

# Feathers

## Summer birding in the Adirondacks

by Tom Williams

**M**y wife Colleen and I did some birding while on vacation this past July of 2010. We spent a weekend split between the Whitney Wilderness area, and the Bloomingdale Bog/Bigelow Road corridor. The next four days were based from a cottage in Westport, a delightful town on the shore of Lake Champlain. If you are looking for nearby summer destinations, perhaps you will find these appealing.

**Sat. 7/10-** Sabattis Circle Rd., near Little Tupper Lake. This is boreal habitat with a bog alongside the road. It is one of my favorite spots to visit and always has something interesting going on. On this morning we had a group of three GRAY JAYS silently fly across the road and alight on the other side before moving on. This was a life bird for us! They held their wings absolutely still and level as they glided to a graceful landing. They are bigger than I expected, nearly as large as a Blue Jay. A WINTER WREN was sitting atop a broken spruce snag, singing his long song. We saw, and heard frequently, LINCOLN'S SPARROW out in the bog. I had a nice look at one facing me, and the buff-colored vest of an adult is unmistakable if seen in good light. Warblers are always passing across from one side of the road to the other. Today we saw or heard NASHVILLE and NORTHERN PARULA. Past trips here have yielded BLACKBURNIAN, CAPE MAY and MAGNOLIA as well. The road has a wide, grassy shoulder in spots where a vehicle can be

safely pulled off the road. There can be a fair amount of traffic later as the morning progresses, as this road is on the way to the scout camp nearby.

At Bear Pond, on the way to the Sabattis "railroad", we watched a COMMON LOON dive on one side of the road, and a minute later, a loon appeared in the part of the pond on the other side. Having seen no other birds the whole time there, we concluded that he swam through the culvert beneath the roadway to reach the other half of the pond. Good swimmer!

A set of railroad tracks leads northeastward from the former Sabattis railroad station, which was destroyed along with the entire hamlet in the great fire of 1908. This is a beautiful walk; you must bring a camera with you. The road to the scout camp goes through the parking area, and the tracks in the other direction, as well as the land on the northwest side, are private property. Along the edge here we found CHESTNUT-SIDED and NASHVILLE WARBLERS singing loudly, and heard an ALDER FLYCATCHER advertising "free beer". Once you've gone a half-mile or so up the tracks, the only sounds are your feet in the gravel, and the wind in the trees. Solitude!

**Sun. 7/11-** Bigelow Rd. and Bloomingdale Bog were strangely quiet, though we were there a bit later in the morning than on previous visits. Good looks at foraging MAGNOLIA WARBLERS were

rewarding. There were ALDER and LEAST FLYCATCHERS present, a couple of HERMIT THRUSH, and a smattering of other resident warblers. I've yet to have a really good sighting along Bigelow Road. Next time I'm going to start in from the Oregon Plains Rd. side and see if I can't scare up the "woodpecker that shall not be named", my new nemesis bird. You can't beat the scenery there, however.

**Mon. 7/12-** We had time early in the day to take the Essex-Charlotte ferry over to Vermont, and we drove up to Shelburne and the Shelburne Bay area. From the boat launch at Shelburne Bay we watched flyovers of OSPREY, DOUBLE CRESTED CORMORANT and CASPIAN TERN.

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## President's Corner



Winter is definitely here: The CBCs are all over, we are getting six inches plus of snow each week and we are using forty pounds of black oil a week. All is not bad. The eagles are regulars at the Cohoes Falls, rare gulls are at the Coxsackie boat launch and common redpolls are at our feeders. No matter what the season, birders always find birds of note.

I want to thank everyone who participated in the Audubon Christmas Bird Counts. The Hudson Mohawk Bird Club is a needed force in the yearly bird census. The number of counters, the number of hours, the number of miles and the number of birds counted would be hard for any club to duplicate.

I hope all of you helped our membership committee by renewing on time – this makes our budget requirements more efficient. I do hope all of you are putting our Annual meeting on your calendar for late April. It will be at the Century House and it will be a nice beginning to Spring birding.

Happy New Year  
and Happy Birding  
*Gary P. Goodness, President* 

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**HMBC Contact Information**

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**HMBC website:** <http://hmhc.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 p.m., 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:

*Chris Grossman*

*7 Nott Rd.*

*Rexford, NY 12148*

# Upcoming HMBC Programs



## *Troy's Fastest Resident*

Curt Morgan

Monday February 7, 2011

7:00 p.m. at the Colonie Library

From her hatching in Quincy Massachusetts to her successful fledging of eight young, Emma, the female peregrine Falcon, is not only Troy, New York's fastest resident; she is a part of the fastest species on the planet. To see her in action over the skies of the Capital Region is breathtaking. Join us to see Curt Morgan's presentation of this awesome wonder.

Curt Morgan grew up here in the Capital Region and has been birdwatching for 30 of those years. He has watched birds across New York and the Northeast, Florida, California, Arizona, Argentina, and Israel. After 400+ birds on his life list he has stopped counting. He has been doing some volunteer work for New York's Department of Environmental Conservation in monitoring the progress of local Peregrine Falcons. Curt and his wife Linda live in West Sand Lake, New York and he is the founding pastor of East Ridge Community Church now located at the former Sand Lake Elementary School.

## *All About Bluebirds – and More*

John Rogers

Monday, March 7, 2011

7:00 p.m. at the Colonie Library

This quality PowerPoint presentation encompasses the life history of the Eastern Bluebird, nest box management, other birds that nest in bluebird boxes, and more. The focus is on bluebirds, but John also shares his passion for the natural world. With visually beautiful photographs, sounds, and a sincere, enthusiastic presentation style, this program is of interest to anyone who appreciates nature.

John Rogers has maintained an extensive trail of bluebird nest boxes north of Syracuse for over 35 years, and has fledged over 12,200 Eastern Bluebirds. He is a recognized authority on bluebird trail management, and has done slide programs and workshops for hundreds of groups including in 10 states and 2 Canadian provinces. John was a cofounder of the New York State Bluebird Society in 1982 and elected a lifetime (volunteer) director in 2002. He is a recipient of the John and Nora Lane Bluebird Conservation Award from the North American Bluebird Society, and a past board member of that organization. John is a member of the Onondaga Audubon Society near Syracuse. He received a BA in Biology from SUNY Oswego.

## *HMBC Literary Night*

Monday, April 4, 2011

7:00 p.m. at the Colonie Library

The Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club will host a literary event at 7:00 p.m. on April 4 at the Colonie Town Library. If you have a favorite short piece of nature writing, either self-composed or by one of your favorite writers, you are invited to read it to the group. We also welcome listeners so don't feel you have to come prepared to read. If you would like to bring a dessert to share with the group you are more than welcome to do so!

**Annual Meeting and Dinner**  
***Tropical Birds Do***  
***the Coolest Things***

Mark Garland

Wednesday, April 27, 2011

Century House, Latham NY

HMBC MEMBERS will receive a separate mailing in late winter with the details of this event. If you are not a member, please join!

Mark Garland is a free-lance naturalist and founder of a small company that plans, organizes, and conducts nature-oriented tours, classes, workshops, and presentations. He previously worked for 4 year as Senior Naturalist for the Cape May Bird Observatory and, before that, for 17 years as Senior Naturalist with the Audubon Naturalist Society. He teaches Elderhostel Birding sessions in Cape May, serves as Nature Editor for the Metro Connection program on Washington's public radio station (WAMU). He taught for many years at the Hog Island Audubon Camp on the Maine Coast. He has led over 200 birding and nature tours to destinations on 4 continents. He is a frequent speaker at birding festivals, clubs, and other venues. He lives in West Cape May, NJ, where he is currently an Associate Naturalist with the Cape May Bird Observatory.

His program, "Tropical Birds Do the Coolest Things" looks at some of the fascinating behaviors and activities of many birds found in tropical regions of the Americas and Africa. It's truly a celebration of the beauty and wonder of birds.

***LOVE IS a photo BLIND***

Victor Lamoureux

Monday, May 2, 2011

7:00 p.m. at the Colonie Library

One of the best ways to get up close to wildlife and to be able to observe wildlife for an extended period of time is through the use of a blind (or hide). Going through photos one day, Victor was amazed to realize just how many stories he can tell about creatures he has taken pictures of from blinds. Although photographic techniques will be briefly discussed, this presentation will largely be about the natural history of species he has had the pleasure to photograph from various types of blinds including shorebirds, kingfishers, herons, songbirds and much more. Victor S. Lamoureux is a Ph.D. biologist earning his degree studying the ecology of green frogs. He is also a professional educator, having taught High School biology, and is currently an Adjunct Professor at Broome Community College, Binghamton, NY. He has been a northeastern naturalist, birder, and wildlife photographer for over 20 years. His talks are highlighted by his award-winning, published photography. He lives in Vestal, NY with his wife and three young children.

*Looking further ahead – details will follow as available.*

***Birding Namibia***

Gregg Recer

Monday, June 6, 2011

7:00 p.m. at the Colonie Library

***A Year with Nature in Western New York***

Tim Baird

Monday, September 12, 2011

7:00 p.m. at the Colonie Library

***Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch***

Andy Mason

Monday, October 3, 2011

7:00 p.m. at the Colonie Library

***Holiday Party***

program to be announced

Monday, December 5, 2011

7:00 p.m. at the Five Rivers

Environmental Education Center

## *Nemesis Bird– Part 1. – It Does Not Exist*

I have never seen a Dovekie. I have seen more than 680 species of birds in North America, without visiting the outer Aleutian Islands or Gambell in Alaska, and certainly without chasing every reported rarity (I would have gone broke long ago had I tried that!). But there are only a few regularly occurring species that I am still seeking, and the tiny Dovekie is one of them.

This is one of our smallest seabirds, a little auk, that breeds in the eastern Arctic (mainly the northwest coast of Greenland (Cornell lab). Dovekies nest in large colonies, building their nest of tiny stones in larger boulder fields. They use their wings to swim underwater to catch their prey of crustaceans and small fish. This diminutive, stocky, black-and-white seabird occasionally is sighted in the winter from the rocky coast of Maine to the mid-Atlantic, but I have never seen one. They tend to be blown in by storms, but quickly head back out to sea, so chasing reports of them is often fruitless. One day I will see this bird and add it to my list – either by luck find one along the coast of Maine or on a winter pelagic trip, a winter visit to eastern Newfoundland, or a June trip to its breeding grounds in Nunavut. Someday, I will see one!

For the Dovekies' sake, I hope to never experience the kind of "wreck" or fallout of emaciated Dovekies where large numbers of starving creatures rained out of the sky in NYC in the winter of 1932-33. [[www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org)].

## *Nemesis Bird – Part 2 – A Christmas Miracle*

Incredibly, a Dovekie had been reported in Hampton, NH since a week before Christmas. I learned about it after four days, thanks to John Kent who knew both how badly I wanted to see one, and that I would be heading up that way for the Holidays. I began checking the NH postings, hoping without expectation that it would somehow stick around another few days. There was no reason to believe that it would, but it should not have been there even four days, and it was Christmas!

Thursday it was still there, and again Friday, Christmas Eve. Would it stay just one more day? Denise and I headed up Christmas morning. John texted me at 11 a.m., it was there; he was looking at it! Denise and I drove on, arriving shortly before 2. We parked at lot 8 in Hampton, where it had been that morning, and began searching the waters off the rocky shore.

The bird is tiny and we hoped it would be close. We searched near, with our binocs, and far, with a scope. There were loons, grebes, and ducks, but alas, no Dovekie. Could we have missed it? Had the jinx struck me once more? Had I missed one by a mere three hours? Would I ever see this thing? It was freezing cold, and Denise returned to the car to warm up. I was freezing too, but kept searching, scoping, hoping that somehow I could find it, that it had not headed out to sea. But, it was a Dovekie, and it was my nemesis bird, and I never see them!

Suddenly, a cloud obscured the sun, and the glare left the water. I was able to scan an area to the south. With binoculars I searched. Close to shore there were a few dark birds, just ducks. Then, somehow, I spotted a tiny black and white bird in the frothy surf, closer to shore than the ducks, only yards from the rocks. Could it be? It must truly be! After a quick look and believing, almost believing, I waved and yelled to Denise, then ran back up the walkway for the scope. We headed south, past lot 7 and down to lot 6, and suddenly **there it was!!!** – close to shore, and nearly opposite us. We didn't need the scope. In fact, we couldn't use the scope, as the bird was so close and so active. We did get some photos but mostly we just watched, looking at every field mark on this tiny alcid.

Finally, sated and cold, Denise went back to the car to again warm up. I remained with the Dovekie, getting pelted by cold salt spray, not caring about anything else than getting to know this new bird. It dived often, and I began timing its underwater forays. Down for 11-17 seconds, and up for only 2 or 3 seconds. Enough to get a quick look, then down again. It dived and dived, working its way up and down the shore, always fairly close. Far more than a tick on a list, it was a creature to be studied, cherished, with which to become acquainted. I learned its plumage, its shape, looked at its short pointed stubby black bill, and learned its habits.

A Christmas present – or a Christmas miracle? One never knows, but it was a special time, on a special day as my nemesis bird turned into a new friend, this tiny Dovekie!

*Winter Owling at Fort Edward*

I don't like winter as much as I used to. My idea for a winter drive is to take I-95 south, all the way to south Florida. But having to stay in the northeast to work during the winter does not allow that! Thus, we do try to get out birding as much as we can. One place that we do make a point of visiting is the Fort Edward Grasslands, only 50 miles north of us. It is a great afternoon/early evening birding spot, where one can often observe wintering raptors. Back in 1991 a Northern Hawk Owl hung around for a few weeks, allowing many to get their life bird, along with many photos. Some years, a Snowy Owl or two can be found in the area. More likely however, most winter afternoons yield an assortment of Rough-legged Hawks (light and dark morphs), Red-tailed Hawks, and Northern Harriers. With luck (and seemingly the right amount of food and snow cover), near dusk one can see the evening flight of the Short-eared Owl. The harriers and short-ear seem to share the same ecological niche, feeding for small rodents in the open grasslands. Interestingly, a "shift change" between these two species seems to occur shortly before dusk.

One typically drives the various roads in the Ft. Edward grasslands for a few hours in the afternoon, and then settles down on the half-mile long Fitzpatrick Road before dusk. As we wait and watch, with luck Harriers are seen, then are "replaced" by the owls. Sometimes before dusk, one can see an owl perched on a hay bale or perhaps on a fencepost; more often we don't see where they come from – suddenly

they just appear. They seem to spend the day in the tall grass along the side of the road. Some years there are none (especially with very deep snow cover); some years there are a few, but in the winter of 2000 we had a bonanza!

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

*An Arctic Visitor*

A friend called me one Saturday afternoon in February 2010, asked if I had seen his email (I had not – unlike many of our friends, we don't check it every hour, or even every day!). John was up at Lake Champlain, having just seen an Ivory Gull! Plans for the next day were quickly reshuffled, as Denise and I, and two other of our closest friends, converted a half-day planned birding at Fort Edward to a chase for

the gull at Lake Champlain. Denise was actually quite sick, suffering from a very bad respiratory bug, but was willing to give it a try for such a rare bird!

We headed up Sunday morning, first checking the reported location at the northeast corner of the lake. Our best clue for finding a rarity is generally to look for a large group of birders (as evidenced by out-of-state plates, often with bird-related names) and scopes all pointing in the same direction! Alas, no bird, no excited group of birders. We got information from another birder who stopped by and told us where the bird was, back on the western (NY) side. With a couple of erroneous stops, we ultimately bumped into other birders, one of whom had internet phone capability and obtained even more real-time information. Heading a few miles farther south, we drove out to a point along the lake, where the road was filled with excited, out-of-state birders! The gull was out on the ice, and we were able to view it from shore with scopes. Despite the bitter cold and with a less caution than we should have exercised, we walked out on the ice for a closer view and to try for some pictures. There were vehicles out on the ice, fishing, but reportedly also some holes in the ice. We did hike out and got a number of photos, talks with the people ice fishing, and had great views of this almost pure white arctic visitor. Denise and Cathy were freezing, and we all headed back to the car. Gregg and I were freezing too, but we both grabbed our better camera equipment and walked way back out in an effort to get some better photos. The bird was hanging

around a dead fish on the ice, and we took many pictures. Getting nervous about the reported holes, I used my tripod to test the surface before I took each step walking back in. Denise was really sick, but still glad that we went; it was a life bird for all four of us.

## **Bird of the Shadows**

Every fall is marked by the arrival of Dark-eyed Juncos to our yard. These sparrow-sized birds arrive in October and stay into April. They are some shade of gray above and white below; white outer tail feathers are visible when they fly, and occasionally if they spread out their tail while sitting. I have tried and tried to get good photos of this bird, but it is tough to get one in good light. They tend to stay on the ground, picking at seeds, and, for some reason, avoid the sunlight. While they might briefly move into the sun, they tend to quickly retreat into the shade – thus – “bird of the shadows.” Why do they do this? Most likely to avoid predators. With their dark gray backs, they are less visible to passing hawks if they are in the shade rather than the bright sun. This difference is even more relevant when the ground is covered by snow. A dark junco will stand out even more in the bright sun reflected by the snow. My pictures of them on the ground are not very good, but I did have better luck with one that spread its tail out revealing the white feathers in our brush pile, as well as one on suet feeder on a cloudy day. We enjoy our juncos and look forward to them each fall.

## **A Tale of Two Herons?**

The first weekend in October provided two heron-related encounters. One, at the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve in Clifton Park; a group of birders observed a Great Blue Heron standing at the edge of the water, staring at what appeared to be an impenetrable, solid green mass of vegetation covering the water. Suddenly it struck, down through the mass, and emerged with a large bullhead speared on its beak. Unable to get it down immediately, the heron flew a few hundred feet to the shore. It eventually got the fish off its beak, and after numerous attempts, got the big fish down!

The second encounter found us in our canoe in one of our favorite paddling places in Saratoga County. We generally visit this Great Blue Heron rookery [from a distance, so as not to disturb them] several times a year. These birds are colonial nesters, building large stick nests high up in large dead trees in water. As the trees fall, they do need to move their colonies around after a while, and that must be happening here, as the number of nests have dropped from about 25 in 2007 to about half that in 2008. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of activity at the rookery during the height of the nesting season in late spring and early summer. The young grow fast, and three or four large immature herons really fill a nest! When an overworked parent arrives with a gullet full of fish, it sets off the most tremendous squawking!

Normally however, in October the nests are long since vacant, patiently awaiting the return of the herons next spring. Paddling toward the rookery, we observed a large bird in one of the heron nests. Assuming it to be a heron just using the nest as a roost, we paddled onward, but as we got closer, we realized that it was not a heron at all! With its huge size, white head and white tail, it was an adult Bald Eagle! As a second eagle flew overhead, the two great birds called to each other.

This only goes to confirm the oft-advised tip: bird every bird!

— *Scott Stoner*

## Junior Birding Club

The Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center announced the start up of the Thacher Nature Center's Junior Birding Club in the November/December issue of their newsletter.

The program is open to kids 7-15 years of age who have a strong interest in birds and are able to be without a parent for at least two hours.

Programs will include bird identification at each meeting; participating in bird banding; monitoring nest boxes; citizen science projects; building nest boxes; bird walks; making bird-related gifts and projects; and much, much more!

Meeting will be once a month. All of the programs are free of charge. There will be a "Patches" option for \$15.00/year if kids would like to earn bird patches for programs and projects that they participate in, and a "Patches & Vest" option for \$20.00/year to earn patches and receive a birding vest to put them on.

The Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center is located in Thompson's Lake State Park, 30 minutes west of Albany and 1 ½ miles outside John Boyd Thacher State Park.

Please feel free to contact the following if you have any questions:

Laurel Tormey Cole  
Backyard Habitat Specialist  
Emma Treadwell Thacher  
Nature Center  
87 Nature Center Way  
Voorheesville, NY 12186

Laurel.Tormey-Cole@oprhp.state.ny.us  
518-872-0800 

## In memoriam – Monte Gruett



It is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Monte Gruett on November 1 2010.

Monte was a long time member of the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club, and his contributions to the Club and the Rensselaer County environs will be missed.

## Take Action for Birds!

The American Bird Conservancy is currently asking for concerned citizens to sign their petition, **Campaign for Bird-Smart Wind Power.**

Many birds (and bats too) are at risk from wind power towers. While it is important to “go green,” it is equally important to safeguard our wildlife in the process. The American Bird Conservancy wants to make sure that mandatory standards are put in place to protect birds, bats, and their habitats.

Please go to [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org) and click on the Action button. (There are also other actions you can participate in on behalf of the birds).

And remember to check the HMBC website Conservation Page regularly for other ways to help our bird friends!

Thank you!

Patti Packer  
Conservation Chair 

There was an AMERICAN KESTREL on the wires along Route 7 as well.

**Tues. 7/13-** From our cottage in Westport we headed north to the famed “Magic Triangle”, the Clark Rd. loop surrounding Webb Royce Swamp. The swamp appears to be no longer extant, though a small stream flows underneath the road. From the dry and dusty roads between the farms we saw WILD TURKEY, NORTHERN HARRIER, EASTERN KINGBIRD, and BOBOLINK. I would like to come back here during a wetter spring season to see what kind of variety one could observe here.

Noblewood Park was our favorite spot; the habitat changes from hemlocks to mixed deciduous woods on the way down to the water and along the banks at the mouth of the Boquet River. A family of GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHERS moved through the tree tops, along with a calling male SCARLET TANAGER (“tic-burr”), some BALTIMORE ORIOLES, and EASTERN WOOD-PEWEES. Farther down were HERMIT THRUSH, both nuthatches and a singing BROWN CREEPER. As we veered left towards the canoe launch, we saw a PINE WARBLER and a YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER.

At the eastern tip of the Boquet delta, we watched a line of some two-hundred DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS fly southbound over

Lake Champlain. Nine CASPIAN TERNS were resting on the sandspit amongst some RING-BILLED GULLS, along with a single GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL. Two “peep” sandpipers ran along the shoreline towards the spit, occasionally flying short distances. After careful observation, and comparing size to the gulls, terns and a nearby SPOTTED SANDPIPER, we determined them to be SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS. At one point the gulls all lifted off making alarmed cries, and we turned to see a sub-adult BALD EAGLE making a pass over behind us.

Back at the cottage, at the Normandie Beach Club, we were surprised by a family of CAROLINA WRENS who popped out from underneath the building. PURPLE FINCHES moved through the cedars on the grounds, and we repeatedly heard but could never sight a BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER.

**Wed. 7/14-** Wickham Marsh offered the expected marsh species, but is so large that it is tough to observe much from the perimeter. From across the elevated railroad bed Lake Champlain is hard by the edge, and a scope can give excellent views here. This is an active Amtrak line, so use caution.

Ausable Marsh had at least five OSPREY on two pole platforms, and MARSH

WRENS were heard but never did pop up in the reeds. EASTERN KINGBIRDS were seen here as well; they were seen at nearly every stop we made since Monday. On the way back we did the tourist thing, stopping at Ausable Chasm. Parking lot birding revealed an INDIGO BUNTING singing from the top of a snag, and a TURKEY VULTURE circling overhead.

**Thurs. 7/15-** We went over to Vermont on the ferry again, but we had no luck seeing CATTLE EGRET that are seen every year at Shelburne Farms, despite finding three groups of cattle grazing. It was a scorcher of a day, and we were “wupped” after a morning hiking in the hot sun. Don’t let your guard down, egrets, we’re coming back for you next season!

Thanks to everyone who gave us suggestions on where to go and what to expect. This is the greatest benefit of HMBC membership, in my opinion: access to years of experience and wisdom shared with a smile, and an anecdote or two. If you have any questions about our trip, and the locations we visited, just shoot me an e-mail at trwdsd@yahoo.com. All the places we visited in NY and so much more, are covered in the terrifically informative and entertaining book *Adirondack Birding*, by Peterson and Lee. 

# Upcoming Field Trips

## FEBRUARY

### MOHAWK RIVER/COHOES TO CRESCENT

Saturday, February 5  
(Albany County; morning)  
Coordinator: Bill Lee  
374-3426  
bileej@hotmail.com

This area, including Cohoes Falls and Simmons Island, offers a great opportunity to study gulls and waterfowl that winter along the Mohawk River. We will look for Glaucous, Iceland & Lesser Black-backed Gulls often present in small numbers in the winter. This trip will be a good introduction to the many fine vantage points along the Mohawk.

We will leave at 8:30 a.m. from the U-Haul parking lot on Ontario St. (NY Route 470, 1/8 mile east of I-787) in Cohoes.

## LONG ISLAND PELAGIC TRIP

Saturday, February 12  
– Sunday, February, 13  
Coordinator: Bill Lee  
374-3426  
bileej@hotmail.com

### Reservations by January 15

This trip is still being developed and final details will be available as soon as possible from the coordinator and on the HMBC website. In conjunction with NYSOA and its Young Birders Club, the boat will leave from Freeport, Long Island. Pelagic trips this time of year usually see the Murres, Dovekies, Puffins, Razorbills and sea ducks. Also possible are White-winged Gulls, Gannets, Jaegers and Skua. The evening prior to the trip will have an ID'ing workshop led by an expert. Trips to local hotspots will substitute if the weather cancels the boat. Note that the boat trip will be expensive and will entail an early morning departure. Cold weather waterproof gear is mandatory and anti-nausea treatment is a really good idea. Contact the coordinator to indicate interest.

## MARCH

### FORT EDWARD AND FORT MILLER

Saturday, March 5  
(Washington County;  
afternoon through dusk)  
Coordinator: Gregg Recer  
899-2678  
gregg.recer@verizon.net

Short-eared Owls are seen most winters in the Fort Edward Grasslands, an Important Bird Area in Washington County. Snowy Owls have also been seen here in the last two years. Wintering hawks, including Rough-legged, Red-tailed, Northern Harriers and perhaps a Bald Eagle or Peregrine Falcon are another feature of this area, as are wintering field birds such as Horned Lark, Snow Bunting, and possibly Lapland Longspur or Northern Shrike. Depending on conditions on the river, we may also search for waterfowl along the Hudson in Fort Miller.

Meet at 12:30 p.m. in the Park-and-Ride lot in the Malta Business Park. Coming from the south on I-87 (the Northway), take Exit 12 and stay to the right, heading east on Route 67 toward Route 9. From the north, go  $\frac{3}{4}$  around the traffic circle to head east on Route 67. At the next traffic circle after the highway, take the first right into the business park and turn right again to the parking area. This trip will be practically all car birding, but access can be limited in places, so we will need to carpool in as few cars as possible.

## **WATERFOWL OF THE HUDSON RIVER SOUTH**

Sunday, March 6

Coordinators: Bill Cook  
(518) 851-2678  
cook@suny.edu

*Joint trip with the  
Alan De Voe Bird Club*

On this spring morning, we will search the Hudson River from Coxsackie to Catskill where waterfowl usually congregate on their way north. There is also a good chance of seeing Bald Eagles.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Coxsackie Boat Launch. Take the New York State Thruway to Exit 21B (Coxsackie-Route 9W), follow 9W south for about 2 miles to Route 385. Go left (east) on Route 385 (Mansion St.) and continue straight to the Hudson River where the road bears left into the boat launch site.

## **HUDSON RIVER ABOVE TROY**

Sunday, March 13

(Rensselaer county: morning)  
Coordinator: Gary Goodness  
862-9260  
goodness@nycap.rr.com

Early migrating waterfowl will be our primary objective on both the Hudson and Hoosic Rivers. We have, however, seen other specialties on previous trips. Possibilities include Bald Eagle, Northern Goshawk, Barnacle Goose, Snow Geese (including Blue Morph) as well as Bluebirds & Killdeer.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. by the chain link fence at the Hannaford Plaza parking lot at the east end of the North Troy-Waterford Bridge.

## **WASHINGTON COUNTY WATERFOWL**

Sunday, March 20 (morning)

Coordinators: Mona Bearor  
(518)745-8637  
Joyce Miller

justlookitup@yahoo.com

*Joint trip with Southern Adirondack  
Audubon*

### **Register by March 19**

Join us as we search the Hudson for migrant waterfowl such as Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Ducks and Mergansers. In recent years on this trip, Canvasbacks and Tundra Swans have been lifebirds for many.

We will meet at the Schuylerville Central School on Route 29. Because we will be travelling in a caravan and need to keep the number of cars to a minimum, the trip will be limited to 12 persons who should expect to carpool. Dress warmly and bring a beverage/snack, your binoculars and a scope if you have one. If you are planning to attend, please call Mona or email Joyce by Saturday, March 19 so that you can be contacted in case of weather related cancellation.

## **RESERVATIONS FOR FORT DRUM**

Saturday, March 26

**APRIL****VISCHER FERRY**

Sunday, April 17

(Saratoga County; evening)

Coordinator: John Hershey  
371-3114

hersheyj@nycap.rr.com

We will start out on this trip looking for spring waterfowl such as American Wigeon, Green & Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser & Pied-billed Grebe. Possible migrant songbirds include Palm Warbler and Rusty Blackbird. We will linger until after dusk to listen for nocturnal bird songs from rails, woodcocks and owls. With a little luck we may get to see one displaying in the moonlight. Bring a flashlight and meet at the main entrance at 5:45 p.m.

**WOODCOCK AT FIVE RIVERS**

Thursday, April 28

(Albany County; evening)

Coordinator: Craig Thompson  
475-0291 (Daytime)

During a meandering to the Woodcock site, we will look for other early spring birds. Woodcock flight time is expected to be around 8 p.m. Bring binoculars and a flashlight.

Meet at 7:00 p.m. at the Five Rivers Interpretive Building.

**FOUR MILE POINT AND VOSBURGH MARSH**

Saturday, April 30

(Greene County; morning)

Coordinator: Al Mapes  
439-4086  
aamapes@nycap.rr.com

On this morning trip, we will hike to the marsh for waterfowl and migrant land birds. We will also check the Hudson River for waterfowl and Bald Eagles. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Coxsackie Boat Launch and car caravan to Four Mile Point Road.

**MAY****PEEBLES ISLAND STATE PARK**

Sunday, May 1

(Saratoga County; morning)

Coordinator: Gary Goodness  
862-9260

goodness@nycap.rr.com

Peebles Island in early May is an ideal environment to watch the spring migration. The variety of habitat insures a plethora of birds; expect to see songbirds, sandpipers, waterfowl and the rest of an early mix of migrants.

Meet in the parking lot on Peebles Island at 8:30 a.m. There may be a State Park \$6 parking fee, so ride with a friend if you can.

### **BIRDS & BREAKFAST AT FIVE RIVERS**

Saturday, May 7

(Albany County; morning)

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

Our annual celebration of the arrival of spring will be held at Five Rivers on Game Farm Road in Delmar. The center has an excellent trail system through a variety of habitats. You can expect to see and hear a number of resident and migrant species 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 a.m. The building will open at 6:45 a.m. with coffee flowing. Groups will leave at 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. 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 and a list compilation. The breakfast is free, but donations will be accepted.

### **VISCHER FERRY MIGRANTS**

Sunday, May 8

(Saratoga County; morning)

Coordinators: Gregg Recer &  
Cathy Graichen  
899-2678  
gregg.recer@verizon.net

This is one of the club's most popular spring 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 next to the Whipple Bridge.

### **PACHAQUACK PRESERVE**

Saturday, May 14

(Columbia County; morning)

Coordinator: Gary Goodness  
225-2288  
goodness@nycap.rr.com

The Pachaquack Preserve is the main park, in Valatie. Pachaquack is a Mohegan word for a "meeting place". The preserve is the meeting place of the Kinderhook Creek and the Valatie Kill. One third of the trails are along the Kinderhook Creek and are perfect for waterthrush and songbirds that desire insects along a creek.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Park & Ride on the left side of Route 9 leaving exit 12 on I-90 east. When exiting exit 12 on I-90 turn right on Route 9 South. The Park & Ride is a few hundred yards on the left.

## SCHODACK ISLAND STATE PARK

Sunday, May 15

(Rensselaer County; morning)

Coordinator: Tom Williams

857-2176

trwdsd@yahoo.com

Schodack Island State Park is actually on a peninsula in the tidal portion of the Hudson River. The western side of the island, along the Hudson River shoreline, is mostly floodplain forest. Schodack Creek runs along the east side; there is an observation point at the end of a side trail. The southern portion of the New York State Bird Conservation Area has posted breeding Cerulean Warblers. Spring migrants and returning residents are plentiful, and the boat launch offers views up and down the river for Bald Eagles. We will walk the orange trail south, returning on the yellow trail including a side trip to view Schodack Creek.

Meet at 7 a.m. at the Kmart Plaza on Routes 9 & 20 in East Greenbush to carpool as there is a \$6 per car fee for the state park.

## CENTURY RUN

Saturday, May 21

(all day)

Compiler: Bob Yunick

377-0146

1527 Myron. St.

Schenectady, NY 12309

Coordinator: Larry Alden

861-6087

overlook@nycap.rr.com

Each group must stay together and jointly identify species reported. Reports must be mailed to the compiler by May 29 in order to be counted. Also, please call or email **Birdline** with the total species and highlights for your group.

Note: You can contact Larry Alden if you have any questions or need suggestions. Also let Larry know if you need people to fill out a group or are interested in joining a group; he may be able to make a match.

**NOTE:** *The compiler must have your results by **Saturday May 28** in order to be counted and published in **Feathers**.*

## FORT DRUM

Sunday, May 29

(Jefferson County; overnight)

Coordinator: Donna Zimmerman

869-6624

Local Leader: Jeff Bolsinger

**Reservations by March 26.**

**Limit: 15 people**

Fort Drum is widely recognized as being one of the best locations in the northeastern US to see grassland birds, especially Henslow's Sparrows and Sedge Wrens, but also has significant populations of shrubland birds, nightjars, Red-headed Woodpeckers and other birds that are rare or declining in the region. Join Jeff Bolsinger, Fort Drum's Migratory Bird Biologist, on a tour of this Army installation, to search for these species and more. We will meet at Fort Drum's Natural Resources Permit Office at 7:00 a.m. and carpool through the training areas until approximately mid-afternoon.

If there is sufficient interest, we will also make a brief visit to the airfield area on the evening beforehand to listen for Whip-poor-wills and Common Nighthawks.

*Registration is necessary by March 26 so that the proper permits can be obtained. 🪶*

***Feathers***

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

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