieldwork was accomplished.”

Museum hours are 9:30 am to 5 pm daily, and the exhibition will be shown through May 1. Entrance to the museum and the exhibits is free.

In other news, Cornell University Press featured the upcoming publication of the Atlas book on the cover of their Fall catalog. The book will be available for purchase in December. Later this month a special mailing from CUP offering a pre-publication discount will be sent to all who volunteered for the Atlas project. We will also make it available through [NYSBirds-l@cornell.edu](mailto:NYSBirds-l@cornell.edu) list serve.

— Kevin McGowan

## HMBC Field Trip Reports

**New Years Resolution:  
No Cold Duck; No Cold Turkey**  
*Thursday, January 1, 2009*

Neither biting wind, nor bitter cold, nor the early hour of the morning after the night before could stay New Year's Day birders from their appointed rounds on the 29th Annual New Years' Day Bird Count at Five Rivers. Despite severe wind chill advisories, 40 post-revelers eagerly queued up inside the Five Rivers Visitor Center on January 1st, watching the action at the bird feeders from the comfort of the birding lounge as Center Director Craig Thompson provided a quick overview of the count and its long-term import.

Afterwards, ace HMBC birders George Steele, John Kent and Scott Stoner joined Thompson in mustering field parties to venture out into the icy blast for as long as human flesh could stand. HMBC'er Donna Zimmerman, much the wiser, headed up a larger-than-usual arm-chair group, continuing the feeder survey indoors.

Outdoors, bird-watching looked more like base-running as birders scurried from wind-break to wind-break. Luckily, the birds were equally active under a full sun, with excellent looks at an unusually late YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, the 2nd straight year for this species, and none ever before Thompson noted that in the last 2 years of the Albany County Christmas Count, this species was also unusually common, and that something might be up with YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER - uncannily foreshadowing the record number of YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER that the Troy Count would produce later that week.

Other notable field sightings included ROUGH LEGGED HAWK (only the 3rd record in count history), RING BILLED GULL (10th record), SSHA (13th record), EABL (16<sup>th</sup> record). Old acquaintances were not forgot, as all twelve of the usual suspects were recorded for the 29th straight year: MOURNING DOVE; DOWNY WOODPECKER; BLUE JAY; AMERICAN CROW; BLACK CAPPED CHICKADEE; WHITE BREASTED NUTHATCH;

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW; WHITE THROATED SPARROW; DARK EYED JUNCO; NORTHERN CARDINAL; AMERICAN GOLDFINCH; HOUSE SPARROW.

It was so cold, bird songs would freeze and shatter in mid-air, so after less than an hour afield, the parties retreated for the compilation and coffee-klatsch indoors. The window-watchers notably added PISI, bringing the party count to a decent 25. Then early birders Doug Steele, William Bynum and Paul Dumas threw in 6 additional early-dawn species, including NORTHERN GOSHAWK, a first-ever for New Year's Day, thus bringing the day's total to 31 species, 1 better than the 28 year average, and very respectable given the weather and reduced effort. All totaled, 69 species have been recorded in the 29 years of this annual celebration of Albany's First Morning, thanks in large part to the able and reliably ample participation of HMBC birders eager to share their love of birds with others.

— Craig Thompson

Saturday, May 17, 2008

**Observers:** Carl George, John Hershey, Jean Holcomb (recorder), Bill Lee, George Shaw, Nancy Slack (1/2 day recorder), Hank Stebbins (compiler), Kurt Weiskotten. Convened in 2 cars: 1. Nancy Slack, Ridge Rd.; 2. Bill Lee, Grand Blvd.; meeting at Union College

**Route:**

Watervliet Reservoir at Route 20  
Black Creek  
Meadowdale  
James Boyd Thatcher Park  
(Paint Mine, Overlook, Indian Ladder)  
Cole Hill  
Bear Swamp  
Basic Reservoir  
Alcove Reservoir  
Stanton Pond  
Blossom Hill Road  
Five Rivers  
Dunn Memorial Bridge  
Papsscanee Park  
Cohoes Flats  
Crescent pool below dam  
Round Lake at Route 9  
Saratoga Airport  
Saratoga Lake  
Vischer Ferry

**Conditions:** Generally overcast with periods of sun; late afternoon experienced scattered showers with a downpour at the Saratoga Airport and a steady rain at Saratoga Lake.

**Time Frame:** Gathered at 5:30 AM and concluded in twilight at Vischer Ferry

**Number of Species Identified:** 123

**Field Check List,** prepared by Hank Stebbins

1. CANADA GOOSE
2. MUTE SWAN
3. WOOD DUCK
4. GADWALL
5. AMERICAN WIGEON
6. AMERICAN BLACK DUCK
7. MALLARD
8. RING-NECK DUCK
9. COMMON MERGANSER
10. WILD TURKEY
11. COMMON LOON
12. HORNED GREBE
13. DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT
14. GREAT BLUE HERON
15. GREEN HERON
16. TURKEY VULTURE
17. BALD EAGLE
18. SHARP-SHINNED HAWK
19. BROAD-WINGED HAWK
20. RED-TAILED HAWK
21. AMERICAN KESTREL
22. PEREGRINE FALCON
23. VIRGINIA RAIL
24. SORA
25. COMMON MOORHEN
26. SEMIPALMATED PLOVER
27. KILLDEER
28. SPOTTED SANDPIPER
29. SOLITARY SANDPIPER
30. LESSER YELLOWLEGS
31. SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER
32. LEAST SANDPIPER
33. DUNLIN
34. AMERICAN WOODCOCK
35. HERRING GULL
36. RING-BILLED GULL
37. GREAT BLACK-BACK GULL
38. BLACK TERN
39. COMMON TERN
40. ROCK PIGEON
41. MOURNING DOVE
42. BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO
43. CHIMNEY SWIFT
44. BELTED KINGFISHER
45. RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER
46. DOWNY WOODPECKER
47. HAIRY WOODPECKER
48. NORTHERN FLICKER
49. PILEATED WOODPECKER
50. OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER
51. WILLOW FLYCATCHER
52. LEAST FLYCATCHER
53. EASTERN PHOEBE
54. GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER
55. EASTERN KINGBIRD
56. YELLOW-THROATED VIREO
57. BLUE-HEADED VIREO
58. WARBLING VIREO
59. RED-EYED VIREO
60. BLUE JAY
61. AMERICAN CROW
62. COMMON RAVEN
63. HORNED LARK
64. PURPLE MARTIN
65. TREE SWALLOW
66. ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW
67. BARN SWALLOW
68. BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE
69. TUFTED TITMOUSE
70. RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH
71. WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH
72. BROWN CREEPER
73. HOUSE WREN
74. MARSH WREN
75. GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET
76. BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER
77. EASTERN BLUEBIRD
78. VEERY
79. WOOD THRUSH
80. AMERICAN ROBIN
81. GRAY CATBIRD
82. NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD
83. BROWN THRASHER
84. EUROPEAN STARLING
85. CEDAR WAXWING
86. BLUE-WINGED WARBLER
87. YELLOW WARBLER
88. CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER
89. MAGNOLIA WARBLER
90. BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER
91. YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER
92. BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER
93. BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER
94. PRAIRIE WARBLER
95. BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER
96. AMERICAN REDSTART
97. WORM-EATING WARBLER
98. OVENBIRD
99. NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH
100. LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH
101. COMMON YELLOWTHROAT
102. HOODED WARBLER
103. SCARLET TANAGER
104. EASTERN TOWHEE
105. CHIPPING SPARROW
106. FIELD SPARROW
107. VESPER SPARROW
108. SAVANNAH SPARROW
109. SONG SPARROW
110. SWAMP SPARROW
111. DARK-EYED JUNCO
112. NORTHERN CARDINAL
113. ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK
114. BOBOLINK
115. RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD
116. COMMON GRACKLE
117. BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD
118. BALTIMORE ORIOLE
119. PURPLE FINCH
120. HOUSE FINCH
121. AMERICAN GOLDFINCH
122. HOUSE SPARROW
123. GREEN-WINGED TEAL

— Hank Stebbins and Carl George

# Upcoming HMBC Programs



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## ***The Great Texas Birding Classic***

### **Hope Batcheller**

Monday, March 2, 2009

7:00 PM at the William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library

Twenty-four hours, four teenage birders, and 195 bird species. It was crazy, yes, and a fantastic experience. The Great Texas Birding Classic is a competitive birding event taking place annually on the Texas coast. Hope Batcheller competed on the 2008 ABA/Leica Tropicbirds team, which was raising money for the American Birding Association's education programs. During the team's four days in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, they experienced the diverse birdlife of south Texas. The area not only boasts species whose primary range is in Mexico, but also migrant passerines and coastal birds. Through stories and photos, Hope will share her adventures from this incredible trip.

Hope Batcheller is 16 years old, and already a very active member of the HMBC. She has been a birder since age seven. Hope has benefited from most of the ABA's youth education programs, and played an active role in starting the NY State Young Birders Club, and originator and organizer of the HMBC's Fall Century Run.

## ***HMBC's Annual Literary Night***

Monday, April 6, 2009

7:00 PM at the William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library

Please join us at the Colonie Town Library on Monday, April 6, 7 PM, for HMBC's Annual Literary Night. Participants are invited to share their favorite nature writings, either poetry or prose at this annual reading. The readings can be either original or published works. If you would like to come as a non-reading listener, that's fine, too. Feel free to bring dessert to share, as well!

## ***HMBC's Annual Banquet and Meeting***

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

Club members will receive a special mailing in March with details of the dinner.

## ***Our Planet's Birding Extremes: Antarctica to the Arctic Circle***

### **Don and Donna Traver**

From Andean Condors in Southern Chile's fabled national park, Torres del Paine to an Emperor Penguin colony on Snow Hill Island in Antarctica and then north to Spitsbergen above the Arctic Circle with stops along the way in the tropics, the British Isles and Siberia this program will provide an overview of places and habitats that the adventure traveler may consider visiting to observe the diverse wildlife of our planet.

Many HMBC members will recall that Don and Donna Traver have recently completed a quest to see at least one species from each Family of birds in the world. They have been our Club's guests at a number of programs over the past half dozen years, recounting their birding adventures from all parts of the globe!

Don and Donna both graduated from SUNY Cortland 1959 as Physical Education Majors, and both obtained Masters Degrees from SUNY Brockport. Donna was a Physical Education teacher in Pittsford Central Schools for 31 years, while Don taught Science and coached wrestling in Webster. They have been avid birders for many years and active in local clubs; Donna is Past President of Rochester Birding Association and Don is Past President of Genesee Ornithological Society.

Together, Donna and Don have seen over 700 species of North American birds and over 5,000 species in the world. They started their bird families quest in 1994 needing 35 more of the world's 204 families (Clements pre-2008 taxonomy). This endeavor was completed in August 2006 in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Recently, they have worked with the Town of Webster in preserving vital migratory bird habitat near Lake Ontario on newly acquired Open Space Lands.

Come and enjoy a great meal and stay to hear Donna and Don recount their birding adventures from Antarctica to the Arctic Circle!

## ***Birding in East Australia from Tasmania to Cairns***

### **Don Morton**

Monday, May 4, 2009

7:00 PM at the William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library

Australia is truly a beautiful country with unique birds and animals that are seen no place else on earth. Ann & Don Morton toured Eastern Australia in November 2007 and saw many of these new and interesting species from Fairy-wrens to Megapods including Frogmouths, Lorikeets, Cockatoos and the first bird Don ever met that frightened him. They were also able to observe many of Australia's unique mammals from egg laying to marsupial in their natural settings. The people were very friendly and helpful and the food was wonderful.

Don, a retired physician, and long-time member of the Bird Club, has been interested in birds and photography since High School but had not had the opportunity to do much "birding" until recent years. Ann, a retired nurse enjoys the outdoors, the hiking and natural beauty that is involved in birding. Over the past 15 years Don has made up for "lost time" and he and Ann have traveled to Ireland, Argentina, The Galapagos, Panama, Trinidad, Mexico, Costa Rica, Alaska and throughout the United States and consider Australia one of the more exciting of their birding adventures.

Please join us this evening for a photo tour of the birds, mammals and scenery of East Australia.

Terry Sprague, from Prince Edward County, Ontario, is the host of the NatureStuff website. Reprinted with the author's permission.

Saturday, December 06, 2008

It was about four or five years ago when a small group of outdoor enthusiasts gathered around me early one night as I lured in a barred owl. We could see, first one, then two barred owls approaching, their graceful forms softly etched in the moonlight as they both landed in a tree directly above where we were standing. As the tape recorder continued to play a variety of calls, the barred owls that had come to see what rivals had dared venture onto their turf, repeatedly answered the fake calls, one of them so agitated that you could see its form pumping vigorously back and forth in the dim light as it barked back in anger. The effort to get a response with a tape recorder was a success, my audience was impressed, and the owls soon left, likely realizing it was all a hoax. The entire exercise probably lasted no more than three minutes, but some birding purists say that is too much. In fact, any intrusion into the lives of birds, is too much.

As birding continues to edge past second position as North America's most popular hobby, the pressure on local birds has never been greater as avid birders take advantage of advanced technology to get a glimpse or a photo of their subjects. In our attempts to do so, are we in danger of being so focused on our quarry that we become blind to the possible hazards of this practice?

All of us have used various techniques to lure birds into viewing in the winter by "spishing," basically doing as the name suggests – making long drawn out "spish-h-h" sounds several times in a row. Another method is "kissing for birds," a series of loud, lip-smacking, squeaking noises made by kissing the back of your hand. It is believed that the noises created resemble distress signals, and birds instinctively launch into a mobbing behaviour in an effort to drive off the supposed intruder. Quite harmless one would think, unless performed during the nesting season, as the practice can draw birds from their nests, leaving the contents vulnerable to attack by predators. It is easy to understand that playing the recorded songs of owls, as we did, also could result in disastrous consequences if the practice is abused.

The case against panting poses of overzealous birders pursuing their prey is mounting. Despite there being a "Birders Code of Ethics" which points out dangers to bird listers and photographers, still we find individuals whose only interest is to get the photo or that all important tick on the bird checklist, at any cost. In the October issue of OFO News, published by the Ontario Field Naturalists, author Christina Lewis asks "Do we really want to treat that owl, that rare bird or any creature, like Britney Spears?"

We need to look at how far technology has come in recent years, and how inadvertently we have played a role in its advancement. Remember the Rare Bird Hotline? If a rare bird was found, a telephone tree was put into service with keen birders calling others on their list until the word had spread. If the bird was lucky, it had already left by the time word finally got around. Today, the Internet listserv has the news broadcast to hundreds of people within seconds. A friend of mine from Toronto e-mailed me a photo of a rare hawk-owl with instructions that I could use it on my website with the understanding that I not reveal its location. I already knew it had been seen on the Leslie Street Spit, and so did hundreds of others who are subscribers to the popular OntarioBirds listserv. This is not to suggest for a moment that all camera owners are paparazzi, but the numbers of photographers has increased dramatically, with advances in digital photography making inexpensive high quality cameras accessible to everyone like never before. Fortunately, local nature photographers are working diligently among themselves and in groups to improve their image by adhering to a strict code of conduct.

With today's sophisticated optical equipment there really is little need to exploit and harass at the expense of birds abandoning their nest and causing even more disruption to their lives than they already face day to day. We should not, as the article in OFO News warns, be ganging up on birds and trampling property posted as private to get that crippling view or tick on a checklist just because others are doing it. As author Christina Lewis says, we need to put down our cameras and our Blackberries, our binoculars and life lists, and find some perspective and humility, and consider what our environment, the birds and other creatures, really mean to us.

Even as a naturalist myself who makes his living teaching about nature and leading guided hikes, I need to re-examine my ethics a bit more, and even question my own behavior. Will I be taking a tape recorder onto the boardwalk at the Frink Centre again this spring to delight everyone as I have done in the past as Virginia rails run across my feet, and I wait for a sora rail to winnow back to me from the depths of the cattails? That's a tough call for anyone charged with the responsibility of making nature available to those on a guided hike. If I do, it will only be to get a brief response, and only once, then we will be on our way, content that we have created but a minimal disruption in the daily lives of these birds, hopefully no more interruption than what would be created from a passing rival bird of the same species. I, too, need to step back and ponder my role, as author Christina Lewis has suggested in her article, by examining the "the big tick, the big click, and the big picture."

— Terry Sprague

Please visit Terry Sprague's NatureStuff website at <http://naturestuff.net>

## Adirondack Birding



**N**EW! This is the first comprehensive guide to birding sites in the Adirondack Park, a six-million acre wilderness that harbors nearly 300 avian species. The authors, John M.C. Peterson and Gary N. Lee, drew on decades of

field experience in selecting sixty places where you can walk or paddle to find the species of most interest to birders. 200 illustrations including 16 pages of color photographs. 5.5" x 8.5". 240 pages. Price \$20.95

# Upcoming Field Trips



## **CORRECTIONS TO 2009 FIELD TRIP**

**SCHEDULE:** The following errors were found on the printed copy of the *HMBC 2009 Field Trip Schedule & Quick List*:

*Hudson River South – the correct date is Sunday, March 1, not March 4 (This has been corrected on this listing).*

*The correct day of the Vischer Ferry trip on September 27 is Sunday, not Saturday.*

*Please make these corrections on your schedules so that you don't miss these trips!*

## **JANUARY OR FEBRUARY**

### **WINTER RARE BIRD TRIP (full day)**

Coordinator: Bill Lee  
374-3426  
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, contact the coordinator. In recent years, participants have seen Thick-billed Murre, Eared Grebe and Boreal Owl.

## **FEBRUARY**

### **Sunday, February 8**

#### **FORT EDWARD & FORT MILLER (afternoon thru dusk)**

Coordinator: Gregg Recer  
899-2678  
gregg.recer@verizon.net

Short-eared Owls are seen most winters in the Fort Edward Grasslands, an Important Bird Area in Washington County. Wintering hawks, including Rough-leggeds, Red-tails, Northern Harrier and perhaps a Bald Eagle or Peregrine Falcon are another feature of this area, as are wintering field birds such as Horned Lark, Snow Bunting and possibly Lapland Longspur or Northern Shrike. Depending on conditions on the river, we may also search for waterfowl along the Hudson in Ft. Miller. Meet at 12:30 pm in the park-and-ride lot in the Malta Business Park. Coming from the south on I-87 (the Northway), take Exit 12 and stay to the right, heading east on Rt. 67 toward Rt. 9. (from the north, go 3/4 around the traffic circle to head east on Rt. 67) At the next traffic circle after the highway, take the first right into the business park and turn right again to the parking area. This trip will practically be all car birding, but access can be limited in places, so we will need to carpool in as few cars as possible.

### **Saturday, February 14**

#### **MOHAWK RIVER/COHOES TO CRESCENT (morning)**

Coordinator: Bill Lee 374-3426  
bileej@hotmail.com

This area, including Cohoes Falls & Simmons Island, offers a great opportunity to study the gulls & waterfowl that winter along the Mohawk River. We will look for Glaucous & Iceland Gulls usually present in small numbers in winter. This trip will be a good introduction to the many fine vantage points along the Mohawk. We will leave at 8:30 am from the U-Haul parking lot on Ontario St. (NY Rt.470 18/ mile east of I-787) in Cohoes.

## **MARCH**

### **Sunday, March 1**

#### **WATERFOWL OF THE HUDSON RIVER SOUTH (morning)**

*Joint Trip with Alan De Voe Bird Club*

Coordinator: Bill Cook  
851-2678

On this spring morning waterfowl trip, we will search the Hudson River from Cossackie to Catskill where the waterfowl usually congregate on their way north. Expect to see Canvasback, Goldeneyes & many more species. There is also a good chance of seeing Bald Eagle. Meet at 8:00 am at the Cossackie boat launch site. Take the NYS thruway to Exit 21B (Cossackie - Rt. 9W), follow 9W south for about 2 miles to Rt. 385, go left (east) on Rt. 385 (Mansion St.) and continue straight to the Hudson River where the road bears left into the boat launch site.

### **Sunday, March 15**

#### **HUDSON RIVER ABOVE TROY (morning)**

Coordinators: Joan Cipriani  
374-3729  
jlcip@nycap.rr.com  
Peggy Rudis  
371-5051

Early migrating waterfowl will be our primary objective on both the Hudson & Hoosic Rivers. We have, however, seen other specialties on previous trips. Possibilities include Bald Eagle, Northern Goshawk, Barnacle Goose, Snow Geese (including Blue Morph) as well as Bluebirds & Killdeer. Plan to meet at 8:00 am by the chain link

fence at the Hannaford Plaza parking lot located at the east end of the North Troy-Waterford Bridge. Please call one of the coordinators if you plan to attend.

### **Sunday, March 29**

#### **WASHINGTON COUNTY WATERFOWL (morning)**

*Joint trip with Southern Adirondack Audubon*

Coordinators: Joyce Miller  
justlookitup@yahoo.com  
Mona Bearor  
745-8637  
conservebirds@gmail.com

Join us as we search the Hudson for migrant waterfowl such as Goldeneye, Bufflehead and mergansers. Last year, Canvasbacks & Tundra Swans were life birds for many. If time permits, we will also visit the Ft. Edward Grasslands for late winter specialties such as Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Harrier & Snow Bunting. We will meet at the Schylerville Central School on Rt. 29 at 8:00 am to form a carpool. Dress warmly, bring a beverage/snack, your binoculars and a scope if you have one. Please contact one of the coordinators to register.

## **APRIL**

### **Sunday, April 5**

#### **VISCHER FERRY (evening)**

Coordinator: John Hershey  
371-3114

The main focus of this trip will be spring waterfowl. We will search for American Wigeon, Green & Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Wood Duck, Ring-necked duck and Pied-billed Grebe. Possible songbirds include Palm Warbler and Rusty Blackbird. We will linger until a little after dusk to listen for American Woodcock. Bring a flashlight and meet at the main entrance at 5:15 pm.

### **Saturday, April 11**

#### **BLACK CREEK MARSH - WILD TURKEY PARCEL (morning)**

Coordinator: Jennifer Hamilton  
861-8202

DEC and the Wild Turkey Federation maintain this parcel adjacent to the marsh which provides a different approach to the marsh and the adjoining areas. Birds of interest seen and heard here include



## Upcoming Field Trips — *continued*

Golden & Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Eastern Towhee, Ruffed Grouse, Brown Thrasher and 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.

### Thursday, April 23 WOODCOCK AT FIVE RIVERS (evening)

Coordinator: Craig Thompson  
475-0291 (daytime)

During a meandering walk to the Woodcock site, we will look for other early spring birds. Woodcock flight time is expected to be around 8pm. Bring binoculars and a flashlight if you have them.

Meet at 7:00 pm at the Five Rivers Interpretive Building.

## EagleFest

We were fortunate to attend the first annual EagleFest hosted by the Teatown Lake Reservation in February 2004. It is nice to see it has grown and is more popular than ever. We saw dozens of Bald Eagles, as well as many Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers. The EagleFest will be held at Croton Point Park in Westchester County on Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup>. You can take an easy hike to observe the birds, or even stay in your car. It is definitely worth the 2-hour drive from the Capital District!

Check out their website for a list of activities, directions and many sponsors and conservation group links at <http://www.teatown.org/eaglefest.htm>.

— Elayne Ryba 

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### Feathers

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

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