

# Feathers

## Birding at the Point *by Scott Stoner*

Ontario's Point Pelee is one of North America's must-see birding hotspots. This long, pointed peninsula that "hangs" down from the north shore of Lake Erie is a famed spring migration spot. Once overrun with recreational use, it has been preserved and protected for the birds – and is well managed for the birders as well. Recently, I had the chance to go during

early May, to hook up with Steve, my long-time friend and birding buddy from high school on Long Island. Steve was on a cross-county driving trip and Denise had to work; this was a guys-only birding reunion tour! Steve and I have been friends for more than 30 years, stemming back from our joint efforts on the bottle bill in the 1970's – and a birding trip to Newburyport, MA to see the Ross's Gull in 1975!

I flew out to Chicago on May 2, getting a great view of Pt. Pelee from the air. Steve picked me up at Midway airport and we drove east, stopping at the Henry Ford museum in Dearborn, MI before heading across the border from Detroit into Windsor, Ontario. After some questions at the border including whether we had flu-like symptoms, they let us into Canada. Like the Detroit area, Windsor is highly dependent on the auto industry, and business seemed really affected there.

We enjoyed the next two-and-a-half days at Point Pelee National Park. There, we walked the many kilometers of woodland trails, enjoying the spring wildflowers (Jack-in the pulpit, Mayapples, white trilliums and many more) and looking and listening for spring birds. Although Point Pelee is considerably south of Albany, its trees were barely beginning to leaf out, delayed due to the cold waters of the lake. But the birds were there, and actually easy to spot

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Rose-breasted Grosbeak

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## President's Corner



It has been two months since I addressed you last. The Mississippi Kite has taken center stage and its interest is waning. Some new "bird" or its circumstances will come along and "unite" us – we will call our fellow members, get involved and be energized about birding again. This is the "nature" of birding. To bird we must engage our birding community and share the excitement of the experience. Is it the beauty or the character of the bird, the opportunity to see a new rare bird or a lifer? Therefore the leadership must help you get to the experience. We

are working to communicate better with you through our web site: [www.hmhc.net](http://www.hmhc.net), our field trips and our programs.

Most importantly: Help us get "new" members. Birding through the HMBC is the best opportunity to have a great birding experience. I have permission to take Dick Beeler's "by line": "*A bird in the hand should be put back in the bush.*" – R.M. Beeler

— Gary Goodness 

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### HMBC Contact Information

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### 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 or photos that would inspire others?

Share them with the HMBC membership by submitting them to the addresses below:

Please send all *electronic* submissions *via e-mail* to: Chris Grossman at [bgrossman@nycap.rr.com](mailto:bgrossman@nycap.rr.com)

Send **all** paper submissions to:

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*7 Nott Rd.*

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## **Century Run 2009 Adds Black Vulture as 254<sup>th</sup> Species**

**I**t was only a matter of time following years of northward advance of the BLACK VULTURE from the South, through New Jersey and up the Hudson Valley that it would be recorded on the Club's Century Run. And this was the year, on the 64<sup>th</sup> consecutive Guy Bartlett Century Run, May 16, 2009, with two sighted near Cohoes Falls on the Mohawk River.

Other rarities included only the fourth report of SNOW GOOSE and the sixth report each of SURF SCOTER on Saratoga Lake and HOODED WARBLER at Bennett Hill Preserve in Clarksville. The SNOW GOOSE reports, one near Perth, the other at Vly Creek in Voorheesville were more an oddity than a rarity. Both birds appeared to be injured with the Voorheesville bird apparently the same bird as recorded last December on the Schenectady Christmas Count, sustained over the winter by food handouts from Smith's Tavern! That may be the first time ever in Club annals that an individual bird was noted on a Christmas Count and on the following Century Run.

Otherwise, the day's results were not impressive: 147 species were recorded tying 43<sup>rd</sup> in 64 years. Six observer groups totaling 20 people were afield from 0030 to 2030 with the evening ruined by rain. Three of the six groups exceeded the 100 mark with 116 species the highest. Forty species were reported by all groups, another 22 by all but one group, and 20 species were found by only one group (listed by group below) with 10 of them by Group F alone.

The day's weather did not make birding easy and some folks quit earlier than usual. A low over Ontario, sweeping east, brought much wind and warmth (temperature ranged 50 to 76F at Albany, though one group reported 82F) with growing cloudiness through the day and finally a clash with an incoming cold front at 1730-1830 producing rain (some locations very heavy), lightning and thunder.

Just as the Century Run is a quest to enjoy as much of the local avian diversity, it is also a demonstration of the diverse ways people approach this quest. Last year Larry Rowland got 100 species in 12.5 hours on his bike. This year David Harrison, long time area birder in his youth now a resident of New Jersey, came to his parents' home in Clifton Park and began birding at half past midnight out his bedroom window, then elsewhere for the next 20 hours. Hope Batcheller sat on her porch in Petersburg from 0330 to 1100 recording 58 species. She referred to it as a "Big Sit" and plans to do more of it. And then there are the "traditionalists" such as Larry Alden et al. and Carl George et al. who just grind it out from predawn to postdusk. Others fit the day into their schedule as they can.

Listed below in order received via email and postal mail are the field groups, listing participants with area covered and those species seen by that group only. Thanks to everyone who participated as well as for additional comments about the day. Group leaders are noted with an asterisk.

**Group A** – Hope Batcheller\*. Petersburg, Rensselaer Co., 0330-1100, 58 species. Cooper's Hawk.

**Group B** – David Harrison\*. Clifton Park, Great Sacandaga Lake, Broadalbin, Perth, Galway, Glenville, Scotia, Collin's Lake and Mohawk River at Locks 8 and 9, 0030-2030, 106 species. Horned Grebe, Red-breasted Merganser, Broad-winged Hawk and Swainson's Thrush.

**Group C** – Marne Onderdonk\*. Northern Saratoga Co., Greenfield, Saratoga Battlefield and Wilton Wildlife Preserve, 0700-1100 and 1200-1930, 65 species.

**Group D** – Larry Alden\*, Jackie Bogardus, Steve Chorvas, Jeff Marx and John Roosenberg. Albany Co. including Cohoes Falls, Thacher Park, Black Creek Marsh, Alcove and Basic Creek reservoirs, Stanton Pond and Partridge Run, 0300-2030, 116 species. Black Vulture, Black-billed Cuckoo and Hooded Warbler.

**Group E** – Roger Miller, Tom Palmer\*, Carol and Jon Stack. Montgomery, Schenectady and Fulton counties, west to Palatine Bridge, north to Ft. Johnson, east to Mariaville Lake and south to Burtonsville, 0810-1830, 88 species. Pied-billed Grebe and American Bittern.

**Group F** – Watervliet Reservoir, Black Creek Marsh, Beaver Dam Rd., Thacher Park, Chase Rd. Pond, Cole Hill State Forest, Bear Creek Marsh, Basic Creek Reservoir, Stanton Pond, Blossom Hill, Albany, Cohoes Falls, Round and Saratoga lakes and Saratoga Co. Airport, 0500-1730, 113 species. Gadwall, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Sora, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Bonaparte's Gull, Black Tern, Horned Lark, Purple Martin, Tennessee Warbler and Vesper Sparrow.

*Tabulation of the species observed follows on pages 52-53.*

	a	b	c	d	e	f
COMMON LOON		b		d		
PIED-BILLED GREBE					e	
HORNED GREBE		b				
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT		b		d	e	f
AMERICAN BITTERN					e	
LEAST BITTERN				d		f
GREAT BLUE HERON	a	b		d	e	f
GREEN HERON				d		f
MUTE SWAN				d		f
SNOW GOOSE				d	e	
CANADA GOOSE		b	c	d	e	f
WOOD DUCK		b		d		f
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK		b		d		f
MALLARD		b	c	d	e	f
GADWALL						f
SURF SCOTER						f
COMMON MERGANSER	a	b				
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER		b				
BLACK VULTURE				d		
TURKEY VULTURE	a	b	c	d	e	f
BALD EAGLE				d		f

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK						f
COOPER'S HAWK	a					
BROAD-WINGED HAWK		b				
RED-TAILED HAWK	a	b	c	d	e	f
AMERICAN KESTREL		b		d	e	
PEREGRINE FALCON				d		f
RUFFED GROUSE	a	b			e	
WILD TURKEY	a	b		d	e	f
VIRGINIA RAIL		b		d	e	f
SORA						f
COMMON MOORHEN					e	f
SEMPALMATED PLOVER				d		f
KILLDEER		b		d	e	f
SOLITARY SANDPIPER				d		f
SPOTTED SANDPIPER		b		d		f
PECTORAL SANDPIPER						

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER						f
LEAST SANDPIPER				d		f
AMERICAN WOODCOCK	a			d		
BONAPARTE'S GULL						f
RING-BILLED GULL		b		d		f
HERRING GULL			c	d		f
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL				d		f
BLACK TERN						f
ROCK PIGEON		b	c	d	e	f
MOURNING DOVE	a	b	c	d	e	f
BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO				d		
EASTERN SCREECH-OWL		b		d		
GREAT HORNED OWL		b		d		
BARRED OWL	a	b		d		
CHIMNEY SWIFT		b	c	d	e	f
RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD	a	b	c	d	e	f
BELTED KINGFISHER		b		d		f
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER	a		c	d	e	f
YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER	a	b		d	e	f
DOWNY WOODPECKER	a	b	c	d	e	f
HAIRY WOODPECKER	a	b			e	f
NORTHERN FLICKER	a	b	c	d	e	f
PILEATED WOODPECKER	a	b	c	d	e	f
EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE		b	c	d		
WILLOW FLYCATCHER		b		d		f
LEAST FLYCATCHER	a	b	c	d	e	
EASTERN PHOEBE	a	b	c	d	e	f
GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER	a	b	c	d	e	f
EASTERN KINGBIRD		b	c	d	e	f
HORNED LARK						f
PURPLE MARTIN						f
TREE SWALLOW	a	b	c	d	e	f
NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW		b		d	e	f
BANK SWALLOW		b		d	e	f
BARN SWALLOW	a	b	c	d	e	f
BLUE JAY	a	b	c	d	e	f
AMERICAN CROW	a	b	c	d	e	f
FISH CROW		b				
COMMON RAVEN	a			d	e	
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	a	b	c	d	e	f
TUFTED TITMOUSE	a	b	c	d	e	f



RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH		b			e	f
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH	a	b	c	d	e	f
BROWN CREEPER		b		d		

HOUSE WREN	a	b	c	d	e	f
WINTER WREN		b		d		
MARSH WREN		b		d		f
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET				d	e	
BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER				d		f
EASTERN BLUEBIRD		b	c	d	e	f
VEERY	a	b	c	d	e	f
SWAINSON'S THRUSH		b				
HERMIT THRUSH		b	c	d		f
WOOD THRUSH		b	c	d	e	f
AMERICAN ROBIN	a	b	c	d	e	f
GRAY CATBIRD	a	b	c	d	e	f
NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD				d		f
BROWN THRASHER				d	e	
CEDAR WAXWING	a		c	d		f
EUROPEAN STARLING	a	b	c	d	e	f
BLUE-HEADED VIREO		b	c		e	f
YELLOW-THROATED VIREO	a	b	c	d	e	f
WARBLING VIREO	a	b		d	e	f
RED-EYED VIREO	a	b	c	d	e	f
BLUE-WINGED WARBLER	a	b	c	d	e	f
TENNESSEE WARBLER						f
NASHVILLE WARBLER				d		f
YELLOW WARBLER	a	b	c	d	e	f
CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER	a	b	c	d	e	f
MAGNOLIA WARBLER	a	b		d	e	
BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER		b	c	d	e	f
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER		b		d	e	f
BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER	a	b	c	d		f
BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER		b	c	d	e	f
PINE WARBLER		b	c			
PRAIRIE WARBLER				d		f
BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER	a	b	c	d		f
AMERICAN REDSTART	a	b	c	d	e	f
WORM-EATING WARBLER						f
OVENBIRD	a	b	c	d	e	f

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH		b		d	e	
LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH		b		d	e	f
MOURNING WARBLER		b			e	
COMMON YELLOWTHROAT	a	b	c	d	e	f
HOODED WARBLER				d		
CANADA WARBLER		b		d		f
SCARLET Tanager	a	b	c	d	e	f

NORTHERN CARDINAL	a	b	c	d	e	f
ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK	a	b		d	e	f
INDIGO BUNTING		b	c	d		
EASTERN TOWHEE		b	c	d	e	f
CHIPPING SPARROW	a	b	c	d	e	f
FIELD SPARROW			c		e	
VESPER SPARROW						f
SAVANNAH SPARROW		b		d	e	f
SONG SPARROW	a	b	c	d	e	f
SWAMP SPARROW		b		d	e	f
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW		b	c	d	e	f

DARK-EYED JUNCO		b		d	e	f
BOBOLINK		b	c	d	e	f
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD	a	b	c	d	e	f
EASTERN MEADOWLARK		b	c	d	e	f
COMMON GRACKLE	a	b	c	d	e	f
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD	a	b	c	d	e	f
ORCHARD ORIOLE		b		d	e	
BALTIMORE ORIOLE	a	b	c	d	e	f
PURPLE FINCH	a	b		d	e	f
HOUSE FINCH		b	c	d	e	f
PINE SISKIN	a	b				f
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	a	b	c	d	e	f
HOUSE SPARROW		b	c	d	e	f

— Robert P. Yunick

Seven chickadee species are found in the American Birding Association North American birding area. The first, the BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE (*Poecile atricapilla*), is familiar to all of us and is found in a broad swath of central North America including the lower two-thirds of Alaska. A second species, the BOREAL CHICKADEE (*P. hudsonica*) is found primarily north of the Canadian border, but it can be found in certain boreal bogs in New York such as Massawepie Mire, Ferd's Bog, and near Bloomingdale, NY. My wife, Chris, and I have also found them on the High Peaks above about 3500 feet. The other eastern species is the CAROLINA CHICKADEE (*P. carolinensis*) can be found south of the Mason-Dixon Line and as far west as eastern Texas/Oklahoma.

The MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE (*P. gambeli*) lives in the mountainous west of North America extending up into British Columbia and Alberta to the Yukon Territory border, but not generally along the Pacific coast. The CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE (*P. rufescens*) can be found along the Pacific coast from roughly Anchorage, AK, to south of San Francisco, CA, with a small extension east along the Canadian/US border to the Rockies. A third species, the MEXICAN CHICKADEE (*P. sclateri*), can be found high up in the Chiricahua Mountains of SE Arizona. This is the very northern extent of their range, and, thus barely enters the North American birding area.

The final species, the GRAY-HEADED CHICKADEE (*P. cincta*), is found only in northern Alaska along both sides of the Brooks Range and a bit into the Yukon and Northwest Territories. It is considered to be very high on the list of the most difficult North American birds to see, and our trip to see it is the subject of this article. The bird has been split from the very similar Siberian Tit.

I have taken the species ranges from The Sibley Guide to Birds, pp 374-377. By referring to the guide, you can see that the seven species are very similar looking with

The trip was an eight day rafting trip down the Marsh Fork of the Canning River and a small portion of the Canning below the confluence. These rivers flowed north into the Arctic Ocean from high in



Figure 1. Immature Golden Eagle seen on the Denali Park Road

small variations of cap and side color, song, mask detail, and, with the Chestnut-backed, the color of the back feathers. Identification of the Black-capped and Carolina in overlap regions can be difficult.

My quest was born when we signed up for the Fieldguides, Inc., trip to SE Arizona in June, 2008, and when our son, Josh, and his family moved to southern Maryland. Our other son, Zack, lived at the time in Berkeley, CA, and I realized that through clever planning of birding trips and family visits, I could see all but the Mountain and Gray-headed birds.

How to find a Gray-headed Chickadee? I Googled "gray-headed chickadee + birding" (or something similar). The first hit on the Google list was for Wilderness Birding Adventures (WBA) in Eagle River, AK. It turned out to be a small wilderness birding and rafting company run by husband and wife, Bob Dittreck and Lisa Moorehead.

the Brooks Range in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In fact, the rivers are the western borders of the Refuge, the highest protected area in a much larger preserve. WBA also offered other raft trips that were less birding focused as well as birding trips to the other hot spots in Alaska including Adak and Gambell.

WBA's information required us to be prepared for weather that could range from sub-freezing to summer warmth. We would have to provide a three season tent, synthetic fill sleeping bags and pads, and adequate synthetic clothing to keep us dry and comfortable in any condition. Lastly, there were the dread North Slope mosquitoes.

Our plan was to fly to Anchorage, then drive to Denali for a two-day visit, and finally drive to Fairbanks to meet the group late on June 14 for a meeting. We arrived in Anchorage and reached our hotel by mid-afternoon. This allowed us to walk

to Lake Hood, the seaplane base, to look for waterfowl. It had been filled with birds during our previous visit in 2007, but this time, it only held a RED-NECKED GREBE. The next morning we drove to Westchester Lagoon, an important Anchorage wetlands that had also been quite active our last trip. Notable sightings this time included MEW GULLS and GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULLS, BARTAILED GODWITS, ALDER FLYCATCHERS and WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS.

At Denali, we stayed at the McKinley Creekside Cabins about thirteen miles south of the Park entrance. It had pleasant cabins and a very nice restaurant. There we saw a GRAY JAY family and Chris found a fledgling GREAT HORNED OWL on an early morning walk.

Denali Park has only one road that accesses the interior. It goes 90 miles into the old mining area of Kantishna. Presently, a part of the area is an historic site while the Park's only private in-holding, a small group of lodges, are found there. Private vehicles are restricted after the first few miles, so the only travel is via tour buses. We took the full Kantishna trip lasting about twelve hours. Along the way we had a super view of two bull moose running across the tundra, some

caribou, grizzlies, and a pair of wolves that passed within about 30 feet of the bus and then walked away along the road.

While waiting to board the bus, I heard the ethereal call of a varied thrush. Later, an immature GOLDEN EAGLE flew in front of the bus and landed on a rock ledge in full view of everyone. Figure 1 is a picture of this bird. At another point, I spotted a WILLOW PTARMIGAN standing on the road's edge.

The tour group met in Fairbanks with the guides Bob Dittreck and Aaron Lang. There were three other couples who were our age and who were very serious and experienced birders. We had our gear inspected to be sure all was appropriate and we received two very important items: large dry bags and a pair of hip boots. Finally we were given heavy plastic bags to put inside both our dry bags and day packs.

The next morning (June 15), we boarded a small airplane from the Wright Air Service for the hour and half flight to Arctic Village, which is about 150 miles north of Fairbanks and is on the southern edge of the Refuge and the Brooks Range. The community is home to about 300 Natives Americans and

has a subsistence economy. Everything has to be flown in including the fuel for the local power plant.

At Arctic Village, we met Kurt, the bush pilot and his small Cessna three-passenger plane. He carried us over the Continental Divide at Carver Pass on a 25 minute flight that ended on a small informal landing area on the bank of the Marsh Fork (Figure 2.). The first flight carried Bob, the rafts and all the food. We were told to be sure that we each had our personal baggage and tents on our flight and that setting up the tent was our first priority. It required four trips to get everybody and everything in.

We pitched our tents on the broad, flat tundra bench above the river while the kitchen/eating area was established on the gravel shore of the river at least a 100 yards from the tents. As a bear safety precaution, no food went up to the tent area and all scraps and uneaten food went into the river. Later that evening, someone spotted a sow bear and cub at a distance up and across the river.

A lot of work then went into setting up the rafts for the next day's float. They had to be inflated and rigged to carry us, the gear and food. Aaron and two couples were in one boat while Bob and the other two used the second. We were instructed on paddling technique and water safety. While this was going on, MEW GULLS, ARCTIC TERNS, AMERICAN ROBINS and WANDERING TATTLERS moved up and down the river. We could also hear the song of WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS.

The first night, we hiked about a mile along the tundra to the first area where the GRAY-HEADED CHICKADEES had been found. While we were above the tree line, cottonwoods occasionally grew along stream valleys. The chickadees nested in



Figure 2. Coming into the Marsh Fork Put-In



Figure 3. Typical Boreal Chickadee nest hole in a Cottonwood tree

tree holes and foraged in the nearby willow bushes. Bob and Aaron had located a few nests over the years while leading backpacking and rafting trips. Bob led us to the tree, and we sat down to wait for the bird. Unfortunately, all we saw this time were mosquitoes. Along the way, we did stir up several UPLAND SANDPIPERS.

The next morning, we started our float. At this point, the Marsh Fork was a relatively shallow, braided stream, and we had to frequently jump out of the rafts to pull over the gravel. The rafts would move along with the current with us paddling as needed to avoid rocks or to move toward a deeper branch. If the bow would ground,

the stern of the raft would pinwheel around, and we would then float down the river sideways or backward. All the time we kept seeing birds: RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS, HARLEQUIN DUCKS, GOLDEN and BALD EAGLES, SPOTTED SANDPIPER, RUDDY TURNSTONE, and more UPLAND SANDPIPER.

One morning, we floated through a narrow canyon with a two-mile section of rapids. The high water level made the passage fairly easy, although the other raft hung up at a 45 degree angle on a big rock. They had to climb out onto the rock and free the raft to proceed. After this, we stopped for lunch on a gravel bar, then took a short walk into a willow thicket where we found lots of bear, wolf and moose tracks. We got a great look at an ARCTIC



Figure 4. Adult Boreal Chickadee approaching the nest hole

WARBLER and I got a quick view of a GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH that we had been hearing.

We made a couple of sweeps of tundra-covered hillside trying to locate SMITH'S LONGSPURS. This species does not display as actively as the Lapland Longspur, and, when it is disturbed, often scoots away in the tundra. On the second sweep, we raised a female briefly. It seemed to return to the same spot, so we closed in to try to find the nest. This succeeded when one of us almost stepped on the nest and its three eggs. At this point, we quickly moved away.

That evening we made our second attempt to find the chickadee. We had camped on a large, flat gravel bar at the outlet of a creek that Bob and Aaron had named Tit Creek. Moving through the tundra, we stirred up a LESSER YELLOWLEGS. Bob led us through a cottonwood and willow woods to a tree that had previously held a nest. The nest opening was a 3 inch diameter hole (Figure 3). Again we sat and waited and swatted mosquitoes. No bird appeared. This process was repeated at two more holes unsuccessfully. We did pass a bear-rubbing tree that had tufts of hair sticking to rough spots on it.

The good thing about birding above the Arctic Circle near the solstice is that it never gets dark and the birds keep moving. This allowed us to continue to a fourth nest hole further up the Tit Creek drainage. Again we all sat down in a line about twenty feet from the hole and waited. Soon Bob noticed a bird moving in from the left about 12 feet off the ground. It was a GRAY-HEADED CHICKADEE. It moved in short jumps to a small bush a couple of feet from the hole. It perched there looking around and then



*Figure 5. Carrying a Crane Fly to the young in the nest hole*

popped into the hole. Soon after, its head reappeared, and it popped out. We could hear the chicks calling for a few moments after it left. We sat there quite awhile taking pictures and watching the parents come in to feed the young. Figures 4 and 5 show the adult perched on the branch outside the hole. The reader may be able to see the crane fly in the bird's beak in Figure 5. Figure 6 shows the adult leaving the hole.

Some of the group returned to the active nest for more pictures the next morning. On the return walk, they had a brown wolf pass about 100 feet from them. It stopped to observe a moment before disappearing into the brush. Another wolf sighting occurred a previous morning when we watched a pair of gray colored wolves move across the bench for at least a half mile on the other side of the river.

A second chickadee sighting occurred on

a subsequent afternoon when some of the group hiked up a deep narrow canyon to visit a cave that was the source of a cold, fast moving stream. We had to cross the stream, then change from hip to hiking boots in order to walk over the talus that edged the stream. Along the way, we spotted two large golden eagle nests. I could see down feathers clinging to the sticks of one, but no birds were visible. We could also see holes use by cliff swallows for their nests. Bob told us that the chickadees had used one of the holes previously. One couple stopped at this point while we continued to the cave. They observed another pair of chickadees foraging on the canyon wall across the stream. After our return, we were all able to at least glimpse a bird as it flew up and over a rock edge on our side to get to its hidden nest.

Twice we found four foot thick ice lining

either side of the river. One time, it forced the stream into a new channel, and we had to line the rafts through the willow brush. The second time, we moved carefully from one gravel bar to the next with scouting to assure that the channel was open ahead. While stopped at one gravel bar, we chopped some ice loose for the evening's drinks.

One of the clients, Tim Earle, was a Northwestern University anthropology professor who amazingly spotted a discarded small stone tool lying amongst the gravel at the river's edge. He pointed out the tooling marks on it and suggested that it had been made as an awl. On our last hike up onto the tundra to visit some small lakes, we stopped on the top of a rise for lunch. While looking for a place to sit, Tim reached down

and picked up another stone artifact that he described as an edge for scraping or cutting. We could clearly see the tooling marks on both sides of the edge. Tim thought that it had been discarded after it broke off the original larger piece. Both items were left where they were picked up.

On this hike, we were all able to get very good looks at a male SMITH'S LONGSPUR. Through a scope, we could clearly see the beautiful head pattern and chestnut colored breast. That day, we also had a small herd of caribou approach the campsite, but they were too shy to come too close.

The weather could be highly variable. Initially, we had warm days and pleasant nights, but the clouds appeared on June

19 and the temperature dropped. When I looked out of our tent about 2 AM, I could see a light dusting of snow on the ground. By 8 AM, June 20, there was about a four inch accumulation (Figure 7). This was the first day of summer and the last rafting day, so the snowfall had an unexpected consequence the next two nights, the planned final ones of the trip.

After a tough launch and a quick float through the confluence of the Marsh Fork and Canning Rivers, we moved downstream to our last camping spot, a large sand and gravel bar that included a long area to be used as a landing strip. In the middle of the first night, one of us looked out from our tents to see that the river had risen from snow melt during the day and had covered



Figure 4. Adult Boreal Chickadee approaching the nest hole



Figure 7. Mid-summer's day snowfall graces the Marsh Fork Latrine Area

the landing strip. Bob and Aaron had to rescue the rafts and some of the equipment. The river receded during the day and we felt secure that Kurt, the bush pilot, could land the next morning. Of course, the river repeated its behavior during the night, so Bob had to call Kurt to hold off. The river dropped significantly by noon, and we were able to assist the draining of the strip by cutting channels with our boot heels and building low gravel dams to divert any water. Kurt was able to fly us out as well as bring in WBA's next group who were waiting at Arctic Village. The afternoon Wright Air Service pilot knew we were coming in late, so he delayed his return to Fairbanks until we were all there in Arctic Village.

Total bird list: 56 species including lifers GRAY-HEADED CHICKADEE, SMITH'S LONGSPUR, and THAYER'S GULL.

"But! Wait!" you say. "What about the quest for the seventh chickadee?"

That's easy, if you are willing to stretch the definition of a "year" a bit and don't expect the Gray-headed to be the final one. The BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE appears at our Rexford feeders daily. I saw the CAROLINA CHICKADEE during a visit to our son, Josh's, in St. Mary's County, Maryland in April, 2009, and we saw a CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE on a visit to Berkeley to see our son Zack in spring, 2008. The MEXICAN CHICKADEE was seen on the Fieldguides, Inc., trip to SE Arizona in June, 2008, while the GRAY-HEADED CHICKADEE was seen on the trip reported here. We saw the Boreal Chickadee in the woods behind the Museum of the North in Fairbanks.

Thus, the seventh chickadee turns out to be the Mountain. I picked up this while we

visited Zack and family in their new home in Ventura, CA, on the return from Alaska. My Southern California birding guide said that the bird could be found on Figeroua Mountain northwest of Santa Barbara in the Los Padres National Forest. This is probably the southern-most extent of their range. Following the guide's instructions, I drove up the east side of the mountain to a wooded area just over the top. My iPod brought in a small Mountain Chickadee flock, and my quest was complete. My joy was compounded when on the drive down the mountain's west side, I passed the entrance to Michael Jackson's Neverland where I was able to snap pictures of the mob in mourning outside the gate.

*Note: Pictures will appear in color when viewed on the website version of Feathers.*

— Bernard Grossman

on the nearly bare branches. I can't stress enough how beautiful the woods were – it was a most enjoyable place to walk. Some migrants had already come through, many would pass during our stay, and others were hopefully still on their way.

Several fine trails are in the area of the Visitor Center, and we walked them all. Birding there (as everywhere) was a very collaborative affair, with intelligence freely and rapidly shared among new friends we met along the trails. At times, we were clued in to a good bird by the huge crowd that was gathered – sort of like looking for large mammals in Yellowstone where a hundred cars were pulled off (or stopped on) the road! Although we never encountered a major fallout of passerines, the birding was very good, very steady, and we ultimately tallied 15 species of warbler in the park, including NASHVILLE, WORM-EATING, PROTHONOTARY, HOODED, and BLACKBURNIAN, YELLOW-THROATED, WARBLING, and WHITE-EYED

VIREOS, SWAINSON'S THRUSH, VEERY, many BALTIMORE ORIOLES, several ORCHARD ORIOLES, and an abundance of ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS all enhanced the experience!

Several trails deserve special mention – the Woodland Trail, Tilden Woods Trail, and Chinquapin (like the oak) trail. These provide, collectively, a range of forest habitats including wetlands with NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, drier oak forest where we had a WILD TURKEY, and just beautiful spring woods filled with wildflowers and bird song. Along the park road in one morning we spotted a RED-HEADED WOODPECKER!

Twice we went to “the Tip” – this is the southernmost point in Canada, at the 42<sup>nd</sup> parallel. Access to the Tip is provided by tram, and the habitat seems to be benefiting. One day it was completely still and the other it was blowing like crazy, with crashing waves. Birding was actually better on the

latter day, with a mini-fallout of BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS, BONAPARTE'S GULLS, COMMON TERNS, and a TREE SWALLOW at a nest hole.

The Friends of Point Pelee operate the tram, and also operate the bookstore, and a two-week “Festival of Birds” that includes breakfast and lunch each day near the visitor center. A tent outside also housed the birder's board to record daily sightings. One day outside the Visitor Center we saw a huge crowd of birders, split between two sides of a small patch of prickly pear cactus and grass, all staring at this tiny area. Joining the crowd we learned that they were on the track of a reclusive GRASSHOPPER SPARROW, which we soon got to see, well and up close!

A stop at Niagara Falls along the way back provided a fitting end to the trip, which included great birds and a great reunion “road trip” for two old friends. 



*The Point*



*Trail at Pelee*

**Birds and Breakfast at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center**  
*Saturday, May 9, 2009*

On a fine May morning, three groups of birders totaling about 40 individuals scoured the grounds of Five Rivers Environmental Education Center from 6:00 until 10:30 AM. Combined, the groups identified a total of 70 species, despite the low numbers of migrant warblers.

Among the species sighted were:

BLUE-WINGED, YELLOW, CHESTNUT-SIDED, PINE, and PRAIRIE WARBLERS, as well as COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH, and large numbers of OVENBIRDS

EASTERN PHOEBE, LEAST and GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHERS, and EASTERN KINGBIRD

RED-BELLIED, DOWNY, HAIRY, and PILEATED WOODPECKERS and NORTHERN FLICKER

GREEN and GREAT BLUE HERONS

CHIPPING, FIELD, SONG, SWAMP, WHITE-THROATED, and WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS and DARK-EYED JUNCO

CAROLINA, HOUSE, AND WINTER WRENS

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO

BOBOLINK

BROWN THRASHER

These and many other species of birds made for an enjoyable morning of birding, after which the group enjoyed a breakfast together, courtesy of the HMBC. Thanks to our group leaders: John Kent, Patti Packer, Alan Mapes, Scott Stoner and Gregg Recer for your time and efforts in locating birds for our participants!

— *Denise Hackert-Stoner and Scott Stoner*

**Saratoga Battlefield National Historic Park**  
*Sunday, June 7, 2009*

One of the trip participants did a little walking around while we waited for everyone to gather at the Visitors' Center at the Battlefield, and he located a BARRED OWL near its nest. With this auspicious start, we walked about a mile down the tour road to the path to the field on the right of the road. Along the way, we saw an unidentified empid flycatcher, probably a

willow or alder. The group was also treated to an excellent view of a SCARLET Tanager pair. It is relatively easy to see the male, but the yellow-green female is less frequently seen.

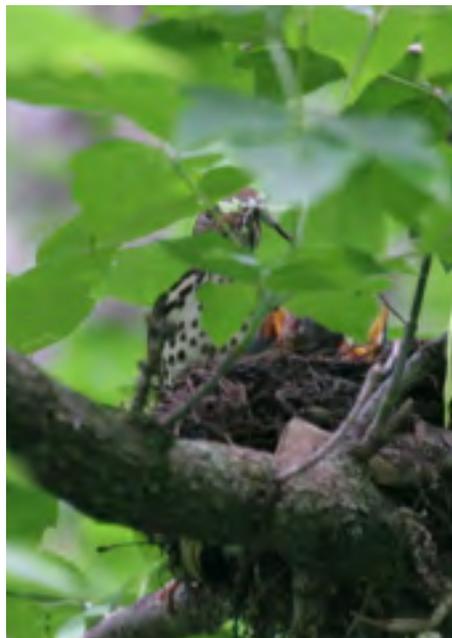
Heading across the field at the first cannon on the left, we then had good looks at a flying EASTERN MEADOWLARK and a TREE SPARROW perched in the mouth of another cannon. Later on the Wilkinson trail heading back to the Center, we had a close encounter with a male BLUE-WINGED WARBLER.

We all took a second look at the BARRED OWL and found that it now had a fluffy fledgling sitting next to it.

A total of 49 species were seen or heard. Surprisingly for the Battlefield, this did not include bluebird, turkey or red tailed hawk.

— *Bernie and Chris Grossman*

**Papscanee Preserve**  
*Saturday, June 20, 2009*



12 birders met for a walk thru the Papscanee Preserve. A number of KILLDEER were (15-20) seen in the sod farm upon entering the preserve area. A bit farther on, there were many AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES flitting all through the tall grass in the field on the south side of the road. In the same area a SPOTTED SANDPIPER, SAVANNAH SPARROW, WILLOW FLYCATCHER, YELLOW WARBLERS were observed. Highlights in the preserve

itself were A MUTE SWAN, DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT attempting to swallow an eel, BALD EAGLE diving for a fish, and an INDIGO BUNTING. Bird of the day was a WOOD THRUSH feeding 3 young still in their nest. Species for the day numbered 51. A nice walk was had by all.

— *Don and Nancy Gresens*

*Picture provided by Alan Gee.*

**Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center**  
*Saturday, June 27, 2009*

A group of 18 people showed up for this outing at Thacher Nature Center. Temperatures were comfortable and a light breeze kept the bugs at bay. Although we'd had rain showers on and off all week, we were fortunate that morning to have partly cloudy to cloudy skies; it didn't start raining until we were on our way home.

Our first bird of the day was a HOUSE WREN nesting above a sign in the parking lot. It was the first of many HOUSE WRENS that we would see. The edge habitat where the woods and the fields meet proved to be very productive for us, and we spent a lot of time there. We found a pair of SCARLET TANAGERS, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, and EASTERN PHOEBE flicking its tail. A single DARK-EYED JUNCO perched in a tree. The sounds of EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE, OVENBIRD, and RED-EYED VIREO were evident in the bordering woods. We heard, but did not see, BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER.

As we walked down the trail, acrobatic TREE SWALLOWS that are raising young in several of the bluebird boxes flew around us. One brave youngster in a box close to the trail stuck its head out to beg, drawing the attention of its parent carrying an insect. YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER was seen as the group made its way towards the old schoolhouse.

Along Ketchum Road, we heard EASTERN TOWHEE and located the bird perched on an overhead line. Many of us got good looks at it through Don's scope. We heard COMMON YELLOWTHROAT within the brushy area along the roadside and FIELD SPARROW near the crest of the hill. There were plenty of RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS in the grasslands

but only a single BOBOLINK, a female, was found.

Walking back along the road, we heard the song of a WOOD THRUSH close by. After unsuccessful scanning the treetops and branches, the bird flew out of the brush; it had been probably been right in front of us! We also saw a pair of soaring BROAD-WINGED HAWKS.

Most of us then walked down past the Nature Center to a small pavilion in the woods that overlooks Thompson's Lake. There, we witnessed an apparent scuffle between a BLUE JAY and a YELLOW-THROATED VIREO that was probably nesting in the area. We had great views of this colorful but not often seen vireo.

In all, we had 41 species. Other species seen or heard included GREAT BLUE HERON, TURKEY VULTURE, HAIRY WOODPECKER, EASTERN KINGBIRD, BARN SWALLOW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, GRAY CATBIRD, CEDAR WAXWING; CHIPPING, FIELD, SAVANNAH, and SONG SPARROWS; NORTHERN CARDINAL, and AMERICAN GOLDFINCH.

— Ellen Pemrick 

## Upcoming HMBC Programs

### ***Birding Northern India***

**Bernie Grossman**

Monday, September 14, 2009

7:00 PM at the William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library

We traveled to Northern India from Late January through mid-February, 2009, to bird an area centered on New Delhi. This included stops at Ranthambhore, Keoladeo Ghana, and Corbett National Parks, as well as the Kumaria/Kosi River and Nainital areas in the Himalayan foothills. We also stopped at Agra to see the Fatephor Secri palace, Agra Fort, and the Taj Mahal.

We saw 320 bird species, leopards, wild elephants, monkeys, and deer species. There were also two really close encounters with wild tigers.

This talk will present descriptions and pictures of the birds and animals seen as well as the culture and monuments of India that we experienced.

*Bernard Grossman has been a member of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club for over thirty years and most recently was its president. Previous programs for the Club described trips to Churchill, Manitoba, to view the polar bears and to Alaska for birding. He was a chemist at Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory, Niskayuna, NY, for more than 30 years.*

### ***Resource Exploitation, Finch Nesting Events and a Closer Look at Red Crossbill***

***Vocal Types in New York***

**Matt Young**

Monday, October 5, 2009

7:00 PM at the William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library

Matthew A. Young has lived in Central New York for the past 12 years and now resides in Scott, NY (Cortland County). Matt received his B.S. in Water Resources from SUNY-Oneonta and his M. S. in Environmental Forest Biology (concentration in Ornithology) from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in 2003. Matt did his masters research at The Great Swamp Conservancy near Canastota, which is now recognized as an Audubon Important Bird Area, and has helped the Cornell Plantations, Finger Lakes Land Trust, and Central New York Land Trust's acquire unique bird and plant habitat in CNY. He is a Kingbird Regional Editor, (The NYS Ornithological Journal) and he sits on the Board of Directors at Lime Hollow Nature Center and Central New York Land Trust. He recently was an Adjunct Professor in Environmental Studies at SUNY-Cortland before accepting a job in 2008 at the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds as an Audio Production Engineer at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. He wrote the finch (i.e. siskin, grosbeak, crossbills) species accounts for the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas and his research interests involve the study of Red Crossbill vocal types in North America with a focus on the types that occur in the east.

***An Introduction to Birding and Bird-Feeding***  
**Scott Stoner and Denise Hackert-Stoner**  
***HMBC Open House and New Member Night***

Monday, November 2, 2009

7:00 PM at the William K. Sanford (Colonie) Town Library

Learn why birds are interesting and why “birding” is such a fun and popular hobby – both across America and in our own backyards. In this program we’ll cover some basics of identifying birds and how to attract them to our yards. Feeders, bird seed, plantings, and squirrels will be discussed! Come and learn why we enjoy birds so much!

Information about the Hudson–Mohawk Bird Club will be available. New members and the public especially invited. Extra refreshments will be served.

*Scott is a past president of the HMBC and Capital Region Audubon, and teaches birding classes for both North and South Colonie School Districts. Denise is a trip leader and past Director of the bird club. Scott and Denise write a monthly nature column for the Chatham Courier and their work has been published in the Times Union’s Life Stories section. They authored a feature story on Christmas Bird Counts in the New York State Conservationist magazine. Together they have birded and traveled across North America but especially enjoy sharing the joy of birding with beginners right here at home.*

## Birding on Fort Drum

For several years I had been intrigued by some of the posts on the Northern New York birding e-mail list about Fort Drum. When I saw a post last year in which a single birder in a single day reported four species that I had never seen, I decided to plan a trip up there. In most cases, birders need a Fort Drum Recreational Permit to be on the base, so I applied for one by mail last fall. The permits are valid for a year beginning October 1; the ones that will be valid next spring will be available this fall. See below for details.

Jeff Bolsinger is a research associate for Colorado State University, and he has been monitoring bird populations on Fort Drum since 1995. He leads anywhere from one to three field trips per year, most commonly on or around Memorial Day weekend. At that time of year, Jeff can usually find HENSLOW’S SPARROW, CLAY-COLORED SPARROW, RED-HEADED WOODPECKER, and GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER without much trouble. GRASSHOPPER, VESPER AND SAVANNAH SPARROWS are common, and SEDGE WREN can often be found by late May. I signed up to go on Jeff’s trip on May 16 this year. This trip happened to be an official Army-sponsored event in recognition of International Migratory Bird Day, so it turned out that I didn’t need

my Recreational Permit. However, in other cases, the permit is required even if you are part of one of Jeff’s groups. Since the trip was meeting at 7:00 AM on Saturday, I drove up on Friday and stayed in Watertown.

Located east of Lake Ontario in northern New York, Fort Drum is the largest Army facility in the northeastern U.S. It lies where the land begins to rise into the Adirondack highlands from the Lake Ontario Plains and the St. Lawrence Valley. Habitat types include tens of thousands of acres of deciduous and coniferous forest, as well as thousands of acres of wetlands, successional shrublands, and old fields and sandplain grasslands. When I met the group at the Permit Office near the village of Great Bend, it was windy and threatening rain. We first set out for the area where most of the HENSLOW’S SPARROWS are found. When we got out of the cars, the wind was blowing about 25–30 MPH with higher gusts. A passing CANADA GOOSE was caught up in a gust and did a barrel roll right in front of us, much to everyone’s amusement. Jeff was able to hear BOTH HENSLOW’S and CLAY-COLORED SPARROWS, but the wind made it impossible to tell where the sounds were coming from. Searching with a scope was unsuccessful as well, as the birds appeared to be staying down low in the grass, out of

the wind. It began to rain and thunder, so we decided to move on and try the first of Jeff’s favorite spots for GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER. The rain let up as we arrived, and we heard GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER song there, but we didn’t see one. Since Blue-winged and GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLERS sometimes sing one another’s songs, it is not reliable to identify either by sound alone. Another rain shower arrived, so we got in the cars and moved on to an area of open oak woodland, where several pairs of RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS breed. We quickly found a pair of them and got good, close looks. Our next stop was another warbler location. As soon as we got out of the cars there, I found my life GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER and got a good look. The spot was very active with warblers, including CANADA, TENNESSEE, NASHVILLE, BLACK AND WHITE, YELLOW, and NORTHERN PARULA. RED-EYED and YELLOW-THROATED VIREOS were also heard there. After spending a half-hour or so there, we went back and tried once more for the grassland sparrows, but were again defeated by wind, rain, and thunder.

Although birders with the appropriate permit can visit Fort Drum on their own, they are required to call the day before their visit. Only then will they be told which areas of the installation will be open to them

the following day. It is the responsibility of the birders to use the supplied map and be sure they remain within the allowed areas for the day in question. This makes it difficult to plan, so the best way to visit is to sign up for one of Jeff's trips. His permit allows him to take groups into many areas that are not otherwise open to visitors. Jeff announces his trips in advance in postings on the Northern New York birding e-mail list and on the Fort Drum Fish and Wildlife

website, and they always require advance registration.

For information on Fort Drum Recreational Permits, and recent bird sightings at Fort Drum, see <http://www.drum.army.mil/garrison/pw/FishAndWild.html> or call (315) 772-9636.

For an article by Jeff Bolsinger and Raymond Rainbolt from

Winging It, the ABA newsletter, see <http://www.drum.army.mil/garrison/pw/pdf/environmental/natresources/fishandwild/wingingit.pdf>

For recent postings on the Northern New York birding e-mail list, see <http://birdingonthe.net/maillinglists/NNYB.html>

— John Kent 

## The Art of Frantic Birding

*Terry Sprague, from Prince Edward County, Ontario, is the host of the NatureStuff website. Reprinted with the author's permission from The Tweed News, Tweed ON Canada, Wednesday, April 22, 2009*

I have written a few times on that popular pastime among the birding types, known as "bird listing." I participate myself now and again, and while I suppose the practice is quite harmless, there is always a danger of it leading to a general lack of appreciation of birds, their colours, their songs, and their attributes. A bird winds up becoming little more than a needed tick on someone's check list.

But bird listing does have its advantages. Since the aim of the game is to acquire the maximum number of species within a given time period, the practice does tend to sharpen one's senses. To compete with any degree of pride at all, one must have an intimate knowledge of field marks and bird song. Because every second counts one must narrow each find down to its family and species by either a few critical field marks or its song in as little time as possible.

But apart from the practical advantages, the biggest reason most people do it is that it's just plain fun. Who says birding must always be scientific? I guess one could even call it a sport. Bird listers are known as lighthounds or frantic birdwatchers. Frantic because they always seem to be

in a big flurry as they bustle about with a sort of happy kind of madness the whole world could use a lot more of today.

That gets us down to the matter of lists. Every birder has a yard list - those species seen in one's dooryard. While some will enter anything on their list that they may see from their yard, many, like myself, are purists, entering only those species whose feet actually touch terra firma, or at least, land in a tree or on the fence bordering the yard. But I am relaxing my rules a bit and am now counting those who fly over our property. Finally, all those Canada geese can now be entered, along with the whimbrels I saw some 10 years ago, and last year's bald eagle, and the rare Henslow's sparrow we had in a hay field just across the fence back in 1996.

But the yard list is only one of many which birders frequently keep, and among them we find trip lists and specific locality lists - lists compiled just to document, and for reference purposes.

The mid-May migration madness, however, is another thing. Enter the "century run", or "the big day" a 24-hour marathon of sorts held during the peak of the bird migration, not intended for the faint of heart. Most experienced birders can reach 100 species by noon with little problem. About 20 years ago with a little help from two experienced birders, I hit 153 species, in a 24-hour insanity from

which I still have not fully recovered. We climbed steep rock faces, waded through swamps and mud flats, scanned open lakes and tree tops, and combed acres of prickly ash; surely nothing escaped us that day. Last May, with the help of well known naturalist/photographer/lecturer Michael Runtz I managed 147 species in a 24-hour period during a Birdathon. At 64 years of age, I was surprised I could hang in there for 24 straight hours, with no sleep, and only fast food.

Another less popular event, but one suitable for those with limited time on their hands, is "The Big Minute." To enter this event, one definitely needs a crisp knowledge of birds songs, and an intimate knowledge of where birds, and lots of them, are known to congregate. The inventor of this idea is a New Brunswick resident who has compiled lists of birds seen from moving trains, atop muskrat houses, and in shopping mall parking lots. One of the ground rules of The Big Minute is that the participant can move around, although just how far anyone can move around in 60 seconds and gain anything is questionable.

Birding in the fast lane, we call it.

— Terry Sprague 

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Please visit Terry Sprague's NatureStuff website at <http://naturestuff.net>

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**AUGUST**

**Reservations for Noblewood Park**  
Saturday, August 15

**NOBLEWOOD PARK**

Saturday, August 22 (all day)  
Coordinator: Matt Medler  
mdm2@cornell.edu

This park along the shore of Lake Champlain offers both beautiful scenery and excellent birding. During late August, Noblewood's vast sandbars typically host hundreds of Bonaparte's Gulls, scores of Common Terns, and up to 30 Caspian Terns. With so many gulls present, there is always a chance of picking out a Little Gull, Black-headed Gull, or something even rarer. Shorebirds are hit-or-miss at Noblewood, but when they are present, they can often be enjoyed at close range. Contact the coordinator by Sat. Aug. 15 for details and carpooling information.

**JAMAICA BAY****WILDLIFE REFUGE**

Sunday, August 23 (all day)  
Coordinator: Jory Langner  
439-0604  
langnerj@earthlink.net

Jamaica Bay Wildlife refuge in New York City is widely recognized as one of the top birding spots in North America. Migrating shorebirds will be the main attraction this time of year. A variety of herons and egrets can be expected along with the possibility of Clapper Rail, Black Skimmer and Boat-tailed Grackle, to name just a few. This will be a day trip. Contact the coordinator by Thurs. Aug 20 for details and to arrange for carpooling.

**SEPTEMBER****CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY**

Friday, September 11 –  
Sunday, September 13 (overnight)  
Coordinators/Leaders:

Gerry Colborn (primary)  
237-3898  
gcolborn@nycap.rr.com

Tim Colborn  
(440) 979-9972 gcolborn@  
wowway.com

James Colborn

**LIMIT 10 PARTICIPANTS**

Cape May, NJ is famous among birders worldwide for the avian spectacle that occurs there every fall. Countless birds stop by or pass through there on their way to their southern wintering grounds. Join us as we look for raptors at the Cape May point, songbirds at Higbee Beach and shorebirds at Stone Harbor. We'll make stops at Malibu Beach to see the 100+ Black Skimmer colony and Nummy's Island to see the roosting Night-Herons. These are just a few of the sites we'll be visiting. We'll also be keeping our eyes out for migrant and resident butterflies and dragonflies as well as any other critters we can find. Participants will be responsible for their own transportation and accommodations. The leaders will be happy to assist in providing information about where to stay in Cape May.

**HAWK WATCHING AND  
SONGBIRDS IN THE  
HELDERBERG ESCARPMENT  
#1: PINNACLE**

Saturday, September 19  
Coordinator: Gary Goodness  
862-9260  
goodness@nycap.rr.com

We'll first explore the trails at Camp Pinnacle for fall migrants then head out to "Sunset", the hawk watching site to search the skies for Broad-winged and other migrating hawks. Meet in front of the bank at the southwest corner of Routes 20 & 155 in Guilderland at 8:00 am.

**HAWK WATCHING AND  
SONGBIRDS IN THE  
HELDERBERG ESCARPMENT #2:  
HIGH POINT**

Saturday, September 26  
Coordinator: Gary Goodness  
862-9260  
goodness@nycap.rr.com

We will bird our way out to the hawk watching area, looking for migrating passerines along the 1.5-mile trail out to High Point, where we will watch for Broad-winged and other migrating hawks. Meet in front of the bank at the southwest corner of Routes 20 & 155 in Guilderland at 8:00 am.

**VISCHERS FERRY NATURE AND  
HISTORIC PRESERVE** Sunday,  
September 27 (morning)

Coordinator: John Hershey 371-3114  
hersheyj@nycap.rr.com

Fall migrants will be the main attraction for this field trip. Species that breed further north or in higher elevations stop here on their way south, sometimes providing better opportunities to observe them than when they are in their breeding territory. We will search for waterfowl, raptors, thrushes, Winter Wren, vireos, kinglets, White-throated and Lincoln's Sparrows, Scarlet Tanagers and a variety of warblers. Meet at the preserve entrance at 8:30 am.

## OCTOBER

### DEAD CREEK WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, ADDISON, VT

Saturday, October 10 (all day)

Coordinator: Scott Stoner 785-6760  
scottjstoner@aol.com

Leader: Bob Budliger

This premier waterfowl site in the Champlain Valley of VT can be teeming with Snow Geese around this time of year. There are often a few Ross' Geese mixed in with them. Area ponds have an assortment of puddle ducks and the open fields of the area attract raptors of a variety of species. Bald eagles have been hacked here, so are part of the avifauna now. We will spend the morning at Dead Creek, then travel to a couple of nearby spots offering a chance to bird Lake Champlain.

Meet at the Goose Viewing Area at Dead Creek at 10:00 am (on VT Rt 17, between the VT side of the Crown Point Bridge and Addison, VT). Persons wishing to carpool should contact Scott and meet at the Park & Ride at Exit 9 of the Northway at 7:15 am.

### FIVE RIVERS ENVIROMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

Sunday, October 11 (morning)

Coordinator: John Kent  
426-7919  
jwkent@verizon.net

We'll walk about two miles over generally flat terrain with some small hills, passing through a variety of habitats. A walk on the same weekend in 2008 came up with 6 species of sparrows and 5 species of woodpeckers as well as both species of kinglets. There may still be a few vireos and warblers passing through, and on the ponds we may see Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Wood Duck, and perhaps some other waterfowl. Be prepared to walk in some wet grass and possibly some muddy spots if the weather has been wet. Meet at 8:00 am in the main parking lot by the Visitor Center.

### SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK & BATTLEFIELD

Saturday, October 17 (morning)

Coordinators: Scott Stoner and Denise  
Hackert-Stoner  
785-6760 scottjstoner@  
aol.com

This popular mid-fall trip features beautiful foliage and a good chance of hawks, woodpeckers, sparrows, bluebirds and late migrants as we walk the woods and grasslands of the Saratoga Battlefield.

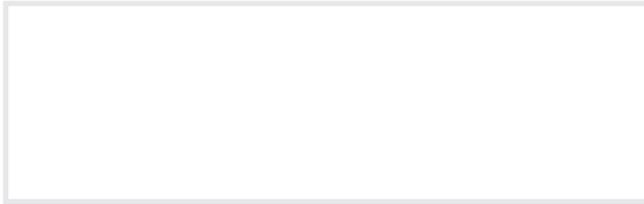
We'll walk about two miles along the popular Wilkinson Trail and perhaps some of the tour road; portions of the walk are hilly. Over the years these trips have found Fox Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Pine Warbler, Common Raven and even Red-headed Woodpecker, so one never knows what will turn up. Meet at 9:00 am in the parking lot near the park's visitor center (off Route 32). The National Park Service charges a fee to walk the Wilkinson Trail, payable at the visitor center. Bring lunch if you would like to join us to picnic in back of the visitor center at the end of the trip. Please wear bright clothing, as there may be hunting on land adjacent to the park. 

**Feathers**

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Dan Welch, Membership Chair  
c/o TSV  
700 Columbia Turnpike  
East Greenbush, NY 12061

Any number of household  
members may be included in a  
single membership

Student \$ 6.00  
Active (Household) \$ 20.00  
Sustaining \$ 30.00  
Life \$ 250.00 (payable in two annual payments of \$125.00 each)

**Membership Category**

(Please circle one category)

We wish to apply for a membership in the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club Inc., as indicated below:

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Have you borrowed this copy of *Feathers* from someone else? Why not become a member? Or, are you a member who has overlooked your membership renewal?

**Join HMBC/Renew Your Membership**