

April 2023  
Volume 83 No 2

# Feathers

*Bi-monthly publication of the  
Hudson-Mohawk  
Bird Club, Inc.*

## **Cape Ann field trip report, March 17 - 19, 2023 By Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen**

Seven HMBC members and guests spent an enjoyable weekend of coastal winter birding in the Cape Ann and Newburyport areas of Essex County Mass. Some of the group got the weekend going by successfully locating a staked-out Barnacle Goose amongst a large flock of Canada Geese in a field in Acton Mass. on the way to the hotel on Friday. Saturday started out with good views of many of the common wintering sea ducks of the area -- including Common Eider, Surf Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, and Red-breasted Merganser -- at the Jodrey State Fish Pier in Gloucester. We started seeing single Razorbills at different spots in the harbor, eventually counting at least 7. We all also got a few brief glimpses of 2 gray seals swimming near the pier. Although there were plenty of the three common gulls present, none of the rarer wintering gulls were found -- pretty unusual at this location among all the Gloucester fish-processing facilities.



*(continued on p 54)*

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No President's Corner this month

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**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](mailto: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](mailto:DeniseHStoner@aol.com).

Send all paper submissions to:

**Denise Hackert-Stoner**

**6 Knob Hill Road.**

Loudonville,

NY

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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](mailto: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

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## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

**Saturday, April 15, 2023, 8AM**

**Location: BEGINNER BIRDER WORKSHOP - EARLY MIGRANTS AT FIVE RIVERS EEC (Albany County; morning)** This trip is geared towards novice birders, but all are welcome.

**Coordinator: Scott Stoner 518-785-6760 [scottjstoner@aol.com](mailto:scottjstoner@aol.com)**

Join us for a morning walk through the varied habitats of Five Rivers as we explore fields, ponds, woodlands, and marshes and look for permanent resident birds and early migrants. Be prepared for wet trails.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot at Five Rivers EEC in Delmar.

**Sunday, April 23, 2023 8AM**

**Location: POWELL SANCTUARY (Columbia County; morning) (joint trip with Alan DeVoe Bird Club)**

**Coordinator: Kathy Schneider 518-248-8665 [fallline@nycap.rr.com](mailto:fallline@nycap.rr.com)**

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.

**Sunday, April 30, 2023, 8AM**

**Location: HANNACROIX CREEK PRESERVE (Greene County; morning)**

**Coordinator: Rich Guthrie 518-756-9094 [richardpguthrie@gmail.com](mailto:richardpguthrie@gmail.com)**

On this trip we'll be looking for migrant warblers, vireos and of course, (New) Baltimore Orioles. The moderately easy trail goes around attractive nesting and migrant songbird habitats with a scenic creek and waterfall. Louisiana Waterthrush nest here regularly and migrant warblers are drawn to the varied habitats along the trailsides. Let's see if we can add some interesting species to the Breeding Bird Atlas and to the list of over 120 species recorded for this eBird Hotspot. We will start at the main entrance to the Preserve. If time permits, we will also explore the trail leading down to the Hudson River where Bald Eagles and migrant waterfowl are often seen.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the main entrance, just off NYS Rt. 144, just south of the Albany/Greene County line (Coeymans/New Baltimore).

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS (CONTINUED)

**Wednesday, May 3, 2023 5:30-8:00PM**

**Location: Henry G Reist Sanctuary (Schenectady County; evening)**

**Coordinator: Tristan Lowery [tristanlowery@gmail.com](mailto:tristanlowery@gmail.com)**

Many club members may not even know that the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club owns and operates its own wildlife sanctuary. The Henry G. Reist Sanctuary was donated to HMBC by Margaret Reist in memory of her husband, Dr. H. G. Reist, and at 111 acres it is one of the largest forest and open-space resources in the Town of Niskayuna. The Reist has been a favorite haunt of neighborhood residents for over half a century, but its gentle woodland trails remain little explored by birders. In this beginner-friendly outing, we'll explore the Sanctuary looking for spring migrants.

Meet at 5:30 p.m. at the Kelly Adirondack Center parking lot at 897 St David's Lane in Niskayuna.

**Saturday, May 6, 2023 8:00AM**

**Location: Bog Meadow Brook Trail (Saratoga County; morning)**

**Coordinator: Ron Harrower [ronharrower14@gmail.com](mailto:ronharrower14@gmail.com)**

Bog Meadow Brook Trail, an old rail trail just east of Saratoga Springs, runs along the northern edge of a swamp and consists of wetland habitat with two ponds with a wet mixed forest in between. This varied habitat provides a good migration stop for many warblers and other passerine species, while the ponds and wetlands will have waders and marshbirds, and shorebirds are likely if the edges are exposed.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the trailhead pull-off on Meadowbrook Road, about 0.3 mile west of Stafford Bridge Rd/Rt. 67. If we have enough participants, we will stage some vehicles at the Lake Ave end to save walking the round trip.

**Wednesday, May 10, 2023 7:00AM**

**Location: Washington Park (Albany County; morning)**

**Coordinator: Tristan Lowery [tristanlowery@gmail.com](mailto:tristanlowery@gmail.com)**

At the peak of spring migration in May, even a downtown urban park can attract a variety of warblers, vireos, sparrows, and other migrating songbirds. For this special midweek trip, we'll meet up at Albany's historic and picturesque Washington Park for an easy morning of spring birding before beginning the rest of our days.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the corner of Englewood Place and State Street on the north side of the park, opposite the University at Albany downtown campus.

**Saturday, May 13, 2023 Birds and Breakfast Groups set out at 6, 7, and 8AM**

**Location: Five Rivers Environmental Education Center (Albany County; morning)**

**Coordinator: Sue Rokos [szrokos@gmail.com](mailto:szrokos@gmail.com) 518-535-0006**

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 Visitors Center at 10:30 a.m. for coffee, bagels, fresh fruit and a list compilation. The breakfast is free, but donations are welcomed!

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS (CONTINUED)

**Sunday, May 14, 2023 7:30AM**

**Location: Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve (Saratoga County; morning)**

**Coordinator: Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen [gregg.recer@gmail.com](mailto:gregg.recer@gmail.com) 518-330-4552 (GR)**

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 20, 2023 4AM – 9PM**

**Location: Century Run, All of Region 8**

**Compiler: Larry Alden 518-495-6535 [overlook@nycap.rr.com](mailto:overlook@nycap.rr.com)**

This is the Club's 77th consecutive Century Run, where teams of birders try to find as many species of birds as possible on count 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. 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 best 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 and bird where you want and at your own pace to see what you can find. Groups informally compete for bragging rights, but the results do provide a good snapshot of what birds can be found in our area in a single day.

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 the following: species identified, hours afield, team members, and geographical areas (counties) covered. Also, please send an e-mail to the [HM Birds](#) group with the total number of species observed, and highlights for your group.

**Sunday, May 21, 2023 7:30AM**

**Location: Schodack Island State Park (Rensselaer County; morning)**

**Coordinator: Naomi Lloyd 518-596-5964 [naomi\\_kestrel@yahoo.com](mailto: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.

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS (CONTINUED)

### **Sunday, May 28, 2023 7:30AM Beginning Birder Workshop**

**Location: Saratoga National Historical Park and Battlefield (Saratoga County; morning)**

**Coordinator: Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen [gregg.recer@gmail.com](mailto:gregg.recer@gmail.com) 518-330-4552 (GR)**

Saratoga Battlefield is a great location to learn many of the common grassland and open-country breeding species of the region such as Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Savannah and Field Sparrows, American Kestrel, Eastern Towhee, and several wood-warbler species. We will cover some of the park trails on foot, as well as bird from the one-way tour road, and can expect to spend the entire morning. This trip will be geared toward novice birders, but all are welcome.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot near the park's visitor center off SR 32.

### **Monday, May 29, 2023 7:30AM**

**Location: Hidden Lake Girl Scout Camp (Warren County; morning)**

**Coordinator: Kate Schnurr 518-253-6158 [thekatwho@msn.com](mailto:thekatwho@msn.com)**

Hidden Lake is on 400 acres in the southern Adirondack Park, approximately 3 miles from Lake George Village. The camp has trails through wooded areas; around the main pond, camp sites and by a stream that empties into a small pond. We can expect to encounter higher elevation nesting birds. In the past Blackburnian; Black Throated Green; and Black and White Warblers, Blue Headed Vireo, Red Eyed Vireo, Cedar Waxwing, Rose Breasted Grosbeak and Scarlet Tanagers have been seen.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Exit 8 Park & Ride to car pool.

### **Saturday, June 3, 2023 7:00AM**

**Location: Cherry Plain State Park (Rensselaer County; morning)**

**Coordinator: Naomi Lloyd 518-596-5964 [naomi\\_kestrel@yahoo.com](mailto:naomi_kestrel@yahoo.com)**

Cherry Plain State Park is situated on the Rensselaer Plateau of the Capital District. The relatively high elevation, cool climate and a 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, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Black-and-White and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Veery, Hermit Thrush and Winter Wren also nest here.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Hannaford parking lot on the right side of Route 43, just past the intersection of Route 150 in West Sand Lake, to carpool to the park.

### **Sunday, June 4, 2023 8:00AM**

**Location: Strawberry Fields Nature Preserve (Montgomery County; morning)**

**Coordinator: Ellen Pemrick 518-366-5360 [lnmp@nycap.rr.com](mailto:lnmp@nycap.rr.com)**

Strawberry Fields is located on Cranes Hollow Road in the Town of Amsterdam. It includes a nature preserve protected under a conservation easement with MHLIC, a family home, and a working farm, and features 2.5 miles of trails through fields and forest. Birds found here include Bobolink, Eastern Bluebird, Baltimore Oriole, Common Yellowthroat and Ovenbird. We'll walk the trails and see what turns up. Be prepared for possible wet or muddy conditions and tall grass.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the designated parking area at the preserve.

Directions can be found at: [mohawkhudson.org/our-preserves/strawberry-fields-nature-preserve](http://mohawkhudson.org/our-preserves/strawberry-fields-nature-preserve)

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS (CONTINUED)

**Saturday, June 10, 2023 7:30AM**

**Location: Stillwater School Nature Trail/Lock 4 State Canal Park (Saratoga and Rensselaer Counties; morning)**

**Coordinator: Naomi Lloyd 518-596-5964 [naomi\\_kestrel@yahoo.com](mailto:naomi_kestrel@yahoo.com)**

The Stillwater School Nature Trail has an expansive open marsh on the north side, with Green Heron, Virginia Rail and Sora often 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. We will then drive 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, June 11, 2023 7:00AM**

**Location: Plotter Kill Nature Preserve (Schenectady County; morning) (joint trip with NY Breeding Bird Atlas)**

**Coordinator: Julie Hart [julie.hart@dec.ny.gov](mailto:julie.hart@dec.ny.gov)**

Join the Atlas as we see what birds are breeding in the Preserve. We'll explore the nature trails through forest and field and will likely run into a Louisiana Waterthrush along the stream. This should be prime time for nest building so we'll be keeping an eye out for any birds carrying nesting material. We'll be contributing data to the Rotterdam Junction CE atlas block.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the trailhead parking on Mariaville Rd.

**Saturday, June 17, 2023 7:30AM**

**Location: Beebe Hill Multiple Use Area (Columbia County; morning) (joint trip with NY Breeding Bird Atlas)**

**Coordinator: Julie Hart [julie.hart@dec.ny.gov](mailto:julie.hart@dec.ny.gov)**

We'll walk the trails at Beebe Hill to see what birds we can find breeding and contribute to the State Line NW atlas block. We should find some marsh birds near the pond and forest interior birds on the hike to the fire tower. We'll pose for some gorgeous views at the top.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the fire tower trailhead parking (on the north end of Barrett Pond) on Beebe Forest Rd.

**Saturday, June 24, 2023 7:00AM**

**Location: Swatling Falls Nature Trails and Halfmoon Town Park (Saratoga County; morning) (joint trip with NY Breeding Bird Atlas)**

**Coordinator: Julie Hart [julie.hart@dec.ny.gov](mailto:julie.hart@dec.ny.gov)**

Explore the trails at Swatling Falls Nature Trails in Halfmoon. We'll experience a variety of habitats including forest, field, and shrub as well as see the falls. After we've explored the trails we'll head over to Halfmoon Town Park to add some more open habitat birds to our day list. We'll document any breeding birds for the Troy North NW atlas block.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the trailhead parking on Swatling Rd.



## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS (CONTINUED)

**Sunday, July 9, 2023 7:30AM**

**Location: Berlin Mountain (Rensselaer County; morning) (joint trip with NY Breeding Bird Atlas)**

**Coordinator: Coordinator: Julie Hart [julie.hart@dec.ny.gov](mailto:julie.hart@dec.ny.gov)**

Join the NY Breeding Bird Atlas for a hike up Berlin Mountain from Green Hollow Rd. Experience a diversity of habitat as we go up in elevation. We will be paying attention to breeding birds in Atlas block Berlin CE including Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and Blue-winged Warblers on the slopes to Mourning Warbler at the summit. This trip requires hiking 2.3 miles uphill and then returning on the same route, though it is a fairly easy grade dirt road up to the ridge and we will be walking slowly to hear the birds. Bring a packed lunch, sturdy shoes, and plenty of water.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the trailhead parking lot at the end of Green Hollow Rd.

**Saturday, July 15, 2023 7:00AM**

**Location: Fulton County, Leader's Choice (Fulton County; morning)**

**Coordinator: David Harrison 908-892-5495 [david.harrison57@earthlink.net](mailto:david.harrison57@earthlink.net)**

Leader's Choice in the foothills of the Adirondacks with good chances for some of our region's more northern breeders – maybe even Mourning Warbler if we're lucky. Anticipate up to 6 miles of hiking on moderate terrain.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Fulton County Visitors Center on the NE side of the Rt. 29 & 30 traffic circle about 9 miles north of Thruway exit 27.

## WRITERS PAGE

I Went on a Quest, by Barb Putnam

I went on a quest, with camera in hand,  
 off to Colombia, what a great land!  
 Searching for birds, capturing their beauty,  
 And practicing Spanish, that was my duty.  
 I met with Jude, she's my friend and my tutor,  
 It was so nice to see her without a computer.

The hiking was tough, but I persevered,  
 And then, stunning birds appeared.  
 The hummingbirds had so many colors bright,  
 Their wings were such a blur in flight.  
 So many tanagers, a vivid show,  
 Their feathers were a rainbow on the go

The trip went by so fast,  
 I really did have a blast.  
 Now memories of my trip remain,  
 With pictures captured, to sustain,  
 The beauty of all those birds so fair,  
 I look forward to going back there.



Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager



Bay-headed Tanager



Lesser Violetear

## ON NATURE

Toucans!

By Scott Stoner

I had never been to the tropics. In fact, I had some reservations about traveling there. Finally we decided to go. For me, it was in part because Denise really wanted to, and ...because I really, really wanted to see a toucan! These large arboreal Neotropical birds with their huge, oversized bills fascinated me and drew me to Costa Rica. On a tour with a relaxed week at Rancho Naturalista in the Caribbean foothills, I felt virtually assured of seeing one.

Whenever I mentioned toucans, everyone referred to Toucan Sam in the Froot Loops commercials. Perhaps I missed something as a child, but I had neither eaten Froot Loops nor was familiar with their commercials. But I had seen photos of them for years, mainly from Gregg Recer's multiple tropical sojourns, and I really really wanted to see (and hopefully photograph) one!



The first hopeful sign was at the welcome dinner at the start of the tour near San Jose, when our Field Guides leader assigned people to groups to assure egalitarian seating in the bus over the forthcoming adventure. Just like Field Guides' leaders employ personal bird nicknames, they assigned bird names to participant seating groups as well. It was a very good omen that the four people in our Group 3 were the toucans!!

On our first morning at Rancho Naturalista, at 3,200 feet in the Caribbean foothills and about two hours' drive southeast of the capital of San Jose, we saw our first toucan: a Keel-billed, rather nonchalantly pointed out by a wonderful 91-year old fellow participant on a hike through a hillside pasture. A distant look, but hey, a toucan!!! Farther up the hill was another one, also a Keel-billed, still far, but close enough to attempt a photo coupling a 500 mm lens with a 1.4 x teleconverter. Distant and grainy, but "proof of toucan." Yeah! At the same place we were treated with a second species, a Collared Aracari (which I soon learned was pronounced "arasari," not "arakari"). Smaller than the Keel-billed but at least as colorful, it too was (barely) within range for a "proof of toucan" image!



Left: Keel-billed Toucan Right: Aracari

## ON NATURE *(CONTINUED)*

Later in the tour, on a long day trip to the Caribbean lowlands, we would add yet a third toucan, the large Yellow-throated Toucan! It was in the dense tropical rain forest at a place called Centro Manu. This location also provided a somewhat closer view of a Keel-billed, and a chance to compare the two large species.



Keel-billed (left) and Yellow-throated (right) Toucans

That afternoon, still in the Caribbean lowlands, at artist Jose Cope's feeders, we were amazed to see both Collared Aracaris and Yellow-throated Toucans at such close range that even by backing up as far as I could, it was difficult to fit the entire toucan in the frame!

## ON NATURE (CONTINUED)

That afternoon, still in the Caribbean lowlands, at artist Jose Cope's feeders, we were amazed to see both Collared Aracaris and Yellow-throated Toucans at such close range that even by backing up as far as I could, it was difficult to fit the entire toucan in the frame!



There are 36 species of toucans, all in the Neotropics, from Mexico through Central America to northern South America (Ebird; Birds of the World, Cornell Lab of Ornithology). They are in the family Ramphastidae, within the order Piciformes along with woodpeckers, honeyguides, and several families of barbets. Within the toucan family are five genera, listed below:

*Aulacorhynchus*: 8 species of "toucanets"

*Ramphastos*: 7 species of "toucans"

*Andigena*: 4 species of "mountain-toucans"

*Pteroglossus*: 10 species of "aracaris" and Saffron Toucanet

*Selenidera*: 6 species of "toucanets."

## ON NATURE (CONTINUED)

Their bills are as functionally fascinating as they are beautiful. Serrated, toucans use them to reach bananas and other fruit that competitors might not access. Mainly frugivorous, toucans will also grab large insects and other arthropods, and even the eggs and nestlings of other birds. Toucans can't swallow directly from their bill tips, but toss the food up and into the back of their throats to get it down.



Aracari

Not just for eating, toucans' bills are also used for thermoregulation, primarily cooling from the intense tropical heat. Lightweight and thin, composed of keratin (like our fingernails) and supported by bony rods, these giant showy beaks have blood vessels close to the surface to dissipate heat. Toucans can control the flow of blood to their bills to either lose or retain heat as needed.

Toucans nest in natural cavities, generally ones excavated by woodpeckers but rarely do they make their own by clearing out rotted wood.

Sadly, like other Neotropical forest birds, toucans face habitat destruction; they are also hunted and trapped for food, traditional medicine, and the pet trade. The cohesiveness of toucan family groups renders them particularly vulnerable to hunting. Roughly one quarter of toucan species are of conservation concern.



**ON NATURE** (CONTINUED)

So I returned satisfied with sightings and images of toucans, but inspired to return to the tropics to see additional species of this fascinating family of birds!

Scott Stoner

[www.naturelogues.com](http://www.naturelogues.com)

## Field Trip Reports

See “Cape Ann Field Trip Report,” feature article

### Cape Ann *(continued)*

The nearby East Pt/Niles Beach/Niles Pond area produced many more Surf and a couple of Black Scoters, both Scaup, Ring-necked Duck, and a Red-throated loon. A passing couple mentioned seeing a King Eider earlier that morning at Niles Beach, and within 15 minutes the bird flew in to join the numerous Commons in the inner harbor area. We all had great scope looks at the beautiful full-alternate male King, which hung around for close to 30 minutes.



After that great start in Gloucester, we headed to Rockport; first stop, Halibut Point State Park. With the sun coming out and fairly mild temps, conditions there were unusually pleasant. We had great views from the elevated overlook at close rafts of Black Scoters, Long-tailed Ducks and our first Harlequin Ducks. The winds were light, but had been persistently offshore for a couple of days, and so none of the more pelagic birds that the nor'-easter had brought in earlier that week were still present. But we did manage to get a few distant scope views of Northern Gannets. The mix of birds at Andrew's Point and Cathedral Ledge was similar, with more Harlequin Ducks, another big group of Razorbills, and more Common and Red-throated loons.





## Cape Ann *(continued)*

We wrapped up the day on Cape Ann back in Gloucester at Bass Rocks. Viewing conditions were ideal with the sun at our backs, light winds, and relatively smooth water. Surf, Black and White-winged Scoters were all present along the shore. After scouring many stretches of the rocky coastline there, we finally turned up a large group of Purple Sandpipers flying in tight formation up and down the shore, and swarming over the exposed seaweed-covered rocks.

A group of un-id'd grebes was repeatedly spotted and lost from view, but eventually we were able to scope a couple of them confirming their ID as Red-necked Grebes. The final highlight of the day was the appearance of three different Black Guillemots in succession. We got a first-hand view of different molt stages as the first was a very pale bird still largely in basic plumage, the second with a black body but pale gray head transitioning from basic to alternate, and then a full-alternate bird, completely black except for the large white oval wing-patch. An interesting contrast that we would not have seen if we were there during the trip's historical February time-frame.

To celebrate a great first day of the trip we had a nice seafood dinner in Gloucester.



Sunday the weather got its revenge on us after the relatively mild conditions the day before. As predicted, the temperatures fell and stayed in the low-mid 30s F all day, and the west wind started really blowing hard, with steady winds of 20 mph or so, and gusts twice that. Nevertheless, we carried on as best we could covering Salisbury Beach State Reservation, and then continuing to Plum Island/Parker River NWR. Howling winds were the constant theme of the day, making scope viewing tough at the Salisbury Beach breakwater.

## Cape Ann *(continued)*

We ran into some park construction there and therefore were unable to do any land-birding in the RV campground, but some of the group managed to see a single Snow Bunting along the entrance road.



The winds were a help for raptor-viewing at Plum Island, with many Northern Harrier sightings, one light-morph Rough-legged Hawk hanging in the wind over the road, and a day-active Short-eared Owl observed by a couple members of the group. Offshore birds were similar to Cape Ann, although we finally came across a few Horned Grebes, and were able to put the scope on a single, early-arriving Piping Plover. Some of the group got some really close-up views of a few more Purple Sandpipers at Plum Island town beach. The group split up after lunch, but a few of us made a stop at a flooded field west of Newburyport that had a mix of puddle ducks, including many Northern Pintail and Green-winged Teal and a single, early, male Blue-winged Teal. Our last stop was in Salem Mass where an Eurasian Wigeon had been staked out for several days. The tide was very low pushing birds out away from shore, but with some scope-scanning we were eventually able to pick out the rusty-headed male Eurasian with the creamy-yellow crown patch, amongst a small group of American Wigeon. A nice way to top off a very fun and successful weekend. Thanks to all who joined us on the trip.

Cathy Graichen

Gregg Recer

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## Upcoming HMBC Programs

**Date and Time:** Monday, May 1, 2023, 6:30pm

**Location:** Five Rivers EEC, Delmar, NY

**Topic:** Birds of the Adirondacks and the Northeast

**Speaker:** Warren Greene

Renowned bird photographer Warren Green is a native of Gloversville, NY. He's married with two grown sons and four grandsons. Warren retired in 2010 from the Fulton County Probation Dept., where he was Director for 22 years. He is currently a part time Fulton County Legislator. As a young child, Warren was always fascinated with the natural world, starting with butterflies and moths, followed by reptiles and amphibians; they would be followed by birds soon after graduating from college. In 1976, he bought my first camera and has not been without one since. Warren started photographing birds shortly thereafter as he was intrigued by a bird nest in a lilac tree in his parents' back yard and tried his best to document it.

**Date and Time:** Monday, June 5, 2023, 6:30pm

**Location:** TBA

**Topic:** Birding India

**Speaker:** Gregg Recer

*Feathers*

**Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club**

**c/o Five Rivers EEC**

**56 Game Farm Road**

**Delmar, NY 12054**