

FEATHERS

Vol. 62
No. 1

February
2000

Published Bi-monthly by The Hudson-Mohawk

THE BIRDS OF BARROW

by Dick Patrick

I always thought you needed snow to operate a snow-mobile. But here comes one splashing across the tundra in our direction at a tremendous speed with some huge object bouncing along behind. The vehicle hits a deep puddle, slams to an abrupt stop, black smoke billows out of the engine. We see the object being bounced is a caribou carcass and the driver is an Inupiat Eskimo. He grabs his rifle. What's he going to do - shoot his snow-mobile? No, he is just looking for somewhere dry to set the rifle while he tries to salvage his ride and his kill.

The object here is that, if you are going bird watching in the Arctic, bring your waterproof boots. With the permafrost there is always a couple inches of water lying on the tundra because the land just cannot drain. We saw cemeteries built on the tops of the sod huts of the original inhabitants and other cemeteries with pumps and hoses draining the grave sites.

Enough of these morbid thoughts. If you get the opportunity to go to the northern-most city in North America, which is Barrow, Alaska, don't even think twice. Just go.



As you might expect, it isn't cheap. We went on a Victor Emanuel Nature Tour as an extension of an Alaskan trip. The cost of the extension to Barrow was \$1350 which includes a \$400 round trip flight from Anchorage - of course you have to get to Anchorage on your own. Along the way to Barrow you fly over the Brooks Range and the Gates of the Arctic (what a great name!) National Park and Preserve. For our \$1350 we got two nights in Barrow and 35 species of birds.

The big three of the Arctic bird world - King, Spectacled and Steller's Eiders practically met us at the airport which you could see was a relief to our guide, Kevin Zimmer. Yes, these eiders are all that you hope they would be. The

continued

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orange shield on the head of the King, the white glasses on the greenish head of the Spectacled, and the skull-like head and light orange breast with the strange black dot of the Steller's. They were so accommodating that in one location we saw all three species on the same pond. Which was just as well because other than the city streets there are only three short roads leading out of Barrow. Two end at the bordering seas - the Beaufort and the Chukchi (another great name!). These are seas in the Arctic Ocean on either side of Point Barrow. The other road is blocked by a sign saying "DANGER, POLAR BEARS."

Most of us have been fortunate enough to see Snowy Owls at home during severe winters, but here they are white spots throughout the landscape as if they have divided the Arc-

tic into territories - which they have. Their sovereignty is challenged by the Parasitic and Pomerine Jaegers, I don't recall seeing the Longtailed in Barrow. If I had to pick one bird memory from Barrow it would be those two fluffy tail feathers of the Pomerine as it banked over the tundra.

The common duck of the Arctic was the Pintail. There were an equal number of Old Squaws and a few Green-winged Teal. I have new respect for our two local species while wondering why others of their brethren choose the hardships of a flight as far as a bird can go.

We did our traveling in Barrow in an old school bus. There was a colorful parka flung over each seat for our use, which came in handy. The late June temperature was usu-





ally in the high 30's though one morning there was a skim of ice on the ocean. There was a hundred yards or so of open ocean between the shore and the ice cap. I'd say you would find more snow in June in the high country of Wyoming and Montana than you would see in most of Alaska. And in Barrow in June it is still cool enough for you to miss the Biblical plagues of insects that we enjoyed in Nome.

There were Red-throated and Pacific Loons nesting between the ice floes and the occasional White-fronted Goose, Brant and Tundra Swan. As we are looking off across ponds at these water birds practically at our feet along the shore are Pectoral Sandpipers, Golden Plovers and everywhere along the water's edge Red and Rednecked Phalarope spinning in their endless circles. Just to see these birds so plentiful and so close is such a treat. You can really observe them. They are not going to fly anywhere.

I'm thinking if you have a good travel agent and plenty of advance planning time - what do you need a guide for? You are only going where the few roads lead and the birds certainly are not playing hard to get. You do need airline reservations because Alaskan Airlines flights look like they are always full. And you need reservations at the Top of the World Hotel, the only lodgings in Barrow. 40 rooms at \$150. Good luck on finding a no-smoking room. If you go you will find a stuffed polar bear in the lobby and Nelson, the Filipino desk clerk, will be only to glad to plug in some videos on Barrow for your greater edification. Like any motor-inn in Alaska there are outlets by every parking space where you can plug in whatever heating device they use to keep your car alive until the next morning, just to remind you that there is another season up there.

If you just wanted to add birds to your life-list you got that taken care of before lunch. Of course you can go back and really enjoy the birds as you won't be seeing most of them again right away.



That leaves you with a day to see what makes Barrow tick. What is the largest municipality - by land area- in the world? Your answer is the North Slope Boro which includes Barrow. It is governed by a Council made up of the Mayors of the seven Eskimo villages on the North Slope. These villages do not include Barrow yet their Mayors govern it through their control of the oil revenue. The Boro is rich. It can hire any Eskimo that wants a job at a minimum wage of \$20 an hour. The oil money also pays each Eskimo; man, woman and child \$1800 a year, so families are large. Barrow does not have a movie theater, bowling alley, shopping center or other public gathering place. It does have a first class school system, a hospital, a cultural center and a big general store like a Walmart. Dirt roads are constantly being sprinkled by municipal watering trucks as the wind is always blowing up dust and grit. Like Nome there isn't a tree, shrub or flower anywhere. Well, that last isn't so, as Patsy made a point

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of photographing every species of wildflower we saw in Alaska. Right on the gravel beach among the piles of whale bones we saw the very inconspicuous Bering Sea Chickweed

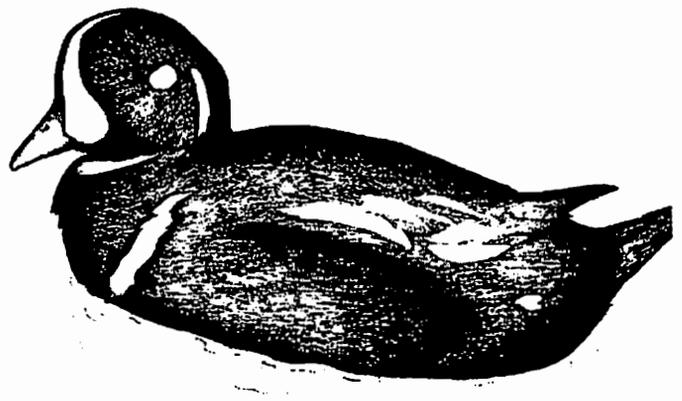


and we also have photos of Frigid Coltsfoot and Woolly Lousewort; but there were no cultivated garden flowers at least that we saw.

As you have a choice of one hotel, you also have a choice of one restaurant - Pepe's North of the Border. This is an authentic Mexican Restaurant right next door to the Top of the World. As you may suspect, the prices are hideous, say \$17.00 to \$35.00 for dinners. Well, maybe that isn't so bad. Everything has to be flown in. Some years Barrow is not even accessible for the late summer barge. The food is exceptional and the owner and staff are delightful people. We often had the cavernous restaurant to ourselves. You are not going to be running up a huge bar bill as Barrow is "damp." You have heard of "wet" and "dry." Well "damp" means the Eskimos can fly in a limited amount of booze for family use. But, as they say the whole country is one big airport, I understand the limiting is hard to do. Our bus driver, a NYC native,

who was serving and I believe enjoying the 18 month tour in Barrow of his wife's contract with the hospital explained to us that drunkenness and child and spouse abuse are terrible problems in the cold winter with its months of darkness. I don't doubt him; but we weren't there in the winter and I don't want to tell you anything we didn't see ourselves.

My first hand knowledge of the Inupiat was a brief visit with an oh so lovely young lady who asked us if we were interested in hearing about whaling. She told us about the old women making money sewing together the seal-skins which are the shell of the boats which we saw in the yards of many homes. The whale boats have six seats and the occupant of each seat has his assignment. For instance the first seat is for the harpooner and the fifth seat holds two children so they can learn the trade. She occupies the fourth seat, which means she throws out the floats attached to the harpoon rope which acts as a drag on the whale to keep it from diving. She said her father, the captain, sits in the wedge-shaped seat at the rear of the boat. She asked if I could imagine the thrill that went through her when she spotted the first whale she would be going after. I am afraid my life's experience is too limited to imagine such excitement. I asked her if that sharp looking outfit she was wearing with the number on the



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back was her whaling outfit. She laughed and said, "No, silly, it's my softball warm-ups." I should also mention this very young lady was pregnant with her fourth. The high school teams are nicknamed "The Whalers." Most appropriate team name I ever heard.

Let me finish with a final thought on birds. There are two songbirds in Barrow - the Lapland Longspur and the Snow Bunting. And singers they are - from most roof tops. I saw a bird house and ask an Inupiat if it was for

Snow Buntings. He said, "No Snow Birds." Being a trained birdwatcher I said, "SNOW BUNTING."

He replied, "SNOW BIRD. " His city, his bird. Anyway, did you know Snow Birds live in birdhouses?



Reading is for the Birds (or About Them!)



Our literary/dessert event "An Evening of Treats for Body and Soul," has been scheduled for April 3, 2000 at Five Rivers, at 7:30 PM. Quite a few Club members will be sharing their favorite nature-related reading, in poetry or prose. We will also be sharing our favorite desserts, in what promises to be a fun-filled evening!

Please contact Denise Hackert-Stoner, at 785-6760, if you would like to read. The material does not have to be original, and please feel free to attend whether you read or not! Please bring a treat to share!





C130 versus Canada Goose at the Schenectady County Airport

by Carl J. George

The magnificent Canada Goose has become a regional nuisance: Among the well publicized elements of disgrace are misplaced guano deposits (c. one pound per adult bird per day), physical damage to lawns through feeding, attacks of defensive parental geese on curious children, pollution of swimming waters with *E. coli*, and as hazardous wanderers on our roadways. But one challenge of their increasing numbers has not been sufficiently attended by the local media, that of airport safety and thus this account, published for the first time, of an incident at the Schenectady County Airport.

This report originates in a conversation with Major Joel Mayron, pilot of the large military cargo planes (C 130 and LC 130) we see passing over Schenectady and Scotia. Perhaps I should revise my word "large" to "huge"; they have a wingspan of 132' 7", a length of 97' 9", a height of 38' 6", an empty weight of 84,000 pounds and a fully loaded weight of 155,000 pounds. With sleds on each of the three wheels - as is the case in the LC130 - the empty weight is increased about 6,000 pounds.



Major Maynor's C130 - with 26 people aboard - struck seven Canada Geese while landing during a calm, clear afternoon on September

afternoon in 1996; at impact the plane's air-speed was about 130 knots (c. 150 mph), its height above ground about 200 feet. The flock of some 30 birds was seen at the NE end of runway number 4-22 and in the attempt to fly over them the Geese rose unexpectedly quickly to strike the plane "like bowling balls" - the Major reports. One bird struck a propeller causing damages requiring its replacement. Five others created impact craters about two inches deep and seven inches in diameter in the eight-inch thick aluminum of the leading edge of the wing. Another entered an air intake duct on the right wing causing less damage. The plane landed safely, was repaired and remains in service today but matters could have been much worse.

Major Maynor brought to my attention another altercation with Canada Geese on September 22, 1995, by a Boeing 707 AWACS plane at the Elmendorf Airforce Base near Anchorage, Alaska. The plane carrying 60,000 pounds (9,500 gallons) of jet fuel "inhaled" geese in two of the left-side jet engines during take off and, with the loss of power, crashed in a horrendous fireball instantly killing all 24 passengers and crew. The accident is detailed in the November, 1995 (vol. 78, no. 11), issue of Airforce Magazine.

A "Bird Condition" panel in the control office of the Stratton Air National Guard Base indicates the status of avian activity - red, yellow, green. On the day of my visit it read green reflecting few birds and the success of the bird-control program. European Starling, various gulls, American Crow, Upland Sandpiper, Homed Lark, Savannah Sparrow and, of



course, Canada Geese are attracted to the grassy expanses of the airport but only the starlings, gulls and geese prove dangerous locally. The American Crows although large seem wise enough to avoid harm's way! The short grass of the lawns is especially attractive and efforts to allow the height to reach 10-14" have not been successful; aesthetics prevail.

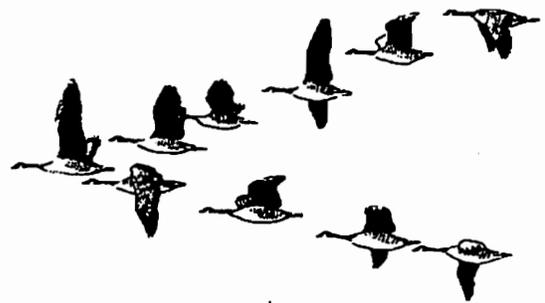
Major Maynor suggested that I access the web page of BASH, the Bird- Aircraft Strike Hazard center at Kirtland Airforce Base in New Mexico (www-afsc.saia.afmil.afsc/bash/home.html) for further guidance and this was done to shed more light on the significance of the Canada Goose for the United States Air Force. The species ranks second, after the American White Pelican, in damage costs; the Canada Goose (N = 54) bill, as of 17 August, 1999, stands at \$81,311,165.00, that of the American White Pelican (N = 4) at \$231,621,373.00, with BASH studies beginning in 1985. The number of events is shown by the numbers in parentheses indicating that the pelican impacts are especially expensive, i.e. about 58 million dollars per episode! The Canada Goose, on the other hand is a slightly more economical species logging in at about one and one-half million dollars per event! Major Maynor's encounter with the Canada Goose at a cost of about \$10,000 for repairs thus seems like a bargain.

For those interested in the role of smaller birds the BASH reports indicate that the Horned Lark is the most frequently encountered with 877 events on record costing us taxpayers \$2,764,273.31, or a mere \$3,152 per strike! The Mourning Dove ranks next followed by the Turkey Vulture, Barn Swallow and Red-tailed Hawk. Nearly 40,000 strikes have been reported since 1985 with a cost of about one-half billion dollars. The average

number of record strikes annually is c. 2,700.

The trajectory of Runway No. 4-22 at the Schenectady Airport is particularly problematical: its SW extension passes directly over the southern part of Collins Lake of Collins Park, Scotia, one of the region's more attractive areas for Canada Geese! Annual standard sightings have increased at Collins Park from 135 in 1988 to more than 18,000 in 1997! Please check out our web page for a ten-year accounting of Canada Geese (and other waterbirds), on a weekly basis, at Collins Park (<http://tardis.union.edu/~birds>).

Some twenty departures of the C130s and LC130s (with sleds) are supported per month by the 109th Airlift Wing at The Stratton National Air Guard Base and thus we have roughly 240 "opportunities" per year for big



trouble, i.e. 30,000 pounds and more of 3P8 diesel fuel bursting into flame with its precious human cargo and possibly impacting the urban landscape. A corresponding number of landings also take place but these are less dangerous because of reduced fuel load, slower speed and lessened power requirement.

The current interest in an enhanced management program for Canada Geese by the New York State Department of Conservation now seems an especially important undertaking,

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especially around airports with nearby wetlands - such as Albany International Airport (with Ann Lee Pond) and the Stratton ANG Base (with Collins Lake).

Postscript

More recently, I have learned of a second Canada Goose - C130 strike at the Stratton ANG Base, as reported by Major Steve Fifield. This was a lesser event involving only two geese and causing less damage to the aircraft.

Special thanks are extended to Majors Joel Maynor, Major Steve Fifield and Colonel William Mathew for their guidance on this item of avian natural history.

References

Anon. 1999 (March) When geese become a problem. Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resource, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, US Department of Agriculture.

<http://www.dec.state.ny.us>
<http://tardis.union.edu/~birds>
<http://www-afsc.saia.af.mil/afsc/bash/home.html>

Wedding Announcement

On January 16, 2000, two HMBC members, Scott Stoner and Denise Hilton, were married! Denise and Scott met through birding in 1995. She is now known as Denise Hackert-Stoner; Denise and Scott will remain at their current address and phone number in Loudonville.

Audubon Society of the Capital Region Programs

Thursday, Mar. 9, James Beemer on The
Wildlife of West Point - all 16,000 Acres



IMPRESSIONS OF FORT EDWARD

by Denise Hackert-Stoner and Scott Stoner

We like to arrive at the end of Fitzpatrick Road early, at least half an hour before dusk. Small farmhouses line the road, the familiar half-built garage, a reddish-brown horse, the wooden fence posts, and the silos and barns in the distant fields. A few harriers zoom low, just above the grass, an occasional rough-legged hawk, a small flock of snow buntings flush from a field beyond the fence. Then one, then two short-eared owls appear, flying toward us as though from nowhere. One of the owls dives from above, to harass a harrier, as though routing the hawk from its territory. Another owl similarly attacks a rough-legged hawk that is in a tree, ensuring that the 'shift change' occurs in a timely manner. An owl dives into the field and emerges with a small dark rodent in its talons. If we squeak like a mouse, a flying owl curiously looks our way, but can't be fooled for long. More and more owls appear in view, fewer and fewer hawks, and then, in the distance, beyond the field at the end of the road, comes the call that sounds so human, we almost dismiss its familiar "you-all" until we finally recognize it as a barred owl. Far above, throughout the twilight, hundreds of Canada geese fly over, from 20 to 200 at a time, their sound mingling with the barking and screaming of the owls. Just as suddenly, the show is over. The hawks, owls and geese are all gone. We are left in the gloom, with the small farmhouses, the half-built garage and the reddish brown horse.

Authors' Update:

Since writing this we have been back there twice, and the action continues. On January 23, with about one inch of snow cover, we had 8 short-ears and about as many harriers, and lots of raptorial interaction. The owl flights began about 4:30 PM but we never saw where they came from. Most interesting was a rough-legged hawk that dove at a flying short-ear, causing it to drop its prey. Also, an owl landed atop the telephone pole at the end of Fitzpatrick, affording several startled birders a scope-filling view! On January 29, a bright sunny but cold day with about six inches of snow over, the harriers were nowhere to be seen, but the owl activity was intense. About 4:35 PM (one-half hour before sunset), four short-ears rose up from the short grass along Fitzpatrick, followed by four more, and more after that. We counted a total of 17 of these magnificent creatures, and the barking, interacting, active flights continued for a half hour!

Last minute update:

On Feb 5, with several inches of new snow cover, **NO owls** were found around Fitzpatrick.

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Please Note:

- **The program meeting in March will be held at the Colonie Town Library and will begin at 7:00 PM (Note earlier start time!). The May and June programs will return to Five Rivers EEC and begin at 7:30 PM.**

Monday, Mar 6, 2000 - 7:00 p.m. at Colonie Town Library, Sue & John Adair on Alaska. From the bird cliffs of the Pribilofs to the majesty of Denali, from the sea birds and mammals of Resurrection Bay to the tundra at Nome, our two week tour took us to some of the scenic and birding hot spots of the 49th state. We tried to capture it all on film and will share an hour's worth with you. Please join us for a summer trip to the great state of Alaska -- where all the days are long, all the snow and ice is good looking and all the birds are above average. Sue has been birding for about 14 years. She is the current treasurer, Federation NYS Bird Clubs and past president, treasurer, secretary, newsletter editor of Onondaga Audubon Society. A sometimes wildlife illustrator for Onondaga Audubon, Federation, etc. John has been *resisting* birding for about 14 years. He is a past treasurer and board member of Onondaga Audubon Society. Takes most of the photographs and works the slide projector to slow Sue down!

Annual Meeting

Tuesday, April 11, 2000 - Shaker Ridge Country Club, Wayne R. Petersen, Field Ornithologist from Massachusetts Audubon Society. Shorebirds: A Profile Incredible. Shorebirds are one of the most spectacular groups of birds in the world. Their variety, wide distribution, interesting breeding biology, and their extraordinary migration strategies combine to make them outstanding subjects for study, both by birders and ornithologists alike. During the past century many shorebirds were persecuted for market and sport; some, like the Eskimo Curlew, never recovered. With full protection from hunting during the 20th century, many species have made a remarkable recovery. However, once again many shorebirds are facing even greater survival challenges as our environment rapidly changes.

Highlighted by specific examples, this program will provide a brief overview of some of the more important elements in the natural history of shorebirds, and will underscore the more important conservation issues facing Western Hemisphere shorebird biologists in the new millennium. Thoughts on how to recognize a few of the more common shorebirds in the field will also be in the presentation.

6:00 p.m. Dinner

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

8:30 p.m. Program

Monday May 8 (note - special date - NO MEETING FIRST MONDAY) Daniel Edelstein on Warblers, 7:30 pm, Five Rivers

Mon June 5 Don and Donna Traver on Chile 7:30 PM, Five Rivers.



PROGRAM REPORTS

South Africa Dec 6, 1999

Sated with desserts, a capacity crowd at the Club's annual Christmas party at Five Rivers sat down to enjoy a fascinating exploration of South Africa. Dr. Ken Able and his wife Mary had spent 7 weeks there, exploring its extraordinarily varied habitats on their own in a rented travel trailer. From the large mammals of Kruger Park in the northeast to the picturesque southern coast to the deserts of the northwest, Ken shared his remarkable experiences, fine slides and keen insights into a place few of us have seen.

At Kruger, lodging was pleasant, although the gates were locked promptly in the early evening for safety of the guests from the mammals. Far above typical camping, the gated compounds appeared quite lavish outposts in a vast wilderness of elephants, giraffes, wildebeest, wart hogs, impalas and zebras, which roamed about amongst the baobab trees. Birds were plentiful and unique as well, including black-eyed bulbul, tawny eagle, lilac-breasted roller, natal trancolin, cory bustard, yellow-billed and grooved horn-

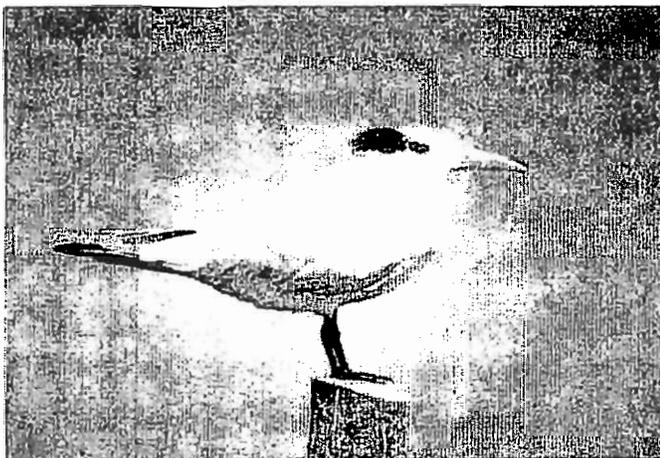
bills, saddle-billed, hammer-headed and Marabou storks, the colorful malachite kingfisher and the huge goliath heron. Of particular interest is a terrestrial raptor, the secretary bird.

Regulations were strict in Kruger; people were not allowed out of the vehicles except in designated (gated) picnic areas. This too was for personal safety from the wildlife. After Kruger they went on to Mkuze Nature Reserve, which had both similar habitat and similar species, then to the higher elevations of Giant's Castle and Golden Gate National Parks.

The next major stop was along the coast. This was a remarkable contrast to the open country of the northeast, with its lush, rocky shoreline, replete with black oystercatcher, South African kelp gull, red bishop and southern right whales. Jackass penguins were in the Capetown area; they nest under shrubs and vegetation, their vocalization includes braying. The Ables photographed the Cape of Good Hope, which surprisingly is not the most southerly point in Africa! That honor falls to Cape Agulhas, which juts into the Indian Ocean 100 miles or so farther east. A visit to West Coast National Park turned up cape weavers, pied wagtail, brown-striped zebra and clipspringer, a small antelope seen on the rocks.

The last major areas visited was the dry desert of the Kalihari-Gemsbok National Park. This area in the far northwest corner of the country borders on Namibia and Botswana.

With its dry salt lakes, red sand and man-made water holes, this area hosts gemsbok with their long straight horns, communal nest



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colonies of sociable weavers, springbok, cheetah and ostrich.

Some general impressions of the trip were that it was very expensive to get there, but prices were quite reasonable once there. Some urban areas (particularly Johannesburg) were described as unsafe, but in the countryside it seemed OK. South Africa has a good tourist infrastructure. There has been a huge influx of people, 20 million since the

1996 election, from Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Many have come across Kruger Park, despite its inherent wildlife dangers and rugged climate.

The program left all of us enlightened, and I'm sure, many dreaming of the chance to explore this rich natural landscape for themselves.

-- Scoff Stoner

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Renew HMBC Dues Now!

♣ It is dues renewal time. Thanks to everyone who has sent in their renewal checks. If you haven't sent in your check and renewal form, please send it in soon. Memberships that are not up to date will be set to inactive status and will not receive future Club mailings.

♣ Dues are the major income source for the Club, so renew now to help the Club continue providing programs, newsletters, field trips, summer camperships and other Club activities.

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Club Announcements

Birdline Invitation

You are probably aware that HMBC has, for many years, operated a telephone message and answering machine called the Birdline. The Birdline Team is extending an invitation to interested Club members to join the team. Team members have the unique opportunity to find out, first hand, what bird sightings have been reported for the week, and to sharpen many of their "birding interests and skills".

The Team consists of two people; a compiler who records and types the messages each day and the "voice" who composes a script that is read into the machine as the out-going message for the week. Both parties need to be able to type somewhat and have a computer. The compiler should have a cursory knowledge of the birds of New York State and willing be to record messages from a telephone.

If you think that you might be interested in one of these activities, please call John Saville at 399-5959 to learn more about this exciting program.

John Saville,
Birdline Team Chairperson

New Field Trip Committee Chair

The Club is seeking an individual to chair the Field Trip Committee. If interested, please contact Gregg Recer, 899-2678.



DEC Camperships Available

HMBC sponsors two campers to the DEC Environmental summer camps. If you are interested in nominating a camper, please contact Gregg Recer, 899-2678, for more details.

HMBC Board in need of new members

The HMBC Nominations Committee is currently conducting a search for people to run for HMBC Board Member and Officer slots for the 2000 - 2001 Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for the business of running HMBC's day-to-day activities and setting Club policies. If you might be interested, you can contact Al Mapes, Nominations Committee Chair, at 439-4086 to discuss the positions available.



Field Trip Reports

Editor's Note: We recently discovered the following two field trip reports from Walter Ellison from 1997 trips that had been misfiled and so had never been published. My sincere apologies to Walter for the inordinate delay in printing his trip summaries. Hopefully you will enjoy hearing about these trips even after this delay.

Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area Addison, Vermont 25 October 1997

In spite of a rainy morning five intrepid birders set off from the Capital District for Vermont's Champlain Valley. The rain let up as we journeyed northward, and by the end of the trip it was a mostly cloudy, blustery day with a cold north wind. We found 41 species for the day. Highlights included the spectacle of 8000 **SNOW GEESE** spread out over hayfields adjacent to the 'goose pulloff' on Vermont Route 17 in the refuge, other waterfowl in the area including **GADWALL** and **NORTHERN SHOVELER**, and raptors attracted to the geese. A **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** feeding on a dead goose was driven off by one of two immature **BALD EAGLES** that was in turn harrassed by two **PEREGRINE FALCONS**. We also visited Lake Champlain which proved too choppy to provide satisfactory views of the **LOONS**, **SCOTERS** and **OLD-SQUAW** we managed to spot. We capped the trip by exploring Gage Road south of the village of Addison observing the last of five **NORTHERN HARRIERS** for the day, a third Peregrine Falcon dashing by, and an uncooperative flyover **LAPLAND LONGSPUR** identified by its distinctive flight calls.

- Walter G. Ellison



Lower Mohawk River Gulls 6 Dec 1997

Six birders gathered along the Mohawk in Cohoes on a cool overcast mning. Sue Adair, who arrived early, already had located the trip's lone **GLAUCOUS GULL**, at least two **ICELAND GULLS**, and an eclipse **GREATER SCAUP**. After viewing these finds we headed north on Cohoes-Crescent Road stopping at the park overlooking Cohoes Falls. We had spectacular views looking down on at least three Iceland Gulls feeding below the falls. We proceeded to Crescent Dam where we found more Iceland Gulls. We finished the trip by checking Flight Lock Road in Waterford scanning gulls roosted on the walls of canal locks and in the lot next to Guard Gate 2. Our best sighting at Guard Gate 2 was of an immature **BALD EAGLE** soaring high overhead being dive-bombed by a **PEREGRINE FALCON**. We encountered 28 species including at least six Iceland Gulls.

- Walter G. Ellison



Tomhannock Reservoir November 7, 1999

It was a beautiful fall day, sunny with a few clouds. A fair wind was blowing, making things a bit chilly and the reservoir somewhat choppy. About 18 birders assembled at the reservoir for our trip. We circled the reservoir counter-clockwise with a few excursions down some side roads. Roadwork on the causeway limited viewing access near the south end of the reservoir. Highlights of the trip included: 3 **COMMON LOONS**, 2 **PIED-BILLED GREBES**, 1 **HORNED GREBE**, many **RUDDY DUCKS**, **COMMON GOLDENEYE**, **HOODED MERGANSERS** and **COMMON MERGANSERS** plus a few **GREEN-WINGED TEAL**, **NORTHERN PINTAIL** and a lone **NORTHERN SHOVELER**. We all enjoyed watching a low-flying **BALD EAGLE** at close range. Although species numbers and bird count numbers were somewhat low, we finished the trip with 42 species.

- *Bill Gorman*



Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch November 13, 1999

With a report of twenty-three Golden Eagles, twenty of them in a period of less than two hours, on the Sunday before, five HMBC'ers set out with high hopes for Franklin Mountain,

near Oneonta. Saturday's weather, although overcast with occasional sprinkles and gentle southerly winds, was forecasted to be better than Sunday though not most favorable for a good hawk flight. Sure enough, it was slow with one **GOLDEN EAGLE**, one **RED-TAILED HAWK** and one **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** our total at 1:30PM when we quit and headed home. On Monday, with favorable northwest winds, twenty more Golden Eagles were seen; reinforcing the birder's lament - "*You should've been here (last Sunday, next Monday) some other time than the present!*". Maybe next year we'll hit it just right!

- *Bill Lee*

Gull Trip December 4, 1999

Six dedicated souls gathered in the rain along the shore of the high, muddy and largely birdless Mohawk River. We decided to try and make the best of a bad situation and headed up river in search of birds. In about an hour the rain stopped, and with the temperature in the 40s and no wind, it was not unpleasant. The general paucity of birds did not change, however. With only 300-400 gulls around, the prospects for finding unusual ones were not good. Presumably the mild and open weather has permitted the birds to remain farther north and the periodic detonations on the Colonie Landfill, designed to scare gulls away, also probably did not work in our favor. Below Cohoes Falls we found a bird that appeared to be an adult **THAYER'S GULL**, but it disappeared before we were able to have a sufficiently good study of it. Later we found what was probably the same bird above Lock 6 on the north side of the Mohawk. This bird was sitting on the water with a number of other gulls and we had a good opportunity to scrutinize it at leisure. Obliging, it even raised its wings a

Feathers



couple of times to afford good scope views of the underside of the wings. Except that the iris was pale, the bird exhibited all the marks that are thought to distinguish this controversial species, and we agreed that it was about as good a Thayer's Gull as one is likely to see. The list (meager though it is): **GREAT BLUE HERON** 1; **CANADA GOOSE** 10; **AM. BLACK DUCK** 5; **MALLARD** 25; **COMMON MERGANSER** 20; **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** 1; **RED-TAILED HAWK** 6; **AM. KESTREL** 2; **RING-BILLED GULL** 40; **HERRING GULL** 200; **THAYER'S GULL** 1 ad.; **GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** 100; **ROCK DOVE** 80; **MOURNING DOVE** 50; **DOWNY WOODPECKER** 2; **NOR. FLICKER** 1; **BLUE JAY** 2; **AM. CROW** 40; **FISH CROW** 2-3; **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** 5; **EUROPEAN STARLING** 400; **CEDAR WAXWING** 100; **SONG SPARROW** 3; **SNOW BUNTING** 50; **HOUSE FINCH** 5.

- Ken Able



Five Rivers New Year's Day Count January 1, 2000

The first day of 2000 dawned with few Y2K disasters, relatively good weather, and a tremendous turnout for Five Rivers' 20th Annual New Year's Day bird count. Unlike a Christmas Bird Count, this was an event to record species seen rather than numbers of individuals, an annual event to kick off the

year's list with a public program. Over 80 people participated, most in the three formal 9 AM walks led by Five Rivers Center Director Craig Thompson, former Director Alan Mapes, and yours truly. These groups scoured the grounds of Five Rivers, supplemented by some independent early morning work by several HMBC members. The tally for the day was 37 species, second to the all-time record of 38.

GREAT BLUE HERON was new to the count, raising the composite list for the 20 years to 66 species. Also found were **COOPER'S HAWK** (second time) and two species for only the third time, **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** and **CAROLINA WREN**. Thirteen species have been found on New Year's Day every year; these are **MOURNING DOVE**, **DOWNY WOODPECKER**, **BLUE JAY**, **AMERICAN CROW**, **BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE**, **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH**, **NORTHERN CARDINAL**, **AMERICAN TREE SPARROW**, **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW**, **DARK-EYED JUNCO**, **HOUSE FINCH**, **AMERICAN GOLDFINCH** and **HOUSE SPARROW**. Although seen there recently, **Common Redpoll** and **Northern Shrike** were not found on January 1, nor were any ducks. **Belted Kingfisher** has been added since the first, attesting to the mild weather.

All species seen this day were credited to the New Year's Day Count; however, people are encouraged to visit Five Rivers and report their sightings; any new-for-the-year species will be added to the year list with due credit to the observer! Let's try to break 150 for the year at Five Rivers, and add to the Center's cumulative all-time total of 216!

- Scott Stoner



Upcoming HMBC Field Trips

(Consult your field trip schedule or Birdline (439-8080) for trip details)

FEB 12 BIGELOW ROAD - BLOOMINGDALE BOG

Sat

Coordinator: Bill Lee

374-3426

This Adirondack hot spot is readily accessible and home to Boreal Chickadee, Gray Jay and Red and White-winged Crossbills. Three-toed Woodpecker is also often seen here. Call the coordinator for meeting time and place and an alternate weather date, if necessary.

FEB 19 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR FORT EDWARD GRASSLANDS TRIP (Feb 26)

FEB 19-21 CAPE ANN & PLUM ISLAND

Sat - Mon

Coordinator: Bill Lee

374-3426

Reservations by Jan 31

Our popular winter trip to the Massachusetts coast will focus on the north shore from Nahant, just north of Boston, to the New Hampshire coast. Join us in search of alcids, white-winged gulls, Purple Sandpiper, Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, Eiders, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspur, Short-eared and Snowy Owls and other raptors on this three-day weekend.

FEB 26 FORT EDWARD GRASSLANDS (WASHINGTON COUNTY)

Sat

Coordinators: Brad & Beth Bidwell

632-5692

Co-sponsored with the FNYCBC

Reservations by February 19

This large agricultural grassland complex is a hot spot for wintering raptors, Rough-legged Hawks, Peregrine Falcon and Snowy and Short-eared Owls; and Lapland Longspurs have been here in recent winters. This is a joint trip with the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs. Participation may be limited so call the coordinator for reservations, meeting time and place.

MARCH 1 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR DELAWARE BAYSHORE TRIP (May 27-29)

MAR 5 WATERBIRDS OF THE LOWER MOHAWK VALLEY

Sun

Coordinator: Gerry Colborn

272-1544 or

gdcolborn@prodigy.net

On this morning trip, we will scan the Mohawk for gulls, cormorants and mergansers. Emphasis will be placed on gull identification. Iceland and Glaucous Gulls are quite possible, and there's always a chance for Lesser Black-backed Gull. Bring your scope, if you have one, since we'll visit the Crescent Dam and Cohoes Falls and other vantage points along the river. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Jumping Jack's parking lot at the Scotia end of the of the Western Gateway Bridge (Route 5).



APR 16 CHRISTMAN SANCTUARY
Sun **Coordinator: Ann B'Rells** **355-5615**

This compact Nature Conservancy property, along the waterfalls of the Bozenkill, contains old fields, orchards, pine plantations and mature woods. On this morning walk, we will be looking for early spring arrivals such as Prairie Warbler, Hermit Thrush and Louisiana Waterthrush. There will be some required hill walking, and muddy conditions are expected. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the Central National Bank in Duanesburg, which is on Route 20 (Western Ave.) just after the turn for I-88 and about 1/2 mile east of the intersection of Routes 20 & 7 (on the left hand side of Route 20 coming from Albany). Parking is extremely limited at the Sanctuary, so we ask that you meet for carpooling to the site that is about a mile away from the meeting place.

APRIL 17 - RESERVATION DUE FOR DERBY HILL, OSWEGO COUNTY & LAKE ONTARIO (April 22)

APR 22 DERBY HILL, OSWEGO COUNTY AND LAKE ONTARIO
Sat **Coordinator: Sue Adair** **355-8008**
Reservations by April 17

We plan an early start for this all day trip to Oswego County so bring a lunch. Derby Hill is a prime hawk-watching site, but as always, weather conditions (especially winds) can make or break a good flight. However, we also plan to visit various sites in Oswego County and along Lake Ontario in search of early spring migrants. Possibilities exist for Palm, Pine, Prairie and Yellow-rumped warblers, as well as kinglets, sparrows and Winter Wren. Meeting place and time will be given to you when you call the coordinator to register for the trip.

APR 27 WOODCOCK AT FIVE RIVERS
Thur **Coordinator: Alan Mapes** **439-4086**

During a meandering walk to the Woodcock site, we will look for other early spring birds. Woodcock flight time is expected around 8 p.m. Bring binoculars and flashlight. Meet at the Five Rivers Interpretive Building at 7 p.m. (See page 2 for directions.)

APR 29 PALMER'S RAVINE AND VICINITY
Sat **Coordinator: Tom Palmer** **843-1491**

On the morning portion of this trip, we will spend much of our time at Palmer's Ravine, the coordinator's own woodland preserve. Waterproof footgear will repel the morning dew in Tom's grassy fields. We can hope for Great Horned Owl in the ravine and Kestrel in the Kestrel box Tom has set up. We can expect Bluebirds and Tree Swallows. We are planning an early start but call the Coordinator for reservations and meeting time. (See page 2 for directions to the Palmer residence) .



National Audubon Society to Sponsor Lake Ontario Bird Festival 2000

OSWEGO COUNTY, NY - The National Audubon Society of New York State has agreed to become the organizational sponsor of the Lake Ontario Bird Festival, to be held May 5 through 7, 2000, at Mexico Point State Park along Lake Ontario's eastern shore.

"The Lake Ontario Bird Festival is a perfect event for the National Audubon Society of New York State to promote its mission for the protection and proper management of birds, wildlife, and their habitats through advocacy and education," said David Miller, executive director of the National Audubon Society of New York State.

The theme of the 2000 festival will be "Birding Our Big Backyard."

"We plan a mix of programs, with live birds and noted conservation speakers, activities highlighting opportunities for birdwatching across New York State, along with activities to enhance the bird habitat in your own backyard," said Betty Green, festival chairwoman and Town of Mexico councilwoman.

"We're excited to announce the National Audubon Society of New York is our new organizational sponsor, and that the New York Power Authority has recently renewed its major sponsorship of the festival for 2000. This kind of support will allow us to continue to offer conservation and live bird programs in regional school districts as part of our educational mission," Green continued.

Festival activities include live bird demonstrations, conservation education speakers, information displays, wildlife arts and crafts booths, habitat hikes, and a shuttle to Derby Hill, a New York State Important Bird Area which is located nearby. Field trips will visit other nearby birding "hot spots" and state parks on Lake Ontario.

The festival will take place Friday, Saturday and Sunday, May 5, 6 and 7. There is no admission charge for the 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daytime festival events Saturday and Sunday at Mexico Point State Park, located just off New York State's only National Scenic Byway, the Seaway Trail (NYS Route 104B). Evening programs will carry a ticket price.

New for 2000 will be Friday and Saturday evening programs, featuring a wildlife photographer along with Dr. Steve Kress, who will discuss how to attract birds through landscaping. Dr. Kress, who initiated the restoration of puffins along the coast of Maine, will also be signing his new book, "The Bird Garden."

Saturday evening activities include a barbecue, hayrides and riverside storyteller around the campfire at Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Resort on the Little Salmon River.

A new Junior Artists and Environmentalists Program at the festival offers a series of hands-on activities, including birdhouse building, wetlands walk and talk, and habitat drawing at Derby Hill.



Author Hope Marston will read about wood ducks and burrowing owls from her "Little Book" series. Youngsters and their families will learn backyard birdfeeding tips and how to identify bird songs.

"The Lake Ontario Bird Festival is becoming a major event worthy of the attention of tour operators as well as local residents and individual birding enthusiasts," noted Christine Gray, APR, director of Oswego County's Promotion and Tourism Department. "We are now packaging the festival among our offerings for motorcoach companies and for presentation at trade shows organized by the American Bus Association and other tour group associations."

Over the past few years, festival participants have seen 106 different bird species. Highlights include the sighting of an adult red-throated loon and a pair of American bitterns. In 1998, a pair of harlequin ducks lingered in the lake waters off the festival grounds for most of the festival's second day. Eighty-five different birds were seen and heard during the 1999 festival.

The festival began in 1997, following a study by the Central and Western New York Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, which cited that lakeshore habitats offer a diversity of colorful songbirds migrating through Central New York. Derby Hill Bird Observatory has traditionally been respected as a place to view thousands of hawks during the spring migration season.

Members of the Onondaga Chapter of the National Audubon Society will again lead field trips and help organize the festival. Through a statewide council, 32 chapters, and a sanctuary system, National Audubon Society of New York State is providing conservation leadership based on sound science with specific campaigns on birds, forests, wetlands, and wildlife on local, state and national levels.

For a year 2000 program flyer, write to:
Lake Ontario Bird Festival
P.O. Box 326
Mexico, NY
13114

Check the web site at www.co.oswego.ny.us, or call (315) 349-8322.



JOIN IN OUR SECOND BREEDING BIRD ATLAS!

In the early 1980's, New York was one of the first states to do an Atlas project, mapping the breeding distribution of its birds. Now it is time for New York to repeat the Atlas in order to learn how breeding bird distribution has changed.

The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs is working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Cornell's Department of Natural Resources, and the Lab of Ornithology on this huge project.

The state has been divided into about 5300 blocks, each about 10 square miles (25 square kilometers). Our goal is to send a birder into every one of those blocks over a five year period, beginning in spring 2000. This will require many field workers (over 4000 participated last time!)

Your help is needed!! Field observers will visit various habitats within assigned blocks and will record evidence of breeding for as many species as possible. Each will be provided with instructions, field cards and maps, and asked to use specific criteria to rate each species as a possible, probable, or confirmed breeder.

If you want to participate, contact your Regional Coordinator for more information:

Niagara Frontier Region 1

Richard C. Rosche
110 Maple Rd.
East Aurora, NY 14052-1720
Phone: 716-652-8409
email: drosche@juno.com
(prefers email communication first)

Genesee Region 2

Robert Spahn
716 High Tower Way
Wester, NY 14580-2514
Phone: 716-671-5690
email: KHVM75@prodigy.com

Finger Lakes Region 3

Bard Prentiss
P.O. Box 283
Dryden, NY 13053
Phone: 607-844-4691
email: prentissb@snycorva.cortland.edu

Susquehanna Region 4

Chad Covey
49 S. Main St.
New Berlin, NY 13411
Home phone: 607-847-6522
Work phone: 607-753-3095 X 201

Oneida Basin Region 5

Dorothy W. Crumb
3983 Gates Road
Jamesville, NY 13078
Phone: 315-682-5420
email: dwcrumb@a-znet.com

or

Bill Purcell
281 Baum Road
Hastings, NY 13076
Phone: 315-668-2871
email: wpurcell@dreamscape.com

St. Lawrence Region 6

Bob Long
Box 206
Pompey, NY 13138
Phone: 315-677-9840
email: rlongmd@AOL.com

Adirondack-Champlain Region 7

John M. C. Peterson
Discovery Farm, RR 1, Box 230
Elizabethtown, NY 12932
Phone: 518-873-2052

Hudson-Mohawk Region 8

Jane Graves
133 York Ave.
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-2533
Home phone: 518-587-8992 (before 6 pm)
email: jgraves@skimore.edu
(email is preferred contact)

Hudson-Delaware Region 9

Michael Bochnik
Home address: 86 Empire Street
Yonkers, NY 10704
Home phone: 914-237-9331
Work phone: 914-785-3840
Home email:
76652.3224@compuserve.com
Work email: michael.bochnik@cibasc.com

Marine Region 10

Ken Feustel
41 Belton Road
Babylon, NY 11702
Phone: 516-669-0951
email: feustel@mindspring.com

Or write to: Breeding Bird Atlas Project Coordinator, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation,
Wildlife Resources Center, Delmar, NY 12054



HMBC BOARD FOR 1999 - 2000

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HMBC Contact Information

BIRDLINE of E. NEW YORK: (518) 439-8080

Email: hmbc@hotmail.com

HMBC website: <http://members.xoom.com/hmbc/>

Reminder!!

All HMBC Board meetings are open to all Club members. Board meetings usually take place the second Monday of every odd-numbered month. Meetings are held at Five Rivers Center or other local venues at 7:00 PM. The March, 2000 meeting will be held at Treasurer Dan Welch's place of business, The Sweater Venture, on Rt. 9 in Latham on the **third Monday, March 20.**

Send articles, clip-art,
photos, artwork to:

Feathers
c/o Cathy Graichen
23 Scotch Mist Way
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

or via e-mail to:

recerg@crisny.org

Feathers



PRESIDENT'S CORNER: As I write this, there's a foot-plus of snow on the ground outside, but the PBS show that's on the tube is a tour of summertime Alaska on the Alaska railroad — just the sort of thing to spark my annual late-winter antsiness for springtime weather and birding! While waiting for the snow to melt, there's a lot of Club business to work on. As you read through this issue of *Feathers*, you'll note that we're looking for volunteers to fill quite a few leadership positions in the Club. As a volunteer organization, the Club can only be as strong as the people who lend their time and effort to keep the Club running. At the moment

we're looking for people to help out on two important Club committees: the Field Trip Committee, which is in need of a new committee Chair, and the Birdline Committee, which can always use additional help compiling incoming calls, producing the weekly message scripts and making the message as "The Voice." We are also looking for people to join the HMBC Board as Officers or Board members.

Another important volunteer opportunity for HMBC members is the new New York State Breeding Bird Atlas project organized by the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs. The Hudson-Mohawk Region contains the largest number of Atlas blocks of any region in the State, so we need as many people to help out as we can possibly muster. The best thing about this project is that to do the "work" involved means you have to (!) go birding.

If you're interested in any of these openings, please contact the people mentioned elsewhere in *Feathers*, or you can call me and I'll put you in touch with the appropriate person. As always, I want to thank all of the hard-working people who volunteer their time and effort to keep the Club running smoothly.

Gregg Recer

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Vol. 62
No. 2

April
2000

Published Bi-monthly by The Hudson-Mohawk

Getting it Down Right

(Observations on Feeding Behavior of the Great Blue Heron)

by Carl George and Ray Perry

It is 8:45 AM on the clearing Sunday morning of October 12, 1997, with an air temperature of 37F. The heavy mattress of fog is lifting from the Mohawk Valley at Collins Lake, Scotia, opening the still and sunny day. Water temperature is 54F. A Song Sparrow sings from its perch atop a spruce tree a few yards away. A pair of Pied-billed Grebe dive-feed over the muddy bottom of the southeastern bay of the lake. A flock of seven Ring-billed Gull rest on the sand beach of the Southwestern shore. The Red-winged Blackbirds - hundreds of them - have long since left their roost in the cane-brake nearby and scour the countryside for breakfast.

A juvenile Great Blue Heron stands in the shallows of the northeast corner of the lake struggling to ingest a twelve-inch long Brown Bullhead (*Ictalurus nebulosus*); the fish is so long and large - about two inches in diameter - that the bird has difficulty lifting its head and neck into the swallowing position but in spite of repeated and exhausting efforts the fish will not go down. The fish's large, spinous pectoral fins are erected and catch in the corners of the bird's mouth preventing the swallowing. The bird's head drops and the fish is released into the shallow water only to be quickly recaptured for another, futile effort at swallowing. The lifting is repeated three more times but in each case the spines impede the swallowing regardless of the vigorous shaking and thrusting of the bird's large head.

Finally, the bird throws the fish down into the shallows and with great precision either breaks

or disengages the spine of the right pectoral fin; it then rolls the now limp fish over onto the other side to similarly alter the spine of the left fin - the process taking but a few minutes. After a short period of rest and seeming contemplation the head of the large fish is again engaged, the great beak of the heron lifted skywards - and the bulky morsel slithers from sight creating a notable ripple as it descends into the digestive apparatus. A heroic and, possibly, clever act of feeding has been completed - and observed.

The first author has stood at Quinlan Park along the east shore of Collins Lake at least once, almost every day for the last ten years

continued

■ This Issue...

In Memory of Sam Madison

Reflections on Everglades

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Programs and Field Trips

Atlas 2000 Project

Lake Ontario Bird Festival

Golden-winged Warbler Project



and this is the first time the described feeding behavior of the Great Blue heron has been seen. How disappointing it was that no other person shared and confirmed the observations. Furthermore, review of the many accounts of the Great Blue Heron in standard references make no mention of the observed behavior.

And then most delightfully, the second author, also observing at Collins Lake about a week later reports seeing quite the same behavior: a Great Blue Heron consuming a large Brown Bullhead after "billipulation" of the pectoral spines - but this time in the sandy shallows of the southwestern shore. Again, it is not clear whether the spines are broken, removed or disengaged because the fish is submerged in the shallow water. Also, the authors are not sure whether it was the same immature bird

doing the feeding.

We are thus confronted with the long-standing quandary of animal behavior: Were the bird's actions simply the unfolding of innate behavior "hard-wired" into the brain of the species?; was the fin alteration a cultural artifact passed on from bird to bird by observation and learning?; or, were we seeing the result of on-the-spot problem solving of a fellow sentient creature?

The authors present these notes asking other members of the HMBC to share with us similar observations on the feeding of the Great Blue Heron.

Utica Marsh

by *Scott Stoner & Denise Hackert-Stoner*

In our first visit to this state wildlife management area in Oneida County site we were impressed with its avian inhabitants but disturbed by the conditions there. In several hours on April 8, we saw 10 Great Blue Herons and a variety of waterfowl including Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck and nice looks at Northern Shovelers. There are two viewing towers which provide nice overlooks of the extensive marsh. A woodland/marsh trail was in poor condition with flooding and a broken boardwalk, but in a short distance we did see both Kinglets, White-breasted Nuthatch and very close Brown Creeper. A drive down to the Mohawk River portion of the preserve produced nice looks at three Wild Turkeys, bringing our total to about 30 species, just before the storm hit.

Unfortunately, the area appears to be a major site for illegal dumping, including large items, such as a water heater, outdoor gym, etc. There was so much debris that it made for a less than pleasant human visitor experience. A clean-up day is scheduled for May 6, however. For information on that, as well as bird lists and other information for Utica Marsh, visit the web site:

http://academics.hamilton.edu/biology/ewilliam/utica_marsh.html



In memory of Longtime HMBC Member Samuel Madison

It's our unhappy duty to report that on April 7, Samuel Madison, longtime HMBC member and good friend to many Club members, died after a brief illness. Sam was born in 1914 in Buffalo NY. He grew up in the Lockport area, attended Alfred University and the University of Buffalo, and received his law degree from U. Buffalo in 1943, graduating at the top of his class. Sam was admitted to the New York State Bar the same month he graduated from law school and went on to a very distinguished career in public-utility law working for the State's Public Service Commission for nearly 40 years, including more than 20 years as the Commission's chief executive officer.

Sam's tenure with HMBC (and its predecessor, the Schenectady Bird Club) was equally remarkable. Sam joined the Club in 1948 and was a Life member. Sam was pivotal in the re-structuring of the Schenectady Bird Club into HMBC in 1969 and drafted HMBC's certificate of incorporation. He was among HMBC's original Board of Directors and served as Club President on three separate occasions. Sam continued to be a valued source of advice, policy information and Club history for many HMBC Boards for nearly 30 years after his last term as President. In 1994 Sam's extensive contributions to the Club were recognized when he received the first Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club Lifetime Service Award.

Sam was a prodigious field birder, with a life-list total for the American Birding Association region (North America north of Mexico and not counting Hawaii or the Caribbean) of 732 (ranking 114 on the all-time ABA list). He led numerous Club field trips well into the '90's, including many of the trips that have become Club standards, such as Cape Ann, Mass in winter and the Delmarva peninsula in spring. His birding career included worldwide birding travel, capped off by a trip to Attu that was highlighted in Pete Dunne's book, *The Feather Quest*.

Sam is survived by his wife, Audrey, 5 children, 11 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren. Gifts in Sam's memory may be made to the Unity Church Albany Building Fund or the Eastern New York Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

A future issue of *Feathers* will be devoted to remembrances of Sam from other Club members. Anyone who has a story or anecdote about Sam that they would like to share is encouraged to contribute.



Reflection on the Everglades by Scott Stoner

"There are no other Everglades in the world."

This statement by Marjory Stoneman Douglas in her 1947 masterpiece, *The Everglades: River of Grass*, summarizes the way we too think of this precious, priceless and imperiled ecosystem in South Florida. Despite its decline due to human endeavors, the Everglades, and other remaining public lands in this region, are some of our most favorite places in the world. The decline of birdlife here is tremendous (wading bird populations down by fully 93% since about the 1930's), but enough remains to show even first-time visitors that this is a land still worth saving. The Everglades is a prime example of the fact that our parks do not exist in isolation, and that protecting a piece of land does not prevent activities outside its boundaries from negatively impacting it. We have affected the quality, quantity, timing and distribution of water in this system, and the Everglades have suffered dearly for it. Fortunately, finally, enough people have advocated a change in the destructive practices that have diverted water from the Everglades, that an 8 billion dollar restoration effort is being planned. We are hopeful that with the support of the readers of this article, along with those worldwide who love these lands as we do, this restoration will succeed. You can read about it at www.evergladesplan.org. Support of Everglades protection and restoration can always be made to our representatives in Washington!

This winter we were able to take an extended vacation to South Florida, visiting Everglades National Park, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and Sanibel Island with its magnificent sunrises, sunsets, shelling beaches and the fabulous J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge.

Based first at Flamingo in Everglades National Park, we explored Anhinga Trail, Eco Pond, the pinelands, the mangroves, the coastal prairie and the true Everglades, the sawgrass (sedge) containing "river of grass." The first thing we noticed as we entered the Park was the construction along the main park road. Two segments are being rebuilt to allow for greater passage of water through the Taylor Slough, which then runs through the Anhinga Trail area. Anhingas were nesting here; at least one nest had several small, skinny-necked young pecking up wanting to be fed. Other species here included Snowy and Great Egrets, Double-crested Cormorants, Pied-billed Grebes, Common Moorhen, Limpkin (heard) and Pileated Woodpecker. Along with the nearly 100 vultures of both species overhead we spotted a dark-morph Short-tailed Hawk, this long sought after bird was new for Denise.

While visiting Anhinga Trail we had a remarkable opportunity to observe the beautiful Purple Gallinule as it fed upon the seed pods of the water lilies that grow in Taylor Slough. After nipping a pod off, the Gallinule headed to a secluded place among the foliage. It began to peck at the pod, eventually exposing the seeds. Within its beak, the bird extracted one seed, and carefully rinsed it in the water, loosening a whitish substance which washed away in the stream. Only after rinsing, did the bird eat the seed. It repeated this behavior, pecking, rinsing and swallowing, until all of the seeds were eaten, and then stepped out of the reeds back to the lily pad, standing on its incredibly huge feet, to nip off another pod. It was a fascinating process to observe, and we



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wondered about this milky substance that the bird seemed so interested in rinsing off. Was it a toxic substance meant to protect the seeds from consumption? Or did it just have a foul taste?

Another highlight of our stay was the sighting of 6 Painted Buntings near the cottages, including two splendidly colored males!

Moving over to Florida's southwest area, a day at Corkscrew provided a look at the eggs of the apple snail (the adult of which the Limpkin and Snail Kite feed upon), and nesting Wood Storks and Yellow-crowned Night-Herons. One of the latter was feeding from a log right next to the boardwalk, providing a super photo opportunity for all who ventured by.

A full week on Sanibel was both restful and exciting; days at Ding Darling were sandwiched between some of the finest sunrises and sunsets we'd ever seen., Along with shells along the beach, we were surprised by the number of herons and egrets that walked the shallow waters along the Gulf. Other species on the beach included Willet, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-bellied Plover, Sandwich and Royal Terns and Black Skimmer. One evening, we observed a Great Blue Heron trying to get the fish that some men were catching. The bird was persistent and the men were annoyed, even throwing sand in an effort to drive it away. The bird persevered, however, and eventually flew off with its prize, possibly snatched from the fishermen's own box!

Folks who have been to Ding Darling share our view that it is one of the jewels of the National Wildlife Refuge system! With its 5-mile wildlife drive past several ponds, one never quite knew what to expect. The viewing varied with both the tide and time of day, with morning and evenings usually best. One time we could see 140 Snowy Egrets in a single pond; another time there was an abundance of shorebirds including both Yellowlegs, Dunlin, Willets, and more. Reddish Egrets were often about, in with the Tri-colored and Little Blue Herons. Two evenings, we had close looks at a group of about 50 Roseate Spoonbills silhouetted in the setting sun!

We urge you to visit the natural parts of Florida, advocate for its restoration, and come see our slide show in September!





UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Please Note: The May and June programs will return to Five Rivers EEC and begin at 7:30 PM. The Fall and Winter programs will return to the Colonie Library except the December Holiday party.

Monday May 8 (note - special date - NO MEETING FIRST MONDAY) Daniel Edelstein on *Wood-Warblers: Threatened Beauties*, 7:30 pm, Five Rivers.

Combining slides of eastern North American wood-warblers with their songs, this audio-visual presentation highlights our small and colorful songsters whose brief migrational visit adds so much to the spring and autumn landscape. In addition to the slides and songs of warblers, we will explore the population declines in some species, especially forest-breeding neotropical migrants (such as warblers) that nest in North America and whose winter/summer habitats have experienced degradation. Daniel will describe several long-term biomonitoring programs for land birds including the Breeding Bird Survey and Breeding Bird Census, that may play a major role in aiding efforts to conserve avian diversity including warblers, in North America.

Daniel Edelstein is a naturalist and science writer from Maryland, who has led bird walks and taught natural history classes for the past 20 years. He has been an instructor for the DC-based Audubon Naturalist Society and author of the book, *A Program Planner for Naturalists and Outdoor Educators*.

Mon Jun 5 Don and Donna Traver on *Chile* 7:30 PM, Five Rivers.

The primary motivation for traveling to Chile was the opportunity to search for Magellanic Plover, a monotypic family found only at the southern extremes of our hemisphere. Over 250 species of birds were seen which included names like Andean Condor, Chilean Flamingo (on a lake of 13,000 elevation near the Bolivian border), Inca Tern, Magellanic Woodpecker, Scale-throated Earthcreeper, Rufous-tailed Plantcutter, Patagonian Sierra-Finch, Craig Chillia and Buller's Albatross on a pelagic out of Valparaiso. Chile is a wonderful, spectacularly beautiful and friendly place to bird!

Donna and Don Traver are retired public school educators who spend much of their time birding. They have set a goal of seeing a representative of each of the world's 196 bird families. Some of the places the quest has taken them thus far are Bhutan, Borneo, Brazil, Madagascar, New Zealand and the United Arab Emirates.

Mon Sep 11, Scott and Denise Stoner on *South Florida: Imperiled Paradise*, 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library

Mon Oct 2, Jim Coe on *Birding by Habitat*, 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library

Mon Nov 6 Scott Corcoll, NYS DEC, *Hawks and Owls of New York State*, 7PM Colonie Library

Mon Dec 4 Neil Giffords, Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission, *Breeding Birds in a Fire-dependent Jack Pine Barrens*, 7PM Holiday Party, 7:30 PM Program, Five Rivers.



PROGRAM REPORTS

Seabirds Jan 3, 2000

HMBC members and friends were both entertained and educated as Bill Gorman presented the Club's first program of the new year on January 3. Held at the Colonie Town Library, a group of about 50 people escaped the frigid temperatures to enjoy Bill's fine movie on the subject of seabirds.

As always, the quality of Bill's movie was top notch, giving the enthralled audience a rare opportunity to witness pelagic birds in action. We enjoyed gaining from Bill's expertise as he described the various categories of sea-going birds, and were able to see many examples of birds from each category.

Bill presented fine moving pictures of birds such as albatross, tropicbird, frigatebird, boobies and noddies, among others. Some birds were in flight, while others were filmed while feeding or nesting.

Once again, HMBC members reaped the benefits of having a film maker in their midst, and we thank Bill for continuing to offer his hard won product for our enjoyment and education.

- *Denise Hackert-Stoner*

Belize February 7, 2000

On Monday February 7, 2000, Graham Cox of National Audubon's NY State office gave us an interesting and enlightening look at Belize and its critical conservation needs. Graham provided the following summary:

Belize is a small country about the size of the Adirondack Park, on the Yucatan Peninsula in Central America. It has a long and fascinating history as part of the Mayan Empire, from 400 to 900 A.D., and a sad and scarred recent history, complete with slavery and labor unrest, as part of the British colonial system. However, today, as an independent country with a relatively small (230,000) but racially

Capital District Audubon Society Programs

Thurs May 11, 7 PM, Colonie Library, Kathy O'Brien of DEC on the **Karner blue butterfly** of the Albany Pine Bush.

Thurs June 8, The monthly audubon program is an outdoor walk, in the Albany Pine Bush, led by staff of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission. Look for birds and discuss ecology. Meet at 6 PM at the butterfly sign on the east side of SR 155 just south of Old State Road (the intersection where the Credit union is). We will be on the trails from 6 pm - 8 PM.

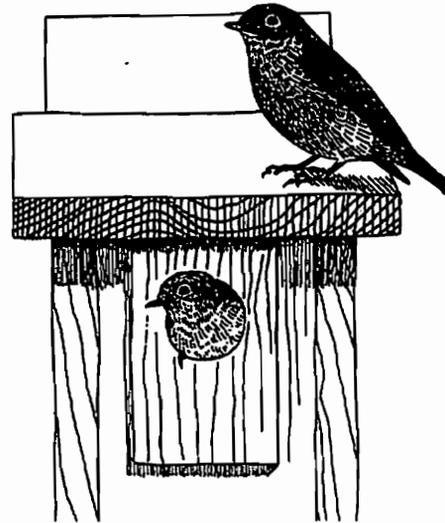


mixed population it is doing a great job in promoting conservation of its natural resources and in developing its ecotourism economy. The Belize Audubon Society is playing a key role in managing the country's nature preserves, which are rich and fascinating havens for birds and wildlife, including jaguars and howler monkeys. They have a strong sense of their Mayan history and have opened up a lot of the Mayan city and temple sites. They also have the longest coral reef in the Western Hemisphere off their Caribbean coast which is the focal point for much of their Western tourism trade.

But there is a down side: the country is in desperate need for money to develop its physical and human infrastructure. The international community is funding major road construction from the capital city south to the Mayan Mountains, speeding the logging of tropical hardwoods, including mahogany.

Graham also presented a request for assistance from Alejandro Grajal of Audubon's Latin American and Caribbean Program, for both the Crooked Tree Wildlife Reserve and the Cockscomb Jaguar Reserve. If HMBC members would like to contribute, they are asked to contact Alejandro directly at the address below.

1. The Crooked Tree Wildlife reserve desperately needs a new outboard motor (45 hp). Their previous motor was stolen and the very committed park rangers are stuck with a smaller backup motor and boat. The Crooked Tree Wildlife reserve is the largest wetland in Belize and home to 38 pairs of nesting Jabirus as well as thousands of wading birds, ducks and migratory birds. It is also a birding paradise.



2. Cockscomb reserve also needs chainsaws for clearing interpretation trails and general maintenance.

3. They also need binoculars in good state and Mexican Field Guides.

4. They encourage everyone to visit their 9 reserves in Belize and enjoy their natural and cultural diversity.

Alejandro Grajal, Ph.D.
Director, Latin America and Caribbean Program
National Audubon Society
444 Brickell Avenue, Suite 850
Miami, FL 33131 USA
<http://www.audubon.org/local/latin/>
Tel 305-371-6399
Fax 305-371-6398
E-mail AGRAJA@Audubon.org



Alaska March 6, 2000

On this evening, Sue and John Adair treated us to a tour of some of Alaska's birding hotspots, flowers and spectacular scenery. With John's fine pictures and Sue's insightful narration, the 70 folks present that evening came away with a perspective of this great state from the glaciers of Kenai Fjords to the bird cliffs of St. Paul, the grandeur of Denali and the barrenness of Nome.

Beginning in Anchorage in June, one immediately notes the near-constant float plane activity. Alaska is a remote area, and air is a primary means of transportation.

A boat trip at Kenai Fjords National Park offered close-up views of calving glaciers and seabirds. An even closer view was being had by some folks in kayaks, which seemed a riskier endeavor!

After landing on a gravel strip on remote St. Paul Island in the Pribiloffs, they saw numerous species along the bird cliffs, including Least, Crested and Parakeet Auklets, Com-

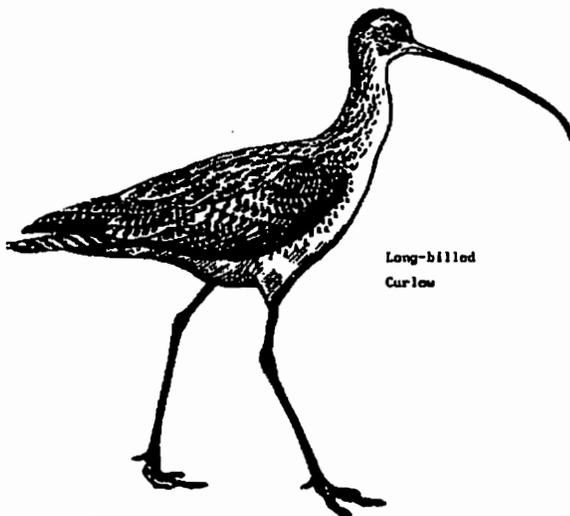
mon and Thick-billed Murres, Red-legged Kittiwakes, and Red-faced Cormorants, and Puffins. The four species of passerine on the island included the easily found Gray-crowned Rosy Finch and the not-found Mackay's Bunting. Fishing is a primary industry on this small treeless island, which boasts one hotel used by visiting birders, a Russian Orthodox church, and a climate that is often cool and cloudy.

Denali National Park and its centerpiece, the dominating, weather-making peak of Denali proper, offered nearly a hundred miles of vastness, crossed by a single road, The mountain, visible from 200 miles away, when closer rewarded the Adairs with sunny views of its snow-covered peak, a rare and inspiring sight. Birding within Denali was less prolific than along the Denali Highway east of the Park, but offered such treats as long-tailed Jaeger, and a somewhat uncomfortably close look at a grizzly bear,

Remote Nome, at only a few thousand the fifth largest town in Alaska, had remains of the gold rush, a railroad to nowhere, and 24-hour days that offered views of such specialties as Bristle-thighed Curlew, reached after only a short hike across difficult terrain.

A visit to Alaska is a rewarding, enlightening and enriching experience, as was our evening spent learning about it.

-Scott Stoner



Long-billed
Curlew



Upcoming HMBC Field Trips

(Consult your field trip schedule or Birdline (439-8080) for trip details)

APR 27
Thur

WOODCOCK AT FIVE RIVERS

Coordinator: Alan Mapes

439-4086

During a meandering walk to the Woodcock site, we will look for other early spring birds. Woodcock flight time is expected around 8 p.m. Bring binoculars and flashlight. Meet at the Five Rivers Interpretive Building at 7 p.m. (See page 2 for directions.)

APR 29
Sat

PALMER'S RAVINE AND VICINITY

Coordinator: Tom Palmer

843-1491

On the morning portion of this trip, we will spend much of our time at Palmer's Ravine, the coordinator's own woodland preserve. Waterproof footgear will repel the morning dew in Tom's grassy fields. We can hope for Great Horned Owl in the ravine and Kestrel in the Kestrel box Tom has set up. We can expect Bluebirds and Tree Swallows. We are planning an early start but call the Coordinator for reservations and meeting time. (See page 2 for directions to the Palmer residence) .

MAY 3
Wed

PEEBLES ISLAND STATE PARK

Coordinator: Frank Murphy

373-1933

On this evening walk, we will search for early shorebirds, ducks, Palm Warbler, Osprey, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and many first arrivals for the year. The shadbush should be in spectacular bloom as well. Meet at 6:00 p.m. at the main parking lot. (See page 2 for directions.)

MAY 6
Sat

WILSON POWELL BIRD SANCTUARY

Coordinator: Jackie Bogardus

283-6603

Join us for this spring visit to Columbia County's spectacular Wilson Powell Bird Sanctuary. The sanctuary, owned and maintained by the Alan Devoe Bird Club, is comprised of diverse habitat, offering nesting and foraging opportunities for a wide variety of birds. Expect to see herons, ducks, geese, kingfishers, sparrows and finches, and hopefully many other songbirds and migrating warblers. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the small parking area on Rt. 9 about a mile south of Exit 12 of I-90. Bring a snack or lunch as we expect to be at the Sanctuary until at least noon.

MAY 7
Sun

PAPSCANEE PRESERVE.....AND BEYOND?

Coordinator: Gary Goodness

272-5830

This recently opened preserve lies between 9J and the Hudson River in southern Rensselaer County. We'll spend the first part of this early May morning exploring this site in search of migrants. An optional extension might take us to another local spot as recent bird activity indicates. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking area off 9J onto Staats Island Road.



MAY 9
Tues

REIST SANCTUARY
Coordinator: Joe Coticchio

374-2449

Join us for an evening exploration of the HMBC's Reist Sanctuary property in Niskayuna led by HMBC's Sanctuary Committee Chair. This trip will be in search of migrant and summer-resident songbirds including warblers, vireos, thrushes and flycatchers. The Sanctuary is also a good location for observing Pileated Woodpecker. Meet at 6:00 PM at the end of Morgan Ave., off of St. David's Lane in Niskayuna.

MAY 11
Thurs

FIVE RIVERS
Coordinator: Alan Mapes

439-4086

On this evening walk, we will explore Five Rivers' woodlands, fields and ponds in search of migrant songbirds and arriving breeders. We'll do a little scouting in preparation for the upcoming Birds and Breakfast, and we may also try for American Woodcock at the end of the evening if they're present and still performing their courtship flights. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Interpretive Building (visitor center). See directions on page 2.

MAY 13
Sat

BIRDS AND BREAKFAST AT FIVE RIVERS
Coordinator: Denise Hilton

785-6760

Our annual celebration of the arrival of spring will be held at the Five Rivers Environmental Education Center on Game Farm Road in Delmar. The Center has an excellent trail system through a variety of habitats. You can expect to see and hear a number of resident species and migrants, including Canada Geese with their newly hatched goslings, Eastern Bluebirds feeding their young, and (hopefully) a number of different warblers. The Interpretive Building (visitor center) will be open, with coffee flowing, from 6:45 a.m. Birding groups will leave from there at 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. You may join one of these groups, or come earlier and go out on your own, as we try to find as many species as possible. We'll rally at 10:30 a.m. for coffee, doughnuts, bagels, fresh fruit (approx. \$3.00 donation) and a list compilation. (See page 2 for directions.)

MAY 14
Sun

VISCHER FERRY MIGRANTS
Coordinators: Gregg Recer & Cathy Graichen

899-2678

Timed for the peak of spring migration, this is one of the Club's most popular trips. We will explore this varied site for warblers and other songbirds, as well as marsh species including rails and bitterns. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Main Entrance (See page 2 for directions.)



MAY 27
Sat

GRAFTON LAKES STATE PARK
Coordinators: Philip and Marjorie Whitney

477-9050

By now, most of the migrant songbirds will be on territory and singing. Expect up to a dozen warbler species, plus thrushes, vireos, Scarlet Tanager and the resident woodland birds. Take Route 2 east from Troy to the main entrance and go from there to the parking lot at Long Pond Beach where we will assemble at 7:30 a.m.

MAY 28 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR FORT DRUM GRASSLANDS & PERCH RIVER WMA (Jun 10-11)

JUN 3-4
Sat-Sun

ADIRONDACK WEEKEND: WHITEFACE MT & MASSAWEPEE MIRE
Coordinator: Bill Lee
Co-sponsored with the NYSFBC
Reservations by May 21

374-3426

Spruce Grouse and Bicknell's Thrush are the target species for this trip and special arrangements have been made to see them. We'll join D.E.C.'s Spruce Grouse expert, John Ozard, at Massawepsee Mire, one of the largest boreal peatlands in New York with an old rail right of way. Three-toed and Black-backed Woodpeckers, Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Lincoln's Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird and Red and White-winged Crossbills have bred here. A pre-dawn drive to the top of Whiteface Mountain has been arranged. Sunday's sunrise chorus will include Bicknell's and Swainson's Thrushes, Blackpoll and other warblers, along with White-throated Sparrows. This will be a joint trip with the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs and attendance may be limited. Call the coordinator for reservations.

JUN 3
Sat

BIRDING BY EAR: THATCHER PARK
Coordinator: Walter Ellison

456-6224

Come spend the morning with us searching for the breeding birds of this local park. We will focus on learning to identify the songs of the numerous species of flycatchers, thrushes, vireos, warblers and other passerines present in the park and sharpening the skills needed to separate species by ear. Call the coordinator for meeting time and place.

JUN 10-11
Sat-Sun

FORT DRUM GRASSLANDS & PERCH RIVER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA
Coordinator: Bill Lee
Reservations by May 28

374-3426

These two "Important Bird Areas" in Jefferson County include one of the state's most significant grassland and shrubland breeding bird communities, Fort Drum, with Upland Sandpipers, Grasshopper, Henslow's and Vesper Sparrows and hosts the largest populations of singing male Clay-colored Sparrows. Perch River is an exceptional fresh water wetland with nesting Black Terns, Trumpeter Swans and both bittern species. Adjacent grasslands have breeding Grasshopper and Henslow's sparrows, Sedge Wrens and Black Rail has occurred. Local guidance will be provided on this joint trip with the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs.

Feathers



JUN 11
Sun

NORTHERN SARATOGA COUNTY

Coordinator: Barbara Putnam

792-7542

On this morning trip, we will explore varied habitats along the road on the way to the Hadley Mountain trailhead. Due to the narrowness of the road, we will need to car pool. Meet at 7:00 a.m. in or near the village of Lake Luzerne (call coordinator for the exact meeting spot).

JUN 17
Sat

LAKE TAGHKANIC STATE PARK

Coordinator: Bill Cook

851-2678

This will be a morning trip searching for breeding species in this southern Columbia County State Park. The trail winds through second growth shrubbery, to mature forest and marshy lakeside. Common breeding birds include Prairie Warbler, Brown Thrasher, Field Sparrow, Eastern Towhee and American Woodcock. Meet at the park at 8:00 a.m. Directions to the meeting place: From the north, take the Taconic State Parkway south to Exit Route 82 (Hudson/Ancram). Turn left (east) at end of exit ramp (on Route 82) toward Ancram. Go 2 miles and turn right into Lake Taghkanic State Park "back" entrance. Drive about 200 yards and park in small parking area on right, opposite entrance to nature trail.

JUN 18
Sun

SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK (BATTLEFIELD)

Coordinators: Brad & Beth Bidwell

632-5692

This morning visit to the Saratoga Battlefield will begin with a walk in the area of the Visitor Center. We will then drive the tour road through the Park hoping to see many of the Park's sparrows (Henslow's (?), Savannah, Field, and Grasshopper) as well as many other breeding species. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the flagpole in the Visitor Center parking lot. A small entrance fee is required.





The Birding Game *by Alfred Palmer*

There's nothing in this world I know,
That I would rather do;
Than pack binocs and field Guides
and list a bird that's new!

A Birder walks on many trails
most every chance he gets.
This passion's shared by Pat and I
and others we have met.

'Hotlines' to call. 'Hotspots' to see.
This is the 'Birding Game'.
But once you start the 'Feather Quest',
your life won't be the same!

Birdline reports a 'rarity',
A 'first' for New York State!
Drop everything. We have to go.
All other work must wait!

A 'Lifebird' added to my list
is worth a drive all night.
We know the most productive time
is somewhere near 'first light'.

We've gone on 'rare bird trips' before.
Each time our hopes are high.
We're lucky sometimes. Mostly not!
But Birders never cry!

A 'fallout' of a migrant flock
is Nature's 'grand display'.
With help of serendipity,
we'll catch that show someday!

I've always had this crazy wish
while birding locally;
To one day find a New York 'first',
and claim my rarity!

Why this obsession to see birds;
and tally every one?
The reason as all Birders know,
is that it's lots of fun!

There's just about ten thousand birds.
We'll never see them all!
Unless we live one hundred years,
and still make 'pishing' calls!

Literary Sharing Event

On April 3rd, a group of 13 (plus one in spirit) members of HMBC kicked off the Club's first Literary Sharing Event.

In an amazing display of literary talent, Club members shared their favorite nature-related prose and poetry. Many of the readings were original pieces, some written quite recently reflecting on walks at favorite birding spots, others composed many years ago, and shared with families through time. Some readers shared their favorite pieces written by published authors and poets. All were shared with warmth, and received with gratitude.

As readers and listeners indulged in a luscious array of desserts, we decided that our Club's "Literary Wing" should host this event on an annual basis. As spring 2001 comes around, think about joining us for our evening of "treats for body and soul".

- Denise Hackert-Stoner



Field Trip Reports

Waterfowl of the Hudson River (Greene County) March 26, 2000

The temperature was in the 50s and the sun was warm on what is usually a cold and wintry field trip. From the outset, this trip presented strange phenomena. There were **CAROLINA WRENS** singing in two localities. **CANVASBACKS** are usually seen in large rafts out in the middle of the river, so the lone Canvasback that greeted arriving birders next to shore at the Coxsackie boat-launch site was a surprise. Yet, even stranger was the drake **GREATER SCAUP** keeping company with two female **COMMON GOLDENEYE**. It was as if all of the type A personality ducks had already migrated north leaving only "weirdos" lounging behind. Most of the ducks had apparently moved north, or at least elsewhere, (many local ponds had species not seen on the river this day) so the waterfowl watching was sparse. Still, 11 species of waterfowl were seen. However, it wasn't until the end of the trip that we chanced to see both **GREEN-WINGED** and a **BLUE-WINGED TEAL** flushed out of some reeds on the Catskill Creek, but only one observer (Richard Guthrie) picked out the Blue-winged Teal. It was more of an early spring migrants day than a winter duck day so we took a side trip to the Coxsackie flats to hear an **EASTERN MEADOWLARK** sing. Participants included Joan and Andrea Cipriani, Jocelyn Cole-Calkins, Ted Elliman, Molly Kelly, Nancy Slack, David Telian, Erin Willsey and Chad Witko.

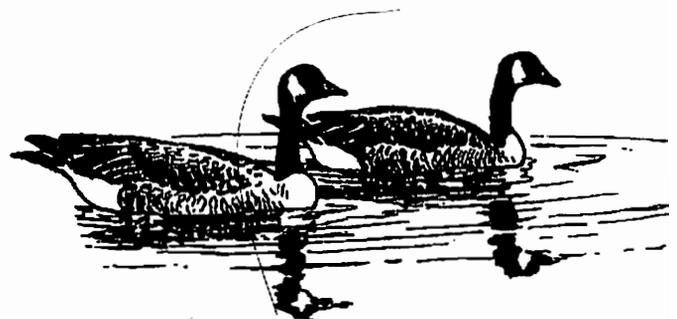
- Bill Cook

Braddock Bay April 1-2, 2000

The group of nine HMBC birders met Saturday morning eager for a day of hawkwatching and waterfowl searches. The weather forecast seemed promising with south winds prior to a rainy front forecast for the day. The temperatures started cool in the 30's, but as the day wore on, the temperatures rose to the 60's and were quite pleasant.

The group proceeded to the Hawk Watch at Braddock Bay, stopping along the way along the shoreline of Lake Ontario in Rochester. We easily found **RED-NECKED GREBE**, **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** and **CANADA GOOSE**. Bryce tried out his brand-new binoculars on geese and **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS**.

A large distant bird was spotted flying west out over the lake. The bird was very large, showed a long, straight, fully extended neck, and flew with continuous, slow and deeply-undulating wing beats. Unfortunately the bird was seen mosting flying away from our location so the view was not ideal. The bird may have been a **SANDHILL CRANE** (several had been seen in the area between Rochester and Montezuma during the preceding week), but we could not be certain of its identity.

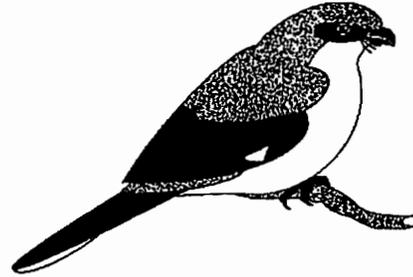




Arriving at Braddock Bay State Park, the group first visited the Hawk watching station. Not much movement was occurring, and after a short time, we decided to explore the area for owls. In addition to hawk migration, the area is also known for movement of owls, particularly Saw-Whet and Long-eared Owls. A hike along the nature trail generated three **BROWN CREEPERS**, but no owls.

Later settling at the Hawk Watch station, the group found **TURKEY VULTURE**, **NORTHERN HARRIER**, **RED-TAILED HAWK**, **SHARP-SHINNED** and **COOPER'S HAWKS** and an **AMERICAN KESTREL**. Except for one large kettle of vultures, the numbers were fairly low. The group then proceeded to "Owl Woods" to try to discover birds roosting in the pines and cedars nearby. A walk through the trail on Saturday did not produce anything. The group headed to search the fields for flocks of field birds that had been reported earlier in the week. Although several large flocks of Canada Geese were scanned (in hopes of adding a Greater White-fronted Goose to Bill Lee's quest for 300 NYS birds in 2000), the only field birds that were seen was a distant flock of possible **SNOW BUNTINGS** seen by the last car in the caravan as we pulled away from one roadside location.

As the afternoon wore on, the decision was made to visit Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and look for waterfowl. Reaching Iroquois around 4PM, the group scanned the impoundments and found **PIED-BILLED GREBE**, **TUNDRA SWANS**, **GREEN-WINGED TEAL**, **GADWALL**, **AMERICAN WIGEON**, **NORTHERN SHOVELER**, **CANVASBACK**, **GREATER SCAUP**, **RINGED-NECK DUCK**, **HOODED MERGANSER**, **RUDDY DUCK**, **AMERICAN COOT**, and **GREAT BLUE HERON**. Early songbirds seen and



heard included **EASTERN BLUEBIRD**, **HERMIT THRUSH**, **TREE SWALLOW**, and **EASTERN PHOEBE**.

We pulled into our last overlook at Iroquois about 20 minutes before sunset. Almost immediately Joan Cipriani's daughter, Andrea, pointed out an unusual-looking bird perched near the edge of the impoundment. It was immediately identified by others in the group as a shrike. The bird did not allow us a long uninterrupted view. Instead it moved among several exposed perches on both sides of the impoundment over the course of about 15 minutes. The bird was in essentially adult plumage, but appeared to have a little brown on its upperparts and, so, may have been year-old immature. The bird's pale rump seemed to imply a **NORTHERN SHRIKE** — and this was, of course, far-and-away the more likely possibility — but there was a lingering bit of doubt as the bird flew off and out of view. (Curiously, a Loggerhead Shrike was subsequently reported from Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area, adjacent to Iroquois; could this have been the same bird?)

The Braddock Bay Raptor Research Associa-



tion were running a morning owl prowl on Sunday, so we decided to join them. As luck would have it, the weather turned rainy overnight and our group formed the entire group for the morning walk, except for the leader and one local latecomer. After a brief slide presentation on the nature of owl migration at Braddock Bay (during which the rain let up a bit) we headed again to Owl Woods. We had a bit of assistance from an Association intern that had already been searching the area and gave us a tip about one roosting **SAW-WHET OWL**. Everyone in the group had excellent looks at the bird. We continued searching through the pines, firs and spruces. Two more Saw-whets were found within about 10 feet of each other, right adjacent to the trail! This was a life sighting for many in the group (including the trip coordinators, who had only previously heard Saw-whets), so having two birds visible simultaneously was greatly appreciated. Interestingly, according to the walk leader, during a recent season when owl-banding was being done at Braddock Bay, they would have nights where 15 - 20

Saw-whets would be banded, but the next morning they would commonly only be able to locate 2 or 3 birds. Our three Saw-whets probably represented only a small fraction present in the area that morning.

The weather remained marginal through lunchtime, and so we decided to begin the trip home. We searched a little more for field birds and were able to locate several **HORNED LARKS**. Several of us detoured to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge on the way home. Waterfowl were extremely numerous on the main impoundment, with a tremendous number of Canvasback present. We were able to locate about a half-dozen **REDHEADS** mixed in as well as many of the same duck species found at Iroquois the day before. We also added **BLUE-WINGED TEAL**, **BELTED KINGFISHER** and **OSPREY** to the trip list.

— *Cathy Graichen*
— *Gregg Recer*

Lake Ontario Bird Festival

The Lake Ontario Bird Festival, sponsored by the National Audubon Society of New York and the New York Power Authority, will be held May 5 - 7, 2000 at Mexico Point Park just off Rt. 104B in Mexico, NY. The day events are free and the evening and dinners can be had for a modest price. The dinner speakers include Gary Van Riper with a Bird Photography Workshop on Friday May 5th and Dr. Stephen Kress on Backyard Landscaping to Attract Birds.

Special activities will be available for the "Junior" Attendees. There will also be field trip opportunities with Onondaga Audubon and Nature Conservancy for a small fee and a free shuttle to Derby Hill NYS Important Bird Area.

For more information, visit <http://www.co.oswego.ny.us> or call 315-963-7657, 315-465-7578 or 315-465-4271.



Argentina - "From Top to Bottom" Capital District Audubon Program Report

by Scott Stoner

On Thursday November 11, HMBC veteran world travelers Dale and Lilian Samuelson took nearly 30 HMBC and Audubon enthusiasts on a photographic journey to several areas of Argentina - "From Top to Bottom" as they described it. They showed slides they had taken on a tour with Field Guides in November of 1997 (austral spring in Argentina). The country is large and the habitats and birdlife, diverse! Flying into Buenos Aires, the Samuelsons first took a few days to experience some of the culture of this large, modern clean city, including the widest street (16 lanes) in the world and mobile dog-washing vans.

Birding encompassed four areas including the Andes in the northwest, the Valdez Peninsula on the east coast, Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip and the edge of the pampas region near Buenos Aires. Some of the area near the Andes resembled southeastern Arizona, with a Saguaro-like cactus. However it also had orchids in the trees and Andean Condors! The Valdez Peninsula offered a Magellanic Penguin colony, Kelp Gulls and Elegant-crested Tinamous. At the southern extreme is Ushuaia, often called the world's southernmost city, with nearby Tierra del Fuego National Park and a boat trip on the Beagle Channel. Avian encounters in this region included Dolphin Gulls, Austral Thrush, Rock Shag and the spectacular Magellanic Woodpecker! Finishing out their trip back in the warmer climes near Buenos Aires, they explored the vast low, flat grassland/marsh region of the pampas, seeking highlights such as Stripebacked Bittern, Giant Wood-Rail and Muggier Stork.

This was a fascinating blend of unique avifauna, beautiful flowering plants and fascinating culture, and we thank the Samuelsons for sharing yet another of their peripatetic experiences with us!

HMBC Contact Information

BIRDLINE of E. NEW YORK: (518) 439-8080

Email: hmbc@hotmail.com

HMBC website: <http://members.xoom.com/hmbc/>

Reminder!!

All HMBC Board meetings are open to all Club members. Board meetings usually take place the second Monday of every odd-numbered month. Meetings are held at Five Rivers Center or other local venues at 7:00 PM. The May, 2000 meeting will be held at treasurer Dan Welch's place of business, The Sweater Venture, on Rt. 9 in Latham.



NEW YORKS FORESTS AND BIRDS UP AGAINST MOTORIZED ACCESS

One of New York's greatest natural resources--our State Forests--is under threat from plans to allow motorized all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and dirt bikes into the woods.

In central NY, the Department of Environmental Conservation is proposing to build an 80-100 mile system of ATV and dirt bike trails in the Treaty Line State Forests, an 18,000 tract of public lands located in Broome, Chenango and Delaware Counties. The trails, part of a 20 year Unit Management Plan for the forests, would be the first such access to the State Forests by recreational vehicles, but likely not the last.

ATVs are 4 wheel drive recreational machines designed and advertised to "go anywhere", and they do just that. Dirt bikes are a two-wheeled version that are even louder, smokier and more damaging. Both are able to climb steep slopes, cross streams and speed down trails. In the process, however, they erode the soil, silt streams, damage vegetation and disturb wildlife. They are a particular threat to low-nesting birds such as Wood Thrushes and Ovenbirds, and also affect forest hawks and other woodland species. The peak period of ATV/dirt bike use will coincide with the peak of breeding bird activity.

ATVs and dirt bikes will conflict with low impact uses of the forests--hiking, birding, camping, etc. The noise of the machines can carry as much as a mile in each direction, and their exhaust fumes linger long after the vehicles have passed.

The Finger Lakes Trail, a popular hiking route constructed and maintained by volunteers, passes through the Treaty Line forests and will be crossed by the ATV/dirt bike trails. illegal use of the FLT by the machines is already a problem, as is trespass on private land.



Biking



Cost of the plan is put at nearly \$3 million for trail construction and acquisition of land, along with a \$190,000 annual maintenance budget, a great expense to benefit one small user group.

Clearly, ATVs and dirt bikes are not an appropriate use of our state forests, which more and more are among the last large wooded areas available to the public and providing habitat for birds and other wildlife. Sprawl and development are on the increase even in rural areas of the state. The value of the forests as a natural refuge for humans and wildlife alike can only increase.

If this plan is carried out, similar trails can be expected statewide. However, before the DEC plan is put into effect, there is a public comment period--an opportunity for birders and others who recognize the irreplaceable value of the State Forests to speak out.

It is important that conservationists let the state know that ATVs and dirt bikes do not belong in the NY State Forests. Letters on the Treaty Line Unit Management Plan should be sent to: NY State DEC, 2715 State Hwy. 80, Sherburne, NY 13460; fax-(607) 674-9034; email-rgpancoe@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

For more information on this issue, please contact Andy Mason, Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, RD 2 Box 314, Jefferson, NY 12093, (607) 652-2162 or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, or TreatyLine@juno.com.

Golden-winged Warbler Atlas Project

a project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Ithaca College

We need the help of experienced birders and biologists in the eastern US and Canada to study the population status and habitat and area requirements of the Golden-winged Warbler, the Blue-winged Warbler and their hybrids. Project participants will survey and conduct point counts at known and potential Golden-winged Warbler breeding sites in the US and Canada. Participants will receive a free research kit.

To join the network of volunteers or for more information, contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Golden-winged Warbler Atlas Project

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

159 Sapsucker Woods Road

Ithaca, NY 14850

Phone: 607-254-2465 Fax: 607-254-2415

e-mail: forest_birds@cornell.edu

<http://birdsource.cornell.edu/GOWAP>



JOIN IN OUR SECOND BREEDING BIRD ATLAS!

In the early 1980's, New York was one of the first states to do an Atlas project, mapping the breeding distribution of its birds. Now it is time for New York to repeat the Atlas in order to learn how breeding bird distribution has changed.

The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs is working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Cornell's Department of Natural Resources, and the Lab of Ornithology on this huge project.

The state has been divided into about 5300 blocks, each about 10 square miles (25 square kilometers). Our goal is to send a birder into every one of those blocks over a five year period, beginning in spring 2000. This will require many field workers (over 4000 participated last time!)

Your help is needed!! Field observers will visit various habitats within assigned blocks and will record evidence of breeding for as many species as possible. Each will be provided with instructions, field cards and maps, and asked to use specific criteria to rate each species as a possible, probable, or confirmed breeder.

If you want to participate, contact your Regional Coordinator for more information:

Niagara Frontier Region 1

Richard C. Rosche
110 Maple Rd.
East Aurora, NY 14052-1720
Phone: 716-652-8409
email: drosche@juno.com
(prefers email communication first)

Genesee Region 2

Robert Spahn
716 High Tower Way
Wester, NY 14580-2514
Phone: 716-671-5690
email: KHVM75@prodigy.com

Finger Lakes Region 3

Bard Prentiss
P.O. Box 283
Dryden, NY 13053
Phone: 607-844-4691
email: prentissb@snycorva.cortland.edu

Susquehanna Region 4

Chad Covey
49 S. Main St.
New Berlin, NY 13411
Home phone: 607-847-6522
Work phone: 607-753-3095 X 201

Oneida Basin Region 5

Dorothy W. Crumb
3983 Gates Road
Jamesville, NY 13078
Phone: 315-682-5420
email: dwcrumb@a-znet.com

or

Bill Purcell
281 Baum Road
Hastings, NY 13076
Phone: 315-668-2871
email: wpurcell@dreamscape.com

St. Lawrence Region 6

Bob Long
Box 206
Pompey, NY 13138
Phone: 315-677-9840
email: rlongmd@AOL.com

Adirondack-Champlain Region 7

John M. C. Peterson
Discovery Farm, RR 1, Box 230
Elizabethtown, NY 12932
Phone: 518-873-2052

Hudson-Mohawk Region 8

Jane Graves
133 York Ave.
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-2533
Home phone: 518-587-8992 (before 6 pm)
email: jgraves@akimore.edu
(email is preferred contact)

Hudson-Delaware Region 9

Michael Bochnik
Home address: 86 Empire Street
Yonkers, NY 10704
Home phone: 914-237-9331
Work phone: 914-785-3840
Home email:
76652.3224@compuserve.com
Work email: michael.bochnik@clbasc.com

Marine Region 10

Ken Feustel
41 Belton Road
Babylon, NY 11702
Phone: 516-669-0951
email: feustel@mindspring.com

Or write to: Breeding Bird Atlas Project Coordinator, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation,
Wildlife Resources Center, Delmar, NY 12054



HMBC BOARD FOR 2000-2001

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President: Gregg Recer 23 Scotch Mist Way Malta, N.Y. 12020 899-2678	Vice-President: William Lee 2171 Grand Blvd. Schenectady, NY 12309 785-6760
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Joan Cipriani	374-3729
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Scott Stoner	785-6760
Alison VanKeuren	435-0817

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Sanctuary:	Joe Coticchio	374-2449
Social:	Denise Hackert-Stoner	785-6760
Jr. Activities:	Elle Dietemann	766-7045



President's Corner, cont'd.....

birding knowledge and experience, his approach was always helpful, affable and unassuming. At the time I really had no idea, and Sam gave no indication, that we were birding with someone in the top 125 on the all-time American Birding Association area lifelist ranking!

I think Cathy and I are both better for having known Sam, and I know the Club owes him a tremendous debt of gratitude for decades of dedication and hard work and for being a good friend to many of us. He'll be missed.

Gregg Recer

Send articles, clip-art,
photos, artwork to:

Feathers
c/o Cathy Graichen
23 Scotch Mist Way
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

or via e-mail to:

recerg@crisny.org



PRESIDENT'S CORNER: Let me begin by thanking the membership for electing me to a second term. I also want to welcome the newly-elected members of the Board: Alison VanKeuren who will be serving his first term on the HMBC Board, and two returning faces in Scott Stoner (Board member) and Bill Lee (Vice President). Nominations Committee Chair Al Mapes deserves credit for developing a fine slate of officer and board candidates that should serve the Club well over the next year.

I hope the board can make continued progress on several significant issues that we've been working on over the last year. Primary among those are the following: 1) improving our stewardship of the Reist Sanctuary by having the property completely surveyed and by addressing issues concerning trail locations and motor-vehicle access to the property; 2) working with the Town of Clifton Park and interested State agencies to address conservation concerns surrounding the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve; and 3) completing the excellent work carried out by Linda Parr and Sunny Gooding to collect and organize the Club's historical documents and other archival materials. Another objective for this coming year will be to solidify a developing relationship with the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks who own the Shaeffer property immediately adjacent to the Reist Sanctuary, and who share our Club's interest in natural history and conservation. I expect this Board to effectively tackle these and other issues that arise over the next year.

In closing, let me express my condolences to all of Sam Madison's family and friends, especially Audrey, on Sam's passing. Sam was a good friend to many people in the Club, his professional career and his birding career with HMBC were both truly remarkable and he will be greatly missed. When Cathy and I first got to know Sam, he had already been a top-notch "serious" birder for decades and we were rank neophytes. One of our first Club field trips was the Delmarva Peninsula, which Sam led. I later learned that the trip was fondly known to many as "The Battan Death March" for Sam's tireless pace and enthusiasm for covering as much territory as possible. Despite Sam's vastly greater
Cont'd on previous page.....

FEATHERS
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c/o Five Rivers EEC
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Vol. 62
No. 3

Published Bi-monthly by The Hudson-Mohawk

June
2000

Kingfishers ... by Beverly Waite

April 19, 2000

Hearing a familiar rattle one sunny noon in mid-April, I looked overhead to see not one, but two Belted Kingfishers flying southeast, one a little ahead of the other. Their outlines, especially their strong bills and their flight patterns, were easy to identify, although the birds were high enough so I would have missed their color if I had not known they were bluish.

As I stood under an open sky, I watched the two abruptly change course and return my way while starting to do a hawk-like maneuvering in overlapping circles. The chattering of both persisted as the pair flew higher and higher, circling this way and that in what appeared to be a courtship flight. Their separation varied in degrees apart as they moved about, but they were always "together" as they maintained their ritual display.

In a few minutes they worked out of earshot, yet still in sight, now close together and side by side, their path steady to the northwest.

Kingfishers are usually low fliers, scouring river banks or hovering and diving at ponds where they fish. They are sometimes seen on a tree branch or a snag as they knock a fish silly in the head before swallowing it. The aerial display at a couple hundred feet up was new to me.

It was two or three weeks too early for nesting. The birds were in the area of both the Hungerkill and the Normanskill, with at least two ponds in the neighborhood. Were the

birds searching for river territory they would soon be defending as mates? Were they finding each other for the first time? -- males arrive earlier than females -- or was one, or both returning home? Were they using this time between early spring arrival and nesting to reestablish bonding?

Of course I'll never know. After a limited check I found only one reference to this behavior, stating that what it indicated "was unclear."

When these paragraphs were in a creative stage, I woke up in the middle of the night remembering that these Kingfishers had been so high I had not seen whether they were a male and a female, although I sensed harmony and sexual tension. But I cannot "assume" and be scientific, therefore, I submit this piece as evidence of luckily being at the right place at the right time to witness yet another cameo of fascinating birdlife.

■ This Issue ...

New Birds

In Memory of Sam Madison

Crossword Puzzle

Programs and Field Trips Reports

Upcoming Programs and Field Trips

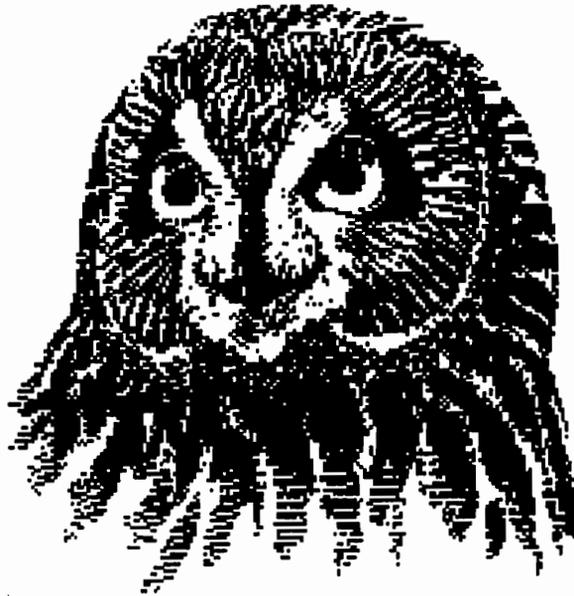


New Birds

by Bill Gorman

New birds are added to the U.S. list via two major means. First, a stray or vagrant bird from another area wanders into U. S. territory and its presence is adequately documented. Second, a species group, present in the U.S., is determined to be composed of subspecies which differ sufficiently enough to be considered separate species. Thus, an existing species is "split" into two or more newly recognized species when data establish sufficient differences. Recent studies suggest that some new birds may possibly be added to the U.S. list via one or both of these means.

Short-eared Owls [*Asio flammeus*] have been observed in south Florida as winter visitors for many years. These birds are believed to be of the nominate race [*Asio flammeus flammeus*] which was the only subspecies known from North America. There were at least 68 reports for Short-eared Owls prior to 1978, almost all of which were reported between early October and late March. Since about that time, there have been at least 20 reports of Short-eared Owls in south Florida outside of their normal winter season. These out of season observations together with the birds' appearances suggested that these birds might be different from the normal winter visitors. Short-eared Owls have been observed on several occasions far out at sea, suggesting that they may engage in migration over large expanses of ocean. A recent study found that the identifiable Short-eared Owls found on the Florida Keys during the spring and summer were Antillean Short-eared Owls from the Caribbean, probably from Cuba. These Antillean Short-eared Owls are of a different subspecies which has been designated [*Asio flammeus domingensis*]. These birds weigh substantially less, have shorter wings and tails, longer tarsi and slightly larger bills than



the nominate subspecies. In the field, [*Asio flammeus domingensis*] appear to have more prominent ear tufts and their underparts are more buffy overall. The feathers of the backs are dark brown with tawny edging giving their backs a dark brown appearance rather than the striped appearance of the [*Asio flammeus flammeus*]. It has been proposed that the Short-eared Owl may warrant splitting into two or more new species. Further studies seem desired, however, before such a split of [*Asio flammeus*] would appear probable. It is interesting to note that an Antillean Short-eared Owl was observed on May 10, 1994 during an HMBC bird trip to the Dry Tortugas, Florida.

Another bird under study is the Cave Swallow [*Hirundo fulva*], which has been reported from and found breeding in the southwestern United States, especially in Texas. More recently, Cave Swallows have been found as vagrants along the East Coast as far north as New York and New Jersey and have even been breeding in south Florida. Recent stud-



ies have lead researchers to propose splitting the Cave Swallow into three species, two of which occur in the U.S. At this time, data suggest that the Florida and east coast birds are [*Hirundo fulva fulva*] from Caribbean populations that were originally residents of Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and the Vieques Islands. It has been proposed that these birds be given species status and be named Fulvous Swallows. Birds from Texas and the South west are mainly [*Hirundo fulva pelodoma*] from populations of the Yucatan and northern Mexico and are proposed to be designated a separate species and be named Cave Swallows. The West Indian Fulvous Swallows differ from the southwestern Cave Swallows in that the orange on the throat extends down onto the sides, flanks and upper chest and also they have darker rumps and undertail coverts. However, the field marks that separate the proposed two new species have not been fully established nor have the distribution ranges for each been worked out. While this proposed split has yet to be acted upon by the American Ornithologists' Union [AOU], this proposal has been under consideration for some time and there appears to be a fair chance that this split might be approved by the AOU in the not too distant future.

Another proposed split, resulting from recent studies, is that of the Brewer's Sparrow. Under this proposal, the two existing subspecies of the Brewer's Sparrow would each be given species status. The population of [*Spizella breweri breweri*] which breeds in the western U.S. and southwestern Canada would become the Brewer's Sparrow. In addition [*Spizella breweri taverneri*] which breeds in eastern Alaska, southern Yukon, western British Columbia and southwestern Alberta would become the Timberline Sparrow. While there is a small overlap in the distribution of the proposed new species, their major ranges appear reasonably separate. The Timberline Sparrow is slightly larger than the Brewer's Sparrow and is darker and grayer with bold black streaking on the upperparts. This split has been under consideration for several years and would appear to have a reasonable chance for acceptance by the AOU and the American Birding Association [ABA].

At this time we can only wait and see if the available data for these proposed splits are sufficient to warrant their acceptance as new birds for the U.S.

Reminder!!

All HMBC Board meetings are open to all Club members. Board meetings usually take place the second Monday of every odd-numbered month. Meetings are held at Five Rivers Center or other local venues at 7:00 PM. The Aug, 2000 meeting will be held at Five Rivers EEC.



Feathers

Across

- 1 homeless kids
- 5 cat protests
- 9 the breath _____
- 15 kayaker's need
- 16 mentally burdened
- 18 reverence
- 20 tool to pour soup
- 21 employ
- 22 dismantled
- 23 word with identical or towers
- 24 albatross' view
- 25 *grateful bird?*
- 27 boot out
- 29 *down and out bird?*
- 36 ____ nut or ____ palm
- 37 greed or a pig
- 38 misbehave
- 40 betrothe
- 41 manipulate the election
- 44 L'il one
- 46 snow crystal
- 47 prefix with lepsy
- 48 purulence
- 49 *bird assassin handbook?*
- 53 suffix for cant or coll
- 54 thomas the train sound
- 55 doctrine or recent movie
- 56 ficus fruit
- 58 eightsome
- 59 pig's sty
- 60 what baby's do

- 61 sandpapers
- 63 peewees
- 64 id counterpart
- 66 "the ____ game"
- 68 *talk about a particular bird?*
- 72 leave ____ as is
- 73 garment size
- 74 *carved bird?*

Down

- 1 word with car or up
- 2 region
- 3 anti-aircraft fire
- 4 spicy sauce
- 5 bigfoot
- 6 TV button
- 7 sprinkler site
- 8 big swallow
- 10 *bird spotted on the Arno River?*
- 11 be without
- 12 ____ fixe (French)
- 13 strip off skin
- 14 evening (poetic contraction)
- 15 surpass
- 17 ____ it, man!
- 19 move into
- 23 *bind a bird by marriage?*
- 26 negative word
- 28 *bird's last aria?*
- 29 *get-lost bird?*
- 30 musical pitch
- 31 first bird house

- 32 droop
- 33 word with drop or that's
- 34 content cat sound
- 35 the Odyssey or Iliad
- 36 *serious bird error?*
- 39 wack or music type
- 41 describing Macy's at Xmas
- 43 *prosperous bird?*
- 45 hawk
- 50 *old senile birds?*
- 51 former NY mayor
- 52 compel
- 53 ____ The Confessor
- 57 secret police
- 62 2:4 e.g.
- 65 measuring instrument
- 67 festive
- 69 clairvoyance
- 70 federal disease agency (abbr.)
- 71 road covering



UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Please Note: All HMBC programs will now be held at the Colonie Library except the December Holiday party. Programs at the Colonie Library begin at 7 PM.

Mon Sep 11, Scott and Denise Stoner on *South Florida: Imperiled Paradise*, 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library

As Marjorie Stoneman Douglas wrote, "There are no other everglades in the world." Southern Florida was once home to flocks of wading birds so great that they filled the sky. Sadly, today's visitors experience only a fraction of these legendary scenes. Rampant growth and efforts to redirect and control the natural flow of water have altered the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of water in the everglades. Hope remains, however. There are still some great birds, and recognition of the severe threats to this precious, priceless ecosystem has led to an ambitious \$8 Billion plan to restore it. From Miami to Sanibel, this slide program will describe the natural habitats of South Florida, show us many of the birds and plants that remain here, and illustrate why this is a place still worth saving.

Scott and Denise Stoner are active members of HMBC who have made numerous visits to southern Florida. Scott is Program Chair and a past President of HMBC and led the Club's 1995 Florida field trip. Denise is a past Vice President of HMBC.

Mon Oct 2, Jim Coe on *Birding by Habitat*, 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library

Artist and Author JIM COE presents this slide program describing how birders can hone their identification skills by learning to associate habitats and plant communities with certain species of birds. Identifications are easier and certainly quicker when a birder can anticipate what species may be present, based on the time of year and nature of the surroundings. Types of habitats discussed include open fields, edges, deciduous woodlands and boreal forest. Within the context of those broad classifications, Jim will also focus on some micro-habitats and their associated nesting species, such as hemlock groves and Blue-headed Vireo, power-line cuts and Chestnut-sided Warbler and wooded streams and Louisiana Waterthrush. Beginning and experienced birders alike will enjoy and learn from this program!

Jim Coe is best known as author and illustrator of "*Eastern Birds: A Guide to Field Identification of North American Species*," first published by Golden Press in 1994. He has contributed illustrations to numerous other field guides and Frank Gill's widely-used textbook "*Ornithology*." Jim is currently working on "*Western Birds*" a companion volume to his Eastern bird guide.

Mon Nov 6 Scott Corcoll, NYS DEC, *Hawks and Owls of New York State*, 7PM Colonie Library

Mon Dec 4 Neil Giffords, Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission, *Breeding Birds in a Fire-dependent Jack Pine Barrens*, 7PM Holiday Party, 7:30 PM Program, Five Rivers.



PROGRAM REPORTS

HMBC held its annual meeting and program on April 11. For its May and June programs, HMBC returned to Five Rivers to hear about warblers and Chile. On May 8, Daniel Edelstein of Maryland presented "Wood Warblers" Threatened Beauties" to a group of about 35 interested persons. On June 5, Don and Donna Traver of western New York gave us a slide tour of Chile.

Shorebirds - April 11, 2000

At our Annual Meeting on April 11, 2000, Wayne Petersen, Field Ornithologist for Massachusetts Audubon, presented "Shorebirds - A Profile Incredible." The nearly 50 diners and many others who joined us for the program were indeed treated to a look into the lives of some incredible birds! Wayne covered shorebird classification, broad identification principles, breeding biology and a look at their remarkable migration, while highlighting the threats to their survival and ongoing efforts to preserve them.

These trans-hemispheric migrants have highly specialized behavior and habitat requirements that put them at risk. Most have suffered heavy persecution via hunting; many have rebounded but now face new challenges due to loss of habitat.

"Shorebirds" are defined to include five families of birds, quite diverse actually, which include sandpipers, plovers, oystercatchers and avocets and stilts. Sandpipers, the largest group, are characterized by long bill, small eye and head, feed by probing (tactile hunting mechanism). Plovers have a "swelling" near the tip of the bill, a large eye, flattened head,

robin-like feeding, running and picking (visual hunting). Shorebirds are generally conservative in plumage, with exaggerated extremities - long bill and legs. They lack webbed feet (thus are not adapted for swimming) - the exception being the phalaropes with their lobed feet. Sexual dimorphism is generally confined to subtle differences such as bill size and overall body size. Phalaropes are again the exception, with striking differences in plumage. Shorebirds' falcon-like wings are designed for sustained flight and also for flight in unison (acrobatic). Cryptic coloration provides camouflage, snipe for instance. Many plovers have bold patterns such as distinct facial patterns, rings, but that provide "ruptive" coloration which breaks up the pattern (as for zebras).

Shorebirds occupy a variety of habitats, not just the shore. All are ground nesters, save for the Solitary Sandpiper which breeds in trees. Not all are in the far north however; for instance, consider some of the breeding grounds of the following: Piping Plover - Atlantic beaches, Wilson's Plover - Mid Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, Willets - salt marshes including Long Island; Mountain Plover - high-elevation short-grass prairie of the U.S. mountain west; American Avocet - inland waters such as the Great Salt Lake; Common Snipe - bogs; American Woodcock - wet woods; Upland Sandpiper - uplands of the northeast; and Killdeer - airports of the northeast (given the loss of natural grasslands).

With this introduction bringing all of us up to speed on the basics, Wayne next took us through some of the remarkable aspects of a far-northern breeding shorebirds's year. In spring, from mid-May to early June, they ar-

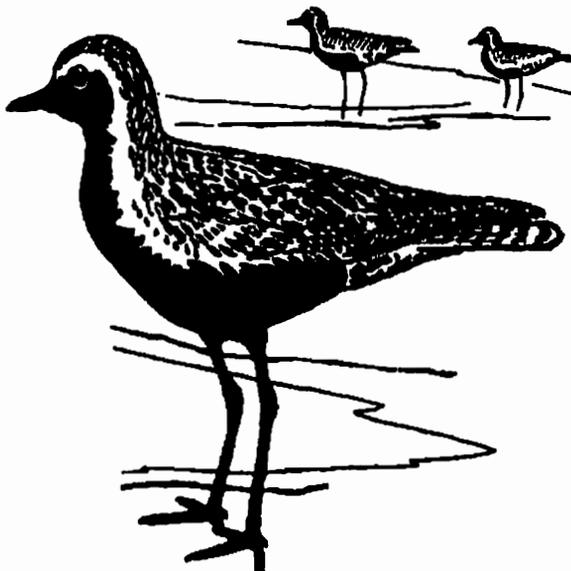


rive on the breeding grounds in northern Canada's frozen tundra. Soon the tundra melts and insects appear -- huge numbers of insects which shorebirds feed upon.

The Arctic summer is short and the birds take full advantage of it. One or two days after arrival the males begin displaying. There is no singing, but they engage in aerial display accompanied by special calls. Pectoral sandpipers for instance, have an inflatable air sac - the male flies low with the air sac inflated, using it as a bellows to emit a hooting type sound. Buff-breasted Sandpipers the male stands on tussocks on the tundra, flash one wing then the other. When the female arrives, the male stands, bill-up, wings spread "Batman-like." One male and one female copulate; often, a second male steps in and tries to mate with the first male.

Phalaropes exhibit reversal of sexual roles. The male does all the domestic duties, the female has the bright colors, does the courting.

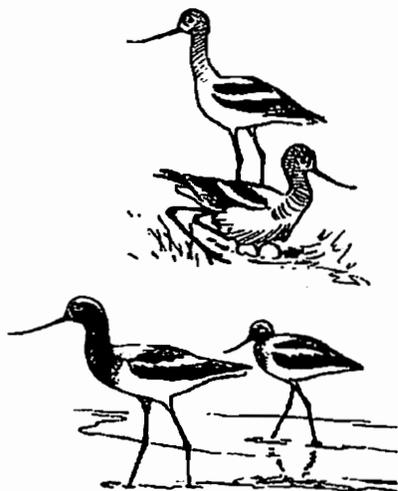
Most species lay 4 eggs per clutch, which is



all they can effectively incubate. One clutch is all they lay, even if the first is lost, for instance to predators such as Jaegers. The young are precocial, able to move around and fend for themselves upon hatching. This is useful given the short season. This also leads to risks, such as by vehicles in the sand where Piping Plovers nest.

Shorebird migration is both remarkable and filled with unresolved questions. Many breed near the top of the world and winter in South America. Soon after breeding, the adults leave the young to fend for themselves, and move to major staging areas to prepare for their journey south. Their needs are abundant food, and an area to rest and preen. When they rest, they keep one leg up to conserve heat, and face into the wind with their bills turned rearwards and tucked into their feathers. This streamlined posture also conserves energy.

Migration has been extensively studied in the Red Knot, largely through the work of Brian Harrington of Manomet. Through both banding and color-marking. In the fall, they move from the north of Canada to the tip of South America, with Monomoy Island in MA as a stopover point. After wintering in South America, they move again north, timed for a major stopover along the Delaware bay shore of Cape May County, NJ coincident with the laying of immense numbers of horseshoe crab eggs. Not only Red Knots but other species including Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderlings and Semipalmated Sandpipers take advantage of this abundant food supply (less abundant now due to declines in numbers of the horseshoe crabs). Again, feeding styles differ, with the turnstones excavating and the knots taking advantage of the proceeds. Encompassing areas such as Reids Beach, NJ, up to 30 % of the total Red Knot population in



May 8, 2000 - Warblers

Daniel described warblers as neotropical, migrating from below the Tropic of Cancer to as far as the Arctic, with 65 species that can be seen at one time or another in North America. In a multimedia presentation, he played the song and described the range, breeding habitat and behavior of over 30 species commonly found in the East. (Note many thanks to Walt Sabin for saving the day by going home to get his "boom-box" after the Center's machine failed!).

Daniel provided a detailed handout with spring arrival and fall departure dates, breeding habitat, status, etc. for a large number of warbler species. Rather than repeat the information he covered for each species, members can contact Scott for a copy of this material if interested.

Daniel closed on a note of more concern, with a discussion of the reasons for decline of warbler species. Not only does forest fragmentation have an adverse effect, but the loss of migration stopover points does as well. Solutions include data gathering, preservation of habitat, habitat restoration, and ecotourism.

Ongoing monitoring efforts include the Breeding Bird Survey, Breeding Bird Census, Christmas Bird Counts, winter bird survey, Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship and Partners in Flight activities.

For more information, people can contact Daniel's web site:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~edelstein>

the western hemisphere can be found here at one time.

Less well characterized is the migration of the Hudsonian Godwit, which breed in Canada's Hudson Bay area, stage along James Bay, then appear to fly nonstop, for perhaps 60 hours, to some speculative stopover point in South America, before continuing on to the tip at Tierra del Fuego. Satellite-tracked transmitters are now in use on such large species as Bald Eagles and Snowy Owls; when the technology enables tracking of the Hudsonian Godwit, a major avian mystery will be solved.

Efforts toward shorebird conservation include the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), and a North American Shorebird Conservation Plan now being finalized. We urge all members to continue to learn about shorebirds and to support efforts to study and protect this fascinating group of birds.

- Scott and Denise Stoner

- Scott and Denise Stoner



June 5, 2000 - Chile

Don Traver showed slides of the tour he and his wife Donna had taken to Chile in (our) autumn, the country is 2,700 miles long from north to south, and only about 100 miles wide and contains a variety of habitats and birds. From the cold tip of South America to the hundred year drought of the Atacama desert in the north, Chile offers much for tourists and birds alike. Chile was described as a safe country, with a modern infrastructure and a tremendous diversity of terrain.

Despite bordering land on virtually its whole east side, Chile is an ecological island, with the Atacama desert at the north, the Pacific Ocean (with the Chilean Trench) to the west, and the Andes, up to 18,000 feet high with 55 active volcanoes, to the east! At the south, Chile terminates at the great southern tip of South America.

Their exploration covered four regions: Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip., the Lakes District, the Santiago area, and the Atacama Desert in the north - perhaps the driest place on earth!

They flew first to Santiago, with a population of 5 million and an elevation of 2,000 feet. After some birding near there, they flew down to the Tierra del Fuego region, where a major objective was to see the Magellanic Plover. The Travers' are seeking to see at least one species in each of the world's families of birds (they have only 11 remaining). The Magellanic Plover is the only species in its family (a so-called monotypic family); this interesting bird is more like a dove than a plover, and they were soon rewarded with excellent looks. It also feeds its young by regurgitating, and walks in circles, similar to a phalarope except on land. Also at the southern reaches were Great Horned Owl, Magellanic Penguins,

Chestnut Collared Sparrow and Straw-necked Ibis. The Atlantic and Pacific oceans meet here, with a noticeable rip in the water.

Moving north to the Lakes District, they saw a medieval festival, the large and spectacular Magellanic Woodpecker (the closest relative of the Ivory-billed). More birding in the Santiago region included a pelagic trip that produced Sooty and Pinkfooted Shearwater, Gray-headed Albatross, Builer's Albatross and Southern Giant Petrel. The mountains near Santiago treated them to Andean Condor and Diademid [Sandpiper-] Plover.

The final major area was the Atacama Desert where no rain has been recorded in 100 years. At the edge of the desert, they observed a thick cloud of an immense number of Franklin's gulls in their southbound (austral spring) migration. The scenic mountain desert was also their stopping point during a soccer match that decided whether Chile would advance to the World Cup. It is difficult to describe the importance of soccer to the Chilean people. Every tiny village has some king of soccer field, even with makeshift goal posts. A soccer ball is truly a ticket out of poverty. This playoff match was sort of like the World Series and Superbowl all put together. Everything else stopped!

Birding in Chile will soon be enhanced by a new field guide, and the Travers highly recommend this country as an introduction to South American birds. Dress for a variety of weather and be prepared for a most scenic experience!

- Scott and Denise Stoner



Field Trip Reports

Vischer Ferry 13 April 2000

We walked along the entrance road on a clear, but cool evening. There was plenty of water in the ponds and the locks. The western one was filled with **RING-NECKED DUCKS** and many **GREEN-WINGED TEAL**. We also saw some **AMERICAN COOT**. The woods between ponds filled with **RUSTY BLACKBIRDS** as dark approached. We did see a hen **HARRIER** and an **OSPREY**, too. The total species for the event was 34.

- *Bernie Grossman*

Palmer's Ravine 27 April 2000

Fair but cool skies greeted ten birders at Palmer's Ravine at 7AM. At first we descended into the ravine and found **LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH**, **BROWN CREEPER**, **BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER**, **RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET**, **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER**, **WILD TURKEY** (one on a nest!) and **PURPLE FINCH** among others. Later, we entered the back field where many raptors were sighted. Included were **AMERICAN KESTREL**, **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK**, **COOPER'S HAWK**, **RED-TAILED HAWK**, **BROAD-WINGED HAWK**, **OSPREY** and **TURKEY VULTURE**. Good views of **PILEATED WOODPECKER**, **BROWN THRASHER**, **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** and **AMERICAN PIPIT**.

A good time was had by all.

- *Tom Palmer*

Peebles Island State Park May 3, 2000

Participants: Donna Zimmerman, Melanie McCormick, Jeffrey Rose, David Tekian, Sharo Schirr (?), Rebecca Brown, Heidi & Carl Klinowski, Gregg Recer, Bryce Recer, Cathy Graichen, George & Kay Hanson, Joan Cipriani, Shirley & Bob Dressler, Dave Potts, Laura & John Zambrano, Jane McCloskey, Autumn & Jennifer Brady Connor, Rose Diana, Frank Murphy - leader.

Highlights: The trip was off to a good start as we all had a good look at a **GREAT HORNED OWL** being mobbed by **AMERICAN CROWS**. Then we got to see an **OSPREY** perched briefly at the south end of the island. We were a bit early in the season for migrating birds but saw a few **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS** and a **BLUE-HEADED VIREO**. A lone **COMMON GOLDENEYE** was spotted on the western side. There were also a few shorebirds at the northwestern side, mostly **SPOTTED SANDPIPERS** and a single **YELLOWLEGS** that we weren't certain if it was a Greater or Lesser. The shadbush which normally lights up the island was past its bloom but there was still some columbine in bloom along the rocky cliffs.





Birds Identified: **DC CORMORANT, GREAT BLUE HERON, TURKEY VULTURE, CANADA GOOSE, WOOD DUCK, BLACK DUCK, MALLARD, COMMON MERGANSER, YELLOWLEGS SP., SPOTTED SANDPIPER, RING-BILLED GULL, HERRING AND GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS, ROCK DOVE, MOURNING DOVE, CHIMNEY SWIFT, BELTED KINGFISHER, DOWNY, FLICKER, LEAST FLYCATCHER, FISH CROW, BC CHICKADEE, TITMOUSE, BG GNATCATCHER, ROBIN, SONG SPARROW, WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, CARDINAL, RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD, GRACKLE, COWBIRD, GOLDFINCH.** Total: 39 Species.

- *Frank Murphy*

Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve May 17, 2000

Participants: G. Hanson, K. Hanson, David Tekian, Vicki Vosburgh, Jon & Sasha Kassoff, Jeff Rose, Hope & Frank Murphy, Tina Markopoulus, Sue & John Adair, Patti Packer, Jennifer Brady-Connor - leader.

Birders who stayed away because of a rainy forecast missed a glorious late evening bird walk at the Preserve. While waiting for late-comers, we witnessed copulating **TREE SWALLOWS** (a little privacy please!) on the electrical line near the bridge. Shortly into our walk, a pair of tame rats (!) joined us before being rescued by fearless birder Jeff Rose, who placed them in his car until he could bring them home. Besides great sightings of a **COMMON NIGHTHAWK**, a **WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW**, and a pair of **SOLITARY SANDPIPERS**, we were also treated to the sights and sounds of other evening animals. Green, tree, and bull frogs were heard calling, and a late spring peeper or two joined in. The group leader captured and released a gray tree frog for the group to see, but not before it jumped onto various members of the group ending up on a young

boy's glasses! As we ended the trip in the glow of moonlight mixed with a state trooper's spotlight a total of 28 bird species were tallied.

Birds Identified: **GREAT BLUE HERON; CANADA GOOSE; WOOD DUCK; MALLARD; SHARP-SHINNED HAWK; SPOTTED SANDPIPER; RING-BILLED GULL; MOURNING DOVE; COMMON NIGHTHAWK; RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD; DOWNY WOODPECKER; HAIRY WOODPECKER; EASTERN KINGBIRD; WARBLING VIREO; AMERICAN CROW; TREE SWALLOW; MARSH WREN; BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER; VEERY; AMERICAN ROBIN; GRAY CATBIRD; YELLOW WARBLER; COMMON YELLOWTHROAT; SONG SPARROW; SWAMP SPARROW; WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW; RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD; COMMON GRACKLE; BALTIMORE ORIOLE.** Total: 28 Species.

- *Jennifer Brady-Connor*

Moreau Lake State Park May 21, 2000

Participants: David Tekian, Donna Zimmerman, Hope Murphy, Joan Cipriani, Jennifer Brady-Connor - leader.

Highlights: A dreary, rainy morning brought no warblers, unusual for the time of year and location, but 26 species in total. As we approached the beach a group of shorebirds originally assumed to be spotted sandpipers were in actuality a small flock of **DUNLINS** in spring plumage. We were also treated to a **YELLOW-THROATED VIREO** and a flock of curious swallows near the north-west end of the bridge that traverses the lake.

Birds Identified: **GREAT BLUE HERON; KILLDEER; SPOTTED SANDPIPER; DUNLIN (small group in spring plumage); EASTERN PHOEBE; YELLOW-THROATED VIREO; RED-EYED VIREO; BLUE JAY; AMERICAN CROW; TREE SWALLOW; NORTHERN ROUGH WINGED SWALLOW; BANK SWALLOW; BARN**



SWALLOW; BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE; TUFTED TIT-MOUSE; BROWN CREEPER; GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET; AMERICAN ROBIN; EUROPEAN STARLING; CHIPPING SPARROW; NORTHERN CARDINAL; RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD; COMMON GRACKLE; BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD; BALTIMORE ORIOLE; AMERICAN GOLDFINCH. Total: 26 Species.

- Jennifer Brady-Connor

Grafton Lakes State Park May 27, 2000

A cool, windy Saturday morning at Grafton Lakes State Park was enjoyed by five birders; the birds were noticeably less enthusiastic. As the group assembled, there was a sudden silence as a pair of **SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS** flew over. Later, a **BROAD-WINGED HAWK** on a roadside perch gave us an unusually close-up look until deciding we were not suitable prey items. Other birds seen or heard included **MAGNOLIA, NASHVILLE, CHESTNUT SIDED, BLACK-AND-WHITE,**

and YELLOW WARBLERS, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, LEAST FLYCATCHER, EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE, BLUE-HEADED VIREO, VEERY, and the ubiquitous **RED-EYED VIREOS** and **OVENBIRDS**. The most colorful sighting was a resplendent **SCARLET TANAGER**, singing in full sunlight from his high perch in a not yet leafed-out Ash. The most unusual, unfortunately not countable, was an insomniac Little Brown Bat, active at 9 AM. We suspect it had been rudely awakened by the hyperactive **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER** that was touring the neighborhood, drumming on any resonant object in sight, natural or artificial. Many common species, including Nuthatches, Cardinals, and the grassland birds remained in hiding all morning, leading to a low total of 39 species. Even the usually raucous resident Common Ravens were nowhere to be heard.

-Philip and Marjorie Whitney

Dr. Sally M. Kelly Dies

Dr. Sally M. Kelly died recently. She was an HMBC member since 1963 and had attended numerous HMBC events in years past. She worked for the New York State Department of Health for many years.

I met Sally on some HMBC trips when we were just starting to bird. She was fun and funny. She enjoyed spending time out of doors. I always enjoyed a bird trip if she was along.

Although I hadn't seen her on a trip for quite some time, I often wondered how things were going. She will be remembered and missed.

- Cathy Graichen



Upcoming HMBC Field Trips

(Consult your field trip schedule or Birdline (439-8080) for trip details)

JUL 1 HANNACROIX RAVINE
Sat **Coordinators: Jocelyn Cole-Calkins & Ron Calkins** **768-2911**

This half-day trip to southern Albany County will be spent hiking along the Hannacroix Creek in search of Scarlet Tanager, finches, warblers, thrushes and other summer residents. Meet at 7:00 a.m. in the Bethlehem Central High School parking lot on Delaware Avenue in Delmar.

JUL 8 CHERRY PLAINS STATE PARK/CAPITAL DISTRICT WILDLIFE MGT. AREA
Sat **Coordinators: Dan Welch & Lynn Huntington** **477-2980**

This area on the Rensselaer Plateau ranges from 1300 to 2000 feet and hosts a fine variety of higher elevation species. We'll look for Winter Wren, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Hermit Thrush, Veery, Mourning, Blackburnian, Canada and a host of other warblers, as well as Broad-winged and Red-shouldered Hawks. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the entrance to Cherry Plain State Park on Miller Rd. between Routes 42 and 43 in the Town of Berlin, Rensselaer County.

AUG 6 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE (Aug 12)

AUG 12 JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE
Sat **Coordinator: Donna Zimmerman** **869-6624**
Local Leader: Michael Bochnick
Reservations by August 6

Migrating shorebirds are the main attraction of this long day trip to the New York City area. We should also see most of the New York State herons and egrets and have a reasonable chance of spotting species that are hard to find in New York such as Clapper Rail and Boat-tailed Grackle. We will meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Visitor Center. Prior to the trip, anyone planning to attend should call Donna Zimmerman to register.

AUG 23 AN EVENING AT FIVE RIVERS
Wed **Coordinator: Doug Steele** **477-7254**

Breeding activity will be underway for some later species such as Goldfinch and Cedar Waxwing; many species should have young well out of the nest by now. Join us for an enjoyable summer evening as we search the grounds for Five Rivers' summer residents, including flycatchers, orioles, warblers, thrushes and perhaps a Screech Owl. If water levels are right, we may even find a few shorebirds on some of the ponds. Meet at 6:00 p.m. in the parking lot. (See page 2 for directions)

SEPT 6 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR THE MOHAWK RIVER CRUISE (Sept 17)



SEP 14 VISCHER FERRY NATURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVE
Thurs **Coordinator: Frank Murphy**

373-1933

Mid-September is good birding at Vischer Ferry. Herons and egrets are still present and a good variety of shore birds are usually present (1999 was the exception), and migrant song-birds are on the move. Meet at 6:00 p.m. at the Main entrance for this evening walk. (See page 2 for directions.)

SEP 16 or 17 HAWK WATCH
Sat or Sun **Coordinator: Arthur Long**

758-9283

This should be the peak migration for Broad-winged Hawks. In 1996, we had a record-breaking day with over 800 hawks -- better than famous Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania! Join us for the morning, the date of which will be decided and announced on Birdline at the last minute since hawk migration is so dependent on weather. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Key Bank in Star Plaza at the intersection of Routes 20 & 155 in Guilderland.

SEPT 17 MOHAWK RIVER CRUISE
Sun **Coordinator: Denise Hilton**

785-6760

Enjoy a late summer pizza cruise along the beautiful Mohawk River, and look for herons, egrets, cormorants and possibly a variety of shorebirds. We hope to have enough people so that we can have the boat to ourselves and make it a fun HMBC social event. The cost for the cruise is \$12.00 per person, and this includes the pizza. A variety of beverages will be available for sale on board. Boarding time is 4:15 PM at the Crescent Cruise Lines dock on Rt. 9, just under the Crescent Bridge in Halfmoon. Call the Coordinator by September 6 for reservations.

SEPT 23- 25 CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY
Sat-Mon **Coordinator: Gerry Colborn**

272-1544 or

gdcolborn@prodigy.net

Limit: 12 people

*******Reservations by July 1*******

This will be our 2nd fall trip to Cape May and we will again focus on migrants. Accipiter/falcon migration will be close to its peak while passerines and shorebirds will still be moving through in good numbers. The trip will also include trips to Brigantine NWR and other southern NJ hot spots. We may also participate in a whale watch.



In Memory of Sam Madison ...

Remembering Sam Madison

by Bob Kirker

My first contact with Sam was as conservation chairman of the Adirondack Mountain Club in the early 70's. I was monitoring power line siting in the Adirondack Park and needed data from the P.S.E. I would call Sam's office and request data. Always, it came in the mail 2-3 days later. I said to myself that at least here is one bureaucrat who responds quickly to requests.

It was only several years later that I began birding and got to know Sam as a birder and friend. Of course, that was one of his many virtues - being prompt and comprehensive. Amazingly, despite his job which involved traveling back and forth to New York City, Sam had little or no time for birding trips. Yet in 1993, he had a record on 13 ABA birding lists as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rank</u>
ABA	717	97
Lower 48	665	86
USA	722	62
World	1894	267
N. America	927	169
Mass	241	79
NY	333	21
NJ	250	100
Fla	236	188
Texas	373	159
Az	279	104
Calif	298	307
RI	212	28

Sam's trip to Attu in 1990, when Sam was 76 years old, typifies his grit and determination. He hiked/bicycled 22 miles. He had already traversed the route across the island four times, was exhausted and was going to bed when he was told the Siberian Flycatcher was at the far end of the island - #700 for Sam. Like a trooper, he gutted it out and finally saw his 700th species.

Sam was a fastidious dresser. On a Mass. trip to Andrews Point, it was raining all day. Sam and Aud had just bought Gore-Tex pants/parka combinations. I remarked as we left the motel how nattily dressed they were. Later, standing at the end of the driveway by the house at the point, I glanced at Sam and he looked so cool - like an ad by the



Marlboro man. We were trying to see a murre in the bay between the raindrops. To give you an idea of how hard it was raining at the time - the lady in the house offered us coffee to warm up!

Another trip to Mass. involved a 5am start from Ho-Jo's at route 4 in Rensselaer county. Sam did not show up on time and as 6 am appeared, I hesitated to call Audrey and wake her up, but finally did. Sam had left 2 hours ago. Now I was worried that he had an accident on the way over. There was one car in the back corner of the parking lot, but it was not Sam's. I double checked it - lo and behold, Sam had bought a new car, he had lain down asleep in the front seat and I had missed him.

We were hoping to see a yellow-nosed albatross that a storm the previous day had blown in. As these birds typically leave as soon as the storm was over, we had little time to get to Barnstable Beach by early am. I drove exceptionally fast (92 mph) all the way to the beach. Both Gary Stone and Sam were asleep - just as well. As we pulled into the bay, the albatross was soaring left to right. There was no time for scopes, we bailed out with our binocs and saw the bird for about two minutes. That was it for the day. We never did see the reported dovebies.

A California trip netted the California Condor - one year before they were captured. I thought we had little chance of success as the timing was bad. We had hired Richard Webster as guide for this trip - one of the so called "WINGS Kirker Specials". It turned out the local Land conservancy was monitoring the species with US Fish & Wildlife funding. A young lady in the back of a ford ½ ton pickup with a two-way radio greeted us at a location that Richard knew about. She was excited as just then she had received a report that two birds were coming down the canyon and would be over our position in 5 minutes. Right on time, the two condors showed up. When seeing these birds by themselves you do not appreciate their size. We were very fortunate that above the condors there was a golden eagle and above the eagle there was a red-tailed hawk. The red-tail would dive down on the eagle who would, at the last second, twist and throw up his talons towards the red-tail. With this show going on, we got a good idea of how huge the condors were. During this trip, Webster was walking across a sandy area and from the shadow of a bird flying over he declared a prairie falcon - a life bird for some of us.

We had to be in Monterey Bay early the next morning for a boat trip. Dick was so excited he wanted to stay longer and maybe see more condors but our time was restricted. We drove him to Bakersfield and bought him a ticket back to San Diego with a very generous tip. Later that night, about 11pm we had supper at some



restaurant in a valley northeast of LA. The tables were close together and right behind me I heard a very familiar voice. Trying to be as inconspicuous as possible, I slowly turned around to look square in the face of Detective "Kojak".

On an Oklahoma trip with Jim Keuthe during early January, Sam and I decided to drive to Amarillo, Texas for a Smith's Longspur. Driving towards our destination, Sam remarked that he and Aud had honeymooned across the USA. Aud had found a beautiful place somewhat south of Amarillo. We got the Smith's Longspur and proceeded to Pal Duro State Park that Sam had remembered. Unbelievably, at the end of the canyon we saw all four bluebird species in one bush. The slanting rays of the sun reflecting on the various hues of blue was a sight I will always treasure.

I remember that during a Florida trip with Sam he was looking for an obscure sparrow species that was hiding behind a large bush. The rest of us had seen the bird and I desperately wanted Sam to see it. So I climbed the fence and slowly walked around the bush - to no avail. As a last resort I was going to push through the bush. Howard Langridge, our guide, told me that this bush was a favored resting place for rattlesnakes. Needless to say, I immediately backed off. Eventually, the bird worked out to the front of the bush and Sam got his sighting.

We were birding below Falcon Dam and Sam was trying for the 14th time to see a Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. I was trying my utmost to make it happen as the bird was seen here two days before near the old Girl Scout camp. We walked back and forth many times and it was beginning to get dark. Sam had an 8am flight out of San Antonio. I was getting nervous not only because of the drive back to San Antonio, but also because this location was a prime spot for drug runners. Only several months later was I told that 2-3 days before we were there, 22 shots were fired one night. We got to Alice, Texas at midnight and took a room at a truckstop to get four hours sleep. I dropped off Sam at 7am for his flight and promptly fell asleep in the airport. Waking up and having only one day left to bird, I called the local RBA - nothing. I took the next flight back to Albany. Had I waited approximately one hour longer, a masked duck was reported on the updated RBA. Sam and I both subsequently got our birds: Sam at the King Ranch two years later and I at Sarita, also two years later.

Finally, as we pass through the labyrinth of life, many doors open/close for us on many people. We are fortunate if a handful leave a lasting mark upon us. Sam of course was one of these! I could travel for hours upon hours with Sam and never run out of conversation. He seemed to me like a rock of stability always ready to help out, provide sage counsel, or just be there for you. Ask Sam for \$15 for car expenses and you get \$20. You could always borrow his scope/binocs/whatever. Sam I miss you!



A Birding Trip with Sam *by Bill Gorman*

I have known Sam as a friend and birding companion for over 30 years and have birded with Sam alone and with groups. One trip that seems to stand out was our trip to Arizona in 1996 in search of an Eared Trogon. Sam Madison, Jim Kuethe and I arrived in Phoenix late one evening. Sam rented a car, but for some reason he and Jim decided I should be the driver. That sounded alright to me since the Arizona roads are usually good roads and even the dirt roads are kept in good shape. Little did I know that it had rained in the mountains that evening. Our destination was a spot in the Superstition Mountains east of Phoenix on a little unnamed road about ten miles the other side of a large copper mine. Soon after entering the copper mine area, I stopped the car. In front of us was a giant mud puddle 100 feet or more in length and covering the entire road bed. "Go ahead, you can make it" said Sam. Jim agreed. Against my better judgement, I gunned the engine and drove into the quagmire. Through some strange set of circumstances we got through the mud barrier and several more before we reached solid ground. At this point, the dirt road ran parallel to a small stream. However, the stream and the road intertwined with the stream crossing the road in several places called washes. When we came to the first wash, I stopped the car again and we all got out to assess the wash. It was about 30 feet across and perhaps a foot or more deep, as best we could estimate. "Go ahead, you can make it" said Sam again. Jim was in agreement. Again, against my better judgement I drove the car into the wash and, to our glee, out the other side. We made it through 2 more washes and I stopped the car again. This time the wash was about 50 feet across and of unknown depth. I parked the car off the side of the road and we waded through the wash. We had just about reached our destination and we met some other birders on the same quest. We spread out to cover as large an area as possible as we searched for our bird. After about five hours of searching we finally located our quarry and we all cheered as we each added the Eared Trogon to our life list. That evening, when we returned to our motel, we could not tell what color our car was under its mud coat. We had to take the car through a car wash before we dared return it to the rental agency. From this trip, we can see that Sam was an adventurous birder, Sam was a gutsy birder and Sam was a persistent birder.

But for me, Sam was a good friend. I will miss Sam and so will the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club.



How We Got To Know Sam and Audrey

by Lillian Samuelson

It was on a birding tour to Britain that we first got to know Sam and Audrey

About ten years ago, after Dale and I had been on the waiting list for a year, we went on Wings' "Great British Experience". We were surprised to find Sam and Audrey from our bird club on the trip too.

Bryan Bland had been running the tour with wife Betty for about fifteen years, and had honed the trip to a fine edge. He took the group to see the sights including Cambridge University and King's Chapel, birding at Cley-next-the-sea, Durham Cathedral, etc. This was only the beginning.

It was the last three weeks of June, and in that time he included most of the things most Americans want to see in Britain outside London --- Hadrian's wall, Beatrice Potter's cottage, Stratford-on-Avon, Salisbury Cathedral, York, castles, Chester, north into the Scottish Highlands, the Hebrides, Wales, Bath, Stonehenge, the places where many of the British television programs carried by WMHT were filmed and much more.

It was planned as a birding trip and he also showed us every species of breeding bird in Britain. Among the birding experiences was a visit to an island where there was an Arctic Tern breeding colony. I have a picture of Audrey (and others) decorated with the terns' favorite defense mechanism, after attacks on our heads with their sharp beaks! We'd been warned to heavily pad the inside of our hats to protect our heads, and it was necessary.

Another recollection is of Bryan's making his way up a very steep face in Scotland to scare up a bird, an Ousel, for all of us to see. His dedication was all but unbelievable.

After the tour, we were all dropped off at Heathrow, Sam and Audrey were taking the same plane we were.

After clearing immigration, the four of us went to the gate area to get our plane. We waited, and waited, and waited, without explanation. About two hours after scheduled take-off, they finally announced that the pilot was ill, there was no back-up, and the flight was cancelled! We decided the best course of action was to head to the Admirals Club, and took Sam and Audrey with us.

There we encountered the wildest mob of passengers we've ever seen anywhere...



Men yelling that they had to be home the next morning, to get to jobs and important meetings, get them home on the Concorde, and much more. We decided the best course of action was to find a quiet corner and wait out the turmoil.

When things finally settled down, the attendants came to us with a bottle of champagne and said "You've been so patient, maybe this will help apologize. Now, what would you like?" Dale suggested "How about three days in London at your expense, and a trip home in first class?" The answer was "That's no problem!"

They sent us to an elegant nearby hotel, with vouchers for breakfast, lunch and dinner for three days, and scheduled us for our trip home. The attendant who took care of the reservations suggested that Dale see her about first class seats before our flight home.

Sam, Audrey, and the two of us had a pleasant stay in London; theater, (Sam suggested "Miss Saigon", which we all enjoyed.) museums, Convent Garden and other London sights, and celebrated on the final night with the champagne.

When we reported to the airport, Audrey and Sam got through immigration ahead of us, and boarded the plane. Dale and I meantime went to claim our upgraded seats, if possible. The same attendant was on duty, and remembered the situation, and promptly upgraded us to business class, then asked, "Where are your friends?" We indicated they had already gone to the gate. Her response was that she could take care of that, and she did so, calling the gate, and arranging for them to be upgraded also.

We boarded the plane and had the happy experience of pulling them out of economy class seats into business class. It was a most pleasant trip, needless to say, that we all enjoyed.

After the trip, we shared my pictures, re-living our trip. We've often reminded each other of the good birds and good times in Britain. They've been good friends ever since.

We will miss Sam.



Sam Madison
by Scott Stoner

Although I unfortunately missed the extensive field birding experiences with Sam that some others enjoyed, I deeply appreciated working with him on other Club matters. Sam had joined the HMBC in 1948, well before I was born, and nearly half a century before I became president in the mid-90's. Endeavoring to run an organization that Sam and his colleagues had been maintaining for so many years was a significant challenge, and Sam's advice and counsel and support were both respected and appreciated. As I grew in the job, one of the most important things I learned was what a fine job people had done in the 1950's and 1960's, when the legal foundation of the organization was being cast. It was a proud moment for me when our Club presented Sam with the first HMBC Lifetime Service Award.

Despite his distinguished professional career, his 732 ABA-area birds and many, many other achievements, Sam always had time to answer a question and offer a helping hand, even in his last months as he struggled through health issues that would have sidelined a lesser man. It was always a pleasure, a real pleasure and privilege, to work with him. I am fortunate to have had that opportunity.

It was always fascinating to learn of Sam's birding adventures as well; his stamina and spirit overshadowed that of someone half his age. Well into his 70's, Sam traveled literally to the end of the world, to Attu at the tip of Alaska's Aleutian islands. Stories of his efforts, walking tens of miles in a single day to chase - and see - several life birds, he humbly recounted to the Club in a 1991 program, and were recorded for perpetuity in Pete Dunne's *The Feather Quest*.

Our Club was so very fortunate to have a life member of the stature - and kindness - of Sam Madison. He filled every conceivable role in the Club's history, from field trip leader, legal advisor, twice as president, and always, for 52 years, there as informal advisor and expert to guide us along the way. Thank you Sam, we'll miss you, we're successful because of you, and we'll remember you always as we continue striving forward to make this the best Club it can be.



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23 Scotch Mist Way
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

or via e-mail to:

recerg@crisny.org

Is the newsletter late?

You may have noticed that this issue is a little later than usual. We were on vacation for over two weeks (can you blame us for choosing 20 life birds in southeast AZ over strict punctuality with the newsletter?) and have been busy trying to catch up with everything. (Not to mention trying to fit in a bird trip or two during migration and the breeding season!) The 2000-2001 Club directory will be sent with the August newsletter. Sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused. We should be back on schedule in August.

- Cathy Graichen & Gregg Recer



PRESIDENT'S CORNER: In Jack Connor's book *The Complete Birder*, Connor describes breeding-season birding as a fairly low-excitement enterprise — mainly comprised of census work with little in the way of vagrant potential. In New Jersey (Connor's state of residence when writing the book), this may be largely true, especially compared to the tremendous migration birding they have there in spring and fall. But we're lucky to have a lot of exciting breeding-season birding within easy reach of the Hudson-Mohawk region. In the space of about 6 weeks Cathy, Bryce and I have had or will have opportunities for enjoying a remarkable variety of breeding species. To drop a few names, we've already seen Trumpeter Swans and Virginia Rails with young, Zone-tailed Hawk, Elegant Trogon, 8 species of hummingbirds

(including Berylline, Broad-billed, Lucifer, Magnificent and Blue-throated), Sulfur-bellied Flycatcher, Cave Swallow, Mexican Chickadee, Painted Redstart, Red-faced and Olive Warblers, and Clay-colored, Vesper and Henslow's Sparrows. Admittedly, all the preceding, except the sparrows, swan and rail, required travelling to southeastern Arizona (via Carlsbad NM for the swallow), but that could even be considered within "easy reach" now that Southwest Airlines flies out of Albany. However, the others were found on a fascinating weekend trip to the Watertown area in northern NY (I know, I know, the swans don't "count") and in early July we are anticipating the birding delights of downeast Maine, including up-close views of Atlantic Puffins and Razorbills, pelagic species such as Greater and Manx Shearwaters and about 2-dozen species of breeding wood-warblers. Chasing fall and winter vagrants can be exciting, but I really enjoy watching breeding birds — the birds are usually at their most colorful, male passerines are in full song and there are many opportunities for observing feeding, courtship and parental-care behaviors. The only trick is to find the places where lots of species are on their breeding ranges — usually by heading north or up in elevation (in the case of the AZ specialties, the sky-islands can be considered "up north" for the species that nest primarily in Mexico).

So, if it seems like all the local birding action consists of Robins, Catbirds and Yellow Warblers, make a trip up to the Rensselaer Plateau, the Helderbergs or the Adirondacks or out to the wetlands of central New York or the New England Coast. There's plenty of quality birding out there. Enjoy!

Gregg Recer

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Vol. 62
No. 4

August
2000

Published Bi-monthly by The Hudson-Mohawk

Doom and Gloom Century Run 2000

by Robert P. Yunick

Rain, showers, gloomy overcast sky, and an air temperature which in some portions of the region never exceeded 49 deg. F. dampened the outcome of the Club's 55th Guy Bartlett Century Run on May 20, 2000. Seventeen observers in five field parties recorded a dismal 149 species, ranking 35th in Century Run history. The best individual group count was 122 species, placing it below 25th in rank. On the bright side, Tom Palmer commented on the scarcity of black flies; and Jocelyn Cole-Calkins enjoyed her first Century Run without bug spray!

It was not a day for rarities or new species. Only two species were recorded for the tenth or less time: Gadwall for the eighth time, last in 1997; and Peregrine Falcon for the tenth time, its fourth since 1996. There were no new species.

The day was more noted for its missed species. Excessive rain in April caused high water (year to date on May 20 of over five inches above normal) which negatively influenced the finding of waders, waterfowl, shorebirds and gulls. Least Bittern was missed for the first time since 1992. The 11 species of waterfowl was below average, and lacked several species of divers and sea ducks. Osprey was conspicuously missed for the first time since 1974, and for only the sixth time in 55 years.

Eight species of shorebirds was below last year's 14 (preceded by a 1999 April drought) and below the usual 11-14 species per year over the past ten years (except for six in 1991).

This year's Run has some other parallels with that in 1991: both of this year's single party high count of 122 species and the total count of 149 species last occurred in 1991, as did a low warbler count noted below.

This year's passage of a cold front, and southward dipping of the jet stream just before count day had the same effect on birding as did a similar, though more pronounced event in 1991. The day before the 1991 Run, incoming cold air clashed violently with hot, humid air in the 80's and dropped the air temperature nearly 40 deg. in four hours into the 40's with north wind overnight to create unfavorable birding. Walter Ellison summed up this year's Century Run most appropriately: "It was not a great outing...It was simply too breezy, too cool, too wet, too many migrants blocked up to the south of us, and what birds were here too reticent to show themselves under such conditions." Jocelyn Cole-Calkins concurred: "Very cold and wet!

In This Issue...

Crossword Puzzle Solution

Hudson River Observations

Programs and Field Trips Reports

Upcoming Programs and Field Trips



No bugs though!"

Common Nighthawk was missed for the fourth consecutive year. And when one looks at the species listed later seen by only one group, it is unusual to see in that list species such as American Black Duck, Eastern Wood-pewee, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk and Greater Yellowlegs.

But most noticeable of all was the lack of warbler species. A low of 20 was tallied compared to 28 last year. One has to go back 44 years to 1956 to find a lower warbler species tally, when in that year only 14 were found. Similar low counts were 19 in 1954, 18 in 1950 and 19 in 1947. For the 40 years since 1960, the average has been 26.3 warbler species per year (maximum of 31 in 1981 and minimum of 21 in 1991 and 1967).

There were 58 species seen by all groups, and 25 species seen by only one group (12 of those by Group E). Field coverage ran from 0315 to 2130 (18 ¼ hours) with Group E afield the longest at 17 ¾ hours amassing the biggest list of 122 species.

Listed below are the field groups, their times afield, areas covered, and species found only by them, with an asterisk denoting the group compiler:

Group A - Tom Palmer* and Dana Mather, 0530 to 1530, 83 species. City and Town of Amsterdam; Towns of Florida, Glen and Root all in Montgomery Co.; and Mariaville L. Evening Grosbeak.

Group B - Erin Willsey and Jocelyn Cole-Calkins*, 0400 to 2130, 102 species. Albany Co. American Black Duck, Hooded Merganser and Semipalmated Plover.

Group C - W. G. Ellison* and N. L. Martin, 0400 to 1930, 117 species. Meadowdale Rd., Altamont, Black Creek Marsh, Thacher Park, Cole Hill State Forest, Basic Creek Res., Cohoes, Vischer Ferry, Saratoga Airport and Lake, and Ft. Edward. Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Red-breasted Merganser, Bonaparte's Gull, Eastern Wood-pewee and Red Crossbill.

Group D - Jackie Bogardus, Becky Brown, Bill Lee*, George Shaw, Nancy Slack, Hank Stebins and Cliff Tepper, 0400 to 1800, 95 species. Black Creek and Tygert Rd. marshes, Thacher Park, Indian Ladder, Basic Creek and Alcove res., Stanton Pond, Port of Albany, Schodack Marshes and Papscanee Preserve. Peregrine Falcon, Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Fish Crow.

Group E - Larry Alden, Joe Cary, Steve Chorvas and Frank Murphy*, 0315 to 2100, 122 species. Vischer Ferry, Cold Spring Rd., Saratoga L., Tower Rd., Conklingville Dam, L. Desolation Rd., Saratoga Airport, Ballston L., Round L., Saratoga sod farm and Battlefield. Black-crowned Night-Heron, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Common Merganser, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Ruffed Grouse, Common Moorhen, Greater Yellowlegs, Whip-poor-will, Tennessee Warbler and Pine Warbler.



Feathers

Common Loon	a	b	c	d	e
Pied-billed Grebe	a	b	c		
Double-crested Cormorant		b	c	d	e
American Bittern	a	b	c	d	e
Great Blue Heron	a	b	c	d	e
Green Heron	a	b		d	e
Black-crowned Night-Heron					e
Canada Goose	a	b	c	d	e
Wood Duck	a	b	c	d	e
Green-winged Teal					e
American Black Duck		b			
Mallard	a	b	c	d	e
Blue-winged Teal					e
Northern Shoveler			c		
Gadwall			c		
Hooded Merganser		b			
Common Merganser					e
Red-breasted Merganser			c		
Turkey Vulture		b		d	e
Northern Harrier			c	d	
Red-shouldered Hawk					e
Broad-winged Hawk					e
Red-tailed Hawk	a	b	c	d	e
American Kestrel	a	b	c	d	e
Peregrine Falcon				d	
Ruffed Grouse					e
Wild Turkey	a	b	c	d	e
Virginia Rail	a	b	c	d	e
Sora	a		c		e
Common Moorhen					e
Semipalmated Plover		b			
Killdeer	a	b	c	d	e
Greater Yellowlegs					e

Lesser Yellowlegs			c		e
Spotted Sandpiper		a	b	c	d e
Upland Sandpiper		a		c	
Common Snipe			b	c	d e
American Woodcock			b	c	e
Bonaparte's Gull				c	
Ring-billed Gull				c	d e
Herring Gull				c	d e
Great Black-backed Gull				c	d e
Black Tern				c	e
Rock Dove		a	b	c	d e
Mourning Dove		a	b	c	d e
Black-billed Cuckoo				c	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo					d
Eastern Screech-Owl			b	c	
Great Horned Owl				c	d
Barred Owl				c	e
Whip-poor-will					e
Chimney Swift		a	b	c	d e
Ruby-throated Hummingbird		a	b	c	d e
Belted Kingfisher		a	b	c	e
Red-bellied Woodpecker			b	c	d
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		a	b	c	e
Downy Woodpecker		a	b	c	d e
Hairy Woodpecker		a		c	d e
Northern Flicker		a	b	c	d e
Pileated Woodpecker		a	b	c	d e
Eastern Wood-Pewee				c	
Alder Flycatcher				b	c e
Willow Flycatcher		a	b	c	d
Least Flycatcher				b	c d e
Eastern Phoebe		a	b	c	d e
Great Crested Flycatcher		a	b	c	d e

Feathers



Eastern Kingbird	a	b	c	d	e
Horned Lark	a		c		e
Purple Martin			c		e
Tree Swallow	a	b	c	d	e
No. Rough-winged Swallow	a	b	c	d	e
Bank Swallow	a		c	d	e
Cliff Swallow	a	b	c	d	e
Barn Swallow	a	b	c	d	e
Blue Jay	a	b	c	d	e
American Crow	a	b	c	d	e
Fish Crow				d	
Common Raven			c	d	
Black-capped Chickadee	a	b	c	d	e
Tufted Titmouse	a	b	c	d	e
Red-breasted Nuthatch		b			
White-breasted Nuthatch	a	b		d	e
Brown Creeper		b		d	e
House Wren	a	b	c	d	e
Winter Wren		b			e
Marsh Wren		b	c	d	e
Golden-crowned Kinglet		b	c		e
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	a	b	c	d	e
Eastern Bluebird	a	b	c		e
Veery	a	b	c	d	e
Hermit Thrush		b	c		e
Wood Thrush	a	b	c	d	e
American Robin	a	b	c	d	e
Gray Catbird	a	b	c	d	e
Northern Mockingbird		b	c	d	e
Brown Thrasher	a	b	c	d	
Cedar Waxwing		b		d	
European Starling	a	b	c	d	e
Blue-headed Vireo		b	c		e

Yellow-throated Vireo	a	b	c		e
Warbling Vireo	a	b	c	d	e
Red-eyed Vireo	a	b	c	d	e
Blue-winged Warbler		b	c	d	e
Tennessee Warbler					e
Nashville Warbler	a				e
Yellow Warbler	a	b	c	d	e
Chestnut-sided Warbler	a	b	c	d	e
Magnolia Warbler	a				e
Black-throated Blue Warbler				d	e
Yellow-rumped Warbler		b	c	d	e
Black-throated Green Warbler		b	c	d	e
Blackburnian Warbler		b	c		e
Pine Warbler					e
Prairie Warbler		b	c	d	e
Blackpoll Warbler			c	d	e
Black-and-white Warbler		b	c	d	e
American Redstart	a	b	c	d	e
Ovenbird	a	b	c	d	e
Northern Waterthrush		b	c	d	e
Louisiana Waterthrush	a			d	e
Common Yellowthroat	a	b	c	d	e
Canada Warbler		b	c	d	e
Scarlet Tanager	a	b	c		e
Northern Cardinal	a	b	c	d	e
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	a	b	c		e
Indigo Bunting	a		c		
Eastern Towhee	a	b	c	d	e
Chipping Sparrow	a	b	c	d	e
Field Sparrow		b	c	d	e
Vesper Sparrow	a		c		e
Savannah Sparrow	a		c		e
Song Sparrow	a	b	c	d	e



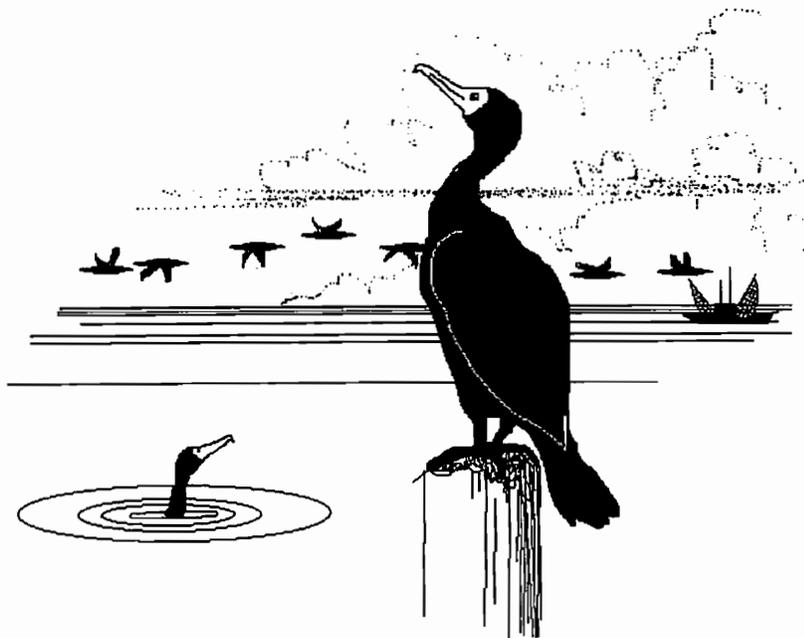
Feathers

Swamp Sparrow	a	b	c	d	e
White-throated Sparrow		b		d	e
White-crowned Sparrow	a				
Dark-eyed Junco		b	c	d	e
Bobolink	a	b	c	d	e
Red-winged Blackbird	a	b	c	d	e
Eastern Meadowlark	a	b	c	d	e
Common Grackle	a	b	c	d	e
Brown-headed Cowbird	a	b	c	d	e
Baltimore Oriole	a	b	c	d	e
Purple Finch	a	b	c		e
House Finch	a	b	c	d	e
Red Crossbill			c		
Pine Siskin		b	c		
American Goldfinch	a	b	c	d	e
Evening Grosbeak	a				
House Sparrow	a	b	c	d	e



Hawk Watcher's Wanted

The Club is looking for volunteers to conduct hawk counts during this year's fall hawk-watching season. Interested Club members should contact Bob Budliger about scheduling and logistics. Bob's number is 439-0006.



Feathers



Feathered Phrases by Edward Sessa

	¹ W	² A	I	³ F	⁴ S		⁵ Y	⁶ O	W	⁷ L	⁸ S		⁹ O	¹⁰ F	¹¹ L	¹² I	¹³ F	¹⁴ E
¹⁵ O	A	R		¹⁶ L	A	¹⁷ D	E	N		¹⁸ A	W	¹⁹ E		²⁰ L	A	D	L	E
²¹ U	S	E		²² A	L	I	T		²³ T	W	I	N		²⁴ O	C	E	A	N
²⁵ T	H	A	²⁶ N	K	S	G	I	V	I	N	G	T	U	R	K	E	Y	
D			O		A				E			E		E				
²⁷ O	U	²⁸ S	T				²⁹ G	U	T	³⁰ T	³¹ E	R	³² S	N	³³ I	³⁴ P	³⁵ E	
		W		³⁶ C	O	C	O		³⁷ H	O	G		³⁸ A	C	T	U	P	
³⁹ R		A		A				T		⁴⁰ E	T	T	⁴¹ T	E		⁴² R	I	⁴³ G
⁴⁴ A	⁴⁵ B	N	E	R		⁴⁶ F	L	A	K	E		T		⁴⁷ N	A	R	C	O
⁴⁸ P	U	S		D			T		N			T		I				T
	⁴⁹ T	O	K	I	L	L	A	M	O	⁵⁰ C	⁵¹ K	I	N	G	B	⁵² I	R	D
⁵³ E	E	N		N				T		⁵⁴ T	O	O	T		H		M	E
⁵⁵ D	O	G	M	A		⁵⁶ F	I	⁵⁷ G		⁵⁸ O	C	T	E	T		⁵⁹ P	E	N
W				L			⁶⁰ T	E	E	T	H	E		I		O		G
⁶¹ A	B	⁶² R	A	S	I	V	E	S		S		⁶³ R	U	N	T	S		O
R		A		I				T					G		⁶⁴ E	⁶⁵ G	O	
⁶⁶ D	A	T	I	N	⁶⁷ G		⁶⁸ H	A	V	⁶⁹ E	A	⁷⁰ C	H	A	⁷¹ T		⁷² A	S
		I			T			P		T		T		⁷³ L	A	R	G	E
	⁷⁴ W	O	O	D	Y	W	O	O	D	P	E	C	K	E	R		E	



Feathers

Across

- 1 homeless kids
- 5 cat protests
- 9 the breath _____
- 15 kayaker's need
- 16 mentally burdened
- 18 reverence
- 20 tool to pour soup
- 21 employ
- 22 dismantled
- 23 word with identical or towers
- 24 albatross' view
- 25 *grateful bird?*
- 27 boot out
- 29 *down and out bird?*
- 36 ____ nut or ____ palm
- 37 greed or a pig
- 38 misbehave
- 40 betrothe
- 41 manipulate the election
- 44 L'il one
- 46 snow crystal
- 47 prefix with lepsy
- 48 purulence
- 49 *bird assassin handbook?*
- 53 suffix for cant or coll
- 54 thomas the train sound
- 55 doctrine or recent movie
- 56 ficus fruit
- 58 eightsome
- 59 pig's sty
- 60 what baby's do

- 61 sandpapers
- 63 peewees
- 64 id counterpart
- 66 "the ____ game"
- 68 *talk about a particular bird?*
- 72 leave ____ as is
- 73 garment size
- 74 *carved bird?*

Down

- 1 word with car or up
- 2 region
- 3 anti-aircraft fire
- 4 spicy sauce
- 5 bigfoot
- 6 TV button
- 7 sprinkler site
- 8 big swallow
- 10 *bird spotted on the Arno River?*
- 11 be without
- 12 ____ fixe (French)
- 13 strip off skin
- 14 evening (poetic contraction)
- 15 surpass
- 17 ____ it, man!
- 19 move into
- 23 *bind a bird by marriage?*
- 26 negative word
- 28 *bird's last aria?*
- 29 *get-lost bird?*
- 30 musical pitch
- 31 first bird house

- 32 droop
- 33 word with drop or that's
- 34 content cat sound
- 35 the Odyssey or Iliad
- 36 *serious bird error?*
- 39 wack or music type
- 41 describing Macy's at Xmas
- 43 *prosperous bird?*
- 45 hawk
- 50 *old senile birds?*
- 51 former NY mayor
- 52 compel
- 53 ____ The Confessor
- 57 secret police
- 62 2:4 e.g.
- 65 measuring instrument
- 67 festive
- 69 clairvoyance
- 70 federal disease agency (abbr.)
- 71 road covering



UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Please Note: All HMBC programs will now be held at the Colonie Library except the December Holiday party. Programs at the Colonie Library begin at 7 PM.

Mon Sep 11, Scott and Denise Stoner on ***South Florida: Imperiled Paradise***, 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library Joint program with Capital District Audubon.

As Marjorie Stoneman Douglas wrote, "There are no other everglades in the world." Southern Florida was once home to flocks of wading birds so great that they filled the sky. Sadly, today's visitors experience only a fraction of these legendary scenes. Rampant growth and efforts to redirect and control the natural flow of water have altered the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of water in the everglades. Hope remains, however. There are still some great birds, and recognition of the severe threats to this precious, priceless ecosystem has led to an ambitious \$8 Billion plan to restore it. From Miami to Sanibel, this slide program will describe the natural habitats of South Florida, show us many of the birds and plants that remain here, and illustrate why this is a place still worth saving.

Scott and Denise Stoner are active members of HMBC who have made numerous visits to southern Florida. Scott is Program Chair and a past President of HMBC and led the Club's 1995 Florida field trip. Denise is a past Vice President of HMBC.

Mon Oct 2, Jim Coe on ***Birding by Habitat***, 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library Joint program with Capital District Audubon.

Artist and Author Jim Coe presents this slide program describing how birders can hone their identification skills by learning to associate habitats and plant communities with certain species of birds. Identifications are easier and certainly quicker when a birder can anticipate what species may be present, based on the time of year and nature of the surroundings. Types of habitats discussed include open fields, edges, deciduous woodlands and boreal forest. Within the context of those broad classifications, Jim will also focus on some micro-habitats and their associated nesting species, such as hemlock groves and Blue-headed Vireo, power-line cuts and Chestnut-sided Warbler and wooded streams and Louisiana Waterthrush. Beginning and experienced birders alike will enjoy and learn from this program!

Jim Coe is best known as author and illustrator of "*Eastern Birds: A Guide to Field Identification of North American Species*," first published by Golden Press in 1994. He has contributed illustrations to numerous other field guides and Frank Gill's widely-used textbook "*Ornithology*." Jim is currently working on "*Western Birds*" a companion volume to his Eastern bird guide.

Mon Nov 6 Scott Corcoll, NYS DEC, ***Hawks and Owls of New York State***, 7PM Colonie Library

Mon Dec 4 Neil Giffords, Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission, ***Breeding Birds in a Fire-dependent Jack Pine Barrens***, 7PM Holiday Party, 7:30 PM Program, Five Rivers.



Field Trip Reports

Christman Sanctuary April 16, 2000

The fog lifted on a beautiful morning as 6 birders were treated to terrific falls as the Bozenkill showed its spring glory. The last of the foot of snow from the previous week provided the water! Christman Sanctuary includes a variety of habitats in a compact walk, including grass and brush, trees, conifer woodlands, and of course, a rushing stream. The highlight of the trip was at least two **LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** singing and flitting through the stream's trees. A dead tree in a field across the Schoharie Turnpike from the sanctuary had two **PILEATED WOODPECKERS** as well as other field birds. A total of 24 species of birds were seen, and a great variety of mosses and spring wildflowers about to bloom added to the trip.

- Ann B'Rells

Vischer Ferry Migrants 14 May 2000

A large group of enthusiastic birders met on Mother's Day morning to bird Vischer Ferry. The weather did not conspire against us (as has often happened on this trip in recent years) and we had a good, if not spectacular, morning of birding. Several of the expected marsh-related breeding species were found during the trip, including **GREEN HERON**, **COMMON MOORHEN**, **MARSH WREN** AND **SWAMP SPARROW**. We had **SORA** calling from the marsh, which is somewhat unusual, but did not see or hear any bitterns or Virginia Rails. We walked the loop south and west from the main entrance toward Lock 19 and had a smattering of migrant passerines including **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER**, **VEERY**, **YELLOW-THROATED AND**

WARBLING VIREOS, **MAGNOLIA WARBLER**, **AMERICAN REDSTART** AND **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH**, **WHITE-THROATED AND WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS** AND **BALTIMORE ORIOLE**. The relative dearth of warbler migrants was somewhat disappointing. At the trail leading into the woods west of the main impoundments, the trail was flooded and so we had to return the way we came. The group totaled 49 species for the morning, which is somewhat below average.

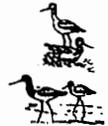
- Gregg Recer
- Cathy Graichen

Saratoga National Historical Park (The Battlefield) 18 June 2000

On Sunday, June 18 ten members of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club took a morning walk at the Saratoga National Historical Park. The morning began very quietly with only a few **RED-EYED VIREOS** calling in the distance. Things began to heat up at Stop 1 where the group was treated to a great look at a male **INDIGO BUNTING**. The field came alive with the songs of **FIELD SPARROWS**, **EASTERN MEADOWLARKS**, AND **BOBOLINKS**. A **BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO** announced its presence by calling out once. Along the tour road, **BLUE-WINGED WARBLERS**, **RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEES**, AND **BROWN THRASHERS** came out to greet us. As a light rain began to fall, the group turned back towards the Visitor's Center.

After a brief car ride, the group entered the park at Stop 3 and was rewarded with **SAVANNAH SPARROWS**, AN **NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD**, and several more **EASTERN MEADOWLARKS** and **BOBOLINKS**. Despite the dreary weather, 51 species were counted.

- Brad Bidwell



Albany Pine Bush 24 June 2000

Several HMBC members met with Erin Donnelly and Brent Kinal, both of the Pine Bush Preserve Commission and Nature Conservancy employees, and birded portions of the preserve known as the King's Highway and Blueberry Hill sections. Erin and Brent provided a wealth of interesting information concerning aspects of Pine Bush ecology, natural history and conservation management based on their intensive field work throughout the preserve. The Pine Bush is a successional habitat that cannot maintain itself over time without periodic fires. Historic fire suppression has allowed succession to proceed within the preserve itself, and also encourages shade-tolerant deciduous forest encroachment from around the periphery of the preserve. One interesting management issue that Erin and Brent pointed out repeatedly was difficulty controlling two invasive (from the Pine Bush's perspective) deciduous tree species — big-tooth aspen and black locust. These are both fast-growing species. The aspen grows clonally making cutting the saplings counter-productive as more new shoots sprout from the root system elsewhere. They must be girdled after reaching several inches in diameter to eliminate the clone, which is a much more labor-intensive process than cutting saplings. The locusts produce chemicals secreted from the roots that inhibit growth of other plants in the vicinity (alleopathy) and a satisfactory method to control its growth and re-establish the Pitch Pine/Scrub Oak community where it has become established has not been developed.

Because of the paucity of water/wetlands habitats in the Pine Bush, the birding there is not especially diverse, but we did find nearly all of the "specialty" breeding species of the preserve. Some of the highlights included **BLACK CUCKOO**, **BROWN THRASHER**, **PRAIRIE AND CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS**, **SCARLET Tanager**, **ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK**, **INDIGO BUNTING**, **EASTERN TOWHEE** AND **FIELD SPARROW**. We ended the morning walk with a total of 36 species.

- Gregg Recer

Hannacroix Ravine 1 July 2000

The day began with early morning sunshine that promised to be warm but not overly hot and humid. Arriving at the Hannacroix Ravine, our group was greeted by a **GRAY CATBIRD** and a group of **BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES**, **RED-EYED** AND **BLUE-HEADED VIREOS**. As we walked through the mixed hardwood forest, we were treated with a beautiful waterfall. Usually at this time of year the Hannacroix has dried up, but with the unusually wet weather that we have been experiencing, the Hannacroix is flowing. Walking along the top





of the ravine we were serenaded by a **HERMIT THRUSH**, **DARK-EYED JUNCOS**, AND **BLUE-HEADED VIREOS**. For many years now, Patty Packer has been in search of the Black-throated Green Warbler. Many times we have heard this bird, but today, through a portal in the forest canopy, sat a **BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** singing on top of a very tall hemlock. Finally, Patty saw her elusive Black-throated Green Warbler!

One of the fledgling birdwatchers, Caitlin Wilsey, spied some very pretty pink flowers that turned out to be our state flower, the wild rose. In this small glen that wafted with the fragrance of the wild rose, we were treated with views of the **AMERICAN REDSTART**, **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** AND **ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK**. The other fledgling birdwatcher, Matthew Stannard, spied an **OVENBIRD** walking along the forest floor catching insects, and the **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER**.

Our trip ended with the beautiful sight and song of the **SCARLET Tanager**. However, the trip's final event was a **RED-TAILED HAWK** swooping low and chasing away the tanager!

- *Jocelyn Cole-Calkins*

Acadia National Park & Machias Seal Island 1 July - 5 July 2000

A group of 16 HMBC members made the trek to the "downeast" Maine coast for three full days of birding on Mt. Desert Island (home of Acadia National Park) and Machias Seal Island. This mid-summer trip was timed to see a variety of Maine's nesting seabirds as well as nesting warblers, "winter" finches and other passerines, with the hope that some boreal species would be found as well.

After a long travelling day on July 1 the group

rallied at "0-dark-thirty" the next morning for a ninety-minute drive from Ellsworth to Cutler for the 7:00 AM boat excursion to Machias Seal Island. The island is only a few acres, and has the odd distinction of being claimed by both the US and Canada. Canadian Fish and Wildlife staff are posted on the island in the summer to maintain the island's light-house and to census seabird populations. There is no other convenient location from the US mainland where several-hundred pairs of nesting **ATLANTIC PUFFINS** AND **RAZORBILLS** and over 1000 pairs of nesting **ARCTIC TERNS** (plus a few non-nesting **COMMON MURRES** for good measure) can all be observed at such close range (nearly within arm's reach from within the Island's two sets of observation blinds. Visiting the Island is a great experience in terms of seeing these birds up close, seeing breeding behavior such as courtship displays and parents bringing food into chicks and for photography. I wonder if all the frame-filling Puffins portraits you see everywhere in gift shops along the Maine coast were taken here. On our trip the weather was near perfect, with mostly sunny conditions (some intermittent fog, of course) and very little wind or choppy seas. It made for a very successful beginning to the overall trip.

Since we were so far downeast at Cutler, we decided to spend the afternoon at Quoddy Head State Park, the eastern-most point in the United States. West Quoddy Head is arguably the most picturesque bit of rocky coastline on the entire Maine coast, which is saying a lot considering the wonderful coastal scenery for the entire length of the coast! In addition to the beautiful coastal scenery, there is a very accessible boardwalk trail through a black spruce/tamarack bog. We walked the boardwalk studying the bog flora, including the insectivorous **PITCHER PLANTS** (which were in bloom) and **SUNDEWS**. Also notable in this bog was the **BAKED APPLE BERRY**, a member of



the *Rubus* (raspberry) genus at the southern extreme of its distribution and the very attractive **SHEEPS LAUREL** in full bloom. Birding was pretty slow in the park, but we did manage to squeak up a couple of warblers (**BLACK-THROATED GREEN** AND **NASHVILLE**). Like many areas with extensive Black Spruce forest on the downeast coast, Quoddy Head is purported to be a location for boreal species including Spruce Grouse, Gray Jay and Black-backed Woodpecker. We had no luck with any of those, however.

Toward the end of the first day a few of us hiked another Maine preserve near Cutler through a dense conifer forest out to another spectacular headland high above the ocean. Again we were hoping for possible boreals. We did have **BOREAL CHICKADEES** calling in a couple of locations, but we could not get a clear view of the birds.

The following two days were spent birding Acadia National Park. The Park has three units spread among three separate land masses (plus bits of several small outlying islands). The main section of the Park is on Mt. Desert Island, just offshore of Trenton ME. The other two sections are on Isle Au Haut and on the mainland at the southern tip of the Schoodic Peninsula. We focused our birding activities on Mt. Desert Island, covering locations on the both the eastern and western sides of the island, plus making a run up to the top of Cadillac Mountain (the highest point on the Eastern Seaboard of the US).

Summer birding in Acadia is interesting because it combines coastal birding with mature coniferous and deciduous forest birding all in close proximity. We were able to find all of the typical summer coastal species around the park including **DOUBLE-CREASTED CORMORANT**, **GREAT BLUE HERON**, **COMMON EIDER**, **C. MERGANSER**, numerous **OSPREY** AND **BALD EA-**



GLS, several gull species, including **LAUGHING GULL**, AND **BLACK GUILLEMOT**. To get to many of the coastal areas you hike short trails through deciduous or coniferous forest where many nesting species of warblers and other passerines can be found. The Ship Harbor trail in the southwest corner of the island and the Sieur De Monts Spring area on the east side are two of the most productive areas for nesting passerines. We covered both areas and found a good variety of breeding forest birds including **EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE**, **LEAST AND GREAT-CREASTED FLYCATCHERS**, **BLUE-HEADED AND RED-EYED VIREOS**, **BROWN CREEPER**, BOTH **KINGLETS**, **SWAINSON'S**, **HERMIT** AND **WOOD THRUSHES**, **VEERY** and about a dozen warbler species including **NASHVILLE**, **NORTHERN PARULA**, **YELLOW**, **CHESTNUT-SIDED**, **BLACK-THROATED GREEN** (BY FAR THE MOST NUMEROUS), **MAGNOLIA**, **YELLOW-RUMPED**, **BLACK-AND-WHITE**, **AMERICAN REDSTART**, **BLACKBURNIAN**, **OVENBIRD** AND **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**.

Cadillac Mountain is better known as a fall



hawk-watching site, but it does offer some interesting breeding birds on its rocky summit. From the trail near the parking area we could hear the paired jumbly calls of a singing **BROWN THRASHER**. Two of us trudged up and down several hundred yards of the open summit area to visually confirm that yes, indeed, the sound was a thrasher. The summit and the auto road to the summit are good places for close-in views of soaring **COMMON RAVENS**, and a few of the group had a warbler near the summit that may have been a **BLACKPOLL**, but wasn't seen clearly enough to be sure of the ID. A few of us hiked up the west side of Cadillac later in the week after the Club trip had officially ended and located **PURPLE FINCH**, **RED CROSSBILLS** and a single **PINE SISKIN**.

We finished up the trip with a tour of the "touristy" part of the Park, visiting a crowded Sand Beach, walking the Ocean Path to Thunder Hole (which was not really thundering) and enjoying some views of Great Head and Otter Cliffs — the standard Acadia postcard views. Even in this area there is good birding to be had, as we got to study newly fledged **PEREGRINE FALCONS** in telescopes from the Precipice Trail parking area. As a fitting ending to a very enjoyable Maine trip, the group had an excellent seafood dinner in Ellsworth the evening of July 4th, before most of the group headed home the next morning.

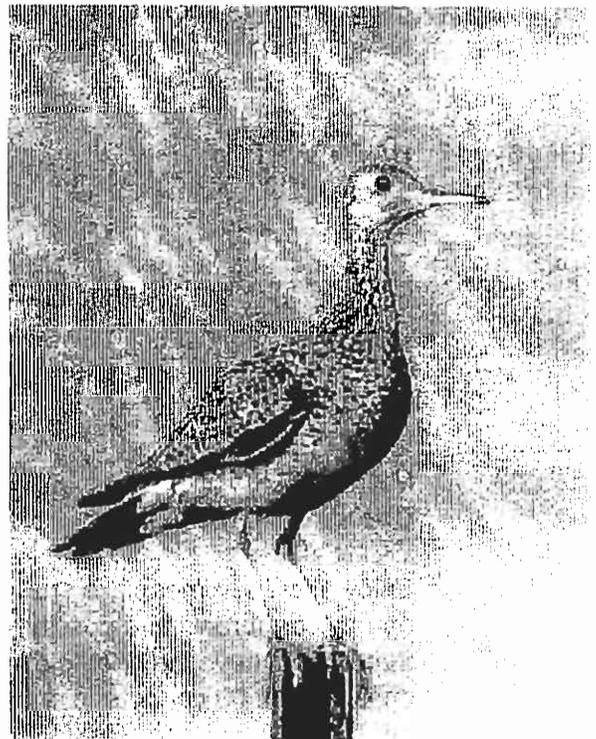
- Gregg Recer
- Cathy Graichen

Cherry Plains State Park 8 July 2000

A chilly but sunny morning greeted five birders at Cherry Plains State Park on Saturday July 8th. A good deal of our birding was done by ear and we were all yearning for our tapes or CD's to verify the many early morning sounds.

We were able to positively ID just under thirty species. Highlights included **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER**, **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER**, BOTH **BLUE-HEADED AND RED-EYED VIREOS**, **WINTER WREN**, **GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET**, **WOOD THRUSH**, **VEERY**, **CEDAR WAXWING** and several warblers including **YELLOW-RUMPED**, **BLACKBURNIAN**, **BLACK-THROATED GREEN** AND **BLACK-AND-WHITE**. The **OVENBIRD** AND **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** also made their presence known. A **SCARLET TANAGER** put on a runway fashion show for us and the **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** made a brief visit near one of the ponds.

- Lynn Huntington
- Dan Welch





SEPT 24
Sun

WILSON POWELL BIRD SANCTUARY
Coordinator: Jackie Bogardus

283-6603

Our first trip to Wilson Powell Bird Sanctuary this year was scheduled for early May when spring was upon us. Join us now as autumn sets in and we search to see which birds are still in residence and which are passing through on the way to their winter homes. We'll again explore the Sanctuary's diverse habitat, finishing our walk at the rock ledges overlooking the Hudson River Valley where we can watch for passing raptors. Our 1999 fall trip included Broad-winged Hawk and an immature Bald Eagle. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the small parking area on Rt. 9 about a mile south of Exit 12 of I-90. Bring a snack or lunch as we expect to be at the Sanctuary until at least noon.

OCT 9
Mon

BERLIN MOUNTAIN
Coordinator: Frank Murphy

373-1933

Berlin Mountain in eastern Rensselaer County has a surprisingly wonderful panoramic view of the surrounding Berkshires and nearby Greylock Mountain. Should be good for hawks and other late fall migrants, and fall colors at their finest. This is a moderate hike, fairly steep at first, then easy, to the summit. Afterwards we can have a late lunch at a great diner in beautiful Williamstown, MA.

Meet at 9 AM at the State parking lot on Route 2 at the Petersburg Pass, just before the Massachusetts border.

OCT 14
Sat

MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Coordinators: Gregg Recer & Cathy Graichen

899-2678

This 6,432 acre refuge has a widely diversified habitat with extensive marshes and is best during spring and fall migrations when tens of thousands of birds pass through. We can expect to see waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and possibly Bald Eagles. We may even be treated to one of those occasions when a rare bird appears. This will be a full day trip so bring a lunch. Call the Coordinator for the meeting time & place.



WATERBIRD HIGHLIGHTS ALONG THE HUDSON RIVER WATERSHED

Battenkill and Hoosic River Tributaries

31 Dec 1999 - 13 April 2000

by Jim Sotis

Hoosic River: 3-4 miles above its merger with the Hudson River - 31 December 1999

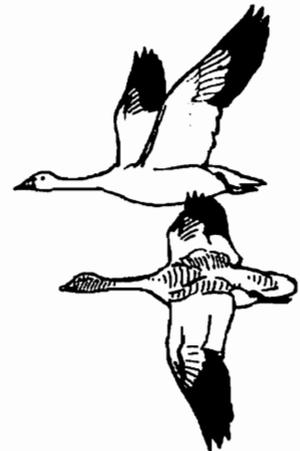
It was a clear brisk morning with the river running strong shore to shore. A dozen common mergansers held together in a tight raft formation, floating leisurely in a fast current; their presence an affecting accent of disciplined wildness before us. A male kingfisher was ensconced in a protective alcove across the river. Evidently, it felt no urgency, for it showed no inclination to dive for any of the finned denizens of the river.

It was Joan Sheppard who had spotted the kingfisher, much to my delight. Shortly thereafter she made her way down river to check on a small cluster of mallards. Just as she had gotten close to them, I was startled by the sudden appearance of a double column of twelve white-winged scoters immediately above me, offering a splendid view of their feathering and disciplined, paired formation. A wonderful accent of wildness, returning from their breeding grounds in northwestern Canada.

Hoosic River: 3-4 miles above its merger with the Hudson River - 24 January 2000

It was another one of those mornings when the lower Hoosic inspires a sense of pure wildness, so transforming the experience. Canada Geese dominated the river with mallards and black ducks floating easily among them or rising to probe favored dabbling areas along the shallow shores.

Suddenly, I was drawn to an emerging distant sight in the sky upriver. It first appeared as a massive floating, seamless apparition spread in depth and width, stretching back beyond viewing. An incredible mass of at least 4,000 Canada geese extending densely across the horizon. An awesome sight! By the hundreds they kept their formations until descending, evincing enormous energy, gabbling with ringing resonance as they slide-slipped to splash down and literally blanket the river down to the ice-covered remaining run of the Hoosic to its merger with the Hudson.



Hudson River: at Fort Miller - 5 March 2000

Brisk western breezes persisted during my observations from the shore of the village. I was surprised to see such a broad stretch of geese and ducks present from the lower portion of the river to up beyond the dam, extending north to the "tail" waters of Thompson Island. I estimated there to be at least 1000 Canada Geese and, among them, 15-20 Snow Geese. Ducks among them included Golden-eye, Ring-necked, Scaup and Common mergansers beneath a "robins-egg" blue sky.

The river was completely free of ice, running strongly shore to shore, the scene resonating with



"goose gabble," suggesting rising urgencies preceding the flight to their breeding grounds along the northern reaches of Canada still before them.

Hudson River - 16 March 2000

I arrived mid-morning March 16th to find the river largely clear of waterfowl, but host to well over 100 tree swallows skimming the river surface picking off an insect hatch as far as could be observed downriver. A few mallards dabbled along shore shallows while a solitary pair of ring-necked ducks moved aimlessly directly before me. Low cumulus clouds moved beneath a broad spread of mixed stratopheric cloud forms. Downriver at Clark Mills, settled pecefully in the last Battenkill impoundment, were a dozen snow geese and twenty or so dabblers--black ducks and mallards.

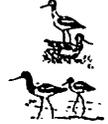
Hudson River - 13 April 2000

On April 13th the Hudson ran smoothly beneath a broad spread of cumulus cloud remnants against the backdrop of a featureless blue vault. Steady breezes sustained light ruffles on the river. 150 or so Canada geese were widely spread with another grouping up near Lock 6. A rather ragged band of immature Golden-eye ducks with a single mature male in attendance seemed to be diving fitfully for aquatic insects, vegetation, fish and crayfish. I suspected they were being led north by the only mature Golden-eye duck of crisp plumage present.

A mature Double-crested cormorant remained perched on a large snag midriver throughout my stay. Subsequently, a pair of late green-winged teals surface fed downriver. Shortly, a Pied-billed Grebe appeared from its most recent dive during a feeding effort. I was delighted with my first sighting of the species this season. All the more because it had recently been listed on the New York State Endangered Species List.

2001 Field Trip Schedule Planning

Now that all the millenium furor has died down, it is almost time to start planning trips for 2001. If you would like to be part of the committee, have suggestions for trips, would like to lead a specific trip or have any other ideas, please contact Gregg Recer, 899-2678. The committee will be meeting in late September to get full-scale planning underway.



Audubon Society of the Capital Region Programs

Mon Sep 11, Scott and Denise Stoner on ***South Florida: Imperiled Paradise***, 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library *Joint program with Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club.*

Mon Oct 2, Jim Coe on ***Birding by Habitat***, 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library. *Joint program with Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club.*

Thurs Nov 9, Bob Budliger on ***Christmas Bird Counts***. 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library.

Thurs Dec 14, holiday party and topic: TBA, 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library.

Audubon Society of the Capital Region Revitalization Effort

The Audubon Society is currently making efforts to revitalize its programs and activities. Currently, 3 past presidents of HMBC are serving as officers and directors: Scott Stoner, President, Bob Budliger, VP and Frank Murphy, Director. The revitalized chapter will complement HMBC efforts in conservation, programs, education and will sponsor several natural history workshops in the fall 2000-spring 2001 year.



HMBC BOARD FOR 2000-2001

Officers

President: Gregg Recer 23 Scotch Mist Way Malta, N.Y. 12020 899-2678	Vice-President: William Lee 2171 Grand Blvd. Schenectady, NY 12309 374-3426
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Jr. Activities:	Elle Dietemann	766-7045

HMBC Contact Information

BIRDLINE of E. NEW YORK: (518) 439-8080

Email: hmbc@hotmail.com

HMBC website: <http://members.xoom.com/hmbc/>

Reminder!!

All HMBC Board meetings are open to all Club members. Meetings are held at Five Rivers Center or other local venues at 7:00 PM. The next board meeting will be **Thursday Sep. 7, 2000** (to avoid conflicting with the September program on Mon Sep. 11). The tentative meeting location is the Schafer House property adjacent to the Reist Sanctuary in Niskayuna.

Send articles, clip-art,
photos, artwork to:

Feathers
c/o Cathy Graichen
23 Scotch Mist Way
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

or via e-mail to:

recerg@crisny.org



PRESIDENT'S CORNER: There seems to be very little in the way of birding news around the area lately. I do have some administrative information to impart. First, there was some confusion in the last issue of *Feathers* concerning scheduling of Board meetings. The routine schedule for HMBC Board meetings is that they are held the second Monday of odd-numbered months at 7:00 PM. Scheduling conflicts sometime cause deviations from this schedule and this is the case for the September, 2000 meeting. That meeting will be held on **Thursday, September 7 at 7:00 PM**. Board meeting locations have varied recently — we tentatively plan to meet at the Association

for the Protection of the Adirondacks (APA) newly-acquired library/research facility in Niskayuna (adjacent to the Reist Sanctuary).

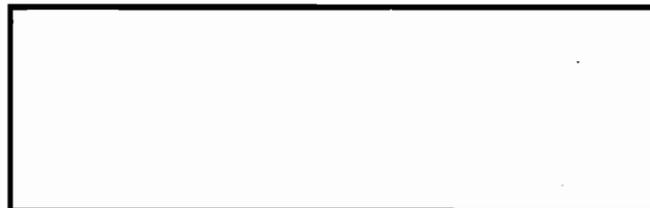
Speaking of the Reist Sanctuary, the Board has authorized an expenditure to have the entire property surveyed. We expect work on the survey to occur during the fall. This is part of an ongoing initiative on the part of Sanctuary Chair, Joe Cotichio, and the Board to enhance our stewardship of the Sanctuary property. Another Sanctuary-related item from the last Board meeting is that, with HMBC Director Carl George's encouragement, the Club is developing a relationship with the APA as a new Sanctuary neighbor. In July, the Board discussed the use of the Sanctuary by local Niskayuna school groups that is being encouraged by the APA. This relationship between HMBC, APA and the Niskayuna school district is an opportunity to expose children to nature and the outdoors, and hopefully foster an appreciation of conservation among upcoming generations.

That's all the interesting news for now. I'm looking forward to the fall migration spicing things up around here, starting soon!
Gregg Recer

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Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club
c/o Five Rivers EEC
Game Farm Rd.
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Vol. 62
No. 5

October
2000

Published Bi-monthly by The Hudson-Mohawk

LAKE TAGHKANIC STATE PARK

by William E. Cook

Editor's Note: Lake Taghkanic State Park is located in Columbia County, in the southern portion of the Hudson-Mohawk Region. This brief birding guide is intended to encourage HMBC birders to explore the area.

DIRECTIONS From the north, take the Taconic State Parkway south to Exit Route 82 (Hudson/Ancram). Turn left (east) at end of exit ramp (on Route 82) toward Ancram. Go 2 miles and turn right into Lake Taghkanic State Park back entrance, labeled "truck and trailer entrance". Drive about 200 yards and park in the small parking area on right with a sign that reads "Parking for Lake View Trail". The mowed trail begins on the opposite side of the road from the parking area where a chain is strung between two posts (see map).

SITE DESCRIPTION The trail complex forms a grid through overgrown field habitat. About 3/4 of a mile from the trail head one branch of the trail crosses a small foot bridge and enters a mature hemlock forest. This trail can be taken around the whole lake if time permits. The hike around the lake is about 5 miles long and involves some walking along county roads. With limited time, turn around and take the trail back to your car after birding the forest area. Alternate routes through the overgrown field habitat can be taken back to your car. One can also drive through the park. Stop at picnic areas to bird the surrounding forest, and stop at beach areas to survey the lake itself.

BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS At the parking area near the entrance to the Lake View Trail listen for Red-breasted Nuthatch in the Red Pine plantation. At the trail entrance during breeding season there are Eastern Towhees, Prairie Warblers, Blue-winged Warblers Chestnut-sided Warblers and Gray Catbirds. A short distance in on the trail Field Sparrows



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News from Florida

and Brown Thrashers hold territories. During migration this area has produced Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Cerulean Warbler, and White-crowned Sparrow. In May 1991 a White-eyed Vireo was seen here. In the winter Common Redpoll and Golden-crowned Kinglet may be found. American Redstarts and Indigo Buntings hold breeding territories at the edge of the forest. The trail crosses a stream where Louisiana Waterthrush sings in April. In the forest breed Barred Owl, Great Crested Flycatcher, Veery, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, Ovenbird, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler and sometimes Winter Wren. During migration one may find Yellow-bellied Sapsucker,

Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-headed Vireo, Warblers including Pine, Magnolia, Canada, Nashville, and Blackburnian. At the sphagnum-willow wetland between the overgrown field and the lake look for Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Willow Flycatcher and Swamp Sparrow. Alder Flycatcher has also appeared here during migration. The lake is most productive in very early spring with migrant waterfowl, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Osprey, Bonaparte's Gull. In late April and early May look for Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper and swallows. At the end of summer look for Great and Snowy Egret.

BIRDWATCHING IN FLYOVER COUNTRY

by Dick Patrick

I just called my brothers to inform them they can still scratch their behinds in South Dakota. We were reasonably well brought up boys and would never dream of making that gross maneuver in public until Dad took us to South Dakota in 1952, back when it still may have been a territory. We were appalled by everything about the state and we showed our disrespect by scratching our rear ends whenever an itch occurred while in the state. We then stopped or at least tapered off once we crossed into the Wyoming Territory. To this day I can still hear any of my sisters-in-law gently admonishing my brothers with "Where do you think you are, South Dakota?"

I have a feeling South Dakota was created with the scraps left over when the other states were formed. I've never been there but I bet North Dakota was made from the left overs of South Dakota.

Scott Stoner's article on his trip to America's Plains in the December 1999 issue of *Feathers* put the initial idea in my noggin to revisit South Dakota. Also the fact that my son Rog is attending the University of Minnesota and his dear friend, Christy, had never been any further west.

In late July, Patsy and I flew out to Minneapolis. Our first adventure was just leaving the Minneapolis area which took an hour and a half. You wait in line on the entrance ramp to get on a freeway. There is a sign saying "ONLY ONE CAR THRU ON A GREEN LIGHT." So you finally get to the top of the ramp, the light in front of you stays red for minutes, then a flash of green truly quicker than the blink of an eye and you launch yourself into traffic. No looking, just accelerate. It seems to work, I am here to write this.

Eventually you are out of The Cities as Garrison Keilor would say and into the land of Norwegian bachelor farmers. Here, every square foot of farmland is producing. The dairy barns are low, one story, open sided affairs with no silos. The cows never leave the barn. Land is too valuable for them to be wandering around in acreages of pasture. Those acres have two crops stretching as far as you see. Corn, twice as high as what we left in Albany County and a small, vivid green crop. We got out to look it over and discovered small purple flowers on it. We asked at our motel in Blue Earth and found the other crop to be soybeans.

We explored downtown Blue Earth in the evening, one wide Main Street with a surplus of antique and secondhand stores. But overhead was the twittering of Chimney Swifts and the neeping of a couple Nighthawks. The Nighthawks put on their famous display of divebombing and pulling up right at the roofs of the stores. Truly the Nighthawks were the only show in town. Best of all they reminded me of nights looking at the sky in downtown Oneonta when I was a boy. I haven't seen that display since my long ago boyhood. That to me is one of the joys of a lifetime of bird watching the continuity between past and present. Actually there was one other show in Blue Earth - the huge statue of The Jolly Green Giant, "Ho, ho, ho." He is from Blue Earth, MN.

The next day we left Minnesota and crossed into South Dakota. Here I have to mention what wasn't on either states "welcome" or "good-bye" billboard — the governor's name. Can you imagine a politician around here missing the opportunity to post his name up for everyone passing by to see?

Good-bye Norwegian farmers. Here the dairy cows were strolling around in vast pasturage. The corn was stunted, smaller than Albany's and a lot of the land was just idle.

Redwings here are field birds and Killdeer are water birds. The ducks are just shapeless brown birds of no known species. However there was much excitement when the first flock of Yellow-headed Blackbirds was spotted. The most common bird is the Meadowlark. You can approach them for a photograph; but they are always standing in the shade of a fence or bush making it hard to get their brilliant yellow. Magpies which I have always found to be shy when asked for a photo are obliging as they pick the bugs out of your car grill.

Our first excursion for birds was the Fort Pierre National Grassland. Prairie Coneflower, Blue Vervain, Salsify, Beebalm, Big Bluestem, Rice Grass and two young lovers, second generation bird watchers, hand in hand leading Patsy and me thru the waving fields of green. The only birds we saw besides Redwings were Grasshopper Sparrows; but who cares?

The third day we arrived at Badlands National Park. Christy was Out West! Rog said she was just in awe of the scenery. My advice is if you haven't been Out West and want to see badlands — go to Petrified Forest, Painted Desert National Park. There you can see both. But the South Dakota Badlands were most satisfactory to us. One day we saw Eastern Kingbird, Western and Cassin's kingbirds. The latter two realized how far we had travelled and posed patiently so we could check out the white on the tail feathers and throat areas to confirm our identifications. Quite different from our half dozen pay-per-view trips mostly with Victor Emanuel where there was always an expert to call out the species. I think fondly of Rog and Christy puzzling out Rock Wren for themselves.

We all puzzled over a flock of swallows that were working in the red earth in the road in front of our ride and wouldn't move. Their behavior was just like the Cave Swallows Patsy and I had seen on a pay-for-view in Texas so I was convinced I had spotted the first flock of Cave Swallows in South Dakota. A later check of the field guide showed that white foreheads indicate Cliff Swallows, so no new ground was broken.

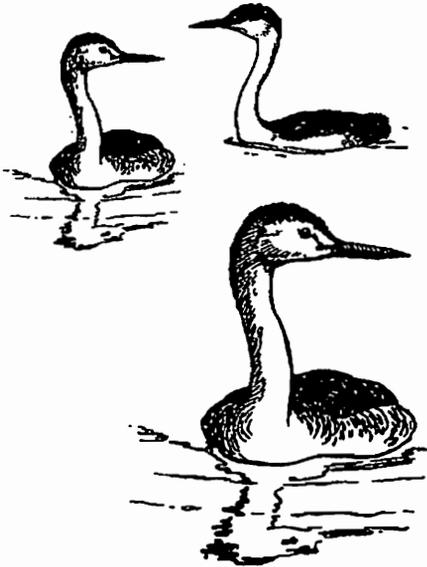
There were flocks of Lark Sparrows. Also Lark Buntings — It was nice to find a bird easy to identify.



Feathers

One evening I skimmed a stone into some low cottonwoods to see if anybody would fly out. A brown kingbird sized bird flew up and taunted us until its mate joined in. "Over here, Blue Grosbeaks!" In the Badlands you had to retreat in the middle of the day because it was just so hot with a frightful glare off the white rock formations. One afternoon we did go to Wall Drug which borders the park and I must admit it was a lot of fun. The free ice-water they advertise was a lifesaver. When you go Out West the first thing to pack is water bottles.

At twilight the animals take over. Herds of Buffalo, Pronghorns, Black-tailed Prairie Dogs, Mule and White-tailed deer. And every night in town or in the wild — Nighthawks. Exceptional ranger programs include prairie dog walks, prairie flower walks and a sit out in the dark experiencing the night. Each park has a bird list (under the counter, usually) at the visitors' center, which lists birds as common, abundant, rare. We would take any clue.



We left the Badlands and headed to the Blackhills via Mt. Rushmore. Every American should make a point of seeing Mt. Rushmore! Scott Stoner mentioned the exorbitant parking fee. As he says you can park free; but the crowds are so great that they had to build parking garages. Because there were four of us and it was in the upper 90's I paid the \$8.00. I had to go back to get a different camera lens as there was a Mountain Goat right by the chin of T. R. and with a longer lens I hoped to get the "goatee." So it was an advantage to be in the parking garage.

From there we went to the Crazy Horse monument which consists of the profile of the warrior, his extended arm and the painted outline of the horse's head. You had a choice of paying \$19 a car load or getting in free. I kind of regret taking the second choice, but I can't imagine that monument ever being completed.

The Black Hills are wonderful — in South Dakota or not. In Custer State Park we took the three mile Lovers' Leap Trail. No one else on it. A lot of birds from back home; Hairy Woodpeckers, both nuthatches, chickadees and a load of little fly catchers. I can't even tell the ones at home. Remember a birdclub fieldtrip to Vischers Ferry when a fellow was mist netting? You could hold the little flycatchers in your hand and still not know which was which. We did see several Western Tanagers. You should have seen how excited that made Christy. All of us for that matter. It seemed to be our week for female birds; but now we know a female Blackpoll has white ovals under the tail. With a guide we wouldn't have had the opportunity of finding that out for ourselves.



At the end of this hike were eleven Bighorn Sheep. I hope you realize how hard I have hunted for this animal over the years. A warning; there is a lot more poison ivy in the Black Hills than you would think necessary.

Feathers

We took a more southern route as we returned east. Hot Springs had several blocks of magnificent sandstone buildings and the downtown was shall we say almost thriving. We went thru a number of small towns in both South Dakota and Minnesota and I would say they were all better off than our Mohawk Valley communities. For one thing they are not competing with shopping centers. These states do not have suburban sprawl. In most instances the land is too valuable as cropland. Then you get to the Sioux Reservation. The steel fence posts turn to sticks; but you do see some beautiful horses. There is no reason to go to Pine Ridge or Wounded Knee. There is no sense of soul there as compared to the Navaho's Window Rock or the Hopi's mesa. If you really want to depress yourself cross the border to Whiteclay, Nebraska the closest source of the whiteman's firewater.

This was the season for mothers with their young; Turkeys, Sharp-tailed Grouse (11 chicks), and most commonly Pheasant. Each field had a tire hung on the fence with "No Hunting" painted on in white. At the home of the steaks there was a notice saying "pheasant hunting \$80 per person a day." Also a notice saying "500 acres available for prairie dog shootng." Sick! In South Dakota it isn't prairie dog towns, it is prairie dog metropolises. Look as we would we didn't spot a Burrowing Owl — an immature Golden Eagle (a good identification experience) and Horned Larks, but no owls.

Crossing the Missouri — we all got a thrill out of being anywhere near where Lewis and Clark passed. Our younger generation spotted a grebe. Western or Clark's I asked. "The Golden Book only shows Western, so that is what it is." The West wasn't made to split hairs.

Just as a curiosity, I mention that I had Virgil Zimmermananow in his mid-80's as a professor at SUNY's Public Affairs school. When he heard we were thinking of going to South Dakota he mentioned he was from Scotland, SD which is why he now lives in New Scotland, NY. We hope to surprise him with some mementos from his hometown.

Our last night on the road was in Sioux Falls, a city the same size as Albany, except Sioux Falls won't be sweating staying at 100,000. We spent the evening on a grassy berm 20 feet from third base in the Bird Cage (the name of their stadium) watching the Sioux Falls Canaries play the Sioux City Explorers. We sat on the grass, which was just fine, because all the seats in the stands were sold out. The people on the next blanket said their city was growing because it is a port of entry for Eritreian and Sudanese refugees. They said you don't have to speak English to get a good job in meat packing. Who knew anything about that?

The next day we were out of South Dakota and I must say it was starting to grow on me and the other three loved it so they have no reason to scratch their seats. On the way back through, Minnesota Patsy thought she had gone to heaven when we came to Walnut Grove, one of the homes of Laura Ingels Wilder. Hard for any bird to top that for Patsy. So that was our trip to Flyover Country.

Feathers

Larinaen Lament

Edward M. Sessa

Anacrostic Directions: *Fill in the clues - one letter for each space. Transfer the letters to the grid below using the numeric values to place them and determine the quote. The initial letters of the first nine clues spell the quotation author's name.*

Minerva's night bird

87 10 77

Poll man

82 2 55 84 93 14

Sense of obligation

90 26 48 78

Vision accessory

23 105 68 53 89 39 62 41 51 57

Bird known as "fire-bird" (2 words)

46 92 108 5 20 42 3 100 47 69 12 61 115 21

W. Alaskan city

50 72 13 80

Prophetic triumph of good

98 34 106 38 52 114 64 59 45 32

Kind of dagger or heel

79 103 75 28 9 102 19 104

A Grant

29 66 25 110

Provide lodgings for

8 17 107 74 15

Home of World Tribunal

1 81 112 40 111

Official doorkeeper

83 22 11 94 16

Mr. White's game

86 76 58 30

Sharpen with a stone

67 43 33 7

Type of carol or log

91 54 27 70

Medieval long-handled weapons

60 6 97 37 24 95 44 35

Feathers

1	2	3	4		5	6		7	8	9		10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18		19	20	21		22	23	24	25	26	27	28		29	30		31	32
33	34	35		36	37	38	38	40	41	42		43	44	45		46	47	48	
49	50		51	52	53	54	55	56		57	58	59	60	61	62	63			
64	65	66		67	68	69	70		71	72	73		74	75	76	77	78		
79	80	81	82	83	84	85		86	87	88	89	90		91	92	93		94	95
96	97	98	99	100		101	102		103	104		105	106	107	108		109	110	111
112	113	114	115																

Pronoun

71 65 113

Spanish curlew

101 36 99 109

Flicker's nickname (hyph.)

31 49 4 63 88 96

Describing a deck or house

18 73 85 56



Feathers

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Please Note: All HMBC programs will now be held at the Colonie Library except the December Holiday party which will be held at Five Rivers EEC in Delmar. Programs at the Colonie Library begin at 7 PM.

Mon Nov 6 Scott Crocoll, NYS DEC, **Hawks and Owls of New York State, 7PM Colonie Library.** Scott's talk will be a 40-minute slide presentation on the breeding biology of hawks and owls that occur in New York State. It will also cover topics such as habitat utilization, predation and behavior. Scott Crocoll has worked as a biologist with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for nearly 25 years. Please join us to learn more about the raptors we hope to see at Fort Edward - and other sites throughout the region, this fall and winter.

Mon Dec 4 Neil Gifford, Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission, **Birds of the Altona (NY) jack pine sandstone pavement barrens, 7PM Holiday Party, 7:30 PM Program, Five Rivers.** The jack pine barrens of Clinton County are truly unique. Created by a glacial flood and maintained by intense stand-replacing wildfires, the 6,000 acre barrens provide breeding season habitat for a diverse avian community. Mr. Gifford is currently an Ecologist with The Nature Conservancy at the Albany Pine

Monday January 8, 2001 - Bill Gorman, **Wading Birds, Colonie Library.** Bill will show movies of most of the wading birds found in the U.S. While many of these birds are large, colorful and easy to observe, their marshy and swampy habitats hamper close approach and make some wading birds difficult to see. Join Bill as he shows these spectacular birds in action in their natural habitats.

Monday February 5, 2001 Philip Whitney, **East Africa: Birds, Mammals, People and Rocks, 7 pm, Colonie library.** An account, with slides, of a three-week trip to northwest Tanzania and Southeast Kenya, including Serengeti National Park, Ngorongoro Crater, Kakamega Forest, and Hells Gate Park. The emphasis is on the amazingly diverse birdlife, but some of the famous large mammals, other wildlife, Rift Valley Geology, and glimpses of life in rural East Africa away from the standard tourist routes are included.

Monday March 5, 2001 Kim Hunsinger on NYS Breeding Bird Atlas - first year progress 7 PM, Colonie library

Monday April 2, 2001 Second HMBC literary night; details will be published next issue, 7 pm, **Five Rivers**

Thursday April 5, Annual Meeting and Program on Costa Rica with Mark Garland, Senior Naturalist of the Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central States, Inc. Location-. **Banquet Hall above the Fuller Road Fire Department in Colonie;** watch your mail this winter for a detailed flyer.

Program Report

by *Scott and Denise Stoner*

As Marjorie Stoneman Douglas wrote in 1947, "There are no other Everglades in the world." On September 11, Scott and Denise Stoner presented "South Florida - Imperiled Paradise" to a joint meeting of HMBC and the Capital Region Audubon. Drawing on slides from visits since 1979, Scott discussed the habitats, birdlife and visiting opportunities at Everglades National Park.

Major habitats (from the high elevation of 7 feet down to sea level) include pine rockland, the true Everglades (river of sawgrass interspersed with "tree islands"), the critical mangroves, the salt-tolerant coastal prairie, and finally Florida Bay. Especially good birding areas include Anhinga Trail near the main park entrance, and Eco Pond in the Flamingo area.

He described how not only the quantity of water but its quality, timing and distribution are critical to the Everglades - and its myriad birdlife's survival. Wading bird populations have dropped by a startling 93 percent since the first half of the 1900's. The Wood Stork, considered an "indicator species" of the health of the Everglades, decreased from 4000 to 250 breeding pairs during the last century. On a more positive note, Scott also touched on the proposed 20-year, \$8 Billion plan to restore some of the original, natural flow of water through the "River of Grass" that Marjorie Stoneman Douglas so poignantly described.

Scott then briefly described the habitat and a few of the birds of National Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Southwest Florida, showing photos of Limpkin, Wood Stork, Barred Owl and Yellow-Crowned Night Heron.

Denise then finished out the evening with a slide tour of Sanibel Island, offshore from Fort Myers. Following a sunrise, she described the low-rise architecture and slow pace of this island, compared to the mainland resort areas, and how the shore- and larger wading birds often are seen close to people along Sanibel's famous shelling beaches. Photos of Snowy Egret, Willet, Sanderling, Black-bellied Plover and a variety of gulls and terns illustrated this. However, the most telling example was the story of a persistent Great Blue Heron that eventually thwarted a fisherman's defense and snatched a fish from his bucket, flying away to eat it safely out of range!

Inland from the beaches lies the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, home to a host of shorebirds and waders, including Reddish Egret, most of the herons, and flocks of Roseate Spoonbills. In the evening, we would often see groups of spoonbills fly in and gather in a flock of 50 or more, backlit by the setting sun!

Denise ended our program not with the typical sunset, but with a sunrise, which signifies our hope that, in our remaining lifetime, people will restore the Everglades to something approaching their natural condition.

Note - for more information about the plan to restore the Everglades, please visit the web site www.evergladesplan.org, or contact us. Information about Everglades National Park can be found on the web at www.nps.gov/ever.

Scrub Jay is a symbol of Preservation *by Richard Beeler*

Editor's note: This is a letter Dick wrote to a local Florida paper.

The statistics - the vote was 34 for the scrub jay, 132 for the mockingbird - that resulted from the Feb. 6 readers question about nam-



ing the Florida scrub jay our official state bird did not surprise me, nor did the comments from those who opposed the suggestion or found it trivial.

Robert Cochrane's point that the state Legislature has more important issues to deal with, is, of course, absolutely true. Those who expressed a preference for the northern mockingbird because of numerous delightful expe-

riences with that species, combined with a complete lack of familiarity with the scrub jay, undoubtedly represent the majority of Floridians.

There are so many beautiful birds in Florida that the choice of one over the others to be our official symbol could not possibly be unanimous. Easy defenses could be made for the great egret, the roseate spoonbill, the wood stork and countless others.

Why, then, am I a member of the minority on this issue? It is not because the scrub jay is more beautiful, more familiar or more important than any other species. In fact, it isn't really the bird that is of primary concern, it is the state of Florida.

As the many attractive aspects, natural and man-made, of life here continue to entice more and more people to share in them, we will continue to be faced with an ever more difficult dilemma: How can we guarantee that the natural wonders which are so much a part of Florida's appeal are not destroyed by the very people who love them?

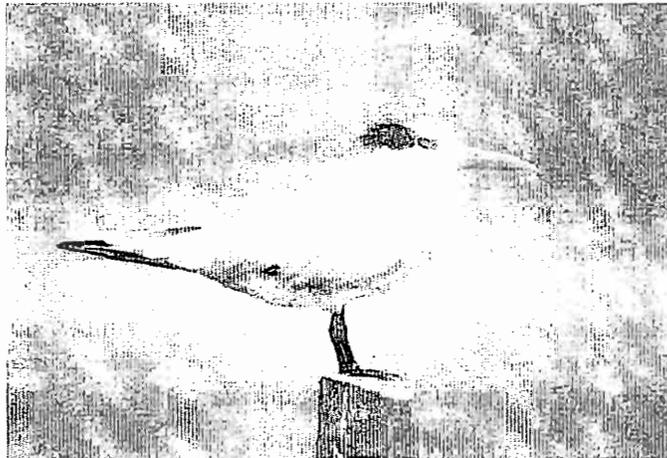


It is, and always will be, as much a question of habitat preservation as it is one of the health of the wildlife that lives in those habitats. Choosing the Florida scrub jay as our feathered symbol would be a statement that we recognize the importance of finding a balance between habitat preservation and development that will allow future generations to love Florida for all the reasons we do now - golf and gulls, weather and wildlife, boating and bobcats.

The northern mockingbird will, in all probability, continue to delight us for centuries, but if all the oak scrub habitat in the state - and we are losing it at an alarming rate - is turned into

homes, golf courses, condos, highways and parking lots, then Ken Turney's comment, "I've never seen or heard the scrub jay, " will be echoed by all of us forever. Naming it as the official state bird would not guarantee that it wins its battle against extinction, but it would send a clear and unmistakable message: We, as residents of Florida, are committed to do our best to see that all the wonders of the state will be as attractive and available to those who follow us as they are, and have been, to us.

Maybe it is not so trivial after all.



DEC 10
Sun

FORT EDWARD (WASHINGTON COUNTY)
Coordinators: Amy & Ian Hanigan

584-3669

This large agricultural grassland complex is a hot spot for many wintering birds. Eastern Bluebird, Northern Flicker, Eastern Meadowlark and Savannah, Song and Vesper Sparrow. Lapland Longspurs, Northern Shrike and Common Redpoll have also been sighted in winter. We may even see some of the wintering raptors, such as Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Harrier, Peregrine Falcon and Snowy and Short-eared Owls. If time permits, we may include some waterfowl. Call the coordinators for reservations, meeting place and time.

2000 HMBC Christmas Bird Counts

DEC 16 (Sat) Schenectady
DEC 23 (Sat) S. Rensselaer County
DEC 30 (Sat) Troy



2001 Field Trip Schedule Planning

Field Trip planning for 2001 is well underway. If you have suggestions for trips, would like to lead a specific trip or have any other ideas, please contact Gregg Recer, 899-2678.

Audubon Society of the Capital Region Programs

Thurs Nov 9, Bob Budliger on **Christmas Bird Counts**. 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library.

Thurs Dec 14, holiday party and Ken Able on **Migration**. 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library.

Thurs Jan 11, 2001, Audubon member Larry King's film "**Adirondack Adventures**." 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library.

Thurs Feb 8, 2001, Scott Stoner, Denise Hackert-Stoner and Gregg Recer on **Hawaii**. 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library.

Field Trip Reports

Mohawk River Cruise September 17, 2000

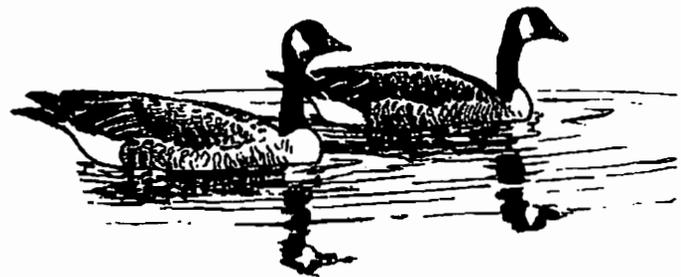
Twenty-four HMBC members and friends enjoyed a sunny, late afternoon cruising on the Mohawk River on September 17. Again our friends at Crescent Cruise Lines provided pizza, as well as their new comfortable boat.

The clear September sky, temperatures in the 70's and beautiful, late-afternoon light combined to make the one-and-a-half hour trip very enjoyable. We were treated to sightings of numerous **GREAT EGRETS** and **GREAT BLUE HERONS**, as well as **BELTED KINGFISHER**, **SPOTTED SANDPIPER**, **RING-BILLED** and **GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS** and **DOUBLE-CREASTED CORMORANTS**, among others. We also enjoyed lovely views of the shore along the Mohawk, including the Vischer Ferry Preserve.

The Sunday afternoon cruise was lovely, and

provided a chance to catch up on Club friends' birding experiences throughout the summer, as well as plans for the upcoming season.

— Scott Stoner
— Denise Hackert-Stoner



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HMBC Contact Information

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Email: hmbc@hotmail.com

HMBC website: <http://members.xoom.com/hmbc/>

Reminder!!

All HMBC Board meetings are open to all Club members. Meetings are held at Five Rivers Center or other local venues at 7:00 PM. The next board meeting will be **Monday Nov. 13, 2000**. The tentative meeting location is the Schafer House property adjacent to the Reist Sanctuary in Niskayuna.

Send articles, clip-art,
photos, artwork to:

Feathers
c/o Cathy Graichen
23 Scotch Mist Way
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

or via e-mail to:

recerg@crisny.org

Feathers



PRESIDENT'S CORNER:

As I write this, the day-trip Cathy and I are leading to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge is 4 days away and there were sprits of snow flying early this morning. I haven't had a chance yet to check out the central-New York hotlines for any chaseable birds around Montezuma, but I hope there's something. I feel like we haven't had a really good day in the field in several months. In mid-September, we had a great experience on an overnight paddling trip in the St. Regis Canoe area in the Adirondacks, hearing Common Loons calling at all hours, and watching one morning as they took-off and landed repeatedly on Long Pond — seemingly giving the group's near-fledgling bird some flying practice prior to starting their southbound migration. We also heard Barred Owls calling from our campsite. But, those were isolated little bits of birding excitement on a paddling trip. Our few local morning and evening outings in September yeilded mainly mosquitoes, along with maybe three total species of warblers. Something about that just did not seem right. So, I'm ready for a big day full of birding and Montezuma should be a good place for it — waterfowl (Redheads and Tundra Swans, if all goes well), late shorebirds, migrant sparrows, maybe some raptors and whatever hot birds are out there on the RBAs. I'm looking forward to it and hope it starts off a good fall and winter birding season.

Gregg Recer

FEATHERS
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Vol. 62
No. 6

December
2000

Published Bi-monthly by The Hudson-Mohawk

MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION APPROVES ACQUISITION OF 5,300 ACRES FOR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

Eds Note: This press release prepared by the US Fish & Wildlife Service highlights new acquisitions to be added to the National Wildlife Refuge System. Among the Refuges to gain new acreage is Montezuma NWR in central New York State and the Silvio O. Conte NWR in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission approved acquisition and protection of more than 5,300 acres of important migratory bird habitat at its quarterly meeting in Washington, D.C. The acreage will be included in 14 separate National Wildlife Refuges in 13 states, improving the refuges' ability to support migratory bird populations.

The Cabinet-level commission, chaired by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, approved the expenditure of more than \$4.4 million to acquire the land. Many of the land acquisitions were approved for refuges along one of the migratory waterfowl "flyways," four major travel corridors that migratory birds follow on spring and fall migrations.

"These new acquisitions strengthen our ability to protect and enhance migratory bird habitat that is critical for the future health of dozens of species of waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and neotropical migrant songbirds. By supporting new land acquisition, leases and conservation easements, the Commission continues to make sure that the 93 million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System remains the world's premier network of public lands dedicated to wildlife conservation," said Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark.

The Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929 established the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission to approve land acquisitions to be purchased with monies from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Since its inception, the commission has approved more than 4.5 million acres of land acquisitions for the 93-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Migratory Bird Conservation Fund is supported by revenue collected from Federal Duck Stamp sales, import duties collected on arms and ammunition, right-of-way payments to the refuge system and receipts from national wildlife refuge entrance fees.

New National Wildlife Refuge System acquisitions:

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Arkansas - Acquisition of 200 acres of moist soil waterfowl habitat and farmland within the boundary of Cache River National Wildlife Refuge in Woodruff County east of Little Rock. The tract includes prime waterfowl habitat in the Lower Mississippi Valley, which supports one of the largest concentrations of mallards anywhere in North America. The acreage will provide the refuge with habitat critical to the success of wintering, migrating and nesting duck populations.

Georgia - Purchase of 405 acres of bottomland hardwood and wetland habitat within the approved boundary of Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, located approximately 5 miles north of Savannah. The tract will become an integral part of Savannah NWR, providing wetland habitat that supports a wide variety of migratory birds, including waterfowl, wading birds and shorebirds.

Louisiana - Purchase of 140 acres of bottomland hardwood habitat within the approved boundary of Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge in east central Louisiana, about 20 miles northeast of Alexandria. The two tracts to be purchased will provide additional waterfowl habitat adjacent to Catahoula Lake, important for wintering waterfowl.

Maine - Purchase of 681 acres within the boundary of Lake Umbagog NWR on the northern New Hampshire/Maine border, 75 miles northwest of Portland, Maine. The acquisition will protect important waterfowl and migratory bird wetland habitat threatened by residential development. The tract is part of a wetlands complex that is recognized as one of the most important migratory bird breeding areas in the Northeast. The area provides important breeding habitat for the black duck, osprey, and common loon.

Mississippi - Approval of a state lease for 502 acres of bottomland hardwood forests and

swamps for migrating waterfowl within the boundary of St. Catherine Creek NWR in southwest Mississippi, approximately 15 miles south of Natchez. Acquiring the lease protects a significant wetland area along the Mississippi Flyway. The bottomlands are used by a variety of waterfowl, including mallard, pintail, wood duck and blue-winged teal.

New Jersey - Purchase of 213 acres within and adjacent to Cape May NWR in southern New Jersey, 30 miles south of Atlantic City. The boundaries of the refuge were expanded by the commission to include the new parcel. The acquisition will preserve low wooded wetlands for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, woodcock and neotropical migrant songbirds. The coastal marshes of New Jersey, including Cape May NWR, provide winter habitat for 30 to 40 percent of the Atlantic Flyway black duck population, as well as migration habitat for millions of other birds migrating through the Cape May peninsula.

New York - Purchase of 18 acres of red maple swamp within the boundary of Montezuma NWR in north central New York, 35 miles west of Syracuse. This acquisition provides the Service with an excellent opportunity to protect existing wooded wetlands that provide feeding and nesting habitat for nesting migratory birds and other forest dwelling species. The refuge also provides important nesting and migration habitat for thousands of waterfowl, including significant populations of Canada geese, mallards and black ducks.

North Carolina - Purchase of 237 acres within Currituck NWR in northeast North Carolina, approximately 3 miles south of the border with Virginia. Acquisition of the tract will protect part of the Currituck Outer Banks coastal wetlands and associated upland habitat for migrating and wintering waterfowl. The tract is used as resting and feeding habitat by black ducks, mallards, American coots, snow geese

and Canada geese. Only a handful of undisturbed ownerships like this tract remain on the Currituck Outer Banks.

Oregon - Purchase of 280 acres of marsh that will be added to Malheur NWR in southeastern Oregon, approximately 130 miles southeast of Bend. Purchase of the tract allows enhancement of migratory bird habitat and increased nesting by a variety of shore and marsh birds and waterfowl, including Canada geese, redheads, canvasback and dabbling ducks. The refuge contains one of the largest freshwater marsh areas in the country, and is a key breeding and migration area in the Pacific Flyway.

Tennessee - Purchase of 330 acres within the approved boundary of Chicksaw NWR in western Tennessee, about 50 miles north of Memphis. The Commission also approved expansion of the refuge's boundary by 31,480 acres, though the additional acreage must be acquired in future purchases. The acquired tracts and the land within the boundary expansion include hardwood bluff habitat, open pasture and bottomland hardwoods that provide wintering habitat for Canada geese and several species of ducks, including black ducks, mallards, gadwall and green-winged teal. The habitat also serves as breeding habitat for wood ducks.

Tennessee- Purchase of 25 acres within Lower Hatchie NWR in western Tennessee, about 40 miles north of Memphis, and expansion of the refuge's borders by more than 12,000 acres. The 25-acre tract consists of native woodland along the Lower Hatchie River, important for wintering waterfowl and other migratory birds. Future acquisition and protection of lands within the refuge boundary expansion will protect valuable migratory bird habitat from being lost to development.

Texas - Purchase of 915 acres within and

adjacent to San Bernard NWR in Brazoria County, Texas, 70 miles south of Houston. The commission approved acquisition of a 715-acre tract that will be added to the refuge, while acquiring 200 acres within the existing refuge boundary. The additions are part of a productive and valuable wetland complex that provides wintering, migration and resident habitat for waterfowl, wading birds, neotropical migratory birds, and other wetland-dependent wildlife species. Thousands of waterfowl winter in the area, including mottled ducks, green-winged teal, gadwalls and black-bellied whistling ducks.

Vermont - Acquisition of 241 acres within the Silvio O. Conte NWR in northern Vermont, 30 miles northeast of St. Johnsbury. Purchase of the tract will enhance the protection of a 16,000-acre wetland complex that is critical to waterfowl. Service acquisition and management of this wetland complex will protect numerous swamps, ponds, standing dead timber and other wetland features that provide breeding, nesting and feeding habitat for waterfowl such as black ducks, wood ducks, hooded mergansers and ring-necked ducks.

Virginia - Acquisition of 249 acres within Great Dismal Swamp NWR in southern Virginia along the border with North Carolina. The tract is mostly wooded wetlands that provide nesting and brood habitat for wood ducks, and feeding, resting and nesting habitat for Canada geese and other migratory waterfowl and neotropical migratory birds.

Acting in its role as overseer of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the Commission also approved 38 grants that will aid wetland restoration, protection and enhancement projects in Canada, Mexico and the United States. The 7 Mexico projects are located in 7 separate states in Mexico and will

HMBC Rare Bird Report

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)

15 November 00

Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, New Scotland, Albany County

Observed from approximately 1430-1432

41^o F, Visibility 10 mi., 23 mph wind WNW, Cloudy

Viewed with Bausch & Lomb Elite binoculars 8X42

As I walked the North Loop Trail at Five Rivers a very large, single bird caught my attention. The wingspan was about that of a Great Blue Heron (a fairly common sight at Five Rivers) but with very broad wings. Direct line of sight to the bird was approximately 1/4 mile. It alternated between soaring/circling and 3-4 slow flaps followed by a glide. The wings were held in a slight dihedral while soaring. The overall impression was of a very large, dark raptor. I looked for field marks other than dark plumage. There were roundish white patches on each wing approx. at base of primaries. There was also a broad white subterminal band on the tail. The head was 1/3 or less of tail length.

The only other bird in the same field of view was an American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). The crow was closer than the Golden Eagle but was still dwarfed in comparison.

The bird was flying roughly SW. No vocalizations.

Comparison with other species:

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*): The white markings were limited to only the distinct wing patches and subterminal band rather than the more mottled appearance of an immature Bald Eagle. I specifically looked for white patches along the axillaries; there was no white here or on the breast or belly. The head was very small compared to that of a Bald Eagle.

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*): The broad wings, large size, dark body and dihedral could indicate a Turkey Vulture. But the overall impression of this bird never hinted at Turkey Vulture. The wing color/pattern was more uniformly dark except for the two white patches rather than the bicolored impression of a Turkey Vulture. The wings were held in a slight dihedral rather than the more pronounced dihedral of a Turkey Vulture. Soaring flight was very steady without the characteristic rocking of a Turkey Vulture (esp. in 20+ mph winds).

Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*): A juvenile dark-phased Rough-legged Hawk might show a similar upper wing pattern with a pale patch near each wing tip. But the underwing pattern of the bird observed was much more uniformly dark except for the white patches mentioned for each wing. Underside of tail was darker than juvenile Rough-legged.. Lacked dark vs. pattern of Rough-legged Hawk. The overall impression of size and wingspan and comparison with the American Crow were of a much larger bird. Appeared to be at least as large as Turkey Vulture.

Report written on 16 November 00 @ 1630. Based on notes taken immediately after observation without reference to any field guides.

Puzzle Solution

Minerva's night bird	OWL	Home of World Tribunal	HAGUE
Poll man	GALLUP	Official doorkeeper	USHER
Sense of obligation	DUTY	Mr. White's game	CLUE
Vision accessory	EYEGASSES	Sharpen with a stone	WHET
Bird known as "fire-bird" (2 words)	NORTHERNORIOLE	Type of carol or log	YULE
W. Alaskan city	NOME	Medieval long-handled weapons	POLEAXES
Prophetic triumph of good	APOCALYPSE	Pronoun	YOU
Kind of dagger or heel	STILETTO	Spanish curlew	IBIS
A Grant	HUGH	Flicker's nickname (hyph.)	WAKE-UP
Provide lodgings for	HOUSE	Describing a deck or house	FULL

*"Hark to the whimper of the seagull
He weeps because he's not an eagull
Suppose you were you silly seagull
Could you explain it to your shegull"*

- Ogden Nash

For comparison with other species I referred to:

Clark, William S. and Wheeler, Brian K. , *A Field Guide to Hawks of North America*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987

Dunne, Pete and Sibley, David and Sutton, Clay, *Hawks in Flight*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988

Field Guide to the Birds of North America, National Geographic Society, 1987

Peterson, Roger T., *Eastern Birds*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980

Robbins, Chandler S., Bruun, Bertel and Zim, Herbert S., *Birds of North America*, Western Publishing Co., 1983

Sibley, David A., National Audubon Society *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 2000

Ray Perry
Five Rivers Center
56 Game Farm Road
Delmar, NY 12054
(518) 475-0291

Feathers

Troy Christmas Bird Count - January 2, 2000

Larry Alden

Thanks again for taking part in the Troy CBC. Since this is usually the last count of the CBC season, I know that you can be pretty tired of doing these counts by this time. I'm sending the sector leaders the detailed results on the following sheets so you can see how you stacked up against the rest of us. If you wish, you can forward a copy to the people who did the count with you.

This year's count was strange from a weather standpoint, with temperatures ranging from just below freezing to above 50 degrees! It did make for some open water, and allowed for four Ruddy Ducks to stick around the Tomhannock Reservoir to be counted - a new species for the count! Since this is the latest of the Club's CBCs, the cold weather usually comes in and drives away the half-hardies that were around for the Schenectady and Southern Rensselaer counts. That may have been the case, but the lack of snow also made it difficult to spot birds, with only one group seeing turkeys, for example. However, this year's grand total came to 71 species, which is the second highest total in the 51 years that this count has been held.

We had record high totals for the following species: Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Ruddy Duck, Sharp-Shinned Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Eastern Bluebird. We also picked up a few species that we don't get very often: Northern Shoveller, Redhead, Merlin, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, and Gray Catbird. I am pleased that we had 22 participants this year, too.

I have entered this year's data on the birdsource.cornell.edu web site. The complete data base for all CBCs is now on this site.

Thanks again for your help. Next year's count will be held on Saturday, December 30, 2000. Be there! If you have any comments, call me at 456-7115 or e-mail me at overlook6@earthlink.net.

Group A: Bill Gorman, Joan Cipriani. 6:15 am - 4:00 pm (3 hours, 2 miles on foot; 6 hours, 65 miles by car. Also ¾ hour, 2 miles owling).

Group B: Larry Alden, Frank Murphy, Steve Chorvas. 5:45 am - 6:45 am & 7:15 am - 5:00 pm (1½ hours, 1½ miles on foot; 8 hours, 80 miles by car. Also 1¼ hours, 12 miles owling).

Group C: Rich Guthrie, Dawn Love, Lin Fagan. 5:00 am - 5:30 am & 7:00 am - 4:30 pm (3 hours, 2 miles on foot; 6½ hours, 46 miles by car. Also ½ hour, 5 miles owling).

Group D: Ken Able, Sue Adair, Walter Ellison, Nancy Martin. 6:20 am - 5:00 pm (6 hours, 2 miles on foot; 4 hours, 34 miles by car. Also ¾ hour, 0 miles owling).

Group E: Bill Lee, Bob Budliger, Gene Vermilyea. 6:30 am - 5:00 pm (3¼ hours, 4½ miles on foot; 6½ hours, 75 miles by car. Also ¾ hour, ¼ mile owling).

Group F: Cliff Lamere, Norton Miller. 6:45 am - 7:00 am & 7:15 am - 3:15 pm (1½ hours, 1 mile by foot; 6½ hours, 69 miles by car. Also ¼ hour, 0 miles owling).

Group G: Gary Goodness, Melanie McCormack, Jeff Rose. 4:45 am - 5:15 am & 7:30 am - 4:45 pm (3 hours, 5 miles by foot; 6¼ hours, 80 miles by car. Also ½ hour, 0 miles owling).

Group G1: Scott Stoner, Denise Hilton. 9:30 am - 12:15 pm & 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm (5¼ hours, 4½ miles by foot. Also ½ hour, 1 mile owling).

1999 COUNT SUMMARY

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	G1	Total
Great Blue Heron			1	1			6		8
Snow Goose	1100	1	761			2			1864
Canada Goose	10000	1161	11440	226	761	6123	600	120	30431
Green-winged Teal					1				1
American Black Duck	150	47	62	123	51	21			454
Mallard	535	235	239	300	117	255			1681
Mallard hybrid			2	2					4
Northern Pintail	2								2
Northern Shoveler			1						1
Canvasback			1						1
Redhead				1					1
Ring-necked Duck	6		1	1					8
Common Goldeneye		1	106	19	19				145
Bufflehead			1						1
Hooded Merganser	6		17	3	3				29
Common Merganser	13	34	32	123	74	1	2		279
Ruddy Duck	4								4
Bald Eagle *	2		2		2				6
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1	1	2	1	1	6		12
Cooper's Hawk				3					3
Red-tailed Hawk	6	6	18	24	12	3	5		74
American Kestrel			2	1					3
Merlin				1					1
Peregrine Falcon				1					1
Ruffed Grouse		6			2				8
Wild Turkey	42								42
Ring-billed Gull	2	22	29	70	66	143	4	10	346
Herring Gull		37	8	920	126	89	5		1185

Feathers

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	G1	Total
Iceland Gull				2					2
Lesser Black-backed Gull					1				1
Great Black-backed Gull	4	10	6	245	308	5	22	4	604
Rock Dove	80	195	320	275	207	277	95		1449
Mourning Dove	12	413	142	102	132	79	13	1	894
Eastern Screech-Owl	2			1					3
Great Horned Owl	2			1	2			1	6
Barred Owl		1							1
Belted Kingfisher	1	1	5	6	2				15
Red-bellied Woodpecker		6		1					7
Downy Woodpecker	1	28	10	20	7	1	7	9	83
Hairy Woodpecker	1	3	5	2	2	1			14
Northern Flicker	1	8	3	2	2	2	1	1	20
Pileated Woodpecker	1	3						1	5
Horned Lark	95								95
Blue Jay	15	37	48	22	34	9	28	12	205
American Crow	136	1795	65	750	2334	216	600	25	5921
Fish Crow		1		8	4				13
Black-capped Chickadee	28	213	51	90	45	4	120	24	575
Tufted Titmouse	10	31	7	22	13	1	16		100
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	2	1				1		5
White-breasted Nuthatch	4	27	10	9	6		12	5	73
Brown Creeper	2	4		4	1		1		12
Carolina Wren		1		1					2
Winter Wren				1					1
Eastern Bluebird		22	20		43	7	6		98
Hermit Thrush	1				1				2
American Robin	7	79	25	21	12	11	1	5	161
Gray Catbird				1					1
Northern Mockingbird	2	2	1	3	3	3	3		17

Feathers

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	G1	Total
Cedar Waxwing		25							25
Northern Shrike			1						1
European Starling	130	1514	322	475	1082	656	650	12	4841
Northern Cardinal	8	13	5	26	4	2	2		60
American Tree Sparrow	3	104	25	27	27	23	65	30	304
Song Sparrow		3		8	1			1	13
White-throated Sparrow	1	11		4	9		1	2	28
Dark-eyed Junco	27	49	77	36	9	3	50		251
Red-winged Blackbird		8	5	2					15
Brown-headed Cowbird		35				1			36
House Finch	20	80	67	29	85	5	14	10	310
Common Redpoll		6	8	70	2		4		90
American Goldfinch	14	19	66	14	6		22	9	150
House Sparrow	27	51	12	75	35	10	13		223
Total Birds	12504	6351	14031	4176	5654	7954	2375	282	53327
Total Species	42	46	44	51	43	29	31	19	71

* Note: Bald Eagles - 2 adult, 3 immature, 1 unknown

Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center

A new Nature Center is coming to the Hilltowns. The Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center is being constructed now at the northern end of Thompsons Lake. (The targeted completion date was Sept. 1, 2000.) The goal is to have a year round program administered by Thacher State Park.

1998 Southern Rensselaer County Christmas Bird Counts

Dec 26, 1998

Seventeen participated in the Southern Rensselaer County Christmas Bird Count. Enclosed is the composite list for each group and the totals. The number of species was about average. Total species for the count was 54 with 19,471 individual birds.

Highlights were as follows:

New Species - 1 Green-winged Teal, 6 Ruddy Ducks
2nd Time Reported - 1 Gadwall, 2 Ring-necked Ducks
Record High Numbers - 444 American Robins, 2 Hooded Mergansers, 233 Black Ducks
2nd Highest Numbers - 2490 Canada Geese, 65 Common Mergansers, 138 Wild Turkeys,
2018 American Crows, 95 Tufted Titmice

For what it is worth! Lowest number of House Sparrows - 282 and 2nd lowest number of Rock Doves - 421. Thanks to Bob Yunick for the previous years' comparisons. Also enclosed is a list of those who participated.

- *Mark Wolfe*
1998 Compiler

Group Compilers
Group A - Rich Guthrie
Group B - Mark Wolfe
Group C - Debbie Shaw, Nancy Kern
Group D - Bill Gorman
Group E - Gary Goodness
Group F - Jeffrey Rose, Melody McCormick
Group G - Phil & Marjorie Whitney
Group H - Bill Lee

(Other participants included Paul D'Bruyn, David and Timothy Gorman, Chris Riano, Ellen Scott, Eugene Vermilyea.)

Feathers

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Total
Common Loon								1	1
Canada Goose	757	448	34	9	270	10	712	250	2490
Wood Duck	1								1
Green-winged Teal						1			1
American Black Duck	21	162		6	2			42	233
Gadwall	1								1
Ring-necked Duck								2	2
Ruddy Duck								6	6
Hooded Merganser								2	2
Common Merganser	9			12				44	65
Sharp-shinned Hawk			2						2
Cooper's Hawk		1				1		1	3
Red-tailed Hawk	8	5	12	13	3	2	9	22	74
Rough-legged Hawk				2					2
American Kestrel	1			3	2			1	7
Peregrine Falcon				2					2
Ruffed Grouse				1	1	1			3
Wild Turkey	15	13	73	3	8	17	9		138
Ring-billed Gull	31	56		64	1			22	174
Herring Gull	9	1	1	12	1	1	13	30	68
Great Black-backed Gull	4			6				6	16
Rock Dove	120	62	37	48	30		86	38	421
Mourning Dove	8	13	53	122	60	3	6	37	302
Eastern Screech-Owl	2	1		1					4
Great Horned Owl	1			1					2
Belted Kingfisher		1							1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1		1						2
Downy Woodpecker	3	5	9	9	10	6	11	4	57
Hairy Woodpecker	1	2	2	2	2	3	2		14
Northern Flicker	2	1	1	3					7
Pileated Woodpecker		1	1	1		1			4
Horned Lark					100				100
Blue Jay	8	5	14	11	20	9	36	3	106
American Crow	42	598	25	66	1000	27	84	176	2018

Feathers

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Total
Black-capped Chickadee	35	22	212	25	40	70	89	8	501
Tufted Titmouse	5	7	13	22	25	6	13	4	95
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1		2				1		4
White-breasted Nuthatch	3	10	6	3	15	5	10	4	56
Brown Creeper		1							1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	5	1			3	3		13
Eastern Bluebird		8		8	1		6		23
American Robin	2	20	20	400			1	1	444
Northern Mockingbird	1	1		3			1		6
Cedar Waxwing								30	30
European Starling	4500	415	319	3000	500	35	675	835	10279
Northern Cardinal	10	4	7	8	2	2	3	5	41
American Tree Sparrow	40	45	42	13	35	6	62	57	300
Song Sparrow	1	13		2				6	22
White-throated Sparrow	8		2	1				5	16
Dark-eyed Junco	30	14	80	86	30	45	46	26	357
House Finch	20	6	8	12	15		2	48	111
American Goldfinch	8	36	5	14	25	17	4	6	115
House Sparrow	10	32	65	80	35	3	42	15	282
Number of species (ave 31)	38	33	28	38	27	24	26	33	

... continue from page 111

go to habitat restoration, management and education projects. Grant funds totaling nearly \$1 million will be combined with \$1.13 million in partner funds for the Mexico projects.

Mexico provides winter and stopover habitat for hundreds of species of waterfowl and migratory birds that breed, summer or migrate through the U.S. to Canada. Recognizing that migratory birds are a shared resource, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act funds grants in Mexico and Canada, in addition to the U.S.

The 12 Canadian projects occur in 10 provinces, with a total of nearly 9.2 million in grant funds matched by almost \$17.1 million in partner contributions, helping to restore and protect thousands of acres of wetlands used by waterfowl and other migratory birds to breed and rear their young before wintering in and migrating through the U.S.

The 19 U.S. projects are located in 18 states and affect nearly 371,000 acres of wetlands and supporting habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds. Grant funds of nearly \$15 million will be combined with nearly \$60 million in partner funds to complete the U.S. projects.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Please Note: All HMBC programs are now held at the Colonie Library except the December Holiday party which will be held at Five Rivers EEC in Delmar. Programs at the Colonie Library begin at 7 PM.

Monday January 8, 2001 - Bill Gorman, **Wading Birds, Colonie Library**. Bill will show movies of most of the wading birds found in the U.S. While many of these birds are large, colorful and easy to observe, their marshy and swampy habitats hamper close approach and make some wading birds difficult to see. Join Bill as he shows these spectacular birds in action in their natural habitats.

Monday February 5, 2001 Philip Whitney, **East Africa: Birds, Mammals, People and Rocks**, 7 pm, Colonie library. An account, with slides, of a three-week trip to northwest Tanzania and Southeast Kenya, including Serengeti National Park, Ngorongoro Crater, Kakamega Forest, and Hells Gate Park. The emphasis is on the amazingly diverse birdlife, but some of the famous large mammals, other wildlife, Rift Valley Geology, and glimpses of life in rural East Africa away from the standard tourist routes are included.

Monday March 5, 2001 Kim Hunsinger on **NYS Breeding Bird Atlas - first year progress** 7 PM, Colonie library. Project Coordinator Kim Hunsinger will explain what the Atlas is all about. Learn how you can participate in this exciting statewide survey. Kim will also provide a the first look at the data that were collected during the first year of surveys. Is someone covering the block where you live? Kim earned a B.A. in Biology at Hartwick College and M.S. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at SUNY Albany. She can be reached at

Kimberley Corwin Hunsinger
Breeding Bird Atlas 2000 Project Coordinator
Wildlife Resources Center
108 Game Farm Road
Delmar, NY 12054
(518) 478-3061

Monday April 2, 2001 Second HMBC literary night; details will be published next issue, 7 pm.
Five Rivers

Thursday April 5, Annual Meeting and Program on **Costa Rica** with Mark Garland, Senior Naturalist of the Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central States, Inc.

Location- **Banquet Hall above the Fuller Road Fire Department in Colonie**

Costa Rica is a small country, just the size of Vermont and New Hampshire combined, yet it is an ideal place to study the natural history of the American tropics. This slide-illustrated lecture will look at the various habitats of Costa Rica and the flora and fauna supported by these habitats. Special emphasis will be on the country's rich bird life; nearly 900 species have been found in Costa Rica.

Monday May 7, 2001: Nunavut: A New Canadian Territory with Dick and Patsy Patrick

Feathers

Program Reports

by Scott Stoner and Denise Hackert-Stoner

HMBC/Audubon Chapter Program Report

Author and artist Jim Coe presented his "Birding By Habitat" program to a joint program of HMBC and the Capital Region Audubon Chapter on Oct. 2. The audience of about 80 people enjoyed the program, in which Jim explained his technique of grouping birds according to their habitat, and using habitat as a tool in identification. Jim uses this technique in his guide, *A Guide to Field Identification of North American Species* published by Golden Guides.

As an example of how the method works, Jim used the backyard habitat. As an adaptable and varied habitat, the backyard is similar to the typical "edge habitat" that many birds like. Robins, Grosbeaks and Orioles, for instance might be seen enjoying the woodland, dense thickets and open area of edge habitats, versions of which may be found in some backyards.

Given a particular habitat, like the edge habitat of the yard, if an element is added, such as a body of water like a small pond, the bird life may expand to include species such as Red-

winged Blackbird, Yellow Warbler and Common Yellowthroat.

If, on the other hand, the edge habitat is drier in nature, then one would more likely find species like Prairie Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler and Indigo Bunting.

The larger, more open, less treed areas might be home to Meadowlark and Bobolink, as well as various grassland sparrows.

As Jim progressed into more intricate variations of the habitat, it became clear that the presence of a stream in a woodland, or a group of hemlock or spruce, might lead the birder experienced in these changes to expect Waterthrush, Blackburnian Warbler, or Solitary Vireo.

Jim's talk was enlightening to his audience, and the information very handy, encouraging the birder to become aware of the habitat as well as field marks, when identifying birds in the field.

Audubon Society of the Capital Region Programs

Thurs Dec 14, holiday party and Ken Able on **Migration**. 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library.

Thurs Jan 11, 2001, Audubon member Larry King's film "**Adirondack Adventures**." 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library.

Thurs Feb 8, 2001, Scott Stoner, Denise Hackert-Stoner and Gregg Recer on **Hawaii**. 7 PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Library.

Hawks and Owls of New York State

Raptors continue to be a big draw, as evidenced by the 70 plus folks who turned out on November 6 to hear DEC's Scott Crocoll discuss the Hawks and Owls of New York State. There are 33 species that occur in NY, some commonly and others, like the Swallow-tailed Kite, only upon very rare occasion (thanks to Bob Budliger's sharp eyes at Five Rivers!).

Some of the information on the various species is represented below. Vultures are no longer classified as raptors, but are still often thought of, and counted, as such, perhaps for historical reasons. Turkey vultures are moving north; black vultures are less common but also moving north, with a few being found in the southern Hudson Valley. Osprey are on the rise, and breed both on Long Island and in the Adirondacks. Bald Eagles are increasing nationwide, with 58 pairs in NY. Northern Harriers, a grassland, ground-nesting species, are threatened in NY.

Looking to the accipiters, sharp shinned are jay size, coopers crow size and goshawk the size of a red-tail. Many of us are familiar with the peregrine falcons that nested on the Dunn Memorial bridge; the DEC had a live web cam set up on the nest.

All raptors are predators, with strong sharp claws, large sharp bills for tearing. Owls have the additional specialization of serrated leading edge of the primary feathers on the wing, enabling silent flight. Great Horned Owls are the largest by weight although not by length, and are known to be aggressive and to eat prey even larger than themselves. Great Gray Owls are the longest, but only half the weight of a great horned. Short eared owls are endangered in NY. No owl species build a substantial nest of their own; some use holes or nests of other species, or nest on the ground.

Raptor breeding activity takes place for much of the year; great horned owls begin courting in December; kestrels and broad winged hawks do not fledge until August.

It was an interesting and informative evening, highlighted by photos and stories from some Scott's early years of studying nesting raptors, which were characterized by some highly vigorous territorial defense!



OWL

Field Trip Reports

Tomhannock Reservoir November 5, 2000

On November 5, 2000, about fifteen birders met at the reservoir. It was a reasonably calm and beautiful day. We checked the birds on each side of the causeway. Birds seen included: A **COMMON LOON**, **RUDDY DUCKS**, **WOOD DUCKS**, **RING-NECKED DUCKS**, **COMMON GOLDEN-EYE**, **BUFFLEHEAD**, **AMERICAN WIGEON**, **COMMON MERGANSERS**, **HOODED MERGANSERS** and **CANADA GEESE**. As we moved along the east side of the reservoir, we watched a lone **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** soaring and hovering over the western hillside. At Nortonville Road, we had close up looks at **HOODED** and **COMMON MERGANSERS** and a light rain started. On Brundige Road we saw **GREEN-WINGED TEAL**, **NORTHERN PINTAIL**, **NORTHERN SHOVELER** and two lone **DUNLIN**. At Otter Creek, we watched an Immature **BALD EAGLE** perched in a tree, but the rain blurred the otherwise great view. At the pumping station, we had nice views of two **RED-NECKED GREBES** and a **COMMON LOON**. We ended our trip a little early due to the rain, even so, we had a nice trip with 41 species seen including life birds for several participants.

- *Bill Gorman*

Montezuma NWR October 14, 2000

The HMBC group headed to Montezuma on a beautiful fall day with clear skies, light breezes and temperatures in the 50's. When the group reached the refuge, we headed to the Esker Brook trail and hiked around the loop for a couple of hours. Woodland species we encountered included **GOLDEN-CROWNED** and **RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS**, **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW**, **DARK-EYED JUNCO**, **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER**, **BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES**, and **DOWNY WOODPECKER**.

We lunched near the refuge office and then spent time studying the waterfowl in the marsh from the overlook. A lot of time was spent discussing **COMMON MOORHEN** - the distance misleading us into considering other rails. In addition to the abundant **CANADA GEESE**, we observed **MALLARD**, **PIED-BILLED GREBE**, **AMERICAN COOT**, **CANVASBACK**, **GREEN-WINGED** and **BLUE-WINGED TEAL**, **AMERICAN WIGEON**, **NORTHERN SHOVELER** and **PINTAIL**. **GREATER SCAUP**, **CANVASBACK**, **RUDDY DUCK** and **RING-NECKED DUCK** rounded out the diving duck list.

Driving the loop road gave us some additional views, but did not add many new species. A look over Tsache Pool provided several **GREAT BLUE HERONS** and a couple of **BALD EAGLES** (one immature, one adult) off in the distance. We then checked up the May's Pt. pool and found two **SNOW GEESE** (one white, one blue) among the **CANADA GEESE**. Both **YELLOWLEGS**, **STILT SANDPIPERS**, **DUNLIN** and **BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS** provided a bit of shorebird identification practice.

A walk bordering the "mucklands" north of the refuge produced several sparrows including more **WHITE-THROATED** plus **SAVANNAH**, **WHITE-CROWNED**, **SONG**, **FIELD** and **CHIPPING** as well as more **Juncos** and **Yellow-rumps**.

While no unexpected finds were made, we had a good variety from a day at Montezuma with a grand trip total of 61 species.

- *Cathy Graichen & Gregg Recer*

Upcoming HMBC Field Trips*(Consult your field trip schedule or Birdline (439-8080) for trip details)***2000 HMBC Christmas Bird Counts**

DEC 16 (Sat) Schenectady
 DEC 23 (Sat) S. Rensselaer County
 DEC 30 (Sat) Troy

Compiler: Bill Lee, 374-3426
 Compiler: Phil Whitney, 477-9050
 Compiler: Larry Alden, 861-6087

JAN 1
 MON NEW YEAR'S DAY BIRD COUNT AT FIVE RIVERS
Coordinator: Al Mapes

439-4086

For the past 20 years, Five Rivers has been welcoming in the New Year with an organized effort to identify all the bird species present on January 1. This also marks the start of their annual bird list. Again this year, HMBC joins the event and encourages members to participate. Groups will go out at 9:00 a.m. from the Interpretive Building (visitor center), but birders are welcome to arrive earlier to get a head start.

JAN or FEB WINTER RARE BIRD TRIP
Coordinator: Bill Lee
Reservations by January 15

374-3426

If any especially rare bird is reported in our general area, we plan to take a trip to look for it. This is usually a day trip, but sometimes requires an overnight stay. To get on the notification list for alert and trip details, call the coordinator. In 1997, we went to Portland, ME for an Ivory Gull; in 1998 to Plymouth, MA for a Bar-tailed Godwit; in 1999 to Hinckley Reservoir, Remsen, Oneida County for a Yellow-billed Loon. In 2001, ????

JAN 13
 SAT FIVE RIVERS — BIRDING BY SNOWSHOE
Coordinator: Ray Perry

399-3962 (H) or 475-0291 (W)

Join us for a morning snowshoe trip around Five Rivers. We can expect to find the typical titmice, nuthatches, woodpeckers and sparrows. Other possibilities that could be present include open field birds, hawks and winter finches. Snowshoes will be available for those without their own. We will hike the property if there is not sufficient snow for snowshoes. Participants are also welcome to join an afternoon educational program on owls in New York that will cover their identification and natural history and where to look for them. Meet at the Five Rivers visitor center at 9:00 AM for the snowshoe walk. The owl program begins at 2:00 PM and runs for about 2 hours.

Feathers

JAN 14
SUN **ANNUAL STATE WATERFOWL COUNT**
Coordinator: Gary Goodness **272-5830**

On the local segment of this statewide event, participants will count waterfowl and other winter birds on the Hudson River between North Troy and Hudson Falls. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the Hannaford Supermarket on the east end of the North Troy-Waterford Bridge (Route 4).

FEB
Date to be arranged **PARTRIDGE RUN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA — BIRDING BY SKI**
Coordinators: Gregg Recer & Cathy Graichen **899-2678**
Reservations by January 31

Partridge Run in southwestern Albany County can be a reliable area for wintering irruptive species such as Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, crossbills, Pine Siskin and redpolls when they are present in our area. Open field birds such as Horned Larks and Snow Buntings can be found in the farm fields surrounding the area. Common wintering species include Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey and Common Raven, as well as the typical titmice, nuthatches and woodpeckers. We will bird from the designated nordic skiing trails in the wildlife management area. **Date and time will be determined by the coordinators based on snow conditions and wintering species present. Call ahead for details and reservations.**

FEB 10 - 11
SAT - SUN **CAPE VINCENT, PT PENINSULA AND AMHERST ISLAND**
Coordinator: Bill Lee **374-3426**
Reservations by February 2

Areas such as Pt Peninsula and Cape Vincent, NY (Jefferson County) can attract such sought-after species as Great Gray Owl, Snowy Owl, Northern Hawk-owl, and even Boreal Owl. In addition, the Gray Partridge is a resident bird at Cape Vincent. If time permits and rare birds are present, a side-trip to Amherst Island, Ont. may also be added to this trip. This can be a productive weekend as many have found life birds in this area.

FEB 17-19
SAT - MON **CAPE ANN & PLUM ISLAND**
Coordinator: Bill Lee **374-3426**
Reservations by Jan 31

Our popular winter trip to the Massachusetts coast will focus on the north shore from Nahant, just north of Boston, to the New Hampshire coast. Join us in search of alcids, white-winged gulls, Purple Sandpiper, Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, Eiders, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspur, Short-eared and Snowy Owls and other raptors on this three-day weekend.

HMBC BOARD FOR 2000-2001

Officers

President: Gregg Recer 23 Scotch Mist Way Malta, N.Y. 12020 899-2678	Vice-President: William Lee 2171 Grand Blvd. Schenectady, NY 12309 374-3426
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Secretary: Lynn Huntington 329 N. Schodack Rd. East Greenbush, N.Y. 12061 477-2980	Treasurer: Dan Welch 329 N. Schodack Rd. East Greenbush, N.Y. 12061 477-2980
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Carl George	393-0629
Joan Cipriani	374-3729
Sunny Gooding	446-9370
Scott Stoner	785-6760
Alison Van Keuren	435-0817

Committee Chairs

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Birdline:	John Saville	399-5959
Programs:	Scott Stoner	785-6760
Field Trips:	Gregg Recer (acting)	899-2678
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Records:	Bob Budliger	439-0006
Sanctuary:	Joe Coticchio	374-2449
Social:	Denise Hackert-Stoner	785-6760
Jr. Activities:	Elle Dietemann	766-7045

HMBC Contact Information

BIRDLINE of E. NEW YORK: (518) 439-8080

Email: hmbc@hotmail.com

HMBC website: <http://members.xoom.com/hmbc/>

Reminder!!

All HMBC Board meetings are open to all Club members. Meetings are held at Five Rivers Center or other local venues at 7:00 PM. The next board meeting will be **Monday Jan. 22, 2001** and will be held at The Sweater Venture on Rt 9 north of the Latham traffic circle.

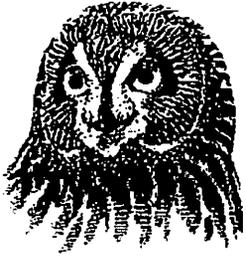
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Feathers
c/o Cathy Graichen
23 Scotch Mist Way
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

or via e-mail to:

recerg@crisny.org

Feathers



PRESIDENT'S CORNER: It's December and that means there's a lot going on. The holiday's are rushing at us and things can get very hectic, but it's a fun time. A couple of HMBC business items are worth mentioning. The 2001 field trip schedule is in your mailing with this issue of *Feathers*. I want to thank all the members of the field trip committee for putting another great schedule of trips together. Everyone who's volunteered to lead a trip deserves kudos as well — the Club couldn't have the enviable variety of trips we do every year without a lot of dedicated field birders running the trips. An important feature of the field trip schedule to note right away is the Christmas Bird Count information. The three HMBC-sponsored counts are Schenectady on 12/16, S. Rensselaer on 12/23 and Troy on 12/30. The count compilers are listed in the schedule (and in *Feathers*) and can be contacted if you would like to participate. As usual, the December mailing also includes a dues renewal notice for 2001. Please take a moment to fill out the form a return it. If you are a new member, please note that we have a calendar-year based renewal cycle. If you joined after June 30, 2000 your dues are considered paid through 2001. New members who joined prior to July 1, 2000 will need to renew their dues for next year.

I hope everyone has an enjoyable holiday season and gets a good start on their year list in 2001!

Gregg Recer

FEATHERS
Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club
c/o Five Rivers EEC
Game Farm Rd.
Delmar, N.Y. 12054

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