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# Feathers

## **BIRDING CHILE**

**by Bernie Grossman**

Chris and I birded Chile with Field Guides, Inc., for three weeks in November (11/6-11/27). There were 12 other clients with us, and our guides were Willie Perez, Field Guides' Ecuador specialist, and a local guide, Rodrigo Silva.

Chile is a long, narrow country lying along South America's western edge that is sandwiched between the Andes Mountain chain and the Pacific Ocean. It is over 4,000 miles long, but its width is probably no greater than 100 miles. It is cut with numerous fiords and deep bays and making it necessary to enter Argentina at times to drive from place to place. These obstacles and distances required the tour to take six internal flights to save time.

We started birding from Punta Arenas and Tierra del Fuego in the cold south and ended in Arica in the hot, dry north just a very few miles from Peru. There were two pelagic trips, one off Valpariso into the Humboldt Current to look for albatross, etc., and a less ambitious one off Arica to search for two storm-petrels. The trip to and from Tierra del Fuego require two ferry rides with further chances at pelagic species. Three trips were made to high altitude, too. The first was to Farellones, a ski area above Santiago, the second to Lauca National Park east of Arica, and the third to another ski area above Termas de Chillan. At Lauca, we slept at 11,500 feet and birded as high as 15,000 feet. The birding was spectacular, but the travel which included long bus rides on gravel roads was physically trying.

Tierra del Fuego is a large island at the tip of South America. The passage between the mainland and the island are the Straits of Magellan. Cape Horn is a point on a small, almost inaccessible island off the south coast of the large island. Southern Chile has been suffering from a drought, so the landscape was pretty bare, especially since the island is covered with grazing sheep. On the first ferry ride, we saw petrels, giant petrels, diving-petrels and shearwaters. A few MAGELLENIC PENGUINS were spotted, too.

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## President's Corner

Over the Halloween weekend, the Reist Sanctuary hosted a Trick or Treat Nature Walk, organized by local students from Van Antwerp Middle School and Hillside Elementary, who dressed as animals found in the sanctuary and gave tours to elementary students. Katarina Mills (red fox), Suchi Mehta (great horned owl and Eastern cottontail rabbit), Lucy Hart (brown bat), Chloe Pepe (red-tailed hawk), Lily Bosco (white tailed deer) and Medeline Mills (striped skunk) gave presentations about their animals and led the students through the Reist Sanctuary. The event helped raise money for the sanctuary. Anyone interested in the tours or donating to the sanctuary can visit

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c48a8ae23a0fb6-trick>.



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Chris and Bernie Grossman will be moving to Florida in the spring or summer of 2017, so HMBC needs someone to replace Chris as **Publications Chair** and someone to replace Bernie as **Field Trips Chair** in the 2017/ 2018 year.

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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?
- 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:**

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Please send all **electronic submissions for Feathers** 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

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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 Chris Grossman [bgrossman@nycap.rr.com](mailto:bgrossman@nycap.rr.com) or (518) 399-9159 if you are interested in purchasing a copy. Checks should be made out to ***Hudson Mohawk Bird Club*** and should be sent to:

Chris Grossman

7 Nott Rd

Rexford, NY 12148

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## Field Trip Reports

### **Saratoga National Historic Park and Battlefield**

September 25, 2016

A dozen birders showed up at Saratoga Battlefield on a sunny autumn morning for this popular annual trip. Near the start of the Wilkinson Trail, we encountered the first of many EASTERN PHOEBES we'd see throughout the day and several CEDAR WAXWINGS. A SWAINSON'S THRUSH, feeding on berries, was sighted by an sharp-eyed member of the group. In colorful fields of goldenrod, aster, and thistle, we found SONG and FIELD SPARROWS, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, and numerous AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES, with juveniles making begging calls. Raptors were limited TO TURKEY VULTURES, RED-TAILED HAWKS, and a single accipiter, probably a COOPER'S HAWK. We saw large flocks of CANADA GEESE and 3 WOOD DUCKS flying overhead; groups of BLUE JAYS (I think we counted 30 or 40 at one point) were also on the move.

By the time we crossed the Park Loop Road to reach a wooded section of the trail we had already seen or heard 5 woodpecker species: DOWNY, PILEATED, and RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS; NORTHERN FLICKER; and YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER. A HAIRY WOODPECKER climbing up a birch tree made it a full "Woodpecker Six-Pack." Turning onto the Liason [sic] Trail, a member of the group heard the call notes of a WINTER WREN. We managed to locate the diminutive bird as it hopped on the ground next to a log.

Back on the Wilkinson Trail, we walked around the Balcarres Redoubt. This area was surprisingly productive; highlights included EASTERN BLUEBIRDS and PINE, PALM, and BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER. One or two people saw a YELLOW-THROATED VIREO.

Among other birds seen or heard during the trip WERE COMMON RAVEN, TREE SWALLOWS (flying overhead), GOLDEN-CROWNED and RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, GRAY CATBIRD, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS, and EASTERN TOWHEE. In total, we had about 40 species.

-Ellen Pemrick

### **Nutten Hook, Stuyvesant**

October 1, 2016

Seven birders took a chance on the weather and explored Nutten Hooke in Stuyvesant this morning. It was cloudy and breezy but the rain held off. We had nice looks at a flock of RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS. A single RUSTY BLACKBIRD perched in a dead tree and gave a good view. Immature BALD EAGLES perched cooperatively on the river and SWAMP SPARROWS were more abundant than SONG SPARROWS. The group totaled 35 species, saw a nice variety of birds, toured the preserve and enjoyed seeing the best preserved ice house on the Hudson River. You can view the complete list at this link <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S31837548>

- Kathy Schneider

## Field Trip Reports..... (continued)

### **Tomhannock Reservoir (Rensselaer)**

November 5, 2016

A dozen birders gathered at the Tomhannock for our annual waterfowl trip around the reservoir. Total numbers were low, but we came up with a respectable number of species: MALLARD, AMERICAN BLACK DUCK, RUDDY DUCK, AND RING-NECKED DUCK, BUFFLEHEAD, COMMON GOLDENEYE, COMMON AND HOODED MERGANSER, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, COMMON LOON, and PIED-BILLED GREBE.

An exceptional spectacle was a flock of 5000+ blackbirds streaming across the water, silent except for the rush of their wings. Most of them appeared to be COMMON GRACKLES.

-Naomi Lloyd

## Upcoming HMBC Programs

### **Birding in Cuba – Birds – People – Cars - Cigars**

**Speaker: Rich Guthrie**

December 5, 2016 – 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

William K. Sanford (Colonie Town) Library 629 Albany Shaker Road, Loudonville, N.Y.

Off limits to most Americans for decades, Cuba has been a mysterious Paradise Lost to so many. Now that the doors are opening, many Americans are curious about the life on the the largest of the Caribbean islands. Rich Guthrie, the voice of the birds on WAMC's Vox-Pop call-in radio program recently visited the island with Birds Caribbean, a conservation organization which focuses on habitat preservation and wildlife of the many Caribbean islands.

Join us as we have a look at not only many of the bird species found only in Cuba, but also a look at the people, life, and of course the vintage cars that are now a national treasure of the Cuban people. The program will include plenty of colorful pictures and narrative.

This meeting is also HMBC holiday party - all are welcome to bring a dessert or snack or non-alcoholic beverage to share. It's not required.

### **Birding France**

**Speaker: Gregg Recer**

January 9, 2017 – 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

William K. Sanford (Colonie Town) Library 629 Albany Shaker Road, Loudonville, N.Y.

Details forthcoming

## Upcoming HMBC Programs..... (continued)

### **Bringing Back the Bald Eagle**

**Speaker: George Steele**

February 6, 2017 – 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

William K Sanford (Colonie Town) Library 629 Albany Shaker Road, Loudonville, N.Y.

In the spring of 2015 the oldest known bald eagle was recovered dead as a road kill. It was one of the first bald eagles released in the reintroduction program conducted by the NYSDEC. George Steele worked on the hacking team that worked with that bird. Join him as he tells the story of the decline and reestablishment of the bald eagle in those early years through a slide illustrated presentation.

George Steele has a BS in Forest Biology/Wildlife Management from SUNY College of ESF in Syracuse. He worked with the NYSDEC Endangered Species Unit for two years and then for the Environmental Education Unit for thirteen years running the DEC's summer environmental education camps. For the last 24 years, George has worked as an independent environmental education program provider/consultant working with schools, nature centers, museums, summer camps and various organizations. He is an active member of the HMBC and the NYS Outdoor Education Association and posts cool experiences and discoveries in work as an environmental educator and naturalist on Facebook. He can be reached at [www.georgesteele.webs.com](http://www.georgesteele.webs.com).

## Upcoming Audubon Programs

### **Birds of the Rensselaer Plateau - Co-sponsoring with the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance**

**Speaker: Rich Guthrie**

December 8, 2016, 7:00 pm

Town of Sand Lake Town Hall

8428 NY Rte. 66

Averill Park, NY 12018

The Rensselaer State Forest is a 2,000 acre preserve and Audubon NY Important Bird Area (IBA) since 1997 and resides right in the middle of the Rensselaer Plateau

Come out this evening to see Rich Guthrie from WAMC's Vox Pop, speaks about area birds, focusing on wintering birds of the Rensselaer Plateau and environs.

At the Sand Lake Town Hall.

Suggested donation \$5.

Co-sponsoring with the [Rensselaer Plateau Alliance](#)!

## On Nature

### Anticipating Winter

by Scott Stoner and Denise Hackert-Stoner

The canoe has been put away, and the rack is off the car. The leaves are mostly down and the yard well on its way to being “put to bed” for the winter. Thoughts naturally turn to snow – and to anticipating the winter birds that might visit our area this year!

Ron Pittaway’s “Winter Finch Forecast” (covering finches and several other irruptive passerines), always eagerly awaited, is already out (<http://www.jeaniron.ca/2016/finchforecast16.htm>). Its suggestion of the possibility of Red and White-winged Crossbills appears accurate, as reports of these and Evening Grosbeaks in upstate NY are already coming in. Four winters ago we enjoyed close views of a flock of Pine Grosbeaks in Queensbury, and Bohemian Waxwings near Glens Falls.



Evening Grosbeak

© Denise Hackert-Stoner  
Naturelogues

## On Nature..... (continued)



**Pine Grosbeak**

Winter finches are very personal to me...as a young birder growing up on Long Island; we would have flocks of Evening Grosbeaks at our feeders. One year we even had Red Crossbills, which ate ravenously from the platform feeder on our deck. They were initially so unafraid that I was able to walk right up to them and take photos at close range! I had never seen them before, and was fascinated by their tameness and crossed bills. While we have caught up with Evening Grosbeaks again (Green Mountains of Vermont), I'd love for another opportunity to observe, study, and photograph crossbills at such close proximity.

Short-eared Owls are already being reported in the area, with Snowies already showing up as close as Vermont. Will we have a repeat of the great irruption of the winter of 2013-2014 when several individuals frequented the Albany International Airport, and one stuck around at RPI in Troy?

## On Nature..... (continued)



**Snowy Owl**

As we eagerly await the winter, we look forward to chasing any reports of winter specialties that make it to, or within a few hours' drive of the Capital Region!

## BIRDING CHILE..... (continued)

The high point of the island was a trip to a KING PENGUIN colony located on a large sheep estancia. The proprietors protect the birds, so we got good looks from a blind about 100 feet away. We stayed in a hotel in Pornevir which allowed us to travel along the coast as well as inland. We saw numerous waterfowl species including both the FLYING and FLIGHTLESS STEAMER DUCKS. Others included swans, geese, ducks, cormorants and gulls. Inland we were treated to LESSER RHEA and a variety of land birds. The rhea looks like a small ostrich.

## BIRDING CHILE..... (continued)

### King Penguins at their colony at Bahia Intuil on Tierra del Fuego



Beside penguins, the other big target species was the MAGALLENIC PLOVER, a monotypic shorebird. While it looks like a typical plover, it is sufficiently different so that it is placed in its own genus. It is normally found living among cobble-sized stone fields on lake or ocean shores. The bird is gray with red legs, and it is hard to spot unless it moves. It took us awhile to locate the first one, but this made seeing several others simpler.

From Tierra del Fuego, we drove north toward Puerto Natales and the beautiful Torres de Paine (Blue Towers and pronounced *pay' ne*) National Park. When people

talk about hiking in Patagonia, they are usually talking about hiking here on a path around the Torres. The target bird in the Park was the AUSTRAL RAIL, but the drought had reduced its habitat and a fierce wind made tape calling impossible. As we drove on toward our hotel, we noted that the lakes that were usually full were now quite dry. At one point, a group of photographers were seen along the road. They were photographing a resting PUMA! It was laying on a rock self about 150 feet from us.

We were now driving through a mix of agricultural land, forest and mountain ranges. Birds such as sierra-finches, ground- and shrike-tyrants and furnariids like miners, cinclodes, and earthcreepers. AUSTRAL THRUSHES were everywhere. In one woods we saw our first GREEN-BACKED FIRECROWN, a hummingbird.

The drive along the Andes foothills provided the best chance for us to see ANDEAN CONDORS. We also saw raptors like VARIABLE HAWK, SOUTHERN and CHIMANGO CARACARA, and KESTREL. Once we watched a SOUTHERN and a rare WHITE-THROATED CARACARA feed together on a sheep carcass.

Our first condor encounter came as we drove along the Pan American Highway close to a rocky cliff. At least twenty condors were perched on the top edge or on shelves. Whitewash stain marked this as an active roost. The bus then turned onto a road leading into a mountain valley where the numbers of condors increased considerably. At one point the bus crested a small hill, and we saw at least a hundred condors standing in a pasture. They took off when the bus appeared.

From Puerto Natales, we drove back to Punta Arenas, and the next morning flew (2.5 hours) north to Puerto Montt. We birded a bit around Puerto Montt and then had a long drive the next day to Temuco. Along the way, the bus headed west off the Highway to Valdivia on the coast, so we could visit some wetlands. The driving continued from Temuco through Chillan to a ski resort called Termas (*hot springs*) de Chillan in the mountains. The bus stopped in Los Angeles for lunch at a famous meat restaurant where we were served braziers of roast lamb piled high.

#### Thorn-tail Rayadito

The target bird in the Termas de Chillan was the MAGELLANIC WOODPECKER. It is a huge bird along the lines of our PILEATED WOODPECKER. The male has a red head, while the female's is black. However, she has a curly crest. We tried hard to find the bird in the woods near the town with Willie and Rodrigo calling with recorded calls and by hitting a big tree with a thick stick in a double tap. One bird did respond, but we didn't see it. We then drove up the mountain road to the ski area where we walked around. Willie spotted a pair of the woodpeckers at a distance in the tree line, and we got decent looks.



On the way down, the bus pulled off into a turn off, so we could try to see a rare hawk. A loud tapping was heard, and we saw a male MAGELLANIC WOODPECKER working in a large tree less than fifty feet from us. Our presence had little effect, so many close up pictures were taken.

**Magellanic Woodpecker (male) near Farellones west of Santiago.**

From here, we went to Concepcion and flew back to Santiago for the night. Then we drove west to the coast at Valpariso and Vina del Mar for our pelagic the next morning. Our hotel was

built on the rocks, so waves crashed directly below us. We slept with the windows open, so water from the waves came into the room when the tide was in. We could see the beautiful INCA TERN, PERUVIAN PELICAN, gulls and cormorants from the room.

The pelagic lasted five hours, and while the weather was "mild," the boat's high bow and motion made it difficult to see some of the smaller birds such as the petrels and diving-petrels. Nevertheless, lots of good things were seen especially when the crew chummed. Then we were surrounded by large numbers of PERUVIAN PELICANS and KELP and FRANKLIN'S GULLS. There were lots of SOOTY SHEARWATERS and GIANT PETRELS moving past us. However, the most

exciting for me were the three species of albatross, ROYAL, BLACK-BROWED, and SALVIN'S. Several of the latter two landed close to the boat. On the return trip, we saw a few HUMBOLDT'S PENGUINS and PERUVIAN BOOBY. The captain served us cheese and a very nice red Chilean wine as the boat entered the sheltered harbor.

The next morning we went first to an estuary where we successful found a STRIPE-BACKED BITTERN, which is similar in size and conformation to our LEAST BITTERN. From here, we drove to an agricultural area and walked along a road to a delightful valley containing a small pond. As we passed a small pool along the road, a GIANT HUMMINGBIRD swooped in and then settled into her nest in a small tree next to the pool. The GIANT HUMMINGBIRD is the largest being 8-9 inches long. Soon after, the male tried to distract us by hovering over the pool's surface. At the pond, Willie was able to call in one of the seven tapaculo species we saw. In general, tapaculos are very difficult to see. They will respond to recorded calls, but will not always make that one last move out of the bush to be seen. Chile's tapaculos are not shy and are pretty easy to see.

**Giant Hummingbird female on her nest**

After driving back to Santiago, we drove to an agricultural area that contains a wetlands. The drought had reduced it, but enough water was present for us to see many BLACK-NECKED STILTS, GREAT and SNOWY EGRETS and gulls. Our main target bird here was the SOUTH AMERICAN PAINTED SNIPE. We had to sweep through the wet areas trying to flush the bird. One was briefly seen in flight. Willie and Rodrigo had made a good effort, but it was decided that we were not going to be successful. As we moved through the marsh, a snipe suddenly skulked through the grass and then stopped where everyone was able to get excellent looks. While the tall grass blocked side views for my camera, I was able to get good pictures as it faced me. It was a grand end to a long day.



On our final day in the Santiago area, we drove high into the Andean foothills toward a large reservoir and the marshy pasture land above it. A narrow dirt road was cut into the hillside along the reservoir with just barely room for cars to pass each other. The marshy land fed melt water into the reservoir. We walked into the pasture where goats and herds of horses grazed, and we swept the wetter areas looking for the target, the DIADEMED SANDPIPER-PLOVER, another shorebird showing characteristics of both sandpipers and plovers. It is in another monotypic genus. Willie told us to wait while he moved through the tall grass at the foot of a slope in hopes of flushing the bird. As we started toward him at the end of his sweep, two of the group simultaneously called that they had seen the bird, and it was nowhere near Willie. Two birds were present, and one was clearly visible to the group for good pictures. After a bit, it flew past us and was joined by the second sandpiper-plover. They then proceeded to mate.

On the way up, we had stopped at a small pasture where we saw sierra-finches, ground-tyrants, and siskins. We stopped again on our return and saw MOUNTAIN PARAKEETS, the smallest of the genus at eight inches and found usually in high meadow areas. They were a beautiful green and blue color.

Arica in Chile's far north was our last base. I was crammed for 2.5 hours into this very limited legroom seat for the flights to and from there. While it is only a very few miles from the Peruvian border, Arica is an important port especially for Bolivia which is landlocked. A winding highway through the Atacama Desert leads over the 15,000 foot pass and then on to Bolivia. The Atacama Desert is the driest non-arctic desert in the world. However snow melt rivers provide for a few oasis valleys and communities.

Before leaving the city, we drove to Lluta Estuary where we found a variety of shorebirds including WHIMBREL, BARTAILED and GRAY GULL, AMERICAN and BLACKISH OYSTERCATCHER SEMIPALMATED PLOVER, KILLDEER and many BAIRD'S SANDPIPER. Our goal up the Arica-Bolivia road was the small oasis village of Putre at 11,000 feet. We birded the area near the small hotel we stayed in and found ground-tyrants, sierra-finches, canasteros, ANDEAN HILLSTAR HUMMINGBIRDS, APLAMADO FALCON, and the beautiful BLUE-GREEN TANAGER, the only tanager species seen on the trip. The ANDEAN HILLSTAR HUMMINGBIRDS were nesting in the eaves of the hotel, and one would perch of the slat of a window in our room.

Chris was hit with altitude sickness that night and could not go up to Lauca National Park the next morning. Another member of the group became ill when we reached the top at 15,000 feet. We were all short of breath and moved slowly here. As we climbed the road out of Putre, we saw a pair of ORNATE TINAMOU and a small herd of NORTHERN HEUMUL, a very uncommon deer. We stopped at a small lake where we saw a pair of beautiful ANDEAN GEESE; CHILEAN, ANDEAN, and JAMES'S FLAMINGOES; ANDEAN GULL; GIANT and SLATE-COLORED COOT; and ANDEAN RUDDY DUCK. Later along the road, we had a flock of RUFIOUS-BELLIED SEEDSNIPE. Chris felt better the next morning, so she was able to join the group on a second trip up into the park. She saw almost all of the birds seen the first day.

We returned down the road toward Arica, but diverted halfway down to avoid a temporary road closure. This route took us through the heart of the Atacama Desert. As mentioned before, this is the driest temperate area place on earth, and absolutely nothing was seen growing during the 30 miles of the drive. At the end, we descended steeply into the oasis Azapa Valley where there was extensive agricultural activity. The main crops were olives and vegetables. After lunch, we tracked down the very rare CHILEAN WOODSTAR, the rarest Chilean hummingbird which feeds primarily on a limited suite of flowers. Habitat loss and competition from of hummingbird species are threatening it.

Our final stop in the Azapa Valley was at the Santuario del Picaflor (hummingbird) where Señora Maria Teresa had built up a beautiful flower garden which attracted the PERUVIAN SHEARTAIL hummingbird. These have a long spatulate tail. By far, Señora Maria Teresa's biggest expense was for water.

I became sick after lunch in the Azapa Valley, and, upon being told that the boat for the next day's pelagic trip might not have a toilet, chose to skip it. Chris did take the trip and saw the two target birds, ELIOTT'S and MARKHAM'S STORM-PETRELS.

There is not enough space in this article for all of the species we saw. I must mention that in the south there were large numbers of GUANACO the wild predecessor of the llama, and in the north smaller numbers of the beautiful, graceful VICUÑA, the predecessor of the alpaca.

A birder can see many more species in the same amount of time by going to Ecuador, Peru, or Columbia, but the quality and unusual nature of some of the Chilean birds made for a very successful time. Chile is a beautiful country, and one can eat the food and drink the water without too much concern. On the other hand, the food was not too inspiring, the bread and cheese not too tasty, ham and cheese sandwiches ubiquitous, and the coffee usually Nescafe', but the wine and the pisco sours were superb. Chris and I found the trip to be physically difficult because of factors like long distances driven and high altitudes, but this is a personal observation.

## Upcoming Field Trips

### DECEMBER

#### **Saturday, December 17, SCHENECTADY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

Coordinator/Compiler: Larry Alden 861-6087 [overlook@nycap.rr.com](mailto:overlook@nycap.rr.com)

#### **Monday, December 26, SOUTHERN RENSSELAER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

Coordinator/Compiler: Phil Whitney, 477-9050, [prmlwhitney59@nycap.rr.com](mailto:prmlwhitney59@nycap.rr.com)

#### **Saturday, December 31, TROY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

Coordinator/Compiler: Larry Alden 861-6087 [overlook@nycap.rr.com](mailto:overlook@nycap.rr.com)

### JANUARY

#### **Sunday, January 1, NEW YEAR'S DAY BIRD COUNT AT FIVE RIVERS EEC, DELMAR, NY**

(Albany County; morning)

Coordinators: Ray Perry 475-0291 (daytime) [raymond.perry@dec.ny.gov](mailto:raymond.perry@dec.ny.gov)

John Kent 424-2234 [jwkent@fastmail.fm](mailto:jwkent@fastmail.fm)

Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, located on Game Farm Rd, Delmar, NY, is a large area of fields and forest and is one of the premier birding locations in the Capital District.

This year marks the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual New Year's Day Bird Count at Five Rivers. The goal of the count is to identify all the bird species present on January 1st. This also marks the start of Five Rivers' annual bird list. HMBC joins the event again this year and encourages members to participate. Groups will go out at 9:00 a.m., but birders are welcome to come earlier to get a head start.

The new Interpretative Building will still be under construction at this point and the old one may be closed, so meet at the new parking area near the new building to form groups. Follow signage to the new area. Call ahead to Five Rivers in case of inclement weather.

#### **Wednesday, January 18, NOTIFICATION/LISTING FOR RARE BIRD TRIP**

Coordinator: Bill Lee 374-3426 [bilee@hotmail.com](mailto:bilee@hotmail.com)

If any especially rare bird(s) is/are reported in our general area, we plan to take a trip to look for it. This is usually a day trip, but sometimes requires an overnight stay. To get on the notification list for alert and trip details, contact the coordinator. In past years, participants saw Ivory Gull and Tufted Duck.

#### **Saturday, January 14, ANNUAL STATE WATERFOWL COUNT** (morning/all day)

Coordinator: Gary Goodness 862-9260 [goodness@nycap.rr.com](mailto:goodness@nycap.rr.com)

On the local segment of this statewide event, participants will count waterfowl and other birds on the Hudson River between North Troy and Hudson Falls.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Hannaford parking lot on the east end of the North Troy-Waterford Bridge (NY Route 4). Call coordinator for exact date.

## FEBRUARY

### **Saturday, February 4, BIRDING BY SNOWSHOE AT FIVE RIVERS** (Albany County; morning)

Coordinator: Ray Perry 475-0291 [raymond.perry@dec.ny.gov](mailto:raymond.perry@dec.ny.gov)

*Joint trip with the Audubon Society of the Capital Region*

Join Ray for a special outing of birding by snowshoe. Meet at the Visitor Center at 9 a.m. for a brief introduction to snowshoeing, then strap on the waffle stompers and go over the meadow and through the woods in search of winter specialties. The program is geared for the birding/snowshoeing novice and is open to the public, but space is limited. The snowshoes are provided through the Friends of Five Rivers. They have changed their policy on snowshoe rentals. There must be at least 8 inches of snow and a \$5 per pair rental charge for non-members of Friends of Five Rivers. Please call Five Rivers at 518-475-0291 by Wednesday, February 4th to register. If there is insufficient snow, we will go on foot. In the event of severe weather, this program may be cancelled.

### **Saturday, February 11, STISSING MOUNTAIN FOR GOLDEN EAGLES**

Coordinator: Bill Lee 374-3426 [bileeje@hotmail.com](mailto:bileeje@hotmail.com)

This Nature Conservancy Preserve of more than 500 acres in the northeast corner of Dutchess County in the town of Pine Plains was dedicated in 1975 as a National Nature Landmark and designated as an Important Birding Area by the National Audubon Society. The high point of the preserve is Stissing Mountain at an elevation of 1400 feet. The mountain has been a wintering site for Golden Eagles for decades. The eagles are frequently visible from the pond's causeway, perching in white pines while waiting rising thermals from the morning sun on the mountain's eastern slope before taking flight and coursing above the mountain and along Stissing Ridge.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Schodack Capital District Transportation Authority's (CDTA) commuter parking lot near the intersection of Route 151 and Route 20. From I-90, take Exit 11E to U.S. Rt. 20; proceed east on Rt. 20 to the 1st traffic light and turn left on Rt. 150. The CDTA park and ride lot is a short distance on the right.

### **Saturday, February 18, DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS, FORT EDWARD GRASSLANDS** Washington County; afternoon through dusk)

Coordinators: Scott Stoner & Denise Hackert-Stoner 785-6760 [scottjstoner@aol.com](mailto:scottjstoner@aol.com)

### **Saturday, February 18, MOHAWK RIVER/COHOES TO CRESCENT** (Albany County; morning)

Coordinator: Bill Lee 374-3426 [bileeje@hotmail.com](mailto:bileeje@hotmail.com)

This area, including Cohoes Falls and Simmons Island, offers a great opportunity to study gulls and waterfowl that winter along the Mohawk River. We will look for Glaucous, Iceland and Lesser Black-backed Gulls often present in small numbers in the winter. This trip will be a good introduction to the many fine vantage points along the Mohawk. Wintering Bald Eagles are likely.

Meet at the NY State Dam Recreation area behind the U-Haul Rental in Cohoes at 8:30 a.m. From 787 going north, turn right onto Route 470 (Ontario Street) in Cohoes. Then turn left onto Clark Ave and proceed to the end. In case of snow, trip will be held on Sunday, February 25.

### **Saturday, February 25, FORT EDWARD GRASSLANDS** (Washington County; afternoon through dusk)

Coordinators: Scott Stoner & Denise Hackert-Stoner 785-6760 [scottjstoner@aol.com](mailto:scottjstoner@aol.com)

Short-eared Owls are seen most winters in the Fort Edward Grasslands, an Important Bird Area in Washington County. This area is also known for other wintering raptors such as Rough-legged Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, and Northern Harriers. Wintering field birds including Horned Lark, Snow Bunting, and Eastern Bluebird are good

possibilities, while Lapland Longspur and Northern Shrike are less likely. If Snowy Owl has been reported, we will make a special effort to see it.

Snow date: Sunday, February 26

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED; Contact the coordinators no later than Feb, 18, to sign up and get the meeting time and place. Space is limited and carpooling will be necessary.**

*Feathers*

Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club

c/o Five Rivers EEC

Game Farm Road

Delmar, NY 12054