

February 2023  
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# Feathers

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

## Costa Rica Birding by Pat Rodriguez and Rob Colborn

My husband and I went to Costa Rica from 1/14-21 to bird with our friends Dave and Bonnie Liebers. We went to the Carara National Park in Tarcoles and saw the scarlet macaw, orange-collared manakin and toucans. From there, we went to Quepos and saw the scarlet macaw eating wild avocados outside of our balcony. We then traveled over a mountain on an unpaved road, due to a navigation error by the driver (me) to our next destination, Rancho Naturalista. We had an excellent guide there, Mercedes Alpizar, who was very knowledgeable and who spoke very good English. She took us to a local stream where we saw three sunbitterns: two males fighting over the female. She also took us to the Turrialba volcano, where we were lucky enough to see the resplendent quetzal, both female and male. We saw many hummingbirds at Rancho's feeders, including white necked jacobin and green breasted mango and many other birds, including the noisy oropendola. We would highly recommend Rancho Naturalista for birding and more information can be found at [www.ranchnaturalista.com](http://www.ranchnaturalista.com).



Male and Female Resplendent Quetzels

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy New Year from the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club!

Though we're just a month into the new year, 2023 is already starting to look like more of a return to the way things used to be than even 2022 had been. We intentionally got off to a slow start with field trips last year due to lingering public health concerns but as I write, we already have two outings under our belt in 2023 – the traditional New Year's Day Count at Five Rivers and an excursion to the Washington County Grasslands – with more to come before the first warblers arrive this spring (including a second Grasslands trip in the works for February and an out-of-state trip to Cape Ann and Newburyport. We're also excited to announce that the club's annual meeting will return to the Century House in Latham this year for the first time since 2019, complete with a buffet dinner and a presentation by Chad Witko of the National Audubon Society. The date is Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, so please mark your calendars!

As things get back to normal, there's always plenty of work to do at HMBC. We have a great team of volunteers, but we could always use more! If you're interested in helping out, we are looking to fill a single two-year-term board vacancy this coming April election. Additionally, we're also looking for chairs to serve on the following club committees: audit, conservation, outreach, social, and youth activities. If you're interested in finding out more about these positions, or helping in anyway, please email me at [president@hmbc.net](mailto:president@hmbc.net).

Good birding in 2023!

Tristan Lowery  
President, Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club  
[president@hmbc.net](mailto:president@hmbc.net)

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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

12211

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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, February 11, 2023, 2-6PM**

**NOTE: DATE IS APPROXIMATE - ACTUAL DATE TBA**

**Location: Mid-February: WASHINGTON COUNTY GRASSLANDS WMA (Washington County; afternoon)**

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

With almost 500 acres of protected fields and meadows, the Washington County Grasslands WMA is a winter treasure. We will meet in the early afternoon and search for Snow Buntings, Horned Larks, Rough-legged Hawks and other diurnal species. Snowy Owl is always a possibility in an irruption year. As the afternoon wears on, we can hope to see the changeover from day to night shift, as Short-eared Owls displace Northern Harriers from their hunting grounds.

The exact date of this trip will depend upon weather conditions, snow depth, etc.

Because we will be birding from the road, it will be necessary to share vehicles and to limit the number of participants to 16. A maximum of five vehicles would be best. Contact the coordinator for reservations, and other information.

Meet at 2:00 p.m. at the parking lot on Blackhouse Road.

**Sunday, February 26, 2023, 6PM**

**DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS, CAPE ANN & NEWBURYPORT/PLUM ISLAND (out-of-area weekend)**

**See trip description March 17-19**

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

**Saturday, March 11, 2023, 8AM**

**Location: VOSBURGH SWAMP WMA (Greene County; morning) (joint trip with Alan DeVoe Bird Club)**

**Coordinator: Alan Mapes 518-817-1512 [alanmapes@gmail.com](mailto:alanmapes@gmail.com)**

On this morning trip, we will hike to the marsh for waterfowl and migrant land birds. We will also check the Hudson River for waterfowl and Bald Eagles.

Meet at 8:00AM at the Four-mile Point Preserve parking lot on Four Mile Point Road. From Mansion Street in the village of Cocksackie, go south on State Route 385 (Washington Ave.), approximately 2.5 miles to a left turn onto Four Mile Point Road. Proceed to the bottom on the hill – the parking area is straight ahead where the road takes a 90 degree bend to the right.

**Friday, March 17, 2023- Sunday, March 19, 2023**

**Location: CAPE ANN & NEWBURYPORT/PLUM ISLAND MA (out-of-area, multi-day trip)**

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

The Cape Ann and the Newburyport/Plum Island, MA, areas are prime winter birding locations. We expect to divide our time between Cape Ann's shoreline and Newburyport/Plum Island looking for white-winged gulls, wintering sea ducks such as Harlequins, scoters, eiders and other winter visitors like Purple Sandpipers, loons, grebes, alcids, field birds, Snowy Owl, etc. Participants will have Friday to travel at their leisure so that we can begin birding as a group first thing Saturday morning. Limit 8 participants. By Club policy, this overnight trip is for members, with non-members accommodated if room is available and with the leader's approval.

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED. Contact Gregg Recer by February 26th to reserve a spot and for hotel reservation information.**

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS (CONTINUED)

**Tuesday, March 28, 2023, 6PM**

**DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS, WOODCOCK WATCHING WITH SUNY COBLESKILL**

See trip description below.

**Coordinators: Scott Stoner & Denise Hackert-Stoner [scottjstoner@aol.com](mailto:scottjstoner@aol.com) 518-785-6760**

**APPROXIMATE DATE -- WOODCOCK WATCHING WITH SUNY COBLESKILL**

**This will take place sometime in the first half of April; contact coordinators Scott Stoner & Denise Hackert-Stoner [scottjstoner@aol.com](mailto:scottjstoner@aol.com) 518-785-6760 by March 28 to sign up to be notified of the exact date.**

**Field leader: Dr Roger Masse of SUNY Cobleskill**

Join Dr Roger J Masse and students in the Wildlife Management program at SUNY Cobleskill for an evening of woodcock watching in Cobleskill. During this crepuscular outing, participants can expect to hear peenting male Woodcock and maybe even see courtship flights depending on lighting conditions. In addition, Dr Masse and his students will place mist nets around select singing grounds in hope of catching and banding these peculiar birds. You know what they say... a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush! Although captures can never be guaranteed, this outing may provide your best opportunity to see a Woodcock up close and personal. Woodcock capture is weather-dependent so scheduling will be flexible. Evenings with precipitation and high winds are avoided. Participants will meet at the site about 1.5 hours before sunset and banding normally concludes around 9:00p.m. The potential window for capture dates is 1-16 April 2023.

**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.

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS (CONTINUED)

**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).

**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.

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS (CONTINUED)

**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 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!

**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.

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS (CONTINUED)

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.

### **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.



## WRITERS PAGE



### “Woody Facts Poem”

By: Marilyn Hamecher 1-21-23

Woodpeckers are not hearing impaired and they can climb-up any tree.  
 They don't damage healthy trees; they prefer the dead ones to a degree.  
 Dying trees are a haven for insects making it easier to drill into a snag.  
 A snag, a dying tree where insects feast on rotting wood, makes you gag.

They also love healthy trees because they house wood boring insects.  
 Prying off the outer layers of bark, exposing tiny bugs they can ingest.  
 These noisy Drummers are found everywhere in the forest and woodlands.  
 Northern Flickers stay at woodland edges, while the Downy loves marshlands.

Their head muscles are so strong, allowing them to drill up to 20x a second, WOW!  
 While extra muscles in their heads act as helmet's protecting their brains, somehow?  
 Drilling is done to find food and make holes for nesting and roosting in Spring and Fall.  
 The Drumming is done in the Spring to attract a mate and protect their space, that's all.

Tree holes depend on the size of the Woody making the noise and doing the drumming.  
 The cavities made by the Pileated range from 10 to 24 inches deep, just by the drilling.  
 The bigger the hole, the bigger the Woody bird that is redesigning the tree and it's bark.  
 Woody's make their own nest spots to hold up to 3-6 eggs; it's how they make their mark.

They've adapted to clinging to trees, forming a tripod, their stiff tail feathers act as a brace.  
 They easily stabilized themselves as they hop from tree to tree, with perfect grace.  
 Their long tongues, a third of their body length, reach deep into crevices searching for bugs.  
 When retracted, it curls back into the bird's skull, ready and waiting to grab the next slug.

There are many more remarkable Woodpecker facts from their heads to their four toes.  
 The first and fourth toes face backward, the second and third facing forward and so it goes.  
 In most species males and females look similar but you can tell them apart by accents of red.  
 Woodpeckers have a varied diet of insects, seeds, nuts, acorns and spiders, so it's been said.

## ON NATURE

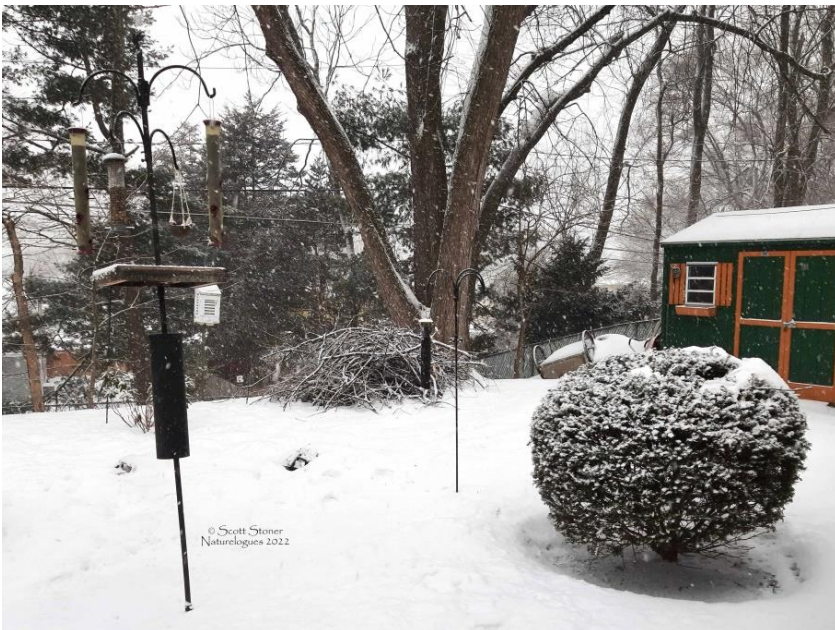
### Point of View

Denise Hackert-Stoner

This is not a bad place we have here. The highway that runs through all the treetops gives us access to everything we need. Our land is segmented into sections by flat metal barriers. Each section is dominated by an enormous box topped by steeply-sloped hills. We are not concerned with the boxes, and we find everything we need behind this one, on our land which we call "The Land Where Seeds Grow."



Our domain lies under the trees and the highway connecting the trees. This is where we make our living. On this, our land, we have all we need.



## ON NATURE *(CONTINUED)*

Even in the cold of winter, we have our branches, which move together at this time in such a way that we can rest among them in the company of birds, finding respite from the wind.



We also use our round tree, thick with branches that are always green, and from which often, especially on very snowy days, seeds grow.



## ON NATURE *(CONTINUED)*

There are plenty of leaves here on our land, which we use to build our dreys. Here we share space with one another, especially at night. The heat from our bodies nestled together inside our leafy dreys keep us warm even on the bitterest winter nights.



Some of our large trees have holes leading to nice living areas, and we sometimes use these as well. We like to have choices, and we like to be able to move from one home to another, especially when we have babies, because we never know when a hawk might be nearby, watching and waiting.



## ON NATURE *(CONTINUED)*

Seeds grow from the many trees here, and these are good food.



Even in the cold, snowy time seeds grow on this wonderful land. We have nourishment from these seeds even in the coldest weather. The seeds are plentiful, and they grow anew every day or two.



## ON NATURE *(CONTINUED)*

Some of the seeds are challenging to get to, even though we can see them in the see-through branches that hang downward from metal trees. The birds eat these seeds all the time. But it is difficult for us because the road to these branches is blocked, and we cannot fly around the barriers. We work and work to get at the seeds in the clear branches, sometimes jumping long distances from nearby trees, and sometimes climbing onto the steep slope on top of the enormous box that dominates our land. Many times we miss the mark and fail, missing our chance to get at the seed in the clear, downward-facing branches. But sometimes we succeed. Sometimes we need to modify these clear branches to get at the seeds, but it is worth the work, because the seeds that grow inside these branches are very nourishing.



Every now and then fruit appears on our land. The fruit is nourishing in itself, and it also contains seeds which sustain us. We never know when the fruit will appear, but we celebrate when it does.



## ON NATURE (CONTINUED)

There is always fresh water to drink on our land, and we are very happy about this. Even when the rain doesn't come, our small pond never dries up. Even in winter, when everything else freezes, we join the birds and enjoy the water from our pond.



In the summer there is a small pond with sweet water that hangs on one of the metal trees that hold the clear branches with seeds. This pond has a top on it, and like all the seeds hanging down from the metal trees it is very hard for us to get to. We often see tiny birds drink from this pond even as they fly. For us it is much more difficult, but sometimes one of us is able to access this pond and taste its sweet water. Once we even took this pond to a better location, where we could enjoy its water any time we wanted it. But very soon the small pond returned to its place hanging from the metal tree.



## ON NATURE *(CONTINUED)*

Even with its challenges, our land is good. It gives us food, water, and shelter, all the time, in any weather. We enjoy its plenty and share it with others who also make their homes here; the birds, the chipmunks, the rabbits, opossums, and skunks. We have also seen larger creatures. These creatures lack fur, and they walk on only two legs. We see them through the clear openings in the enormous box that dominates our land. We see them moving around inside the box. Many times we see them on our land, but they don't bother us or take away our supplies. In fact we notice that soon after they have passed through our land the seeds seem to grow very quickly, regardless of the weather. Otherwise we don't know much about these large creatures, but they seem to be quite harmless.





## Field Trip Reports

### **New Year's Day Bird Count, Five Rivers**

**January 1, 2023**

**Coordinator: Cynthia Edwards**

The 40th Annual New Year's Day Bird Count at Five Rivers EEC was well attended with about 20 enthusiastic participants. The weather was relatively mild with little snow on the ground but the birds were not abundant. Teams walked for two hours scouring the grounds and came up with a total of 25 species including a Northern Harrier, Eastern Phoebe, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, and American Tree Sparrow. Thanks to all who attended, especially Naomi Lloyd for leading a group and to Five Rivers Director Gina Jack for the New Year's Day free "gifts".

### **Washington County Grasslands**

**Sunday, January 21, 2023**

**Coordinator: Naomi Lloyd**

Nine birders started off the trip at the WashCo Grasslands trailhead on Black House Rd with a highlight bird - a Barred Owl that's been calling the nearby barn home this winter. We had brush-obscured views at the time (about 2:00pm) and other viewers had great looks of it out in the open later in the day. Heading west from there, we saw our first American Kestrel and Northern Harriers of the day. A pair of adult Bald Eagles perched in a tree along the Hudson.

With only a dusting of snow on the ground, very few field birds were visible, with only a single flyover flock of Horned Larks near a large manure spread. As we cruised around we picked up more Harriers and plenty of Red-tailed Hawks, and a single distant Rough-legged Hawk. As it grew later, we returned to the field between Black House and Plum Road where our attention was caught by a male Harrier flying of. When we stopped to watch him, we saw the moth-like flight and yipping call of a Short-eared Owl harrassing another Harrier perched in a tree. Eventually we watched five Harriers coursing low over the field and three Short-ears flying higher above them.

Along Plum Road near the Theater we saw two more Short-ears beginning their hunt while a (probable) Rough-leg perched above. On our way back to the parking lot one of the owls flew off a power pole over us.

Thanks to all who came out on a fairly pleasant January day. If there is interest, the trip will be repeated in mid-February when with luck we can pick up more of our winter favorites.

eBird trip report:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/102975>

Important note - the homeowners by the Grasslands parking lot do not like trespassers. Stay on the trail, or expect to be yelled at!

## HMBC Annual Dinner 2023

**Monday April 3, 2023**

**Century House, Latham**

**Program: Audubon's Migratory Bird Initiative**

**Speaker: Chad Witko, Senior Coordinator, Avian Biology, National Audubon Society**

The mission of the Migratory Bird Initiative is to secure the future of migratory birds in the Western Hemisphere by reducing direct threats and protecting key places across the Americas in coordination with science, conservation and policy partners.

The Initiative brings together the latest spatial information on species distributions and movements across their annual cycles to identify priority areas for 458 species of migratory birds that regularly occur in the United States and Canada. We will use this information to define where and how to focus Audubon's conservation investments in order to protect, restore and manage key habitat and also mitigate threats along full migratory pathways for these species.

Audubon expects to achieve these goals by 1) consolidating and elevating the best-available migration science, filling research gaps and identifying real-time threats throughout annual cycle; 2) strengthening connections and cooperation among key stakeholders such as government agencies, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions and the Audubon network, and 3) informing policy advocacy at the local, state and federal level to drive science-based conservation.

Migratory birds face threats during all stages of the annual cycle, and these threats are accelerating. Fortunately, scientific data, particularly during migration, are accumulating; however, we need to act swiftly and collectively to protect birds and the places they need before the opportunities to do so disappear. Partnerships will be central to the success of the Migratory Bird Initiative, and Audubon looks forward to building and strengthening relationships with other key research and conservation organizations.

As Senior Coordinator, Chad Witko communicates about the Migratory Bird Initiative and other science programs within Audubon, working with data and knowledge holders across the Western Hemisphere to build relationships and acquire migratory bird datasets. Through this work, he is a principal contributor to the development of the [Bird Migration Explorer](#).

As an expert birder and ornithologist, Chad provides a lifetime of birding knowledge and nearly twenty years of field experience to the National Science Division at Audubon.

Before joining Audubon in 2019, Chad worked on various bird research, conservation, and education projects across the United States. These include developing avian conservation strategies linked to forestry efforts in New Hampshire, serving as an eBird state reviewer, mist-netting and banding migratory passerines in California, and educating visitors to Eastern Egg Rock about seabird restoration efforts for Project Puffin.

Chad holds a BS in Environmental and Forest Biology from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and an MS in Conservation Biology and a Certificate in Applied Spatial Analysis for GIS from Antioch University New England. He currently resides in Vermont with his partner and daughter.

## Upcoming HMBC Programs

**Date and Time:** Monday, February 6, 2023, 6:30pm

**Location:** Hybrid In-person and Zoom; Five Rivers EEC, Delmar, NY

**Topic:** What's hatching in NY?

**Speaker:** Julie Hart

The New York Breeding Bird Atlas is conducted every 20 years and aims to document the distribution of all breeding birds statewide. This is the third time an Atlas has been undertaken in NY, which will help document changes over the past 40 years. This monumental effort is achieved with the help of a massive team of community scientists. Over 3000 birders have already contributed to the current Atlas by submitting observation of breeding birds to the project! We've completed three years of the five year survey. Come find out what's been recorded so far, what remains to be done, and how you can help. Every observation helps conserve the birds of New York State.

Julie started birding while working as a bird conservation intern in Ithaca. She traveled for several years doing field work around the globe, then spent several years chasing high elevation birds around the Northeast and Hispaniola as the coordinator for Mountain Birdwatch, before she went on to earn her Master's degree studying the impacts of climate change on Cassia Crossbill in southern Idaho. After spending several years abroad, she is now the Project Coordinator for the third Breeding Bird Atlas in NY. Atlasing is her favorite type of birding.

**Date and Time:** Monday, March 6, 2023, 6:30PM

**Location:** Zoom Only

**Topic:** Birding New Mexico

**Speaker:** Bernie Grossman

**Date and Time:** Monday, April 3, 2022, 6-9pm

**Location:** Century House, Latham, NY

**Topic:** HMBC Annual Dinner (Please see separate announcement above)

**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

## Christmas Bird Count Reports

### Schenectady Christmas Bird Count – December 17, 2022, Larry Alden, Compiler

Twenty-four participants in 11 field parties took part in the 94th running of the Schenectady Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 17. The Schenectady CBC has been held continuously each year since 1929.

Weather in the count circle on count day was cloudy, trending to partly cloudy. Temperatures ranged from a morning low around freezing to an afternoon high of 40°F. Rivers and streams were completely open and flowing at normal levels, while still water was mostly frozen over. Snow depths ranged from 4-8 inches. The Albany Airport recorded an average wind speed of 10.1 mph from the west, with a maximum gust of 30 mph, but there were periods with little wind, especially in the afternoon. Field parties covered the 15-mile diameter count circle between the hours of 5:40 a.m. and 5:20 p.m., with some additional evening owling through 7:00 p.m.

A mild late fall transitioned to more typical winter weather in December. In the week preceding count day, daytime highs were in the 30s and nighttime lows were in the 20s and upper teens, resulting in ponds and lakes icing over. On the Sunday before count day, we had our first snow of the season that didn't melt right away, with some six inches or so. By later in the week, much of that snow was still on the ground. The day before the count, an all-day snowstorm dropped a blanket of heavy, wet snow across the circle, with higher elevations getting more than lower spots.

Although the edge of the Helderberg Escarpment in Thacher Park is situated within the count circle (reaching nearly 1500 feet in elevation), most of the count circle accessible by roads lies below 1000 feet, with the majority of that below 400 feet.

Field parties located 57 species. This is almost four species under the average of the previous 10 years of 60.6 species. The count maximum is 70 species from the count held in December 2007. An additional species was reported from within the count circle on count week. A count week species is one that was found in the count circle in the three days on each side of count day but not on count day.

A new species for the count composite, Red-throated Loon, was found this year, raising the composite total to 144 species, with three additional species found only during count week.

The following seven species were notable due to them having been found on 20 or fewer counts: Snow Goose (14<sup>th</sup> occurrence), Ring-necked Duck (4<sup>th</sup>), Red-throated Loon (1<sup>st</sup>), Common Loon (3<sup>rd</sup>), Black Vulture (9<sup>th</sup>), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (18<sup>th</sup>), and Merlin (12<sup>th</sup>). Of these species, Black Vulture and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker have become more common in the last few decades but haven't yet reached the 20-occurrence threshold.

For comparative purposes, the following eight species have been found on 40 or more counts, but were not found on this one: Ruffed Grouse (found on 71 of 94 counts), Ring-necked Pheasant (47 counts), Northern Harrier (57), Rough-legged Hawk (51), Northern Shrike (42), Horned Lark (42), Golden-crowned Kinglet (71), and Purple Finch (52). With the exception of Golden-crowned Kinglet, this list is exactly the same as last year. Horned Lark, last reported in 2013, was the count week bird.

There were record high counts for the following five species: Ring-necked Duck (new record 2, old record 1), Red-throated Loon (new to count), Common Loon (new 2, old 1), Merlin (new 4, old 3), and Common Raven (new 12, old 7).

Waterfowl variety and numbers were low despite ample open water. Ring-necked Duck was last found in 2014 and two loon species on the Mohawk River were exceptional.

Raptor diversity was on the low side, with no Northern Harrier (found in 20 of the last 25 years) for the second year in a row.

It was a bit windy in the pre-dawn hours, but some owls still turned up, with three groups each reporting Eastern Screech-Owl and Great Horned Owl. There were no reports of Barred Owl, which were last counted in 2016.

The only species found which might be described as “half-hardy” were Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Carolina Wren. Both of these species are probably on the hardier side of the half-hardies. As with last year, so-called “winter finches” (crossbills, siskins, redpolls, grosbeaks, and Purple Finch) were only represented by a handful of Red-breasted Nuthatches.

Sparrow numbers were low, especially after a snowstorm that should have brought them out to road edges in search of seeds. There were only four sparrow species reported, and American Tree Sparrows were missed in three sectors and found only in single digits in the others. Red-winged Blackbirds, albeit mostly in low single digits, were found in six sectors and Brown-headed Cowbirds in two.

The total of 7,498 individuals was quite a bit lower than the average of the 20 years prior to this one (10,994).

My overall impression of this count was that bird numbers were down (as evidenced by the low total number of both individuals and species). Perhaps this was due to an overall lack of food resources, which, in turn, could be attributed to our near-drought conditions for much of the summer. Let’s hope things change next year.

The table accompanying this article shows each field party’s sightings and effort. The last column shows how many times a species has been found on the last 25 counts, which can highlight the relative rarity of a particular species.

I want to thank everyone who took part in this count this year.

Larry Alden – Compiler

## 123rd CBC – 94th Schenectady Count - December 17, 2022

	A	B	C	D	D1	D2	E	F	G	H	I/J	Total	Last 25
Snow Goose											14	14	10
Canada Goose	112	2	152	60				40	34	70	17	487	25
Mallard	87	132	47	1			18	35	10	34	19	383	25
American Black Duck	12											12	25
Ring-necked Duck										2		2	4
Common Merganser	49	11		5				4	40	3	9	121	25
Wild Turkey			2	15			38			16		71	23
Rock Pigeon	86	18	145	240			97	22	243	40	56	947	25
Mourning Dove	46	4	69	82	11	24	46	79	32	6	14	413	25
Ring-billed Gull	21	5	3				11	5	6	4	12	67	24
Herring Gull	10		1				3				1	15	24
Great Black-backed Gull	5	3									1	9	21
Red-throated Loon									1			1	1
Common Loon	1	2										2	2
Great Blue Heron	3									1	1	5	24
Black Vulture				60		67		9				76	9
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1						1				3	25
Cooper's Hawk	1		1	1		1		1		1	1	7	25
Bald Eagle	5			3				4	2	3		15	20
Red-tailed Hawk	10	2	8	16		1	12	8	7	4	6	74	25
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	1		1								3	23
Great Horned Owl		1	1	2								4	23
Belted Kingfisher				1		1			1			3	23
Red-bellied Woodpecker	7	5	3	10	1	8	7	11	3	6	3	64	25
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker							1		1			2	14
Downy Woodpecker	9	5	7	6	5	5	10	23	5	8	12	95	25
Hairy Woodpecker	2	2		2		2	5	6	1	2	2	24	25
Northern Flicker	2		1	1			2	6	1		1	14	25
Pileated Woodpecker	1	3		2		1	1	1	1			10	25
American Kestrel								1				1	19
Merlin	1	1									2	4	12
Blue Jay	20	18	23	40	4	12	40	55	12	18	23	265	25
American Crow	36	25	62	60	10	6	55	39	64	12	96	465	25
Fish Crow	5										2	7	17
Common Raven				5	1	2	1	2	1	1		12	23
Black-capped Chickadee	25	15	19	65	14	28	36	137	31	20	35	425	25
Tufted Titmouse	9	8	5	22	4	10	23	42	7	13	19	162	25
Horned Lark					CW							0	3
Cedar Waxwing								1				1	19
Red-breasted Nuthatch			1	2			5					8	25
White-breasted Nuthatch	4	6	6	9	4	14	11	19	4	13	12	102	25
Brown Creeper							1					1	22
Carolina Wren		2	1	1	1	2	3	2	5	2	1	20	25
Winter Wren											1	1	19
Northern Mockingbird	3		7	4			7	3	2	3		29	25
European Starling	49	19	293	430	33		150	75	147	45	123	1364	25
Eastern Bluebird	3	9	15	28	6	1	3	2	19		3	89	25
American Robin	5	13	4	125	1		34	52	16	17	13	280	25
House Sparrow	31	6	92	30	5	5	55	30	78	43	65	440	25
House Finch	9	7	18	40	1	11	12	4	3	22	10	137	25
American Goldfinch	6	10	2	10	6	3	2	25	8	4	1	77	25
American Tree Sparrow		3	3	4	7	3	2	2	2			26	25
Dark-eyed Junco	5	30	35	50	21	23	28	32	7	25	34	290	25
White-throated Sparrow	3	6		11	3	3	4	6	14	27	2	79	25
Song Sparrow		2	3	1			1		1	3		11	25
Red-winged Blackbird	26	2		1			3		1	1		34	22

Brown-headed Cowbird	20			5								25	16
Northern Cardinal	26	12	12	26	9	10	16	32	10	31	16	200	25
Total Birds	757	391	1041	1477	147	243	743	816	820	500	627	7498	
Total Species	40	35	31	40	20	24	35	36	36	33	34	57	
Count Week Species	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	A	B	C	D	D1	D2	E	F	G	H	I/J	Total	

CW - Denotes species found in the count circle during the count week (3 days on each side of count day) but not on count day. Some species totals have been adjusted for double-counting between several field parties.

Last 25 - Number of occurrences on the last 25 counts.

**Group A:** Bob Yunick, Ted Hicks. 6:55 a.m. – 4:10 p.m. (7.25 hours, 5.0 miles on foot; 1.75 hours, 33.0 miles by car. Also 0.25 hours, 2.5 miles owling.)

**Group B:** Eric Molho, John Hershey. 6:00 a.m. - 3:25 p.m. (2.0 hours, 1.0 mile on foot; 7.0 hours, 23.0 miles by car. Also 0.5 hours, 0.25 miles owling.)

**Group C:** Gregg Recer, Cathy Graichen, Scott Stoner. 8:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., less 0.5 hours not birding. (2.0 hours, 2.4 miles on foot; 5.25 hours, 55.4 miles by car.)

**Group D:** Larry Alden, Cindy and Chris Edwardson. 5:40 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (4.5 hours, 3.25 miles on foot; 5.0 hours, 68.0 miles by car. Also 1.25 hours, 12.7 miles owling.)

**Group D1:** Deb Ferguson, John Loz. 9:58 a.m. – 12:37 p.m.; 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. (2.65 hours, 2.0 miles on foot. Also 1.0 hour, 1.25 miles owling.)

**Group D2:** Paul Novak. 8:00 a.m. – 4:20 p.m. with time off in between (2.5 hours, 4.1 miles on foot. Also 2.0 hours feeder watch)

**Group E:** Naomi Lloyd, Tom Williams, Colleen Williams, Tristan Lowery. 7:24 a.m. – 2:53 p.m., less 0.5 hours not birding. (1.25 hours, 1.6 miles on foot; 5.75 hours, 61.8 miles by car.)

**Group F:** George Steele, Marianne Friers. 7:45 a.m. – 3:45 p.m. (0.5 hour, 0.25 mile on foot; 7.5 hours, 57.5 miles by car.)

**Group G:** Neal Reilly, Dan Leonard. 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (3.0 hours, 3.5 miles on foot; 4.0 hours, 48.5 miles by car.)

**Group H:** Kurt Weiskotten. Kelsey Schumacher. 7:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (2.0 hours, 2.0 miles on foot; 3.5 hours, 21.0 miles by car.)

**Group I/J:** Richard White. 6:19 a.m. – 5:21 p.m. (5.0 hours, 8.3 miles on foot; 4.25 hours, 53.9 miles by car. Also 1.5 hours, 4.25 miles owling.)

Notes: Hours and times rounded to the nearest quarter hour.

### Troy Christmas Bird Count – December 31, 2022 Larry Alden, Compiler

Twenty-four participants in seven field parties took part in the 74th Troy CBC on Saturday, December 31, 2022. This club-sponsored CBC has been held every year since 12/31/1949, and my statistics are based on the counts from then onward. Nearly every count has been held a few days on either side of New Year's Day, so I refer to past counts with a two-year name (e.g., this year's is 2022-23).

The weather on count day was cloudy with a little light rain late in the afternoon in some spots. Pre-dawn temperatures were in the low 50s but abruptly dropped into the mid-40s around sunrise, rising throughout the day to a high of 56°F. There was a light wind at 0-10 mph from the southwest. Conditions were good for owling in the pre-dawn hours. There was no snow cover, and rivers and streams were open and flowing at a normal rate. Lakes and ponds were mostly frozen, although Tomhannock Reservoir had some open water. Field parties covered the 15-mile diameter count circle between the hours of 5:28 a.m. and 5:08 p.m.

The winter season up to count day was mostly normal, and the weather in the week preceding count day continued that trend. Early in the week, daytime temperatures were in the 30s and 40s with nighttime temperatures below freezing. From Thursday through count day, however, temperatures were above freezing, and any remaining snow cover melted. There were no significant rain or snow events in the week prior to count day.

Field parties found 64 species, 1.6 species below the average of the previous ten years. There was one "count week" species (species found in the count circle during the three days on each side of count day but not on count day). The most species found in the history of this count was 74, on the 2005-06 count.

Four Black Vultures seen as a flyover in Schaghticoke were a new species for the count. With locally wintering individuals increasing every year, it was only a matter of time before this species made its appearance on this count. The count composite now stands at 145 species, with an additional four seen only during count week.

There were a new record high counts for five species this year: Bald Eagle (new high 56, old high 33), Red-bellied Woodpecker (74, 68), Tufted Titmouse (176, 167), White-breasted Nuthatch (135, 131), and Carolina Wren (73, 32). It's remarkable to note that both the Carolina Wren and Bald Eagle new record highs doubled or nearly doubled the old record. The new records for Tufted Titmouse and White-breasted Nuthatch are also notable, since both species have been around for quite some time (titmouse since the 1960s and nuthatch since the first counts in the late 40s). There has been a steady upward trend for Red-bellied Woodpeckers since they were first reported on the 1992-93 count.

Six species were found that have been observed on 20 or fewer counts: American Green-winged Teal (16<sup>th</sup> count), Ruddy Duck (8<sup>th</sup>), Horned Grebe (5<sup>th</sup>), Black Vulture (1<sup>st</sup>), Barred Owl (17<sup>th</sup>), and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (19<sup>th</sup>).

Another metric which can highlight a more unusual find is to look at species that have been found on five or fewer of the past 25 counts. Other than the Black Vultures, which were new, two widely separated Horned Grebes were found this year. This is only the second time in the last 25 years that Horned Grebe has been seen on this count. The last time Horned Grebes were counted was in 2007-08.

For additional perspective, the following species have been found on 40 or more counts, but were not found on this one: Ruffed Grouse (54 of the previous 74 counts), Rough-legged Hawk (50), Horned Lark (53), and Cedar Waxwing (51). Looking at species which have been found on 15 or more of the last 25 counts, but not this one, we find Ring-necked Duck (17 of the last 25 counts), Merlin (18 of 25), Horned Lark (16 of 25), and Cedar Waxwing (22 of 25). Cedar Waxwings don't appear to be present in much of the local area this winter, likely due to poor food availability.



Waterfowl diversity was about average for the past ten years, but the species list changes each year. This year's "odd ducks" were Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, and Ruddy Duck. As noted before, two Horned Grebes were great finds, and a Common Loon on Tomhannock Reservoir was reported on count day but by a non-participant. This situation requires that it be reported as a count week species.

Gull numbers just topped 1,000 this year, and a single Iceland Gull was the only white-winged gull reported.

Raptor numbers were about average, with the exception of record numbers of Bald Eagles, particularly along the Mohawk River downstream of Cohoes Falls. Rough-legged Hawk has now been missed on the last five counts. Barred Owl was on the list again after being missed last year.

The six common woodpeckers were reported, and only Merlin was missing from the three local falcons.

American Crow numbers were down from last year. This is probably attributable to recent efforts in Troy to disperse them from their roosting sites, where they were fouling sidewalks and parked cars. Fish Crow numbers were back up into the triple digits. I'm sure that Fish Crows are undercounted, since they can only reliably be separated from American Crow by voice.

No "winter finches" were reported, and there were only two Red-breasted Nuthatches. There were no buntings, larks, or longspurs, and other than a single Swamp Sparrow, no unusual sparrows were found for the second year in a row. As with the Schenectady count, sparrow numbers were low, with American Tree Sparrow missed by three field parties and White-throated Sparrow missed by two!

Blackbirds were represented by only Red-winged Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds.

The total number of individuals, 20,742, is below the ten-year average of 24,086, although that average is probably skewed high by several years where crow numbers were much higher.

The table accompanying this article shows each field party's sightings and effort. The last column shows how many times a species has been found on the last 25 counts. This can highlight the relative rarity of a particular species.

Thanks again to all the participants.

Larry Alden - Compiler

## 123rd CBC – 74th Troy Count – December 31, 2022

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total	25 Years
Snow Goose					1			1	22
Canada Goose	5	474	191	280	881	218	417	2466	25
Mallard	18	134	26	437	93	75	35	818	25
American Black Duck		18		37	5	13	24	97	25
Northern Pintail		1						1	10
Am. Green-winged Teal				1				1	6
Common Goldeneye	28	32	32	23				115	25
Hooded Merganser	14	10	12	4	2			42	25
Common Merganser	32	23	48	119	63	19		304	25
Ruddy Duck			2					2	8
Wild Turkey		2	7		30	8		47	23
Horned Grebe	1				1			2	2
Rock Pigeon	130	159	90	930	31	370	155	1865	25
Mourning Dove	39	39	34	125	122	65	42	466	25
Ring-billed Gull	59	40	13	150	76	144	74	556	25
Herring Gull	1			310	1	2	94	408	25
Iceland Gull				1				1	19
Great Black-backed Gull				33		3	5	41	25
Common Loon	CW							-	5
Great Blue Heron		2		1				3	18
Black Vulture			4					4	1
Northern Harrier		1			1		2	4	17
Sharp-shinned Hawk			1	1		1		3	23
Cooper's Hawk	1	1		2		1	2	7	25
Bald Eagle	2	2	8	31	8	9	4	56	25
Red-tailed Hawk	11	16	14	14	8	12	14	89	25
Eastern Screech-Owl				1			2	3	24
Great Horned Owl		4	1	1			1	7	25
Barred Owl			1					1	11
Belted Kingfisher	1	1	1		1		1	5	23
Red-bellied Woodpecker	12	20	14	4	9	4	11	74	25
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		2		1		1		4	16
Downy Woodpecker	8	16	14	10	9	4	26	87	25
Hairy Woodpecker	8	9	8	6	2		3	36	25
Northern Flicker	2	3	1	1	2	1		10	25
Pileated Woodpecker	4	6	4	1	3			18	25
American Kestrel			1					1	15
Peregrine Falcon				1	1		1	3	18
Blue Jay	35	52	42	9	24	16	28	206	25
American Crow	68	902	223	664	185	200	187	2429	25
Fish Crow		5	3	102	2	10	1	123	22
Common Raven	1		2	3				6	22
Black-capped Chickadee	39	135	63	47	59	44	73	460	25
Tufted Titmouse	24	41	31	14	9	12	45	176	25
Golden-crowned Kinglet		1						1	16
Red-breasted Nuthatch		1					1	2	20
White-breasted Nuthatch	18	33	16	15	18	7	28	135	25
Brown Creeper				2			1	3	25
Carolina Wren	2	13	15	24	4	3	12	73	23
Winter Wren							3	3	12
Northern Mockingbird	4	3	1	5	2		1	16	25
European Starling	548	4358	131	1435	80	624	441	7617	25
Eastern Bluebird	14	13	20	5	11	7	23	93	25
American Robin	12	113	75	2	113	6	142	463	25
House Sparrow	64	59	64	94	11	142	38	472	25
House Finch	23	56	42	5	17	24	21	188	25

American Goldfinch	16	8	11	22	3	4	18	82	25
American Tree Sparrow		9	1	6			1	17	25
Dark-eyed Junco	29	70	43	33	32	15	68	290	25
White-throated Sparrow		4	6	18	3		6	37	25
Song Sparrow	2	3	3	4	2	2	2	18	25
Swamp Sparrow				1				1	11
Red-winged Blackbird				1	2		18	21	14
Brown-headed Cowbird	3						31	34	23
Northern Cardinal	17	23	22	22	10	2	32	128	25
Total Birds	1295	6917	1341	5058	1937	2068	2134	20742	
Total Species	37	45	43	50	41	34	43	64	
Count Week Species	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total	25 Years

CW – Count Week species.

Bald Eagle totals do not match the total reported by each individual party. Numbers were adjusted to account for birds which were likely seen by two or more parties.

**Group A:** Jeremy Kirchman, Matt Schlesinger, Flora Schlesinger, Alison Van Keuren. 7:00 a.m. – 2:45 p.m., less 0.5 hour not birding. (1.5 hours, 1.0 mile on foot; 5.75 hours, 38.0 miles by car.)

**Group B:** Larry Alden, Steve Chorvas, Jackie Bogardus. 5:28 a.m. – 6:45 a.m., 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (3.0 hours, 2.2 miles on foot; 6.0 hours, 61.4 miles by car. Also 1.25 hours, 13.6 miles owling.)

**Group C:** Cassie Davis, Zach Davis, Neal Reilly. 6:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (2.0 hours, 3.1 miles on foot; 7.5 hours, 73.5 miles by car. Also 0.5 hours, 0.1 miles owling.)

**Group D:** George Steele, Alan Mapes, Kevin McIlvain, Ezra McIlvain. 6:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (4.0 hours, 5.0 miles on foot; 5.0 hours, 39.0 miles by car. Also 0.5 hours, 0.3 miles owling.)

**Group E:** Steve Mesick, Bill Lee, Peter McGowan. 8:13 a.m. - 4:16 p.m., less 10 minutes not birding (2.25 hours, 1.4 miles on foot; 5.75 hours, 56.6 miles by car.)

**Group F:** Kathryn Schneider, Naomi Lloyd, Marian Sole, Jim de Waal Malefyt. 7:10 a.m. – 1:50 p.m., less 10 minutes not birding. (1.75 hours, 0.75 mile on foot; 4.75 hours, 52.8 miles by car.)

**Group G:** Richard White, Peter Siciliano, Christina McLaughlin. 6:06 a.m. – 5:08 p.m. (4.0 hours, 6.2 miles on foot, 5.5 hours, 68.4 miles by car. Also 1.5 hours, 4.5 miles owling.)

Notes: Hours rounded to the nearest quarter hour.

**Albany County CBC - December 18, 2022 Alan Mapes, Compiler**

The count day, December 18, brought moderate temperature around the freezing mark, but 12 or so inches of snow on the ground and a stiff wind proved challenging. The snow cover drove small birds to the road edges, perhaps explaining a few of the much higher than average species counts.

Flowing waters were mostly open; still waters mostly frozen, with the exception of parts of the Alcove Reservoir. Ten field parties covered the eight sectors of the count circle.

Sixty-nine species were found for the day, two less than the long term average of 71. This was the 36th year the count has been conducted. Here are some notable species count numbers - please let me know if you see any corrections needed.

- Canada geese were low at 40% of average
- Bufflehead were high at 35
- Pied-billed grebe and red-shouldered hawk were unusual finds
- American kestrel was high, the 5 birds tied our all time high
- Red-bellied woodpecker was low
- Common raven was the bird of the day, with 78 found vs. a previous high of 35
- American robin was low at around 10 % of average
- Cedar waxwing was low at just 2
- White-throated sparrow was low
- Brown-headed cowbird was high at 50
- Dark-eyed junco and northern cardinal were runner-up birds of the day, both with the highest ever numbers, each at more than twice the average
- The one pine siskin was notable, as the species has been found on less than one third of the time on this count

Thanks go out to all the participants. I hope you can join us again next year on Sunday, December 17.



American woodcock										0
Wilson's Snipe										0
ring-billed gull		23	25		24		5	11		88
herring gull								1		1
Iceland gull										0
lesser black-backed gull										0
glaucous gull										0
great black-backed gull										0
common loon										0
double-crested cormorant										0
great blue heron	1						1			2
black vulture	3		1		2					6
turkey vulture										0
northern harrier				1						1
sharp-shinned hawk	1				1					2
Cooper's hawk	1	1	1			1				4
northern goshawk										0
bald eagle		3	1	11		1	10	1		27
red-shouldered hawk				1						1
red-tailed hawk	25	24	2	6	8	6	4	4		79
rough-legged hawk										0
eastern screech-owl		2						1		3
great horned owl		3								3
barred owl						2				2
long-eared owl										0
northern saw-whet owl										0
belted kingfisher			1			1	1			3
red-bellied woodpecker	4	12	1	2	4	1	2	8		34
yellow-bellied sapsucker	1	2	1		1			2		7
downy woodpecker	4	14	3	6	7	9	4	8		55
hairy woodpecker	3	3		1			3	1		11
northern flicker		2			4	4	1	2		13
pileated woodpecker	1	4		1	2	5	5	1		19
American Kestrel	3		1		1					5
merlin										0
peregrine falcon										0
monk parakeet										0
eastern phoebe										0
northern shrike										0
blue jay	45	25	9	72	16	23	6	13		209
American crow	179	427	29	17	78	54	39	19		842
fish crow		1						1		2
common raven	2	3	1	33	5	29	5			78







**Saratoga Springs CBC - December 16, 2022 Jean Holcomb, Compiler**

The Saratoga Springs Christmas Bird Count was conducted on Dec 16 under cloudy skies with a few inches of snow on the ground. We had a good turn out in the field including many HMBC members;

Section A Georgia Fitzpatrick and sister

Section B: George Steele and Ellen Kiehl

Section C: Ray Perry and Ron Harrower

Section D: Naomi Lloyd, Al Mapes

Section E: Cindy and Chris Edwardson

Section F: Linda Wright, Jean Holcomb, Carol Blackwell.

We ended up with 63 species which is an average year, way down from the banner year in 2022 when we had some 80 odd species. One factor was the departure of all waterfowl from Loughberry Lake and the general openness of Saratoga Lake which made it hard to bird. Sometimes an early count is good, sometimes not so much.

Highlights were: The pair of tundra swans which had been seen for all December on Saratoga Lake hung around for the count. Cindy and Chris got a few snow buntings and horned larks. Al and Naomi got a northern shrike, and a Long Eared Owl made a short return visit to the Battlefield. And for count week we had our only bird new to count when a Townsend's warbler visited Ray Perry's home feeder.

**Southern Rensselaer County CBC Report - December 24, 2022 Naomi Lloyd, Compiler**

The 55th annual Southern Rensselaer CBC was held on December 24, 2022.

17 participants faced bitter cold, starting in single digits and crawling to mid-teens by afternoon. The previous day had seen heavy rain then a flash-freeze, leaving some secondary roads ice covered. Lakes and some streams had completely frozen over in recent days, sending most waterfowl off and leaving just a few in open patches. Diversity was down from other years, most disappointingly a Long-tailed Duck that appeared on both ends of Count Week but not on the big day. Ducks-of-the-Day were Northern Pintail and Wood Duck.

Big misses included Black Vultures, which seem to have abandoned their habitual winter roost at HVCC. No Falcons were seen in any sector! The winter finch irruption did not reach us - no Grosbeaks, Crossbills, Siskins, or Redpolls, and only a few Red-breasted Nuthatches.

No Snow Buntings or Horned Larks in the snowless fields, and Sparrows and other ground-scratchers were not driven to roadsides.

The only party to go owling reported the only Owls (Barred) of the day. The best Sparrow reports came from American Oil Road/Papscanee where the team had a Lincoln's, plus Red-winged Blackbird, Cowbirds, and Grackles in good numbers, as well as a White-crowned Sparrow.

We ended up with 53 species, a 10-year (possibly longer) low.

My deepest thanks to all who came out and birded in inhospitable weather, on an inconvenient date. I hope to see you again for the 56th Count, on December 23, 2023. Wishing everyone a happy and productive year in the field!

For the spreadsheet please go to:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11la\\_-zpdERukzhQ8KvkBZBI6y-IbD5NNfdHmZFhhjGg/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11la_-zpdERukzhQ8KvkBZBI6y-IbD5NNfdHmZFhhjGg/edit?usp=sharing)

## Meet Your HMBC Board: Amanda Dillon, Board Secretary

### 1. How long have you been on the Board, Dillon, and what are your responsibilities?

I joined the Board as a member in 2018 and did two stints in that position before taking on the role of secretary in 2022.

### 2. What do you do for your day job?

I am the Field Ecologist and Entomologist at the Albany Pine Bush Preserve. We do a lot of research to evaluate our management and restoration efforts and I manage the field work side of things. In any given year I help facilitate a number of field research projects including surveying Karner blue butterfly populations, monitoring breeding birds, evaluating vegetation communities, monitoring water table levels, and most recently surveying our bee community response to mowing and prescribed fire. I hire our seasonal staff and work with outside researchers to conduct these various projects and to learn more about pine bush ecology. I also facilitate our science lecture series and our Community Science Program. It's a good mix of duties and I am constantly learning new things. It is also extraordinarily rewarding to work with our volunteers.

### 3. What hobbies or interests do you have outside of birding?

Sometimes it's hard to take a break when your job is doing what you love! I like to hike and kayak when I can and to cross-country ski when there's snow. I spend a lot of time with my animals. I have two cats, Jazzi and Skadi, who I love to cuddle with at home. I also have an orange-fronted parakeet named Trooper; he likes to go on hikes when it's warm enough and to make appearances on Zoom calls. I fulfilled a childhood dream when I bought my companion Cocoki, an off-track thoroughbred, and she and I go on many adventures together. I try to ride at least once a week, two if I can. I also love to get caught up in a good book but I'm very picky, lol! I am currently listening to Robin Wall Kimmerer read her book, **Braiding Sweetgrass**, and I highly recommend it!

### 4. How did you get into birding? Was there a spark bird involved?

It's funny but I never considered myself a birder. I have always been an entomologist so maybe birds were just too big for me to bother with. I knew the backyard feeder birds because my mom taught me but I don't remember interacting with them other than trying to get some chickadees to eat out of my hands on a couple occasions. I grew up close to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge where our family would visit in the spring and fall to see the spectacle of Canada and snow goose migration and again in the summer to see the goslings. I didn't take ornithology in college which I regret to this day. I started becoming a birder when I began working at the Pine Bush. My coworkers were hired to do point counts and they started teaching me the songs and calls of birds. It felt like a whole world opened up! Whereas before birds were "just there" when I saw them at the feeder or when they gathered by the thousands at Montezuma but all of the sudden birds were everywhere! And I was hooked! I learned all of my birds by sight, and sound, and now I am the one doing the point counts. It helped immensely that I got to see them up close and personal at the Pine Bush banding station. Most people have to learn the confusing fall warblers through binoculars, trying desperately to follow them through the brush, and to identify the color of the undertail coverts or to notice if they have a wing bar. I got to see the birds "in-hand"; maybe that's cheating but I now consider myself a birder and an ornithologist!

## Meet Your HMBC Board: Amanda Dillon, Board Secretary *(continued)*

### 5. Do you have any destination birding dreams?

Okay so, I'm a birder but maybe not a hardcore birder; there has to be a spectrum of birders, right? I do chase rarities occasionally but not more than a couple of hours away and usually only if the bird has proven itself reliable. I have some NYS nemesis birds that I've tried for many times to see but still need to get (I am talking about you black-backed woodpecker and you, upland sandpiper) and I would like to get some ocean birds like dovekie, murre, razorbill, etc. Other than that, I bird where my life brings me! This year I am headed with friends to Puerto Rico. We have a lot of boxes to check but you can bet I will be birding the whole time!

### 6. Do you have a favorite bird?

I always think this should be some cool rare flashy bird but every time I am asked, I come back to the tufted titmouse. I suspect this has something to do with having handled so many of them at banding stations. Whereas other birds seem to accept their fate when caught in a mist-net, the titmouse fights tooth and nail, the entire time while in the net, in the bag, in the hand and all the while making their high-pitched alarm call that tests your hearing. They are so tiny but mighty. So feisty but adorable. Elegant with their silver-gray wings and little pink flanks. And don't even get me started on their crest!

### 7. What is your favorite place locally to explore birds?

Depends on the time of year! I like Cohoes for winter waterfowl; I got my lifer long-tailed duck and red-breasted merganser at the powerplant. Plotterkill Preserve and Woodlawn Preserve are my go-to during spring migration. Fort Edward for winter raptors and snow buntings and horned larks. I get pretty spoiled at the Pine Bush for fall migration since I help operate our fall migration station and Project Owl-net station. I recently moved to Troy where I need to do some research to find good birding spots!

### 8. What is your most surprising birding experience?

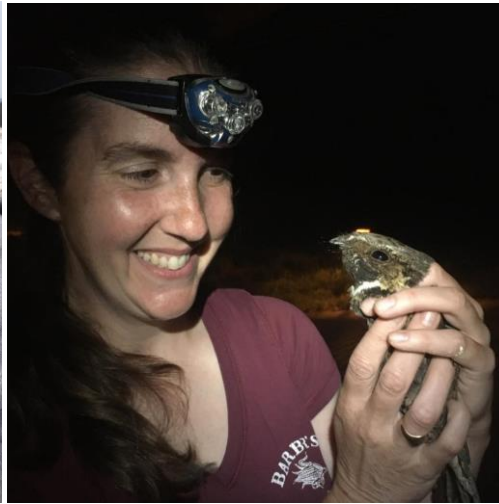
There have been many but the most recent was at our banding station this past fall. We were having a busy morning and I was in the middle of processing a bird when I looked at my coworker and the bird in her hand. What is that, I asked? She said, "um, a Tennessee warbler I think, I haven't looked very closely yet". I shook my head because I saw yellow undertail coverts and a broken eye ring. Sure enough, we had caught our very first orange-crowned warbler after 15 years operating the station! If that wasn't exciting enough, we captured another weird bird which at first, I thought was a Nashville warbler. When I took it out of the bag back at the station, I noticed it had an eye ring but it also had faint breast streaks and just wasn't bright yellow enough to be a Nashville. The head was gray with some olive wash. If it wasn't for the eye ring, it would have been another orange-crowned. In consulting with others, we ultimately determined it was a Nashville-Orange-crowned warbler hybrid. And it turns out, this hybrid had been documented before by Jeremy Kirchman and his graduate student in the Adirondacks. That was a pretty cool bird!

### 9. Do you have any specific hopes or goals for HMBC?

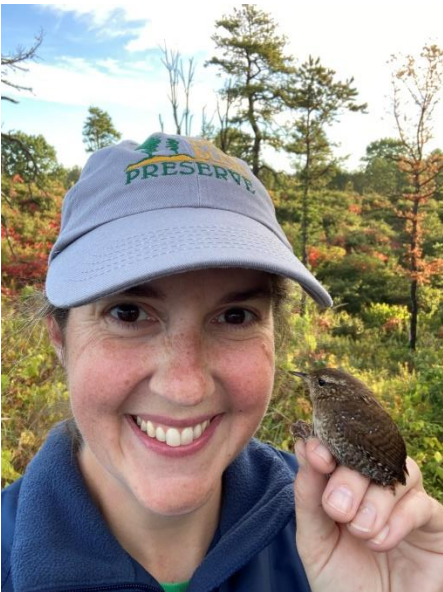
Hmmm, not that I can think of. I am pretty excited about our logo reboot; I think it could be really great for the club! Stay tuned for a future announcement about our new logo design!



Rough-legged Hawk



Whip-poor-will



Winter Wren

## Local Student Creates Vulture-Tracking App

Emma Willard student, Robyn Wu, was awarded the “2022 Congressional App Challenge” for creating an app to track the Turkey Vultures that frequent the campus. Robyn’s award was presented by Congressman Paul Tonko of the 20’t District. To learn more about Robyn’s project go to <https://vulturesofemma.org/>

*Feathers*

**Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club**

**c/o Five Rivers EEC**

**56 Game Farm Road**

**Delmar, NY 12054**