

October 2021
Volume 81 No 5

Feathers

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

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, October 2, SARATOGA BATTLEFIELD (Saratoga County; morning)

Coordinator: Susan Beaudoin 518-796-7868 smbeaudoin1@gmail.com

This popular trip features beautiful foliage and a good chance to see hawks, woodpeckers, sparrows, bluebirds and late migrants as we walk the woods and grasslands of the battlefield. You never know what will turn up. There is no longer a fee for use of the trails.

Meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot near the park's visitor center off SR 32.

Saturday, October 9, FIVE RIVERS EEC (Albany County; morning)

Coordinator: John Kent jwkent@fastmail.fm

We'll walk about 2 miles over generally flat terrain with some small hills, passing through a variety of habitats. Migrating sparrows are often abundant at this time of the year, with a good chance of Lincoln's and White-crowned as well as more common species. Both species of kinglet may be present, as well as Yellow-rumped Warbler, Palm Warbler and Blue-headed Vireo. A late Nashville, Black-throated Green, Blackpoll or Magnolia Warbler might be found. Wood Duck and other waterfowl are possible, as well as Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks and Merlin. Wet grass and muddy spots may be encountered, so waterproof footwear is recommended.

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

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Autumn is always a wonderful time of year in upstate New York, especially for birders. As I write this, the leaves on my neighborhood trees are just as verdant as they were in May, but it won't be long before the broadleaf canopy across our region turns into a dazzling motley containing every shade of gold, amber, ochre, and crimson. It's time for apple picking, cider doughnuts, hayrides, and corn mazes – and Hallowe'en is just around the corner.

While it can't compete with the sheer excitement of spring migration, fall is arguably Hudson-Mohawk birding at its most rewarding. Migrants like vireos, thrushes, and warblers are still passing through our parks and woodlands on their incredible journey back to the tropics, and sparrow diversity and numbers will pick up into October. Ducks and geese are beginning to arrive on local lakes and rivers, shorebird migration isn't quite over just yet, and high overhead, raptors are still streaming south, often in spectacular numbers best viewed from the heights of our area's most awesome vantage points. And looking ahead to winter, the eagerly anticipated winter finch forecast just came out a few days ago, as it does at the end of every September. While it's not surprising that this year's prediction falls short of last winter's "superflight," it's still a good reminder to get those backyard feeders filled in expectation of cooler weather and hungry jays, woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, and nuthatches.

Throughout this season of change, the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club remains busy. After last year's lockdowns, we've had great success resuming our field trip schedule with several fun and well-attended (but safe) outings in the last month, and there are still quite a few more trips on the calendar for October and into early November. Our field trip committee is already hard at work coming up with a full schedule for next year and we have two more great speakers lined up for our upcoming October and November programs. We're very much looking forward to 2022 and – as always – we're happy to welcome new faces to our events. If you've ever had any interest in writing a piece for *Feathers*, volunteering to lead a field trip, giving a talk to the club, or helping on one of our committees, please don't hesitate to let us know as we make plans for what we hope will be a full and eventful year.

Good birding!

Tristan Lowery
President, Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club
president@hmbc.net

You, too, can contribute to Feathers!

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

SHARE them with HMBC members by submitting them to:

HMBC Contact Information
BIRDLINE of EASTERN NEW YORK:
E-mail: contact@hmbc.net
HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

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

Send all paper submissions to:
Denise Hackert-Stoner
6 Knob Hill Road.
Loudonville,
NY
12211

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 grecer@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 *(continued)*

Sunday, October 10, BOG MEADOW BROOK NATURE TRAIL (Saratoga County; morning)

Coordinator: Ron Harrower 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 and a wet mixed forest in between. In October, sparrows are moving in and late migrants are still present. There should be a good variety of waterfowl and lingering shorebirds are possible.

Meet at 8:00 AM at the trailhead pull-off on Meadowbrook Road, about .3 miles 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.

Saturday, October 23, COLLINS LAKE (Schenectady County, morning)

Coordinator: Bill Lee 518-374-3426 bileej@hotmail.com

We will visit Collins Lake to view late migrating waterfowl from the beach and the east side of the lake. We will also take a walk east along the north side of the Mohawk River for fall sparrows. Fox Sparrows have been seen in previous years. Foliage will be off the trees to make spotting LBJs (Little Brown Jobs) a bit easier.

Meet at 8:00 AM near the western end of the Gateway Bridge at Jumpin' Jacks in Scotia. Bring a scope if you have one.

Sunday, November 14, TOMHANNOCK RESERVOIR (Rensselaer County; morning)

Coordinator: Naomi Lloyd naomi_kestrel@yahoo.com

Join us for a morning trip around the Tomhannock Reservoir. We hope to find a variety of waterfowl as resident and migrant passerines and possibly shorebirds. Rarities have turned up at the Tomhannock in the fall and we often find Bald Eagles. Joint trip with Alan Devoe Bird Club.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the parking area at the intersection of Lake Shore Rd. and NY Route 7 at the west end of the causeway. Bring a scope for distant viewing.

Christmas Bird Counts 2021

Saturday, December 18, SCHENECTADY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT (all day)

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

Sunday, December 26, SOUTHERN RENSSELAER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT (all day)

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

Sunday, January 2, 2022, TROY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT (all day)

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

WRITERS PAGE

Northern Mockingbird

By: Marilyn Hamecher 9/21/21

Our beloved Mockingbird is well known as the King of Song.
They can easily imitate at least 12 different Frog and Toad songs.

They learn several hundred songs during their early bird years.
Some research noted, they do not during their elder bird years.

Notorious for mimicking musical sounds and loud machinery.
Famous for showing off vocal adeptness, this is not buffoonery.

Their wide range of vocal dexterity once depleted their species.
They were caught and sold for a price tag, way up in the fifties.

The white patches on their tail and wings are fashionably dual.
Flashing them in defense and using them in their mating ritual.

Mockers are territorial and will dive at anything that is very clear.
They will even attack a mirror, if they see their own image appear.

They are known to build up to 7 nests during their breeding season.
One female can lay up to 27 eggs, in one season and for a good reason.

The Mockingbird has adapted to human development and growth.
Wide lawns are good for hunting insects, making it good for both.

Mr. Mocker is skilled in bird songs and manmade noises of all kinds.
If you see this charming bird, STOP... LISTEN, he'll blow your mind.

This bird has been named the State Bird of five states across the USA.
Known as "a fighter" and defender of his home, what more can I say.

ON NATURE

The Sand Beneath Our Feet

By Denise Hackert-Stoner

I have always loved the beach. Whether strolling along an ocean beach or exploring the beach of a lake or river, I am fascinated by these places where land meets water.



© Denise Hackert-Stoner
Naturelogues 2021

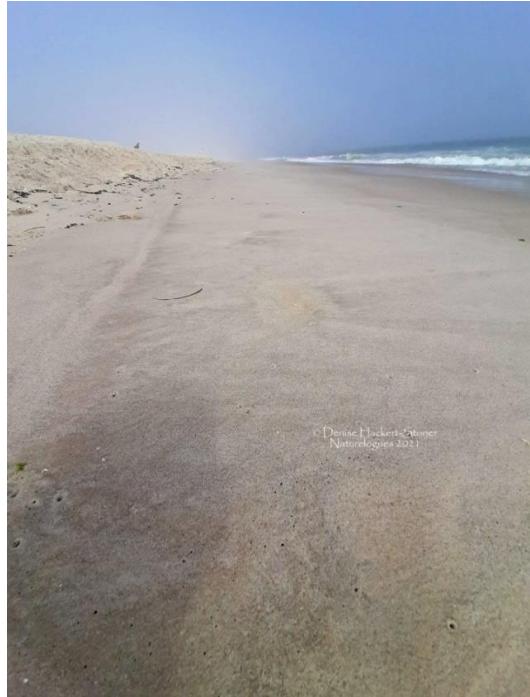
Late this summer we spent a few days visiting the beaches of Fire Island, the barrier beach that separates Long Island from the Atlantic Ocean. I spent quite a bit of time walking along the shore there. Sometime while picking up bits of sand dollars, beach glass and other treasures to bring home for the grandchildren I began to think about the sand itself.



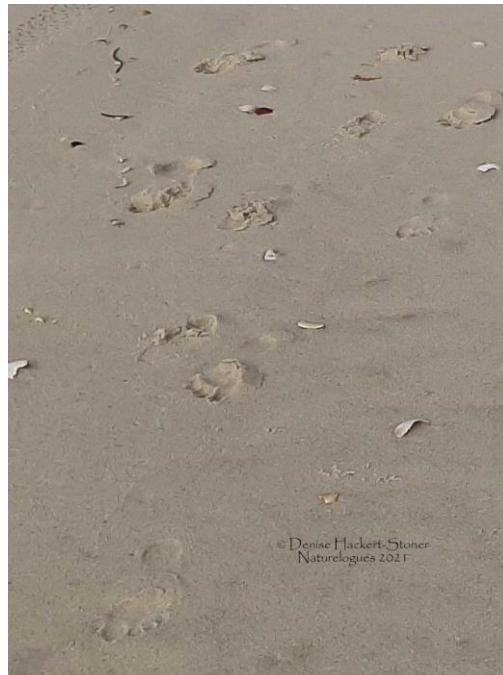
© Denise Hackert-Stoner
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The tiny bits of minerals that make up Fire Island are a glimpse into a rock cycle that can take millions of years. Each tiny grain has an origin story and is on its way to becoming something else. Some of these grains may have once been coastline, eroded over millennia by wave action. Others may have had a longer journey, and may have originated as mountain peaks, broken off, eroded by wind and water, and eventually tumbled along streams and rivers, washed into the sea as pebbles to be further broken down by the power of the sea itself. Each grain is a tiny rock itself, while also having a history of being part

of a much larger rock. Eventually, as the never-ending rock cycle continues, the separate tiny bits of quartz, feldspar, garnet and magnetite that make up Fire Island National Seashore will once again find themselves compressed by water, more layers of sand or some other material, and will once more become part of a much larger rock layer. The cycle never ends. Earth is always changing. Our human time-line is simply too brief to observe these changes.



From our perspective, the sand beneath our feet is ours to dig in, build castles with, discover treasure on. It offers us creatures of land communion with the sea, a vantage point to the far horizon. At the same time, the sand is on its own journey, involved in a much larger, slower cycle of building up and breaking down. At the moment when a human foot leaves a print in the sand, three time-lines converge. The ephemeral footprint, disappearing with the next high tide, the human connected to the foot, limited to its own life-time, and the sand, limited to its own position in the wheel of the rock cycle. Three very different time-lines converging in one moment on the beach.



Rachel Carson, in the July 1958 edition of Holiday magazine, said: "In every outthrust headland, in every curving beach, in every grain of sand there is a story of the earth." As human observers standing in amazement upon those curving beaches, feeling the grains of sand between our toes, we are witnesses to this story.



To learn more about sand, the rock cycle, and Fire Island, check out:

<https://fireislandnews.com/diamonds-on-the-souls-of-our-shores-the-story-of-fire-island-sand/>

<https://medium.com/@georgeannsack/where-does-sand-come-from-cd348b2d8f5b>

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/sand.html>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/rock-cycle/>

Upcoming HMBC Programs

When: October 4, 2021, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Location: Via Zoom (watch for email with link)

Speaker: Dr. Francie Cuthbert

Topic: Recovery of an Endangered Shorebird Population: The Piping Plover in the Great Lakes

The Great Lakes Piping Plover population was listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act in 1986. Francie Cuthbert began her long-term (~35 years) research and conservation efforts to recover this population at the time of listing. This presentation will cover the history of plovers in the Great Lakes, threats that caused their decline to only 12-17 pairs and strategies that were used to increase numbers to 60-70 pairs currently. Join us to learn about the plover's recovery from this distinguished scientist, as well as how a large commercial airliner was named for her!

Dr. Francesca J. Cuthbert is a Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. She is also a Scientific Investigator at the University of Michigan Biological Station during the summer. For the past 30 years her research has focused on three topics in avian biology and conservation: recovery of federal or state listed species (especially piping plovers); ecology and population dynamics of colonial nesting waterbirds; and ecology and management of abundant species (especially double-crested cormorants). Most of her research involves working closely with federal and state agency biologists to facilitate conservation and management in the Great Lakes Region. She has advised > than 50 MS and PhD students and published >100 peer-reviewed research papers. Dr. Cuthbert is a past President of the Waterbird Society, Member of the Waterbird Conservation Council of the Americas and a Fellow in the American Ornithological Society. In 2009 she was honored as a Recovery Champion by US Fish and Wildlife Service for her career-long contributions to the conservation of the Great Lakes population of the Piping Plover.



Upcoming HMBC Programs *(continued)*

When: Monday, November 1, 2021

Location: Via Zoom (watch for email with link)

Speaker: John C. Robinson

Topic: Workshop: The Essentials of Birding by Ear: A Universal Method for Learning How to Identify Birds Using Songs or Call Notes

Birding is fun! Plain and simple. To appreciate, understand, and enjoy the bird life around them, birders must rely on their ability to instantly recognize their fine feathered friends. Identifying birds quickly and easily by sound is not only one of the biggest frustrations birders experience; it is also the singular focus of this special presentation by award-winning author and ornithologist John C. Robinson. This workshop includes a set of advanced techniques that can be adapted year-after-year to fine-tune one's ability to identify similar-sounding bird species or challenging species groups, regardless of geographic location.

A professional ornithologist, keynote speaker, and environmental consultant, John C. Robinson holds a B.S. degree in Biology from Iowa State University. A two-time #1 Best-Selling author, he has published six books about nature and birds, including *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Tennessee* (1990), *North American Bird Reference Book* (2004), and *Tweet, Flutter, and Squawk!* (2015). He has also led professional birding and natural history tours to South Africa and numerous locations within the United States.

Since 1999, John has been an advocate for minorities in birdwatching and nature and has conducted research on how to connect our youth and young adults to nature through the magic of bird watching.

He has worked in collaboration with Toyota and the National Audubon Society; and continues to travel across the country, speaking about his landmark book, *Birding for Everyone: Encouraging People of Color to Become Birdwatchers*.

When: Monday, December 6, 2021

Location, Speaker, and Topic: TBA

Please refer to www.hmbc.net for further details.

Field Trip Reports

Nutten Hooke, Stuyvesant, September 25, 2021

Kathryn Schneider

It was a cool and foggy start to the joint Hudson-Mohawk/Alan Devoe Bird Club field trip at Nutten Hooke in late September. Nevertheless, five of us gathered to explore this section of Stockport Flats on what turned out to be a pretty nice day. While there were still plenty of fallen trees from the Coxsackie microburst in July, the trails had been cleared and marked with new trail markers. We started out on the river trail past the ice house where we picked up several warblers, including Black-and-white and Yellow-rumped, and several groups of White-throated Sparrows, which were first of the season birds for some of us. At the new fishing dock on Ferry Road, we heard a Belted Kingfisher and several singing Carolina Wrens and got nice views of adult and immature Bald Eagles. Our walk down Ferry Road produced a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds, a couple of singing Swamp Sparrows, and a Common Yellowthroat. In the parking lot, Naomi added a Solitary Vireo to our list of about 30 species.



Mark your calendar! The 74th annual meeting of the [New York State Ornithological Association \(NYSOA\)](#) will be hosted online by the [Southern Adirondack Audubon Society](#) Friday evening, October 1 and Saturday morning, October 2, 2021. There is no registration fee.

Join us via Zoom on Friday, October 1 at 7:00 pm, when our keynote speaker will be Dr. Jason Hill, Conservation Biologist with the Vermont Center for Ecostudies. Among other projects, Dr. Hill oversees the annual Mountain Birdwatch citizen science effort. His program will be "The Effects of Climate Change on Montane Birds of the Northeast." You will hear the very latest on his montane bird research!

Continuing our online event on Saturday, October 2 at 9:00 am, we'll take you on a virtual tour through the former [home of Paul Schaefer](#), a noted Adirondack conservationist who was named one of the top 100 conservationists of all time by the National Audubon Society. His legacy and former home will be brought to you through a virtual tour and presentation by the coordinators of the [Kelly Adirondack Center](#). A new historic photo exhibit will be on display within the home, and you'll also see a fascinating 14-foot-tall relief map of the Adirondacks. We'll walk the connecting corridor to the modern Adirondack Research Library and gaze out the windows at the center's bird feeding station. The Kelly Center is fortunate to be the trailhead for the 111-acre [H. G. Reist Wildlife Sanctuary](#), owned and managed by the [Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club](#). This session will take about 40 minutes, followed by a 15-minute break before the Delegates' business meeting.

Gather with us again via Zoom on Saturday, October 2 at 10:00 am for NYSOA's official annual meeting – also known as the Delegates' Meeting. In addition to the delegates of NYSOA's member clubs/organizations, all individual members of NYSOA are welcome to attend. The meeting will conclude around lunchtime.

All attendees must register in advance and will receive log-in information and meeting documents via email. To register, visit www.nybirds.org/annual2021.

We hope to see all of you and your friends at this special event, and we encourage you to share this information with others who may not know about NYSOA – they can get to know us virtually!

- John Loz, President, Southern Adirondack Audubon Society
southernadirondackaudubon.org
- Shirley Shaw, President, NYSOA
nybirds.org

Feathers**Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club****c/o Five Rivers EEC****56 Game Farm Road****Delmar, NY 12054**