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FEATHER DUSTING

compiled by Richard Guthrie

This is the first of a series of reprints from past issues of FEATHERS and will give us some interesting insights to birding of half a century or more ago. The reprints will include interesting observations and accounts from then, field trip reports, Christmas Bird Count summaries, and Century Run results. I will not change any of the spellings, sentence structure, or style of the writers. Where warranted, I will add annotations at the end of an article to bring the nomenclature up to date or to identify sites mentioned.

Many of the observations, such as those in the article by Guy Bartlett are just as valid today as they were back then. Others will give us a comparison of bird life and birding as they were then and how things have changed over the years.

I hope you enjoy reading them and will join in birding vicariously with birders of another era.

Thanks to Walt Sabin for the loan of back issues of FEATHERS.

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V.3 No. 2 February 1941

"MANY ARE BORN, BUT FEW SURVIVE"

by Guy Bartlett, Schenectady Bird Club member

March, 1940, was torn from the calendar. Still no phoebes called in the early morning,

sat on the wires beside the house, or fluttered above the windows. The previous half dozen years had always seen a pair of phoebes there, but it had already been decided that the story was ended, that the conclusion of the tragic story had been written. With early April a few pairs of phoebes did arrive in the neighborhood - - at the bridge up the road, across the highway and up the hill and down the road at another bridge. But those birds did not make up for the pair now missing - - the pair, which for so many years had been such, a familiar sight.

Astronomical figures are used when one calculates the number of houseflies that would result from one pair in just one or two years, if all offspring bred and produced normally. Similarly astronomical figures are required in considering fish such as the cod.

With birds the story is different. Some, including the ducks and gallinaceous birds, lay

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relatively many eggs but successfully rear few; others, like the extinct passenger pigeon, the almost extinct condor, and some others, lay one perhaps two eggs; still others like the song sparrow, may have a half dozen eggs and may nest two or three times a season. High mortality rates must be expected in some species, or they would soon blanket the territory.

In FEATHERS for November, 1939, for instance, it was stated that "from one pair of house wrens, two million birds could be produced in six years' time, if all the eggs hatches and all offspring bred and produced normally."

1934 and 1935 - - None

But to return to the phoebes. In 1934 a pair was first noticed at work on a nest on a shallow ledge over a second-story window of the farmhouse. The occupants of the house knew that the mud going into the construction of the nest would not contribute to the appearance of the house, so the birds were not permitted to build.

Several times the phoebes tried to take possession of the ledge, and each time were foiled. They may have gone elsewhere to nest later, but any such nest was not discovered in 1935 the story was the same.

1936 - - None

Before the birds came back in 1936 there was a change in ownership, and the Man no longer interfered with the phoebes; in fact, attempts were made to assist them.

On May 1, 1936, there were three eggs in the nest on the window ledge. A week later the

nest contained one addled egg, one young that had died very soon after hatching, and one lively offspring. Another week, and that one also had died in the nest.

A second nest was then built, on the opposite end of the same window ledge. The birds had difficulty in making the mud stick to the house, and at least two weeks were gone before they had finished construction. Hardly was it completed before there was a heavy rainstorm. Even though the ledge was protected by the overhang of the roof, the nest was downed by the storm. The birds immediately rebuilt on the same site, and had the work done in record time. A few days later that nest was on the ground, with broken eggs in and beside it. There had been no strong wind, and the cause of the disaster was not apparent. The birds did now seem to try to nest again that season.

1937 - - None

On the theory that the nests fell because the ledge was so narrow - - not wider than 1 ½ inches - - a shelf was fastened to the ledge during the next winter. In the spring of 1937 the phoebes immediately accepted the window ledge but, with the nest partially completed, English sparrows drove them off and brought in chicken feathers to turn the nest quickly into a mess of junk. The phoebes were unable to cope with the sparrows (which, however, quickly succumbed to lead poisoning, administered with a .22). The sparrow nest was removed, and the phoebes immediately started on the same site. The nest soon contained three eggs. On the following day it contained another and darker egg, despite the alertness of the phoebe. A cowbird which had so successfully parasitized several other nests in the vicinity that



season had won again.

The young cowbird was found dead on the ground after a week; the young phoebes were never seen. Again that season the phoebes nested, using the same nest. It was not long before there were four dead young in the nest and the cause was easily determined. The birds were infested with lice.

1938 - - None

In 1938 the birds were not successful in their attempt to use the ledge. Finally, after trying to place mud all along the sill, the birds abandoned the site and built on a wider ledge over the garage - shed door.

The young were hardly a week old when the story of the previous year was repeated. All the young died; the nest was swarming with lice.

The birds built again, this time successfully, on the usual window ledge. Again, however, the young died in the nest.

1939 - - None

In 1939 the phoebes had their usual poor luck in building over their favorite window. On the opposite side of the house, however, they did succeed in building on a similar ledge. The nest was nearly completed when it was noticed that on one of the pair was in evidence. Previously the male had roosted each night on wires close to the roof of the garage. Now the roost was not in use, and the bird was not helping with the nest. It probably had died.

The one bird completed the nest and on two successive days she laid eggs. The house

was being painted but the painter had been told to do nothing to that corner of the house. After the phoebe had flown close to him, atop the ladder, he was in favor of such a procedure.

On the third morning the story of this pair of phoebes was completed. On the ground below the nest on the window ledge was the remaining phoebe, dead, and with her wing and tail feathers heavy with paint. Investigation revealed that the bird had seen fit to alight on another, freshly painted, window ledge on another side of the house.

Perhaps the time will come when phoebes will again nest on ledges of the garage or house, but they will not be the same birds.

An account like this one is only one of many explanations of why birds do not increase to the extent that mathematical calculations indicate are possible.

G.B.

Exploring the Web

submitted by Bob Miller

eBird — New on the Web

The winter 2003 edition of "Audubon Advocate" announced, *eBird*, the new creation of Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. As a diversion from putting together this newsletter, I checked it out and was impressed, not by the wealth of information currently there, but the POTENTIAL wealth of information that will be there if it receives even moderate use.

The site invites birder and non-birder alike to record personal observations. For every ob-



ervation they request the following information:

- Where was the bird observed?
- When was bird observed?
- What effort went into locating the bird?
- Who recorded the bird?
- What species of bird was it?
- How many individuals of each species were recorded?

Location information can be provided by address, pointing on a map, using a named birding hotspot, or longitude/latitude for those with GPS receivers. The map feature scales down to a city block and up to North America. They also have aerial photos and topographical maps of areas selected.

You have the ability to view your previous submissions and show trends over time. It saves your favorite birding locations to make it easier for you to make additional submissions.

You can also view reports by species (or multiples up to 5) mapped, at United States scale down to back roads, even some un-named roads. This is a compilation of all observers reports and it can be limited by a date range. There are graphs to show trends and frequency of sightings. If you want to look at this feature, I suggest looking at the observations for Ithaca, as there are many more data points there than in the Capital District.

I see this websites value as a personal tool, but I am overwhelmed by the potential uses of the database they are compiling. Think of the uses to other birders, amateur naturalists, scientists, conservationists, conservation organizations, educators and governments. Read "About eBird" while you visit to gain an appreciation of the multitude of good that

such a repository can do. See some specific results by looking at "How does Science use eBird", also under "About eBird".

Try the home page of the site to see birding news and features. They also provide links to Audubon and Cornell Lab of Ornithology features.

I found the site was slow to load, but since it was just introduced, they likely don't have it on their best equipment, but it may get better over time as use of this tool increases. You may also find some minor irritations or even problems in use of the site. They welcome feedback. I suspect that feedback will be given serious consideration as the authors seek to improve the usability of their product.

To access this site, type "ebird" in a search engine or "www.ebird.org" in your browser's address area. As with all internet sites, be careful about the using the correct address. You may be shocked at what is returned when you make simple mistakes.

The site requests minimal information about the observer (email address, address). The email address is used to request more details if you report an unusual observation. I have read the Privacy Policy and was satisfied by their terms. I would expect honesty given the reputation of the two founding organizations. But please read the policy for yourself, always a good practice. Saving a copy to your computer or printing the policy is another option you may consider.

I apologize if this article is not of interest to those not connected to the internet. If you have never experienced it, do yourself a favor, sit at a computer with a friend who has some web surfing experience and take a ride. You will be amazed by the amount of material available out there in cyberspace.



Field Trip Reports

Tomhannock Reservoir November 10, 2002

It was a nice warm overcast morning with some clouds and a slight threat of rain when over 20 birders met at the reservoir. We circled the reservoir in a counter-clockwise manner and had some problems finding places to park our large contingency of cars. By the causeway, we found RUDDY DUCK, BUFFLEHEAD, COMMON GOLDENEYE, COMMON MERGANSER and a COMMON LOON. Along the east side of the reservoir we turned up MALLARD, AMERICAN BLACK DUCK, CANADA GOOSE, RING-NECKED DUCK, HOODED MERGANSER, DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT and a perched BALD EAGLE. As we continued on, we added a flying BALD EAGLE, several RED-TAILED HAWKS, NORTHERN PINTAIL, AMERICAN WIGEON and GREEN-WINGED TEAL. When we reached the west side, we found PIED-BILLED GREBE, GREAT BLUE HERON and BELTED KINGFISHER. Based on previous years, the duck numbers were low and we missed several birds seen here just days earlier. Our large group size kept our pace slow, but everyone appeared to get reasonable looks of each find and we all had a good morning of birding with a total count of 31 species.

Checklist: COMMON LOON (3), PIED-BILLED GREBE (2), DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (5), GREAT BLUE HERON (2), CANADA GOOSE (1000+), AMERICAN WIGEON (20), AMERICAN BLACK DUCK (30), MALLARD (20), NORTHERN PINTAIL (2), GREEN-WINGED TEAL (4), RING-NECKED DUCK (30), BUFFLEHEAD (6), COMMON GOLDENEYE (100), HOODED MERGANSER (40), COMMON MERGANSER (50), RUDDY DUCK (40), BALD EAGLE (2), RED-TAILED HAWK (4), RING-BILLED GULL (12), ROCK DOVE (100), MOURNING DOVE (2), BELTED KINGFISHER (2), BLUE

JAY (6), AMERICAN CROW (30), BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE (2), GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET (1), AMERICAN ROBIN (12), EUROPEAN STARLING (6), CEDAR WAXWING (8), AMERICAN TREE SPARROW (1), AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (1).

Bill Gorman

January 1, 2003 New Year's Day Count Five Rivers

Although deep snow made for some difficult walking, the lull between the two record-breaking 21" holiday season storms allowed for about 40 people to participate on the 23rd annual Five Rivers' New Year's Day count, again cosponsored by the HMBC. Birder efforts were high on this 9 AM trip, but the birds were few and far between, perhaps due to the severity of the early winter and lack of "winter finches." Unlike a Christmas Bird Count, the goal of this count is to tally species rather than individuals, and to start off Five Rivers' annual first-of-the-year sightings list. Over 22 years, a total of 66 species had been found on New Year's Day, 13 of them every year. Alas, the total lack of house finch has cut that number to 12, but we did tally DOWNY WOODPECKER, BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, NORTHERN CARDINAL, AMERICAN TREE SPARROW, WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, DARK-EYED JUNCO, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH and HOUSE SPARROW for the 23rd straight year. The species total for the day of 28 was the lowest in recent years, and no new birds were added to the cumulative list. However, we did get RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER for only the 7th time and 5th year in a row. Bob Budliger, starting before 6 AM, added GREAT HORNED OWL (where was it on the Campfire and Owling on the 5th?!); Doug



Steele, also out there since the wee hours, contributed RUFFED GROUSE (2nd time) and SWAMP SPARROW (3rd time) among others. Thanks to Craig Thompson who organized and led this perennially fun event for Five Rivers, and to Denise Stoner who co-lead it for HMBC.

Scott Stoner

Campfire and Owling January 5, 2003

When the 20 HMBC members and friends, led by Alan Mapes, arrived at Five Rivers' scout lean-to on January 5, the day's light was fast fading, the campfire was roaring, and the hot chocolate was steaming. The group exchanged birding adventure tales over hot dogs, made plans with one another for future outings, and generally shared the experience of being in a deeply snowy woodland on a winter's night. As the happy chatter subsided, and the last graham cracker had been eaten, Alan Mapes played his tape of Eastern Screech and Great Horned Owls

several times. The group waited in perfect silence for several minutes, with no response from either owl. Slowly we began the clean up process, and were beginning to bid one another a good night, when an astute listener piped up, "Isn't that an owl?" Sure enough, as the rapt group soon confirmed, an EASTERN SCREECH OWL was calling, perhaps a belated response to the tape. No Great Horned was heard from that evening, although they have been heard this year in the same area, but the evening was great fun, and the Screech Owl was a welcome addition to the festivities.

Thank you to Scott Stoner, for keeping such a great fire, and to Alan Mapes, not only for his tapes, but also for digging out the fire pit, and loaning us his sled. Thank you also to Craig Thompson of Five Rivers, for the use of the snowshoes! And of course, thank you to all the participants, and to the owl!

Denise Hackert-Stoner

Random Thoughts with a Purpose

Thinking about those spring buds coming shortly?

Noticed that this issue of your newsletter seems a little thin?

Next winter (or anytime) let these thoughts bring out the budding writer in you. January and February are slow months for birders, just before a flurry of activity. They also happen to be slow months for article submissions.

Sit down, take some time, write something you want to share. Professional experience, not required (maybe not even desired).

Pen to paper or fingers to keyboard, let others know your birding adventures. Maybe you traveled to some warm spot to enjoy "winter birding". Give others a chance to share your joy.

Send your selection to one of the people in the "Newsletter Submissions" box on the next to last page of the newsletter. It will be highly appreciated!



Upcoming HMBC Programs

WINTER WEATHER CANCELLATIONS. Reminder: The January, February and March 2003 HMBC Programs will all be held at Five Rivers at 7:00 PM. Unlike the library, there is no staff on duty in the early evening; nor does Five Rivers "close" in the evening in bad weather. Decisions as to program cancellation will be made by 1 PM on the day of the program. Decisions will be based on our estimation of the road conditions that evening, but please understand that the decision must be made early enough so that people can learn about the cancellation. If there is a MAJOR winter storm, with offices, malls, etc. closed, it is highly likely that the program will not be held. If it is a more moderate event, we may or may not hold it. You can call Five Rivers at 475-0291 between 1 PM and 4 PM the day of the program to find out.

DEER ALERT. Please use caution going to and from the programs this winter as there are MANY DEER in the vicinity of Five Rivers and the greater Delmar/Slingerlands area! Many HMBC members have had expensive collisions with these hooved creatures already!

Monday March 3, 7PM, Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar
***Alaska Birds*, Movies by Bill Gorman**

Alaska is a large state with many remote areas. Bill's movies provide an introduction to birding in Alaska at the Yupik village of Gambell on St. Lawrence Island, the interior areas around Nome, the Aleut island of St. Paul of the Pribilof Islands, and the Denali National Park and areas south through the Kenai Peninsula. While these areas represent only a small fraction of the state, they provide a good exposure to the birds that may be seen here. Join Bill for his movie "Alaska Birds".

Annual Meeting and Banquet

Tuesday April 8, 7PM, Fuller Road Fire Department Banquet Hall
***Future of Birding and Birds*, Paul J. Baicich**

Paul is co-author of *A Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds*, past editor of *Birding*, and the current Conservation and Public Policy Director for the American Birding .

Monday, April 14, 7:00 PM at Five Rivers
HMBC's Literary Night

If you have a favorite published nature poem or prose piece you'd like to share with the group, or if you like to dabble in composition yourself, or if you like to listen, we hope you will join us for this year's Literary Night! We look forward to a great crowd of many of our "regulars," and hope that many new friends will join us this year. You are welcome to bring a dessert to share, if you like, and sit back and enjoy the fun!

Monday, May 5, 7 PM at Five Rivers
***Birding the Dry Tortugas*, Scott and Denise Stoner**

Seventy miles west of Key West lie the seven islands that comprise Dry Tortugas National Park, one of North America's birding hotspots. Accessible only by boat or seaplane, the Dry Tortugas in April or May are a phenomenal birding experience. The sight and sound of 100,000 nesting sooty terns, complemented by magnificent frigatebird, masked booby, and brown and even black noddy, are reason enough to visit these islands. Add in the migrant songbird possibilities that range from good to incredible, and a sunrise over a tropical island, and you end up with a must-visit location! Scott and Denise will share their Dry Tortugas birding adventures and give some logistical tips for visiting one of our newest national parks.



Upcoming Audubon Programs

Thursday March 13 . 7 PM, Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar
***On the Natural History of Cape Cod* - Bob Budliger**

Program Reports

December Meeting: Deserts and Desserts

Both Deserts and desserts highlighted our December 2 Holiday party! On a bitterly cold December 2, about 30 valiant folks made it out to Five Rivers for the Club's annual Holiday party, and program on the warm deserts of California by HMBC member Dick Patrick. Dick gave an interesting show, complete with his dry humor, on the habitat and inhabitants of the California deserts from the riches of Palm Springs to the Salton Sea. His slides, which also included the Palm Desert and Rancho Mirage areas and illustrated the extravagant use of water by the wealthy in this arid land. Scenes from Joshua Tree National Park and the unique experience at the open-air market in Indio completed the show. Our thanks to Dick for sharing his experiences in this varied region, and to all who brought desserts to share!

January Meeting: The Everglades

On a night soon after the second 21-inch snowstorm within 10 days, 35 folks ventured out to Five Rivers to hear tales of a much warmer place. A poll of the audience indicated that nearly all had been to the Everglades, and would have preferred to be there now, rather than waist-deep in snow. But for those of us living in the great Northeast, photos were as close as we could get that night! In this joint program with the Audubon Society of the Capital Region, Bob Neudel of the Albany Academy took us on a search for the "River of Grass" as described by Marjorie Stoneman Douglas more than 50 years ago. Bob prefaced his talk with a reading from her famous and influential book, then showed us the scenery, plants and animals of the Everglades, in both dry (winter) and wet (summer) seasons. For most of us who have only visited there in the dry season, it was particularly interesting to see nearly-submerged pneumatophores of the black mangrove, the saw-grass in the water, and to hear tales of 95-degree weather and mosquitoes so thick that not only head nets but total body armor were needed to venture out. Bob ended with a discussion of some of the many issues facing the very survival of the Everglades.



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

APR 17
THURS WOODCOCK AT FIVE RIVERS (evening)
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 PM. Bring binoculars and flashlight. Meet at the Five Rivers interpretive Building at 7 PM. (see page 2 for directions of the *2003 Field Trip Guide*)

APR 27
SUN *ROTTERDAM, SCHENECTADY COUNTY--INSTRUCTIONAL TRIP (morning)
Coordinator: Joan Cipriani 374-3729

This early morning trip will visit one or two local spots in Rotterdam and will be geared toward the beginning birder. At this time of year, we will be looking at some of the usual feeder birds and for any early migrants, such as, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow and maybe Rusty Blackbird. Binoculars will be helpful if you have them. Please call the coordinator for meeting time and place.

MAY 3
SAT ALBANY PINE BUSH PRESERVE (morning)
Coordinators: Donna Zimmerman (HMBC) 869-6624
Erin Kinal (Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission) 785-1800

The Albany Pine Bush represents one of the best remaining examples of an inland pine barrens ecosystem left in the world. Intense efforts by the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission have protected over 2,940 acres of this beautiful ecosystem, best known as home to the Karner Blue butterfly but also a fun place to bird and explore. Join us for our annual spring migration bird count in some of the best pitch pine-scrub oak barrens in the Preserve. Along the way we are likely to see/hear the eastern towhee, prairie and other warblers, field sparrows, and many other bird species either passing through or preparing to nest in the Pine Bush. Meet at 8:00 AM at the Karner Barrens East trailhead located on the east side of Route 155 (between Washington Ave. Extension and the State Employees Federal Credit Union. Beginning birders especially welcome. Joint trip with the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission.

Reservations requested by calling the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission Office, (518) 785-1800.

MAY 4
SUN CHRISTMAN PRESERVE (morning)
Coordinators: Debbie Ellinger, Phillip Johnson 370-5921

Join us for a morning walk through this compact Nature Conservancy property. We will walk the trail through old fields, secondary growth and visit the falls of the Bozenkill looking for migrating warblers and other songbirds. Meet at 7:30 am at the entrance to the Preserve off the Schoharie Turnpike near the border between Albany and Schenectady Counties. From the Intersection of US 20 and SR7 in Duanesburg follow SR 7 west out of the village. Turn left onto Weaver Road and then left again onto Schoharie Turnpike. The parking area for Christman's is 2.6 miles on the right on the edge of an old field and not visible from a distance. The Christman's lot is small, so please try to carpool.



HMBC BOARD FOR 2002-2003

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HMBC Contact Information

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Email: contact@hmbc.net

HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

Newsletter Submissions

Please send all **electronic** submissions **via e-mail** to:
Bob Miller at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net

All **paper** submissions should be sent to:
Cathy Graichen
23 Scotch Mist Way
Malta NY 12020

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, usually on the second Monday of odd-numbered months.

Next Board meeting:
March 10th, Monday @ Five Rivers

Other Committee News

Deb Smith now heads the Junior Activities Committee
Carl George has taken the lead for the Reist Sanctuary Committee.

Thanks to these two for volunteering. We now have a full slate of committee chairs.

Feathers



President's Message: The Bluebirds appear to be on scouting missions for their spring time digs, so we can be sure that under this heavy blanket of snow and ice, spring and hope are both waiting to show themselves. This is my final message to you as President of this very fine organization. Thank you for allowing me to hold this position for two terms. It has been a rewarding experience, especially the opportunity to work with the many dedicated volunteers that are the engine of this group.

Your board, committee chairs and volunteers have done some outstanding work in the past two years. We've had fascinating speakers, field trips and educational opportunities for children and adults. Our efforts to properly steward the Reist Sanctuary have continued and have grown. We have now re-printed the first edition of Birding New York's Hudson-Mohawk Region. Work has begun on the second edition of Birding New York's Hudson-Mohawk Region, which will be published in conjunction with our hosting the 2005 Federation of New York State Bird Clubs annual meeting. We've answered the questions of beginners, sent equipment over seas and watched state and local government in an effort to protect habitat and designated Important Bird Areas. Our birding endeavors have gotten us looks at the exciting and exotic along with a better understanding of our everyday companions at our backyard feeders. Our newsletter, publications and bird line have kept you informed while press releases regularly go out to keep the public informed of upcoming events and educational opportunities.

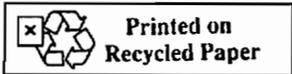
I look forward to continuing to be an HMBC volunteer and hope many of you will join me to make this an even greater organization. I also take this last chance to say it in print, thank you to all the wonderful, hard working volunteers. This is truly an amazing organization!

With hope and wishes for peace, Lynn Huntington

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NIGHTHAWK

by Dick Patrick

You've heard about those old cranks who keep every magazine and newspaper that ever comes into their house? Of course we are not like that, I thought, until I saw my stacks of *ADK*, *Cloudsplitters*, and *Feathers* threatening to topple over on my wife Patsy. I was forklifting each pile down to a reasonable size when the August 2000 issue of *Feathers* flew open to a sentence that stopped me in mid-operation. This sentence was in an article "Doom and Gloom Century Run 2000" by Robert P. Yunick "Common Nighthawk was missed for the fourth consecutive year."

That lone observation had the power to transform me back to a youth growing up in Oneonta. Every night my brothers and I tipped our heads back to enjoy the two birds who always filled our crepuscular (do you like that word?) Oneonta sky - Chimney Swifts and Nighthawks. All the swifts did were twitter overhead in their busy little flocks. But the Nighthawks were endless entertainment. "Look for the white stripe on their wing. You know if they are flying low enough to see the stripe it will rain tomorrow." "Watch that one way up there. He's gonna dive. Listen for the boom!", "Wow!" We were not making life lists. We were watching birds.

I just looked in Kenn Kaufman's *Lives of North American Birds* to see if he knows about "the boom." He does. But he doesn't mention that flying low means rain

We were so entranced by Nighthawks that we did research on the rest of the Goatsuckers (or Nightjars as they have delicately been rechristened). We knew that Poorwills were the only bird to hibernate and Kenn mentions that too. He also states that Poorwills' eyes flash orange in your headlights. That brought back a more recent memory, of driving with Kenn through a Texas night on our way to the Mexican Free-Tail Bat cave and having him point out the orange flashes to us. Another time we learned that the eyes of Pauraques flash a different color.

When we were kids in Oneonta we had never even heard a Whip-poor-will's call. We never dreamed of the opportunity to see a Poorwill. It was just beyond our expectations. Sadly, seeing that first one with Kenn just was not that great an event. It wasn't Kenn's fault. I was grown up and my kid brothers weren't there to share it. Pauraque? Never before heard of the bird. It appeared nowhere in our 1940's library of "birdbooks."

In This Issue....

Spring Preview

GBBC Results are in

New HMBC Officers

Feathers



But we knew something about Goatsuckers that Kenn doesn't know or at least isn't telling us. Chuck-will's-widow when flying turns its eyes backward in its head and looks out through the transparent membrane of its mouth. That is how it catches bugs so easily. I'll bet you didn't know that. If you doubt it just look at Audubon's painting of the bird. You'll see!

Several summers ago we took our son,

Roger, and his future wife, Christy, on a trip through South Dakota. Every night we were treated to the "booming" of Nighthawks over the small prairie towns we visited.

I just received a postcard from Roger announcing the opening of a show of his art. It was an etching of a Nighthawk flying over a mid-western city. It was going to rain there. I could see the white stripe

Spring Preview

by Irene Johnson

This has been a rough winter. By the time February had been torn from the calendar and had been unceremoniously crumpled and thrown into the waste basket, I was ready for some spring, or at the very least, some different scenery. Somewhere that had more color than a dozen shades of grimy gray.

One afternoon, in the midst of this winter's discontent, the phone rang. It was my brother, who lives in northeastern Pennsylvania, in the heart of the "endless mountains". "Come on down", he said! "Come on down and let's do some birding!" and while spring was no closer to setting up house-keeping in the endless mountains than it was here, at least the scenery would be a little different. So, off I went.

I arrive late on a Thursday afternoon. After an evening of getting caught up with what was happening in our lives, we got down to business. Bird business. My brother told me about some of his winter birding adventures around the farms and waterways that abound near his home. He told me of seeing a few

Common Goldeneye and single Hooded Merganser on one of the creeks nearby, and, wonder of wonders, an adult Bald Eagle flying along the Susquehanna River, slowing and circling as it came upon short stretches of open water. My mouth was watering as we made our plans for the morning.

Friday morning found us driving along the Susquehanna, toward the little village of Mehoopany. We turned off onto a farm road, and in a few minutes we were surrounded by fields of corn stubble and winter beaten grass. Scattered here and there, were patches of corn stalks left standing by the farmer, a refuge for the Chickadees and other natives that maintain a winter residence here. They were broken and twisted, but a haven none the less.

The temperature was near 35 degrees as we left the car and stood near the stone wall that girded the field. It felt almost spring-like after the below zero mornings that this winter had imparted back home. We smiled as a flock of Chickadees and Tufted Titmice flitted in and out of a tangled thicket of grape vines that



shrouded the stone wall. Their cheery song was a delight and made me feel spring was not too far beyond the next sunrise.

Suddenly, we saw a flash of white at the edge of an old apple orchard. Through the binoculars, we could identify a Mockingbird as its wings flared against the darker orchard beyond. And then, over near the standing corn, a sleek Ring-necked Pheasant walked into the open stubble, taking short steps and stopping and listening. I had a feeling a Red Fox was just a short distance away, watching and waiting, just like us. Suddenly, the Pheasant lifted, its colors flashing in the morning sun, and its voice raising in alarm. We watched as it disappeared into the next field.

After having spent a long winter confined to birding memories, this was proving to be quite a day. But it wasn't over yet. Standing by the old wall, we saw the usual residents. Crows, Starlings, Cardinals, and others content to make their stand in these old fields and orchards. But the best was left until last.

As we were preparing to drive home, and as we doffed our coats ready to settle back and enjoy the warmth of the car heater, my

brother's jaw dropped. He pointed towards the far end of a grassy field that led away toward the river. There, along a hedge row a large white bird sailed easily along. There was no question what it was. A Snowy Owl! We watched it only for about fifteen seconds, or so, before it veered suddenly and faded away behind a copse of black walnut. I don't think either one of us had taken breath while we held our binoculars on that magnificent creature, and even as it disappeared, we could only smile and shake our heads. What could top that?! The answer came almost immediately. Beyond the far hedge row of the grassy field, a Bald Eagle flew slowly and easily only fifty feet or so over the river. We watched as it went into a glide and dropped closer to the water's surface and vanished along the tree-lined shore.

It had been quite a day. A day that seemed to be given to wipe away the humdrum and dreary days of an old winter. It made me realize that, no matter what, spring was near. And I suppose that even on the most beautiful April morning that was to come, it would not be able to erase the remembrance of that Snowy Owl, and that Bald Eagle that flew into my memory on the day in early March

Bird Walk Leaders Needed at Thacher Park

Here at Thacher Park and Thacher Nature Center we are looking for birders to lead walks on Saturday mornings. Birding is great up here on the Helderberg Escarpment and we have recently been designated as a NYS Bird Conservation Area. We are participating in the BBA survey and developing more programming about birds. We need area birders to help us in these efforts. Please send us interested volunteers.

Thank you,

Nancy Engel
Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center
(518) 872-0800



GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT INITIAL RESULTS ARE IN

50,000 GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT CHECKLISTS SHOW BIRD WHEREABOUTS ACROSS NORTH AMERICA

Bird enthusiasts across North America submitted almost 50,000 checklists totaling more than four million birds during the Great Backyard Bird Count, February 14 through 17, 2003. The event, one of the largest citizen-science projects in the world, documented a regional decline of at least one bird species that may be the result of West Nile virus in those regions.

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), developed and maintained by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, with sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited, asked people across the U.S. and Canada to watch birds in their backyard, local park, or other locale, and to submit their sightings to <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>. The online aspect of the count means birders quickly see how their results complement the continent-wide picture. Now, Cornell and Audubon offer these participants the ability to record sightings throughout the year with the launch of eBird [see article in the February 2003 edition of *Feathers*].

This year's GBBC documented the whereabouts of 512 species, one of which showed declines in some areas compared to previous years. American Crows were reported in alarmingly fewer numbers in Illinois and Ohio, where West Nile virus has had a strong presence. "This decrease may or may not be related to West Nile, but the situation is certainly something we need to pay attention to," says John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Crows seem to be particularly vulnerable to the virus.

Other species showed increases this year.

GBBC participants in the eastern U.S. counted more Dark-eyed Juncos than they had since 2000, perhaps because a massive snowstorm hit the eastern seaboard during the weekend of the count, driving birds to feeders in high numbers. That same snowstorm apparently held early migrants like Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, and American Woodcock farther south, compared to previous years.

In the West, Mountain Bluebirds were reported farther south than last year, and all of the rosy finches (Black, Gray-crowned, Brown-capped) were documented farther north. In previous years, GBBC maps of Eurasian Collared-Dove, a species introduced in the Bahamas before reaching Florida, showed the species spreading quickly northwestward. This year, the maps show no change, suggesting a slow down in the rate at which the bird's range is spreading.

The GBBC was developed to help monitor the abundance and distribution of birds in late winter, helping researchers spot alarming trends before situations become critical. "As we see rapid changes in our environment, like the spread of West Nile virus and shifts in species' ranges, bird monitoring projects such as the Great Backyard Bird Count become increasingly important," says Frank Gill, Audubon's vice president for science. "We hope that the tens of thousands of people who participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count will begin submitting their observations to our latest online monitoring tool, eBird."

eBird (<http://www.birdsource.org/ebird>) lets



birders submit their sightings over the Internet to a vast database anytime, anywhere. They can create their own pull-down menu of their favorite birding locales by plotting their location on a map. They can also choose from the list of birding hot spots already created for each state and province. Their reports are pooled for access in any number of ways. They can look at their own reports for a given location, or on at certain date. They can sort by species. They can even view sightings made by other birders while their own data are made accessible to others. "eBird is a dream come true," says Fitzpatrick. "There's nothing else out there that lets you input your bird sightings and manage them the way you want to, while at the same time making them available to scientists, conservationists, educators-anyone with an Internet connection. I enter my own reports daily - I'm hooked."

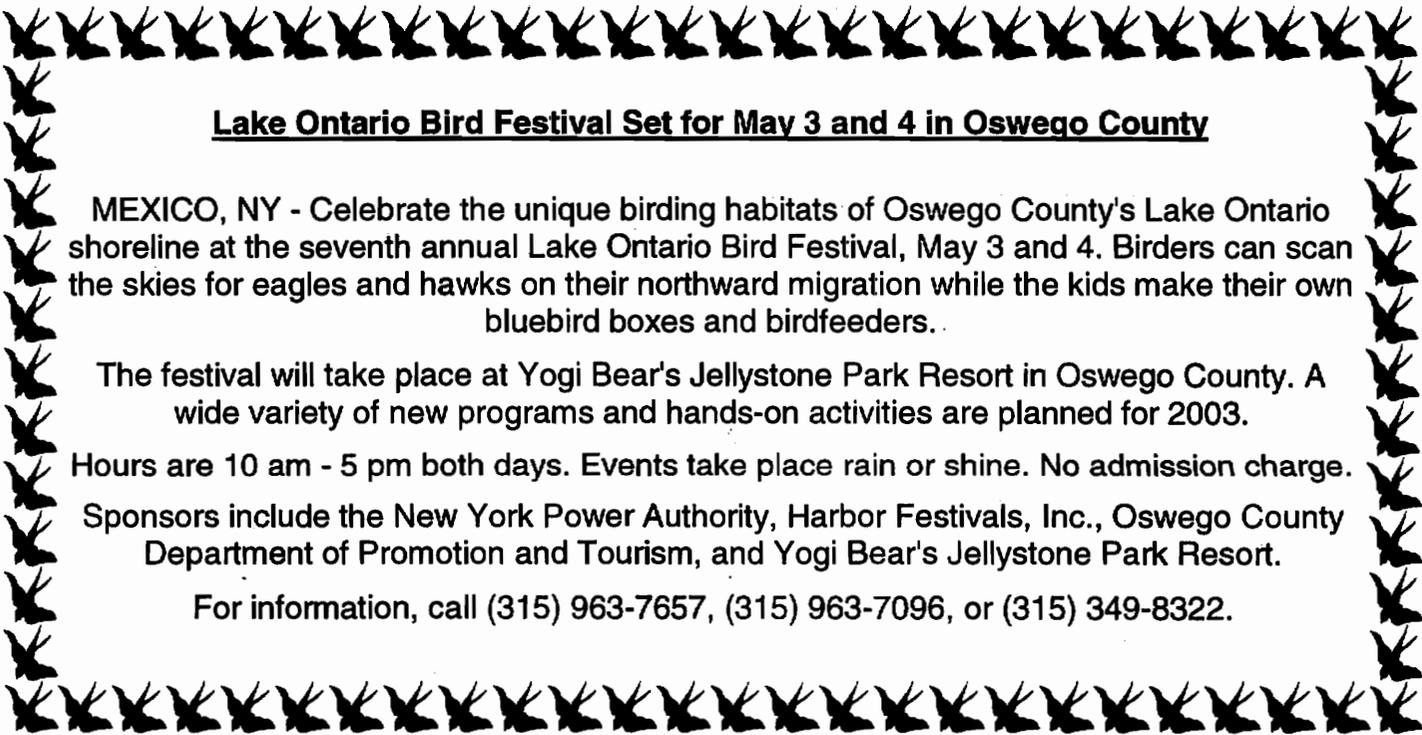
"For years, my bird records have been piling up on shelves, in accessible to anyone but myself. With eBird, those sightings become a

powerful tool for science and conservation," says Gill. He adds that birders can even enter their records dating back years, even decades. "It's a great feeling to get those data off the shelf and into the hands, so to speak, of people that can use them."

Birders are invited to try eBird right away, and to view results of the Great Backyard Bird Count. Top ten lists of all sorts are available at the web site, as are maps of every species reported. Results from previous years are also available.

Next year's Great Backyard Bird Count will take place February 13 - 16, 2004. For more information on the Great Backyard Bird Count and eBird, write the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850, the National Audubon Society Science Office, 545 Almshouse Road, Ivyland, PA, 18974 or visit the web site noted previously.

Source: John Bianchi email , Ithaca, NY - by way of Laura Sommers, April 2, 2003



Lake Ontario Bird Festival Set for May 3 and 4 in Oswego County

MEXICO, NY - Celebrate the unique birding habitats of Oswego County's Lake Ontario shoreline at the seventh annual Lake Ontario Bird Festival, May 3 and 4. Birders can scan the skies for eagles and hawks on their northward migration while the kids make their own bluebird boxes and birdfeeders.

The festival will take place at Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Resort in Oswego County. A wide variety of new programs and hands-on activities are planned for 2003.

Hours are 10 am - 5 pm both days. Events take place rain or shine. No admission charge.

Sponsors include the New York Power Authority, Harbor Festivals, Inc., Oswego County Department of Promotion and Tourism, and Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Resort.

For information, call (315) 963-7657, (315) 963-7096, or (315) 349-8322.



Field Trip Reports

Niagara River Nov. 22 - Nov. 24, 2002

Bill Lee led an adventurous trip to the Niagara River. The group met at the Patterson Rest Area on the NY Thruway at 8:30 AM, November 22. This meant the Dutchess County birders left at 5 AM in the fog. Our first stop was Oswego Bay. Through the rain drops we viewed COMMON and RED-THROATED LOONS, LONG-TAILED DUCKS, MAL-LARDS, COMMON GOLDENEYE, HORNED GREBES, COMMON MERGANSER, GREAT BLUE HERON, and RING-BILLED and HERRING GULLS.

The second stop was at Fair Haven. The skies cleared and the rain stopped. We set off without rain gear in search of the PURPLE SANDPIPERS. The ponds and waterfront area had much to offer: NORTHERN SHOVELERS, CANVASBACKS, RED-THROATED LOONS and BONAPARTE'S GULLS. The skies suddenly opened up and we were soaked. Bill decided he would look on the other breakwater for the PURPLE SANDPIPERS. He soon found himself sitting in the sand at the base of the breakwater. The rocks had become very slippery and Bill had taken the fast way down. Bill had a bruised right hand and knee and a fast swelling left wrist. Did this stop Bill? No, he continued on but the Sandpipers couldn't be found.

Since the weather had changed we decided we would go directly to Niagara Falls, Ontario without any more stops. We arrived at 6 PM in snow and a howling wind. We had great accommodations at The Days Inn Near the Falls. Restaurants were right next door.

Saturday we carpoled and met other birders that had not driven out with us. A few were unable to meet us because of the snow. The weather was now clear and the roads dry.

We birded out to Fort Erie, back to the falls, Whirlpool and Power Plant. We also drove to Niagara on the Lake. I might mention that Bill's wrist was very swollen at this point but never a complaint did he utter.

Sunday we birded Niagara on the Lake and went to the American side to search for the lone CAVE SWALLOW among the ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOWS. No luck. We had nine species of Gulls on the trip - BONAPARTE'S, LITTLE, RING-BILLED, CALIFORNIA, HERRING, ICELAND, LESSER BLACK-BACKED, GREAT BLACK-BACKED, and a BLACK-LEGGED KITTI-WAKE.

A total of fifty-five species were seen on this trip. We counted over thirty RED-TAILED HAWKS as we crossed the state. We had good looks at HORNED and RED-NECKED GREBES, SURF SCOTER, HOODED, COMMON and RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS, GADWALL, AMERICAN WIGEON, HARLEQUIN DUCK, and BUFFLEHEAD to name a few.

A delicious dinner was enjoyed Saturday evening in the Tower's revolving dining room. Bill Lee is now sporting a cast on his left wrist. Bill led a great trip and we hope that more of you can join us on the next trip to Niagara. Everyone should go once. Thanks Bill, you are terrific. Total participants 12.

Carena Pooth, Bill Lee, Binnie Chase

Cape Ann /Plum Island Feb.14 -17,2003

Five intrepid (or foolhardy) birders set out from the Capital District and Hudson Valley for the Boston waterfront and North Shore despite ominous weather forecasts for single digit temperatures above and below zero, strong winds and probable precipitation on



Friday into Saturday with even more precipitation in the form of snow late on Sunday into Monday.

We lucked out on the beginning of the trip, with sunny but very cold conditions, but not with our first targeted bird, a GYRFALCON, which is spending its second winter on South Boston's waterfront. If not for the extreme cold and wind chill, which limited our stay to about an hour and a half, we might have found our bird as it was seen both before and after our brief visit.

On Saturday, we birded Newburyport Harbor, the Parker River NWR and Plum Island and Salisbury Beach State Park. Highlights included GREAT CORMORANT; WILSON'S SNIPE (sitting on a chunk of ice against a bulkhead in Newburyport Harbor looking miserable and, no doubt, wishing it had gone South for the Winter); ICELAND GULL; an adult, and given its small size, male SNOWY OWL fairly close in the Plum Island salt marsh; a CLAY-COLORED SPARROW; and at Salisbury, just feet from the road to the boat launch, a LONG-EARED OWL very visible in the late afternoon sun.

On Sunday, we set out for Cape Ann on an even colder morning with robust Northwest winds. Fortunately, except for our first stop on the northwest side of the Cape in an unsuccessful quest for a drake KING EIDER, we were able to bird the leeward side of the Cape and usually windswept places like Halibut and Andrew's Points were calm and pleasant.

Highlights of the day's birding were HERMIT THRUSH, numerous HARLEQUIN DUCKS, all three SCOTERS, PURPLE SANDPIPER, two BLACK GUILLEMOTS, RED-THROATED LOON, and RED-NECKED GREBE. A visit to the Merrimac River at the Chain Bridge did not produce the BARROW'S GOLDENEYÉ I often see there, but several vocal BALD EAGLES which took flight from the trees above our heads, were a great end to the day.

Monday morning, snow started shortly after 8:00 a.m. and a "white knuckled" drive home over snow packed roads with numerous accidents and "spin-outs", despite much reduced speed limits on the Mass. Pike and Thruway left me feeling as if I had really earned every "good" bird of the weekend.

Bill Lee

Montauk Point/South Shore of Long Island Feb. 21-23, 2003

Canceled, adverse weather.

Bill Lee

Schuylerville to Fort Edward March 2, 2003

Despite a cold steady rain and less-than-perfect visibility, five birders spotted 24 species along the Hudson River from Schuylerville to Fort Edward. The group looped south along scenic West River Road to return to Schuylerville.

Among the highlights were close looks at a ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK perched on a telephone pole, male COMMON GOLDENEYES practicing their courtship head-toss, and eight HORNED LARKS trundling along the edge of the road. Along the Hudson, we spotted at least a hundred MALLARDS, good numbers of BLACK DUCKS, and at least one goldish-hued MALLARD hybrid. On a dirt road north of Schuylerville, three PILEATED WOODPECKERS bounced among the trees around us, calling loudly. Other sights were a GREAT BLUE HERON laboriously flying up the Hudson, COMMON MERGANSERS diving, and large flocks of STARLINGS swarming over the farmlands.

A flock of AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS (?) with one WHITE-THROATED SPARROW among them (?) took advantage of the drippy weather by bathing in the roadside rivulets of rainwater.



Upcoming HMBC Programs

DEER ALERT. Please use caution going to and from the programs this season as there are MANY DEER in the vicinity of Five Rivers and the greater Delmar/Slingerlands area! Many HMBC members have had expensive collisions with these hooved creatures already!

Monday, April 14, 7:00 PM at Five Rivers

HMBC's Literary Night

If you have a favorite published nature poem or prose piece you'd like to share with the group, or if you like to dabble in composition yourself, or if you like to listen, we hope you will join us for this year's Literary Night! We look forward to a great crowd of many of our "regulars," and hope that many new friends will join us this year. You are welcome to bring a dessert to share, if you like, and sit back and enjoy the fun!

Monday, May 5, 7 PM at Five Rivers

***Birding the Dry Tortugas*, Scott and Denise Stoner**

Seventy miles west of Key West lie the seven islands that comprise Dry Tortugas National Park, one of North America's birding hotspots. Accessible only by boat or seaplane, the Dry Tortugas in April or May are a phenomenal birding experience. The sight and sound of 100,000 nesting sooty terns, complemented by magnificent frigatebird, masked booby, and brown and even black noddy, are reason enough to visit these islands. Add in the migrant songbird possibilities that range from good to incredible, and a sunrise over a tropical island, and you end up with a must-visit location! Scott and Denise will share their Dry Tortugas birding adventures and give some logistical tips for visiting one of our newest national parks.

Monday, June 2, 7 PM at Five Rivers

***Colorado Chicken Chase*, Sue Adair**

On April 6, 2002 three birders from the capital district plus one birder from Syracuse set out for the Centennial State. Our goal was to find seven chickens (ptarmigan, grouse and prairie chickens that is) in seven days (not counting travel days of course). We also wanted to see a few other things, like all three species of rosy-finch and any other western birds we could find. We carefully planned a trip for as early in April as we thought all 7 chickens could be found and hoped the rosy-finches would hang on in their winter ranges until we got there. Our travels took us to habitats as varied as the tundra at 11,665 foot Guannella Pass, the southeastern grasslands just a stones throw from Oklahoma, the short and mixed grass prairies of the Pawnee National Grassland, intermountain North Park and the rolling hills of Craig and Hayden. Along the way we saw eastern birds and western birds, northern birds and southwestern birds. To find out if we found all of those chickens and rosy-finches, please join me on June 2 for some scenes, birds, mammals and even a herp and a butterfly from beautiful Colorado.

Thursday Sept. 11 at 7 PM at the Colonie Library.

***Birding Trinidad and Tobago*, Wayne Petersen**

Hold this date for a special joint HMBC/Audubon program

Monday October 6, 7 PM Colonie Library

***Movies on Waterfowl*, Bill Gorman**

Monday November 3, 7 PM, Colonie Library

***Antarctica*, Gerry Lemmo**



Upcoming Audubon Programs

Thurs May 8 7 PM, Five Rivers: Kim Corwin, Atlas Coordinator
Atlas 2000—Breeding Birds of New York

Thurs June 12 7 PM, Five Rivers, Angie Berchielli, wildlife biologist
Cats of New York—Bobcat, Lynx, and Mountain Lion

Program Reports

February Meeting: Spruce Grouse

On February 3, John Ozard, grouse expert for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), gave an most interesting account of "The Decline of Spruce Grouse in the Adirondack Mountains from 1871-2002." John showed us current versus historical distribution and recent decline of this species in New York State. Using anecdotal writings, museum specimens and both published and unpublished scientific literature, John created maps of the range of Spruce Grouse in our State, comparing historic (1871-1874) and recent (1976-2002) eras. John also described work by the DEC research for the NYSDEC in three recent surveys including 2000-2002. The bottom line is that the species is declining; reasons are not that clear, and his recommendation is to see them while they are still there!

March Meeting: Alaska Birds

On March 3, HMBC's own peripatetic birder and noted cinematographer Bill Gorman presented yet another installment of his film series, this time "Alaska Birds." Combining footage from multiple visits to our 49th state, Bill covered many of its birding hotspots. From the Yupik village of Gambell on St. Lawrence Island, the Aleut island of St. Paul (Pribiloff Islands) to Nome, Denali National Park and areas south through the Kenai Peninsula, Bill covered a significant sample of the birding riches of Alaska. His films documented not only the avian diversity of rarities and breeders, but the cultural breadth as well. Of particular interest to those contemplating a trip to Alaska was a sense of the remoteness of some aspects of Alaska birding, in such outposts as St. Paul and especially St. Lawrence Islands. We once again appreciate Bill's movies and accompanying commentary that provides such a unique and informative perspective on a place that most birders either have, or hope to, visit. The large attendance on this cold winter night out at Five Rivers attests to the large following that Bill's movies have attracted over the years, as well as the interest in Alaska birding. We thank Bill for another truly fine program, and look forward to his next one, Waterfowl, appropriately scheduled for next October.

- Scott Stoner, with thanks to the presenters for their write-ups



Upcoming Field Trips

APR 26
SAT

BLACK CREEK MARSH (morning)
Coordinator: Larry Alden

861-6087

Join us for what is arguably the best marsh in the Capital District. We will be searching for American Bittern, Sora, Virginia Rail, Snipe, Wood Duck, Rusty Blackbirds, Bluebirds, Marsh Wren and early spring migrants. Meet at 7:30 AM on Hennessey Road near the RR tracks. From Voorheesville (Route 85A) take Route 156 to a right onto Koonz Road to another right onto Hennessey Road.

NOTE: 1) We will mostly be walking along roadsides; we cannot and will not walk on the railroad tracks. 2) Parking is limited on Hennessey Road and carpooling would be appreciated. The parking lot at the Voorheesville Elementary School (corner routes 85A and 156) across from Smith's Tavern is a convenient place to meet for carpooling. Those able to do so should meet there 15 minutes before the scheduled start time. 3) We may run into wet conditions if we venture into the woods off Meadowdale Road. Appropriate footwear is recommended.

APR 27
SUN

*ROTTERDAM, SCHENECTADY COUNTY--INSTRUCTIONAL TRIP (morning)
Coordinator: Joan Cipriani

374-3729

This early morning trip will visit one or two local spots in Rotterdam and will be geared toward the beginning birder. At this time of year, we will be looking at some of the usual feeder birds and for any early migrants, such as, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow and maybe Rusty Blackbird. Binoculars will be helpful if you have them. Please call the coordinator for meeting time and place.

MAY 3
SAT

ALBANY PINE BUSH PRESERVE (morning)
Coordinators: Donna Zimmerman (HMBC)
Erin Kinal (Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission)

869-6624
785-1800

The Albany Pine Bush represents one of the best remaining examples of an inland pine barrens ecosystem left in the world. Intense efforts by the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission have protected over 2,940 acres of this beautiful ecosystem, best known as home to the Karner Blue butterfly but also a fun place to bird and explore. Join us for our annual spring migration bird count in some of the best pitch pine-scrub oak barrens in the Preserve. Along the way we are likely to see/hear the eastern towhee, prairie and other warblers, field sparrows, and many other bird species either passing through or preparing to nest in the Pine Bush. Meet at 8:00 AM at the Karner Barrens East trailhead located on the east side of Route 155 (between Washington Ave. Extension and the State Employees Federal Credit Union. Beginning birders especially welcome. Joint trip with the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission.

Reservations requested by calling the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission Office, (518) 785-1800.

MAY 4
SUN

CHRISTMAN PRESERVE (morning)
Coordinators: Debbie Ellinger, Philip Johnson

370-5921

Join us for a morning walk through this compact Nature Conservancy property. We will walk the trail through old fields, secondary growth and visit the falls of the Bozenkill looking for migrating warblers and other songbirds. Meet at 7:30 am at the entrance to the Preserve off the Schoharie



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

Turnpike near the border between Albany and Schenectady Counties. From the Intersection of US 20 and SR7 in Duanesburg follow SR 7 west out of the village. Turn left onto Weaver Road and then left again onto Schoharie Turnpike. The parking area for Christman's is 2.6 miles on the right on the edge of an old field and not visible from a distance. The Christman's lot is small, so please try to carpool.

MAY 10
SAT

BIRDS AND BREAKFAST AT FIVE RIVERS (morning)
Coordinators: Denise Hackert-Stoner and Scott (scottjstoner@aol.com) 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. An early group will meet in the parking lot at 6:00 AM; the building will open at 6:45 with coffee flowing, and groups will leave at 7:00 and 8:00. You may join one of these groups, or go out on your own, as we try to find as many species as possible. We'll rally at 10:30 a.m. for coffee, doughnuts, bagels, fresh fruit (approx. \$3.00 donation) and a list compilation.

MAY 11
SUN

VISCHER FERRY MIGRANTS (morning)
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 7:30 a.m. at the Main Entrance (See page 2 for directions.)

MAY 15
THURS

ANN LEE POND (evening)
Coordinators: Philip and Marjorie Whitney 477-9050

This evening walk at the peak of spring migration should produce a variety of transient warblers, vireos, thrushes and flycatchers in addition to many resident species. Meet at 6 PM at the parking area on Route 155, at the North end of the pond near the intersection with Albany Shaker Road (approximately across 155 from Heritage Park stadium).

MAY 17
SAT

CENTURY RUN (all day !)
Compiler: Bob Yunick 377-0146
1527 Myron St.
Schenectady, NY 12309

See how many species you can find in 24 hours in the 11-county Hudson-Mohawk Region. Join a group or form your own and cover all your favorite locations. Each group must stay together and jointly identify species reported. Reports must be mailed to the compiler by May 31 in order to be counted. Also, please call Birdline with the total species and highlights for your group.

MAY 18
SUN

CARTER POND BY BOAT (Canoe or Kayak) (Afternoon)
Coordinators: Scott and Denise Stoner (scottjstoner@aol.com) 785-6760;

Recover from Century Run with a leisurely afternoon paddle in the marshes of Carter Pond, an



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

Important Bird Area in Washington County. As we explore the pond and its south and more extensive north marshes, we'll look for migrant and breeding waterfowl, herons, passerines and rails. Rental boats are not available at this location; all participants must bring their own equipment including a PFD for every person in their boat. Call the Coordinators for starting time, reservations and directions.

MAY 19
MON

VISCHER FERRY (Evening)
Coordinator: John Hershey

371-3114

This month is arguably the most exciting time of the year at Vischer Ferry because of the great diversity and abundance of migrant and early, nesting songbirds. We will search for a variety of flycatchers, thrushes, vireos, warblers, and such favorites as Baltimore Oriole, Rose-Breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, and Indigo Bunting. In addition, we will be listening and looking for marsh birds including rails and bitterns. Meet at the Main Entrance parking lot at 6:00 PM

MAY 24
SAT

MILL CREEK MARSH (SWYER PRESERVE) AND PAPSCANEE ISLAND (Morning)
Coordinators: Philip and Marjorie Whitney

477-9050

We will start with an early morning walk on the half-mile boardwalk through the Nature Conservancy's Swyer preserve at Mill Creek Marsh, a freshwater tidal swamp. This unusual habitat hosts many resident wetland and forest species, and a variety of spring migrants should still be present. Likely species include Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Spotted Sandpiper, Swamp Sparrow, and Great Blue Heron. Possibles include Bald Eagle, Common Moorhen, Marsh Wren, Virginia Rail, both Cuckoos, and both Waterthrushes. We will then proceed to Papsweeney Island, annual home of numerous American Redstarts, as well as Chestnut-sided Warbler, Veery, and Wood Thrush. Schodack Island State Park may be substituted for Papsweeney if the legendary Cerulean Warblers are present. Meet at 7.00 AM at the K-Mart parking lot in East Greenbush, on the right (south) side of routes 9 and 20 about 1.7 miles east of the Dunn Memorial Bridge.

MAY 25
SUN

GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM (morning)
Coordinator: George Steele

842-9305

We will explore this attractive location with its varied habitats and blooming trees, for late migrant and resident songbirds including chestnut-sided and blue-winged warblers, Eastern bluebird, rose-breasted grosbeak, Baltimore oriole and scarlet tanager. From I-88 (or Duanesburg) take US 20 west to the village of Esperance and follow the signs to the arboretum. Meet in the first (lower) parking lot on the left side of the road, by the kiosk, at 7:00 AM.

JUNE 3
TUE

REIST SANCTUARY (evening)
**Coordinators: Donna Zimmerman
Carl George**

869-6624

This field trip is designed to further build the bird list for the Reist Sanctuary. The Sanctuary is the Club's crown jewel, however, we still know its avifauna poorly. We ask that as many come forth for this event as possible, especially those still able to hear the high frequencies and those with the visual skill to pick up the elusive. Meet at 6:00PM at the Morgan Ave. entrance to the Sanctuary, off St. David's Ln in Niskayuna.



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

JUNE 5
THURS

HUDSON RIVER - BIRDS AND BOATS I (evening)
Coordinator: Al Mapes

439-4086

Bring your canoe or kayak for an evening of birding by boat on the Hudson River. We will launch at 6:00 PM on the river south of Albany, exploring quiet bays and side channels and marshes. Bald Eagle is commonly seen in this area, along with Great Blue Heron and waterfowl. Songbirds, woodpeckers and others should be heard and seen along the forested shores. PFD's must be worn; bring an extra paddle and a flashlight for safety. This is an easy paddle, but it is not for rank beginners. Call the coordinator to register and for directions to put-in.

JUNE TBA
SAT— SUN

BEAR MOUNTAIN/STERLING FOREST
Coordinator: Bill Lee
Reservations: Call for details by March 31

374-3426

Southern warblers should highlight this trip. Cerulean, Kentucky and Hooded have all been found in past years, along with other specialties such as White-eyed Vireo, Black Vulture and Common Raven.

Detailed arrangements for this trip were not available when the schedule went to press. Call the coordinator for details.

JUNE 8
SUN

DEER MOUNTAIN SANCTUARY (morning)
Coordinator: Rich Guthrie

756-9094

Deer Mountain Nature Trail is a protected wetland on the Blue Circle Cement Co. property in Coeymans. The trail is an easy walk along the edge of a swamp. Orioles, tanagers and a variety of vireo and warbler species nest here and Worm-eating Warbler is a possibility. Meet at Ravena — Coeymans — Selkirk HS on Rt 9W at 7:00 AM.

JUNE 14
SAT

ADIRONDACK VISITOR CENTER AT NEWCOMB (full day)
Coordinator: Donna Zimmerman

869-6624

This day trip will begin with an early morning exploration of the trails at the center to look for resident bird species. We will be looking for breeding migrants as well as year-round residents. Possible species include: Boreal Chickadee, Blackburnian, Nashville, Northern Parula, Black & White, Bay-breasted, Chestnut-sided, Canada & Mourning Warblers & Blue-headed Vireo. After lunch, one of the center's staff will present a raptor program with live birds of prey. Limit 10 people. Contact the coordinator for meeting time & place.

JUNE 15
SUN

WILTON WILDLIFE PRESERVE (morning)
Coordinator: Barb Putnam

792-7542

Come check out this new preserve in the town of Wilton, Saratoga County. We will take a leisurely walk through this relatively flat area looking & listening for signs of bird activity. To find the Wilton Preserve Nature Trail, leave the Adirondack Northway (I-87) at exit 15. Travel away from the city of Saratoga & towards Gansevoort-northeast on SR 50 past the shopping area. There will be a small parking lot & a fairly large Wilton Preserve sign on your left about 4 or 4.5 miles from I-87. Meet in the parking lot at 7:30 am.



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

JUNE 22
SUN

SCHODACK (CASTLETON) ISLAND STATE PARK (morning)
Coordinator: Gary Goodness

862-9260

Schodack Island is the only reliable location in the Capital Region for breeding Cerulean Warblers. Several other breeding species including Bald Eagles, Great Blue Heron, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Carolina Wren should be found on this trip. Contact the coordinator for meeting time and place.

Birding Research Request

A request from the shorebird management listserv

Dear Shorebird Managers,

I coordinate the Shorebird Sister Schools Program (SSSP). This program links students, education, biologists, and shorebird enthusiasts along flyways tracking shorebird migration. The idea is for the participants to become more aware, knowledgeable, and engaged in conservation of shorebirds and habitats in their local communities.

We need your help!!! To fully engage participants along flyways, we would like to have postings from across the country about shorebird observations. This could include observations of shorebird departures, arrival, breeding, nesting, including the habitat they are using, other species seen (animals and plants) etc. We would also be grateful for any postings regarding observations and/or results from research or monitoring projects. Observations are posted on our web page at <http://sssp.fws.gov> click on shorebird update.

Please pass this message to local birding enthusiasts who might be interested in sending their observations. Your observations are highly valuable to this program.

Send postings to: sssp@fws.gov or hilary_chapman@fws.gov

Thank you for your time and hope to hear from you!!!

Hilary Chapman
Shorebird Sister Schools Program Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Conservation Training Center
Division of Education Outreach

Route 1, Box 166, Shepherd Grade Rd.
Sherpherdstown, WV 25443-9713
hilary_chapman@fws.gov
304-876-7783 phone
304-876-7231 fax

Forwarded by Laura Sommers



HMBC BOARD FOR 2003-2004

Officers

Note our new officers for 2003 - 2004

President:

Dan Welch
329 N. Schodack Rd
East Greenbush, NY 12061
477-2980

Vice-President:

Gregg Recer
23 Scotch Mist Way
Malta, NY 12020
899-2678

Secretary:

David Martin
134 Normanskill Rd.
Slingerlands, NY 12159
765-4982

Treasurer:

Dale Samuelson
Box 579.
Guilderland, NY 12084
355-0818

Directors

Linda Parr	478-9219
Ellen Pemrick	452-4384
Beverly Relyea	brelyea@nrla.org
Scott Stoner	785-6760
Donna Zimmerman	482-8901

Committee Chairs

Conservation:	Patti Packer	399-4843
Birdline:	John Saville	399-5959
Programs:	Scott Stoner	785-6760
Field Trips:	Gregg Recer	899-2678
Membership:	Daniel Ruge	449-1087
Publicity:	Ann B'Rells	355-5615
Publications:	Bob Miller	274-2670
Records:	(vacant)	
Sanctuary:	Carl George	393-0629
Social:	Denise Hackert-Stoner	785-6760
Jr. Activities:	Deb Smith	399-9007



HMBC Contact Information

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

Email: contact@hmbc.net

HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

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, usually on the second Monday of odd-numbered months.

Next Board meeting:
May 12th, Monday @ Five Rivers

Organizational News

Congratulations to our new officers:

Dan Welch — President

Dale Samuelson — Treasurer

and new directors:

Beverly Relyea and **Ellen Pemrick**

and two new committee chairs:

Patti Packer — Conservation

Bob Miller — Publications

and **MANY THANKS** to our past-president

Lynn Huntington for a job **WELL DONE**

Newsletter Submissions

Please send all **electronic** submissions **via e-mail** to:
Bob Miller at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net

Send **hand-written** submissions to:

Bob Miller
1994 15th St.
Troy, NY 12180

All **typed** submissions should be sent to:

Cathy Graichen
23 Scotch Mist Way
Malta NY 12020

Feathers



Dear Fellow Members.

Having had the pleasure of serving as an officer of our fine organization under a number of presidents it is my observation that leadership at this level is not about trailblazing. "making your own mark" or reinventing the system. Rather it is about continuity. It's taking the best ideas, efforts and directions of one's predecessor and trying to extend them just a little bit further.

With that in mind I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to Lynn Huntington for the outstanding job she did serving as our president for the last two years. Under her direction we have achieved some very laudable goals. Two that are worthy of special note are work on the Retst Sanctuary and the revitalization of several long dormant committees.

Our renewed attention to the beautiful piece of property that we own in Niskayuna began with a survey completed during the term of Lynn's predecessor, Gregg Recer, but it fell to Lynn to continue the work of clarifying our borders, our relations with neighbors and our future directions. She performed that work admirably and capped the achievement by bringing the energetic and enthusiastic Carl George on as chair of the committee to oversee the sanctuary.

Lynn was equally persuasive in enlisting fine folks like Deb Smith and Patty Packer to take on new expanded roles in the Junior Activity and Conservation committee. You can feel that energy at board meetings and monthly club meetings.

Thank you, Lynn, for all your hard work. Thank you for your energy and your patience. Thank you also for leaving the club in such a happy, healthy and prosperous condition. Your successors only hope that they can extend what you have done just a little bit further.

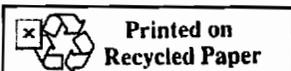
Sincerely, Dan Welch

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

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HMBC 2002 Annual Business Meeting

ABA's conservation chief speaks to disconnect of birders and bird conservation

By Scott Stoner

At the HMBC's Annual Meeting on April 8, we were most fortunate to have Paul J. Baicich as our keynote speaker. Paul is Director of Conservation and Public Policy for the American Birding Association (ABA). He presented a thought-provoking talk on "The Future of Birding and Birds." In this he covered four topics: a) viewing historic trends; b) four avian crises; c) where we are today; and d) where we can go.

Historic trends and missed opportunities were discussed in terms of paths taken by figures in history, from ancient explorers to Rosa Parks (i.e. what would have happened if she had gone to the back of the bus). Next, a century of bird crises were discussed focused on four major events. Within each, Paul described the progression from horror to public outrage to citizen's organization, government response, to institutionalization. These are both illustrative and educational and worth repeating, in chronological order:

- 1) Plume and market hunters.
- 2) Duck decline and prairie pothole emergency (led to waterfowl protection of the 1930's)
- 3) Post-war DDT era (Silent spring, etc.; lead to bans on pesticides)
- 4) Neotropical migrant crisis.

This last one has no easy solution...Is it a northern problem or a southern problem? What do we do about it?

Each crisis was described as more complex than its predecessor.

Where are we today? Paul presented some impressive figures about the numbers of birders, and monetary expenditures on wildlife watching. However, there is a serious disconnect between commitment (avidity) to birding and a commitment to conservation. The first half of the 20th century in its history of conservation had an inclusive culture. Why the current disconnect? Paul offers that bird enthusiasts have not yet been socialized to the value of connecting the enjoyment of birds with the preservation of birds. Where we go tomorrow we choose today. What do we have before us? A crisis in bird life, a growing interest in birds, a disconnect, and a challenge.

Paul offered a few hints:

- The partners in flight MODEL is crucial for conservation

In This Issue....

Annual Meeting Highlights

Bird Poetry by HMBC Members

*Upcoming Field Trips
and Programs*

Field Trip and Program Reports



- Use public events to reach people and focus on festivals (note - Five Rivers' fall festival is Sept. 13)
- Address our cultural impoverishment
- Focus on the state wildlife agencies
- Mix recreation with conservation
- Stick to birds
- Always reach for new people

- Be an internationalist.

Author's note: This talk prompted some deep discussion among several prior club leaders. As I see it and have often heard, no bird habitat, no birds, no birding, no birders. The future not only of birds but of our avid hobby (obsession?) is in our hands...contact your conservation chair Patti Packer if you want to get involved in the Club's conservation efforts.

HMBC 2002 Annual Business Meeting Annual Meeting Survey *By Denise Hackert-Stoner*

In an effort to gage the response to the quality of the Annual Meeting, dinner and speaker event, Scott and Denise put together a survey sheet to be filled out by participants. We appreciate the time and effort taken to complete these surveys. We received 26 completed surveys, and the results are as follows:

1. I enjoy the social preceding dinner and would like it to continue in future years:
Agree, 26 Disagree, 0
2. Recognizing all we need to cover during the evening, is the 6:00 start time for the dinner:
Too early, 0 Just Right, 24 Too late, 1 Undecided, 1
3. I found the quality of tonight's dinner to be:
Excellent, 1 Very good, 2 Good, 11 Fair, 10 Poor, 2
4. I would be willing to pay more to have the event held in a fancier place with more gourmet food.
Agree, 7 Disagree, 17 Undecided, 2
5. I would rather pay less and have a simpler (buffet) meal.
Agree, 8 Disagree, 15 Undecided, 3
6. The content and length of the business meeting were just about right.
Agree, 20 Disagree, 6
7. The quality of tonight's program was:
Excellent, 15 Good, 8 Fair, 1 Undecided, 2
8. From where I sat, I was able to hear and see both the business meeting and the program.
Agree, 26 Disagree, 0
9. I would prefer to have this event held on a weekend.
Agree, 0 Disagree, 25 Undecided, 1

Again, thanks to all who participated in the survey. The Social and Program Committees will take them into account when planning future events.



HMBC 2002 Annual Business Meeting Sam Madison Award

By Scott Stoner

At its 2003 Annual Meeting, the HMBC presented its second annual Sam Madison Award to educator Deb Smith. Scott Stoner presented the award plaque and \$250.00 check on behalf of committee chair Bob Budliger and committee member Bill Lee. As Bob Budliger described in *Feathers* in December 2001, "The Sam Madison Award was established to encourage and enhance the education of students and teachers about birds, bird habitats, and bird conservation" Bob also wrote, "The HMBC has established the Sam Madison award to honor the man who led and advised the Club through much of its history. He served as President, was Nominating Committee chair for as long as anyone can remember, and led field trips to a variety of places. Sam's Delmarva Peninsula trip was legendary...Perhaps Sam's signal accomplishment was his role in acquiring our Reist sanctuary..."

Last year the recipient of the first Sam Madison Award was the Five Rivers Environmental Education Center. This year's winner, Deb Smith has been a middle school teacher for 29 years, and at the Gowana Middle School in the Shenendehowa Central School District for 14 years. For 10 years, she has been the advisor to Gowana's Recycling/Environment Club. This club started a very successful program to recycle the school's paper. Students have been involved in various other environmental activities. In 2002, the Recycling Club was awarded first prize in the NY State Senate's "I am a green nation" competition for their video, "Once is not enough."

Deb is currently in the seventh year of participation in Cornell's Classroom Feeder Watch and has encouraged the other seventh grade science teacher at Gowana to join in the study. Through this program, the study of birds is integrated into the seventh grade science curriculum. Students learn to identify the feeder birds and collect data

about the birds visiting the feeder. This data is sent to Cornell via the Internet. The study of birds is also integrated into other disciplines such as art and creative writing. Several students have had their work published in Cornell's "BirdScope" magazine.

Deb has put together a "bird bag" that is available for any student to take home. This backpack contains binoculars, a field guide, and a journal in which to record observations. Many students are inspired to continue the study of birds and nature outside of school, and some have adopted bird watching as a lifetime hobby.

Since hanging a few bird feeders had generated so much student interest, she began to dream of having an Outdoor Classroom in the school's courtyard, and in 1999, began to apply for grants for this project. She received six grants, including one of the eight US EPA grants given in the state that year. Funds raised totaled \$20,000.

Construction of the Outdoor classroom began in 2000. In the school's courtyard, about the size of a football field, this classroom now includes a 16 x 20 foot pond, bird and butterfly gardens, a garden shed to house tools, composting bins (for waste from the school cafeteria kitchen), weather station, sundial, bird houses and bird feeding stations, heated bird bath, benches that convert to tables for student work, and a greenhouse.

In 2002, the Gowana Courtyard earned certification as a National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitat.

Deb recently took on duties as HMBC Junior Activities Committee Chair. She presented a beginning birding workshop at Five Rivers last fall and organized a Youth Team for the 2003 World Series of Birding that took place in New Jersey on May 10.



BIRD STUDY AT CRYSTAL GROVE

by Cecily Myers

On Saturday May 17, seven Boy Scouts, aged 11 to 15, from two troops earned their Merit Badges in Bird Study. The event was held at Crystal Grove Diamond Mine and Campground, near St. Johnsville. My husband and I own the campground. I am an approved merit badge counselor for the Twin Rivers Council and the western-most member of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club.

Before arriving at Crystal Grove, the boys had some studying to do. They had to be able to explain why bird study is important and how birds are indicators of environmental quality. They had to be able to label 15 parts of a bird and 6 different types of feathers. They had to learn basic binocular care and use and how to use a field guide. Most importantly, they had to learn to identify 20 birds by sight and 5 of these also by sound.

The day started at 7:30 with some instruction on how to find a bird in a forest, followed by a walk around the campground. The weather was cold and windy, and a number of expected birds were not active, but the group saw Least Flycatcher, Downy Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Belted Kingfisher, Robin, and Red-eyed Vireo. There were good looks at Black-capped Chickadee, American Crow, Starling, and a pair of very cooperative Baltimore Orioles. Heard but not seen were Black-throated Green Warbler, Blue Jay, and Red-winged Blackbird. After the walk, the boys spent some time demonstrating their command of the requirements and building bird feeders,

which were hung around the campground. Birds that came to the feeders included Brown-headed Cowbird, Chipping Sparrow, Mourning Dove, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Purple Finch, and lots of Goldfinches and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

The day ended with another walk, during which Broad-winged Hawk, Turkey Vulture, and Black-and-white Warbler were added to the list. A highlight of the walk was an Ovenbird hanging out near a campsite. It walked around in full view not 20 feet from a large group of people staring at it and thumbing frantically through their field guides. It also obliged with a song. Next year, the Ovenbird will definitely be on the list to learn by sight and sound.

This first time seemed to go well, and I hope to make Birding Day an annual event. If you know of any Boy Scouts who would be interested for next year, I can be reached at 1-800-579-3426. The Twin Rivers Council will also have the information, which will be made available to the various troops. The boys have to buy or borrow a field guide and binocular, but otherwise there is no cost to them. Hopefully some kids will stick with it, and we will see more junior birders at meetings and field trips.





Annual Literary Contributions

GEESE

By
Jean Parker Katz

In ranks of V's the geese are massed
For autumn days are waning fast;
They honk and shift as they fly past,
Out front awhile, then slip to last.

I think I've see the last goose go;
Now winter winds will bring the snow,
And ice will still the river's flow --
The geese have gone; that's how I know.

Our Owl List

By
A Palmer

Saw the Horned, Short-eared, and the Barred.
The Ferruginous Owl, Sure was hard.
Found the Spotted in Sheelite;
"Flashed" the Balsas, one night,
And in my Dreams, I've seen Barn Owls – in my
yard!

Also, the Snowy, Long-eared, and Saw Whet;
But the Boreal – we haven't seen yet!
We have three species of Screech;
The Colima, and Elf – one of each!
The Flamulated and Great Gray – we've not met!

Saw the Burrowing, and Mottled, and Hawk.
At the Spectacled Owl – we just gawked!
We've almost seen twenty-two,
If we count, "three missed ones" too!
And for those – we would both – take a walk!

We've enjoyed, 'ticking off', each new Owl.
Every sighting – still gives us – a howl!
Our fervent wish, is to say,
'See a Lifer' – each day.
And keep listing, till we throw in the towel.

Bird Limericks

By
A Palmer

The Ibis has a uniquely curved bill;
Which seems to serve him no purpose – until,
He digs deep in the Swamp
Finding food – which he chomps!
And with Head bobbing – he eats, till he's filled.

A cute backyard bird, is the Junco.
He will come every year with the first snow!
Eating black oil seed,
And on thistle – he'll feed;
Till it's time to move on – then they'll all go!

Don't be fooled by the broken winged game;
As he puts on an act – like he's lame!
When he sings you will hear,
Each distinctive – Kill-deer!
Then you'll know how this Bird got his name!

A strange sound is produced by the Loon,
As he sings in the light of the Moon.
He wouldn't be sad and alone,
With a Mate of his own!
So he warbles this weird lonely tune.

The Mockingbird is Known as a Mimic!
A variety of songs – that's his gimmick.
Original – he's not!
His own song? He ain't got!
For his song expertise is this Limerick!

The Nuthatch is white-breasted or Red.
He's a schemer – always planning ahead!
He hides food in the bark,
Of my trees – until dark!
So I know this clever bird will be fed!



A TALE OF A TAIL

by Robert P. Yunick

On November 15, 2001 Tom Palmer and I were raptor trapping in the area east of Ft. Edward south of Rt 197 when we captured a Red-tailed Hawk on Plum Road. The bird was first spotted in a large tree in the yard of the red-brick farm house on Plum just north of CR 46 and came to a bal-chatri trap baited with a mouse set along the roadside.

By pre-arrangement, Bill Lee's Thursday birding group rendezvoused there with us and had the rare opportunity to admire the beauty of a Red-tail in the hand. The bird's 408-mm wing chord and 1480-g weight (3.25 lbs) made it one of the larger Red-tails I have handled, and indicated it was a female. The bird was released after I recorded various measurements, and then both it and we were on our respective ways.

Little could I imagine the further fate of this bird, and that it was destined for an even greater public appearance before a kindergarten class.

Fast forward to February 16, 2003 when notification came from the Bird Banding Laboratory in Laurel, MD that the bird had been caught due to an injury on January 26, 2003 and was alive in captivity. A call to Cara Huffman, who reported the band to the BBL, revealed that she was a wildlife rehabilitator with the bird in her care, having received it from Jim and Melinda Durrler who live on Rt 197 near Plum Road.

The Durrlers were cross country skiing on January 26, Super Bowl Sunday, on their property south of Rt 197 when they came upon this Red-tail unable to fly lying on the

snow. Jim took off a hooded sweat shirt, wrapped the bird in it and took it home, contacting North Country Wild Care with which Cara is associated. Cara diagnosed the bird, by now known as "Raiderette" for the team of fame that day, with second-degree emaciation and elevated white blood count, unable to stand on her own feet. The diagnosis on the Raiders is still pending.

Cara is a raptor specialist at NCWC, a network of wildlife rehabbers centered at Diamond Point on Lake George. She and two of her associates took turns tube feeding Raiderette every two hours, 12 hours a day for about a week, eventually putting her back on a rodent diet, and providing needed flight exercise in their aviary.

Raiderette's release back to the wild was scheduled for April 8 on Plum Road, but had to be rescheduled due to yet another storm from a winter that would not give up, and a winter which no doubt due to its severity in early snow depth and cold caused Raiderette's near demise due to a lack of food. April 15 at noon became the new day and time.

Tom Palmer, Roger Miller and I spent the morning of the 15th raptor trapping in the Ft. Edward area along the quiet, lonely roads of that pastoral countryside where many HMBC birders seek similar solace. But lonely it was not when just before noon we arrived at this usually inauspicious knoll on Plum Road for the release.

Melinda Durrler had taken the opportunity of Raiderette's rescue from certain death to



teach her South Glens Falls kindergarten class something about raptors (heavy stuff for five-year-olds, but they met the challenge; while some adults still don't know it), and the class complete with their bus and more than a dozen other vehicles were there causing quite a traffic jam on Plum Road.

The Town Supervisor who owns a farm within view of where we stood introduced herself and expressed thanks for this event. There were numerous other adults with reporter's pads and others with cameras to record the event. The youngsters came complete with a long paper banner depicting in their drawings and writings what they had learned about birds of prey. Proudly they stood behind it for pictures.

Cara took Raiderette out of her carrying crate and spoke to the kids who were thrilled to see her finally in the hand as a real live bird. Raiderette now weighed 1392g, almost back to her 1480g when I banded her and much improved over her weight of only 1063g when found January 26th (a 28-percent loss from her weight at banding). Cara gave me Raiderette to again check her plumage for changes from what I had noted when I had banded her.

It seemed ironic to me that here we stood a week after Raiderette's snow-delayed release, experiencing 80-degree heat, bright sun and a stiff SW wind sending late migrating raptors streaming northward. Only a few hundred yards to our south was visible the tree at the farm house from which Raiderette came, and in view less than a half mile to our west stood the Durlers' woodlot where she had been found. Into that SW wind I

launched her back to the wild at 1218 as she ably employed her restored power of flight, thanks to the caring people who found her and those who so capably treated her. The kids cheered.

If you are interested in supporting the efforts of the 13 dedicated women who make up the North Country Wild Care network, you may contact them at northcountrywildcare.org or at 848 Coolidge Hill Rd., Diamond Point, NY 12824, phone 518-644-5798 (they are a 501 (c)3 non-profit). Their information/membership brochure lists the 13 rehabbers with telephone numbers and some intriguing e-mail addresses, e.g., bustercharlie, rpthr (for raptor rehabilitator), pink1, wanderlst (with a license plate reading the same) and nypossum. Sounds like an interesting bunch of people doing good work and deserving of support.

Dedication: while writing this I learned of the death of Rudd Stone in Agawam, MA at age 85, one of the 1939 founding members of the Schenectady Bird Club, the predecessor to HMBC. I grew up in Schenectady around the corner from where Rudd lived and it was he as a bander who in 1949 sparked my interest in bird banding – I banded my first bird, a European Starling, in my yard on January 20, 1950. Rudd was an ardent conservationist well ahead of his time. Had he lived to hear it, he would have thoroughly approved of the work of the folks at NCWC and the care they gave not only Raiderette, but all the other injured or orphaned wildlife entrusted to them.



Field Trip Reports

Waterfowl of the Hudson River (Greene Co.) March 23, 2003

GLOSSY IBIS! It was a life bird for some of the 23 participants and new for both my Greene County list and Region 8 list. After meeting at the Coxsackie boat launch, Rich Guthrie led us to the field on the Coxsackie flats where the bird had been discovered. The bird had been reported on the hot line and it was good fortune for our group that Rich had checked the hot line that morning before joining the rest of the group. The single RUDDY DUCK sleeping at the edge of the bay north of the Coxsackie boat launch, discovered by Will Yandik was a life bird for Erin Willsey. Nine other species of water fowl were observed including AMERICAN WIGEON, RING-NECKED DUCK, COMMON GOLDENEYE and HOODED MERGANSER.

5 BALD EAGLES were seen but we couldn't find the PEREGRINE FALCON on the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. We did have a nice view of a migrating NORTHERN HARRIER gliding just over our heads. Other highlights included the EASTERN SCREECH-OWL sleeping in a wood duck box on Four Mile Point Road, FISH CROW and RUSTY BLACKBIRD. Last year Mark Silo remarked that the "leader was stingy" but this year We had much better luck with a list of about 36 species...and Robert Ramonowski enjoyed seeing a RING-BILLED GULL in his new scope.

Number of Species Observed: 36

GREAT BLUE HERON, GLOSSY IBIS, TURKEY VULTURE, CANADA GOOSE, MUTE SWAN, WOOD DUCK, AMERICAN WIGEON, MALLARD, RING-NECKED DUCK, COMMON GOLDENEYE, HOODED MERGANSER, COMMON MERGANSER, RUDDY DUCK, BALD EAGLE, NORTHERN HARRIER, RED-TAILED HAWK, RING-BILLED GULL, HERRING GULL, GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL, ROCK DOVE, EASTERN SCREECH-OWL, RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, AMERICAN CROW, FISH CROW, TREE SWALLOW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, AMERICAN ROBIN, NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD, EUROPEAN STARLING, AMERICAN TREE SPARROW, WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, NORTHERN CARDINAL, RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD, RUSTY BLACKBIRD, COMMON GRACKLE, HOUSE FINCH.

Trip Participants:

Will Yandik, Rich Guthrie, Jocelyn Cole-Calkins, Erin Willsey, Donna Zimmerman, Bill & Edna Gorman, Jeanne M. Jubic, Bill Pfeiffer, Sheila Daniels, John Daniels, Bob Miller, Jo Schultz, Jennifer Hamilton, Debbie Hager-Barber, Ayla Maya Marber, Joan Cipriani, Lin Fagen, Mark Silo, Tom Phillips, Robert Ramonowski.

- Bill Cook

Rhode Island Coast March 28 – 29, 2003

Nine HMBC members spent the weekend scouring the Rhode Island coast for wintering species and early migrant waterfowl and seabirds on this weekend trip. Saturday morning was spent at Sachuest National Wildlife Refuge. Although the weather looked threatening, we mostly had to contend with a strong wind and temperatures just above freezing. The birds at Sachuest were largely the expected wintering ducks and seabirds, including many HARLEQUIN DUCKS, all three SCOTERS and COMMON EIDER. We had RED-THROATED and COMMON LOONS, and a number of GREAT CORMORANTS. PURPLE SANDPIPERS were very abundant on many of the rock islands just offshore, including ones that were quite close in, giving us great scope views. Another highlight at Sachuest were NORTHERN GANNETS flying fairly close offshore. We made several short stops after Sachuest, finding the expected mix of ducks, gulls, HORNED GREBE and a few early shorebirds (SANDERLING, RUDDY TURNSTONE, DUNLIN, KILLDEER). Unfortunately, COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULLS were a no-show at Watchemocket Cove, where they had been regular most of the winter. At the end of the day, at Turner Reservoir in East Providence, a fairly-distant second-year white-winged gull gave the trip it's most lively birding highlight. The bird was scrutinized for a long time in several scopes, trying to determine whether the bird was a GLAUCOUS or ICELAND GULL. Opinions varied on size and head-profile shape, depending on angle or what other gulls perched nearby. The eventual consensus settled on GLAUCOUS, although the bird did not entirely fit the typical set of field marks for



Field Trip Reports (continued)

either species.

Sunday morning brought steady, cold rain and several participants headed home early. The remaining intrepid birders spent a few hours mostly car birding on the west side of Narragansett Bay. We found a few new species, including SNOWY EGRET and GREAT BLUE HERON, but were unable to turn up any more white-winged gulls at Gallilee. We headed home early on Sunday, having totaled 64 species on a rain-shortened March weekend, with almost no land birds to speak of.

- Gregg Recer
- Cathy Graichen

Schenectady and Rotterdam April 27, 2003

After the rain on Saturday, 8 of us had a beautiful day for birding in Schenectady where we tallied 50+ species. We started out at the Rotterdam Square Mall where we met and had NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD, RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD, SONG SPARROW and AMERICAN GOLDFINCH.

We then headed for the Rotterdam Great Flat Trails. Here there were a couple of areas that were pretty wet and one bridge that was impassable without knee high boots. Although we had no warblers, highlights included CAROLINA WREN, RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, WOOD DUCK, a nesting CANADA GOOSE and BELTED KINGFISHER. Overhead, we sighted flying DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT, NORTHERN HARRIER, RED-TAILED and SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS, TURKEY VULTURE, and BARN, NORTHERN ROUGH-WING and TREE SWALLOWS.

Next stop was the Schenectady Bike Path near Lock 8. As we entered we heard the singing of a HOUSE WREN and soon had great views as it perched in a tree by the path. We were then treated to views of an OSPREY flying overhead, a COMMON MERGANSER in flight as well as both SHARP-SHINNED and COOPER'S HAWKS. One of our group also spotted a COMMON RAVEN. In all, it was a good birding day.

- Joan Cipriani

Pine Bush Preserve May 3, 2003

Twenty-five birders, including several on their first HMBC field trip, turned out at the Pine Bush parking area along Rt.155 at 8am on Sat., May 3rd. Erin Kinal of the Pine Bush Preserve Commission & Donna Zimmerman of HMBC were the coordinators. The weather was a little cool, but the bright sunshine was a welcome sight after the long winter we'd just been through. A singing CHIPPING SPARROW at the top of a small tree greeted us at the entrance to the trail. As we entered the woods, we began to hear BLUE JAYS, AMERICAN ROBINS, RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS, an OVENBIRD and an occasional RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE. We soon started to hear & see BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES and then came upon some RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS foraging in the trees along with a mixed group of warblers. The warblers INCLUDED BLACK AND WHITE, YELLOW-RUMPED, PALM and YELLOW WARBLERS. More warblers of these same species kept coming in as we continued to follow the trail to a small marshy area. While most of us were checking out the incoming warblers, one of the women looked at the marsh through her binoculars & discovered our "bird of the day" - an AMERICAN BITTERN ! We all were able to see the bittern through the generously shared spotting scope of one of our other birders. Also seen at the marsh were a SOLITARY SANDPIPER and a BLUE-HEADED VIREO.

A little ways past the marsh, the woods started to change to a more scrubby habitat, where we added BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, both RED & WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES, COMMON GRACKLE, AMERICAN CROW and a SHARP-SHINNED HAWK. At one spot, 3 WILD TURKEYS crossed the trail ahead of us.

Our last stop was atop a big dune from which we observed a RED-TAILED HAWK near the water tower at the end of Madison Ave. Ext.

Other species observed on this trip were CANADA GOOSE, HAIRY WOODPECKER, NORTHERN FLICKER, HOUSE WREN and EUROPEAN STARLING. Our species total was 30. Noticeably absent from our list was FIELD SPARROW, which is usually seen here.



Field Trip Reports (continued)

After most of the group had left, a few stragglers were standing around talking when three Albany Police cars pulled into the parking area. It seems that someone had called the police to report a large group of what was assumed to be hunters because one man was carrying a tripod & scope ! We explained to the police that we had just finished a field trip & that we probably were the group the caller was referring to. The policeman said that he figured that this was the case, but that they had to check out every call.

I guess birders can be called "hunters", but not in the way meant by the caller. We sometimes "hunt" for birds, not to harm or kill, but to observe and enjoy.

- *Donna Zimmerman*

Christman Sanctuary (and Limestone Rise) May 4, 2003

Fifteen birders gathered for a cool early morning hike through Christman Sanctuary, a small Nature Conservancy property at the western edge of Schenectady county. The slow coming of spring this year produced a relatively quiet walk with only a few migrating passerines present (YELLOW-RUMP WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER, and BLUE-HEADED VIREO). However, nearly everyone got good views of a LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH, whose song could be heard throughout the walk and is known to nest in the preserve. This was a life bird for some. The small numbers of birds, as well as the high waters of the Bozenkill, which prevented our crossing to the second half of the preserve, contributed to an extension of the field trip by some of the party to nearby Limestone Rise, another Nature Conservancy holding.

We walked the first half of the Limestone preserve and identified some additional warblers including BLACK-AND-WHITE and OVENBIRD. A highlight came, when a BROAD-WINGED HAWK swooped in and perched just above our heads allowing everyone a clear view before the bird, after also giving us a careful look, moved on. We were also pleased to

see and hear a COMMON RAVEN, and find evidence of owls through the examination of some bone-packed pellets along the trail. Combining the results from both sites, we were able to tally thirty-five species before calling it a day.

- *Philip Johnson*

Birds and Breakfast May 10, 2003

The weather cooperated this spring, and about 30 birders enjoyed a fruitful morning at Five Rivers. Several people enjoyed the addition of the 6 AM outing facilitated by Jocelyn Cole-Calkins, as well as our 7 AM group, led by Alan Mapes, and 8 AM group with Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen.

With a total of 74 species, some highlights included: BALTIMORE ORIOLE, BOBOLINK, ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK, WHITE-THROATED, WHITE-CROWNED, CHIPPING, FIELD, SONG AND SWAMP SPARROWS, SCARLET TANAGER, BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER, GREATER YELLOWLEGS, SOLITARY AND SPOTTED SANDPIPERS, RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, fly-overs of both OSPREY and COMMON LOON (spotted by Bill Lee), and the following warbler species: BLUE-WINGED, NASHVILLE, YELLOW, BLACK-THROATED BLUE, YELLOW-RUMPED, BLACKBURNIAN, AMERICAN REDSTART, OVENBIRD, LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH and COMMON YELLOWTHROAT.

The hungry birders re-grouped at the Visitor Center for a breakfast of bagels, muffins and fruit as Alan led the compilation. Thanks once again to all the group leaders and participants, and to Five Rivers for hosting us. And as always, thanks to the birds!

P.S. Scott and I continued to bird the grounds in the afternoon, adding the HOUSE FINCH that had been so elusive this morning, along with a male INDIGO BUNTING at the feeders by the gazebo northwest of the Visitor Center.

- *Denise Hackert-Stoner*



Field Trip Reports (continued)

Vischer Ferry May 11, 2003

Very nice weather greeted a large birding contingent on Mother's Day morning for the annual VFNHP morning bird walk. YELLOW-THROATED VIREO song was very evident right in the parking area as we got started. PALM WARBLERS appeared early in the walk -- seemingly some late stragglers - - and we picked up some of the typical water birds of the preserve in spring, including WOOD DUCK, BLUE-WINGED TEAL, GREAT BLUE HERON and SOLITARY SANDPIPER. Marsh birds were uncharacteristically quiet during the walk -- we failed to hear any rails or bitterns. However, as we entered the deeper wooded areas west of the main road we began to find small groups of passerine migrants, including several WARBLING VIREOS, ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAKS and BALTIMORE ORIOLES. Other warblers were mostly found in singles and small groups including YELLOW-RUMPED, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT and BLACKBURNIAN. However, we did eventually get into a couple of substantial migrant warbler waves that provided some exciting birding. Those waves added BLACK-THROATED GREEN, BLACK-THROATED BLUE, MAGNOLIA, NASHVILLE AND BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS, OVENBIRD, AMERICAN REDSTART and BLUE-HEADED VIREO. The trip totaled 60 species.

- Gregg Recer
- Cathy Graichen

Ann Lee Pond May 15, 2003

Fifteen birders on a fine spring evening were greeted by a seemingly tame HOUSE SPARROW looking for a handout. Throughout the evening we were serenaded by chorus of BALTIMORE ORIOLE, WOOD THRUSH, ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK, AMERICAN REDSTART, WARBLING VIREO, GRAY CATBIRD, SONG SPARROW, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, and RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD. Orioles were never out of earshot. Several males and females were present, with frequent fights and chases among the males. We saw Oriole nests under construction at two different locations. The WOOD THRUSH sang from a high perch in a bare tree, affording excellent views. Several RED-

STARTS were seen, and YELLOW, CHESTNUT-SIDED, NASHVILLE, and MAGNOLIA WARBLERS put in appearances. While we were trying to sort out the warblers, A RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD posed on a branch only a few feet away. EASTERN PHOEBES and TREE and BARN SWALLOWS were chasing insects over the pond, and a GREEN HERON flew over as we watched. As dusk approached, a CHIMNEY SWIFT was spotted high overhead, and a last-minute NORTHERN CARDINAL brought the evening's species count to 31.

- Phil Whitney

Carter Pond May 18, 2003

Twelve people in 10 boats (including a 17-pound canoe!) convened at Carter Pond on the afternoon of May 18, 2003 for an exploration of this IBA in Washington County. With four canoes and six kayaks, we explored the south and more extensive north marshes, along with the shore of the main pond. It was a beautiful day, sunny and in the 70's - a great day to be out on the water. Exploration of the upper part of the north marsh was hindered by beaver dams; the first was crossed by most people but no one attempted the second. However, there was plenty of paddling to do in there; a very enjoyable time. Some of the avian highlights included BALTIMORE ORIOLE, several GREAT BLUE HERONS, repeated OSPREY flyovers, YELLOW WARBLER, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT and AMERICAN REDSTART, YELLOW-THROATED VIREO, CANADA GOOSE with goslings, WOOD DUCK and GREEN HERON. Gregg Recer heard VIRGINIA RAIL on his way back out of the north marsh. He later concluded that what we had been hearing earlier, that sounded like cricket frogs, was actually VIRGINIA RAIL as well. The highlight though was a DUNLIN, which offered very close views above the first beaver dam in the north marsh. Birding by boat, especially kayak, appears to be growing in popularity within the Club; additional trips are offered this summer.

- Scott Stoner



Upcoming HMBC Programs

NO PROGRAMS IN JULY OR AUGUST.

Note the return to the Colonie Library in September.

Thursday Sept. 11 at 7 PM at the Colonie Library.

***Trinidad and Tobago - Gateways to the Neotropics*, Wayne Petersen**

The island of Trinidad, roughly 50 miles on a side and lying ten miles off the coast of Venezuela, is a premiere destination for birders seeking a gentle introduction to tropical birding. With species' lists of over 400 for Trinidad and over 200 for Tobago, the two islands host a wide variety of residents, migrants, and vagrants. A typical 10-day trip in mid-winter makes it possible to record over 200 species, while at the same time enjoying comfortable and bird-rich lodging, such as the Asa Wright Nature Center in Trinidad, or Arnos Vale and Blue Waters Inn in Tobago.

Due to their insularity, the islands do not support the overwhelming variety of species found on mainland South America, yet representatives of most of the major Neotropical tropical families are represented: parrots, hummingbirds, woodcreepers, antbirds, tropical ovenbirds, trogons, toucans, manakins, honeycreepers, etc. And perhaps best of all, the strange and mysterious Oilbird, along with thousands of flamboyant Scarlet Ibis!

The first-time visitor can hardly fail to be impressed by these lovely islands, and even a brief visit can provide a fine introduction to the diverse fauna and flora of the Neotropics. Join Wayne Petersen for an evening of slides and discussion and see for yourself!

Wayne Petersen is Field Ornithologist with the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Throughout his career, he has led trips and tours, lectured, and conducted birding workshops across North America, including teaching Shorebirds and Arctic Breeding Bird Ecology for the ABA's Institute for Field Ornithology. Wayne is past Vice President of the American Birding Association, Chair of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, and is a New England Regional Editor for North American Birds. His writing projects have included co-authoring *Birds of Massachusetts* (with Richard Veit), contributing to *The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding* and *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*, and writing the National Audubon Society's *Pocket Guide to Songbirds and Familiar Backyard Birds* (East).

Wayne regularly leads tours for Massachusetts Audubon and Field Guides, Inc., where his tour leading experiences have taken him from arctic Canada to South America, Antarctica, New Zealand, Iceland, Africa, and Madagascar.

Monday October 6, 7 PM Colonie Library

***Ducks, Geese, and Swans - Movies*, Bill Gorman**

As we enter the fall season, it is time for the ducks, geese, and swans to start migrating to the south. Many of these birds will pass through or stop in our area. As we watch these birds we should always check for rarities. Bill's movies depict many of our local, state, and national waterfowl and should be a refresher to help us brush up on our waterfowl identification. Please join Bill for his movies on Ducks, Geese, and Swans.

Bill Gorman is a longtime member of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club who has birded and photographed all over the U.S. His previous programs such as Alaska, Arizona, owls and hummingbirds, have showcased his cinematographic talent, his respect for his subject, and his knowledge of bird habitat and biology.

Monday November 3, 7 PM, Colonie Library

***Antarctica*, Gerry Lemmo** Details will be provided in August newsletter.

Monday December 1, 7 PM, Five Rivers

***On the Human and Natural History of Florida*, Bob Budliger** Details in a future newsletter.



Upcoming Audubon Programs

Thursday Sept. 11 at 7 PM at the Colonie Library.
Trinidad and Tobago - Gateways to the Neotropics, Wayne Petersen

Joint program with HMBC, see previous page for details.

Program Reports

April Meeting: HMBC Literary Night

This year's literary night was great fun. We had a dozen participants, some new and many returning for the fourth time! I don't know which is more enjoyable, the anticipation of sharing some much-loved bit of nature literature or listening to the treasured works of the other readers. We heard many wonderful original works from our very talented members. Some of these pieces will be appearing in Feathers, so be on the look out for them, they are gems! The published works shared this year were many and varied, from spiritual to humorous. All were excellent, and very much appreciated.

Of course, no literary night is complete without dessert, and ours is no exception. From the healthful fruits and breads and dips to the deliciously decadent chocolate, the selection had something for everyone, and more than one something for most!!

A heartfelt thank-you to all for coming. I am already contemplating next April's literary night!
- *Denise Hackert-Stoner*

May Meeting: Birding the Dry Tortugas

On May 5, Denise and Scott Stoner shared their slides and experiences on Birding the Dry Tortugas to an interested audience of 50 persons at Five Rivers. Seventy miles west of Key West are the seven islands and surrounding waters that comprise Dry Tortugas National Park. Created by Congress in 1992, it supplanted Fort Jefferson National Monument and protects significant cultural and natural resources. Accessible only by boat or seaplane, the Dry Tortugas in April or May is a phenomenal birding experience. With 100,000 nesting Sooty terns, 2,500 Brown Noddy, Black Noddy, Magnificent Frigatebird, and Masked Booby, the Tortugas are well worth a spring visit. Add in migrant songbird possibilities that range from good to incredible, and a sunrise over a tropical island, and you can see why this is one of the Stoners' favorite parks!

Scott and Denise described their 1988 and 2002 visits, the history of Fort Jefferson, the birding experience, travel options and logistics, and some recent changes and issues.

- *Scott Stoner*



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

JULY 15
TUES

HUDSON RIVER - BIRDS AND BOATS II (evening)
Coordinator: Al Mapes

439-4086

Bring your canoe or kayak for an evening of birding by boat on the Hudson River. We will launch at 6:00 PM on the river south of Albany, exploring quiet bays and side channels and marshes. Bald Eagle is commonly seen in this area, along with Great Blue Heron and waterfowl. Songbirds, woodpeckers and others should be heard and seen along the forested shores. PFD's must be worn; bring an extra paddle and a flashlight for safety. This is an easy paddle, but it is not for rank beginners. Call the coordinator to register and for directions to put-in.

JULY 19
SAT

RAQUETTE LAKE AREA, INCLUDING FERD'S BOG (full day)
Coordinator: Bob Budliger

439-0006

The central Adirondack area, centered on Raquette Lake, offers several interesting birding areas that feature breeding warblers and possibilities of boreal species. Ferd's Bog possibilities include Boreal Chickadee, Yellow-bellied and Olive-sided Flycatcher, Gray Jay, Nashville Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow and perhaps Black-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers. Moose River Plains can also yield many of these boreal species and Moss Lake is very good for breeding forest species including wood warblers, thrushes, flycatchers and vireos, plus nesting Osprey and Common Loon. We will visit Ferd's and at least one other site in vicinity on this long day trip. Participants may stay overnight on Friday or drive up on Saturday morning. Call the coordinator for details.

JULY 20
SUN

GRAFTON LAKES STATE PARK (morning)
Coordinators: Lynn Huntington & Dan Welch

477-2980

Finding birds in July can be a challenge, even at Grafton Lakes, where 70+ species live and breed every summer. Most are not announcing their presence, and many are scruffy, just-out-of-the-nest fledglings that present different kinds of identification problems than their noisy, breeding-plumaged parents did only a month or two ago. Even so, the rich variety of habitats in and around the park should provide a fun morning with a good assortment of birds. Meet at 7.30 AM on the loop road outside the main park entrance on Route 2, about 14 miles east of Troy.

AUGUST 1 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR JAMAICA BAY — AUGUST TBA



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

AUG 9 STOCKPORT FLATS BY CANOE OR KAYAK (morning trip)
SAT **Coordinators: Scott and Denise Stoner** **785-6760**

On this morning trip we will paddle along the East side of the Hudson River and perhaps into a side creek as we look for herons and other waterbirds. Bring your own canoe or kayak and all equipment including a PFD for every person in your boat. Call the coordinators by August 6 for reservations and logistics.

AUG 16 *HOLLYHOCK HOLLOW SANCTUARY - INSTRUCTIONAL TRIP (morning trip)
SAT **Coordinator: Gary Goodness** **862-9260**

Join us for an introduction to birding at the Audubon Society's Hollyhock Hollow Sanctuary at 46 Rarick Road in Selkirk. Gary Goodness, once a teacher, always a teacher, and a wonderful one at that, will lead us through the trails of this 140 acre sanctuary of woodland, meadow, creek and garden habitats in search of local breeding birds and early migrants heading south as the summer winds down. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Sanctuary.

AUG TBA JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE I (full day)
SAT or Sun **Coordinator: Bill Lee** **374-3426**
Local Leader: Mike Bochnick
Reservations by August 1st

Migrating shorebirds are the main attraction this time of year at this wildlife refuge in the New York City area. Expect to see herons and egrets, and possible Clapper Rail and Boat-tailed Grackle. This is a joint Federation of New York State Bird Clubs Trip.

Detailed arrangements for this trip were not available when the schedule went to press. Call the coordinator for details.

AUG 29 ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
—SEPT 2 **Coordinators: Gregg Recer & Cathy Graichen** **899-2678**
FRI—TUE ******* Reservations by June 20 *******

Acadia is not only a beautiful coastal park, it is an excellent area to experience fall migration. We'll spend three full days (Sat, Sun, Mon) exploring the dense coastal forests, rocky headlands and exposed mountain tops of the park, and may also include a whale-watch trip in order to get a taste of pelagic birding off of Mr. Desert Island. Migrant songbirds will be one major focus of the trip, and we will also spend at least one morning at the Cadillac Mtn. hawkwatch. Limited to 12 total participants.



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

SEPT 7
SUN PEEBLES ISLAND STATE PARK (morning)
Coordinators: Joan Cipriani **374-3729**

Peebles Island State Park is a easily-birded undeveloped State Park that provides a good variety of habitats. This morning trip is timed for the peak of fall songbird migration and should present many opportunities to puzzle out those "confusing" fall warblers plus many other passerine migrants such as vireos, thrushes, kinglets and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Migrant water birds along the Mohawk River may also be found. Meet at 7:30 AM at the main parking area (see page 2 for directions).

SEPT 13 or 14
SAT or SUN HAWK WATCH (all day)
Coordinator: Arthur Long **758-9283**

Join us for our annual club trip to look for migrating birds of prey. Mid-September is a great time to be out hawk watching, especially since it is peak time for Broad-winged Hawks on the move south. The date of this trip will be Saturday, September 14, unless the weather forecast for that day looks poor for hawk migration, in which case there will be an announcement on Birdline (439-8080). Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Key Bank in Star Plaza at the intersection of Routes 20 & 155 in Guilderland.

SEPT 20
SAT VISCHER FERRY NATURE & HISTORIC PRESEVE (morning)
Coordinators: Bernie & Chris Grossman **399-9159**

Join us once again for this popular local trip. Herons and egrets should still be present and a good variety of shore birds can usually be found. There is also a possibility of migrant warblers, vireos and flycatchers. Meet at the main entrance at 8:00 a.m.

SEPT 26 - 28
FRI—SUN CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY
Coordinator: Gerry Colborn **237-3898**
gcolborn@nycap.rr.com

Limit: 12 people
*****Reservations by July 1 ******

This will be our 4th 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.



Two Events This Fall

Photo Workshop. Full details are not available at press time, but the HMBC plans to offer a photography workshop with photographers Tom Lindsay and Warren Greene in September. This is tentatively set up as two evening classroom sessions, Sept. 16 and 18, at Five Rivers, followed by a session in the field on Saturday, Sept. 20.

The evening sessions are expected to cover the basics of SLR photography and wildlife photography. The HMBC will charge a fee for this workshop to cover the costs of instruction, pre-registration will be required and space will be limited. This is a great opportunity to learn from the experts. Watch for a complete announcement and registration information in the August Feathers.

HMBC Night November 17, Colonie Town Library. 7 PM. Save the date!
Celebrate your bird club at HMBC Night. Welcome new members, share information about favorite area birding spots and Club activities, and bring in prospective members!

...and in 2005

HMBC is hosting the 2005 Federation of NYS Bird Club's annual meeting.

Committee meetings are happening regularly. Anybody willing to participate, please call Lynn Huntington at 477-9317 or 477-2980 for information on the next planning meeting (September). A list of potential speakers has been compiled, as well as a list of potential workshops. Previous regional events hosted by the club have been well received and we expect nothing less of this one. The closer we get to this event, the more help will be needed. Please consider giving some of your time to ensure our success.



HMBC BOARD FOR 2003-2004

Officers

Note our new officers for 2003 - 2004

President:

Dan Welch
329 N. Schodack Rd
East Greenbush, NY 12061
477-2980

Vice-President:

Gregg Recer
23 Scotch Mist Way
Malta, NY 12020
899-2678

Secretary:

David Martin
134 Normanskill Rd.
Slingerlands, NY 12159
765-4982

Treasurer:

Dale Samuelson
Box 579.
Guilderland, NY 12084
355-0818

Directors

Linda Parr	478-9219
Ellen Pemrick	452-4384
Beverly Relyea	adkmountaingirl@hotmail.com
Scott Stoner	785-6760
Donna Zimmerman	869-6624

Committee Chairs

Conservation:	Patti Packer	399-4843
Birdline:	John Saville	399-5959
Programs:	Scott Stoner	785-6760
Field Trips:	Gregg Recer	899-2678
Membership:	Daniel Ruge	449-1087
Publicity:	Ann B'Rells	355-5615
Publications:	Bob Miller	274-2670
Records:	(vacant)	
Sanctuary:	Carl George	393-0629
Social:	Denise Hackert-Stoner	785-6760
Jr. Activities:	Deb Smith	399-9007



HMBC Contact Information

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

Email: contact@hmbc.net

HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

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, usually on the second Monday of odd-numbered months.

Next Board meeting:

May 12th, Monday @ Five Rivers

Newsletter Submissions

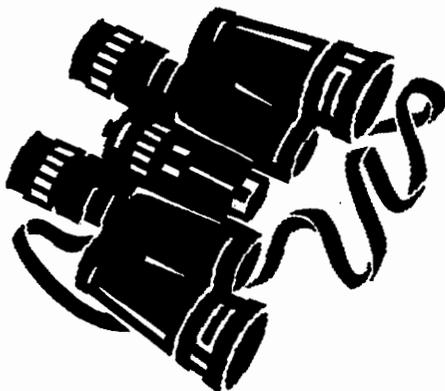
Please send all *electronic* submissions *via e-mail* to:
Bob Miller at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net

Send *hand-written* submissions to:

Bob Miller
1994 15th St.
Troy, NY 12180

All *typed* submissions should be sent to:

Cathy Graichen
23 Scotch Mist Way
Malta NY 12020



Feathers



President's Corner: Common backyard birds offer a comfort, familiarity and routine to our daily lives. The annual return of spring migrants or the loyalty of hardy over winterers help place us and connect us to our personal history.

As I sit at a patio table and scan the yard in front of me I see a Magpie Robin hopping about the lawn in search of insects, an Ashy Drongo perched on a phone wire above and an Oriental White-eye foraging through a leafy tree. Not what you are seeing? Not a surprise, the yard I'm sitting in is in Kathmandu, Nepal (alright, to be fair, there are also House Sparrows in this yard as well!)

While many of us go far afield in search of exotics, another pleasure of travel is letting the familiar and common give order and routine to your days when far from home. It can also help one appreciate how "exotic" the Blue Jay or Chickadee can be to first time visitors to our part of the world.

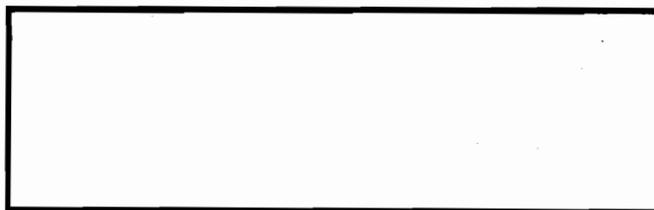
So as another spring unfolds into summer I hope that you take the time to enjoy the Cardinals, Red-winged Blackbirds, Field Sparrows or whichever "common" species add song, color and comfort to your home, your neighborhood and your daily life.

Dan Welch

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

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HOODED AND LAWRENCE'S WARBLERS BEST BIRDS ON CENTURY RUN

by Robert P. Yunick

The Club's 58th consecutive Guy Bartlett Century Run, conducted May 17, 2003, was an improvement over last year's record snowy event, but in some respects was a rather average event. The 145 species plus one hybrid ranked 43rd in 58 years, while the highest group total of 123 species by Group C ranked higher at 24th, and the best total since 1999. That group was afield the longest, 0400 to 2030 (as was Group F with the second highest 114 species), and amassed the greatest number of species, 15, seen only by one group.

There were 20 people afield in six groups combing the eight-county region, each finding at least one species recorded only by one group, totaling 27 plus one hybrid. Another 28 species were recorded by every field party

IMPORTANT

MEETING

NOTICE

*September and October's
meetings*

will be held at

Five Rivers.

Not at the Colonie Library, contrary to previously provided information, which indicated the room would be available for this meeting.

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and 21 more by all but one party. The rarest finds were a Hooded Warbler on Beaver Dam Road near Thacher Park, reported for only the fourth time, three of them since 1999; and a Lawrence's Warbler at Thompson Lake State Park, a ninth occurrence, last in 2001. The only other species reported for the tenth or less time was a Great Egret in flight at Black Creek Marsh, its tenth time, last in 1998.

The warbler tally of 21 species and a hybrid was below the average of 26 since 1960 (range 20 to 31). Tennessee was missed for the third consecutive year after being reported 49 times in 58 years, and Cape May was missed for the sixth consecutive year after 45 prior reports. Conspicuous also was the lack of Osprey for the second year (third miss in four years) after 50 prior listings. Oddly, three species of swallows were reported by only one group, as was Spotted Sandpiper. Normally these species are widely reported.

People commented favorably about the weather after grouching last year about the snow. The weather at Albany, a day after a full moon, was pleasantly sunny under high pressure, therefore cooler than usual with a temperature range of 36 to 67 deg. F., and very light wind. Vegetation was well out, aided by excessive monthly precipitation at 2.79 in., vs. a norm of 1.98. For many days prior to May 17 the Southeast was under nearly constant low pressure and excessive rainfall which may have hampered northward arrivals of birds, hence the less-than-spectacular results for the Century Run.

Field group information is listed below including species reported only by that group. Names with an asterisk were group reporters.

Group A – Scott Stoner*, Denise Stoner, Greg Recer and Bryce Recer, 0730-1630, 75

species plus one hybrid. Totally in Albany Co., including Black Creek Marsh, Thacher Park, Thompson Lake State Park and Five Rivers Center. Lawrence's Warbler.

Group B – Jocelyn Cole-Calkins*, Ronald Calkins and Patti Packer, 0400-1300, 68 species. Five Rivers Center, Black Creek Marsh and Thacher State Park. White-throated Sparrow.

Group C – Bill Lee, Nancy Slack, George Shaw, Hank Stebbins, Kurt Weiskotten and Carl George*, 0400-2030, 123 species. Black Creek Marsh, Thacher State Park, Cole Hill, Black Creek and Alcove Res., Coetmans, Albany, Mohawk River, Vischer Ferry N&HP, Saratoga Airport, Saratoga Lake and Cold Spring Road. Red-throated Loon, Great Egret, Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, Semi-palmated Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Common Tern, Purple Martin, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Nashville Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler and Hooded Warbler.

Group D – Ron Harrower*, 0400-1615 and at dusk, 89 species. Totally in Saratoga Co., including Consalus Vly, Vischer Ferry N&HP, Peeble's Island, Saratoga Lake, Saratoga Battlefield, Tower Road and Fox Hill Road. Mute Swan, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruffed Grouse, Black-billed Cuckoo, Solitary Vireo and Grasshopper Sparrow.

Group E – E. L.* and H. C. Thomas, 0600-1800, 36 species. Guilderland, Nott Road Park, Pine Bush, Meadowdale, Tygert and Hennesey Roads, Helderberg Overlook, Beaver Dam Road, Thacher Nature Center and Albany. Northern Harrier.

Group F – Larry Alden*, Steve Chorvas and Jeff Marx, 0400-2030, 114 species. Albany County. Least Sandpiper, Magnolia Warbler, Canada Warbler and White-crowned Sparrow.



Feathers

2003 Century Run Species/Group List

Species	Groups					
Red-throated Loon			c			
Common Loon			c	d		
Double-crested Cormorant	a		c	d		f
American Bittern		b	c	d		f
Great Blue Heron	a	b	c	d		f
Great Egret			c			
Green Heron	a	b	c			f
Mute Swan				d		
Canada Goose	a	b	c	d	e	f
Wood Duck	a	b	c	d		f
Green-winged Teal			c			
American Black Duck			c			f
Mallard	a	b	c	d	e	f
Blue-winged Teal			c			f
Gadwall			c			
Common Merganser	a		c			
Red-breasted Merganser				d		
Turkey Vulture	a	b	c	d	e	f
Bald Eagle			c			f
Northern Harrier					e	
Cooper's Hawk	a		c	d		
Broad-winged Hawk	a				e	
Red-tailed Hawk	a	b	c	d		f
American Kestrel	a		c	d		f
Peregrine Falcon			c			f
Ruffed Grouse				d		
Wild Turkey		b	c	d	e	f
Virginia Rail		b	c	d		f
Sora	a		c	d		f
Common Moorhen	a					f
American Coot			c			f
Semipalmated Plover			c			
Killdeer		b	c	d		f
Greater Yellowlegs			c			f
Lesser Yellowlegs			c			f
Solitary Sandpiper			c			f
Spotted Sandpiper			c			
Least Sandpiper						f
Pectoral Sandpiper			c			
Common Snipe			c	d		f
American Woodcock		b	c	d		f
Ring-billed Gull			c			f
Herring Gull			c	d		f

Species	Groups					
Great Black-backed Gull			c	d		f
Common Tern			c			
Rock Dove	a	b	c	d	e	f
Mourning Dove	a	b	c	d	e	f
Black-billed Cuckoo				d		
Eastern Screech-Owl		b				f
Chimney Swift		b	c	d		f
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	a					f
Belted Kingfisher		b	c	d		f
Red-bellied Woodpecker	a	b	c	d		f
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		b		d		f
Downy Woodpecker	a	b	c	d	e	f
Hairy Woodpecker	a		c	d		f
Northern Flicker		b	c	d	e	f
Pileated Woodpecker			c	d		
Willow Flycatcher	a	b	c			f
Least Flycatcher		b	c			f
Eastern Phoebe	a		c	d	e	f
Great Crested Flycatcher	a	b	c	d	e	f
Eastern Kingbird	a	b	c	d		f
Horned Lark			c	d		
Purple Martin			c			
Tree Swallow	a	b	c	d	e	f
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	a	b	c			f
Bank Swallow			c			
Cliff Swallow						f
Barn Swallow	a	b	c	d	e	f
Blue Jay	a	b	c	d	e	f
American Crow	a	b	c	d	e	f
Fish Crow			c	d		
Common Raven	a		c			f
Black-capped Chickadee	a	b	c	d	e	f
Tufted Titmouse	a	b	c	d	e	f
Red-breasted Nuthatch	a		c	d		f
White-breasted Nuthatch	a	b	c	d	e	f
Brown Creeper		b	c			f
Carolina Wren			c			f
House Wren	a	b	c	d		f
Winter Wren	a	b	c			f
Marsh Wren		b	c			f
Golden-crowned Kinglet			c			f
Ruby-crowned Kinglet			c			
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher		b	c	d		f



2003 Century Run Species/Group List (continued)

Eastern Bluebird	a		c		e	f					
Veery		b	c	d		f					
Hermit Thrush		b	c	d		f					
Wood Thrush	a	b	c	d	e	f					
American Robin	a	b	c	d	e	f					
Gray Catbird	a	b	c	d	e	f					
Northern Mockingbird	a		c	d		f					
Brown Thrasher	a		c			f					
Cedar Waxwing	a		c								
European Starling	a	b	c	d	e	f					
Blue-headed Vireo				d							
Yellow-throated Vireo	a	b	c	d		f					
Warbling Vireo	a	b	c	d		f					
Red-eyed Vireo	a	b	c	d		f					
Blue-winged Warbler	a	b	c	d		f					
(Lawrence's Warbler) *	a										
Nashville Warbler			c								
Yellow Warbler	a	b	c	d	e	f					
Chestnut-sided Warbler	a	b	c	d		f					
Magnolia Warbler						f					
Black-throated Blue Warbler	a		c			f					
Yellow-rumped Warbler	a	b	c	d		f					
Black-throated Green Warbler	a	b	c			f					
Blackburnian Warbler			c			f					
Pine Warbler				d		f					
Prairie Warbler			c	d		f					
Black-and-white Warbler	a	b	c	d		f					
American Redstart	a		c	d		f					
Worm-eating Warbler			c								
Ovenbird	a		c	d		f					
Northern Waterthrush							c				f
Louisiana Waterthrush	a	b	c								f
Common Yellowthroat	a	b	c	d							f
Hooded Warbler							c				
Canada Warbler											f
Scarlet Tanager							c	d			f
Northern Cardinal	a	b	c	d	e	f					
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	a	b	c	d							f
Indigo Bunting								d			f
Eastern Towhee	a							d			f
Chipping Sparrow	a	b	c	d	e	f					
Field Sparrow	a							c	d		f
Vesper Sparrow									c	d	
Savannah Sparrow										c	f
Grasshopper Sparrow										d	
Song Sparrow	a	b	c	d	e	f					
Swamp Sparrow	a	b	c	d							f
White-throated Sparrow									b		
White-crowned Sparrow											f
Dark-eyed Junco	a	b	c							e	f
Bobolink	a								c	d	f
Red-winged Blackbird	a	b	c	d	e	f					
Eastern Meadowlark										d	f
Common Grackle	a	b	c	d	e	f					
Brown-headed Cowbird	a	b	c	d	e	f					
Baltimore Oriole	a	b	c	d	e	f					
Purple Finch	a									c	f
House Finch	a									c	f
American Goldfinch	a	b	c	d	e	f					
*** Totals ***	75+	68	123	89	36	114					
	1										





A CENTURY OF CONSERVATION

by Bob Budliger

A hundred years ago it was common practice to shoot anything from your boat as you sailed down a Florida river. Shooters lined the rails of passenger steamboats plying the St. John's River and potted at ducks, herons, gators—anything that moved. Yachtsmen shot pelicans at a colony near Cape Canaveral. One man, incensed by this carnage waged a loud campaign that was heard all the way to the White House.

President Theodore Roosevelt designated on March 14, 1903 Pelican Island, five small acres in Florida, the first National Wildlife Refuge in the country. The government allocated one man and one boat to the protection of the Brown Pelican, a species to be threatened by pesticide contamination 50 years later. This was only the beginning. Many more refuges were to come, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service would be formed from the Biological Survey to manage them. We celebrate a Century of Conservation throughout the year with events all across the country.

By some accounting Pelican Island was actually the second designated refuge. President William McKinley, by proclamation in 1901, set aside a large tract in the Wichita Mountains of Oklahoma to protect the American bison. Unrestricted market hunting had all but eliminated the estimated 60 or so million of these one ton beasts. Wichita Mountains was the site of the first successful restoration attempt of bison, and later figured in the restoration of elk. But, it was early designated a "Forest Reserve", so it is not the first refuge in the system.

"Teddy" Roosevelt, the first (and perhaps

only) conservation President, protected dozens of sites around the country by executive order. It wasn't until the his distant cousin Franklin became President, however, that the refuge system really came to life. The 1930s were tough—the great economic depression had the nation on its knees. A series of devastating droughts made people more aware of the need for conservation. Several events in the 30s put the refuge system on a sound footing. J. N. "Ding" Darling became chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, J. Clark Salyer was dispatched to the West to scout out potential conservation lands, the "Duck Stamp" legislation passed, and the Civilian Conservation Corps was formed.

Darling had served on a three-man commission with ecologist Aldo Leopold and publisher Thomas Beck appointed by Roosevelt to make recommendations on wildlife restoration. A nationally-noted editorial cartoonist and conservationist, Darling set out with a fervor unknown in conservation circles. He acquired financial commitments for land purchases, formed alliances in Congress, and captured the public's attention. With a deadline for spending \$2.5 million looming, Darling cajoled Salyer, a PhD candidate and waterfowl expert, into making a rapid assessment of opportunities to protect waterfowl in the Midwest and West.. Salyer worked during the days with various state biologists and drove at night to cover 18,000 miles in six weeks. He drafted plans for over 600,000 acres of refuges.

Darling, recognizing the need for a consistent money stream, proposed and saw the passage of the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act. The "Duck Stamp", required by waterfowl



hunters, has succeeded beyond all expectations. Millions of dollars dedicated to purchasing wetlands are generated by the sale of this stamp, annually designed by the winner of a nationwide contest. The stamps are purchased by conservationists and stamp collectors, and the art is highly valued.

The growing refuge system benefited from the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC provided jobs for the unemployed and gave talent and labor to the development of national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges. (The Cs also worked in state programs and their handiwork can still be seen at Five Rivers.)

Today there are 538 National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs), over 300 of which are staffed. Many of them have formal visitor centers and a wide range of wildlife-related activities take place on them. A few, "Ding" Darling NWR on Florida's Sanibel Island, are noteworthy tourist attractions. The System sees only 10% of the National Park visitation, but that's still a whopping 36 million people. Our closest Refuge is Montezuma NWR, a large marsh complex that you cross when you drive the Thruway between Syracuse and Rochester.

All refuges are managed for wildlife. Public visitation and recreation, including hunting and fishing in some, are secondary uses and only allowed if compatible with the primary mission. It is an enormous challenge for biologists and managers to balance wildlife and human needs, particularly with the paltry budget given the enormity of the Refuge System. The Service manages 94 million acres with a \$300 million budget-- \$3.15 an acre, the price of a BigMac! And, this is compounded by a facilities repair backlog of over \$800 million.

A Century of Conservation can quickly be undone if we don't become aware, connected, and active. The threats are many and varied— inadequate management and maintenance

monies, lack of planning, incompatible uses, political meddling, environmental quality, and invasive plants. As a former US Army airfield the Shawangunk NWR in Ulster County hosts an array of threatened grassland birds. Refuge staff must borrow large mowers to maintain grassland, purple loosestrife is invading the wetter portions, chemical contaminants left by the Army must be cleaned up, the FBI wants to use old runways for car chase training, and politicians lobby to allow model airplane fliers to stage events in these open areas.

The current preoccupation with national security has emboldened military planners to assault the system. There is a current proposal to grab up 22,000 acres in North Carolina to build a Marine Corps airfield. This is not a new problem—the US Army at Fort Sill wanted a significant piece of Wichita Mountains NWR for an artillery range and the Air Force once wanted a night bombing range next to the winter home of all the Whooping Cranes in the world

Multiply the problem by 538 and you've got the picture. Each of us has his or her favorite, and all of us has been in a National Wildlife Refuge to bird. We each have a responsibility to ensure the professional management of these places. Buy a Duck stamp at the post office, get your Golden Eagle Passport at a refuge entry station, lend your support to a conservation "watchdog" group, let your elected representative know how you feel.

Twenty or so conservation groups have formed the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) to celebrate the Refuge Centennial by focusing on the System's needs. Do you CARE? Get connected.

Contact CARE, Wildlife Management Institute,
1101 14th St, Washington, DC 20005

202.371.1808



Fall Self-Guided Visit to Collins Lake

by Carl George

Try a self-guided visit to Collins Lake in Scotia to observe the vespertine arrival of waterfowl. Hundreds of Mallard, Black Duck and other waterfowl arrive at dusk - the peak arrival starting about 20 minutes after sunset. Drive to Quinlan Park on Washington Ave. at the east end of the lake. Washington Ave may be reached by taking Schonowee Ave. at Jumping Jacks or Sunnyside Ave. off of Route 50. Dress warmly; a hat and gloves are often needed.

Station yourself 20 minutes before sunset at the south end of Quinlan Park. This will give you an opportunity to orient and to observe the waterbirds already present on the lake. Dramatic arrivals of Red-winged Black Birds for overniting in the marshlands may also be seen. Many Canada Geese and Common Merganser may also be present. Starting about 20 minutes after sunset focus your attention on the open waters south of the island. Best viewing will be through binoculars. Notice the direction and flock size of the birds as they approach the lake and the time of beginning and ending of the arrival.

Overniting of waterbirds will continue at Collins Lake until ice cover is complete. This lake, although thoroughly urban, is one of the more important fall and spring sanctuaries for waterfowl in the region.

You might enjoy a web page dealing with the waterbirds of Collins Lake:<http://tardis.union.edu/~birds/>.

Not A Dead Goldfinch

by Dick Patrick

I came home from the YMCA the other morning (the last week in May) and wasn't there a dead Goldfinch lying on its back at the base of our dining room window. I pulled my work gloves on in preparation for burial of one of God's creatures.

When I get back outside the little bird has revived and is staggering around. It certainly isn't a Goldfinch although it has a brilliant yellow belly. In fact, it is quite a bit smaller than a Goldfinch. Patsy and I pull a field guide (Sibley's) out of the pile of birdbooks and first start through the vireos, because there aren't so many of them. Not even close. Lets take on the warblers. There it is! A Nashville Warbler!

Now why didn't I know the bird right off? After all I have considered myself a trained bird watcher almost all my life? The main reason is if you are trying to learn warblers from a field guide you are going to pass right by this one because it is usually on a page of skip-over western warblers. It is also painted so drably in most field guides that it does not look like the beauty we saw. Give Sibley credit we were fortunate to pick his guide out of the stack. His likeness is closer than in any other book using paintings. If we hadn't been so lazy we could have dug through the color photos in the Audubon Society Guide to Western Birds and seen the exact likeness of our little guest. An interesting thing about Sibley is that he includes the weights, 0.3 oz. for the Nashville as opposed to 0.46 oz. for a Goldfinch. In a bird that tiny that is a big difference. Of course the Nashville didn't look anything like a Goldfinch once he got the wind back in his sails. He hopped around at the base of our hedge for awhile and then was gone. How blessed Patsy and I felt that the little fellow could continue his journey and that we had been so privileged to briefly share his acquaintance.

Feathers



103rd CBC (Winter 2002-03) results for the Troy by Larry Alden

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	G1	Total
Great Blue Heron		2					1		3
Canada Goose	236	26	1060	14	65	45	1200		2646
American Black Duck	8	5	64	38	14	12	1	10	152
Mallard	68	89	94	33	121	22	2	3	432
Ring-necked Duck			9						9
Greater Scaup				1					1
Lesser Scaup				1					1
Common Goldeneye		6	156	16	2				180
Hooded Merganser		6	30	2	2				40
Common Merganser		267	30	89	85	6			477
Ruddy Duck	1								1
Bald Eagle *		1	5	3	2				11
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1	1				1		4
Cooper's Hawk			1	1					2
Northern Goshawk		1							1
Accipiter Species				1					1
Red-tailed Hawk	7	10	14	28	14	7	8		88
Rough-legged Hawk	1								1
Merlin					1				1
Wild Turkey			3			1			4
Ring-billed Gull		10	35	66	129	17		3	260
Herring Gull		8	7	1165	47	3	4		1234
Iceland Gull				2					2
Lesser Black-backed Gull				1					1
Glaucous Gull				2					2
Great Black-backed Gull		6	4	457	47		3		517
Rock Dove	120	183	180	350	144	464	400	9	1850
Mourning Dove	82	119	100	105	70	48	70		594
Eastern Screech-Owl	1		1						2
Great Horned Owl	1	5		1					7
Belted Kingfisher		2		2	2				6
Red-bellied Woodpecker		3	1	1	1	1			7
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	1							2

Group A: Bill Gorman,
Edna Gorman.

6:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (2
hours, 1 mile on foot; 7
hours, 96 miles by car.
Also 1 hour, 4 miles
owling).

Group B: Larry Alden,
Steve Chorvas.

5:45 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (2
hours, ½ mile on foot; 8
hours, 82 miles by car.
Also 1¼ hour, 14 miles
owling).

Group C: Rich Guthrie.

8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (1
hour, 0 miles on foot;
7½ hours, 45 miles by
car. Also ½ hour, 0
miles owling).

Group D: Ken Able,
Sue Adair, Jane
Graves, Alison
VanKeuren.

7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (4
hours, ½ mile on foot;
7½ hours, 45 miles by
car). Note: Group D
split up during the day
and had a total of 11½
party hours.

Group E: Bill Lee,
Larry Federman.

11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
(½ hour, ¾ mile on foot;
5½ hours, 46 miles by
car).



Feathers

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	G1	Total
Downy Woodpecker	6	28	8	6	3	6	2		59
Hairy Woodpecker	3	8	2	4	1		1		19
Northern Flicker	2	8	1	2	1	1			15
Pileated Woodpecker						2			2
Blue Jay	91	111	46	13	13	17	25	6	322
American Crow	1186	416	131	950	522	365	600	2	4172
Fish Crow		6		5	1				12
Common Raven		1			1				2
Horned Lark		45				168			213
Black-capped Chickadee	59	157	25	27	14	28	21	12	343
Tufted Titmouse	9	26	10	5	12	6	6		74
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1								1
White-breasted Nuthatch	7	28	11	2	5	6	1	5	65
Brown Creeper				3					3
Carolina Wren		2							2
Golden-crowned Kinglet		2				1			3
Eastern Bluebird	2	23	11		12	8			56
Hermit Thrush		1	1						2
American Robin	81	74	55	8	63	11	2	43	337
Northern Mockingbird	3	1		2	1	1	3		11
European Starling	900	373	330	449	318	471	600		3441
Cedar Waxwing		50	11			46			107
American Tree Sparrow	118	96	24	7	19	35	75		374
Song Sparrow	7	11	5	11		2	45	4	85
White-throated Sparrow	34	27	8	1	5				75
Dark-eyed Junco	106	132	50	1	8	25	25		347
Snow Bunting	2								2
Northern Cardinal	4	27	6	5	7	7	3	6	65
Brown-headed Cowbird	6	6				5			17
House Finch	58	68	48	4	51	8	20		257
American Goldfinch	8	13	47	11	1		6	3	89
House Sparrow	56	75	30	19	25	14	10		229

Group F: Norton Miller, Heather Miller.

7:15 a.m. - 3:45 p.m. (1 hour, ¾ mile by foot; 7½ hours, 103 miles by car).

Group G: Gary Goodness.

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (8 hours, 71 miles by car).

Group G1: Scott Stoner, Denise Hackert-Stoner.

10:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. (1¾ hours, 1½ miles on foot, ¼ hour, 2½ miles by car).

* Note: Bald Eagles - 8 adult, 3 immature

Bold = record number for the count

Total Birds ▶ 3276 2566 2655 3914 1829 1859 3135 106 19340

Total Species ▶ 35 48 40 43 37 33 27 12 64



Field Trip Reports

Swyer Preserve May 24, 2003

Weather forecasts predicted that Saturday May 24 would be a washout, but nine birders encountered only clouds with a few light showers and surprisingly few insects at Swyer (Mill Creek) Preserve and Schodack Island State Park. Birds were plentiful although, in poor light and thick foliage, most were heard rather than seen. At Swyer, a cooperative VEERY posed in full view for several minutes and we had good looks at a highly vocal GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER, A RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, and the ubiquitous GRAY CATBIRDS. A singing ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK was located only with



some effort and A PILEATED WOODPECKER was spotted briefly in flight, while NUMEROUS COMMON YELLOWTHROATS remained in hiding. EASTERN WOOD-PEEWEE, FISH CROW, SONG

SPARROW, and WOOD THRUSH were also audible but invisible. Near the mouth of the creek, a BELTED KINGFISHER was active, a BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER fled into deep foliage at the sight of binoculars, and an adult BALD EAGLE, the day's only raptor, was seen flying up the Hudson. At Schodack Island, a CERULEAN WARBLER heard the day before neither appeared nor spoke up, but YELLOW, CHESTNUT-SIDED, BLACK-AND-WHITE, and BLUE-WINGED WARBLERS and OVENBIRD were heard from. A first-year male AMERICAN RED-START, singing loudly but in female disguise, kept us guessing for several minutes. Several GREAT BLUE HERONS were seen aloft, and another ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK and a brilliant BALTIMORE ORIOLE were enjoyed by all before a heavier shower ended the morning with 43 species seen or heard.

• *Phil Whitney*

Landis Arboretum May 25, 2003

On Sunday, May 25, we were able to squeeze in a field trip to the Landis Arboretum between all the rain. Ten people hiked around the property enjoying the birds and the lilacs, still in bloom with this late, wet spring. Although no particularly unusual birds were seen we enjoyed seeing or hearing 35 species.

The most interesting were BALTIMORE ORIOLES busy collecting nesting materials and building a nest and four or five RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS feeding on the flowers of a horsechestnut. YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER, CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER and COMMON YELLOWTHROAT gave us the opportunity for very good looks.

- *George Steele*



Field Trip Reports (continued)

Bear Swamp, Westerlo, New York July 5, 2003

After much fanfare and excitement from fireworks and cookouts, a small group of birders made their way to the cool, damp forest of Bear Swamp, Westerlo, New York. It appeared that the swamp had been recently flooded, possibly due to beaver activity. Fiddle heads were just unfurling and the trail was very soggy. Since walking through the first part of the trail was like walking through quick sand, our group decided to walk the trail in reverse. The rhododendrons were beginning to bloom and as reported two years ago, the rhododendrons are still in decline. But, while walking along the trail in reverse, we observe healthy rhododendrons in bloom.

As we stepped into Bear Swamp we were greeted by SWAMP SPARROW and COMMON YELLOWTHROAT. NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES were heard singing emphatically, but could not be seen. We were serenaded by VEERY and HERMIT THRUSHES as we walked along the trail. A pair of GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHERS flew along the lower branches of trees along the trail. The upper, drier forests produced BROWN CREEPERS and BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES that flitted from tree to tree. Also, a male SCARLET TANAGER came down from the upper canopy of the forest. It is amazing how a very brightly colored bird like the Scarlet Tanager can sometimes be very difficult to see. But patience prevailed and we were able to watch the Scarlet Tanager for some time feeding on caterpillars.

After battling the mosquitoes and giving up enough of our blood to them, we backtracked our steps and retreated to comfort of our vehicles.

Attendees: Amy Reilly-Veino, Neal Reilly, Jennifer Hamilton, Patti Packer

Species: BROAD-WINGED HAWK, YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, HAIRY WOODPECKER, EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE, GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER, RED-EYED VIREO, BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, BROWN CREEPER, VEERY, HERMIT THRUSH, AMERICAN ROBIN, OVENBIRD, NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, SCARLET TANAGER, SWAMP SPARROW, COMMON GRACKLE, BROWN-HEADED ORIOLE, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH.

- *Jocelyn Cole-Calkins, Ronald Calkins*

Ferd's Bog July 19, 2003

Though somewhat late in the season, 13 HMBCers made the pilgrimage to Ferd's Bog on Saturday, July 19. Our leader, Bob Budliger, has considerable experience in this boreal gem and explained the origins of the name, the past birding history, and the current dispute about the management need for the infamous "boardwalk". This visit was an average one, but Ferd's is worthwhile even on a "bad" day.

Territorial singing is much reduced from June levels and most passerines are dispersed from nesting sites and silently tending young. The "woodpeckers" have moved away from their nest-holes. The OSPREY pair that nests, out-of-view of "bog central", was carrying food. GREAT BLUE HERONS were commuting in to the woods across the bog—nesting perhaps? A few warbler species, none unexpected, were heard in the woods and several sparrow species sang in the bog. We had



Field Trip Reports (continued)

good views of LINCOLN'S SPARROW.

A small band of BOREAL CHICKADEES greeted us at their usual hangout in the balsam fir fringing the bog entrance. This is the area we had the BVD (better view desired) YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER. Several other BVDs were seen/heard—OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER seen at a distance, and a tantalizing look at a BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER in flight at the other end of the bog

A mid-day lunch break at Moss Lake added COMMON LOON and little else before we made one more pass at Ferd's. At the parking area, we tried to lure A WINTER WREN out so some could add it to their lifelists. It came out but didn't stay still long enough.

In all, 40 species were found and at least three of our party had lifers.

- *Bob Budliger*

Grafton State Park July 20, 2003

Six birders joined Lynn and me on a beautiful sunny Sunday morning for an exploration of Grafton State Park.

We began on the south side of Route 2 with a 1 ½ - 2 mile hike of Gartler Trail. This delightful trail begins in broad cattail marshes (COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, BARN SWALLOWS, RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS, SONG SPARROWS) then enters into an expansive meadow of Highbush BLUEBERRIES (WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS, ROBINS, CEDAR WAXWINGS, BLUE JAYS, CATBIRDS). The meadow leads to a cool, mostly conifer, forest which, while short on birds (CHICKADEES and the songs of VEERY and WOOD THRUSH) was rich in wild-

flowers, moss, ferns and mature upper story growth. We encircled several quiet beaver-created wetlands before finally emerging at the Dunham Reservoir canoe launch on Johnson Rd. A stroll along Johnson Rd. turned up OVENBIRD, WINTER WREN and RED-EYED VIREO while the reservoir was supporting BELTED KINGFISHERS, TREE SWALLOWS, CANADA GEESE and AMERICAN GOLDFINCH.

We conveniently shuttled back to our start point (to be greeted by an EASTERN KINGBIRD) in a vehicle we had placed in the reservoir before starting. From there we visited two other park locations on the north side of Route 2, Long Pond Rd. just east of the park entrance and Shaver Pond Rd. just west of the entrance. While the parking lot at the north end of Long Pond Rd. had turned up RAVENS and BROAD-WINGED HAWKS in past trips this time the woods were quite quiet. The highlight was spotting a handsome Mink hurrying along the north shore of North Long Pond. Birding highlight there was a RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH.

Having started at 7:30 am we finished up about 11:30 am at an old orchard at the head of a nature trail leading to Shaver Pond. The GRACKLE and RED-TAILED HAWK spotted there brought the day's bird count to 30+ species - about what one might expect on a mid-summer morning. While one of our birders did get one life bird the overall mix was of rather common species. However, perfect summer weather, a delightful hike and pleasant company made for an excellent club field trip.

- *Lynn Huntington and Dan Welch*



Upcoming HMBC Programs

Thursday Sept. 11 at 7 PM, Five Rivers (note changed location)

***Trinidad and Tobago - Gateways to the Neotropics*, Wayne Petersen**

The island of Trinidad, roughly 50 miles on a side and lying ten miles off the coast of Venezuela, is a premiere destination for birders seeking a gentle introduction to tropical birding. With species' lists of over 400 for Trinidad and over 200 for Tobago, the two islands host a wide variety of residents, migrants, and vagrants. A typical 10-day trip in mid-winter makes it possible to record over 200 species, while at the same time enjoying comfortable and bird-rich lodging, such as the Asa Wright Nature Center in Trinidad, or Arnos Vale and Blue Waters Inn in Tobago.

Due to their insularity, the islands do not support the overwhelming variety of species found on mainland South America, yet representatives of most of the major Neotropical tropical families are represented: parrots, hummingbirds, woodcreepers, antbirds, tropical ovenbirds, trogons, toucans, manakins, honeycreepers, etc. And perhaps best of all, the strange and mysterious Oilbird, along with thousands of flamboyant Scarlet Ibis!

The first-time visitor can hardly fail to be impressed by these lovely islands, and even a brief visit can provide a fine introduction to the diverse fauna and flora of the Neotropics. Join Wayne Petersen for an evening of slides and discussion and see for yourself!

Wayne Petersen is Field Ornithologist with the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Throughout his career, he has led trips and tours, lectured, and conducted birding workshops across North America, including teaching Shorebirds and Arctic Breeding Bird Ecology for the ABA's Institute for Field Ornithology. Wayne is past Vice President of the American Birding Association, Chair of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, and is a New England Regional Editor for *North American Birds*. His writing projects have included co-authoring *Birds of Massachusetts* (with Richard Veit), contributing to *The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding* and *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*, and writing the National Audubon Society's *Pocket Guide to Songbirds and Familiar Backyard Birds* (East).

Wayne regularly leads tours for Massachusetts Audubon and Field Guides, Inc., where his tour leading experiences have taken him from arctic Canada to South America, Antarctica, New Zealand, Iceland, Africa, and Madagascar.

Monday October 6, 7 PM, Five Rivers (note changed location)

***Ducks, Geese, and Swans - Movies*, Bill Gorman**

As we enter the fall season, it is time for the ducks, geese, and swans to start migrating to the south. Many of these birds will pass through or stop in our area. As we watch these birds we should always check for rarities. Bill's movies depict many of our local, state, and national waterfowl and should be a refresher to help us brush up on our waterfowl identification. Please join Bill for his movies on Ducks, Geese, and Swans.

Bill Gorman is a longtime member of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club who has birded and photographed all over the U.S. His previous programs such as Alaska, Arizona, owls and hummingbirds, have showcased his cinematographic talent, his respect for his subject, and his knowledge of bird habitat and biology.

Monday November 3, 7 PM, Colonie Library

***Antarctica*, Gerry Lemmo** Details will be provided in October newsletter.

Monday December 1, 7 PM, Five Rivers

***On the Human and Natural History of Florida*, Bob Budliger** Details in October newsletter.



Upcoming Audubon Programs

Thursday Sept. 11 at 7 PM at the Colonie Library.

Trinidad and Tobago - Gateways to the Neotropics, Wayne Petersen

Joint program with HMBC, see previous page for details.

HMBC PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Please join us for this new offering, a 3-part photo workshop with local experts Tom Lindsay and Warren Greene. Tom and Warren have both given programs to the Club, and Warren's photo of the Eastern Bluebird graces the cover of our 1996 book, *Birding New York's Hudson-Mohawk Region*.

Dates: Tuesday Sept. 16 (7:00 - 8:30 PM), Thursday Sept. 18 (7:00 - 8:30 PM), and Saturday Sept. 20 (8:30 AM - Noon).

Tuesday evening (classroom) will cover the basics, transitioning from point-and-shoot to single lens reflex (SLR) photography. Thursday (classroom) will focus more on techniques of wildlife photography. Saturday (field) will provide a chance to work in the field to practice what we learn during the week. Classroom sessions will be taught by Tom Lindsay; the field session will be taught by Tom Lindsay and Warren Greene. The course will include coverage of film, cameras, lenses, supports, blinds, exposure, and composition. Students should bring their own film and equipment to the sessions. Refreshments will be served.

Space is limited, on a first come-first served basis. Pre-registration is necessary, and a fee of \$20.00 is charged for HMBC members (non-member fee: \$35.00). This fee, payable in advance, covers all three sessions. Due to fixed costs to the Club, prorated fees for partial attendance are not possible. Refunds will only be made if your space can be filled from a waiting list.

To sign up, call Scott or Denise Stoner at 785-6760 and send the registration fee, payable to "Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club" to Scott Stoner at 6 Knob Hill Rd., Loudonville, NY 12211-1112.



Upcoming Field Trips

AUG 29
—SEPT 2
FRI—TUE

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

Coordinators: Gregg Recer & Cathy Graichen

899-2678

******* Reservations were by June 20 *******

Acadia is not only a beautiful coastal park, it is an excellent area to experience fall migration. We'll spend three full days (Sat, Sun, Mon) exploring the dense coastal forests, rocky headlands and exposed mountain tops of the park, and may also include a whale-watch trip in order to get a taste of pelagic birding off of Mr. Desert Island. Migrant songbirds will be one major focus of the trip, and we will also spend at least one morning at the Cadillac Mtn. hawkwatch. Limited to 12 total participants.

SEPT 7
SUN

PEEBLES ISLAND STATE PARK (morning)

Coordinators: Joan Cipriani

374-3729

Peebles Island State Park is a easily-birded undeveloped State Park that provides a good variety of habitats. This morning trip is timed for the peak of fall songbird migration and should present many opportunities to puzzle out those "confusing" fall warblers plus many other passerine migrants such as vireos, thrushes, kinglets and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Migrant water birds along the Mohawk River may also be found. Meet at 7:30 AM at the main parking area (see page 2 for directions).

SEPT 13 or 14
SAT or SUN

HAWK WATCH (all day)

Coordinator: Arthur Long

758-9283

Join us for our annual club trip to look for migrating birds of prey. Mid-September is a great time to be out hawk watching, especially since it is peak time for Broad-winged Hawks on the move south. The date of this trip will be Saturday, September 14, unless the weather forecast for that day looks poor for hawk migration, in which case there will be an announcement on Birdline (439-8080). Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Key Bank in Star Plaza at the intersection of Routes 20 & 155 in Guilderland.

SEPT 20
SAT

VISCHER FERRY NATURE & HISTORIC PRESEVE (morning)

Coordinators: Bernie & Chris Grossman

399-9159

Join us once again for this popular local trip. Herons and egrets should still be present and a good variety of shore birds can usually be found. There is also a possibility of migrant warblers, vireos and flycatchers. Meet at the main entrance at 8:00 a.m.



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

SEPT 26 - 28 CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY
FRI—SUN **Coordinator: Gerry Colborn** 237-3898 **gcolborn@nycap.rr.com**
Limit: 12 people
*****Reservations by July 1 ******

This will be our 4th 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.

OCT 12 JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE II (full day)
SUN **Coordinators: Gregg Recer & Cathy Graichen** 899-2678
Weather date MON, OCT 13

The focus at Jamaica Bay in October shifts from shorebirds to migrant waterfowl and hawks, although some late songbird and shorebird migrants will also be possible. With the right weather conditions, this can be a very good coastal hawk-migration area. This will be a full day trip so bring a lunch. Call the coordinators for the meeting time and place.

OCT 25 SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK (BATTLEFIELD) (morning/noon)
SAT **Coordinators: Scott and Denise Stoner** 785-6760 **scottjstoner@aol.com**

The Saratoga Battlefield is a nice place to explore in the mid-Fall. We should still see some foliage as we walk part of the Wilkinson Trail through grassland and woodland habitats. Birds we'll search for include bluebirds, woodpeckers, wild turkey and late fall migrant and early wintering passerines. In 2002 we had Fox Sparrow near the visitor center. Plan to walk about 2 miles on the trail in 3-4 hours, including some hilly terrain, and wear bright colored clothing as there is hunting in lands adjacent to the park.

Meet at the visitor center at 9:00 AM. The Battlefield is in Stillwater in Saratoga County and can be accessed from either route 4 or 32.

NOV 9 TOMHANNOCK RESERVOIR (morning)
SUN **Coordinator: Bill Gorman** 477-4921

This morning trip around the Reservoir should yield loons and grebes, a variety of ducks (possibly including sea ducks), and large numbers of geese. Meet at 8:30 a.m. on Lake Shore Drive near its junction with Route 7 (at the west end of the causeway)



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

NOV 15
SAT

***FIVE RIVERS INSTRUCTIONAL TRIP (morning)**

Coordinator: Ellen Pemrick

452-4384

Perfect for the beginning birder, a morning spent watching the feeders from the warmth of the Interpretive Building should be a fun and easy way to become familiar with the resident feeder birds of Five Rivers. Join us for a relaxing and informative morning. Meet inside the interpretive building (visitor center) by the feeders at 9:00 AM

NOV 23
SUN

HUDSON RIVER WATERFOWL AND FORT EDWARD GRASSLANDS (mid-morning to afternoon)

Coordinators: Joyce Miller

743-2200 ext. 485

justlookitup@yahoo.com

Mona Bearor:

745-8637

ramonabearor@adelphia.net

Join us as we search the Hudson River near Fort Miller in Washington County for migrant waterfowl such as Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Mergansers, plus perhaps Bald Eagles. Then on to nearby Fort Edward's grasslands to see what's arrived for the winter: Rough-legged Hawks, Snow Buntings and other treats are possible. Meet at 9 a.m. to carpool from the Schuylerville Central School, opposite the 50s Diner on Route 29. From the Northway, take Exit 14 and follow signs to Rte. 29 to Schuylerville.

Dead Bird Reporting Hotline

1-866-537-BIRD

If you see a dead bird on your property or in a public place in your community, please call.

Birds give us vital information about West Nile Virus and other environmental health concerns.

During this year's mosquito season, we are asking for your help in reporting dead birds.



This Fall

HMBC Night

November 17, Colonie Town Library. 7 PM. Save the date!
Celebrate your bird club at HMBC Night. Welcome new members, share information about favorite area birding spots and Club activities, and bring in prospective members!

...and in 2005

HMBC is hosting the 2005 Federation of NYS Bird Club's annual meeting.

Committee meetings are happening regularly. Anybody willing to participate, please call Lynn Huntington at 477-9317 or 477-2980 for information on the next planning meeting (September). A list of potential speakers has been compiled, as well as a list of potential workshops. Previous regional events hosted by the club have been well received and we expect nothing less of this one. The closer we get to this event, the more help will be needed. Please consider giving some of your time to ensure our success.



HMBC BOARD FOR 2003-2004

Officers

Note our new officers for 2003 - 2004

President:

Dan Welch
329 N. Schodack Rd
East Greenbush, NY 12061
477-2980

Vice-President:

Gregg Recer
23 Scotch Mist Way
Malta, NY 12020
899-2678

Secretary:

David Martin
134 Normanskill Rd.
Slingerlands, NY 12159
765-4982

Treasurer:

Dale Samuelson
Box 579.
Guilderland, NY 12084
355-0818

Directors

Linda Parr	478-9219
Ellen Pemrick	452-4384
Beverly Relyea	adkmountaingirl@hotmail.com
Scott Stoner	785-6760
Donna Zimmerman	869-6624

Committee Chairs

Conservation:	Patti Packer	399-4843
Birdline:	John Saville	399-5959
Programs:	Scott Stoner	785-6760
Field Trips:	Gregg Recer	899-2678
Membership:	Daniel Ruge	449-1087
Publicity:	Ann B'Rells	355-5615
Publications:	Bob Miller	274-2670
Records:	(vacant)	
Sanctuary:	Carl George	393-0629
Social:	Denise Hackert-Stoner	785-6760
Jr. Activities:	Deb Smith	399-9007



HMBC Contact Information

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

Email: contact@hmbc.net

HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

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, usually on the second Monday of odd-numbered months.

Next Board meeting:
September 8th, Monday @ Five Rivers

Newsletter Submissions

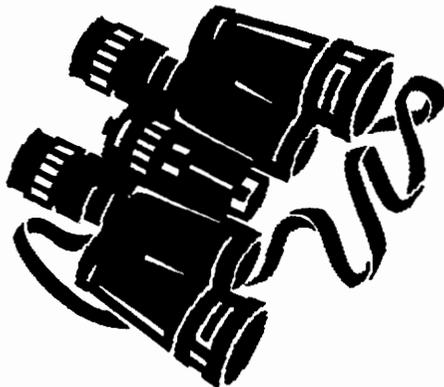
Please send all **electronic** submissions **via e-mail** to:
Bob Miller at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net

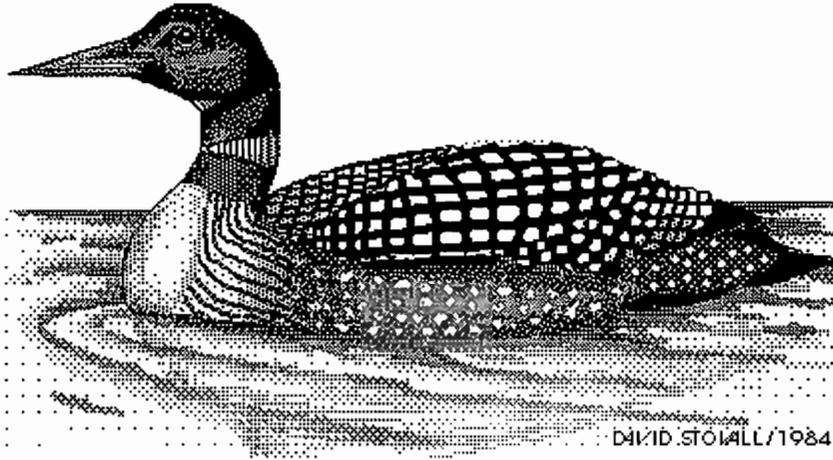
Send **hand-written** submissions to:

Bob Miller
1994 15th St.
Troy, NY 12180

All **typed** submissions should be sent to:

Cathy Graichen
23 Scotch Mist Way
Malta NY 12020





Afloat

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PHOTOS AND ARTWORK WANTED

Are you a bird photographer or artist? The Club is preparing a new, enlarged edition of "Birding New York's Hudson-Mohawk Region" and is looking for an outstanding color bird photograph for the cover and bird art to accompany the chapters. Members and non-members are welcome to submit photos and artwork for the book.

To enter the photo contest submit up to five color photographs to David Martin (address below). The highest quality printing is usually done from slides, but we will consider color prints. The deadline for receipt is May 31, 2004. Every submission must be an original photograph taken by the submitter. You must include a self-addressed envelope of appropriate size and with the correct postage so that we can return your entries. If you submit a print, do not include the negative. If a slide is the winner, the original, not a dupli-

cate, will be required for the printer. The cover photo will be selected by a panel of club members who do not know the identity of the submitter.

Artwork should be pen and ink or similar drawings suitable for small scale reproduction in black and white. At present we are planning to reprint some or all of the art from the first edition. If you are interested in contributing art, please call, email or write David Martin before Jan 1, 2004. The book committee will want to see samples of art and will work with contributors to select subjects to complement chapters and avoid duplication.

The HMBC will not pay for use of the work but will give appropriate credit in the book to the photographer and artist.

Contact information: David Martin, 134 Normanskill Road, Slingerlands, NY 12159. 765-4982. dlsbmartin@verizon.net

IMPORTANT MEETING NOTICE

November's meeting
will be held at
Five Rivers.

Not at the Colonie Library,
contrary to previously provided information,
which indicated the room would be available
for this meeting.



Field Trip Reports

Peebles Island September 7, 2003

Sunday, September 7, was a great day for birding Peebles Island State Park. With the rain we've had, the grass was lush with bushes and trees still green and full. We began by heading north through the wooded area hoping for early migrant warblers. Stopping for a calling BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, we were rewarded with sightings of a few BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS, ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, WARBLING VIREO, and WHITE-BREASTED NUT-HATCH. EASTERN WOOD PEWEE and GRAY CATBIRD were heard in the same area. DOWNY and HAIRY WOODPECKERS, along with a NORTHERN FLICKER made appearances.

When we reached the waterway by the cliffs (the Mohawk River), we viewed 2 GREAT BLUE and 1 GREEN HERON. As we continued a DOUBLED-CRESTED CORMORANT flew by and several BELTED KINGFISHERS were in the area. An OSPREY treated us to great looks as he posed on a tree branch on the island. It was not a good day for shorebirds. Our only sightings were several SPOTTED SANDPIPERS. Farther along the trail, we spotted a RED-TAILED HAWK and TURKEY VULTURE overhead, along with a small flock of CEDAR WAXWINGS flitting around in the trees. We also located 2 WOOD DUCKS, a few AMERICAN BLACK DUCKS, MALLARDS and CANADA GEESE.

As we left the waterway heading back toward the Parking area, we located a FIELD SPARROW, ROBIN and CHIMNEY SWIFTS overhead. In all, we totaled 37 species and had a lovely walk.

— Joan Cipriani

Hawk Watch, 2003 September 13, 2003

Just one more bird and we could have tied last year's remarkably unusual total! (For those of you who have forgotten---I certainly haven't---we tallied one raptor at the 2002 Hawk Watch.)

Another way to put this is, final score:

Eager Watchers 9

Raptors 0

Oddly, the Watchers, aka the Falcons or the Accipiters or the Buteos, were the losers!

— Arthur O. Long





Upcoming HMBC Programs

Monday Nov. 3 at 7 PM, Five Rivers (note changed location)

***Antarctic Passage - An Adventure by Sea* with photographer Gerry Lemmo.**

Sail the southern ocean aboard a Russian icebreaker, where massive icebergs flank the decks and seals and penguins play along the beaches of Earth's most southern lands. Journey by Zodiac

**Monday Nov. 17, Colonie Library
*New Member Night***

The Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club celebrates its second New Member Night, expanded this year to include all members as "HMBC Night." Members who joined in 2002 or 2003 will receive a special invitation in the mail, but all new - and old members are welcome. Officers, directors and committee chairs will be on hand to describe Club activities, and long-time local birders will give short presentations on some of their favorite birding hotspots within the greater Capital Region. Special refreshments will be served. All members are invited to participate, and to welcome new members, and to bring guests (prospective members)

**Monday December 1, 7 PM, Five Rivers. Holiday Party and Program
Crackers, Conchs, and Con Men, or Who Stole Florida? Bob Budliger**

Numbers of herons, egrets, and ibises are a mere tithe of what they were when Miami was a trading post. South Florida is over-run with exotics--parrots, coquis, walking catfish, cajeput trees. And the Mouse is King!

Bob Budliger, a 4th generation Floridian, will present a slide-illustrated tale of the changing natural history of this tropical former paradise. He will share his personal observations of environmental changes and how they have impacted native plants and animals. A brief historical perspective will draw upon the perceptions of his forebears, passed down in colorful tales of butcher birds, bull bats, and shite pokes.

Feel free to bring a dessert or snack to share; upcoming Christmas Bird Counts will also be discussed.

Bob Budliger, worked as a teacher and National Park Service Ranger before his career with the NYS DEC. He has served as president of the HMBC, the Audubon Society of the Capital Region, and the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs. Now retired, Bob continues to write, travel, lecture and teach all of us about the natural world he loves and knows so well. Come learn about Florida from our own expert!



Upcoming Audubon Programs

Thursday, November 13 at 7 PM, Five Rivers
***Costa Rica: A Week at Rancho Naturalista*, Sue & John Adair**

Most people don't think of July as a great time to visit the neotropics, but you might be surprised at how dry and accessible Costa Rica can be at that time of year. Come listen (and look) as Sue and John Adair recount their recent one-week trip to Costa Rica where they visited national parks, private universities and mountainous countryside finding birds (246), butterflies (32), reptiles & amphibians (14) and mammals (9). As always, Sue had her trusty camera with her, so many of the critters they found were captured on film for us all to enjoy.

Thursday, December 11 at 7 PM, Five Rivers
***The Lure of the West*, Scott and Denise Stoner**

Vast deserts, towering mountains, immense grasslands, bejeweled caverns, and badlands and canyons etched by majestic rivers; the American West has captivated hearts and minds throughout our nation's history. In this slide/music program we will visit some of the natural treasures of this great land, and look at some of the ways it has influenced human history. Great scenery, wildlife and wildflowers, wide open spaces, the tracks of early travelers, towns and cities large and small all make up today's West. Join us as we explore the land that inspired the dreams of pioneers.

Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society meeting of special note

Friday, November 21, at Oneonta Country Club in Oneonta, NY
Hawk Mountain's Keith Bildstein To Be Featured At Audubon Dinner

Keith L. Bildstein, Ph.D., Director of Conservation Science at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Kempton, Pennsylvania, will be the speaker at this year's Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society Charter Dinner.

Keith Bildstein is a renowned author and conservationist who has played a major role in turning Hawk Mt. from a bird lookout to an internationally-known center for bird conservation and education. He oversees Hawk Mountain's science and education programs, coordinates the activities of the Sanctuary's interns, graduate students, and visiting scientists, and manages the Hawk Mountain's growing databases. Among his research is the study of the behavioral ecology of Red-tailed Hawks, Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Harriers, and American Kestrels. He has been President of the Wilson Ornithological Society and the Colonial Waterbird Society, Vice-president of the Raptor Research Foundation, and is a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union. He edited the *Wilson Bulletin*, a quarterly journal of ornithology, from 1984 through 1987, and was a member of the editorial board of *The Auk* in 1997-2000. Keith's numerous publications include co-authoring "Raptor Watch: a Global Directory of Raptor Migration Sites" and "Hawkwatching in the Americas". He is currently writing a book on the migration ecology of raptors. DOAS is very pleased to have this opportunity to host one of the country's finest ornithologists and raptor experts. The dinner is open to the public. For reservation information, contact Julia Gregory, (607) 563-2924.



Program Reports

September Meeting: Trinidad and Tobago - Gateway to the Neotropics

The HMBC and Capital Region Audubon joined forces to lead off their fall program schedules on September 11 at Five Rivers. Speaking to a packed house on a tropically-warm evening, Mass. Audubon's field ornithologist Wayne Petersen presented "Trinidad and Tobago - Gateway to the Neotropics." Wayne gave a fascinating account of the human and avian history of these islands off the coast of South America. Some highlights included birding on the veranda at Asa Wright Nature Center, peering into a cave for the mysterious oil-bird, and the role of ants and various antbirds in the tropical ecosystem. As Wayne explained, these islands host representatives of most of the major Neotropical families including parrots, hummingbirds, woodcreepers, tropical ovenbirds, trogons, toucans, manakins, honeycreepers, etc. A boat trip in the evening showcased large numbers of the beautiful scarlet ibis!

Wayne's slides and expertise imparted a great sense of the birding experience in this two-island nation, a great introduction to tropical birding. He also described a variety of places to stay and trip logistics. We appreciate his taking time out of his very busy schedule to share his expertise with us (he was due back in Boston the next morning to begin a tour to Nova Scotia, a far-less tropical locale!).

— *Wayne Petersen*

Photography Workshop

HMBC held a photography workshop in mid-September. Under the expert tutelage of Club members/photographers Tom Lindsay and Warren Greene, the students learned the basics of cameras, wildlife photography, and spent a valuable morning in the field, learning the ins and outs of sophisticated equipment and techniques.

As an added bonus, the Club gained 5 new members! We appreciate Tom and Warren's time and patience, and hope to do something like this again in the future.

— *Scott Stoner*



Upcoming Field Trips

OCT 25 SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK (BATTLEFIELD) (morning/noon)
SAT **Coordinators: Scott and Denise Stoner 785-6760 scottjstoner@aol.com**

The Saratoga Battlefield is a nice place to explore in the mid-Fall. We should still see some foliage as we walk part of the Wilkinson Trail through grassland and woodland habitats. Birds we'll search for include bluebirds, woodpeckers, wild turkey and late fall migrant and early wintering passerines. In 2002 we had Fox Sparrow near the visitor center. Plan to walk about 2 miles on the trail in 3-4 hours, including some hilly terrain, and wear bright colored clothing as there is hunting in lands adjacent to the park.

Meet at the visitor center at 9:00 AM. The Battlefield is in Stillwater in Saratoga County and can be accessed from either route 4 or 32.

NOV 9 TOMHANNOCK RESERVOIR (morning)
SUN **Coordinator: Bill Gorman 477-4921**

This morning trip around the Reservoir should yield loons and grebes, a variety of ducks (possibly including sea ducks), and large numbers of geese. Meet at 8:30 a.m. on Lake Shore Drive near its junction with Route 7 (at the west end of the causeway)

NOV 15 *FIVE RIVERS INSTRUCTIONAL TRIP (morning)
SAT **Coordinator: Ellen Pemrick 452-4384**

Perfect for the beginning birder, a morning spent watching the feeders from the warmth of the Interpretive Building should be a fun and easy way to become familiar with the resident feeder birds of Five Rivers. Join us for a relaxing and informative morning. Meet inside the interpretive building (visitor center) by the feeders at 9:00 AM

NOV 23 HUDSON RIVER WATERFOWL AND FORT EDWARD GRASSLANDS
(mid-morning to afternoon)
SUN **Coordinators: Joyce Miller 743-2200 ext. 485justlookitup@yahoo.com**
Mona Bearor 745-8637 ramonabearor@adelphia.net

Join us as we search the Hudson River near Fort Miller in Washington County for migrant waterfowl such as Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Mergansers, plus perhaps Bald Eagles. Then on to nearby Fort Edward's grasslands to see what's arrived for the winter: Rough-legged Hawks, Snow Buntings and other treats are possible. Meet at 9 a.m. to carpool from the Schuylerville Central School, opposite the 50s Diner on Route 29. From the Northway, take Exit 14 and follow signs to Rte. 29 to Schuylerville.

DEC 20 (Sat) SCHENECTADY 2003 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
DEC 27 (Sat) SOUTHERN RENSSELAER 2003 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
JAN 3 ('04) (Sat) TROY 2003 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT



HMBC BOARD FOR 2003-2004

Officers

Note our new officers for 2003 - 2004

President:

Dan Welch
329 N. Schodack Rd
East Greenbush, NY 12061
477-2980

Vice-President:

Gregg Recer
23 Scotch Mist Way
Malta, NY 12020
899-2678

Secretary:

David Martin
134 Normanskill Rd.
Slingerlands, NY 12159
765-4982

Treasurer:

Dale Samuelson
Box 579.
Guilderland, NY 12084
355-0818

Directors

Linda Parr 478-9219
Ellen Pemrick 452-4384
Beverly Relyea adkmountaingirl@hotmail.com
Scott Stoner 785-6760
Donna Zimmerman 869-6624

Committee Chairs

Conservation: Patti Packer 399-4843
Birdline: John Saville 399-5959
Programs: Scott Stoner 785-6760
Field Trips: Gregg Recer 899-2678
Membership: Daniel Ruge 449-1087
Publicity: Ann B'Rells 355-5615
Publications: Bob Miller 274-2670
Records: (vacant)
Sanctuary: Carl George 393-0629
Social: Denise Hackert-Stoner 785-6760
Jr. Activities: Deb Smith 399-9007



HMBC Contact Information

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

Email: contact@hmbc.net

HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

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, usually on the second Monday of odd-numbered months.

Next Board meeting:

November 10th, Monday @ Five Rivers

Newsletter Submissions

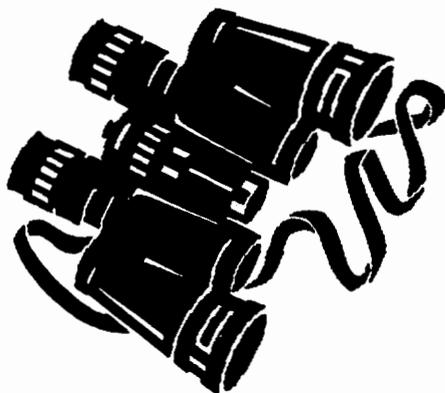
Please send all *electronic* submissions *via e-mail* to:
Bob Miller at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net

Send *hand-written* submissions to:

Bob Miller
1994 15th St.
Troy, NY 12180

All *typed* submissions should be sent to:

Cathy Graichen
23 Scotch Mist Way
Malta NY 12020





In 2005

HMBC is hosting the 2005 Federation of NYS Bird Club's annual meeting.

Committee meetings are happening regularly. Anybody willing to participate, please call Lynn Huntington at 477-9317 or 477-2980 for information on the next planning meeting (September). A list of potential speakers has been compiled, as well as a list of potential workshops. Previous regional events hosted by the club have been well received and we expect nothing less of this one. The closer we get to this event, the more help will be needed. Please consider giving some of your time to ensure our success.

FEATHERS
Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club
c/o Five Rivers EEC
Game Farm Rd.
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BIRDS OF THE HIGH ARCTIC

By Dick Patrick

After enjoying Gerry Lenuno's presentation at our November Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club meeting which included the birds of Antarctica, I thought I should give our Arctic birds their due.

The birds I will describe Patsy and I saw in Nunavut in August of 2000. On the odd chance that you do not know, Nunavut is the section of the former Northwest Territory of Canada which lies above the tree line and includes the majority of the islands that are way up there at the top of your map. At the date of our journey the Territory of Nunavut was only one year old. Nunavut with 20 miles of paved road makes up one fifth of the land area of Canada with about 27,000 people - less than our Town of Guilderland.

It is a lot closer than Antarctica. You just

drive to Ottawa and take a plane north. The trick is finding a group going in that direction. We would love to go back but have only found one such package for 2004 and it starts at \$9,000 per person, a bit steep for a two week vacation, not that it wouldn't be worth it.

Our trip left from Ottawa, refueled at Iqaluit [see map next page], the territorial capital, located at the head of Frobisher Bay, Baffin Island and continued north to the community of Nanisivik at the very top of Baffin Island. Just to put things in perspective in North America, only Resolute on Cornwallis Island and Grise Fiord on Ellesmere Island are permanent communities further north than Nanisivik.

Not that it has anything to do with birds but

MEETING NOTICE

The Colonie Library renovations are finally done and our January meeting will be held at:

The Colonie Library

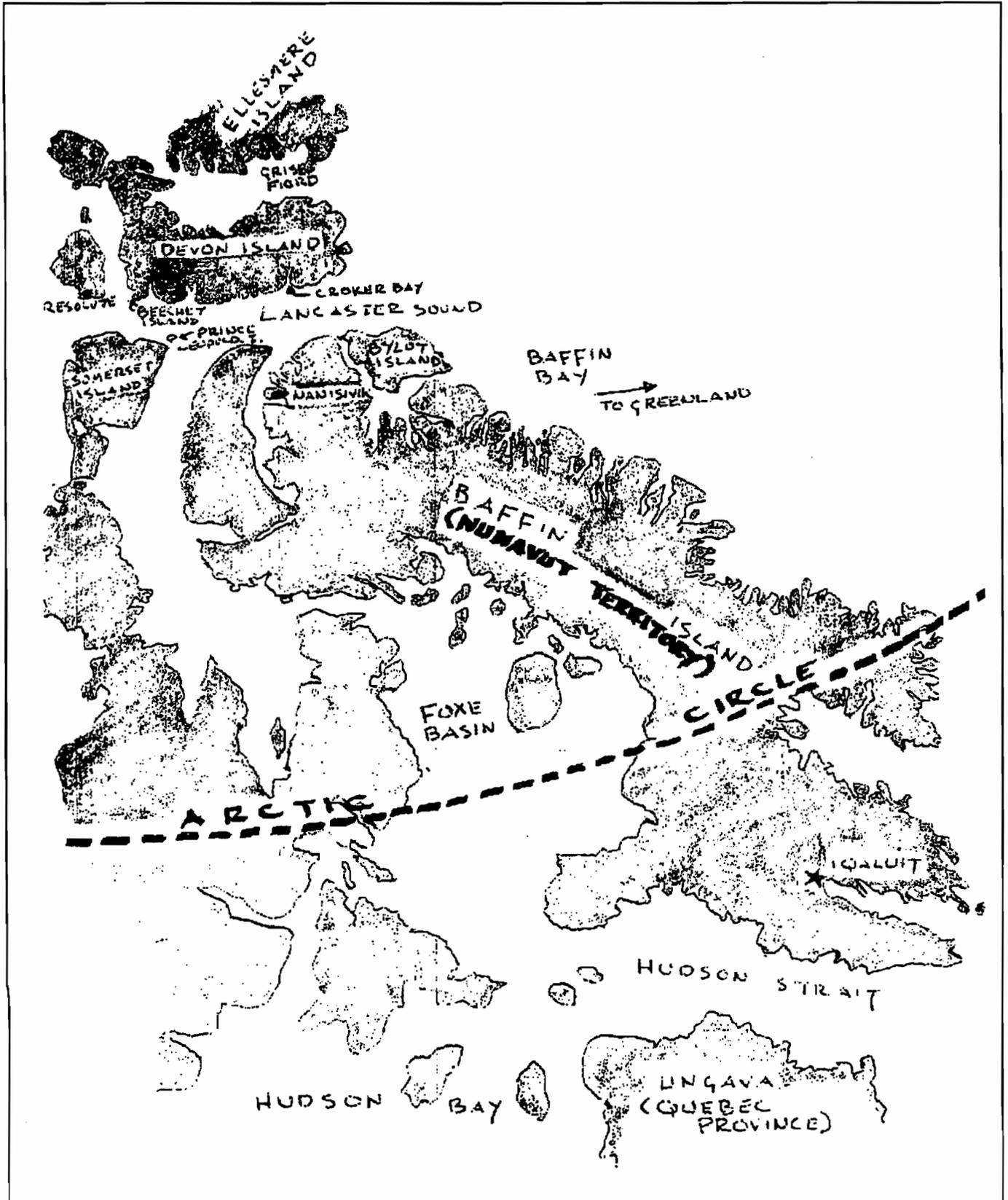
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Horseshoe Crab Harvesting

2004 Field Trips





BIRDS OF THE HIGH ARCTIC (continued)

you have to wonder why do people live in these end of the world locations. Well, it wasn't their idea. It was a combination of Canada feeling threatened that the major powers (the US and Russia) might not take Canada's claim to these northern islands seriously if no Canadians lived there. Plus the fact that the Inuit were not making it on their own as seal, whale and caribou hunters. If these animals weren't plentiful and they usually weren't, then the women, children and elderly starved. By the Canadian government gathering up these families, (Inuits don't have tribes) and building settlements with stores, schools and medical facilities to relocate them to it would appear that both the government and the people would be better off. As this is supposed to be an essay on birds and not sociology let's just say that is another story.

We were accompanied on our visit to the north by John Chardine a research scientist. Marine Ecosystems, with the Canadian Wildlife Service in Atlantic Canada. John is from New Brunswick on the Bay of Fundy.

If you go to the Arctic to fatten your "life list" you have gone in the wrong direction. John tells me we saw 18 species while we were in Nunavut. I was looking in the wrong direction for five of those.

As soon as we landed we saw Ravens and when our Russian ship set sail we were always accompanied by Fulmars. They never landed on the ship and I didn't notice them floating on the water either. I asked John, "what do they do, sleep while they are flying?" He replied that there is a theory that they can shut half their brain down to sleep

and navigate on the other half that stays awake. I wrote to Bird Watcher's Digest to see what they knew about that theory. So far no reply. Anyway the Fulmars were the one species that was always with us.

We sailed west right up Lancaster Sound, the main street of the Northwest Passage. Occasionally we would see a flock of small birds flying over the water in the far distance. "Purple Sandpipers" or another time "Red Knots on their way south" John would sing out. I am presuming he knew. He sounded like he did. Our first destination for birds was Prince Leopold Island (off Somerset Island) which from what we could see was a towering thousand foot high cliff inhabited by colonies of Fulmars, Thick-billed Murres and Black-legged Kittiwakes and also numbers of white Glaucous Gulls, the predators of the north.

Either by luck or design we arrived just as the mother murre announced to the chicks that her job was over and they are now on their own. So there we were bobbing up and down in our Zodiac as the murre chicks sail off the cliffs and plop all around us into the icy water. The mini-murres are "cheeping" and their "Dads" are replying with what can be best described as a growling sound. Somehow chick and father pair up and John tells us they are beginning their swim to Greenland. He says they will be adults by the time they arrive. Believe me this whole scene, the raining of chicks, the plopping in the water, the cheeps and the growls are an experience we will never forget and feel so blessed that we could be in the middle of it. There was an ugly side, too of course. Some



BIRDS OF THE HIGH ARCTIC (continued)

of the chicks didn't jump far enough out to make it to the water but landed at the base of the cliff where they were dispatched by the gulls.

Later John told us about the hunting regulations and bag limits for murre in the Maritimes where many freezers are stuffed with murre carcasses. Life must be tough in those provinces to depend on murre for the table.

The next bird life was at Croker Bay (Lat. 74° 35', someone asked Gerry Lemmo what his Antarctica latitude was). Croker Bay is on Devon Island. Devon is the largest uninhabited island in the world and is also the site of Beechey Island which holds the only marked graves from the 1845 Sir John Franklin Expedition. There we had two choices a two and a half mile hike along the bay to the foot of a glacier or a short walk to visit a fresh water pond. I selected wrong. I picked my way over the rocks toward the glacier. There was a polar bear way in the distance on the glacier which was the only one we saw. In Antarctica we heard that the guides carry sticks to poke off bothersome seals. I know that in Alaska our guides carried "bear spray." In the Arctic there are always guides at each end of a group, each with a rifle and the order of shells in the clip is always the same. The last two shells are buckshot in case the bear gets right on top of you.

Patsy's group went to the pond where as she is proofreading this she reminds me that she saw Purple Sandpipers up close and personal there as well as Snow Geese, King Eiders and Old Squaws Yes, Old Squaws. I am not giving in to the group of self appointed ninnys who are trying to deprive us of

the evocative bird names of our youth; Slate-colored Juncos, Baltimore Orioles, Sparrow, Pigeon and Duck Hawks for example. I like continuity. The bird names we learned as kids are always going to be the ones I use.

We sailed back east on Lancaster Sound to Pond Inlet on Baffin Island where we saw Water Pipets (another name from my youth) and Red-throated Loons. We also saw the remains of huts from the Dorset and the Thule people. Someone advanced a theory that these people survived the cold, dark winters by going into a state of torpor. Another interesting theory that I would love to know more about.

That sums up the birds we saw in Nunavut. We sailed east along the south coast of Bylot Island, a bleak, misty, barren, black rock-cliffed nightmare out into Baffin Bay toward Greenland where we ran into a hell-of-a storm, 24 foot waves and 50 knot (whatever that is) winds, projectile vomiting - but not by us! And there flying around or bobbing on the waves completely unconcerned were Starling sized Dovekies. God showing off, what only He can create! Unforgettable!

We did make it to Greenland where each town had four species of I guess you would say song birds; Lapland Longspurs, Wheat-ears, Snow Buntings and Common Redpolls. But what is really of interest in Greenland is how their communities are so prosperous so vibrant compared to what we saw in Nunavut.

When I was a child Dad took us to the Adirondacks. I couldn't imagine a more wonderful place. Then he showed us the American West! Dad, if only we could have shown you the Arctic.



Field Trip Reports

Saratoga Battlefield October 25, 2003

Foliage and woodpeckers were the highlights of this morning walk at the Saratoga Battlefield. Fifteen participants met us at 9:00 AM for a hike of the Wilkinson Trail at this site, more formally called the Saratoga National Historical Park. We were treated to a pleasant fall morning with many yellow and orange leaves still on the trees, highlighting the gray barks beyond. We hiked through grasslands and coniferous woods.

Total bird species were only 24, but we did have both COOPER'S and RED-TAILED HAWKS, and five species of woodpeckers, mostly thanks to Ellen's sharp eyes and keen interest in this group of birds. Viewing included PILEATED and RED-BELLIED together in the pine forest; NORTHERN FLICKER, DOWNY and HAIRY rounded out the list. Other species included YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET, and CEDAR WAXWING. As it clouded over and a cold wind came up, we encountered a group of a half-dozen or so DARK-EYED JUNCOS on the lawn of the Visitor Center, the first of the season for some of us...and a sign that winter was on its way.

— *Scott and Denise Stoner*

Fort Miller/Fort Edward Nov. 23, 2003

Ten birders enjoyed sunshine and spring-like temperatures in the mid-50s on November 23 in southwestern Washington County. The group spotted 36 species, including a NORTHERN SHRIKE and PEREGRINE FALCON. Six birders saw life birds: five with the shrike; one

with a flock of horned larks.

The trip started in Schuylerville, and caravanned across the Route 4 bridge to the unpaved River Road to Fort Miller. Along this route we viewed CANADA GEESE, AMERICAN BLACK DUCKS, MALLARDS, COMMON GOLDENEYES, HOODED MERGANSERS, COMMON MERGANSERS, two BELTED KINGFISHERS, RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, DOWNY WOODPECKERS, HAIRY WOODPECKER, NORTHERN FLICKERS, DARK-EYED JUNCOS and a NORTHERN CARDINAL. A NORTHERN SHRIKE posed for us in sun-lit shrubs and trees along the river side of Fort Miller, allowing us to see even the faint wavy barring across the breast.

The Fort Edward grasslands area (Cary Rd., Rte. 46, Blackhouse, Fitzpatrick Roads) yielded both distant and close looks at several hawks: NORTHERN HARRIERS (one was harrassing a ROUGH-LEGGED), RED-TAILED HAWKS, several ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS, AMERICAN KESTRELS, a PEREGRINE FALCON, plus a small flock of HORNED LARKS, EASTERN BLUEBIRDS, and a flock of eight or nine EASTERN MEADOWLARK.

Other species spotted were GREAT BLUE HERON (along the Champlain Barge Canal in Fort Edward), RING-BILLED GULL, ROCK PIGEON, MOURNING DOVE, BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, TUFTED TITMOUSE, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, EUROPEAN STARLING, AMERICAN TREE SPARROW, HOUSE FINCH, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, and HOUSE SPARROW.

— *Joyce Miller*

CONGRATULATIONS TO JOYCE

She tallied her 500th species
soon after leading this trip



Upcoming HMBC Programs

These programs are free and the public is welcome; refreshments will be served.

Monday January 5 at 7:00 PM, Colonie Library.

Natural Delmarva with Tom Lindsay

A large land mass comprised of parts of three states (Delaware, Maryland and Virginia), the Delmarva Peninsula stretches nearly 200 miles from north to south. It is bordered on the west by the Chesapeake Bay, and on the east by the Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Its position on the Atlantic flyway makes it an important area for migrating shorebirds, waterfowl, hawks, and other bird species.

Photographer Tom Lindsay will present a program feature the Delmarva's most productive parks, preserves, and refuges, and he will share tips for successful birding in every season.

Monday February 2 at 7:00 PM, Colonie Library

100 Years of Birdbanding - 53 on my watch by Bob Yunick

Scientific bird banding in North America celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2002. Administered by the U. S. Geological Service's biological resources division, over 60 million birds have been banded by professional and avocational banders in the U. S. and Canada.

In his presentation, Bob Yunick, who banded his first bird in Schenectady in 1950, the same year he joined the Schenectady Bird Club (predecessor to HMBC), will describe some of the history of banding as well as the techniques used, and his experiences in banding over 176,000 birds of 203 species in six U. S. states and the Canadian arctic. It will cover from hummers to hawks, showing some of the capture devices, and the kinds of bands used for different species.

Some of the stories about the finding of banded birds in distant places seem almost stranger than fiction, but all provide data on better understanding the marvel of migration and the challenges birds confront in order to survive.

Bob Yunick was introduced to banding in 1950 by Rudd Stone, one of the 1939 founding members of the Schenectady Bird Club, and obtained his own master permit in 1962. He has banded birds in West Virginia, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maine, New Mexico, and the Canadian arctic.

Bob has served as a board member and secretary of HMBC, editor of *FEATHERS*, and was the first voice of Dial-A-Bird (since renamed Birdline). He is an honorary member, current member of council, and a past president of the Eastern Bird Banding Association; member and past president of the Association of Field Ornithologists; an elective member of the American Ornithologists' Union; a certified North American Banding Council landbird trainer and bander, and NABC-certified hummingbird bander.

He co-authored with Peter Pyle of the 1987 edition of *Identification Guide to North American Passerines*, and was a collaborator in the revised, expanded 1997 edition, *Identification Guide to North American Birds, Part 1*. Bob has published extensively on banding projects using data on birds caught in his own yard, at his year-round Adirondack banding station at Jenny lake near Corinth, at Tom Palmer's near Amsterdam, and at Island Beach State Park, NJ. Since retiring in 1999, Bob has devoted new effort to hummingbird banding at Jenny Lake and to winter road trapping of raptors.



Upcoming HMBC Programs (continued)

Monday March 2 at 7:00 PM, Colonie Library

HMBC Merlins Report on the 2003 World Series of Birding

On May 10, 2003, a team of 4 young men represented the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club (HMBC) in the Youth Division of New Jersey Audubon's World Series of Birding. Come and meet David, David, Jackson, and Dickie and hear about the adventure that began in the Great Swamp at 3:00 AM and ended at the finish line at Cape May Light House at midnight. Along the way, they listed 109 species and visited some of the hottest birding spots in the Northeast. Through this event, the boys collected pledge money of over \$1400 for The Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, the conservation cause of their choice. Find out all about the HMBC Merlins' 2003 World Series Event, and how they plan to make the 2004 event even better.

Upcoming Audubon Programs

Thursday, January 8 at 7:00 PM, Colonie Library

OWLS - Movies by Bill Gorman

Almost every five year old can recognize an owl, yet most adults have never seen an owl in the wild. There are eleven species of owls found in upstate New York and several are permanent residents. Finding these owls in the wild is not easy, but viewing them on the screen is. Please join Bill for his movies showing all of the owls found in the eastern United States.

Program Reports

November Meeting, The Antarctic

On November 3, 2003, photographer Gerry Lemmo spoke about the Antarctic to an enthusiastic crowd of over 50 people at Five Rivers. Beginning the show in his cold-weather gear to get us in the mood for summer at the bottom of the world, Gerry then took us on a tour from the tip of South America to the Falkland Islands and the northern tip of the Antarctic peninsula. Tales of seasickness and violent seas highlighted the journey, but the scenery and wildlife made it all worthwhile! The scenery was hauntingly beautiful, with huge ice formations that dwarfed the large ship, and wildlife galore. Penguins, huge numbers of them in great colonies, stretched as far as the eye could see, reminiscent of the early days of bison and passenger pigeons on our great plains - or tales of endless flights of egrets over Floriday Bay. Antarctica is as remote and unspoiled as those lands used to be...we hope it will remain so, and we thank Gerry for showing it to us!
by Scott Stoner

New Member Night

HMBC's second New Member Night was held on November 17th - at the Colonie Town Library. Members who had joined the Club since January of 2002 received a special invitation, and many attended the event. The newcomers were joined by long-time Club members, many of whom gave presentations about their favorite local birding spots. The birding sites included Saratoga Battlefield, Carter Pond and Lake Taghkanic State Park, all presented by Scott Stoner, Papsscanee Preserve, Grafton State Park and Notch View in Western Massachusetts, all presented by Phil Whitney, Huyck Preserve, Partridge Run, Bear Swamp and Black Creek Marsh, all presented by David Martin, Five Rivers, presented by Craig Thompson, Vischer Ferry, presented by Frank Murphy, and Tomhannock Reservoir, presented by Bill Gorman. The audience was also treated to Bob Budliger's overview of birding the Capital Region throughout the year. It was a fun evening, and a treat to see so many new members, including three new members who joined that very evening!
by Denise Hackert-Stoner



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

JAN 11 ANNUAL STATE WATERFOWL COUNT (morning/full day)
SUN Coordinator: Gary Goodness 862-9680

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).

JAN 17—19 CAPE VINCENT/ PT PENINSULA (WITH POSSIBLE EXTENSION TO AM
HERST ISLAND)
SAT—MON Coordinator: Bill Lee 374-3426
Joint trip with the New York State Ornithological Association
Reservations by January 10

Areas such as Pt Peninsula and Cape Vincent, northwest of Watertown NY on Lake Ontario (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.

FEBRUARY 8 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR CAPE ANN/PLUM ISLAND (Feb 14 — 16)

FEB 13 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR MONTAUK PT/LI SOUTH SHORE (FEB 21 — 22)

FEB 14-16 CAPE ANN & PLUM ISLAND
SAT - MON Coordinator: Bill Lee 374-3426
Reservations by Feb 8

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.



Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

FEB 15 FORT EDWARD GRASSLANDS (mid-afternoon to dusk)
SUN **Coordinators: Joyce Miller** 743-2200 ext. 2485
Mona Bearor justlookitup@yahoo.com
745-8637
ramonabearor@adelphia.net

Short-eared Owls are usually seen each winter in the Fort Edward Grasslands, an Important Birding Area in Washington County. We also expect to see Rough-Legged Hawks, Horned Larks, perhaps Snow Buntings and other winter treats. Meet at 2 p.m. to carpool from the Schuylerville Central School. From the Northway (I-87), take Exit 14 and follow signs to Rte. 29 to Schuylerville. Schuylerville Central School is on the north (left if coming from Saratoga) side of Rte. 29, on the hill sloping down into the village of Schuylerville. This trip will be in conjunction with Southern Adirondack Audubon.

FEB 21—22 MONTAUK PT. & SOUTH SHORE LONG ISLAND
SAT—SUN **Coordinator: Bill Lee** 374-3426
Joint trip with the New York State Ornithological Association
Reservations by February 13

Join Long Island resident birder John Fritz to winter hot spots on Montauk Point and the South Shore barrier beaches of Long Island. Alcids — Dovekie, Common and Thick-billed Murres, Razorbill — Common and King Eider, rafts of Black, Surf and White-winged Scoters, Northern Gannet and Black-legged Kittiwake are regularly seen from Montauk Pt. Wintering Sparrows, finches and raptors along the barrier beaches often include rarities seldom seen elsewhere in New York State.

MAR 7 WATERFOWL OF THE HUDSON RIVER SOUTH (GREEN COUNTY) (Morning)
SUN **Coordinator: Bill Cook** 851-2678

On this spring morning waterfowl trip, we will search the Hudson River from Coxsackie to Catskill where the waterfowl usually congregate on their way north. Expect to see Canvasback, Goldeneye and many more species. There is also a good chance of seeing Bald Eagle. Meet at 8 AM at the Coxsackie boat launch site. Take the NYS Thruway to Exit 21B (Coxsackie — Route 9W), follow 9 W south for about 2 miles to Route 385, go left (east) on 385 (Mansion Street) and continue straight to the Hudson River where the road bears left into the boat launch site.



Feathers

HMBC BOARD FOR 2003-2004

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East Greenbush, NY 12061
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HMBC Contact Information

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

Email: contact@hmbc.net

HMBC website: <http://hmbc.net>

Reminder !!

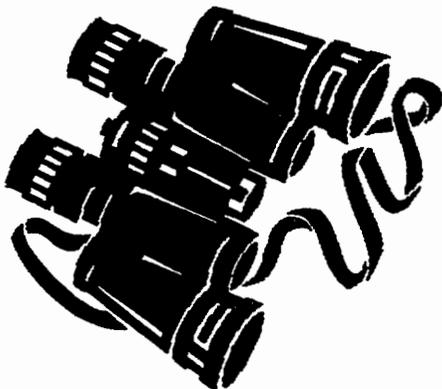
All HMBC Board meetings are open to all Club members. Meetings are held at Five Rivers Center or other local venues at 7:00 PM, usually on the second Monday of odd-numbered months.

Newsletter Submissions

Please send all *electronic* submissions *via e-mail* to:
Bob Miller at RobinMiller.Troy@verizon.net

Send all submissions to:

Bob Miller
1994 15th St.
Troy, NY 12180





Shorebird/Horseshoe Crab Conservation Campaign

We are all familiar with the astounding number of migrating birds that hit the beaches at Cape May each spring. For millennia, their arrival has been timed to coincide with the coming ashore of horseshoe crabs to lay their eggs. The migrating birds stock up on the fat from the eggs to allow them to continue their migration, many to the high Arctic.

Unfortunately horseshoe crabs are also caught for bait by commercial fishermen seeking conch and eel, in addition to being used as cheap fertilizer. There are numerous on-going efforts to limit the harvest of horseshoe crabs because the decline in their numbers is likely contributing to the marked decline in numbers of migrating birds, especially the red knot, a New Jersey state-threatened species.

Please learn more about this problem by reviewing the material at the New Jersey Audubon Society web site (www.njaudubon.org, search for "horseshoe") and at many other sites that can be found with a web search for "horseshoe crab" + "bird migration".

Special thanks to Patti Packer for suggesting this notice.

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

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