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## THE MOCKINGBIRD AND THE CARDINAL

*By Dick Patrick*

We twenty-first century bird watchers are so spoiled. There I am in my sack the other morning looking idly at the yew outside my bedroom window when I notice a Mockingbird and a Cardinal looking back at me. Do you older folks remember the thrill of sighting either of these birds for the first time? I doubt it was from your bed.

Dad decided it was time to take me and my oldest brothers to show us Washington DC. As it took about forever to drive that distance from Oneonta we holed up the first night in a motel on the outskirts of our Capital. And what's this? There is a television in the room! We sophisticates had certainly heard of television but we had not yet had the opportunity to share a room with our own private set. Now, test your memory banks. Do you remember motel TV's that required you to put a quarter in a slot for maybe 30 minutes of viewing? That is what this one was. But Dad was not only a cop he was also an electrician. By a little tinkering on Dad's part for one quarter we could watch TV as long as we pleased and then the set was kind enough to return the quarter.

We almost didn't get into Washington because of this. The Great Train Robbery (in black and white, of course) was playing the next morning and if we had a vote we would have much preferred lying in bed watching that old western to traveling into the city. Dad didn't give us that vote and before the morning was over we were face to face with our first Mockingbird in one of those big Sweet Bay Magnolias. And, over our heads were vultures. Black or Turkey? who knows? just seeing a buzzard was such a thrill. Dad was forgiven his "child-abuse" of dragging us

away from "the tube."

Several years later Dad decided it was now time to go Out West. I should give equal credit to Mother for volunteering to stay home on these early trips with the two or three babies or "younguns" as they were called then. In those days you didn't fly west and rent a car. We rode (and fought) every mile of the way in our "woody" station wagon. Early on in the trip we stopped at the restored village of New Salem, Illinois, site of Abraham Lincoln's early law practice. We did appreciate the history but what made that day so absolutely memorable was seeing our first Cardinal perched in a leafless tree that brisk spring morning so long ago.

Before I started writing this I did a bit of research in the family birdbook. The one which is still protected by Gramma's oilcloth cover as she knew it was the most used book in our home, Birds of America, 1936, with 106 full color plates by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. This is not just bird identification, this book is literature. At the time the Cardinal's northern-most limit was Central Park in NYC and the Mock-

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ingbird traveled north irregularly to Long Island. Both a far piece from Oneonta.

As you know with the passing years both birds appeared here more and more often until now, when I have two peeping—Toms outside my bedroom window. To carry this tale a bit further. Flocks of Tufted Titmice and Mourning Doves seemed to appear overnight. One day they were everywhere. Titmice we would have loved to have seen in our youth. I know our dirty little minds just

liked the name, but neither species were then to be found.

Did we lose anything from this northern movement of birds? When we were kids our bird feeder was often mobbed by Evening Grosbeaks. I can't speak for you, but I never see them now.

Tomorrow I am going to lay in bed even longer. Who knows maybe I'll see a Roseate Spoonbill looking in. I'll let you know.

## Troy Christmas Bird Count

*By Larry Alden*

The Troy Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, January 3, 2004 and recorded 65 species, which is a little lower than the ten-year average for this count. Warm weather (temperatures ranged from 35 to 46 degrees) and lack of river ice kept the birds from congregating, and resulted in only ten waterfowl species. It was rather windy and rainy in the pre-dawn hours and the Great Horned Owls were not calling, though Group A managed to get one. Snow cover consisted of bare ground with the remains of drifts, so the land birds were not concentrated, either.

Despite the weather, record high numbers (or ties) were seen for the following species: Cooper's

Hawk, Merlin, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Common Raven, Tufted Titmouse, Hermit Thrush, and Cedar Waxwing.

Merlin made its ninth appearance in 57 counts, Barred Owl made its eighth, Northern Saw-whet Owl was identified in only its second count (the only other year was 1984), Common Raven made its seventh appearance, Purple Finch was seen for the first time in five counts, and Pine Siskin was seen for the first time since 1990!

Many thanks go out to the 23 participants, and despite what the club trip schedule says, next year's Troy CBC will be held on Saturday, January 1, 2005.

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Group A: Bill Gorman, Doug Hamilton. 6:00 am - 4:00 pm (3 hrs, 1 mile on foot; 6 hrs, 75 miles by car. Also 1 hr, 4 miles owling).

Group B: Larry Alden, Steve Chorvas. 5:30 am - 7:00 am, 7:15 a.m. - 5:15 pm (2 hrs, 1 ¼ mile on foot; 7 ¾ hrs, 56 miles by car. Also 1 ¼ hr, 13 miles owling).

Group B1: Frank Murphy, Gary Goodness, Woody Gillies. 9:00 am - 4:30 pm (7 ½ hrs, 65 miles car)

Group C: Rich Guthrie, Lin Fagan, Sue Stewart. 7:30 am - 5:00 pm (2 hrs, ¼ mile on foot; 7 hrs, 55 miles by car. Also ½ hr, 3 miles owling).

Group D: Sue Adair, John Adair, Alison VanKeuren, Tom Palmer, Kathy Rowland. 6:00 am - 4:00 pm (4 ½ hrs, 3 miles on foot; 4 ½ hrs, 39 miles by car. Also ½ hr, 2 ½ miles owling). Note: Group D split up during the day and had a total of 10 party hours of daylight birding.

Group E: Bill Lee, Gene Vermilyea. 7:00 am - 4:45 pm (2 hrs, 2 miles on foot; 7 ¾ hrs, 73 miles by car).

Group F: Norton Miller, Andrew Miller, Phil Whitney. 7:30 am - 4:30 pm (2 hrs, 2 ½ miles by foot; 7

hours, 85 miles by car). Group G: Joan Cipriani, Peggy Rudis, Honey Hollen 7:00 am - 4:30 pm (2 ¼ hrs, 1 mile by foot, 7 ¼ hrs, 72 miles by car).



# Feathers

## 104th CBC (Winter 2003—2004) results for Troy *Compiled by Larry Alden*

	A	B	B1	C	D	E	F	G	Total
Great Blue Heron	1								1
Snow Goose	2			1					3
Canada Goose	2000	210	95	1945		79		9	4338
American Black Duck	65	4		25	14	15	8		131
Mallard	50	43	4	146	86	49	29	66	473
Ring-necked Duck				9					9
Bufflehead				1					1
Common Goldeneye	4			22		9			35
Hooded Merganser				6					6
Red-breasted Merganser				1					1
Common Merganser	9	19		21	9	15	5	1	79
Bald Eagle *	2				1	2		1	6
Northern Harrier			1						1
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1				1		2	4
Cooper's Hawk			1	1		1	1	2	6
Red-tailed Hawk	3	5	4	14	9	9	14	7	65
American Kestrel						1			1
Merlin							1		1
Ruffed Grouse		1		2					3
Wild Turkey	1	1				28			30
Ring-billed Gull	11	20		23	32	50	8	26	170
Herring Gull	3	6		9	1014	58	64	57	1211
Iceland Gull					3				3
Great Black-backed Gull	3	6		1	256	80	5	38	389
Rock Pigeon	135	57	10	370	128	201	220	159	1280
Mourning Dove	34	40	21	204	30	145	113	137	724
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	1		1					3
Great Horned Owl	1								1
Barred Owl								1	1
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1								1
Belted Kingfisher			1	1					2
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	2	2	4	1				10
Downy Woodpecker	4	17	19	22	9	9	9	6	95

Notes: Bald Eagles - 2 adults, 4 immatures; Bold = record number or tied record for the count

# Feathers



104th CBC (Winter 2003—2004) results for Troy  
Compiled by Larry Alden

	A	B	B1	C	D	E	F	G	Total
Hairy Woodpecker	1	6	4	5	6	1	2	2	27
Northern Flicker		2	1	4	2	3		3	15
Pileated Woodpecker			1	1			1		3
Blue Jay	85	59	32	110	10	60	14	62	432
American Crow	1050	575	350	95	195	649	940	67	3921
Fish Crow		2			3				5
Common Raven							2		2
Horned Lark				50				67	117
Black-capped Chickadee	36	81	140	110	36	25	104	46	578
Tufted Titmouse	6	11	14	32	7	3	7	72	152
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	4		3					8
White-breasted Nuthatch	5	16	15	16	3	3	11	8	77
Brown Creeper	1	3	2						6
Carolina Wren		1						2	3
Golden-crowned Kinglet		6	2	1					9
Eastern Bluebird	2	3	3	14	6	3		13	44
Hermit Thrush		1			1				2
American Robin	41	15	25	9	2	3	31		126
Northern Mockingbird	1					3	4	2	10
European Starling	1500	184	500	49	179	1374	1285	491	5562
Cedar Waxwing	15	1	43	33	120	107		55	374
American Tree Sparrow	16	42	19	24	22	51	49	98	321
Song Sparrow	3	3	1		4	3	1		15
White-throated Sparrow		25	7	3	10	7	4		56
Dark-eyed Junco	36	58	59	47	32		34	35	301
Northern Cardinal	1	14	5	19	22	5	14	8	88
Purple Finch							2		2
House Finch	20	7	13	64	14	12	24	31	185
Common Redpoll			1	5	10				16
Pine Siskin							2		2
American Goldfinch	54	38	26	37	12	10	39	21	237
House Sparrow	24	46	11	67	70	170	150	21	559

Total Birds	5229	1636	1432	3627	2358	3244	3197	1616	22339
Total Species	40	41	33	45	35	36	33	33	65



## Field Trip Reports

### Acadia National Park

August 30 – September 1, 2003

Ellen Pemrick, Beverly Relyea, Gregg Recer, Bryce Recer and Cathy Graichen met in Ellsworth, Maine for a long weekend at Acadia National Park. On Saturday morning, we started the trip with a visit to the Sieur de Monts Spring area. The weather was a little overcast, but no serious rain. Migrant songbirds flitted in the tops of the trees and we identified RED-EYED VIREO, BLACK-THROATED BLUE, BLACK-AND-WHITE and BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS. While not seeing large flocks, the birds occasionally came down near eye level, but still hid in the vegetation making identifications challenging. After we finished at the springs, we headed up the auto road to the top of Cadillac Mountain to visit the hawkwatch. Although still a bit early in the fall hawk watching season, the station was manned each day by National Park Rangers. We ate our lunches and studied the birds. The vantage from Cadillac allows birders to watch the hawks migrate across the sound. The challenge is to filter out the gulls flying back and forth around the sound. We had a nice view of a BALD EAGLE, but no other hawks. After the hawkwatch, we hiked on Great Head above Sand Beach. From the trail, we found DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS and BLACK GUILLEMOTS.

Perhaps the highlight of the trip was the whale watch into the Gulf of Maine. In addition to Humpback whales (always a treat), we had excellent views of GREATER SHEARWATERS, a couple of SOOTY SHEARWATERS, and several WILSON'S STORM-PETREL. A PARASITIC JAEGER and a POMARINE JAEGER were also seen. They flew alongside of the ship giving us a chance for excellent views. A NORTHERN GANNET also flew by. A few RED-

NECKED PHALAROPES were seen swimming as the ship drove past. Perhaps the strangest bird at sea was THE RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH that perched briefly on the ship, taking a mini-break before continuing its trip south. After the whale watch returned we headed back to the hawkwatch to see if the hawk flight was any busier. OSPREY, TURKEY VULTURE, SHARP-SHINNED, and BROAD-WINGED HAWKS provided more variety. After the hawkwatch we took the opportunity to drive the auto route and take in the scenery along Sand Beach, Thunder Hole and Otter Cliffs.

On Monday morning, we traveled to the eastern side of Mount Desert Island and visited Bass Harbor Lighthouse and hiked the coastal trails. We encountered a few waves of fall migrants that included COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, BLACK-THROATED GREEN, NORTHERN PARULA, MAGNOLIA, AMERICAN REDSTART and RED-EYED VIREO. A lunch break at Seawall provided an opportunity to study the common gulls in the area: BLACK-BACKED, RING-BILLED, HERRING and LAUGHING. A trip to the Visitor Center to turn in Bryce's Jr. Ranger packet and receive his patch wrapped up the trip to one of the most diverse National Parks.

— Cathy Graichen and Gregg Recer

### Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge October, 12 2003

Seven HMBC members visited Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge on Sunday Oct 12, 2003. The day was cool with occasional showers. Autumn is a good time to visit for the late shorebirds and waterfowl migrants. We viewed the East Pool, but could not get very far around since the water levels had risen after recent rains and were now man-



## Field Trip Reports (continued)

aged for waterfowl use. We did study a few shorebirds including GREATER and LESSER YELLOWLEGS, and DUNLIN. Some of the waterfowl in the East Pool included BLACK DUCK, MALLARD and MUTE SWANS.

We quickly headed back for the walk along the West Pool to Terrapin Point. The vantage points of the pool and of the bay provided several waders include SNOWY and GREAT EGRETS, GLOSSY IBIS, GREAT BLUE HERON and an immature LITTLE BLUE HERON. Waterfowl were plentiful in the pool and several species identified included AMERICAN WIGEON, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, RUDDY DUCKS. Along the trail to Terrapin Point a large group of shorebirds mixed with gulls provided some of the most variety and included AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER, BLACK-NECKED STILT, WILLETS, SEMI-PALMATED SANDPIPERS, BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS and RUDDY TURNSTONES.

We found a few other species expected in this area including BOAT-TAILED GRACKLES and BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS. A few hawks moving around provided views for those who looked upwards at the right time. These included OSPREY, SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, AMERICAN KESTREL and NORTHERN HARRIER.

The day ended with a stop at a park near the Whitestone Bridge looking for Monk Parakeets. None were found but it was a great chance to add some late migrants and other hardy songbird species including RUBY-CROWNED and GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, AMERICAN ROBIN.

— *Cathy Graichen and Gregg Recer*

### Tomhannock Reservoir November 9, 2003

It was a clear, sunny and cold morning when we arrived at the reservoir. The water was calm and many CANADA GEESE congregated

near the causeway. As we checked this area, we turned up a COMMON LOON, RUDDY DUCKS, COMMON GOLDEDEYE together with COMMON and HOODED MERGANSERS. At our first stop on the east side of the reservoir, we watched an adult BALD EAGLE fly over the water and then alight in a nearby tree. At Nortonville Road, we had nice views of both COMMON and HOODED MERGANSERS. In the red pine grove before Otter Creek, we found BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, DOWNY WOODPECKER and a BROWN CREEPER. On a small pond off Tomhannock Road, we saw several GADWALL, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, AMERICAN WIGEON, BUFFLEHEAD, MALLARD, and BLACK DUCKS and enjoyed lingering fly-bys of COOPER'S and RED-TAILED HAWKS. Otter Creek Inlet produced nothing new, but the north end of the reservoir turned up RING-NECKED DUCKS and a pair of NORTHERN PINTAILS. We ended the morning near the pumping station with a small flight of SNOW GEESE, a WILD TURKEY and many noisy crows. It was a great day for birding, but the bird numbers were low with no unusual finds.

Species: COMMON LOON (5), DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (10), CANADA GOOSE (1000), SNOW GOOSE (25), MALLARD (40), BLACK DUCK (40), GADWALL (4), NORTHERN PINTAIL (2), GREEN-WINGED TEAL (12), AMERICAN WIGEON (15), RING-NECKED DUCK (60), COMMON GOLDENEYE (50), BUFFLEHEAD (8), RUDDY DUCK (30), HOODED MERGANSER (50), COMMON MERGANSER (12), COOPER'S HAWK (1), RED-TAILED HAWK (5), BALD EAGLE (1), WILD TURKEY (1), HERRING GULL (1), RING-BILLED GULL (8), ROCK DOVE (50), MOURNING DOVE (2), DOWNY WOODPECKER (1), BLUE JAY (6), AMERICAN CROW (500), FISH CROW (1), BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE (4), TUFTED TIT-MOUSE (4), WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (1), BROWN CREEPER (1), NORTHERN MOCKING-BIRD (1), AMERICAN ROBIN (1), AMERICAN



## Field Trip Reports (continued)

GOLDFINCH (1), DARK-EYED JUNCO (4), WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (2), SONG SPARROW (1), HOUSE SPARROW (10).

— *Bill Gorman*

### Campfire & Owls January 11, 2004

Twenty members braved some very cold temperatures to join this outing at Five Rivers Center in Delmar. We had a good compliment of birds at the feeders at the Visitor Center as we assembled for the walk. As usual for this time of year, most of the birds found during this late afternoon program were seen right there at the feeder.

After enjoying the feeder birds, we took a half-hour walk along snowy roads and paths to the Adirondack Leanto built years ago by Boy Scout Troop 75. The leanto is a great

gathering and campfire place for groups. Scott and Denise Stoner had a nice roaring fire going, a rack of hot dogs cooking and the fixin's for hot chocolate ready. Although we had a crisp evening with no wind, the hoped-for Great Horned Owls were not heard. This year, our local pair seems to have changed their nesting area, or at least their early evening hooting area, to a location further downstream in the Vlomankill valley. In fact, since the program date, they are being heard most evenings right behind my house, about ½ mile downstream from the leanto area.

Even though the owls did not cooperate, the hot dogs and hot chocolate were much more predictable. They tasted great, and really hit the spot on such a cold evening. Many thanks go to Scott and Denise - it takes a lot of behind the scenes work to stage this annual event.

— *Alan Mapes*





## Upcoming HMBC Programs

**Monday March 1<sup>st</sup>** 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.

### **Annual Meeting and Banquet**

**Thursday April 22<sup>nd</sup>** at 7PM, Fuller Road Fire Department Banquet Hall

***Seabird Restoration***, Steve Kress

HMBC Annual Meeting with Banquet - details sent to members

Dr. Stephen Kress will discuss the exploitation of Maine seabirds for food and feathers and discuss why seabirds such as puffins, murres, gannets and terns require management to encourage recolonization. He will review techniques for restoring colonies of puffins, terns, storm-petrels and other seabirds. He will also highlight other seabird restoration projects that rely on the techniques developed in Maine. These projects include efforts to restore Common Murres in California, Caspian Terns in the Columbia River and and Short-tailed albatross to Midway Island.

**Monday May 3<sup>rd</sup>** at 7:00 PM, Colonie Library

***A Cultural Birding Trip to Assam and Bhutan***, Don and Donna Traver

Ibisbills nest on stony islands in the wildly flowing rivers that drain the great Himalayas. Don and Donna Travers' goal is to see at least one species from each of the world's 204 bird families. With only a few families remaining, the Ibisbill, both unusual bird and the sole member of its family, provided an "excuse" for one of the Travers' most memorable trips.

As the route to Bhutan requires a stop in India, a pre-trip extension to Kaziranga National Park in the state of Assam was impossible to turn down. Here, they were able to come within meters of a magnificent, highly endangered Indian one-horned rhinoceros while astride an elephant! Phenomenal birding in India was surpassed in their memories only by that of tens of thousands of people living seemingly on top of each other in the noisiest place they have ever been.

After an overnight delay in Katmandu, the capital of Nepal, the Travers enjoyed a spectacular flight past four of the five highest mountains in the world, enroute to Paro, the only airport in Bhutan. The placid and harmonious culture of Buddhism permeates the sky, mountains and people of this Kingdom and can be felt all around you. Three weeks here were spend birding along a sometimes perilous road that is the only one in the country. They were fortunate to see five (5) Ibisbills!

Don and Donna Travis have taken time out of their search for bird families to twice travel here to share their experiences with the HMBC. They have previously presented about Chile and New Zealand and the sub Antarctic Islands. Come join them for their third program, and learn about the birds and people of Assam and Bhutan!



## Future HMBC Event

### HMBC Annual Literary Night

**Wednesday April 7<sup>th</sup>** at 7:00 PM, Five Rivers

Everyone is welcome to bring a nature-related poem or essay, and a dessert to share.

This annual event has become a staple of the Club, as many of our resident writers and lovers of literature look forward to sharing some of their favorite pieces each year. If you are a "regular" to our literary night, or if you're an interested first timer, we hope you will join us at Five Rivers with a few of your favorite nature poems or essays to share. These may be published works (either your own or others'), or unpublished writings. Some people even prepare works especially for this occasion each year! If you are a non-writer who would enjoy an evening of nature writings read aloud, you are very welcome to attend. Our evening is traditionally served not only with the above-mentioned food for the mind and soul, but also with plenty of food for the body as well, in the form of delicious desserts provided by our participants and audience members! So join us on April 7, as we gather to enjoy reading, listening, and eating dessert in the company of friends.

Reservations are NOT needed, but feel free to contact Denise Hackert-Stoner at 785-6760 if you have any questions.

## Program Reports

### **December Meeting, *Crackers, Conchs, and Con Men, or Who Stole Florida?***

With winter knocking on the door, at least 60 people turned out to Five Rivers on December 1 to attend the HMBC's Holiday party and to hear Bob Budliger's tales of human and natural history in Florida. This talk inspired much anticipation and curiosity in the minds of the audience. Knowing that Bob is a native Floridian, and known for his storytelling as well as his breadth of knowledge, people came with high expectations - that were fully fulfilled.

"Crackers" are described variously, including folks who lived close to the land in the northern half of Florida - as well as other places in the south. The crackers are gone now, but their tales remain.

Bob described the Florida of his youth, where people ate everything from cranes to ducks to turtles, and described wildlife in terms like "shite poke," Hell-diver, fish hawk, hoot owl (barred was an "eight-hooter") and buzzards.

Bob's relatives did not necessarily appreciate his understanding of the need to preserve endangered species, yet knew that replacing the turtles' egg-laying habitat with high-rise hotels did far more to endanger a species than a person eating one or two in a season. One of his hard-of-hearing relatives also had trouble understanding his father's name. Finally, after hearing "Budliger" shouted many times, louder and louder, heard it as "boodligger" or bootliger" and misunderstanding, remarked, "not much business in that these days." (note - the term "bootlegger," which the spell checker suggests as an alternative to "Budliger" - originated from the practice of hiding alcohol in boots.)

Spaniards landed on the coast in 1513, but never settled Florida. Native Timucuas, Tequestas, and Calusas died out by the 1700s and were replaced by Creeks from the north. These were "runaways," in the Muskogee language Seminole. Seminoles slowly retreated to the Everglades as a result of a succession of wars with the Cracker settlers and Cavalry. With a different language, the Miccosukee split



## Program Reports (continued)

off from the Seminoles in the 1970s. Three are today about 2,500 Seminoles and 550 Miccosukees.

Tories from the Bahamas settled in Key West and developed a salvage industry that made Key West one of the richest towns in the U.S. Legend has it that they used conch shells for signaling. Key West evolved through sponging, cigar-making, and U.S. Naval activities to its current reputation as a party town.

Florida is long, north-to-south, spanning 6.5 degrees of latitude. I-75 provides a good cross section of habitats and never gets above 200 ft. I-95, which most of us use, shows little more than megalopolis.

We are familiar with the river of grass of the Everglades, where the "grass" is actually sawgrass, a sharp-edged sedge. Native long-leaf and slash pines were the basis of the "naval stores" industry. Until the early 1900s, trees were tapped for turpentine and pitch, important to the wooden ship fleets of the world for caulking, waterproofing, and treatment of ropes. Florida reputedly was the source of three-quarters of the naval stores used worldwide. The bark of mangroves from Flamingo went to factories for tannic acid; buttonwoods were used to make charcoal. The bark of the gumbo limbo was used to make mucilage; its red and peeling bark also leads to its nickname of tourist tree. Now, threats to Florida include non-native invasive plants, such as Casuarina (Australian pine) and melaleuca.

Modern day Florida has its areas that are rich and poor, including the great dichotomy within Palm Beach county with both West Palm Beach and Belle Glade. The mouse is king, and birding only a small percentage of the vast tourism industry. In fact, when queried by the Hendry County Sheriff's office in rural south Florida, Bob replied that he was birdwatching. The officer commented, "I've heard there's people who do that"!

Although alligators were rare and endangered 30 years ago, they are now a nuisance. Other species are in various states of decline or increase. Wading birds are reduced to 5 to 10 percent of their earlier numbers. Liguus tree snails, with about 30 named varieties of one species, have suffered from collectors' greed. Entire hammocks worth of snails were collected, then the hammock was burned to destroy the rest, increasing the scarcity - and value - of the collection.

Crocodiles are only found in extreme south Florida, such as at the Flamingo marina in the Everglades National Park, and at Ding Darling NWR on Sanibel Island. The huge croc there, moved miles south to near Marco Island for visitor safety, promptly returned and is now monitored by refuge staff. Sea Turtles, now protected, were once a source of eggs and meat at one time; people would turn over the adult females, when they came ashore at night to lay their eggs on the beaches. Unable to right themselves, they were then butchered the next morning.

Hurricanes are an integral part of Florida's history. The hurricane of 1935, which devastated the keys, destroyed Flagler's attempts to link these fragile islands by rail. An earlier plan to make a rail line from Miami to Flamingo, then to Key West by ferry, had been scrapped because Florida Bay was too shallow. That potential rail line is now the main park road in the Everglades NP. Donna went through the Everglades in 1960 and destroyed the old Coot Bay Ranger Station, which was never rebuilt. We all remember Andrew in 1992, which devastated Homestead but spared the southern part of the Everglades due to its compact size. Devastating floods caused by hurricanes in the 1920's prompted efforts to control the flooding - and the waters of south central Florida, whose flow is so critical to maintaining the everglades.

The Army Corps of Engineers replaced the meanders of the Kissimmee River with a straight canal, and diked up Lake Okeechobee. Although it is this same Army Corp that is now putting the bends back into



**Program Reports (continued)**

the river, and a key part of the \$7.8 billion plan to replumb south Florida and restore some semblance of more natural flow to the everglades, efforts are being resisted by Big Sugar, which has significant economic interests in the agricultural areas south of Lake Okeechobee.

What is the future of Florida? One thousand new residents arrive every day, and population growth has far outpaced all expectations. The Florida of Bob's youth is long gone, and he does not have very high hopes for its future.

by Scott Stoner with Bob Budliger

**January Meeting Natural Delmarva**

Returning to the Colonie Library after a year's absence, the HMBC kicked off 2004 on a snowy night with an evening tour of the Delmarva Peninsula. Comprised of Delaware and parts of Maryland and Virginia, the Delmarva is rich with refuges, waterfowl and shorebirds. Photographer and Club member Tom Lindsay showed us its highlights and birding strategy, focusing on key refuges including Blackwater and Bombay Hook as well as lesser-known locations such as Cape Henlopen State Park. From the spring shorebird spectacle along the Delaware bayshore to the late fall skies filled with snow geese, the Delmarva is surprisingly close to the Capital Region - and definitely worth a visit! We thank Tom for sharing his experiences and photographic success with a large crowd of interested HMBC folks.

by Scott Stoner

**Boy Scouts, get your Merit Badge in Bird Study**

- Saturday, May 15 at Crystal Grove Diamond Mine & Campground, near St. Johnsville. Space is limited to 12 scouts, and some pre-work is required, so register early. The event is open to all troops at no charge. For more information, call Cecily Myers at 1-800-KRY-DIAM.
- Below is an excerpt from the official requirements for the Merit Badge:
- Explain the need for bird study and why birds are useful indicators of the quality of the environment.
- Show that you are familiar with the terms used to describe birds by sketching or tracing a perched bird. Demonstrate that you know how to properly use and care for binoculars. Explain what the specification numbers on the binoculars mean. Show how to adjust the eyepiece and how to focus for proper viewing. Show how to properly care for and clean the lenses.
- Demonstrate that you know how to use a bird field guide. Show your counselor that you are able to understand a range map by locating in the book and pointing out the wintering range, the breeding range, and/or the year-round range of one species of each of the following types of birds: Seabird, Plover, Falcon, Warbler or vireo, Heron or egret, Sparrow, Nonnative bird (introduced to North America from a foreign country since 1800)
- Observe and be able to identify at least 20 species of wild birds. Prepare a field notebook, making a separate entry for each species, and record the following information from your field observations and other references. Note the date and time. Note the location and habitat. Describe the bird's main feeding habitat and list two types of food that the bird is likely to eat. Note whether the bird is a migrant or a summer, winter, or year-round resident of your area.

(Continued on page 14)



## Upcoming Field Trips

FEB 14—16 CAPE ANN & PLUM ISLAND **CHANGED TO MARCH 5 — 7**

FEB 15 FORT EDWARD GRASSLANDS (mid-afternoon to dusk)  
SUN **Coordinators: Joyce Miller**

**Mona Bearor**

**743-2200 ext. 2485**  
**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 — Dovkie, 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 5—7 CAPE ANN & PLUM ISLAND  
SAT - MON **Coordinator: Bill Lee**  
**Reservations by Feb 8**

**374-3426**

### **NOTE DATE CHANGE**

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)

APR 24  
SAT

BETAR BYWAY (morning)  
Coordinators: **Mona Bearor**

**745-8637**  
**ramonabearor@adelphia.net**  
**Carol Fischer (Southern Adirondack Audubon)**  
**cfischer44@aol.com**

The Betar Byway is a paved walking/biking path along the Hudson River in the Village of South Glens Falls. This easy half-mile hike will reveal land and water residents and perhaps some early migrants. This trip is perfect for newer birders and anyone just wishing to enjoy a spring morning. Meet at 7:30AM at the parking lot at the end of First St. First St. is a left turn (from the south) off Rt.9 in the village of South Glens Falls, 2 blocks south of the bridge over the Hudson River. This trip will be in conjunction with Southern Adirondack Audubon.

APR 29  
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.

- .....
- (Continued from page 11)
  - Be able to identify five of the 20 species in your field notebook by song or call alone. For each of these five species enter a description of the song or call, and note the behavior of the bird making the sound. Note why you think the bird was making the call or song that you heard.
  - Do ONE of the following: Go on a field trip with a local club or with others who are knowledgeable about birds in your area. Keep a list or fill out a checklist of all the birds your group observed during the field trip. Tell your counselor which birds your group saw and why some species were common and some were present in small numbers. Tell your counselor what makes the area you visited good for finding birds.
  - By using a public library or contacting the National Audubon Society, find the name and location of the Christmas Bird Count nearest your home and obtain the results of a recent count [found earlier in this newsletter]. Explain what kinds of information are collected during the annual event. Tell your counselor which species are most common, and explain why these birds are abundant. Tell your counselor which species are uncommon, and explain why these were present in small numbers. If the number of birds of these species is decreasing, explain why, and what, if anything, could be done to reverse their decline.
  - Do ONE of the following. For the option you choose, describe what birds you hope to attract, and why.
    - Build a bird feeder and put it in an appropriate place in your yard or another location.
    - Build a birdbath and put it in an appropriate place.
    - Build a backyard sanctuary for birds by planting trees and shrubs for food and cover.
  - From <http://www.meritbadge.com/bsa/mb/029.htm>
- .....



## HMBC BOARD FOR 2003-2004

### Officers

**President:**

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

**Vice-President:**

Gregg Recer  
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899-2678

**Secretary:**

David Martin  
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Slingerlands, NY 12159  
765-4982

**Treasurer:**

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Box 579  
Guilderland, NY 12084  
355-0818

### Directors

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

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Birdline:	John Saville	399-5959
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Field Trips:	Gregg Recer	899-2678
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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](mailto:contact@hmbc.net)

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

### HMBC Board Meetings

Next meeting is Monday, March 8th at Five Rivers.

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 Contributions Desired

- Have anything you think other birders would be interested in?
- Have a favorite birding spot you want to share?
- Are there any stories that might inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the address at right.

### Newsletter Submissions

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

Send all **paper** submissions to:

**Bob Miller**  
**1994 15th St.**  
**Troy, NY 12180**



## Photos and Artwork Wanted

There still may be time to submit your artwork for inclusion in the Club's new, enlarged edition of "Birding New York's Hudson-Mohawk Region". Desired is 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 duplicate, 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. 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.

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

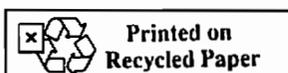
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## EVERGLADES!

*By Scott Stoner*

"There are no other Everglades in the world." So wrote Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, in her 1947 book, "Everglades: River of Grass."

That same year, Congress created Everglades National Park, a place that I first visited in 1979. I have since explored nearly 40 of our great national parks, but it is Everglades - Everglades!! - that has drawn me back again and again. I've now been there 18 times in 25 years.

Come with me now, to the Everglades, and I'll show you why it's my favorite. I'll tell you why Everglades was made a park, how it is threatened, and what is being done to try to save it.

How many of us have visited the everglades?  
-----

For those of you who have not, what images do you have?

A vast, great wetland, filled with alligators and mosquitoes, poisonous snakes, tropical plants, tropical birds, heat and humidity? The everglades has all that, and more.

It is a land of two seasons, wet and dry, a land of wading birds - egrets, herons, spoon-bills, and wood storks; a land of alligators and crocodiles both; and - yes - mosquitoes. It is a land of history and mystery, of plume hunters and outlaws, and a birthplace of conservation. It is also a land that is now terribly, terribly endangered.

Everglades National Park is at the very southern tip of the Florida peninsula. Its million and a half million acres are south and west of Miami. It makes up only one-fifth of the "river of grass" described by Marjorie Stoneman Douglas.

What is this river? It is wide, flat, and shallow, flowing slowly south from Lake Okeechobee to Florida Bay; 6 inches deep, 100 feet per day.

Let's visit the everglades today...Most people, including me, visit in the winter, during the dry season. The weather is pleasant, generally sunny and 80 degrees, the mosquitoes are fewer, and it is a good time to see birds.

We can explore the everglades by car, boat, foot, tram, or bicycle. Some of the spots to go include "Anhinga Trail." Its boardwalk into the swamp, that takes us by giant alligators, colorful purple gallinules, herons, bitterns, and the nests of anhingas, the birds for which

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*Many Upcoming Field Trips*

*Upcoming Programs*

# Feathers



## EVERGLADES! continued

the trail is named. We can pause at the place with the mysterious name, "Pa-hay-okee" and look out across miles of sawgrass, the river of grass, dotted with tree islands. Closer to the tip of Florida, boardwalk and trails take us into the mangroves and along the edge of the great Florida Bay at the historic settlement of Flamingo. Here we are 40 miles into the park and 50 miles from the nearest town. Flamingo is where we stay, year after year. It truly is an outpost, a place to get away from faxes and emails, phone calls and meetings. A place to watch birds, alligators and crocodiles, to paddle a canoe through twisting mangrove trails, a place to relax. A place to immerse oneself in nature...to start the day at nearby Eco pond before sunrise, explore the glades all day, and end the day with a sunset over Florida Bay.

This is what the everglades is all about - and why it was created. Unlike our other national parks, Everglades was set aside not for its scenic beauty, but for its biological diversity. As President Harry S. Truman said "Here are no lofty peaks seeking the sky, no mighty glaciers or rushing streams wearing away the uplifted land. Here is land, tranquil in its quiet beauty, serving not as the source of water but as the last receiver of it. To its natural abundance we owe the spectacular plant and animal life that distinguishes this place from all others in our country."

Now, if only were true that creating this park would protect it forever...

Unfortunately, drawing a line around some land on a map and making it a national park does not protect it from threats beyond its borders. Let's look at a couple of examples...

In Yellowstone, our first national park, when a majestic bison, symbol of the American West, unable to read the sign and unmindful of the

dangers, wanders outside the park boundary, it is shot to death, dead out of fear of disease to cattle.

The Great Smoky Mountains, our most-visited national park, suffers from air pollution from distant sources...

And the Everglades, downstream, at the end of the river of grass, depend on the water that flows in from outside, north of the park. And it's not just a matter of enough water...the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of water are all necessary parts of a properly functioning everglades ecosystem.

To demonstrate, ...during the summer wet season, the great marshes flood and wildlife spreads out. During the dry season, there are fewer and fewer wet areas, and as the glades dry up, birds and the fish they eat become concentrated. It is then that the wood stork begins to nest. They rely on a high density of fish to feed their young. They can swing their great beaks back and forth and snap down in milliseconds when they touch a fish. If the water cycle is not right, the young starve and the nests fail. One season lost. Repeat this for too many seasons, and the wood storks are lost...

There are many demands on water in South Florida. The rapidly growing population needs water to drink, and demands protection from the floods that killed many in earlier times. Sugar growers want it too, for they use the northern part of the everglades (outside the park) for agriculture. Over the past 70 years, we have taken over the movement of water in south Florida. We have built a levee around Lake Okeechobee, dug a thousand miles of canals, and diverted the natural flow of water for human needs. .... The great river of grass has been tamed, and the Everglades are dying.



## Feathers

V66N2  
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Wading bird populations are down to a mere 7 percent - seven percent of what they were in the 1930's. The tales of wading birds in great flocks, stretching across the sky from one end of Florida Bay to the other, are lost to history, unseen by our generation, like the huge flocks of passenger pigeons that once darkened the skies of the American West. We were too late to save the passenger pigeon...can we still save the Everglades?

Before we address that question, let's take a step back even further, to an earlier threat to the everglades, about 1900. Picture small islands in Florida Bay, covered from one end to the other with egrets, nesting, feeding their young. Plume feathers from breeding egrets were all the rage then, to decorate ladies' hats. These birds were slaughtered by plume hunters, eager to fill this lucrative market. The first Audubon game warden, Guy Bradley, was shot and killed in Florida Bay by the very plume hunters he was trying to arrest.

This was in 1905, and the human outcry helped end the senseless destruction of these birds. The egret are now protected from plume hunters, but can they withstand the threats to their waters?

Fortunately, people have recognized that the everglades are dying, and there is a massive effort underway to save them. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan is a 30-year, \$8 billion dollar effort to mimic the natural flow of water to the everglades. It involves complex engineering and technology, some of it yet to be developed. It is the greatest environmental restoration plan ever tried. Will it work? Some think it will, others are more skeptical. Should we try? Yes -

Because - there are no other everglades in the world.

*This is an adaptation of a verbal presentation that Scott gave at work .*

### **Birding 101 by the Audubon Society of the Capital Region**

The Audubon Society of the Capital Region will offer a short course in beginning birding on four days in June. All classroom and field activities will take place at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar. The cost of the class is \$20.00 per person and there is a class limit of 15. The classes will be lead by expert birder Bob Budliger and other birders from the ASCR board. To register for the class call Bob at 439-0006 between May 1 and June 1.

Two, two hour evening classes will be held on June 8 and 15 from 7 to 9 PM. These classes will cover birding tools such as binoculars, field guides, audio recordings of bird songs, and birding organizations. We will also cover the basics of bird identification including what to look at and look for, and bird identification clues such as behavior, habitat, and time of year.

The field trips will be held from 8:30 to 11:30 AM on June 12 and 19. On the first outing we will practice using our optics (a must in order to see those birds -- you can't identify them if you can't find them!) and practice basic identification of what we find at Five Rivers. During the second field trip we will also begin observing behavior and talk about field methods, birding ethics and behavior.

It has been a number of years since a birding course was offered in this area. We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity and sign up today!



## Field Trip Reports

### Fort Edward Grasslands February 15, 2004

The Feb. 15 trip to the Fort Edward grasslands attracted 10 participants but no Short-eared Owls, our target species for the trip. The weather was warmer than expected: five degrees above instead of below zero, with little wind.

The owls have not been seen this winter at their usual wintering grounds in Washington County, to our knowledge. We also encountered snowmobilers (total: 13) racing through the fields, and wondered about the relationship between the two.

We were treated to good views of ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS (total: 17) and eight RED-TAILED HAWKS. One SNOW BUNTING, flying across on Cary Road, was a "better view desired" lifer for some participants.

During the rest stop at the Fort Edward Stewarts, we spotted two HOODED MERGANSERS in the Hudson, behind the store.

Other species spotted were a small flock of HORNED LARKS puttering in a freshly-manured field on Rte. 46, AMERICAN TREE SPARROW, HOUSE SPARROW, MOURNING DOVES, ROCK PIGEONS, BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, TUFTED TITMOUSE and AMERICAN ROBIN, as well as a very noisy flock of 500 migrating STARLINGS.

— Joyce Miller

### Waterfowl of the Hudson River South March 7, 2004

A pair of EURASIAN WIGEON made this club trip special. The two birds flew past us then set down in the water near enough for scope

study. They were life birds for several of the participants of this trip. The wigeon were seen at 4 mile point road in Cossackie. Participants were Jocelyn Cole-Calkins, Elle Dietemann, Hannah Ingleston, Rich Guthrie, Joyce Miller, Tom Phillips, George Rodenhansen, Hank Stebbins, Erin Willsey and Chad Witco. Among the other 10 species of ducks seen were GADWALL, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, NORTHERN PINTAIL, RING-NECKED DUCK, COMMON GOLDENEYE and HOODED MERGANSER.

The diversity of ducks was OK but numbers were very low. This was the first week of open water for this part of the Hudson River. The river should have been filled with ducks anxious to get north to their breeding areas. The weather and water conditions were optimal for finding migrant ducks. I was also impressed by the lack of waterfowl on their winter range along the Gulf of Mexico this past December and January. It appears that North American duck populations may have suffered a severe crash. There has been concern expressed for decades that the breeding areas of North American ducks, the prairie potholes of the Midwest, no longer allow adequate breeding because of changing agricultural practices. Much of the plant cover at the edges of the prairie potholes, that once protected waterfowl nests from predators, has been removed in order to increase tilled land. Another concern is the death of large numbers of waterfowl caused by botulism in the Great Lakes. In the 2003 FNYSCB Waterfowl Count Bryan Swift noted that dabbling duck numbers were down but diving duck numbers were up. It might be time to start expressing concern and considering revising management and hunting practices.



## Field Trip Reports (continued)

A few raptors were also seen over the river. These included an AMERICAN KESTREL, COOPER'S HAWK, NORTHERN HARRIER, ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK and about a half dozen BALD EAGLES.

— *Bill Cook*

### Waterfowl of the Hudson River above Troy March 14, 2004

The trip started off favorably with sightings of WOOD DUCKS, COMMON MERGANSERS, and several CANADA GEESE off Marion Avenue in Waterford. On River Bend Rd just above Marion Ave., a NORTHERN GOSHAWK flew by, while we had good views of HOODED MERGANSERS, COMMON GOLDENEYE, MALLARDS and BLACK DUCKS on the river. Although waterfowl were in short supply on Calhoun Drive, we had great looks at a BALD EAGLE. Our next stop was the Hoosick River on Knickerbocker Rd, North of Hemstreet Park. Driving along the road, a few of our birders caught sight of a KILLDEER, while others spotted an EASTERN BLUEBIRD flying overhead. However, when we stopped to view waterfowl

and geese on the river, we were in for a great surprise. It wasn't long before one birder spotted a BARNACLE GOOSE. All thirteen birders got great views of this beautiful goose. We also noted that it was not tagged. To top this off, SNOW GEESE, BLUE MORPH SNOW GEESE, NORTHERN PINTAILS, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, AMERICAN WIGEON, GADWALL, RING-NECKED DUCKS and RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS were also found. Later, on Rte. 113 we observed a BELTED KINGFISHER, and then at Clark's Mills a GREAT BLUE HERON, WOOD DUCKS and HOODED MERGANSERS were spotted. From here our next stop was Ft. Miller, which provided us with a RED NECKED GREBE, BUFFLEHEAD, and TUNDRA SWAN. By this time, most of the group departed.. The remaining three continued to bird the Hudson along Route 4. At Wright's Loop on the shores of the Hudson River, we spotted a group of about 75 SNOW GEESE and started scoping them in hopes of finding a Ross's Goose. However, as if programmed, the group took flight and did not return. All in all, it turned out to be a great day. The total species for the day were 46.

— *Joan Cipriani*

### Saratoga P.L.A.N. Annual Birdwalk & Brunch

The Saratoga P.L.A.N. organization is holding it's annual birdwalk & brunch on Saturday May 15<sup>th</sup> 7-9 am at the Vischer Ferry Preserve. They are looking for volunteers to lead bird walks that morning.

In case you don't recognize the name "Saratoga P.L.A.N.", they are the result of last year's merger of the Land Trust of the Saratoga Region and the Saratoga Springs Open Space Project. They are the land trust serving Saratoga County.

If you would like to volunteer to help Saratoga P.L.A.N. – or – wish to find out more about this event, contact:

Alane Ball Chinian, Executive Director, Saratoga P.L.A.N.,  
110 Spring Street Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.  
alane@SaratogaPLAN.org  
(518) 587-5554 (phone), (518) 587-6467 (fax)



## HMBC TO HOST 2005 FEDERATION MEETING

The dates are set for the 2005 Federation Meeting. We will be the host group for the annual event, which draws 150-200 birders from across the state.

Mark your calendar for Sept 23-25, 2005 to take part in what should prove to be a very interesting weekend at The Marriott Hotel on Wolf Road in Albany.

There is a core group of volunteers from the club that have been working on the planning of this event since last summer. We are ready for YOUR help now. As the date approaches we will need many more volunteers. There are many jobs both large and small that need the attention of volunteers.

### Our goals include:

- Satisfying the needs of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs
- Making the best possible presentation of HMBC as the host club
- Host a successful event that attendees find worthwhile and well managed
- Generating income for HMBC through book sales and other sales opportunities

### The committee is:

- We are committed to keeping our meetings short.
- We do most of the work between meetings
- We will not to over burden any individual.
- We will find a task that meets the time you have available to commit
- We will find a task that suits you and your skills so that it's fun for you to do

Please step up to the plate for the club, we won't ask for more than you are able to give and we will be very appreciative of the help you do offer.

Thanks to all who have helped so far. We have a great group of volunteers that are doing wonderful work, so thank you **Joan Cipriani, Philip Johnson, Bill Lee, Patti Packer, Peggy Rudis** and **Jo Shultz**. Recently **Bob Budliger** and **Helen Dolan** have also joined our ranks. Don't miss out on all the fun...call Lynn today to find out what jobs are still open and how you can help.

Lynn Huntington can be reached at 477-2980 in the evening  
or during the day 477-9317 or by e-mail at [lynnh123@earthlink.net](mailto:lynnh123@earthlink.net).



## Upcoming HMBC Programs

**Monday May 3** at 7:00 PM, Colonie Library

***A Cultural Birding Trip to Assam and Bhutan***, Don and Donna Traver

Ibisbills nest on stony islands in the wildly flowing rivers that drain the great Himalayas. Don and Donna Travers' goal is to see at least one species from each of the world's 204 bird families. With only a few families remaining, the Ibisbill, both unusual bird and the sole member of its family, provided an "excuse" for one of the Travers' most memorable trips.

As the route to Bhutan requires a stop in India, a pre-trip extension to Kaziranga National Park in the state of Assam was impossible to turn down. Here, they were able to come within meters of a magnificent, highly endangered Indian one-horned rhinoceros while astride an elephant! Phenomenal birding in India was surpassed in their memories only by that of tens of thousands of people living seemingly on top of each other in the noisiest place they have ever been.

After an overnight delay in Katmandu, the capital of Nepal, the Travers enjoyed a spectacular flight past four of the five highest mountains in the world, enroute to Paro, the only airport in Bhutan. The placid and harmonious culture of Buddhism permeates the sky, mountains and people of this Kingdom and can be felt all around you. Three weeks here were spend birding along a sometimes perilous road that is the only one in the country. They were fortunate to see five (5) Ibisbills!

Don and Donna Travis have taken time out of their search for bird families to twice travel here to share their experiences with the HMBC. They have previously presented about Chile and New Zealand and the sub Antarctic Islands. Come join them for their third program, and learn about the birds and people of Assam and Bhutan!

**Monday, June 7, 2004**

***Hudson-Mohawk Birds***, Bill Gorman

7pm at Five Rivers Environmental Ed Center

We all like to travel to new areas and see the exotic birds that are found there. In the same manner, people from Hawaii and other areas would like to travel to New York to see the exotic Great Horned Owl, the beautiful Wood Duck and the other exotic birds of our area. Yes, if we stop and think about it, the Hudson-Mohawk area is blessed with many exotic birds. Please join Bill for his movies of our own Hudson-Mohawk Birds.



## Upcoming Capital Region Audubon Programs

**Thursday May 13 at 7:00PM, Colonie Library**

***Postcards from the West*, Larry & Maryde King**

This 40-minute film features Yellowstone, Ranier, and Olympic National Parks. In Yellow-stone, visit the high falls in the Yellowstone River, the hot springs, and Old Faithful. In Rainier, hike to a glacier and see wildflowers in a mountain meadow. In Olympic, take a walk in the rain forest and along the Pacific coast. A final section of the movie features wildlife and wildflowers of the west. Larry and Maryde King are long-time active participants in our chapter and enjoy presenting their nature films to local groups.

**Thursday June 10 at 7:00 PM, Colonie Library**

***Butterflies of the Capital District*, Sue Adair**

In order to help prepare us for the butterfly count field trips, Sue Adair will present a program on butterflies of the Capital District. Almost all of the photos she will use were taken by Sue in up-state New York, most right around Albany. Sue will cover some basic identification techniques, where and when to find butterflies, and a bit about their life cycles. Please come to learn how to

### **Northern Catskills Bird Festival, at the Huyck Preserve**

June 5, 2004 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM, Rensselaerville, NY

There are many attractions to the bird festival, including a walk and mist netting presentation by Rich Guthrie, bird walk led by Audubon New York's Larry Federman, children's activities and more.

The mission of the Huyck Preserve is:

*... to protect the natural beauty of the Rensselaerville Falls, the watershed of Lake Myosotis and surrounding lands, to conduct long-term research on natural systems as part of a global effort to understand and preserve the Earth's biodiversity, and to increase appreciation of this effort through innovative, field-based educational programs for students, teachers and the community.*

If you would like to learn more, please send an email to [huyckeducation@yahoo.com](mailto:huyckeducation@yahoo.com) or call Liz LoGiudice at the Huyck Preserve on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 797-5172 or Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays at the Greene County Environmental Center 945-2085.

The Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve and Biological Research Station is located approximately 28 miles southwest of Albany, New York off State Route 85 in the Village of Rensselaerville. Information on the preserve can be found at [www.huyckpreserve.org](http://www.huyckpreserve.org).

Liz LoGiudice, Education Coordinator at the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve in Rensselaerville provided notice of this event.



## Upcoming Field Trips

**MAY 1**      **ASHFORD GLEN PRESERVE (morning)**  
**SAT**      **Coordinator: Ellen Pemrick**      **452-4384**

Located near the Albany/Schenectady county line, the Ashford Glen Preserve is an 11.5-acre woodland purchased by a group of neighbors in 2000 and donated to the Albany County Land Conservancy (ALCLC). This field trip is being offered jointly with the ALCLC. We will explore the Preserve property, looking for warblers, thrushes, woodpeckers, and various other species. As time and weather allow, a visit to the Reist Sanctuary in Niskayuna may follow. Meet at 8:00 AM at the entrance to the Ashford Glen Preserve.

Directions: Northway to Exit 6; west on Route 7 for approximately 3 miles. Turn left onto Vly Road (traffic light at Stewart's). Take the third right onto Brookhill Road. Immediate right onto Cascade Terrace and then left onto Ashford Lane. The Preserve entrance is located at 22 Ashford Lane. Note: there is no parking lot; park along the street; carpooling is encouraged.

**MAY 2**      **COLUMBIA COUNTY HOTSPOTS (all day)**  
**SUN**      **Coordinator: Fran Martino**      **392-5252, Ext. 205**

Explore Columbia County's birding hotspots with the Columbia Land Conservancy. Our first stop is the Greenport Conservation Area, over 700 acres along the Hudson River where we'll seek Osprey, Bald Eagles and Fish Crows; Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks nest in its upland meadows. Next, the southern part of Columbia County offers an invigorating half-mile walk to the top of "Old Croken" that overlooks the Drowned Lands Swamp Conservation Area. This wetland system spans over 1,000 acres and is considered one of the most important wetland systems in the Hudson River Valley. Third, just two miles north of the Village of Chatham will bring participants to the Ooms Conservation Area at Sutherland Pond, a 35-acre pond that is an important destination during migration for a large number of geese, ducks and other waterfowl. Our final stop will bring us into the Village of Chatham to Borden's Pond followed by an optional wrap-up session at "Peint o Gwrw Tafarn", a cozy Welsh pub in downtown Chatham.

Contact the coordinator for directions and starting time.

**MAY 8**      **BIRDS AND BREAKFAST AT FIVE RIVERS (morning)**  
**SAT**      **Coordinator: Denise Hackert-Stoner**      **785-6760**  
                                         **Scott Stoner**      **785-6760, scottjstoner@aol.com**

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



## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

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 9  
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

MAY 13  
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. NOTE: the traffic pattern around Albany International Airport and Ann Lee Pond has recently changed. If needed, contact the coordinators for details.

MAY 15  
SAT

CENTURY RUN (all day !)

**Compiler: Bob Yunick**

**377-0146**

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.



## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

MAY 17  
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. Last year we had American Bittern and great looks at Virginia Rail! Meet at the Main Entrance parking lot at 6:00 PM

MAY 22  
SAT

ALBANY PINE BUSH PRESERVE (morning)

**Coordinators: Donna Zimmerman 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. Tick warning - wear light colored clothing including long pants that can be tucked into socks. Reservations requested by calling the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission Office, (518) 785-1800, Ext. 212

MAY 23  
SUN

WILTON PRESERVE - CAMP SARATOGA (morning)

**Coordinator: Beverly Relyea.**

**For more info, contact the Wilton Preserve office at 587-1939, ext. 229 (days)**

Come explore the trails of this old Boy Scout Camp, which is now one of the four parcels that comprise the Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park. Let's see if we can find the new spring arrivals and early nesting songbirds. Meet at 7:00 AM

Directions: Take Northway to Exit 15. From northbound exit ramp, take a right and travel north/east on Route 50 for about 3.4 miles (past all of the malls). Take a left on Edie Road (landmarks: E.M. Stone sign and Jehovah's Witness Building will be





## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

Please register for this trip by calling the coordinator - more details will be supplied, including directions to the launch. Recommended items to bring along include binoculars, water bottle, warm clothes, flashlight, rain gear and an spare paddle.

JUNE 5  
SAT

MAX V. SHAUL & FRANKLINGTON VLAIE (full day)

**Leader: Greg Capobianco**

**Local Coordinator: Donna Zimmerman**

**869-6624**

Max V. Shaul SP: Expect to see a good number of warblers but with leafout they will be challenging. Usuals include Ceruleans, Northern Parulas, Canada, Blackburnian, and Louisiana Waterthrush. Past highlights (I have led walks here for 13 years) include Wilson's Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Upland sandpiper & Philadelphia Vireo.

From Max V. Shaul, a ten minute drive to Franklinton Vlaie. Nesting bald eagles, other raptors in past years have included Goshawk, Red-tailed, Sharp-shinned, Broad-winged & Coopers Hawks, Kestrel, Osprey and assorted waterbirds.

Meet at Max V. Shaul SP - 6 miles south of Middleburgh on NY Route 30; park entrance on right. 6:30 a.m. sharp. There is a State Park Entrance Fee.

JUNE 12

FT. DRUM **NEW TRIP**—*Final plans not yet completed*

**Coordinator: Bill Lee**

**374-3426**

Expected to include Fort Drum, Perch River W.M.A. and Chamoux Barrens the weekend of June 12th. A joint trip Federation/HMBC. Contact Bill for further details.

JUNE 13  
SUN

PEMBER (HEBRON) NATURE PRESERVE (morning)

**Coordinators: Mona Bearor**

**745-8637 ramonabearor@adelphia.net**

**Joyce Miller**

**justlookitup@yahoo.com**

This underbirded Washington county parcel is comprised of 125 acres of open fields, mixed hardwood and conifer forest, and extensive marshes along the Black Creek. Two miles of trails and an observation deck allow viewing of all habitats. Woodpeckers, flycatchers and thrushes are well represented here. In addition to the regular woodland and marsh species, the following have been observed: American Bittern, Osprey, Northern Goshawk, Wild Turkey, Ruffed Grouse, Virginia Rail, Sora, American Woodcock, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Winter Wren, Brown Thrasher, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Rusty Blackbird, and Fox Sparrow. This is a joint trip with Southern Adirondack Audubon. Please contact a coordinator for meeting time and place.

**JUNE 17 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR NOTCHVIEW RESERVATION & MORAN WMA**

Trip is June 19



## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

JUNE 19  
SAT

NOTCHVIEW RESERVATION & MORAN WMA (full day)

**Coordinators: Philip & Marjorie Whitney**

**477-9050**

**Reservations by Thurs. June 17**

Notchview Reservation is a 3000 acre preserve on the crest of the Berkshires in Windsor, MA, East of Pittsfield. It is managed by the Massachusetts Trustees of Reservations. There are a wide variety of habitats, including coniferous, mixed, and deciduous forests, open fields, old orchards, and small wetlands. Since it is used as a cross-country ski area in winter, there is a good network of trails as well as a few unpaved roads. The birding possibilities are as diverse as the habitats. Expect as many as ten warbler species, Red-eyed and Blue-headed vireos, Hermit Thrush, Winter Wren, Pileated Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruffed Grouse, and Wild Turkey in the wooded areas. The open fields host Bobolinks, Eastern Kingbird, and Killdeer, among others. Raptor species reported here include Northern Goshawk, Coopers Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, American Kestrel, and Great Horned Owl. The road and fields near the Visitors' Center are well supplied with nesting boxes, and Eastern Bluebirds are hard to miss.

Less than five minutes away, the Moran WMA has many of the same habitats, as well as marshes and an unusual wet meadow. The area is noted for the grassland species that occasionally nest here. These include Henslows and Grasshopper Sparrows and Sedge Wren (don't count on these, but there are few other places within two hours of the Capital District where all three are possible). Lincoln's Sparrow has also nested here.

Bring a bag lunch and good walking shoes; we will probably walk up to two or three miles over moderately hilly terrain. June is black-fly season so bring plenty of DEET or equivalent, and wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. There is a \$2 per adult entrance fee at Notchview.

JUNE 26  
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.



**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 Mlst 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](mailto:contact@hmbc.net)

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

**HMBC Board Meetings**

Next meeting is Monday, May 10th at Five Rivers.

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 Contributions Desired**

- Have anything you think other birders would be interested in?
- Have a favorite birding spot you want to share?
- Are there any stories that would inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the address at right.

**Newsletter Submissions**

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

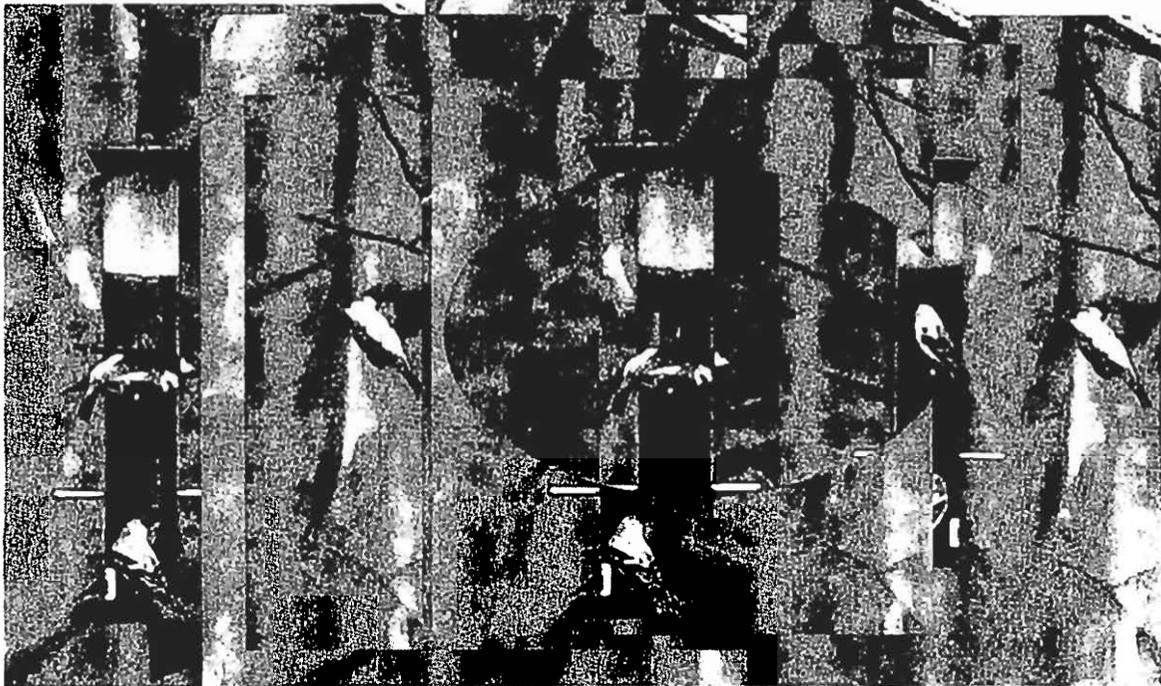
Send other submissions to:

**Bob Miller**  
**1994 15th St.**  
**Troy, NY 12180**

# Feathers



Finch Collage watercolor by Mary Jane Bartlett (original in color)

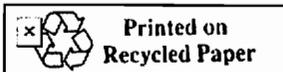


FEATHERS  
Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club  
c/o Five Rivers EEC  
Game Farm Rd.  
Delmar, N.Y. 12054

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## THE ENDANGERED RANGER

"service level adjustment"

*By Bob Budliger*

When you visited a National Park a decade ago you no doubt came into contact with that world-renowned icon of America's scenic and wild land-- the Park Ranger. Uniformed in green and gray and sporting the trademark "flat hat", a Stetson of felt or straw, the Park Ranger ensured your visit was enjoyable, informative, and even inspirational. And above all else, safe. Visit now and look for a ranger!

The Ranger is endangered, and your next National Park visit will likely be impaired because of it. If budget projections become reality, there will be a lot of reductions in service, reduced hours of operation, and even some closures. Acadia National Park, on the Maine coast, is facing a 53% "shortfall" in budgetary needs.

Newspapers recently spotlighted a memo to the managers of parks in the Northeast, headquartered in the Philadelphia office of the National Park Service. Managers are advised to seek ways to live within budgetary reductions. Among the suggestions are: close park visitor centers on Federal holidays; eliminate Ranger-led tours; let the grass grow; turn campgrounds over to concessionaires; close on Sundays and Mondays. These are only suggestions. Under no circumstances are managers to talk about "closing". These are to be called "**service level adjustments.**" (It is reminiscent of a time when I was told not to use the term "closed" when faced with similar budget prob-

lems. We used "not open." Wish I'd heard of "service level adjustment.")

Here are some facts gleaned from a few sources familiar with the National Park Service budget. Since 1980 there has been a reduction in the permanent ranger staff of 16% and a reduction in the seasonal ranger staff of 24%. While on the surface that may sound manageable, bear in mind that in the same 25 years there are an added 60 million park visitors each year, and the number of park units has increased by 54, bringing the number of park units to 387. Everytime a new park is established, rangers are moved from somewhere else to staff it. It's become a really thin "green line."

- Park budgets in the past 25 years, when corrected for inflation, have been reduced by 20%.
- The current Executive budget request of

In This Issue....

*The Cormorant and the Bittern*

*Many Field Trip Reports*

*Al Palmer Limericks*

*Important Membership Notice*



## THE ENDANGERED RANGER continued

\$2.4 billion is less than 65% of what is needed.

- Park budgets grew 9% a year in the 1990s; they've grown 1% a year the first three years of this administration.

The US National Park Service (NPS) has an enormous responsibility. We are all familiar with the big parks with the great scenery — Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon. We also know the important historic sites--Saratoga, Independence Hall, Gettysburg. Some of us know of the less well-known recreational rivers, seashores, and lakeshores. There are a multitude of small historic sites that protect our diverse heritage; and don't forget that the monuments in our nation's capital are the responsibility of the NPS. The very White House is managed by NPS. 387 units in all.

It takes a lot of people with a diverse set of skills to make our visit enjoyable and safe. It is equally important to protect the park resource from us, the visitor. We don't often see the manager, the recreation planner, the archeologist, the biologist. We do see the maintenance working in the background. It's the ranger that makes our visit — the naturalist or historian that gives meaning and focus to our visit; the law enforcement ranger that makes the visit safe. We also see, in increasing numbers, dedicated volunteers, students and retirees, who help out.

There are fewer than 2,000 law enforcement rangers and an equal number of interpretive rangers in the whole system. Their numbers continue to drop. More park services are being taken on by volunteers-- some 125,000 of them donating over 4.5 million hours, an equivalent of another 2,000 employees. There still is serious shortfall in necessary services. It is estimated that there is one in-

terpretive ranger for every 100,000 visitors.

This is compounded by the current war on terrorism. Every time we got to Orange Alert, the NPS spends an added \$60,000 a day in unbudgeted activity. Rangers are pulled from park duty to guard bridges and dams. In one of the more bizarre episodes, rangers were sent on temporary assignment to the Statue of Liberty from Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico. This left precious Native American archeological resources unguarded.

A really unhealthy trend in park management philosophy is "contracting out." Privatization. This is not the same as concessioning, where certain supporting services such as hotels, restaurants, marinas, and gift shops are leased to private sector businesses to operate. This is turning over the core responsibilities to business interests. The interpretive tour on the tram at Everglades National Park's Shark Valley is a good example. The fear is that the tour leaders are trained to give the "spiel", but lack the breadth of knowledge to answer questions, which are rarely in the script. Then too, the NPS is no longer telling its story and then visitor gets to pay extra for the service.

The NPS is facing the greatest crisis in its history. It all come down to whether or not we value our heritage, and how much we value it. I can't help but point out that the *\$87 billion* we will spend in Iraq would run the National Park Service for over *40 years !!*

Suggestion-- look at these websites and let your elected representative know how you feel

[nps.gov](http://nps.gov)

[bushgreenwatch.org](http://bushgreenwatch.org)

[npca.org](http://npca.org)



## THE CORMORANT AND THE BITTERN

*By Dick Patrick*

In church the other Sunday the Old Testament reading was from Zephaniah. Maybe you are familiar with that book of the Bible but I wasn't. So when I got home I turned to Patsy's Dartmouth Bible which was her textbook many years ago at Syracuse University. This source gives some background concerning each book and follows this with the majority but not all of the Biblical text.

It seems Zephania, one of the minor prophets, was a contemporary of Jeremiah. He came on the scene perhaps 626 BC. As the book of Zephania is only three chapters and it was right there before me, I read it. I got to chapter two and the Dartmouth Bible omits verses 14 and 15. I wonder what was about them to be left out so I go to my King James Version to see what is missing and lo:

"...will make Ninevah a desolation and flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations; BOTH THE CORMORANT AND THE BITTERN SHALL LODGE IN THE UPPER LINTELS OF IT; THEIR VOICE SHALL SING IN THE WINDOWS; desolation shall be in the thresholds."

Now isn't that a pretty thought. We all know of that booming pump sound of the bittern although I have never heard a peep out of a cormorant and the literature is equally silent on the subject. Yet the idea of several cormorants perched on your windowsill while the bittern performs his "music" is a most haunting image of desolation.

The other omitted verse states that "every one that passeth by her (Ninevah, now Baghdad) shall hiss and wag his hand." I picture that to mean shaking your finger in shame at the ruins of the city.

Then I think, I've only seen a bittern twice in my life and it seems to me the Biblical writers are basically desert people. Why the waterbirds?

To me the King James Version is "The Word", what I was brought up on, but let's check some other Bibles and see what they say.

Well, a search of nine other Bibles have pelicans, vultures, desert owls, screech owls, horned owls, tawny owls, ruffed bustards and even hedgehogs and porcupines with their hoots, wails and echoing calls into and from the windows. A number of Bibles also have ravens croaking from the thresholds.

The Old Time Gospel Hour Edition has a note following "cormorant" that the word in Hebrew is "ga'at" meaning pelican and a note following "bittern", saying it is from "gipod" which means porcupine or hedgehog.

In the Revised Standard Edition there are three footnotes for this verse which state "the vulture and the hedgehog shall lodge in her capitals; the owl shall hoot in the window, the raven croak on the threshold." The note after "vulture" says the meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain, after "owl" Hebrew "a voice" and after "raven" Hebrew "desolation."

And in case you are wondering what the other versions tell us about the people passing by the ruins of Ninevah hissing and wagging their hands. They also mock, shake their heads in disbelief, scoff, whistle (a nice touch), but they mostly follow King James and hiss. While some throw up their hands most, rather than just wag their hands, shake their fists.

If the Dartmouth Bible hadn't seen fit to skip these two verses I doubt you would have been subjected to this screed.

But regardless of the scenes of desolation the point of Zephaniah and the reason it was read in church, is that despite all of our shortcomings and misdeeds God nevertheless rejoices over us with joy and singing.

And that great good news is the same in every Biblical text.



## HMBC Field Trip Reports

### Vischer Ferry Preserve – Instructional Trip April 10, 2004

Approximately 14 participants started this trip at the main entrance where we were all greeted by an EASTERN PHOEBE as we arrived. Among the participants were several new members or members-to-be. The group reported birding experience levels ranging from “beginner” to “over 20 years”. We began by walking the towpath trail west of the main entrance, where the closest views of ducks in the Preserve can often be found. There were plenty of chances to study the plumage of RING-NECKED DUCKS. Several BUFFLEHEAD were spotted along with many MALLARDS, CANADA GEESE, and AMERICAN BLACK DUCKS. About halfway along the pools to the west we found a number of AMERICAN WIGEON. Among the wigeons was a duck with a reddish head and buffy forehead stripe which we quickly identified as a male EURASIAN WIGEON. Considerable excitement ensued over this rare visitor to the Preserve, and everyone had excellent views. Other marsh ducks seen along the towpath included GREEN-WINGED and BLUE-WINGED TEAL. We spotted 2 GREAT BLUE HERONS flying overhead. A few RUSTY BLACKBIRDS seen along the trail were lifebirds for many. We even enjoyed studying the bright yellow plumage of an AMERICAN GOLDFINCH through the scope.

Seeing the EURASIAN WIGEON was enough excitement for many, but after returning to the main entrance, we continued toward the river and then looped east and back to the main entrance. In the back ponds close to the river we got better looks at GREEN-WINGED TEAL and spotted a PIED-BILLED GREBE. Surprisingly, at this point we had not yet seen a wood duck anywhere. So, many were delighted when we finally spotted a

handsome pair of WOOD DUCKS, not in the water, but perched side-by-side in a tree. Enjoying a view of the Mohawk River, we spotted a few COMMON MERGANSERS and DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS. Other birds seen on our loop east included a pair OF BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS, a BELTED KINGFISHER, and a SOLITARY SANDPIPER.

— John Hershey

### Derby Hill and Montezuma NWR April 17-18, 2004

Participants: Joan Cipriani, Cliff Anglin, Naomi Jaffe, Jeremy Kleinberg and Susan Stewart.

Susan and I decided to leave on Friday, April 16 to do some birding on the way up to the trip sites. Although we had had no reports from the Utica Marsh, our first stop would be at the Marsh in hopes of seeing early migrants. It was a beautiful day for birding, and we were treated to good views of several GREAT EGRETS, a GREAT BLUE HERON and an OSPREY flying overhead. There were still some waterfowl that had not left for their breeding grounds: NORTHERN PINTAIL, NORTHERN SHOVELER, RING-NECKED DUCK and HOODED MERGANSER. Of course, there was also the gorgeous WOOD DUCK, and ever present MALLARDS and CANADA GEESE. TREE SWALLOWS were hawking insects over the pond, a BELTED KINGFISHER was singing his song going from one perch to another, and an EASTERN PHOEBE was bobbin his tail. We heard the call of a distant PILEATED WOODPECKER, and heard the tapping of a DOWNY above our heads. Several NORTHERN FLICKER paid a visit as well. The SONG SPARROWS were singing, and we heard the sewing machine song of the SWAMP SPARROW.

Of course, the RED-TAILED HAWK was ever



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

present along the Thruway looking for prey.

Our next stop was at the northwestern shore of Oneida Lake where we were thrilled to see a RED-NECKED GREBE in breeding plumage, a HORNED GREBE and several DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT flying over the lake just above the water. RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS and COMMON GRACKLE were squawking to make sure everyone knew we were around.

Since we planned to spend the night in Baldwinsville, and it was still light out when we arrived, a ride around the area seemed in order. Of course, it was still a little early for some of the impressive warbler species and arcadian flycatcher that can be found in mid May in this area. However, it was a pleasant evening and we added AMERICAN BLUEBIRD to our list as we listened to the music of spring peepers and other frog species.

The forecast for Saturday appeared favorable for a good hawk flight. Susan and I headed up to Derby Hill Saturday morning to meet the rest of our group; Cliff, Naomi and Jeremy. It appeared that everybody was aware of the forecast because there was a large number of people already at the site.

Although not a fantastic flight, ten species of hawks were seen with good views at the North Site: OSPREY, TURKEY VULTURE, NORTHERN HARRIER, SHARP-SHINNED, COOPERS, RED-SHOULDERED, BROAD-WINGED, RED-TAILED, ROUGH-LEGGED, and AMERICAN KESTREL. Also seen overhead were a number OF COMMON LOON, GREAT BLUE HERON, CEDAR WAXWING, NORTHERN FLICKER, TREE, NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED, and 1 BARN SWALLOW. While PINE SISKIN, HOUSE FINCH, GOLDFINCH, SONG SPARROW, and a CHIPPING SPARROW made stops at the feeders. Also HAIRY WOODPECKER, RUBY and GOLDEN-

CROWNED KINGLETS, and a BROWN THRASHER were found in the trees and bushes. On the Lake were BUFFLEHEAD, PIED-BILLED GREBE and RED-BREASTED MERGANSER.

When it started to sprinkle in late afternoon and the flight slowed down, Dave Wheeler and a few members of Onondaga Audubon invited us to join them on trip to Noyes Sanctuary (East of Nine Mile Point). Highlights were a LONG-EARED OWL sitting in a tree enabling all to see it, YELLOW-BELLIED SAP-SUCKER, BROWN CREEPER, GOLDEN and RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS and YELLOW-RUMPED, PINE and PALM WARBLERS.

The day was not yet over, however. Bill Purcell and Dave mentioned UPLAND SANDPIPERS at the Oswego Airport in Fulton. We all jumped at the opportunity to go. Sure enough, there were 4 Uppies at the airport in plain view – what a treat. In addition, there was a WILSON'S SNIPE, GREATER YELLOW-LEGS, EASTERN MEADOWLARK and a WILD TURKEY being followed by a coyote.

Although we had planned to visit Montezuma on our way home Sunday, the group could not resist, Dave's invitation to visit the Sithe/ Independence Station. On Sunday morning, driving from Pulaski to Sithe, Jeremy spied a RUFFED GROUSE and a WILD TURKEY. We met up with Dave at Sithe and as we started walking through Sithe, we flushed a GREAT HORNED OWL. What a great start, and as we continued on HERMIT THRUSH were encountered a few times along with a WINTER WREN scurrying around on the ground. RED- AND WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH were also added to our list. KINGLETS, BROWN CREEPER, DOWNY WOODPECKER and EASTER PHOEBE were also seen. The frosting on the cake, however, was the GREAT HORNED OWL, again, flying from the site where we had seen



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

him earlier. This aroused our curiosity. Could he have a nest here? Sure enough, there was the young owl sitting in the hollow of a broken-off tree. Oh yes, this just happened to be one of Dave Wheeler's Atlas Blocks.

By the time we got to Derby Hill, the skies looked ominous and birders were leaving the North Site. We decided to check out the hedges and shrub for anything new. Dave found a BROWN THRASHER and we added RED-BELLIED and HAIRY WOODPECKERS along with a WOOD DUCK. At this point, we could hear the thunder rolling above and decided to call it a day, and as we got into our cars the rain started.

As in most field trips, everyone did not see all the birds, but the trip was well worth it with some of the group seeing life birds.

— Joan Cipriani

### **Betar Byway** April 24, 2004

Eight spring loving souls met to enjoy a morning walk on the Betar Byway. The sunshine was a welcome treat. Thirty-three species were sighted including great looks at WOOD DUCK, LESSER SCAUP, YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, an EASTERN BLUEBIRD pair, TREE SWALLOWS and CEDAR WAXWINGS. Long looks at a male NORTHERN FLICKER guarding a nesthole were especially interesting. Close looks at a very cooperative BROWN CREEPER were also special for many who had previously only had a glimpse of this busy little bird. We also viewed a pair of RED-TAILED HAWKS receiving aerial blows from an AMERICAN CROW. Kinglet-like sounds were heard but even with 8 pairs of eyes trained on the stand of spruce the bird could not be sighted!

CHIPPING SPARROW and LESSER SCAUP were new species for the Byway which brings the total species list for the site to 87. Even though a bit early in the season, it was a beautiful morning and the walk was enjoyed by all participants.

#### Species List:

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT  
GREAT BLUE HERON  
CANADA GOOSE  
WOOD DUCK  
MALLARD  
LESSER SCAUP  
TURKEY VULTURE  
RED-TAILED HAWK  
RING-BILLED GULL  
MOURNING DOVE  
YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER  
DOWNY WOODPECKER  
NORTHERN FLICKER  
PILEATED WOODPECKER  
EASTERN PHOEBE  
TREE SWALLOW  
CEDAR WAXWING  
EASTERN BLUEBIRD  
AMERICAN ROBIN  
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE  
TUFTED TITMOUSE  
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH  
BROWN CREEPER  
AMERICAN CROW  
EUROPEAN STARLING  
CHIPPING SPARROW  
SONG SPARROW  
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW – HEARD ONLY  
NORTHERN CARDINAL  
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD  
COMMON GRACKLE  
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD  
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

— Mona Bearor



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

### Ashford Glen Preserve & Reist Sanctuary May 1, 2004

A group of 26 people met at the Ashford Glen Preserve in Colonie for this first-ever joint field trip of the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club (HMBC) and the Albany County Land Conservancy (ALC). It was a warm, sunny day with temperatures in the 60s when we started out. At the trailhead for the Preserve, we heard EASTERN PHOEBE, NORTHERN CARDINAL, and TUFTED TITMOUSE singing in the adjacent residential neighborhood. We had a good view of HAIRY WOODPECKER as the first sighting of the day. Many of the participants had never been to the preserve, so we wandered off the path slightly to look along the stream for birds. We didn't see any birds there, but we did hear a distant AMERICAN GOLDFINCH. Returning to the main trail, we heard a beautifully singing HERMIT THRUSH. Views of the thrush eluded us all morning (though not for lack of trying!). At one point, an unidentified accipiter, possibly a SHARP-SHINNED HAWK flew by.

Surprisingly, the warbler count was limited to a single BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER, seen by only a few participants; the non-stop calling of a TUFTED TITMOUSE nearby (and the "gas-hawks" flying overhead) occasionally made it difficult to listen for others. The best sighting we had at the preserve was a RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER high up in a tree, but we saw abundant evidence of woodpecker activity throughout the property, and also heard DOWNY and PILEATED WOODPECKERS. Other species seen or heard included BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, and AMERICAN ROBIN. Having experienced a greater variety of bird species at Ashford Glen on previous

occasions, the leader was somewhat disappointed, but the group seemed to enjoy the attractive woodland habitat of the preserve. We saw many native ferns, emerging trillium and may apples, and abundant skunk cabbages on the property, as well as a large unidentified frog and minnows in the winding stream.

Following the visit to Ashford Glen, a much smaller group accompanied the leader to Reist Sanctuary in Niskayuna. We were very impressed with the work that Carl George and other members of the Sanctuary Committee have done on the property, including the installation of trail markers and signage and bridge construction. Highlights of the trip included singing BROWN CREEPER; RED-TAILED HAWK flying above the trees; the unusual combination of OVENBIRD with SONG SPARROW and RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD in a marsh at the wood's edge near Hummingbird Manor; and a calling NORTHERN FLICKER. As with Ashford Glen, there is much evidence of woodpecker activity at Reist Sanctuary, although the trees here appear to be older. Nature photographers take note: the combination of marsh marigolds in bloom and skunk cabbage along the Blue Trail was breathtaking.

— Ellen Pemrick

### Vischer Ferry Mother's Day Walk May 9, 2004

A group of about 15 HMBC members gathered for the annual Vischer Ferry Mother's Day walk anticipating some exciting spring-migration birding. The weather proved to be something of a detriment, however, with a chilly, gray start to the morning. Undeterred, the group proceeded along the usual route across the Whipple Bridge. A huge group of



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

swallows perched on the overhead wires and traversing ponds on both sides of the main trail gave us plenty to do right off the bat. With much study, we were able to discern four species -- TREE, N. ROUGH-WINGED, BANK and BARN. Further along the main road, we also spent a while searching the large cottonwoods east of the trail for several spring-time firsts that are invariably present there, including BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER, WARBLING VIREO and BALTIMORE ORIOLE. A BROWN THRASHER was a fun surprise, while the WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS all over the road were expected but still well appreciated for their annual mid-May appearance. Everyone had a nice look at a flyover OSPREY. Sprinkles began as we got to the pools at the end of the main road and discovered a good number of shorebirds in the eastern pool including SOLITARY SANDPIPERS and GREATER and LESSER YELLOWLEGS, all in good numbers. Unfortunately, as we scoped the shorebirds, the rain began in earnest. Attempts to get a response from a Virginia Rail were unsuccessful, and many wise trip members decided to call it quits at that point. A few of us (perhaps with more stubbornness than sense!) choose to press on a bit longer on the basis of John Hershey's report that he had found a family of fledgling Great Horned Owls in the woods toward the west of the last main pool the day before. The wet trudge was for naught, however, as the owls were no longer in the area. We did pick up a couple of warblers in the woods (BLACK-THROATED GREEN and REDSTART), bringing the trip total up to a somewhat meager 51, although not totally unrespectable given the weather. Nevertheless, the walk still made a nice start to Mother's Day.

— Gregg Recer  
— Cathy Graichen

**Ann Lee Pond**  
May 13, 2004

Thick clouds and threatening thunder brought untimely twilight and limited the evening's birding mostly to songs and silhouettes. As we began, a flock of CEDAR WAXWINGS landed in the apple trees opposite the parking area. Within the park, several BALTIMORE ORIOLES were singing and occasionally favored us with a flash of brilliant orange in the dim light. WARBLING VIREOS were also heard, and diligent binocular work resulted in a brief glimpse of one of the singers. GRAY CATBIRDS lurking in the underbrush made their presence known all evening. WOOD THRUSH and EASTERN KINGBIRD were seen (with difficulty), while GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER and RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER were heard. As TREE SWALLOWS stitched the air over the pond, GREAT BLUE HERON and BELTED KINGFISHER were fishing in the shallows. The usual spring warblers were represented only by a single persistently singing but resolutely invisible YELLOW WARBLER. When the resident CANADA GEESE splashed down for the night, the group of eleven birders had a final tally of 28 species.

— Philip and Marjorie Whitney

**Vischer Ferry Preserve**  
May 17, 2004

Despite an excellent turnout of participants on a Monday evening for this field trip, windy conditions (and sometimes mosquitoes) made it a very challenging one for bird-finding. After crossing the Whippel bridge we made our way slowly down the main path toward the river. WARBLING VIREOS were heard frequently but very few were actually seen with more than fleeting glimpses. Several SOLITARY SANDPIPERS provided good views



**HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)**

through a scope. An EASTERN PHOEBE was also cooperative enough to allow us a good look. After reaching the Mohawk River, we explored many of the interconnecting trails near the river. As would be expected, YELLOW WARBLERS and COMMON YELLOWTHROATS were heard everywhere, but were more difficult to see. If there was a highlight for the trip, perhaps it would be 2 separate species both with striking, orange-and-black plumage – BALTIMORE ORIOLE and AMERICAN REDSTART. One surprise near the river was several CHIMNEY SWIFTS high in the sky. ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS were heard but, unfortunately, never seen. As we were hurrying back to the main entrance at dusk we could just barely make out the song of a VEERY over the sound of the wind. Other migrant songbirds included: TREE SWALLOW, GRAY CATBIRD, SONG SPARROW, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW, RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD, COMMON GRACKLE, and AMERICAN GOLDFINCH.

Besides the windy conditions which made songbirds especially hard to find, we also were disappointed by the failure to find rails and bitterns, or many other marsh birds. This may be partly due to significantly drier wetland conditions in the Preserve than last year. In addition, it may be that migrant songbird numbers throughout the Hudson-Mohawk region are down this spring

— John Hershey

**LIMERICKS by Al Palmer**

*Puffins*

The Puffins are Atlantic, Tufted and horned;  
With faces of Clowns – they were Borneed!  
From the Atlantic to Pacif –  
'round the World, - there's do dif!  
Each ones face – is identically adorned!

**Swyer Preserve and Papscanee Island  
May 29, 2004**

On a cool morning at the Swyer Preserve, a.k.a. Mill Creek, brisk winds kept some of the small birds under cover, but were no problem for a pair of adult BALD EAGLES soaring high over the Hudson while seven birders watched in awe. BALTIMORE ORIOLES, YELLOW WARBLERS, and COMMON YELLOWTHROATS provided color for the walk, while ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS, VEERYS, SCARLET TANAGERS, and SONG SPARROWS contributed background music. A pair of HAIRY WOODPECKERS loudly protested our presence near their nest. GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER, RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, GREAT BLUE HERON AND BELTED KINGFISHER were present, and GRAY CATBIRDS were rarely out of sight or hearing. The whole group had an exceptional look at an EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE singing and preening in full sunlight on a low branch less than fifteen feet away. As we returned to the cars, a TURKEY VULTURE glided overhead and a OVENBIRD called from the underbrush.

At Papscanee Island, AMERICAN REDSTARTS were singing everywhere, and some even kept still long enough to be seen and admired. We added NORTHERN FLICKER, CEDAR WAXWING, WOOD THRUSH, RED-EYED VIREO, and BLUE-WINGED, CHESTNUT-SIDED, and BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS to the list for the day, and enjoyed an unexpected dividend when a pair of BLACK-BILLED CUCKOOS suddenly appeared directly over the trail, posing long enough for all to see. 41 species of birds seen or heard (and almost no mosquitos) made for an altogether delightful morning.

— Philip and Marjorie Whitney



## Columbia Land Conservancy Field Trip Reports

### Daylong Birding of the Hot-spots of Columbia County May 4, 2004

Thirteen bird enthusiasts explored the protected lands of Columbia County on Sunday, May 2nd on a bird walk hosted by Columbia Land Conservancy. Fran Martino, environmental educator for the Conservancy and co-educator, Barbara Nuzzi teamed up with members of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and others to lead participants on this "mini bio-blitz" of the diverse habitats of Columbia County.

Over forty species of birds were sighted during the daylong event that included visits to four public conservation areas owned and/or managed by Columbia Land Conservancy, a member-supported, non-profit land trust dedicated to protecting farmland, wildlife habitat and rural open space in Columbia County.

Participants began their day's adventure at the Greenport Conservation Area where the humid breeze from the Hudson River across the open meadows stirred the grasses where the EASTERN MEADOWLARK was first up on the day's sightings. Near the rustic, cedar bridges along the stream on the Red Trail, the group spotted COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, YELLOW WARBLER, LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH and OVENBIRD. At the scenic overlook bench on the Blue Trail,

participants saw OSPREY, DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS, and WOOD DUCKS in the North Bay of the Hudson River.

In the southern corner of Columbia County, the group was treated to a YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER, BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER and a flock of about twenty CEDAR WAXWINGS at the Drowned Lands Swamp Conservation Area in Ancram. BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER, SCARLET Tanager, HERMIT THRUSH, WOOD THRUSH, and GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER were among the findings.

The final two stops were in Chatham at Borden's Pond and Ooms Conservation Area at Sutherland Pond. A DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT found a place to dry his wings at the Ooms Conservation Area as a GREAT BLUE HERON patiently waited near it for a meal.

*Columbia Land Conservancy hosts free environmental education programs on a regular basis throughout the year on protected land throughout Columbia County. The Conservancy's environmental educator will develop customized educational programs in partnership with area schools, day-care centers, after-school programs and summer enrichment programs to bring children into the out-of-doors.*

— Fran Martino  
(518) 392-5252, Ext. 205

### LIMERICKS by Al Palmer

#### *The Little Killer*

A small ruthless Bird, is the Shrike!  
Who uses Barb-wire, for a spike  
He impales his prey,  
In this uniquely, strange way –  
So his victims – perhaps, die of fright!

#### *Energy Plus*

He's a perky, wide-eyed Dynamo;  
Who Keeps all of his systems, on GO!  
You'd think, a whistle, so shrill  
was made be some Teenager – until,  
Our cute Titmouse appears, Then we Know!



## HMBC TO HOST 2005 FEDERATION MEETING

The dates are set for the 2005 Federation Meeting. We will be the host group for the annual event, which draws 150-200 birders from across the state.

Mark your calendar for Sept 23-25, 2005 to take part in what should prove to be a very interesting weekend at The Marriott Hotel on Wolf Road in Albany.

There is a core group of volunteers from the club that have been working on the planning of this event since last summer. We are ready for YOUR help now. As the date approaches we will need many more volunteers. There are many jobs both large and small that need the attention of volunteers.

### Our goals include:

- Satisfying the needs of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs
- Making the best possible presentation of HMBC as the host club
- Host a successful event that attendees find worthwhile and well managed
- Generating income for HMBC through book sales and other sales opportunities

### The committee is:

- We are committed to keeping our meetings short.
- We do most of the work between meetings
- We will not to over burden any individual.
- We will find a task that meets the time you have available to commit
- We will find a task that suits you and your skills so that it's fun for you to do

Please step up to the plate for the club, we won't ask for more than you are able to give and we will be very appreciative of the help you do offer.

Thanks to all who have helped so far. We have a great group of volunteers that are doing wonderful work, so thank you **Joan Cipriani, Phillip Johnson, Bill Lee, Patti Packer, Peggy Rudis** and **Jo Shultz**. Recently **Bob Budliger** and **Helen Dolan** have also joined our ranks. Don't miss out on all the fun...call Lynn today to find out what jobs are still open and how you can help.

Lynn Huntington can be reached at 477-2980 in the evening or during the day 477-9317 or by e-mail at [lynnh123@earthlink.net](mailto:lynnh123@earthlink.net).



## Upcoming HMBC Programs

**Thursday, September 9, 7 PM, Colonie Library**

***Pajaros Y Ruinas*, Gregg Recer**

**Birds and Mayan Temples of Yucatan Mexico and Belize**

There's more to the Riviera Maya than the beaches of Cancun and Playa del Carmen. The eastern Yucatan Peninsula is a wonderful combination of the Caribbean, dry tropical forest and numerous archeological sites. Spending a week there is an easy way to become introduced to birding the neotropics, with the bonus of exploring fascinating Mayan ruins sites ranging from the huge and well-known such as Chichen Itza, to many obscure and barely excavated sites. While climbing pyramids, you can start adding entire new bird families such as Motmots, Puffbirds, Ant birds, and Jacamars to your life list! Join Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club past president Gregg Recer for a slide presentation describing his family's recent travels to this beautiful area.

*In October, the HMBC and the Capital Region Audubon Society offers a "Focus on Florida", each club will hold meetings on their normal nights. Members of both clubs are invited to both meetings.*

**Monday, October 4 at 7 PM, Colonie Library (HMBC)**

***The Everglades* John Greene**

**Thursday, October 14, 7 PM, Colonie Library (Audubon)**

***Crackers, Conch & Con Men*, Bob Budliger**

Bob offers a slightly revised version of the program he gave at the HMBC meeting in December 2003.

### LIMERICKS *by Al Palmer*

#### *The Quail*

On the head of a Quail, is a crest  
While some others may think, plumes are best.  
The Montezuma feels safe,  
with their Sentinels in place.  
So His Cavery can Dine with the rest!

#### *Redpoll*

We can't depend, on the Common Redpoll.  
Being unpredictable – must be his goal!  
This year's Invasions were fine –  
But they don't come – everytime!  
Will they be back again? We don't Know!





## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

(<http://birds.cornell.edu/>). We will plan to carpool and leave around 7:00 AM, for the 3 ½ hour drive to Ithaca. After a short walk on the trails of Sapsucker Woods, we will spend the afternoon visiting the Lab's Johnson Center for Birds and Biodiversity, which overlooks Sapsucker Woods pond and showcases the paintings of Louis Agassiz Fuertes and other famous bird artists. Details were unavailable at press time, but we hope to include a behind-the-scenes tour of the lab. Although the trip will officially end on Saturday, participants who wish a more relaxed day may wish to make their own arrangements to stay overnight in Ithaca and perhaps bird the grounds on their own Sunday morning, or visit a nearby state park. Contact the coordinator for reservations and details.

**AUG 21—22 NH COAST & NEWBURYPORT MA WHALE WATCH**  
**SAT—SUN Coordinators: Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen**  
**Reservations due by July 25**

**899-2678**

On this trip we will focus on migrant shorebirds and also look for pelagic birds from one of the commercial whale-watch trips run out of Newburyport MA. We will spend one morning on the whalewatch looking for shearwaters, jaegers, storm petrels gannets and phalaropes feeding on nearby Stellwagen Bank. The remainder of the weekend will be spent searching two prime shorebirding areas — the Hampton marshes along the short stretch of coastline in NH and Plum Island MA. The shorebirding can be very exciting at these areas — some interesting vagrants seem to show up here every year. Among the expected species, are over a dozen species of sandpipers, piping plover, several heron and egret species and *Spartina* marsh specialities such as clapper rail and seaside sparrow. Call the coordinators for details and reservations.

**AUGUST 28 VISCHER FERRY NATURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVE (morning)**  
**SAT Coordinator: John Hershey**

**371-3114**

Join us for this morning walk at one of the Club's most popular birding locations. We'll look for post-breeding herons and egrets, Wood Ducks, marsh birds, as well as summer resident songbirds. In addition, we will try to spot some of the first of the southbound migrants including Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Scarlet Tanager, kinglets, vireos, and a variety of warblers. We'll visit Ferry Dr. at the end of the trip to look for shorebirds and other species along the edge of the Mohawk River.

Meet at 8:00 am at the main entrance.



# Feathers

## HMBC BOARD FOR 2003-2004

### Officers

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

**Vice-President:**

Gregg Recer  
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899-2678

**Secretary:**

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355-0818



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Beverly Relyea	adkmountaingirl@hotmail.com
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Birdline:	John Saville	399-5959
Programs:	Scott Stoner	785-6760
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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](mailto:contact@hmbc.net)**

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

### HMBC Board Meetings

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 Contributions Desired

- Have anything you think other birders would be interested in?
- Have a favorite birding spot you want to share?
- Are there any stories that would inspire others?

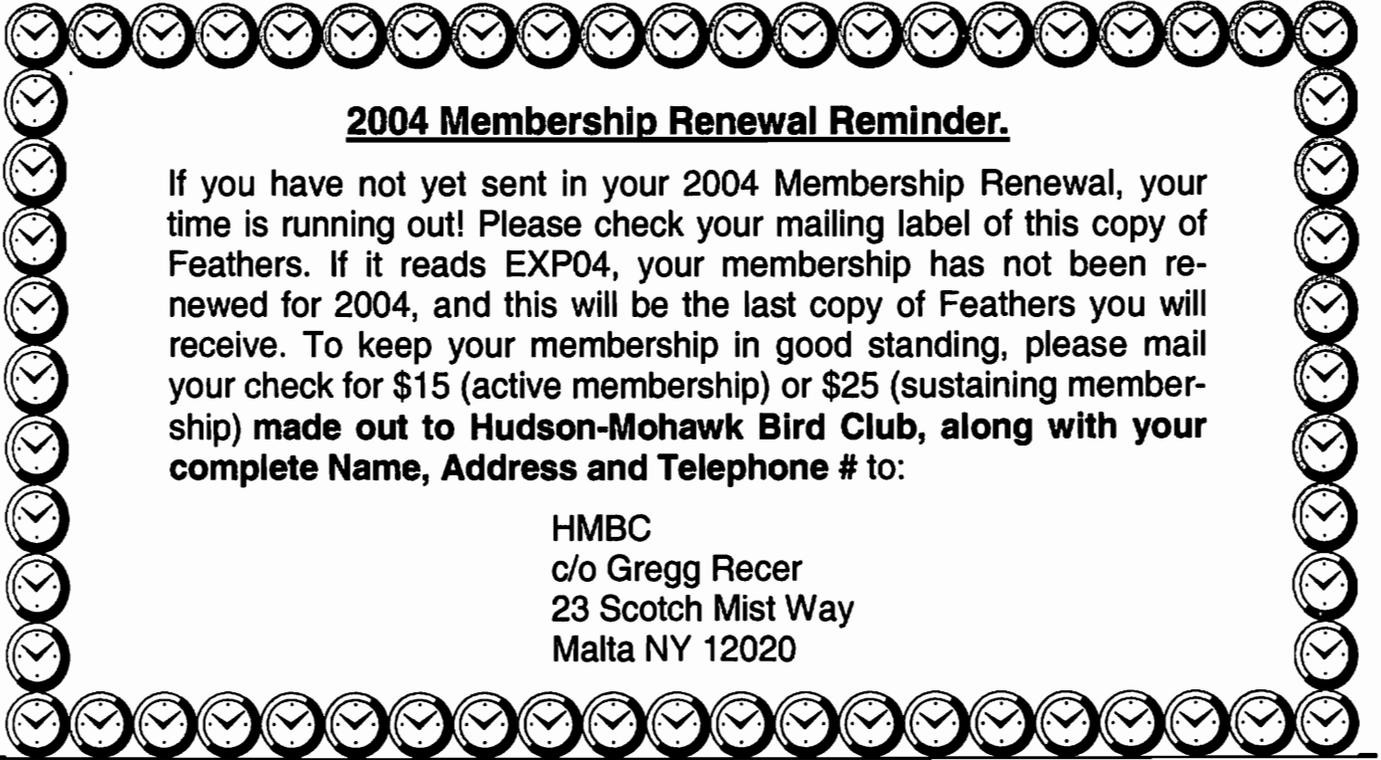
Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the address at right.

### Newsletter Submissions

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

Send all submissions to:

**Bob Miller**  
**1994 15th St.**  
**Troy, NY 12180**



## 2004 Membership Renewal Reminder.

If you have not yet sent in your 2004 Membership Renewal, your time is running out! Please check your mailing label of this copy of Feathers. If it reads EXP04, your membership has not been renewed for 2004, and this will be the last copy of Feathers you will receive. To keep your membership in good standing, please mail your check for \$15 (active membership) or \$25 (sustaining membership) made out to **Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club**, along with your **complete Name, Address and Telephone #** to:

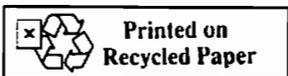
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## MONUMENT VALLEY - A BIRDING COLD SPOT

*By Dick Patrick*

Our fellow geezers were huddled around the Weather Channel gibbering in terror at predictions of blizzards, ice storms and assorted nasty conditions for the Southwest. Patsy and I were more interested in tanking up on the complimentary breakfast at our Gallup, New Mexico motel than any concerns about weather.

Evidently our good appetites appeared out of place to the others as someone was dispatched to inquire about our destination. With a shower of crumbs we replied "The Four Corners." Bingo! We were warned that we would be heading into the area pinpointed as the heart of the possible storm. We observed that this is a day that the Lord has made and we will rejoice and be glad in it and while you are up please pass us another Danish.

Patsy and I called together the posse of Ravens that had been escorting us since our arrival in Albuquerque the day before and we headed north on intriguingly numbered Rt. 666. As further proof that the inmates are running the asylum a road sign advises us that Rt. 666 has been renumbered, presumably so as not to chance summoning up the beast mentioned in Revelations 13:18.

It was a fantastic day; snow on the buttes, ominous purple skies in all directions, ragged clouds, streams of sunlight - a glad to be alive day. Other than the Ravens not perfect for bird watching. Let's watch for Indians then. That is the main reason we came out.

For the politically correct - if you called them Native Americans they would just shake their heads. We were in Navajo Country and the Navajos were in the last wave over from Siberia arriving in the Southwest 500 years or so ago. Very possibly they appeared after the Spanish Conquistadors.

The first Navajo we encountered was an old man hitch hiking to a funeral in Tohatchi. Being fans of Tony Hillerman we started with our passenger to begin our life list of clans, Towering House Clan. He described himself as a ranch hand. We couldn't drive him right to the door of the church because of the sea of mud. It may look like desert but the soil is not sandy.

Next we picked up a couple, Many Hogans Clan, going to Farmington hoping to sell some "dream catchers" the lady had fashioned. The sample she showed us was lovely, but such a tenuous economy!

We parted company at Shiprock and headed west to the four corners. Patsy sang out

In This Issue....

*Dick Patrick Artwork*

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## MONUMENT VALLEY - A BIRDING COLD SPOT continued

"There is a hawk with a white breast." I turned around and there with immaculately groomed sideburns and the brightest yellow talons was a Prairie Falcon. A bird you would turn around for any day.

At the Four Corners Monument there was a Navajo taking our \$3.00 apiece, two Japanese tourists and a circle of unoccupied shanties which in better weather would be occupied by Indians displaying their crafts. But this was February 28, not prime tourist season. Well we've got four states to choose from (no, I 'm not going to name them for you) there has to be a bird around here some

place. And there was! A lone Horned Lark. Not a flock of larks, just the one. We were happy to see it.

We arrived at Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park. Yes, the Monument Valley you see in all the old Western movies. You don't hike on reservation land. You stick to the one loop road thru the park. And as we could see the mud we were not inclined to chance "sticking" to that road so we chose a guide, "King Richard", Folded Arms Clan, and set off as the only passengers (\$35 each) in a roomy van for a tour of the back country. We were not disappointed. We told our guide that we were





## MONUMENT VALLEY - A BIRDING COLD SPOT continued

bird watchers so he stopped at every flock in the valley - both of them - for our perusal. The first was a clan of Cassin's Finches. The second appeared as swirling clouds of light blue tinsel - Mountain Bluebirds at least a hundred. A sight we will never forget.

"King Richard" had gone off to college to get a degree in something to do with computers, which led to a job off the reservation, which led to a layoff, which led to returning home to true happiness and a job working for his brother in their guide service. The Navajo Reservation is the size of the State of West Virginia not coincidentally the area where he lived as a child was included as part of our two and a half hour tour. We asked him "A hot shot like you, at 41, why aren't you married?" All the good looking women according to him are in King Richard's clan thus are considered related to him and therefore off limits. The next time you are in Monument Valley look him up.

That evening, Sunday, February 29, we reported to Monument Valley High School which is just down the road from Gouldings Lodge. Now we are in San Juan County, Utah, just steps north of the Arizona border. We were meeting with the high school principal preparatory to spending a week as volunteers in the school. Pat Seltzer and her husband Jack came to the high school for a year mainly out of curiosity and now seventeen years later she is the principal and he, among other things, is the basketball coach. It was a Sunday night but she, along with all the teachers, live right across the parking lot in an apartment building that is an essential part of the school campus.

She advised us that we would fit in best if we didn't arrive with our own agenda. I had spent several months polishing and fine tuning my

agenda but after listening to Mrs. Seltzer for less than five minutes I knew she was right.

As I am writing for our bird club I can not tell you all I would like to about Monument Valley High School, its students (100% Navajo) and teachers (a wonderful mixture). Let me just say it appears to be a state of the art school, lacking for nothing in the way of equipment. Tony Hillerman donated \$22,000 for the football field lighting. Hats, earphones and sunglasses are not worn in school and belly buttons are not on display. The students can not help but be poor, however they don't look poor, very neat and clean, a little turquoise jewelry but no make-up. They certainly aren't outgoing with strangers; but Patsy and I gave two classes, 20 minute talks on our trips to the Arctic - no slides, just chatting and showing pictures from books in the school library. Their friendliness and enthusiasm we will always treasure. I just can't continue on this subject or all birds would be forgotten. These are people that after only five days in their company have a permanent place in your heart. And the good thing is, there is always a furnished apartment at the school for the use of volunteers.

We had a couple hours each day between the end of class and supper at the lodge. Do your selves a favor and arrange to spend a couple days at Gouldings. You are never going to get a better view with your room. That is for certain.

So in the couple hours we poked around looking for birds and seeing how the Navajo live. I'm guessing a load of Robins and Juncos (slate-colored flavor) stole away in our suitcases because they were everywhere. Other than that we saw Sage Sparrows and Brewer's Sparrows. The latter we researched in Kenn Kaufman's Lives of American Birds



## MONUMENT VALLEY - A BIRDING COLD SPOT (continued)

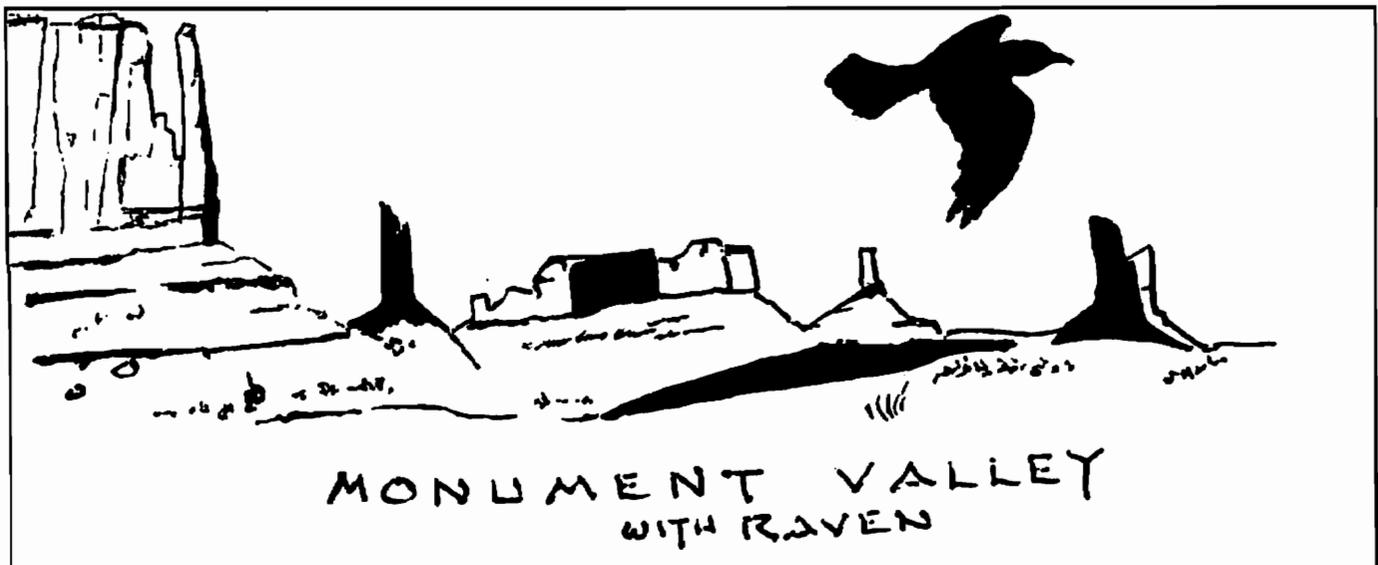
as the little brown striped blurs that were always streaking into the bottom of sagebushes we couldn't possibly identify from field guides. The third bird was something else. We took the road thru Mexican Hat up to the Goosenecks. These impossible snaky canyons are the worlds deepest meanders, I could imagine God saying "What does it take to impress this guy?" "I know." Out of nowhere flew a Bendire's Thrasher, perched on a rock on the rim and sang his song just for Patsy and me. Thank You.

One of our favorite after school drives was west ten miles to the trading post - general store in Oljato to visit with the young woman, home from college, who ran the business. She listed her whole family tree of clans; Salt, Bitterwater, Edgewater and Near the Water and also wrote the names in Navajo for us.

We visited the sewage lagoons at the lodge which on a Victor Emanuel pay-per-view would have yielded more species than you would see in a month back home. Here only Ravens. One day we heard a wren song echoing in the canyon and there were two Western House Wrens. For Monument Valley

that was it for birds; no other hawks, no eagles, no towhees, no plovers, no jays, no quail, just what I told you.

I'm afraid the Navajos were equally spare; small dwellings, corrals, hogans (ceremonial lodges), ramadas (stick arbors), propane tanks, junk trucks, sheep pens (a circle of poles and scrap lumber) and of course a basketball goal. And dogs. I have never been a dog fan. But any dog I saw out there I would be honored to own. Dogs would be a whole separate story. Other than the "well used" trucks and dogs not all dwellings had all of the above improvements. Another thing the dwellings didn't have was lawns and landscaping. Unlike newcomers to the West, Indians realize water is precious, too precious to waste on lawns. As far as landscaping is concerned they are content with the sagebrush (many different kinds), the One-seed Juniper and at higher elevations, Pinyon Pine. They seem to be truly at peace with what to us would seem very little. I would be naive to think that somewhere there aren't a few rich Navajos; but if there are they do not disfigure the landscape with the ridiculous McMan-





## MONUMENT VALLEY - A BIRDING COLD SPOT (continued)

sions that are polluting our countryside. They also have too much self-respect to think they can magically improve their lot with casinos. A good lesson for us all!

Just a couple more birds and I'll let you go. We passed thru the Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site where we enjoyed a road full of socializing Western Bluebirds. A day later we were at El Morro National Monument where the Western Bluebirds were through socializing and on to establishing their turf. To digress, you don't go to El Morro just to see bluebirds. There is also Inscription Rock - a record of Anasazi, Zuni, the Spanish, emigrants, camel soldiers, railroad surveyors

who all stopped at this oasis. The history of the West written on one long rock wall by the people who authored the story.

Besides birds, what else didn't we see. Mammals. We didn't see mammals. A couple little lizards and a few ground squirrels but no deer, elk, antelope, bighorn sheep, javelinas. Pretty much all grazing land with hardly any sheep or cattle either.

Yet, go there. You won't be disappointed; every sunrise, sunset, and storm over Monument Valley shows what God can do when He really wants to show off for His children.

And always Ravens.

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## BACKYARD CONFRONTATION

*By Jean Parker Katz*

WHAT was that big shape on the birdbath? Grabbing my binoculars, I saw that a sharp-shinned hawk was perched on the rim, absolutely immobile.

Let me admit right now that I had to search in several field guides for a picture of the top side of the bird before I was able to be sure of the identification. How many hawks, after all are considerate enough to come down and pose on birdbaths? And how many of those that do are obliging enough to do so when someone happens to be looking?

Luckily, this bird was in no hurry to bathe. That allowed me plenty of time to make a positive identification. Back to the binoculars, I saw her energized enough to step into the water. She stood there moving her head to survey the area before bathing.

Suddenly she started to move, but not like any bird I had ever seen taking a bath. She raised

and lowered her wings repeatedly and spread her tail, showing individual feathers, beautifully striped. What was going on?

Our back yard is the playground for too many squirrels, all of them accustomed to drinking from the birdbath, which is a snow saucer on the ground. They don't take turns with each other, let alone with birds.

So, one of the squirrels apparently was thirsty, and expected that bird over there to give way to him. The hawk did not take kindly to this interruption of her ablutions and like a good many animals, made herself as large and menacing as possible to back up her prior claim.

The squirrel, unused to any backtalk, advanced and retreated several times before ceding the territory to the hawk. Sharpie then took a long, luxurious bath and finally flew off, leaving a temporarily squirrel-free back yard.



## HMBC Field Trip Reports

### Hebron Nature Preserve June 13, 2004

A 75° sunny day with a gentle breeze was the perfect setting for the first field trip to the Hebron Nature Preserve. Our group of 12 was joined by the Pember naturalist who was also leading another trip later that day. Everyone was pleased at the count of 55 species - 35 seen and 21 heard - who could complain about walking through the forest to the accompaniment of a several VEERYS? The family of AMERICAN WOODCOCK remained elusive and the Blue-winged Warbler was not to be found, however we enjoyed nice looks at BROWN THRASHER, we heard the VIRGINIA RAIL and seven species of warblers plus five species of sparrows were tallied. The varied habitat of open fields, woods, and marsh accounts for the high species count and many participants were planning to return on their own. We added nine new species to the Breeding Bird Atlas records for this block, and confirmed an additional three species. Experts and beginners alike were a part of the group and everyone returned with a bit more birding knowledge - if not a new bird for their life list!

— *Mona Bearor*

### Notchview Reservation and Moran WMA June 19, 2004

On a cloudy, cool, windy morning in the Berkshires three birders saw or heard a total of 40 species, including 10 warbler species. Beginning at Moran, we were surrounded by YELLOW WARBLERS, COMMON YELLOWTHROATS, and CEDAR WAXWINGS. GRAY CATBIRD, VEERY, CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER and a distant WHITE-THROATED SPARROW were heard, but the brisk winds kept any grassland birds

in hiding. A surprise flyover by an AMERICAN BITTERN gave us our bird of the day. Moving on to Notchview, we were greeted by a raucous PILEATED WOODPECKER. As DARK-EYED JUNCOS trilled from the high spruces along the circuit trail, we added MAGNOLIA, BLACK-THROATED BLUE, BLACK-THROATED GREEN, YELLOW-RUMPED, BLACK-AND-WHITE, and BLACKBURNIAN WARBLERS, all "by ear" save for a fleeting look at a BLACKBURNIAN. Oddly, we had two magnificent views of usually hard-to-see OVENBIRDS. As we walked we were serenaded by WINTER WRENS, PURPLE FINCHES, RED-EYED VIREOS and HERMIT THRUSHES, all well concealed in windblown foliage. We chased a vocal INDIGO BUNTING around a clearing for several minutes to get a two-second view. A singing GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET also favored us with a brief appearance. As we emerged from the woods into the fields and orchards near the visitor center, a strange-looking "sparrow" turned out to be a female BOBOLINK, recognized finally when a male BOBOLINK perched alongside. CHIPPING SPARROWS and an EASTERN PHOEBE were active near the outbuildings, and a swarm of TREE SWALLOWS were hunting over the fields. The swallows appear to have nearly monopolized the numerous nesting boxes; we saw only one EASTERN BLUEBIRD all day.

— *Philip and Marjorie Whitney*

### Cherry Plains WMA July 10, 2004

Fourteen feather fanatics on a cloudy, cool morning started out by stalking a singing BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER that finally gave us a brief look at close range. Some in the group had a more distant look at a YELLOW-THROATED VIREO before we continued



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

along Jiggs Highway, where YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER and RED-EYED VIREO appeared and several OVENBIRDS and a HERMIT THRUSH sang in hiding. In a clearing west of the State Park, an INDIGO BUNTING sang a variation of his usual song for several minutes from atop a small tree in full view of all, while a COMMON YELLOWTHROAT and a small clan of CHIPPING SPARROWS competed for our attention. At the dam below the lake, TREE and BARN SWALLOWS worked over the water and two unspotted SPOTTED SANDPIPERS (immatures?) teetered along the shore. The highlight of the morning was a stop at the end of Dynamite Shack Road. As the sun broke through the clouds, a male ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK was feeding young, and we watched a family of BLACKBURNIAN WARBLERS and two immature BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS, while MAGNOLIA and YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS, DARK-EYED JUNCO, and RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH were heard not far away. Also among the morning's 31 species were GREAT BLUE HERON, BROAD-WINGED HAWK, CEDAR WAXWING, and YELLOW WARBLER.

— *Phil Whitney*

**Grafton Lakes State Park**  
July 11, 2004

Six birders began the morning at the blueberry patch, noisy as always with singing WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS, EASTERN TOWHEES, and GRAY CATBIRDS. A flurry of warblers included NASHVILLE, CHESTNUT-SIDED, BLACK-THROATED GREEN and COMMON YELLOWTHROAT. VEERY could be heard, and as we were about to leave a BROAD-WINGED HAWK flashed by carrying some unidentified prey. Returning along the Gartler Trail, at the marsh we added SONG and SWAMP SPARROWS while a raucous chorus of RED-WINGED

BLACKBIRDS "sang" from the cattails. TREE and BARN SWALLOWS and AMERICAN GOLD-FINCHES patrolled the meadow as HOUSE WRENS trilled from the "bluebird" boxes. At one spot along the Wildwood Trail, repeated chik-brrr calls signaled the presence of SCARLET TANAGERS, and soon both male and female appeared. As a HERMIT THRUSH sang in the distance, the same spot yielded RED-EYED VIREO, OVENBIRD, BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER, and a small tribe of BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES. A female BALTIMORE ORIOLE awaited us as we returned to the parking area. At the end of Shaver Road, a brief stop produced EASTERN PHOEBE, EASTERN WOODPEWEE, and a brilliant male PURPLE FINCH. Along Long Pond Road, we added YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, EASTERN KINGBIRD, and LEAST FLYCATCHER, and spent several minutes stalking an elusive YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER that kept singing but never appeared. A final stop at White Pond Swamp brought nothing new except for a flyover by a GREAT BLUE HERON. In all, 42 species seen or heard; not bad for a mid-July morning.

— *Phil Whitney*

**Cornell Lab of Ornithology**  
August 7, 2004

On Saturday August 7, 15 people plus met Denise and me at the new Cornell Lab of Ornithology building at Sapsucker Woods in Ithaca. Interest and participation were high. The new lab, more formally known as the Imogene Powers Johnson Center for Birds and Biodiversity, had opened barely one year ago, and is a beautiful new building overlooking the pond on Sapsucker Woods. Although the hoped-for behind-the-scenes tour was not possible due to staff availability, there was plenty to see and do both inside and out.



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

Early arrivals birded the grounds while the rest of us made the 200-mile drive from the Capital Region. Convening at 11 AM, we enjoyed very close looks at a cooperative GREEN HERON near the entrance. Then, after a brief stop at the large indoor viewing area, we gathered in the auditorium to enjoy a short, multimedia introduction to the work of the lab, that stressed the value of citizen science to the knowledge base of ornithology. Following that, folks spread out to explore various exhibits of the lab, including the Fuertes Room, the Art Gallery, the sound studio, and (of course!) the gift shop. Folks in various groups also explored the several

miles of trails. The collective birdlist was about 35; highlights included CEDAR WAXWING, a BARN SWALLOW nest with young on the side of the building, RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS, BELTED KINGFISHER, GREAT BLUE HERON, and several WARBLERS including MAGNOLIA, AMERICAN REDSTART, YELLOW-RUMPED, and YELLOW. An adult and immature YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER provided a nice ending to the trip to Sapsucker woods. Some did this as a (long) day trip; others stayed one night or even two. It was a relaxed trip with a lot of flexibility, and enjoyed by all.

— Scott Stoner

## Upcoming HMBC Programs

**Thursday, September 9, 7 PM, Colonie Library**  
***Pajaros Y Ruinas*, Gregg Recer**  
Birds and Mayan Temples of Yucatan Mexico and Belize

There's more to the Riviera Maya than the beaches of Cancun and Playa del Carmen. The eastern Yucatan Peninsula is a wonderful combination of the Caribbean, dry tropical forest and numerous archeological sites. Spending a week there is an easy way to become introduced to birding the neotropics, with the bonus of exploring fascinating Mayan ruins sites ranging from the huge and well-known such as Chichen Itza, to many obscure and barely excavated sites. While climbing pyramids, you can start adding entire new bird families such as Motmots, Puffbirds, Ant birds, and Jacamars to your life list! Join Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club past president Gregg Recer for a slide presentation describing his family's recent travels to this beautiful area.

*In October, the HMBC and the Capital Region Audubon Society offers a "Focus on Florida", each club will hold meetings on their normal nights. Members of both clubs are invited to both meetings.*

*First, on Monday October 4, HMBC welcomes freelance naturalist and photo tour leader John Green, as he presents a slide and music program on the Everglades. Then, on Thursday, October 14, Audubon and HMBC past president Bob Budliger will present his renowned natural and human history of Florida, entitled "Crackers, Conchs, and*



## Upcoming HMBC (Audubon) Programs (continued)

*Con Men, or Who Stole Florida." To conclude the focus on Florida, Scott and Denise Stoner present "A Week in the Everglades"..All three programs are at 7:00 PM at the William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library on Albany-Shaker Road at Maxwell Road. Details of each program are provided below.*

**Monday, October 4 at 7 PM, Colonie Library (HMBC)**

***The Everglades*, John Greene**

a Slide and Music Show

Picture a flat, expansive region of sawgrass, intermittently dotted with islands of trees. The air is alive with birds and insects, and almost every pond has its resident alligators and other water-loving denizens. This is the Everglades!

The lifeblood of the Everglades is water. The major source, a shallow, slow-moving sheet, flows southward from the Lake Okeechobee region, through sawgrass, around tree islands, and into Florida Bay. Its passage through extensive areas of sawgrass gives rise to the name, "river of grass." The water level fluctuates from a high, during the summer wet season, to a low in the winter dry season.

The organisms inhabiting the Everglades have adapted to survive changing environmental conditions, including the fires that occur during the dry season. However, the continued diversion of water via canals and dikes, and the continued stress on native plants from competition with introduced species, may create conditions to which the Everglades and its tenants may not easily adapt in the future. "The Everglades" highlights wading bird behavior, the role of the alligator in this complex ecosystem, and the many inhabitants of the "Glades."

John Green is a free-lance photographer and interpretive naturalist from western Massachusetts. He has been photographing nature for over 30 years and has achieved an impressive portfolio. He has been featured on the television series "PBS Kids," and his print and slide shows have been widely exhibited. John has led many photo workshops and tours. Also a gifted teacher and field naturalist, John has led workshops and tours from Florida to Massachusetts. A popular speaker, he has delighted audiences with his inspiring slide and music presentations. Join John and HMBC on October 4 for "The Everglades."

**Thursday, October 14, 7 PM, Colonie Library (Audubon)**

***Crackers, Conch & Con Men*, 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 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



## Upcoming HMBC (Audubon) Programs (continued)

have impacted native plants and animals.

Bob Budliger is past president of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, and the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. This native Floridian has taught high school on Long Island and worked as a Park Ranger at Fire Island National Seashore. Following that, Bob worked for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, serving as the first Director of Five Rivers Center, and later, as chief of environmental education.

Join Bob and Audubon on October 14 for his insightful window into the history - and future - of south Florida.

**Monday November 1, 7 PM, Colonie Library.(HMBC)**  
***A Week In the Everglades*, Scott and Denise Stoner.**

The focus on Florida concludes with "A Week in the Everglades".

In this slide and music program, we explore Everglades National Park - from its entrance near Florida City all the way to Florida Bay. Along the way, we look at different habitats - pine rockland, sawgrass ("river of grass"), mangrove, coastal prairie - and the birds and other wildlife within. Come see why Everglades is our favorite national park - and worth spending a week there every winter! We will also explore why it is so highly threatened, and discuss the prospects for saving it.

Denise and Scott enjoy visiting and photographing natural America from coast to coast, but have a special affection for south Florida, having made more than 10 trips to the Everglades! Scott Stoner is past president of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and the Audubon Society of the Capital Region; his photography has been published in *Birder's World* magazine. Denise leads field trips and has been an officer and director of the Bird Club. Together, they have presented programs on Florida, National Parks, the West, and other topics to a variety of groups in the Capital Region.

## Upcoming Capital Region Audubon Programs

**Thursday, December 9, 7PM, Colonie Library**  
***Down to the Sea*, Gerry Lemmo**

Examine some of the fascinating life forms, waiting to be found, from the beaches of Maine to coastal Alaska. Images include the comical puffin, a primitive horseshoe crab, feisty Stellar's sea-lions, and a vivid red starfish in a rocky tidal pool.

Gerry Lemmo's travels have brought him to five of the seven continents. Through his vivid photography, he immerses you, the viewer, into the geography, culture and spectacular wildlife of places both near and far. With sixteen, 45- minute programs, full of both native and international subjects, you are enlightened with images of common, yet rarely seen birds and mammals of the Adirondack region, as well as exotic creatures from distant lands. Alaska, Madagascar, The Amazon, Kenya and Antarctica are among the destinations. The unique calls of featured wildlife accompany many programs, and some are enlivened with native music.



## Program Reports

### February Meeting *100 Years of Birdbanding - 53 on My Watch*

To a full house at the Colonie library, long-time HMBC veteran Bob Yunick presented "100 Years of Birdbanding - 53 on My Watch":

Scientific birdbanding in North America celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2002. Bob Yunick has been an active part of this for more than half the century! He banded his first bird in Schenectady in 1950, the same year he joined the Schenectady Bird Club (predecessor to the HMBC). Bob was introduced to banding by Rudd Stone one of the founding members of the Club in 1939, and obtained his own master permit in 1962. He has banded over 176,000 birds in six states and the Canadian arctic.

People are fascinated with birds due to their spectacular plumage, power of flight and ability to migrate (migration myths include birds flying to the moon, burrowing in pond bottoms, and humming birds hitching rides on the backs of larger birds).

Migration interest led to banding. The first banding in North America was in 1803 by Audubon at a Mill Grove, PA estate. He placed a silver wire on Phoebe nestlings' legs; one returned following year. Audubon was lucky - at Bob's Jenny Lake (northern Saratoga County) station, he had one female banded 7/96, return to exact nest site for 6 years; then banded 3 of her mates and 28 offspring - never seeing a one of them (other than her) again!

The first scientific banding was in 1899 in Denmark with numbered bands. The US got into bird banding in 1902. The passage of the Migratory Bird Act in 1916 led to the Migratory Bird Treaty in 1918, signed by the US, Canada, and Mexico. In 1920 the US Bureau of Biological Survey set up a formal US/Canadian banding program, which ultimately became the US Fish and Wildlife Service; banding is now managed by the Biological Resources Division of the USGS.

There are currently 5,275 banders in North America; 375 in Canada. In the U.S. there are 2,000 master permits and 2,900 subpermits in US; approximately 160 band hummingbirds. One quarter of the banders are avocational ornithologists like Bob; 32% are university researchers, and 27% are government agency researchers.

A whopping 63 million birds have been banded so far, and 3.5 million recovered. This equates to 5.5% (this is so high due to approximately 30% of banded waterfowl, but usually less than 0.1% for songbirds). The current banding rate is about 1.2 million birds per year, with 85,000 reported found per year.

Bob reviewed the purposes of banding: to provide data for determining conservation policies, learning where birds migrate and winter, how long they live, etc. He then related five stories documented by banding:

- 1) Chimney Swift wintering ground discovery in 1943 with 13 bands from Yanayacu River in SE Peru. Birds had been banded in Ontario, Connecticut, Illinois, Georgia, Alabama, and 8 in Tennessee.



## Program Reports (continued)

2) Golden- and White-crowned Sparrow work of Richard Mewalt in California sending birds 1800 miles to Baton Rouge, Louisiana (26 of 414 birds sent there returned to California the next winter). Subsequently, he sent 660 (including 22 of the 26 returnees) 2400 miles to Maryland, and of those, 15 returned to California (including 6 that had previously returned from Baton Rouge)!

3) Manx Shearwater displacement from nest borough in Wales to Boston - the bird returned 3200 miles in under 13 days. Other displacement experiments were conducted with Laysan Albatrosses in the Pacific, 82% of the displaced birds returned, covering distances of 1900-4700 miles at about 230 miles per day. An incredible 82% of the displaced birds returned.

4) Longevity records of 42 years, 5 months for Laysan Albatross - the oldest bird on record. Raptors generally live 15-25 years. Bob recaptured a Red-tailed Hawk after 26 years, 6 months, establishing a new record. This has since been superseded twice to a record 28 years, 8 months, which is not only the oldest Red-tailed Hawk, but the oldest North American raptor. Songbirds generally can live to 10-17 years; the oldest Common Grackle is 20 years, 11 months. Warblers generally live 5-10 years; 6 species have been recorded in double digits. The oldest Common Yellowthroat is 11 years, 6 months. As to hummingbirds, 9 of 14 species have been recorded to live over 8 years, with the oldest a Broad-tailed in Arizona at 12 years, 2 months. The oldest Ruby-throated is 10 years, 2 months in Ohio.

5) Finally, Bob recounted a fascinating saga surrounding Evening Grosbeaks; work that others did with M. Brousseau in Quebec. A cat caught a starling (banded in Pennsylvania) and then an Evening Grosbeak. Then, a US fisherman impressed on him the value of reporting bands, resulting in the shooting of 275 Evening Grosbeaks banded by 101 US/Canadian banders in late 1950's.

Bob also reviewed his own banding career, starting in Schenectady in 1950; mostly backyard feeder banding, but also at Vischer Ferry 1964-91 banding 25,910 birds of 126 species plus one subspecies. He also conducted raptor banding in Cape May, New Jersey from 1975-1993, banding 2,509 raptors of 10 species. Bob also banded at Island Beach State Park, New Jersey from 1964 to present - total of 46,595 birds of 122 species in fall, and (1993 to present) 4,969 birds of 90 species in spring. Closer to home, at Jenny Lake in northern Saratoga County, from 1970 to present, Bob banded 27,836 birds of 77 species. In a one-week period during July 1977, Bob banded 41 birds of 9 species at Cambridge Bay in the Canadian Arctic (above the Arctic Circle at near 70 degrees North Latitude). Finally, in August of 2001, he banded hummers near Silver City, New Mexico and (in June 2003), hummers in Maine, at Mooselookmeguntic Lake.

Total birds banded since he obtained his own master permit in April 1962 is 176,537 birds of 203 species. The 5 most numerous are Purple Finch - 14,167, Pine Siskin at 13,393, Dark-eyed Junco 13,084, White-throated Sparrow - 11,713, and Golden-crowned Kinglet at 11,374. These five species totaled 36.4%. His oldest Jenny Lake Purple Finch is 11 years, 1 month;



## **Program Reports (continued)**

close to the North American record of 11 years, 9 months.

Some interesting anecdotes from banding included a Barn Swallow (from Vischer Ferry) banded 8/29/64 that was encountered 10/12/64 on ship in Caribbean; 2 of 10 Cape May Broad-winged Hawks, one shot 10 weeks later at Bay of Pigs, Cuba and one 8 weeks later injured along road at Key Largo, Florida. Common Terns from Martha's Vineyard taken by market hunter in British Guyana; a Peregrine mistnetted at Island Beach, New Jersey, eating a flicker in the net 10/91 shot 1/93 in the Gran Chaco region of Argentina approximately 4500 miles and 68 degrees of latitude south of banding, Bob's longest band recovery.

He described various re-encounters of birds from his yard and Jenny Lake including a Pine Siskin from British Columbia, 2,150 miles away, others from 7 states and 5 provinces west to West Virginia and south to North Carolina. Evening Grosbeaks from 13 states and 4 provinces west to Michigan and south to Alabama. Other banders' Evening Grosbeaks have come to him from 11 states and 1 province from as far away as Ontario, West Virginia, and Texas. A newly hatched Mourning Dove from his yard banded in 5/73 was found in a salmon fishing camp on the Pinware River in Labrador (1013 miles) in 6/74.

At various times Bob has held 5 North American age records, but 2 have been superseded. He currently holds the record for female House Finch (ties male record of 1940's) of 11 years, 7 months a Yellow Warbler female at Vischer Ferry of 10 years, 11 months - just 7 months short of the oldest North American warbler, a Common Yellowthroat of 11 years, 6 months, and a Swamp Sparrow at 5 years, 4 months.

Finally, Bob demonstrated some bands including hummer bands, songbird bands and lock-on raptor bands, banding equipment, 2 hummer traps (Sargent and Hall), electronic reporting of banding data to Bird Banding Laboratory, and the reporting of found bands to the Bird Banding Laboratory.

by Scott Stoner

### **March Meeting *Hudson-Mohawk Merlins***

On March 1, a good-sized crowd gathered at the Colonie library to hear a report from the 2003 World Series of Birding from the team that HMBC sponsored, the Hudson-Mohawk Merlins. With advisor Deb Smith, the four students, David Burke, David Steinberger, Jackson Mesick, and Dickie White, along with several parents in two vehicles birded NJ on May 10, 2003. Covering the state in 21 hours, they began at 0300 in the Great Swamp and ended up at Cape May Light House at midnight. Representing the HMBC in the Youth Division, the Merlins identified 109 species and raised over \$1,400 for the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks. Along the way, they had a great time, met some other serious birders, and saw a number of life birds! Of greatest interest to the audience were the talks by several of the students



## **Program Reports (continued)**

themselves, who described their highlights and memories of the day. It was great to see such enthusiasm and dedication to birding in such young people...and the HMBC should strive to offer more activities to encourage them.

by Scott Stoner

### **HMBC Literary Night, April 7, 2004**

One of the annual treats of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club has become its spring Literary Night. This past April 7, members shared many of their favorite gems of nature literature. Several of the presenters read from their own work, and we were delighted and honored to hear these charming pieces, which included poetry, limericks, and an essay. Each one was unique, and valued. Others preferred to read from their favorite published poets or essayists. This year seemed to be the year of Mary Oliver, as several people independently chose to read her poems. As always, the evening was an experience not only of the mind and spirit, but of the taste buds as well, as the group shared many delicious desserts.

Thanks to all who attended this year's Literary Night. As fall and winter approach, and with them the season for reading by the fire, or examining your own experiences of nature in prose or verse, please keep in mind that next April you can share your favorites with a group of like-minded folks who would love to listen!

by Denise Hackert-Stoner

### **April Meeting *Seabird Restoration***

After the banquet and annual business meeting, HMBC members enjoyed a presentation by Dr. Steve Kress of National Audubon, on the restoration of seabirds. About 60 people attended the program, held at the Fuller Road Fire Department in Colonie. Dr. Kress presented slides and described efforts to reintroduce puffins on islands off the coast of Maine, and other seabirds at other locations. He discussed the exploitation of Maine seabirds for food and feathers and discussed why a number of seabirds need management to encourage recolonization. He highlighted efforts elsewhere, using techniques developed in Maine, to restore Common Murres in California, Caspian Terns in the Columbia River, and Short-tailed Albatross to Midway Island. All in all, it was an interesting and informative evening.

by Scott Stoner

### **May Meeting *A Cultural Birding Trip to Assam and Bhutan***

On May 3, Don and Donna Traver spoke to a large crowd at the Colonie library on A Cultural Birding Trip to Assam and Bhutan. In their third visit to the HMBC, Don and Donna continue to



## Program Reports (continued)

recount their quest to see one species of each bird family in the world - which admittedly is just an excuse to travel to some most interesting places!

In this installment, they had a fascinating trip to Assam in northern India and the Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan. In Assam, they visited Kaziranga National Park, where (while riding an elephant) they came within meters of a highly endangered Indian one-horned rhinoceros. As they described, "phenomenal birding in India was surpassed in their memories only by that of tens of thousands of people living seemingly on top of each other in the noisiest place they have ever been."

After a delay in Katmandu, the capital of Nepal, they experienced a spectacular flight (passing 4 of the 5 highest mountains in the world!) enroute to Paro, Bhutan. Paro has the only airport in Bhutan; the airline has only two planes and 10 pilots. Once in Bhutan, the visitor will find that it only has one road, as well! (Which the women were out repairing). Bhutan was described as educated, expensive to visit, and restricted in the number of visitors allowed in. The Travers spent three weeks in Bhutan, birding along this sometimes perilous single road, but they were excited to see five (5) Ibisbills. The Ibisbill is both unusual and the only member of its family, and nests on stony islands in the wildly flowing rivers that drain the Himalaya mountains. This was this bird that provided the "excuse" for this fascinating trip - and thus program! We again thank the Travers' and look forward to a fourth visit.

by Scott Stoner

### **June Meeting *Hudson-Mohawk Birds***

The people came early to the June 7 program at Five Rivers - and filled up the front seats first! That could only mean one thing: Bill Gorman's movies were about to begin! Over the years, we have so enjoyed Bill's movies of birds from Alaska to Hawaii, Owls, Waterfowl, and many others; this time he treated us to the avian riches close to home.

Bill Gorman's presentations and movies have generated quite a following over the years in the HMBC - and the community. It was a great tribute that so many folks ventured out to Five Rivers in June, often a poorly attended month with so many competing activities.

Taking a family-by-family approach, he showed his famous movies, covering loons to house sparrows, and about 40 families in between. This approach, scientifically through the checklist, worked to well-illustrate the variety of bird species within our capital region. It was a good balance of some longer segments, such as the Pileated Woodpecker hammering out great chunks of a tree, and the selection of several species to represent many families. We thank Bill again for sharing his experience and cinematographic expertise with his many HMBC friends and fellow birders!

by Scott Stoner



## Upcoming Field Trips

SEPT 11 or 12 HAWK WATCH (all day)  
OR  
SEPT 18 or 19  
SAT or SUN

**Coordinator: Arthur Long**

**758-9283**

**NOTE: Trip date will be decided at the last moment, based on weather forecast. If the first weekend does not look promising, the trip will be held on the second weekend. We are trying this new strategy this year to avoid a weekend where both days have poor hawk-migration weather. Check for the last minute announcement on Birdline (439-8080) just prior to Sept 11.**

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. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Key Bank in Star Plaza at the intersection of Routes 20 & 155 in Guilderland.

SEPT 12  
SUN

**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 19  
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



## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

**OCTOBER 1 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR MONTEZUMA & IROQUOIS (OCT 10—11)**

**OCTOBER 8 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR LAKE CHAMPLAIN & DEAD CREEK MARSH  
(OCT 16—17)**

**OCT 10—11 MONTEZUMA AND IROQUOIS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES  
SUN—MON Coordinators: Gregg Recer & Cathy Graichen 899-2678  
Reservations due by October 1**

We plan to search these two western NY wetlands complexes for migrant waterfowl and late shorebirds. The variety and numbers of ducks and geese at these two areas can be very impressive in fall. If time permits we may also cover some points along the southern shore of Lake Ontario. In addition to waterfowl, other possibilities include Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon and a good variety of migrant sparrows. Call the coordinators for details and to make reservations.

**OCT 16—17 LAKE CHAMPLAIN AND DEAD CREEK MARSH  
SAT—SUN Coordinator: Bill Lee 374-3426  
Reservations due by October 8**

Dead Creek Marsh is one of the best waterfowl areas in Vermont, especially for large snow goose flights. A vagrant Ross' or White-fronted Goose mixed in is always a possibility. A good variety of other waterfowl and raptors should be expected. On the NYS side of Lake Champlain, more waterfowl, loons grebes, gulls and Bald Eagles are all possibilities. Call the coordinator for details and to make reservations.

**OCT 23 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



## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

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 6  
SAT

**NORTHERN HUDSON RIVER + SARATOGA LAKE (full day)**  
**Coordinators: Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen**

**899-2678**

We will spend the day searching for migrant waterfowl, loons and grebes at some of the top waterbird spots in Saratoga and Washington Counties. We'll start with a couple of spots on Saratoga Lake that provide easy group access. From there, we will cover the Hudson River from Stillwater north to Ft. Edward or Hudson Falls. If time permits, we might briefly explore the Ft. Edwards farm country for early wintering hawks. Meet at 8:00 AM at the Malta Business Park parking area.

Directions: Take the northway (I-87) to exit 12 and follow rt 67 east to the first traffic light, only about 0.1— 0.2 miles east of the highway. Take a right at this light into the business park entrance, take another right at the stop sign and follow the roadway into the parking lot.

NOV 14  
SUN

**TOMHANNOCK RESERVOIR (morning)**  
**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 20 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR NIAGARA RIVER/ NIAGARA FALLS  
(DECEMBER 4— 5)**



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**HMBC Contact Information**

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

**Email: [contact@hmbc.net](mailto:contact@hmbc.net)**

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

**HMBC Board Meetings**

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 Contributions Desired**

- Have anything you think other birders would be interested in?
- Have a favorite birding spot you want to share?
- Are there any stories that would inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the address at right.

**Newsletter Submissions**

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

Send all submissions to:  
**Bob Miller**  
**1994 15th St.**  
**Troy, NY 12180**



## Editors Note

You will be receiving this, the August edition of Feathers, in September. My apologies for the tardiness of this issue. Late summer is simply a very busy time, with vacations, family visits and work around the house. You should be receiving the October issue in a more timely fashion.

I hope you have all enjoyed a happy and healthy summer.

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**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 AGAIN BEST BIRDS ON CENTURY RUN

*By Robert P. Yunick*

The Club's 59<sup>th</sup> Guy Bartlett Century Run on May 15, 2004 produced repeat appearances of a Hooded Warbler at Thacher Park and Lawrence's Warbler at Thompson's Lake, both in Albany County, as occurred in 2003. The Hooded was the fifth record, first in 1948, then four times in the past six years; while the Lawrence's was its tenth occurrence, again first recorded in 1948.

The Century Run drew 14 participants, the lowest since 1946, in four parties who were afield between 0330 and 2030. Three of the four exceeded 100 species, with 118 species the best effort, amassing a cumulative total of 140 species plus a hybrid (this includes two species added by me at Jenny Lake while not officially doing the Run). This total ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the prior 58 years, and except for the snow-ravaged Run in 2002, is the lowest total since 1963.

There were 58 species reported by all groups, and another 36 by all but one group, with 23 species reported only by one group. While two warblers were the best finds of the day, warblers were generally poorly reported with only 19 forms represented from the 38 on the composite list. Only 9 of 29 species of waterfowl were found, three of nine gulls and seven of 20 previously reported shorebird species.

It is interesting to note the fates of four species which have been the focus of considerable human management, or manipulation if you prefer. Two game birds, Ring-necked Pheasant and Wild Turkey, show divergent paths involving human stocking efforts of the past. The non-native Ring-neck which for

many years was heavily stocked in the area and was recorded in 42 of the first 42 years of the Century Run to 1987, has gone unrecorded for the past 11 consecutive years, as stocking has declined or been totally eliminated. The Wild Turkey, a formerly native species, which underwent reintroduction by man is widespread and thriving. This year's appearance on the Century Run is its 21<sup>st</sup> and it 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive for the 15 years since 1990.

The other two species, both reintroduced native raptors, are the Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. The former is the beneficiary of a program which involved hatching wild eggs from birds elsewhere in North America and raising and hacking the young at suitable locations in New York to create a viable, wild, breeding population. This year's recording on the Century Run is its 20<sup>th</sup> with 15 of them in the past 21 years. On the other hand, the Peregrine, recorded for the 14<sup>th</sup> time, eight in the past nine years, has been re-established thanks to a captive breeding program originally developed at Cornell University.

The day's weather, in a word, was beautiful. Albany Airport reported a temperature range of 66-84 deg. F while there were scattered lows in the low 60's reported by people afield. Wind was light, and there was a trace of precipitation at Albany as localized thunderstorms rumbled through the area beginning about 1730. Foliage was well out due to prior spells of hot spring weather, despite a nearly one inch deficiency in precipitation for the month to date and over four inches year to date.

# Feathers



## 2004 Century Run Species/Group List

Species	Groups			
	a	b	c	d
Common Loon		b	c	d
Double-crested Cormorant	a	b	c	d
American Bittern		b	c	d
Least Bittern			c	
Great Blue Heron		b	c	
Green Heron		b	c	d
Canada Goose	a	b	c	d
Wood Duck		b	c	d
American Black Duck		b		d
Mallard	a	b	c	d
Blue-winged Teal				d
Gadwall		b		
Ring-necked Duck		b		
White-winged Scoter				d
Common Merganser		b	c	
Turkey Vulture		b	c	d
Bald Eagle		b		
Northern Harrier	a			
Red-shouldered Hawk	a			
Broad-winged Hawk			c	d
Red-tailed Hawk		b	c	d
American Kestrel		b	c	d
Peregrine Falcon		b		d
Ruffed Grouse		b	c	
Wild Turkey	a	b	c	d
Virginia Rail		b	c	d
Sora		b	c	d
Common Moorhen		b	c	d
Killdeer	a	b	c	d
Solitary Sandpiper	a	b		
Spotted Sandpiper	a	b		d
Semipalmated Sandpiper		b		d
Western Sandpiper				d
Least Sandpiper		b	c	d
Common Snipe				d
American Woodcock		b		d
Ring-billed Gull		b	c	d
Herring Gull		b	c	d
Great Black-backed Gull		b	c	d
Rock Pigeon	a	b	c	d
Mourning Dove	a	b	c	d
Black-billed Cuckoo	a	b		d
Eastern Screech-Owl			c	
Barred Owl			c	d

Species	Groups			
	a	b	c	d
Common Nighthawk		b		
Chimney Swift	a	b	c	d
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	a	b	c	d
Belted Kingfisher	a	b		
Red-bellied Woodpecker		b	c	d
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		b	c	d
Downy Woodpecker		b	c	d
Hairy Woodpecker			c	d
Northern Flicker	a	b	c	d
Pileated Woodpecker	a	b	c	d
Eastern Wood-Pewee		b	c	d
Alder Flycatcher				d
Willow Flycatcher	a	b	c	d
Least Flycatcher	a	b	c	d
Eastern Phoebe	a	b	c	d
Great Crested Flycatcher	a	b	c	d
Eastern Kingbird	a	b	c	d
Horned Lark		b		
Purple Martin		b		
Tree Swallow	a	b	c	d
Northern Rough-winged Swallow		b	c	d
Bank Swallow	a	b		
Cliff Swallow	a			
Barn Swallow	a	b	c	d
Blue Jay	a	b	c	d
American Crow	a	b	c	d
Fish Crow		b		
Common Raven			c	d
Black-capped Chickadee	a	b	c	d
Tufted Titmouse	a	b	c	d
Red-breasted Nuthatch		b	c	
White-breasted Nuthatch			c	d
Brown Creeper		b	c	d
House Wren	a	b	c	d
Winter Wren			c	d
Marsh Wren		b	c	d
Golden-crowned Kinglet			c	d
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		b		
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	a	b	c	d
Eastern Bluebird	a	b	c	d
Veery	a	b	c	d
Hermit Thrush		b	c	d



## 2004 Century Run Species/Group List

Species	Groups			
Wood Thrush	a	b	c	d
American Robin	a	b	c	d
Gray Catbird	a	b	c	d
Northern Mockingbird			c	d
Brown Thrasher	a		c	d
Cedar Waxwing	a	b	c	d
European Starling	a	b	c	d
Blue-headed Vireo		b		d
Yellow-throated Vireo	a	b	c	d
Warbling Vireo	a	b	c	d
Red-eyed Vireo	a	b	c	d
Blue-winged Warbler	a	b	c	d
(Lawrence's Warbler)				d
Nashville Warbler		b		d
Yellow Warbler	a	b	c	d
Chestnut-sided Warbler	a	b	c	d
Magnolia Warbler		b	c	d
Black-throated Blue Warbler		b		d
Yellow-rumped Warbler	a	b	c	d
Black-throated Green Warbler		b	c	d
Blackburnian Warbler		b	c	d
Prairie Warbler		b	c	d
Blackpoll Warbler	a	b	c	d
Black-and-white Warbler	a	b	c	d
American Redstart	a	b		d
Ovenbird	a	b	c	d
Northern Waterthrush	a	b	c	d

Species	Groups			
Louisiana Waterthrush		b	c	d
Common Yellowthroat	a	b	c	d
Hooded Warbler		b		
Scarlet Tanager	a	b	c	d
Northern Cardinal	a	b	c	d
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	a	b	c	d
Indigo Bunting		b	c	d
Eastern Towhee		b		d
Chipping Sparrow	a	b	c	d
Field Sparrow	a	b	c	d
Savannah Sparrow	a	b	c	
Song Sparrow	a	b	c	d
Lincoln's Sparrow				d
Swamp Sparrow	a	b	c	d
White-throated Sparrow				d
White-crowned Sparrow	a	b	c	
Dark-eyed Junco		b	c	d
Bobolink	a	b	c	d
Red-winged Blackbird	a	b	c	d
Eastern Meadowlark	a	b	c	d
Common Grackle	a	b	c	d
Brown-headed Cowbird	a	b	c	d
Baltimore Oriole	a	b	c	d
Purple Finch		b	c	d
House Finch	a	b		d
Pine Siskin				e
American Goldfinch	a	b	c	d
Evening Grosbeak				e
House Sparrow	a	b	c	d

### Group Information

Below are listed the field parties with areas covered and species found only by that group. Names marked with an asterisk were the group's reporter.

**Group A** — Barb Putnam\*. Towns of Milton, Wilton and Northumberland in Saratoga Co., 0730-1030 and 1400-1530, 71 species. Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered Hawk and Cliff Swallow.

**Group B** — Kurt Weiskotten, George Shaw, Hank Stebbins, Jeremy Dibbell, Bill Lee and Carl George\*. Black Creek area, Thacher Park, Hennessy Rd., Chase Pond, Dunn Memorial Bridge, Cole Hill, West-erlo, Bear Swamp, Basic Creek and Alcove Reservoirs, Cohoes, Stanton Pond and Saratoga Park and Lake, 0400-2030, 118 species. Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck, Bald Eagle, Common Nighthawk, Horned Lark, Purple Martin, Fish Crow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Hooded Warbler.

**Group C** — Ron Calkins, Jocelyn Cole-Calkins\*, Erin Wilisey and Patti Packer. Black Creek Marsh, Thacher Park and Nature Center, Town of Berne, Five Rivers in Delmar, Cohoes Fall and Lock 7 in Niskayuna, 0415-1845, 105 species. Least Bittern and Eastern Screech-Owl.

**Group D** — Jackie Bogardus, Steve Chorvas and Larry Alden\*. Entirely within Albany Co., 0330-2030, 114 species and one hybrid. Blue-winged Teal, White-winged Scoter, Common Snipe, Alder Flycatcher, Lawrence's Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, and White-throated Sparrow.

(**Group E** — Robert Yunick while banding at Jenny Lake, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak).



## HMBC Field Trip Report

**Peebles Island - Saratoga County**  
September 19, 2004

Participants: Eleanor & SR Wages, Sheila & John Daniels, Frank Murphy

The HMBC field trip around Peebles Island State Park yielded many niceties including a PEREGRINE FALCON having breakfast; an OSPREY and GREAT EGRET flying eye level over the river; a mixed flock of warblers including CHESTNUT-SIDED, BLACKBURNIAN, MAGNOLIA, BTG, REDSTART; and several SCARLET TANAGERS. There were hardly any shorebirds because there was no shore. The river, normally a trickle this time of the year, was a gushing whitewater rapids from hurricane Ivan, and the two SPOTTED SANDPIPERS seen were scaling the cliffsides across the Mohawk.

Birds Observed: DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT; GREAT BLUE HERON (2); GREAT EGRET (1); CANADA GOOSE; MALLARD; AMERICAN BLACK DUCK; TURKEY VULTURE (10); OSPREY

(1); BROAD-WINGED HAWK (1 JUVENILE); RED-TAILED HAWK (2); PEREGRINE FALCON (1); SPOTTED SANDPIPER (2); RING-BILLED GULL; GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL; ROCK PIGEON; CHIMNEY SWIFT; BELTED KINGFISHER; RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER; DOWNY WOODPECKER; HAIRY WOODPECKER; NORTHERN FLICKER; EASTERN PHOEBE (1); TREE SWALLOW (3); CEDAR WAXWING; CAROLINA WREN (HEARD); GRAY CATBIRD; AMERICAN ROBIN; BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE; TUFTED TITMOUSE; WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH; BLUE JAY; AMERICAN CROW; EUROPEAN STARLING; BLUE-HEADED VIREO (1); WARBLING VIREO (1); RED-EYED VIREO (1); CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER (1); MAGNOLIA WARBLER (1); BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (4); BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER (1); AMERICAN REDSTART (1); SCARLET Tanager (3); SONG SPARROW; NORTHERN CARDINAL.

— Frank Murphy

### Upcoming HMBC Programs

**Monday November 1, 7 PM, Colonie Library. (HMBC)**  
***A Week in the Everglades*, Scott and Denise Stoner.**

The focus on Florida concludes with "A Week in the Everglades".

In this slide and music program, we explore Everglades National Park - from its entrance near Florida City all the way to Florida Bay. Along the way, we look at different habitats - pine rockland, sawgrass ("river of grass"), mangrove, coastal prairie - and the birds and other wildlife within. Come see why Everglades is our favorite national park - and worth spending a week there every winter! We will also explore why it is so highly threatened, and discuss the prospects for saving it.

Denise and Scott enjoy visiting and photographing natural America from coast to coast, but have a special affection for south Florida, having made more than 10 trips to the Everglades! Scott Stoner is past president of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and the Audubon Society of the Capital Region; his photography has been published in Birder's World magazine. Denise leads field trips and has been an officer and director of the Bird Club. Together, they have

presented programs on Florida, National Parks, the West, and other topics to a variety of groups in the Capital Region.



## Upcoming HMBC Programs, continued

**Monday, December 6, 7 PM, Five Rivers**

***Birding Acadia***, Tom Lindsay—this is the ***HMBC Holiday Party***

Please bring a dessert or other snack to share AND drive with caution due to deer in the area!

In Acadia National Park variety is the word. A great variety of habitats in close proximity to each other reveal birding opportunities galore in this beautiful setting on Maine's rocky coast. Bird on foot along miles of hiking trails, by bicycle or on horseback along the carriage road system, from your car on the Park Loop Road, by canoe on of the park's many freshwater ponds, or by sea kayak in Frenchman's Bay. View pelagic species in the morning from one of Bar Harbor's whale watch boats, then spend the afternoon atop Cadillac Mountain counting hawks. When the coastal fog rolls in, bird by ear!

**Monday January 3, 7 PM, Colonie Library**

***Adirondack Birds and Wildlife***, Warren Greene.

**Monday Feb. 7, 7 PM, Colonie Library**

***HMBC Open house, new member night.***

**Monday March 7, 7 PM, Colonie Library**

***Impressions of Bhutan***, David Martin

## Upcoming Capital Region Audubon Programs

**Thursday November 11, 7 PM, Colonie Library**

***The Smokies In Springtime***, Tom Lindsay

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park preserves the natural and human history of the southern Appalachian Mountains, and spring may be the best time for a visit. Wildlife, wildflowers, mountain streams and waterfalls delight the eye in this 520,000- acre park straddling the Tennessee/North Carolina border. Examples of early Appalachian architecture have been preserved as well, and the cabins, barns, schoolhouses and churches that remain give a glimpse of the region's past.

**Thursday, December 9, 7PM, Colonie Library**

***Down to the Sea***, Gerry Lemmo

Examine some of the fascinating life forms, waiting to be found, from the beaches of Maine to coastal Alaska. Images include the comical puffin, a primitive horsehoe crab, feisty Stellar's sea-lions, and a vivid red starfish in a rocky tidal pool.

Gerry Lemmo's travels have brought him to five of the seven continents. Through his vivid photography, he immerses you, the viewer, into the geography, culture and spectacular wildlife of places both near and far. With sixteen, 45- minute programs, full of both native and international subjects, you are enlightened with images of common, yet rarely seen birds and mammals of the Adirondack region, as well as exotic creatures from distant lands. Alaska, Madagascar, The Amazon, Kenya and Antarctica are among the destinations. The unique calls of featured wildlife accompany many programs, and some are enlivened with native music.



## Upcoming Field Trips

**NOV 6 NORTHERN HUDSON RIVER + SARATOGA LAKE (full day)**

**SAT Coordinators: Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen 899-2678**

We will spend the day searching for migrant waterfowl, loons and grebes at some of the top waterbird spots in Saratoga and Washington Counties. We'll start with a couple of spots on Saratoga Lake that provide easy group access. From there, we will cover the Hudson River from Stillwater north to Ft. Edward or Hudson Falls. If time permits, we might briefly explore the Ft. Edwards farm country for early wintering hawks. Meet at 8:00 AM at the Malta Business Park parking area.

Directions: Take the northway (I-87) to exit 12 and follow rt 67 east to the first traffic light, only about 0.1— 0.2 miles east of the highway. Take a right at this light into the business park entrance, take another right at the stop sign and follow the roadway into the parking lot.

**NOV 13 FRANKLIN MT. HAWKWATCH, ONEONTA, NY (weather date Nov. 14)**

**SAT Coordinator: Andy Mason (607) 652-2162 AndyMason@earthling.net**

**Note: this field trip is not listed in the 2004 Field Trip guide**

Franklin Mt. is a fall hawk lookout in the northern Catskill Mountains, known for significant flights of Red-tailed Hawks and Golden Eagles. Mid-November is prime time for Goldens, with double-digit days possible under favorable conditions. A determination of the likely best winds will be made mid-week to decide on Saturday or Sunday for this trip.

**NOV 14 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 20 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR NIAGARA RIVER/ NIAGARA FALLS (Dec. 4— 5)**

**DEC 4—5 NIAGARA RIVER AND NIAGARA FALLS**

**SAT—SUN Coordinator: Bill Lee 374-3426**

**Diane Teta 631-286-4866**

**Joint trip with the New York State Ornithological Association and the Linnean Society of New York**

**Reservations due by November 20**

The Niagara River, between Lakes Erie and Ontario, hosts thousands of gulls at this time of year. A wide variety of gull species will be present. We have a reasonable chance of finding Lesser Black-backed, Little, Franklin's, Common Black-headed, Bonaparte's, California and white-winged gulls, plus Black-legged Kittiwake. This is a very good time of year for rare gulls.

**2004 HMBC-sponsored Christmas Bird Counts:**

**DEC 18 (Sat) SCHENECTADY 2004 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

**DEC 26 (Sun) SOUTHERN RENSSELAER 2004 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

**JAN 2 (Sun) TROY 2004 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**



## HMBC BOARD FOR 2004-2005

### Officers

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Membership:	Daniel Ruge	449-1087
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Patsy Patrick	456-4007
Ellen Pemrick	452-4384
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Donna Zimmerman	869-6624



### HMBC Contact Information

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

**Email:** [contact@hmbc.net](mailto:contact@hmbc.net)

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

### HMBC Board Meetings

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 Contributions Desired

- Have anything you think other birders would be interested in?
- Have a favorite birding spot you want to share?
- Are there any stories that would inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the address at right.

### Newsletter Submissions

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

Send all submissions to:

**Bob Miller**  
**1994 15th St.**  
**Troy, NY 12180**



**ATTENTION**

Your club is looking for people interested in  
presenting a program at our monthly meetings.

We would also appreciate suggestions for programs.

Please forward your thoughts to Scott Stoner at  
785-6760 or to [scottjstoner@aol.com](mailto:scottjstoner@aol.com).

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

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Published Bi-monthly by the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club Inc.

### In Memoriam, Bill Gorman

Bill was a serious birder since the 1950s and was a long-time member of the American Birding Association. He has birded extensively in the United States, both alone and with some of our top birders, including: Peterson, Sibley, Lane, Sykes, Small, Russell, Dunn, etc. He conducted Breeding Bird Surveys for the Department of the Interior and has had bird-related publications in BIRDING, WINGING IT, and BIRD WATCHERS DIGEST, and had a USA life list of over 840 species. Bill was an active member of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club since 1967 and served on the Board of Directors, Records Committee, and for about 20 years as the Field Trip Committee Chairman. He led over 50 Club trips and presented about two dozen bird programs to the Club. He taught classes in Bird Identification and Birding for the Blind and was a serious bird photographer

His annual trip to the Tomhannock Reservoir for waterfowl was always popular, but he was perhaps best known for his movie programs. In an age of video and then digital photography, Bill remained true to his passion - of "real" or "reel" movies as I called them. Working with true movie equipment and always with the utmost respect for his subject, Dr. Gorman treated us to a wide variety of programs from across North America. From

as far as Alaska and Hawaii to our local hotspots, his movies covered both places and groups of birds. Perhaps most famous were his shows on hummingbirds and owls, two groups for which he had a special affection. I always enjoyed booking Bill for another show, and took extra time in introducing him, for I knew how special he - and his movie shows - were. It was only fitting that his last show for us was one close to home - Hudson-Mohawk Birds, in June of 2004. Although obviously battling health issues at that time, Bill was even more obviously so pleased to give this program that he overcame those issues and presented a wonderful finale to his many years of fine programs. Meticulously and scientifically, he went through family by family, showing and teaching about the many birds that we can enjoy and study close to home. His reputation preceded him, and the audience arrived in numbers, coming early to land seats in the front rows. We thank Bill for his great contributions to our Club, and for the many fine programs he presented over many years. We will miss him. Good birding, Bill!

— Scott and Denise Stoner



## OF PRAIRIE CHICKENS & WHOOPING CRANES

*By Dick Patrick*

Patsy and I just received our copy of the Adopt-a-Prairie Chicken Newsletter from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The Prairie Chicken to be adopted is the Attwater race of the Greater Prairie Chicken. Why would anyone give money to that cause? Two reasons. First we believe you are what you support. The other reason is we actually saw these birds dancing on their leks in April 1987.

This was our first pay-per-view trip with Victor Emmanuel. Looking back at my diary jogs the memory although I failed to record the Crested Caracara that we saw hunting on the ground in an adjacent field. My diary only says that "we were up at 4:45, it was cool, we saw a couple birds jumping around in a cow pasture and there are only about 1100 of them left."

My diary does go on at length about a terrible steak we had for supper the night before in the town of Eagle Lake and an atrocious club sandwich in the same restaurant the next day. Then I went on to rave about seeing an alligator in a pond and all the armadillos we were seeing for our first time.

The Adopt-a-Chicken Newsletter doesn't concern itself with Texas cuisine or even armadillos.

"Is it a trend, or just two good years in a row? Who knows, but the population numbers for this year continued the upward pattern set last year. Our spring census showed an estimated 62 birds this year, up from last year's 58 estimated."

"This year six chicks survived past six weeks of age - something that has not been documented on the refuge for several years!" It goes on to tell, "refuge staff netted insects and intensely fed the hen and chicks about every hour, every day for two weeks." Then

they speculate on all the possible reasons that chicks do not survive, inbreeding, insect availability, inclement weather, predators and unknown factors. Most year's newsletters tell us no chick has survived. Ironically there is a photo included of a nest with 25 birds.

The newsletter also has a section on Whooping Cranes which is much more upbeat. In Wood Buffalo National Park, Canada, a record 66 chicks hatched, surpassing the previous high of 58 chicks in 1997. The Whooping Crane coordinators predict the population will surpass 200 in the fall of 2004 up from the 193 cranes present last spring. In June they actually sighted 137 birds out of a maximum of the 193. In 1941 there were only 15 birds wintering in Texas and another 6 in a flock in Louisiana that soon dwindled away.

Of course Texas has an interest because of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Back in 1987 after the atrocious club sandwich we drove to Aransas but had to wait two days because of rough water before we could go out to see the cranes. While the rest of the gang were ecstatic over seeing a Lesser Black-backed Gull (evidently a rare bird) I was equally ecstatic over a waffle breakfast in Rockport and in the evening some peeled shrimp and pepper steak in Kingsville. I don't keep a life bird list but it appears I am recording a life eating list. When we finally got on the water we were rewarded with views of "8 Whooping Cranes real close and 8 others flying in the distance." I also was impressed with the large flocks of Roseate Spoonbills.

The conclusion to this screed is to express appreciation that the parks and wildlife people of Texas are working faithfully to protect these precious birds for all of us. For more information the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is located at 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744.



## HMBC Field Trip Reports

### Vischer Ferry Preserve August 28, 2004

Despite oppressive heat and humidity and constant harassment by mosquitoes, 14 brave birders persevered through the morning and were rewarded with a respectable list of 42 species. This trip was scheduled late enough in the month to allow for the sighting of many "fall migrants" not usually seen in the Preserve during the earlier part of the summer.

We found a good list of birds right in the parking lot as we began, including RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, EASTERN PHOEBE, EASTERN WOOD-PEEWEE, and BALTIMORE ORIOLE. From the main entrance, we moved down the towpath to the west following the long stretch of pools and marsh. WOOD DUCKS were everywhere present along the towpath. The males were in eclipse plumage but still provided a colorful sight. A few MALLARDS were seen as well, but the only "fall migrant" ducks were a small group of BLUE-WINGED TEAL, also in eclipse plumage. Other marsh birds included GREAT BLUE and GREEN HERONS, BELTED KINGFISHER, and RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS. As we reached the end of the marsh area we came upon a hot spot of migrant songbirds. Members of the group managed to identify a few of the elusive warblers present: BLACK-THROATED GREEN, MAGNOLIA, and NASHVILLE. A migrant RED-EYED VIREO was also seen along with two possible migrants: WARBLING VIREO and AMERICAN REDSTART. Some group members spotted a COOPER'S HAWK. CEDAR WAXWINGS were often heard and eventually seen along the towpath.

After returning to the main entrance, we drove down to the Ferry Dr. parking lot. Here we found 2 GREAT EGRETS in the Mohawk River, as promised. We also added a GREAT BLACK-

BACKED GULL and DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT in the river to our list. Walking down the road leading east into the Preserve, we all had good looks at a migrant SCARLET TANAGER in green- yellow plumage. A RED-TAILED HAWK was also seen as we returned to the parking lot. In the final tally of birds we had all five woodpeckers normally resident in the Preserve: PILEATED, DOWNY, HAIRY, RED-BELLIED, and NORTHERN FLICKER.

— John Hershey

### Saratoga National Historical Park October 23, 2004

Sixteen participants joined us on a very pleasant morning at the Saratoga Battlefield. After donning our blaze orange colors (because of hunting on neighboring lands) and paying the fee to walk the Wilkinson Trail, we set forth to see what we could find. As we left, Denise spotted two distant GREAT BLUE HERONS flying by. Soon after, the group enjoyed looks at a group of 30 or so DARK-EYED JUNCOS, along with two FOX SPARROWS! As we emerged from the woods, an EASTERN MEADOWLARK flushed up from the grass. AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES were in good abundance in the grasslands, with estimates of 70 total individuals for the trip. We also had RED-TAILED HAWKS and a SHARP-SHINNED, along with a TURKEY VULTURE. The best bird of the trip, unfortunately not seen by all, was a woodpecker encountered while walking the tour road between Stops 5 and 6. Initially assumed to be a Northern Flicker by some, with careful compilation of observations by several participants it was determined to be an immature RED-HEADED WOODPECKER! This bird was identified by committee, as different folks had each seen different parts of it through the trees. A good find - we wonder if it was the



## HMBC Field Trip Reports (continued)

same individual that had been seen several days earlier in Gansevoort. Great looks at EASTERN BLUEBIRDS provided a fine ending to the trip, as we returned to the Visitor Center shortly after noon. The weather was sunny and relatively warm, and the foliage near peak - a most enjoyable and surprisingly "birdy" trip. A total of 26 species was identified. In addition to those listed above, we had CANADA GOOSE, DOWNY WOODPECKER, N. FLICKER, TREE SWALLOW, BLUE JAY, AM. CROW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, TUFTED TITMOUSE, AM. ROBIN, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, CHIPPING, SONG, and WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS, RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD, COMMON GRACKLE, and BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD. And, congratulations to two Club members who enjoyed a special anniversary that day!

— *Scott and Denise Stoner*

### Tomhannock Reservoir November 14, 2004

Nine birders gathered for four hours of casual birding around the Tomhannock Reservoir. We tallied 36 species.

We met at 8:30 on a clear but cold morning with the temperature in the 20s. There was a slight breeze, but not enough to roil the waters. As expected, the most productive spot was the area south of the Route 7 causeway. Everyone got good looks at plenty of HOODED MERGANSERS and RUDDY DUCKS, and close scrutiny of the birds turned up a flock of RING-NECKED DUCKS and few female BUFFLEHEADS. The bird-of-the-day was found here: a LONG-TAILED DUCK. It was quite actively feeding and spent more time under water than above, but we were able to determine it was a female. With water levels high, we did not see any shorebirds.

We continued around the reservoir, stopping at pull-offs. At the pump house, the flock of CANADA GEESE suddenly got very agitated at what was probably an eagle, but, alas, we never determined the cause with certainty. Lakeshore Road gave us some of our last species, including a quick look at a SHARP-SHINNED HAWK and more satisfying looks at CEDAR WAXWINGS and EASTERN BLUEBIRDS. By the time we finished our circumnavigation at 12:30, it had turned out to be a beautiful fall day with the temperature around 40 degrees.

Birds seen: COMMON LOON, DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT, GREAT BLUE HERON, CANADA GOOSE, AMERICAN BLACK DUCK, MALLARD, RING-NECKED DUCK, LONG-TAILED DUCK, BUFFLEHEAD, COMMON GOLDENEYE, HOODED MERGANSER, COMMON MERGANSER, RUDDY DUCK, SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, RED-TAILED HAWK, RING-BILLED GULL, GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL, MOURNING DOVE, BELTED KINGFISHER, YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, DOWNY WOODPECKER, HAIRY WOODPECKER, PILEATED WOODPECKER, BLUE JAY, AMERICAN CROW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, TUFTED TITMOUSE, RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, EASTERN BLUEBIRD, EUROPEAN STARLING, CEDAR WAXWING, AMERICAN TREE SPARROW, DARK-EYED JUNCO, NORTHERN CARDINAL, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH.

This trip was dedicated to the memory of **Bill Gorman**. Bill was a member of the HMBC for nearly 40 years, and Field Trip Committee Chair for 20 years. He led this Tomhannock Reservoir field trip every year, until his passing last month.

Attendees: Ellen Pemrick, Tom Phillips, Hannah Ingleston, Clint Anglina, John Hershey, Helen Rice, Nancy Slack, Hank Stebbins

— *Larry Alden*



## Upcoming 2005 HMBC Programs

**Monday January 3, 7 PM, Colonie Library**  
***Adirondack Birds and Wildlife*, Warren Greene**

This slide program will feature birds of the Adirondacks in beautiful settings. Warren will also highlight orchids, moths and butterflies, scenics, and a few mammals. The show includes a specific section on Owls that were photographed in the Northeast region. Come join us to start the New Year with this spectacular slide show! Free and open to the public; refreshments will be served

Warren Greene is a native of Gloversville, NY where he currently resides. Since 1976 he has been employed by the Fulton County Probation Dept. where he has been the director since 1988. Warren has had a lifelong love of nature and the outdoors. About the same time he began working at the Probation Dept. he translated his love of the outdoors into photography. He has had hundreds of photos published in various books, magazines, calendars, and postcards. In addition, he is co-author of *Birds of the Adirondacks* published by North Country Press, and has many of his bird photos housed at The Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, Pa. Besides bird photography Warren also enjoys macro, insect, and Fall scenic photography. His work can periodically be seen in such regional magazines as *Adirondack Life*, *Adirondac*, and *The Conservationist* as well as several national magazines.

### Join Us For HMBC's Open House and New Member Night!

**Monday, February 7, 7 PM, Colonie Library**

Chase away the winter blues with an evening of fun, as we celebrate our bird club with members old and new! We ask each member who attends this event to bring a guest who is not a member. There will be presentations from our field trip and program chairs, as well as our club president, explaining the fine birding opportunities available through membership in our club. The evening will include Bob Budliger, presenting his excellent program about birding the Capital Region throughout the year. Of course, refreshments will be plentiful, so please plan to come, boost your club, and bring a friend (or two!!)

**Monday March 7, 7 PM, Colonie Library**  
***Impressions of Bhutan*, David Martin**

Bhutan, a small, isolated Himalayan kingdom, is a nature traveler's paradise. Bhutan's isolation and rich Buddhist culture has preserved huge tracts of unspoiled wilderness. Splendid mountain views and pristine forests extend as far as the eye can see. From warm, moist lowlands to rhododendron forests high in the mountains, Bhutan offers amazing biological diversity in a small area. The woods ring with bird calls. This program will highlight photographs and original audio recordings of life and wildlife in Bhutan.

David Martin, a member of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, is a life-long birder and an amateur photographer and nature-sound recordist.



## Upcoming 2005 Capital Region Audubon Programs

*All meetings are free and open to the public, refreshments served.*

**Thursday January 13, 7PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Celebrating the Hudson River - A Long Paddle*, Alan Mapes**

The Great Hudson River Paddle is held each summer to celebrate the improving condition of the Hudson River, and involves a paddle trip from Albany to Manhattan, 145 miles. Alan Mapes took part in the trip by kayak in 2002, and will share the experience through slides and stories. He will bring the home-made kayak and native Inuit paddles that were used on the trip. Join us for a colorful trip down the Hudson Estuary, "the river that flows two ways".

**Thursday Feb 10, 7PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***Chincoteague: Natural History of a Barrier Island*, Bob Budliger**

Bob will present an illustrated talk on the nature of the Virginia barrier island at Chincoteague. He will explore the origins of the island, its history, its plants and animals, and its fabled wild ponies. Bob is the retired Director of Education for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and has taught five coastal ecology workshops for Cornell University at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

**Thursday March 10, 7PM, William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library**  
***The Canadian Atlantic*, Denise and Scott Stoner**

From the Gannets of Bonaventure, the tides of Fundy, and the highlands of Cape Breton, across the sea to the fjords, bogs, and icebergs of Newfoundland and Labrador, this great and diverse land is filled with scenery, wildlife, and culture. Slide and music program shows the wonders that draw visitors again and again to these special places.

## Program Reports

### **September Meeting *Pajaros Y Ruinas,* *or Birds and Mayan Temples of Yucatan Mexico and Belize***

HMBC and Audubon teamed up on September 9 for a joint program to kick off their fall seasons, with veteran HMBC birder and speaker Gregg Recer's fine presentation. With digital images, Gregg described the birds and ruins that he and his family had seen on two trips to the Yucatan, one of which extended into Belize. Gregg showed us that there is much to explore in the Yucatan beyond the beaches of Cancun - including ruins from the massive Chichen Itza to more obscure and barely excavated sites. Around (or from!) the pyramids one can get an introduction to Neotropical birding, with new families such as



## Program Reports (continued)

Motmots, Puffbirds, Ant birds and jacamars. An excursion into Belize, based at Lamanai Outpost Lodge, provided further birding vacation opportunities, including a night boat trip into New Lagoon to see herons and other denizens of tropical waters. Other species that highlighted the program were Laughing Falcon, Crane Hawk, Gray-necked Wood Rail, Agami Heron, Bare-throated Tiger Heron, and Jabiru.

— Scott Stoner

### *Focus on Florida* Three consecutive programs

#### October Meeting *The Everglades*

On Monday October 4, HMBC welcomed freelance naturalist and photo tour leader John Green, as he presents a slide and music program on the Everglades. This was an encore of sorts, as *The Everglades* was the first of many shows that John has given to the HMBC over the past eight years. This was an updated version, and highlighted the habitats and wild creatures that make the everglades so special. In the show's second part, John treated us to a choreographed presentation of music and some of the finest everglades slides in this professional photographers collection! It was an educational evening, along with a treat for the eyes and ears! We thank John for his great show, and look forward to his next program.

—Scott Stoner

#### October Audubon Meeting *Crackers, Conchs, and Con Men, or Who Stole Florida*

Then, on Thursday, October 14, Audubon and HMBC past president Bob Budliger presented a revised encore of his renowned natural and human history of Florida. This native Floridian discussed the past, present and future of Florida as only Bob can, replete with personal experiences, humor, and a thought-provoking look at the state's future.

—Scott Stoner

#### December Meeting *Exploring the Everglades*

On Monday, November 1, Denise Hackert-Stoner and Scott Stoner presented their slide, lecture, and music show. Denise gave a introductory perspective to the everglades, explaining the key roles of sun, water, and land. Next, Scott took us through the Park, from the main entrance near Florida City to Flamingo, stopping at Anhinga Trail, the pinelands, and the river of grass en route to Flamingo. Flamingo featured Florida Bay, the mangroves, Eco Pond and the visitor complex. Finally, the music of Steve and Amelia accompanied the last set of slides, highlighting the need to protect and restore the everglades.

—Scott Stoner



## Upcoming Field Trips

JAN 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY BIRD COUNT AT FIVE RIVERS (Albany County; morning)  
SAT Coordinator: Craig Thompson (Five Rivers Center) 475-0291 (daytime)  
Gregg Recer (HMBC) 899-2678

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

JAN 1 TROY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, 2004 (NOTE DATE CHANGE FROM 2004  
SAT SCHEDULE)  
Coordinator: Larry Alden 861-6087

JAN or FEB WINTER RARE BIRD TRIP  
Coordinator: Bill Lee 374-3426  
Reservations by January 20 bileej@ hotmail .com  
If any especially rare bird is reported in our general area, we plan to take a trip to look for it. This is usually a day trip, but sometimes requires an overnight stay. To get on the notification list for alert and trip details, call the coordinator. In recent years, trip participants have seen Ivory Gull, Bar-tailed Godwit, Yellow-billed Loon, Gyrfalcon and Tufted Duck.

### JANUARY 7 - RESERVATIONS DUE FOR AMHERST ISLAND/CAPE VINCENT (JAN 15—17)

JAN 15—17 AMHERST ISLAND/CAPE VINCENT (Jefferson County + Ontario, Canada)  
SAT—MON Coordinator: Bill Lee 374-3426  
Reservations by January 7 bileej@ hotmail .com  
Joint trip with the New York State Ornithological Association

Early indications of large movements of Great Gray, Northern Hawk and Snowy Owls in northern Minnesota and Ontario, and an abundant meadow vole population on Amherst Island near Kingston, Ontario this winter, promise a unique owling experience. In some past winters, nine species of owls have been found here in a single day. On past trips, we've seen Boreal, Great Gray, Long-eared, Northern Hawk-, Saw Whet, Short-eared and Snowy Owls. Gray Partridge is a resident at nearby Cape Vincent.



## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

- JAN 16** ANNUAL STATE WATERFOWL COUNT (morning/full day)  
**SUN** **Coordinator: Gary Goodness** **862-9680**  
(JAN 23, Alternate weather date) **goodness@nycap.rr.com**  
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 29** STISSING MOUNTAIN/THOMPSON POND PRESERVE (Dutchess County;  
**SAT** full day)  
**Coordinator: Bill Lee** **374-3426**  
(JAN 30, Alternate weather date) **bileej@hotmail.com**  
Golden Eagles have been wintering on Stissing Mountain (elevation 1403 ft.) for many years. As the morning sun warms the eastern-facing slope, the birds can often be seen rising on a thermal to begin the day's hunting, or, with diligence and some luck, can be found at their overnight roosts perched in huge white pines. This Nature Conservancy preserve of 400+ acres has four miles of trail through varied habitats and should provide a variety of wintering birds. We found Saw Whet Owl here in February 2004. Call the coordinator for meeting time and place.
- FEB 12** MOHAWK RIVER/COHOES TO CRESCENT (Albany & Saratoga Counties;  
**SAT** morning)  
**Coordinator: Bill Lee** **374-3426**  
(FEB 13, Alternate weather date) **bileej@hotmail.com**  
This area, including Cohoes Falls and Simmons Island, offers a great opportunity to study the gulls and waterfowl that winter along the Mohawk River. We will look for Iceland and Glaucous Gulls, usually present in small numbers in winter. This 3- to 4-hour trip will be a good introduction to the many fine vantage points over the Mohawk. We will leave at 8:30 AM from the Golden Krust Bakery at 180 Ontario St. in Cohoes (on Rt. 470 about 1/8 mile east of Rt. 787, across from the U-Haul).



## Upcoming Field Trips (continued)

FEB 20  
SUN

WASHINGTON COUNTY WATERFOWL & RAPTORS (Washington County morning)

**Coordinators:** Joyce Miller 743-2200 ext. 2485 millerja@sunyacc.edu  
Mona Bearor 745-8637 ramonabearor@adelphia.net

We'll search for migrant waterfowl on the east side of the Hudson River from the Schuylerville bridge to Fort Miller, then swing over to the Fort Edward Grasslands to look for Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Harrier and more. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Schuylerville Central School parking lot, on Route 29. From the Northway, take Exit 14; on 9P go west to Henning Road to Rte. 29 to Schuylerville. The school is on the north side of Rte. 29, just before the hill slopes into the village of Schuylerville. Let one of the leaders know if attending.

MAR 5  
SAT

COHOES-WATERFORD – LOWER MOHAWK RIVER (Albany & Saratoga Cts morning)

**Coordinator:** Gerry Colborn 237-3898 gcolborn@nycap.rr.com  
This trip will focus on waterfowl, gulls and raptors along the Lower Mohawk river near Cohoes and Waterford. We'll hope to see Iceland, Glaucous and Lesser Black-backed Gulls as well as Bald Eagles. Meet at the Dunkin' Donuts on the corner of Rtes 32 and 470 in Cohoes at 8:30 a.m..

MAR 6  
SUN

WATERFOWL OF THE HUDSON RIVER SOUTH (Green County, morning)

**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.

MAR 12  
SAT

HUDSON RIVER ABOVE TROY & HOOSICK RIVER ON KNICKERBOCKER RD  
(Rensselaer & Washington Counties; full day)

**Coordinator:** Joan Cipriani

374-3729

Early migrating waterfowl will be our target, but Bald Eagles and Snow Geese are also likely in this area. Last year, we were treated to a Gyrfalcon. We plan to bird until early afternoon, so you may want to bring a lunch with you. Plan to meet at 8:00 a.m. by the chain link fence at the Hannaford Plaza parking lot. The super-market is located at the east end of the North Troy-Waterford Bridge, Route 4).



## HMBC BOARD FOR 2004-2005

### Officers

**President:**

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

**Secretary:**

Frank Murphy  
7 Finch Ct.  
Rensselaer, NY 12144  
577-8005

**Vice-President:**

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

**Treasurer:**

Dale Samuelson  
Box 579  
Guilderland, NY 12084  
355-0818

### 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
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Publications:	Bob Miller	274-2670
Records:	(vacant)	
Sanctuary:	Carl George	393-0629
Social:	Denise Hackert-Stoner	785-6760
Jr. Activities:	Deb Smith	399-9007

### Directors

Larry Alden	861-6087
Patsy Patrick	456-4007
Ellen Pemrick	452-4384
Beverly Relyea	adkmountaingirl@hotmail.com
Donna Zimmerman	869-6624



### HMBC Contact Information

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

Email: [contact@hmbc.net](mailto:contact@hmbc.net)

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

### HMBC Board Meetings

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 Contributions Desired

- Have anything you think other birders would be interested in?
- Have a favorite birding spot you want to share?
- Are there any stories that would inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the address at right.

### Newsletter Submissions

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

Send all submissions to:

**Bob Miller**  
1994 15th St.  
Troy, NY 12180



## HMBirds Online

If you have internet access, you may be interested in HMBirds. We currently have a group of over 100 members who share bird sightings and bird-related news (mostly about the Capital District) over the internet. HMBirds is a Yahoo! Group and it does have a few ads. Anyone with an internet connection can read the messages at the website but only members may post messages.

The purpose of the group is to keep Capital District birders informed of current happenings. We post bird sightings, field trips, and local programs of interest. The success of the group depends on members taking the initiative to communicate with each other.

Although there is no official affiliation with HMBC, many if not most of the HMBirds members are also members of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club. We welcome new members (free). When a message gets posted, it is then made available via the web to anyone whether they are a member or not. "Posting" means sending a note to the group email address. Members may choose to get each message immediately in their email. By going to the website, subscription changes are easy to make. Changes include: receiving messages as email, stopping the delivery of email messages temporarily, or unsubscribing completely.

To just read messages with your browser or to sign up to become a member, go to this website:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hmbirds/>

To help curb spam, HMBirds is set up so that a subscription (free) is not automatic. When you try to join, you need to write a note and then get "approved" before you become a member with posting privileges. If you just say that you are an HMBC member, you will be approved ASAP. I suggest that if you are worried about having your email address show on a website, open a free email account (such as Yahoo!) and use that address for HMBirds. .

— Barb Putnam

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

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