

Feathers

Birding in Borneo by Joyce Miller

This article was originally published in The Chronicle newspaper of Glens Falls on Oct. 4, 2018. The full version with added photos may be viewed at <https://www.glensfallschronicle.com/birding-in-borneo/>.

Vine-tangled jungles, ferocious blood-sucking leeches, rare orangutans and maybe poison-dart blowguns: those are the images that Borneo evoked in my mind. I was a little uncertain about what I'd experience during my three-week birding trip to Borneo this summer.

First: Borneo is not a country. It's an island, the third largest in the world. It's in southeast Asia about halfway between Australia and Vietnam, near the equator. Three countries own sections of Borneo: Indonesia to the south, Malaysia to the north, and the tiny nation of Brunei on a slice of the north coast. We visited Sabah, a Malaysian state in northeastern Borneo, touring through the steamy eastern lowlands and cooler western mountains.

Birding friends have raved about Borneo, so I signed up for the waiting list two years ago for a small-group trip with the top-notch birding travel company Field Guides Inc., based in Austin, Texas. I started my journey on June 24, flying from Albany to Philadelphia to London to Kuala Lumpur to Sandakan on Borneo. I arrived after 25 hours of flights over four days, plus a 12-hour time change, a total of more than 11,500 miles.

Our group of eight was led by guide Megan Edwards Crewe with local guide Hamit Suban of Borneo EcoTours.

Most days, we woke up around 4:45 a.m., met at 5:30 a.m. for breakfast, left at 6 for a birding walk lasting until 11:30 a.m., then had lunch at noon. The next field trip ran from 3:30 to 6 p.m. After quick showers, we met to compile the day's species checklist at 6:30 p.m., had dinner at 7, got ready for the next day's activities and headed to bed. We also went on several night walks. It's not everyone's idea of a vacation, but we were on a mission to see as many birds and other wildlife species as possible.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

No President's Column for this issue

You, too, can contribute to Feathers!

- Do you have a birding story or photos that might be of interest to other birders?
- Have you led a field trip for HMBC?
- Have you written short prose or poetry on the subject of birds? We're starting a Writers' Page!
- Did you take a birding vacation?
- Do you have a favorite birding spot?

SHARE them with HMBC members by submitting them to:

HMBC Contact Information

BIRDLINE of EASTERN NEW YORK:

E-mail: contact@hmbc.net

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

Please send all **electronic submissions for Feathers** via e-mail to:
Denise Hackert-Stoner at DeniseHStoner@aol.com.

Send all paper submissions to:

Denise Hackert-Stoner

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New printing of *Birding New York's Hudson Mohawk Region* is now available

Birding New York's Hudson Mohawk Region, a new printing of HMBC's classic book, is now available. A copy is \$20 for HMBC members and \$25 for non-members. An additional charge of \$5 for postage and handling will be added to the price per book. Contact Gregg Recer gregg_recer@alum.rpi.edu or (518) 899-2678 if you are interested in purchasing a copy. Checks should be made out to ***Hudson Mohawk Bird Club*** and should be sent to:

Gregg Recer

23 Scotch Mist Way

Malta, NY 12020

BIRDING IN BORNEO *(continued.....)*

We were thrilled to see several orangutans, which are critically endangered. At the Borneo Rainforest Lodge, we enjoyed long looks at a 35-year-old male orangutan who frequently visited the lodge property. He plucked and ate young durian tree leaves then, at dusk, snapped off a few branches to pile into a bed in a tree. Two researchers sat on camp stools nearby, taking notes on his actions.

I spent an afternoon at the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, which cares for young orphaned orangutans until they are ready to be released back into the rainforest. From a glassed-in observation area, I watched young apes swing with long furry red arms along ropes strung across the lawn of their exercise area, wrestle each other and eat fruit on the feeding platform. One young orangutan entertained itself - and me - by somersaulting across the entire lawn.



Orangutan rehab center

Three species of edible-nest swiftlets nest at the famous Gomantong Caves, the subject of David Attenborough documentaries. We covered up with rain ponchos to catch dropping guano, then picked our way along a slippery boardwalk into the huge limestone caverns. We gasped not only at the thousands of birds and bats in the murky darkness above us but also the black guano heaped on the cave floor, swarming with thousands of cockroaches, beetles and other insects. The swiftlets spin tiny nests with their saliva and adhere them to the cave walls. Local people collect the nests for bird's nest soup, a delicacy in China.

The busy Sukau Rainforest Lodge, located directly on the Kinabatangan River, was accessible only by motorboat. Every morning and afternoon, we'd coast along the river in small skiffs. We spotted several orangutans, turkey-sized hornbill birds, very rare Storm's Storks, and an active family of five Borneo pygmy elephants eating grass and splashing in the river. During walks on the lodge boardwalks, we spotted pygmy squirrels the size of a mouse, giant forest ants more than an inch long, and barking geckos that sound like hoarse chihuahuas.

We spotted many family groups of endangered proboscis monkeys along the rivers. They are endemic, found only in Borneo. Their long straight pale tails looked like white candles hanging from tree branches, making them easy to spot. The males have famously goofy, droopy big "Jimmy Durante" noses. The females have small pert triangular noses, and most were holding babies.

In the Danum Valley rainforest, we spent four days at the Borneo Rainforest Lodge, a spectacularly modern and elegant place 50 miles from the nearest paved road, 2 1/2 hours along a bumpy, winding gravel road. The meals were gourmet-level and

BIRDING IN BORNEO *(continued.....)*

abundant, ranging from cheeseburgers to banana-blossom curry. Decadent desserts were balanced with lots of fresh fruit: pineapple, papaya and dragon fruit.

The people working at the lodges were knowledgeable, gracious, very good-humored, and spoke excellent English. One lodge nature guide told us that they work daily for many months and collect their days off so they can spend longer times at home with their families.

Birds were easy to spot along the dirt roads in the mornings, but as the day heated up, birds retreated to the rainforest, so we did too. The mud on the narrow forest trails was thick, slick and goopy, like wet peanut butter. Even though it was the dry season, it is still a rainforest, with short but torrential downpours on many days.

We were on alert for two types of biting leeches: small brown leeches and the larger yellow-and-black-striped tiger leeches. We wore full battle gear on hikes: waterproof Neos overshoe boots, lots of bug spray and leech socks. Leech socks are made of light-colored Christmas-socking-shaped fabric to wear between socks and shoes. They fasten above the knee and prevent leeches from crawling through knit socks to bite ankles and cause copious bleeding. The light color helped us spot them before they got to uncovered skin. Two brown leeches started inch-worming up my boot but I plucked them off after a few tries - slippery and tenacious critters! One birder, getting ready to shower after a hike, discovered a leech had latched onto his wrist under his watch band. It left a round red bite. Another birder had a brown leech draped over her eyelid, but when our leader spotted it, brushed it off quickly. They carry no diseases, but the gross-out factor is huge.

To spot birds hiding high in the tree canopies, we tottered along bouncy boardwalks suspended between enormous dipterocarp trees, which were more than 200 feet tall and hundreds of years old.



The rainforest is filled with dipterocarp trees, some more than 200 feet tall and hundreds of years old.

We visited a family farm that sold admission to see their rafflesia plants, among the largest flowers in the world. The warty red and beige flower is the size of a flattened beach ball, hollow and spiky in the center. Flies pollinate it, attracted to its rotten-meat smell. The family exhibited a traditional wooden blow dart pipe with a pouch of darts that could be tipped with poison. Hamit explained that this hunting method is still used in some areas of Borneo.



Rafflesia flower, about the size of a beach ball

For the final leg of the trip, we flew to the northwest coast to Kota Kinabalu, a thriving modern city. Buzzing mopeds, the mystical Muslim call to prayer and loud late-night Malaysian music were quite a shock after the melodic birds and buzzing cicadas of the rainforest. The endless oil palm plantations in the Sabah lowlands were replaced by steep mountains, red landslide streaks on mountainsides and occasional rice paddies.

From there, we drove to Mount Kinabalu, more than 13,400 feet tall and a World Heritage site. It's a knife-edge jagged wall of a mountain that reminded me of the Grand Tetons. Our lodge was at the entrance of the Mount Kinabalu park at 6,000 feet. To our relief, the weather was like a pleasant spring day: 60s during the day, 50s at night, but still very humid. In the mornings after a rain, the forest trails filled with wispy clouds.



The writer at Mount Kinabalu

We saw more than 220 species of birds. Highlights for me were the weird orange and black Bornean Bristlehead, the turkey-sized Rhinoceros Hornbill and fantastical Asian Paradise-Flycatcher. That graceful bird, with a blue-black head and long graceful white tail plumes, landed on a branch near us and sang, displaying a lemon-yellow mouth. We watched a family of rare endemic Whitehead's Trogons, as the red, orange and blue male stuffed a giant walking-stick insect into the mouth of a puzzled baby, not sure what to do with the gangly food.

I added 201 new species to my bird life list, for a total of 2,820, about 26% of the world's more than 10,700 species. Despite the leeches and heat, Borneo is one of the most welcoming and dramatic places I've visited. I'll rave about it now too.

Field Trip Reports

Fort Edward Grasslands – February 9, 2019

On a clear but somewhat breezy and bitterly cold afternoon, 12 birders visited the Fort Edward Grasslands and nearby riverine areas in search of wintering raptors, field birds, and waterfowl.

Just west of the village of Fort Edward on Rt 197, one carload saw 4 Black Vultures flying overhead, with another perched on a snag nearby. In the Hudson River by the Stewart's in Fort Edward, we found Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, and Common Goldeneye in with all the Mallards. Additional Common Goldeneye and a couple of Common Mergansers were in the river along Rt 4 between Blackhouse Road and Cary Rd. Most of the folks on the trip saw the Horned Larks at the west end of Cary Rd near Rt. 4.

Two adult Bald Eagles were spotted along with one immature.

Hawks were abundant, with a full dozen Rough-Legged Hawks, mainly light morph, very actively flying about, especially near Plum Rd off of Rt 197. Five Northern Harriers and 6 Red-tails rounded out the list, along with a few common birds as noted below. We did not have any luck with owls, as the reported Barred Owl(s) were not evident; nor were any Short-eared Owls in the usually reliable area along Fitzpatrick Rd.

Thanks to my co-leader Denise and to everyone who braved the cold with us and contributed to the many fine observations on the trip!

A list of what just our carload had is below; it is not a full and complete list for the combined group.

Scott Stoner

Vosburgh/Four Mile Point Road – March 24, 2019

On Sunday, four of us visited Vosburgh/Four Mile Point Road area south of Coxsackie, the trip rescheduled from the previous day due to weather. We found 40 species between 8 and 11:30 AM. The swamp was mostly open except for a skim of ice in the shallows from the cold night. Waterfowl were present in good numbers, including common merganser, hooded merganser, mallard, American black duck, green-winged teal, wood duck, American wigeon, ring-necked duck, gadwall, Canada goose and mute swan. A northern harrier made a pass over the marsh shortly after we got there, putting up most of the ducks temporarily. On the river, we had a group of lesser scalp and the expected bald eagles, including two at the nest across from Coxsackie and one on the nest at Stockport Flats across the river from Four Mile Point.

Alan Mapes
Delmar

VENETIAN GARDENS BIRDS

BY JEFF SCHOONMAKER

Doris and I visited Venetian Gardens Park a few weeks ago while staying in Eustis, Florida for a week. This small public park on the western shore of Lake Harris in Lake County hosts an abundant supply of beautiful and accessible birds.

There was a time when we had never seen a Purple Gallinule at all, and earlier on this trip we had seen just one at the Blue Heron Wetlands west of Titusville and another one or two in a couple of other places. Venetian Gardens Park is the permanent home to a thriving population of 30 or so of them! We had never seen so many in one place, and we went nuts taking ridiculous numbers of photos of them. We especially enjoyed seeing groups of them at the same time and seeing them so close that binoculars were superfluous. They are a strikingly beautiful bird!



We watched as one was getting aggressive with a Common Gallinule (Moorhen). The latter bird hunkered down and hissed back while flaring its white tail feathers. Neither of us had ever seen that behavior before, and I was delighted to get a photo of the bird's defensive posture.



Besides Limpkins and a smattering of other Florida birds, there was a particularly fearless Wood Stork wandering around. We found out why late one afternoon. An older couple came every day with a bag of bread and fed it, while trying to keep the Boat-tailed Grackles and White Ibis at bay. We know that such feedings are ill-advised, partly because bread is not a good source of nutrition for birds. But many of us feed birds good-for-them food in our back yards, sometimes year 'round. No one claims that doing so makes them incapable of fending for themselves.

With that reasoning in mind, we went back the next day with just 2 slices of bread, but we only used one. And half of that went to other birds. The other half produced a most enjoyable encounter with the Wood Stork. While Doris photographed the action, I got up close and personal with the Wood Stork. Such encounters are incredibly special to us. Because the bird stayed close after I stood up, I was able to get some super-close photos of its head. Can you see the reflection of the horizon and the setting sun in its eye?



After spending a week on the barrier island just south of Merritt Island NWR and another week in Lake County northwest of Orlando, we flew home to Al-brrr-any having seen 112 birds to start our 2019 year list. But it's not really about the numbers. Seeing birds, and occasionally getting very close to them, is exhilarating!

HMBC Annual Program: April 15, 2019

Mountain Birdwatch and the Future of Citizen Science

Presented by Jason Hill, Vermont Center for Ecostudies

Program description:

Mountain Birdwatch is an initiative to engage wildlife enthusiasts, and to harness the power of the public to conduct wildlife monitoring for high-elevation birds of the spruce-fir forests of eastern New York and northern New England. Each year, close to 200 citizen scientists trek up mountains to rise before dawn and perform repeated avian surveys from hiking trails for 11 montane species such as Bicknell's Thrush, Blackpoll Warbler, and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher—species that are rarely detected from traditional roadside counts at lower elevations. Analyzed annually using cutting-edge statistical models, Mountain Birdwatch provides the only region-wide source of population information on these vulnerable high-elevation breeding birds. Jason will first highlight some of the ways that Mountain Birdwatch data have been used for conservation and management, such as creating a population estimate for Bicknell's Thrush. Jason will also discuss how citizen science is changing from a "free labor" approach to one of collaboration with the volunteers who collect the data.

Jason Hill Bio:

As a kid from Iowa, Jason grew up enamored with how the natural world managed to exist in a heavily modified agricultural landscape. His biocentric wonder led him to New England, where he is a quantitative ecologist with the Vermont Center for Ecostudies helping to oversee the citizen science project, Mountain Birdwatch, and research into montane ecology. A quantitative ecologist and ornithologist by training, Jason joined the Vermont Center for Ecostudies in January 2015. A lifelong birder and naturalist, Jason followed graduation from the University of Montana (BS, Wildlife Biology) with a series of wildlife-based adventures that found him monitoring sea otters in California, tracking endangered Red-Cockaded Woodpeckers in Florida, and researching House Wrens at La Selva Biological Station in Costa Rica. On Maui, his crew was tasked with capturing the three remaining Po'ouli: a Hawaiian honeycreeper that is now thought to be extinct.

Jason investigated the post-fledgling ecology of Saltmarsh Sparrows at the University of Connecticut (MS, Ecology), and completed his PhD with the Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Penn State University, studying the population ecology of grassland sparrows following experimental landscape manipulation.

Here at the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, Jason wears many hats. He primarily investigates avian ecology within the montane spruce-fir community, but he also coordinates the [Suds & Science discussion series](#) and cranks out R code on demand for his colleagues. In his free time, Jason serves as an eBird coordinator for Central Pennsylvania and enjoys paddling and observing nature (follow along with [my adventures on iNaturalist.org](#); see my recent observations below). You can often find him ascending rock walls or hitting the trails with his son, Heron, and permanent belay partner, Katie. And he is still a kid, at heart.

Upcoming HMBC Programs

Date and Time: May 6, 2019, 7-8:30pm

Location: Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

Speaker: Meteorologist Jason Gough

Meteorologist Jason Gough is looking forward to spending some time with the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club in early May. Jason notes that birders all have a unique connection to the weather, as do the birds we observe! Jason has a true appreciation of birds and their bioengineering, and explains that, "As advanced as we are at aviation physics and mechanics, we got nuthin' on birds."

In his open discussion on May 6, Jason hopes to answer some of our many questions and to teach us a little bit about how and why our weather works. He hopes that it will enhance our birding experiences and looks forward to learning from birders as well!

Bring your questions about the weather!!

Jason Gough was born and raised in Albany. He graduated from Albany High School and attended Auburn University. He transferred to and received his degree in meteorology from the University of Maryland. (It should be noted that he is a huge fan of Auburn Football and goes to at least one game a year there).

While at Maryland, he interned at WJLA for a summer. The station created a paid position to keep him on as a weather producer and forecaster. After he graduated, he took his first on-air position in Corpus Christi, Texas in August 2001.

He returned to Albany to WNYT, where he was on air for 13 years. He made the decision to leave the station to pursue the fight to pass the Child Victims Act into law, which happened back in February. He also set out to lobby for funding for his television show, Wine About the Weather, which he will continue to do until the end of March.

Lastly, he hosts a website, jasonswater.com. It has all kinds of forecasts, blogs and articles on weather that he regularly updates. You can sign up for a daily delivered email (6am) and request a personal forecast for something you have going on.

Date and Time: June 3, 2019, 7-8:30pm

Location: Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

Speaker: Julie Hart

Topic: Breeding Bird Atlas: It has been 20 years since the last breeding bird atlas in New York State and a lot has changed! The third atlas will take place from 2020-2025 and involve thousands of volunteers from across the state. This talk will cover the history of the atlas, the importance of atlas data, and how you can get involved. Learn how the third atlas will differ from previous atlases, including how we will be using eBird for data entry. eBird will make it easier to track progress and allow anyone to enter data anywhere. Atlasing is a great excuse to explore new areas and provides an intimate look into the daily lives of birds. Whether you are a beginner or advanced birder, this unique opportunity will strengthen your birdwatching skills while contributing valuable data to a large conservation-oriented project.

Julie is a native Vermonter who became a birder while working as a bird conservation intern with National Audubon, Audubon New York, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. She traveled for several years doing field work, including studying Common Loons (NH), Common and Roseate Terns (ME), Golden-winged Warblers (NY), Kokako (New Zealand), Black-capped Petrel (Haiti), and Ivory-billed Woodpecker (AR), before returning to VT to serve as the coordinator for Mountain Birdwatch with the Vermont Center for Ecocostudies. After several years chasing Bicknell's Thrush around the mountains of the Northeast and Hispaniola, she moved to Wyoming where she received her Master's degree studying the impacts of climate change on Cassia Crossbill in southern Idaho. Then in Europe, Julie learned about different habitats, wildlife, and conservation issues while participating in long-term "ringing" efforts. She returned to coastal CT to work as the database manager for Yale's Map of Life project before settling in Albany to coordinate the third Breeding Bird Atlas in NY. Along the way she participated in two bird atlases, as a technician for the VT atlas and as a volunteer for the CT atlas, and considers atlasing her favorite type of birding.

UPCOMING ASCR PROGRAMS

No ASCR programs to announce at this time

WRITERS' PAGE

Robins on the Lawn

by Bruce Sowalski

Hop Hop Stop

Over here over there, no

Hop Hop Stop

Look up look down, go

Hop Hop Stop

Hunt Peck, a quick bite now

Hop Hop Stop

Tug Pull, back to the nest full

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ARTISTS' PAGE

No Submissions for Artists' Page for this issue

THE HELDERBERG ESCARPMENT HAWK WATCH LOCATED AT THE THACHER PARK OVERLOOK IS REQUESTING HMBC ASSISTANCE

During the 1990's HMBC joined with the nationally recognized HMANA (the Hawk Migration Association of North America) and NEHW (the NorthEast Hawk Watch) in a concerted effort to observe and document the annual fall migration of diurnal raptors (daytime hawks and eagles) through our capital region. Because the site chosen for that endeavor had significant limitations with respect to the number of observers and raptor enthusiasts it could comfortably accommodate alternative sites were considered. The establishment of the Helderberg Escarpment Hawk Watch located at the John Boyd Thacher State Park Overlook was a direct outgrowth and owes its existence to these efforts.

At this time, in its eighteenth year of formal operation, core members of this organization (HEHW), representing the administration of both J.B. Thacher State Park and the affiliated Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center, 'Friends of Thacher State Park', local Audubon, as well as HMBC and other local and regional birding entities, are working to create and erect an informational sign at this hawk watch site. As parent to the fledgling HEHW, members of the HMBC community are invited to contribute their knowledge and experience to this project in the form of their thoughts and ideas with respect to the content and erection of this sign. To date consideration is being given to text regarding the geological and topographic significance of this site for the migrating raptors. Additionally, graphics depicting regional and continental flight patterns and conditions, significant contributing weather patterns, species/peak timing and flight conditions and patterns, species identification silhouettes, as well as thermal and deflection updraft implications for flight and energy conservation are also being considered.

Please send your ideas and suggestions to HMBC Life Member Will Aubrey at: helderbird@Yahoo.com. Thanking you in advance.

ON NATURE

“Birds on a May Morning”

By Scott Stoner

As a child raised by birders and steeped in nature, I soon learned to look forward to May. Not just that school would almost be done for the year (which gave me more time to focus on nature study), and not just for the warmer weather... May meant the arrival of the most wondrous array of warblers and other songbirds, many of them right there in our yard on the south shore of Long Island!

One day, my mother and I were almost overwhelmed by the abundance and variety of birds in just the two great oaks in our backyard, craning our necks in to see them as we breathlessly turned our attention from one to the next. At least some were life birds that day; others likely already old friends. Sometimes we wouldn't even need to leave our yard; other times we would expand our search to our friends' yard adjacent. In total, over several years of my early birding days, a full 16 'life warblers' were from our small neighborhood on what was still a fairly rural part of Long Island. Beyond warblers, scarlet tanager, rose-breasted grosbeak, indigo bunting and more were part of the experience!



Sometimes we would head to a nearby community, in the central part of the Island, to a special place everyone called “Yaphank Woods.” A heavily birded place with a muddy trail and great trees, and some wet woods. One May we had a Cerulean Warbler there, and my life list said that it was with Dennis Puleston. That alone is a significant memory, as any opportunity to go birding with Dennis was one to be treasured. Dennis Puleston was probably the best known naturalist on Long Island. In his 95 years on this planet, he documented the decline of Osprey due to DDT and was instrumental in a case that resulted in its ban. Ornithologist, author, painter, conservationist, and world explorer, Dennis was a founder and first chairman of the Environmental Defense Fund, and more locally, helped to save the Carman's River that ran through our town. He lived only two streets away from us, was a natural teacher, and willingly shared his knowledge and expertise with all.

One of my early memories of Dennis was a somewhat virtual one, as he was the narrator and jacket illustrator of a lovely record, "Birds on a May Morning." This "33 RPM monophonic LP" dated 1963 from Rhode Island Audubon, was recorded in part right there on Long Island, and featured the songs of 36 species of the eastern US. We would play this every spring in an effort to refresh our knowledge of bird songs, or to simply enjoy them. Dennis is now long gone, but his legacy lives on in the multiple generations of birders and naturalists he inspired, including me. And people can still go birding at the Yaphank Woods, now fittingly preserved by Suffolk County and named the "Dennis Puleston Warbler Woods."

Now, when I think of birding on a May morning, I think of Dennis, of that record, and of the joy of birding as a child with my parents. Soon it will be May, and it will be time to dig out his record, play it once again, and look forward to the birds on a May morning!



Upcoming Field Trips.

April

Sunday, April 7, VISCHER FERRY NATURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVE (VFNHP) (Saratoga County; morning)

Coordinator: John Hershey 518-371-3114 hersheyj@nycap.rr.com

We will start out on this trip looking for spring waterfowl such as American Wigeon, Green and Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, and Pied-billed Grebe. Other possibilities include Virginia Rail, American Bittern, Palm Warbler and Rusty Blackbird.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the VFNHP main entrance, at the intersection of Riverview and Van Vranken Rds. in Clifton Park.

Saturday, April 13, EARLY MIGRANTS I, FIVE RIVERS EEC (Albany County; morning)

Coordinators: Tom and Colleen Williams 518-857-2176 trwdsd@yahoo.com

Join us for a three mile walk throughout the Five Rivers property. We will explore fields, ponds and marshes, portions of the service road, the Vlomankill corridor, and finish with a loop around the Beaver Pond. More than forty bird species can be observed on a favorable day in mid-April. Be prepared for wet trails.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot at Five Rivers EEC in Delmar.

Saturday, April 20, EARLY MIGRANTS II, FIVE RIVERS EEC (Albany County; morning)

Coordinators: Scott Stoner and Denise Hackert-Stoner 518-785-6760 scottjstoner@aol.com

Join us for a walk through the varied habitats of Five Rivers as we explore fields, ponds, woodlands, and marshes. More than forty bird species can be observed on a favorable day in mid-April. Be prepared for wet trails.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot at Five Rivers EEC in Delmar.

Saturday, April 27, ANN LEE POND (Albany County; morning)

Coordinator: Tom and Colleen Williams 518-857-2176 trwdsd@yahoo.com

Ann Lee Pond is a shallow 10-acre pond located near Albany International Airport in the Town of Colonie. In late April, waterfowl, swallows, and early warblers should be present. Baltimore and Orchard Orioles may have just arrived if the weather has warmed, feeding in the blooming apple trees of the orchard across Heritage Lane. We'll view the orchard area, then take the red loop trail around the pond back to the parking area, which is about one mile in length. Footwear appropriate for muddy trails is suggested.

<https://hmbc.net/content/ann-lee-pond>

Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot of Ann Lee Pond on Heritage Lane, across from the historic Shaker apple orchard.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS *(continued.....)*

Sunday, April 28, POWELL SANCTUARY (Columbia County; morning)

Coordinator: Kathy Schneider 518-248-8665 fallline@nycap.rr.com (Joint trip with the Alan DeVoe Bird Club.)

This 145-acre preserve has been owned and managed by the Alan DeVoe Bird Club since 1959. It features a beaver pond with an observation blind, neighboring farm fields, and Dorson's Rock, a sandstone ledge that offers good hawk watching and a panoramic view of the Hudson Valley. There are 3 miles of moderate, well-marked trails throughout the sanctuary, which is mostly woods. The club's list for this site has more than 200 species, including 20 species of warblers.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Wilson M. Powell Wildlife Sanctuary, 75 Hunt Club Road, Old Chatham. From the junction of County Route 13 and Albany Turnpike in the hamlet of Old Chatham, travel southwest on County Route 13 for 0.9 miles to Pitt Hall Road on the left, where two signs mark the road to Powell House and the sanctuary. Follow Pitt Hall Road 0.25 miles, then bear left (east) onto Hunt Club Road and continue 0.25 miles to the main parking lot.

May

Saturday, May 4, STILLWATER SCHOOL NATURE TRAIL/LOCK 4 STATE CANAL PARK

Coordinator: Naomi Lloyd 518-596-5964 naomi_kestrel@yahoo.com

The Stillwater Schools Nature Trail has an expansive open marsh on the north side, with Green Heron, Virginia Rail, and Sora present. Least Bittern is also possible. The wetland continues along the south side but is not as open. The wide trail continues to the Hudson where it turns left and follows the river through a deciduous forest where we will look for migrant songbirds.

We will then travel south about 1.7 miles to Lock 4 State Canal Park to check rocky shoals on the Hoosic River for shorebirds and walk the woodlands around the Lock.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the trail entrance. Turn off Rt 4 in Stillwater at the road to the school complex, and drive to the end. The trail starts at a chain link gate.

Sunday, May 5, HARLEM VALLEY RAIL TRAIL (Columbia County; morning)

Coordinator: Marian Sole 203-710-9096 mrnsole7@gmail.com (Joint trip with the Alan DeVoe Bird Club.)

This former railroad bed has been turned into a paved public trail, running north to south through extreme southeastern Columbia County. We'll walk a mile or so on a portion of the trail that is home to many woodland species. Cerulean Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, and Hooded Warbler have all been observed in the area in recent years.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Under Mountain Road parking area. From the north: Taconic Parkway south to Route 23. Take Rt. 23 east to Hillsdale and pick up Route 22 south at the stop light. Take Route 22 south from Hillsdale 8.6 miles to Under Mountain Road. Under Mountain Road is on your left, five-tenths of a mile past the Citgo gas station located at the intersection of Route 22 and Columbia County Route 3. There is a bright blue sign just before Under Mountain Road directing motorists to the trail. Turn left on to Under Mountain Road (if you pass the scenic pull-off along Route 22, you've missed the turn for Under Mountain Road). Proceed three-tenths of a mile to the trail parking lot on your left.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS *(continued.....)*

Saturday, May 11, BIRDS & BREAKFAST AT FIVE RIVERS EEC (Albany County; morning)

Coordinators: Tom & Colleen Williams 518-857-2176 trwdsd@yahoo.com

Our annual celebration of spring migrants will be held at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, located along Game Farm Rd. in Delmar. The center has an excellent trail system through a variety of habitats. You can expect to see and hear many resident and migrant species, including warblers, thrushes, vireos, and orioles, along with a few waterfowl and herons. A typical year results in about 70 species; a good year for migrants can top 80!

An early group will meet in the parking lot at 6:00 a.m. Additional groups will leave at 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. You may join one of these groups or go out on your own as we try to find as many species as possible. We'll rally at the new Visitors Center at 10:30 a.m. for coffee, bagels, fresh fruit and a list compilation. The breakfast is free, *but donations are welcomed!*

Sunday, May 12, VISCHER FERRY NATURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVE (VFNHP) MIGRANTS (Saratoga County; morning)

Coordinators: Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen 518-330-4552 (GR, c) gregg.recer@gmail.com

This is one of the club's most popular spring trips. We will explore this varied site for warblers and other songbirds as well as marsh species including herons and rails.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the VFNHP main entrance, at the intersection of Riverview and Van Vranken Rds. in Clifton Park.

Saturday, May 18, CENTURY RUN (NYS Region 8; all day)

Compiler: Larry Alden 518-861-6087 overlook@nycap.rr.com

This is the Club's 74th Guy Bartlett Century Run, where teams of birders try to find as many species of birds as they possibly can in a single day within the eleven county NYS Region 8. Each group must stay together and jointly identify species reported.

The Century Run is not so much a field trip, but a challenge where you or your group tries to identify as many birds as possible within a set 24-hour period. Groups informally compete for bragging rights, but the results do provide a good snapshot of what birds are out there in a single day. A good Century Run (so named for the goal of reaching a "century", or at least 100 species) calls for proper planning to hit a wide variety of habitats at the right time. Some groups try to cover the whole HMBC area; others limit themselves to a smaller geographic area – a single county, town, etc. Also, there is nothing that says you can't go out on your own, where you want and at your own pace, to see what you can find.

Reports should be emailed to the compiler by May 28th, in order to be counted and published in "Feathers", the Club newsletter. Reports should include species, hours afield, team members, and geographical areas (counties) covered. Also, please send an e-mail to the HMBirds group (<https://groups.io/g/hmbirds/messages>) with the total number of species observed, and highlights for your group.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS *(continued.....)*

Sunday, May 19, SCHODACK ISLAND STATE PARK (Rensselaer County; morning)

Coordinator: Naomi Lloyd 518-596-5964 naomi_kestrel@yahoo.com

Schodack Island State Park sits along the eastern shore of the Hudson River just south of Castleton-on-Hudson. Approximately seven miles of Hudson River and Schodack Creek shoreline bound the 1,052-acre site. A portion of the park shelters a Bird Conservation Area (BCA) that is home to Cerulean Warblers, and a Great Blue Heron rookery. Resident songbirds are plentiful.

Previous Club trips have seen about 50 species, including a dozen or more warbler species. Keep your windows open as you drive along the park entrance, it is a very "birdy" stretch of road. Depending upon where the Cerulean Warblers are nesting, we will walk about 3-4 miles along level paths.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Schodack Island State Park main parking lot at its south end. There is no admission fee before 8:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 25, NORMANSKILL FARM (Albany County; morning)

Coordinator: Tristan Lowery 646-323-8914 tristanlowery@gmail.com

Normanskill Farm is a city-owned park and farm that offers a variety of habitat for birding within the City of Albany. During spring migration, the woodland trails, grassy fields, and gardens are ideal for finding flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, sparrows, and orioles. Two dozen species of warblers have been recorded here in recent years (including Hooded and Mourning). The Normanskill Creek occasionally attracts waterfowl, shorebirds, and large numbers of swifts and swallows.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Normanskill Farm parking lot on Mill Rd. From Delaware Avenue heading south, turn left on Mill Road just before the bridge over the Normanskill Creek. Parking lot is on the left ¼ mile along Mill Road.

Sunday, May 26, FOX HILL RD. (Saratoga County; morning)

Coordinator: John Hershey 518-371-3114 hersheyj@nycap.rr.com

On this trip we will travel through the remote forested and wetland areas along Desolation Lake Rd. and Fox Hill Rd. in Saratoga County. We will bird from the roadside, and explore areas recently acquired by New York State for conservation and recreation. Higher elevation breeders will be the main target. As many as 15 or more breeding warbler species are possible including Nashville, Canada, and Mourning Warbler. Other breeding species that have been seen in the past include American Bittern, Northern Goshawk, Broad-winged Hawk, and Swainson's Thrush.

Because we will be birding from the road, it will be necessary to share vehicles and to limit the number of participants to 16. Waterproof footwear is recommended. Contact the coordinator for reservations, and other information.

Meet at the Saratoga County Airport parking lot off Geyser Rd. at 7:30 a.m.

Feathers

Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club

c/o Five Rivers EEC

56 Game Farm Road

Delmar, NY 12054