

December 2020
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Feathers

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

NEW YEAR'S LIST BY BOB BUDLIGER

Birders are not listless and it's that time of year again. Many Capital District birders will converge on the Five Rivers Environmental Education Center on January 1 to begin their 2021 list. This marks the 40th venture that features individual and group field trips around the center's grounds. In past years birders enjoyed a convivial compilation over coffee at the end of the morning. In the time of COVID the New Year's Count will look different, but one way or another the counting will happen. **Check Five Rivers website for details on this year's count.**

If you are one who enjoys this event thank Alan Mapes for starting this craziness. He established the bird viewing area in the old building that overlooked a variety of feeders. He also put up a tally board that showed a running list of bird sightings throughout the year. It listed in chronological order the first sighting of the year of each species and identified the observer. This began in the late 1970s. Staff naturalists were not working on January 1st so the year list got started the 2nd or 3rd. The birding public was invited to participate and it soon became *de rigueur* to get your name on the board as the first observer of a species for the year.

In 1980 I started at 6 AM on the first with Eastern Screech Owl in the woodlot near the parking lot and Great Horned Owl in the Vlomankill Trail area. I drew up my list, let myself in the building (I was Alan's supervisor), and left my list on Alan's desk.

The next year, the staff couldn't let the "boss" beat them to the punch so they organized their own team, and, they invited the public to share the fun. Not long into this becoming an annual event Five Rivers partnered with the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club to co-sponsor the **Five Rivers New Year's List**, an enduring program to this day.

While there are scheduled groups that go out at specific times led by staff and bird clubbers, individuals also go out earlier if they wish. The compilation at mid-morning is the official start. Species counts over the years are typically in the mid-30s. This is certainly influenced by weather which in turn impacts birder effort. It is not unusual to have 30 or so birders out beginning their annual lists.

And on it goes. Good birding.

Inside This Issue...

New Year's List.....	114
President's Corner.....	115
HMBC Birding Guide.....	116
Upcoming Field Trips.....	117
Writer's Page.....	118
On Nature.....	119
HMBC Annual Meeting and Virtual Social Notice.....	122
Upcoming HMBC Programs.....	123

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

There is no President's Corner column 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

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:

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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 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

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

COVID-19 Response Update, September 25, 2020: The HMBC Board has decided to cancel all club field trips until further notice. One possible exception to this may be the 2020 Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs). Guidance from the National Audubon Society indicates that the decision whether or not to hold each count is up to the individual count compilers, and NAS recommends waiting until after November 15th to make that decision based on the pandemic conditions at that time. Announcement of the status of the three HMBC CBCs will be made after that date. HMBC virtual programs will continue via Zoom until further notice. We will continue to monitor New York State Executive Orders and guidance related to social-distancing requirements. As the details of orders and guidance are revised, we will re-evaluate whether or not to hold subsequent events. Please check hmbc.net frequently for any updates.

A note about 2020 Christmas Bird Counts: check wwwHMBC.net for updates on this year's CBC's. Plans are still being made.

WRITERS' PAGE

Blessed Birds

Written by: Marilyn Hamecher 4/23/20

Betty Barred Owl rolls her little cotton puffs around in her nest.
Over half way through their confinement, in one twiggy place.
Excited and ready to take their first flight into the open sky.
They are not concerned about wearing a mask or a virus.

Ruby Red-tailed Hawk is patiently waiting for her eggs to pop.
She knows how long it takes them to hatch and what it means.
They will be ravenous when they pop open and she'll be ready.
No chink in their armor, they're not worried about Covid-19.

Alma Osprey waits for her little bobble heads to get comfy.
She waits for Dad to arrive with their first breakfast feeding.
Mr. Osprey will provide all the food they will need or want.
Close quarters but no social distancing in Alma Osprey's nest.

Bonnie Blue Jay is busy gathering food from hidden places.
She stashed it away knowing she would need it this Spring.
Her chicks are nearly ready to enter an unknown new world.
Unaware of a deadly Virus plaguing the humans on Earth.
It's Spring, what Virus?

ON NATURE

“Daring to Dream of our Southwestern ‘Home’” by Scott Stoner

We miss Tucson and the lovely Sonoran desert that surrounds it. Not only is it near and dear to us, but it was also our last major trip before the world changed last winter. Out there last January to celebrate our Anniversary, and not yet fully aware of the impending plague, we extended our stay at a desert resort to avoid regrets, just in case something bad happened...Little did we know how prophetic that would be.

From morning walks at Sabino Canyon to amazing sunsets over Saguaro National Park, it is a place that we love! Scenic beauty, warm desert air, great vistas, and a variety of unique birds photograph make every day a joy.



Desert birds greet us each morning: Verdins, Black-throated Sparrows, Gila Woodpeckers, and Lesser Goldfinches are just outside of our room.



ON NATURE *(CONTINUED)*

Lovely Costa's Hummingbirds, with their extensive iridescent purple gorget, actively feed at the flowers next to the parking lot, coming and going from perches nearby.



Nearby desert parks such as Sabino Canyon welcome us with Phainopeplas and Roadrunners, just feet from our car!



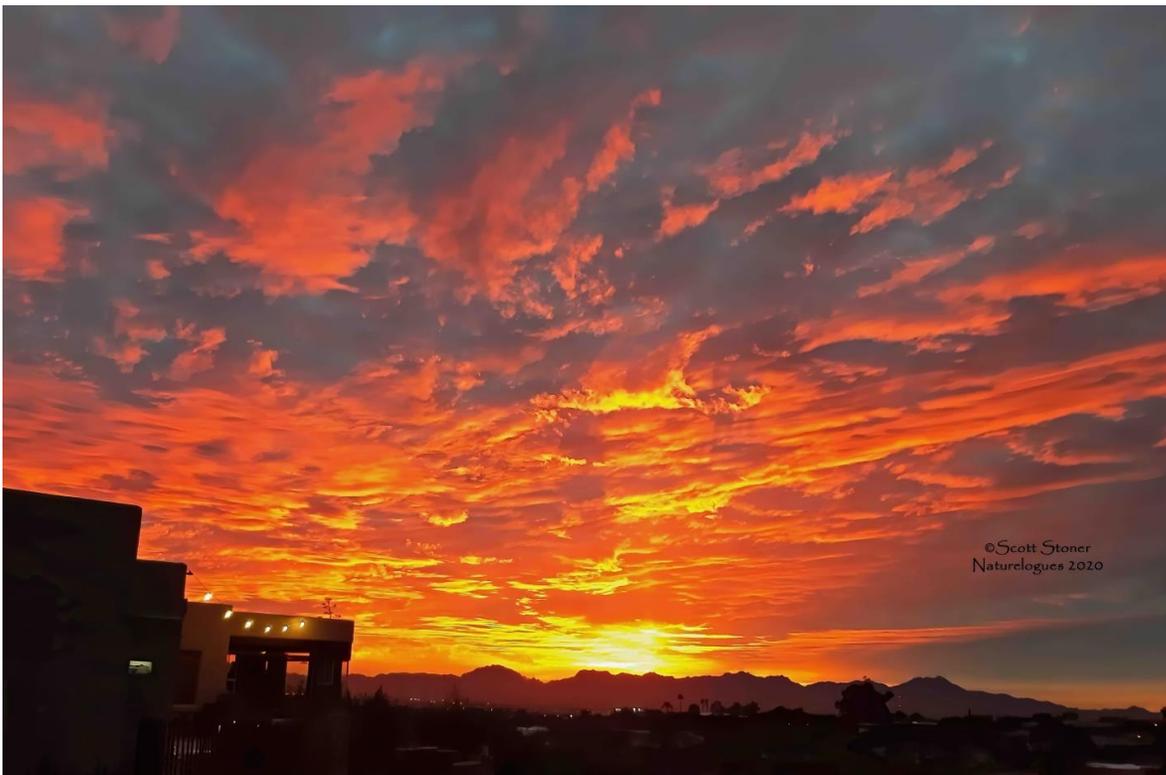
ON NATURE *(CONTINUED)*

The sensory beauty of the desert is not just visual. One of wonderfully familiar sounds is the ever-present chortling of the Cactus Wren.



Their sounds, the desert scenery, and even the smell of the creosote bush after a rain, all collectively signal that we are home in the desert.

Optimistic about returning to normalcy, one of the first places we will travel is back to the desert, back to Tucson, back to our southwestern "home."



Notice of Annual Business Meeting and Virtual Social Monday, December 7, 2020 via Zoom Meeting

Agenda:

- **Virtual Social Get-together -- 6:00 - 6:30PM**
- **Annual Business Meeting including Elections -- 6:30 - 7:15PM**

Hello HMBC Members:

On Monday, December 7th, 2020 at 6:30PM EST, the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club's postponed 2020 Annual Meeting of members will be held remotely via an online Zoom meeting. The 2020 Annual Meeting was originally scheduled for April 13, 2020, but was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Per the HMBC bylaws, the business meeting agenda will include: reports of the Board of Directors, Treasurer, and committee chairs; election of Officers and at-large Board members; and election of new Club members. Under the Bylaws, the Officers and Board members whose terms were completed on March 31, 2020 continued to serve in their respective positions as there were no "duly qualified" successors due to the postponement of the Annual Meeting. The purpose of the election in December is to fill these positions for the remainder of the 2020 - 2021 fiscal year.

The business meeting will be preceded at 6:00PM by an online social period in lieu of our usual December Holiday Party. Following the business meeting, the December program meeting will be held via a separate Zoom meeting. The December program topic is: Distressed Wildlife with Wildlife Rehabilitator Kitty Rusch.

Follow the instructions in the Zoom meeting invite below to join the social period (6:00 - 6:30) and/or the Annual Meeting (6:30 - 7:15). A separate Zoom meeting invite will be sent out for the program meeting. Please note that a **passcode** is required to join this meeting (included in the meeting invite below), and that the meeting is limited to HMBC members only. Please do not share this meeting invite with others.

NOTE: The first time you use Zoom on a device, you will be prompted to download the Zoom app when you click on the meeting link below. Follow the prompts to download the app and then launch the meeting using the meeting ID from the invite. (The app is recommended, but if you prefer, there is also an option when you open the link below to join the meeting via a web browser window, but with limited capabilities.) Audio connections can be through the app on your device or through a separate dial-in phone number given below.

Meeting details:

Topic: HMBC Annual Business Meeting

Time: Dec 7, 2020 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) (social period); 6:30 PM Eastern Time (business meeting)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82739950013>

Meeting ID: 827 3995 0013

Passcode: 414421

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,82739950013# US (New York)

+13126266799,,82739950013# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 827 3995 0013

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82739950013>

- Gregg Recer, Membership Chair
- gregg.recer@gmail.com

Upcoming HMBC Programs

When: December 7, 2020, Check Club website for time, www.hmhc.net

Location: Virtual presentation on Zoom

Speaker: Kitty Rusch

Topic: Distressed Wildlife

Summary: This program is presented by licensed wildlife rehabilitator and environmental educator Kitty Rusch. Learn about the steps to take if you find an orphan baby rabbit, a fledgling bird or a snapping turtle in the middle of the road and the reasons why these steps are so important in the ultimate reintroduction the animal back into the wild. We will also discuss personal experiences of heartbreaking failures and uplifting success including the antics of messy Marvin the opossum in the basement.

If you are interested in becoming a wildlife rehabilitator, want to hear stories of wild animal rescue or just want to save that baby bird that fell out of the nest, please join us.

An email will be sent and posted to HM Birds in advance of the program date with the link to view the presentation via Zoom.

When: January 4, 2021, 6:30-8:00PM

Location: via Zoom – watch for email with link to connect

Speaker: Bernie and Chris Grossman

Topic: A Return to Japan: Birding in the Spring

Summary: Several years ago we traveled to Japan in winter to bird the residents and wintering migrants. While Japan's northern areas were suffering a difficult season, we experienced milder conditions in the south where even some fruit trees were blooming. We saw many of Japan's winter residents including several species of crane. Because of the snow and cold, the trip to Hokkaido required some changes in schedule and the missing of a few sought after species.

The present talk covers last year's spring trip with the goal of seeing returning migrants and the unusual endemic birds and mammals of the Ryukyu Islands to the south. Mt. Fuji, a national landmark, is surrounded by extensive forests and development. We sought migrating thrushes as well as summer residents. An overnight ferry trip took us to Miyaki-Jima, a small volcanic island south of Tokyo, for a 6 hour stay where we saw endemics and migrant Old World Warblers. We then flew to Amani and Okinawa Islands in the Ryukyus. Both are sub-tropical and the home of unique endemic birds and mammals. The final part of this tour returned to Hokkaido in much nicer weather. Here we were thrilled to see a Blakiston's Fish Owl, the world's largest, that had been missed the first time. Winter residents like the Steller's Sea Eagle were gone, but we found many lovely summer residents and migrants.

Chris and Bernie Grossman lived in NY's Capital District for 42 years before moving to Tallahassee 3.5 years ago. During their time in the Capital District, they were active birders, and they held several leadership positions within HMBC. Bernie has given several talks concerning their worldwide birding travels to the Club.

Upcoming HMBC Programs *(continued)*

When: Feb 1, 2021, 6:30-8:00

Location: Via Zoom – watch for email with link to connect

Speaker: gregg recer

Topic: Birding the West Indies



Puerto Rican Tody, by Gregg Recer

Summary: The West Indies comprises hundreds of islands spread throughout the greater Caribbean region. The whole area is an avian endemism hot-spot just a short plane ride from the US east coast. Many of the islands offer the opportunity to combine a relaxing tropical vacation with exciting birding. This travelogue program will be a broad composite overview from several trips to the region.

Gregg Recer is a former HMBC president. He and his wife, Cathy Graichen, have been HMBC members for 30+ years and over that time have become avid world birders.

When: March 1, 2021, 6:30-8:00

Where: Via Zoom – watch for email with link to connect

Speaker: Chris Benesh of Field Guides

Topic: Workshop on flycatcher identification (More info to follow)

Feathers

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c/o Five Rivers EEC

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