

April 2022
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Feathers

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Hudson-Mohawk
Bird Club, Inc.*

A trip to Volunteer Point in the Falkland Islands by Sonja Willett

In November 2019 I had the opportunity to join family members on a 22 day segment of a 245 day World Cruise on the ocean liner Viking Sun. The segment sailed from Buenos Aires to Santiago, cruising around the southern tip of South America. I was not new to cruising but this was my first experience with Viking Ocean Cruises and my first visit to this part of the world. Viking offers its guests a variety of enrichment programming. Along with historians and a geologist, this segment of the cruise featured Scottish naturalist Michael Scott, who gave several lectures describing the bird species we might encounter as we moved from warmer to colder climates. I appreciated his knowledge and expertise.

A highlight of the cruise was the excursion taken to Volunteer Point in the Falkland Islands. Volunteer Point is a remote headland with a sandy beach near the northeast corner of East Falkland Island. Three species of penguins can be found at Volunteer point, including the largest King Penguin colony in the Falklands with about 2000 breeding pairs. I booked a private tour with Estancia Excursions, but Viking and other operators also offered tours to this popular destination. Access to the site is across extensive bogs from the main roadways, which makes for bumpy travel in all-wheel drive vehicles. It is well worth the 2.5 hour drive from Stanley.



(continued p29)

Inside This Issue...

Tales from the Field.....	35
President's Corner.....	36
HMBC Birding Guide.....	37
Upcoming Field Trips.....	38
Writers Page.....	43
On Nature.....	44
Upcoming HMBC Programs.....	48

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

After some promisingly mild days in March, the month ended with a few days of near-freezing temperatures and more flurries, letting us all know that while the equinox has passed, we're not out of the woods just yet when it comes to winter weather. But birds are on the move north and the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club is gearing up as we head into what is arguably the most exciting season for birders in our area.

Of course, our most notable spring tradition is just around the corner on our calendar, the Annual Meeting and Annual Program. After two years of disruptions to this event because of the public health crisis, we're happy to be able to present the 2022 annual meeting under somewhat more normal circumstances with a potluck social on Tuesday, April 5th at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar. While we have fond memories of club dinners at the Century House in years past and will likely look into holding our annual meetings there once again, hosting a potluck event at Five Rivers seemed a safer bet due to lingering pandemic concerns at the time the HMBC Board and Program Committee needed to make that decision. The business meeting will of course feature reports and elections, but we're especially excited for the program half of the evening, which will feature *The Penguin Story - with Antarctica Photo Show*, presented by award-winning photographer and guide Yun Wang.

Like the weather, the club field trip schedule is warming up as well, with at least one trip per weekend through spring migration, all the way into the first half of June. This year's spring offerings feature many old favorite trips, as well as some new destinations for the club, so be sure to mark your calendars - we look forward to seeing you in the field! Of course, at the height of spring migration this year comes the 77th running of the Guy Bartlett Century Run, and after that, we head into breeding season for most species in our area - I do hope you're all exciting plans to search for nesting birds in our area in this third year of the New York Breeding Bird Atlas III.

Happy spring and good birding!

Tristan Lowery
President, Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club
president@hmbc.net

You, too, can contribute to Feathers!

- Do you have a birding story or photos that might be of interest to other birders?
- Have you led a field trip for HMBC?
- Have you written short prose or poetry on the subject of birds? We're starting a Writers' Page!
- Did you take a birding vacation?
- Do you have a favorite birding spot?

SHARE them with HMBC members by submitting them to:

HMBC Contact Information

BIRDLINE of EASTERN NEW YORK:

E-mail: contact@hmbc.net

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

Please send all **electronic submissions for Feathers** via e-mail to:
Denise Hackert-Stoner at DeniseHStoner@aol.com.

Send all paper submissions to:

Denise Hackert-Stoner

6 Knob Hill Road.

Loudonville,

NY

12211

New printing of *Birding New York's Hudson Mohawk Region* is now available

Birding New York's Hudson Mohawk Region, a new printing of HMBC's classic book, is now available. A copy is \$20 for HMBC members and \$25 for non-members. An additional charge of \$5 for postage and handling will be added to the price per book. Contact Gregg Recer gregg_recer@alum.rpi.edu or (518) 899-2678 if you are interested in purchasing a copy. Checks should be made out to ***Hudson Mohawk Bird Club*** and should be sent to:

Gregg Recer

23 Scotch Mist Way

Malta, NY 12020

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, April 3, 2022

RESERVATION DEADLINE - Friday-Sunday, April 29-May 1, [BRIGANTINE AND GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES](#) (New Jersey, out of area trip; overnights)

Contact gregg.recer@gmail.com by April 3rd for reservations and logistics details.

Saturday, April 9, 8:00 AM: EARLY MIGRANTS AT FIVE RIVERS EEC (Albany County; morning) This trip is geared towards novice birders, but all are welcome.

Location: Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

Coordinator: Scott Stoner 518-785-6760 scottjstoner@aol.com

Join us for a morning walk through the varied habitats of Five Rivers as we explore fields, ponds, woodlands, and marshes and look for permanent resident birds and early migrants. Be prepared for wet trails. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot at Five Rivers EEC in Delmar.

Sunday, April 10, VISCHER FERRY NATURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVE (VFNHP) (Saratoga County; morning)

Location: Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

Coordinators: Five Rivers EEC 518-475-0291 (daytime) ~and~ John Kent 518-424-2234 jwkent@fastmail.fm

Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, located on Game Farm Rd., in Delmar, NY, is a large area of fields and forest and is one of the premier birding locations in the Capital District. This year marks the 40th Annual New Year's Day Bird Count at Five Rivers. The goal of the count is to identify all the bird species present on January 1st. This also marks the start of Five Rivers' annual bird list. HMBC joins the event again this year and encourages members to participate. Groups will go out at 9:00 a.m., but birders are welcome to come earlier to get a head start. Everyone will meet up at the Visitors Center for a compilation of species-observed at 11:00 a.m.

Call ahead to Five Rivers in case of inclement weather.

Meet at 8:45 a.m. at Five Rivers EEC in Delmar.

Sunday, April 17, COLLINS LAKE (Schenectady County; morning)

Location: Collins Park, Scotia

Coordinators: Tom and Colleen Williams twill0526@gmail.com

In mid-April, Collins Lake should host several species of diving ducks, grebes, Common Loon, and wading birds like Great Blue Heron. It is also attractive to passing rarities and certain hard to find species. We will scan the lake from the boat launch area, then move to Quinlan Park on the east side of the lake for a different view, and bird the wooded areas along the lakeshore and Collins Creek for songbirds.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot for Collins Park, entering from Schonowee Avenue in Scotia.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS *(continued)*

Sunday, April 24, POWELL SANCTUARY (Columbia County; morning) (joint trip with Alan DeVoe Bird Club)

Location: Powell Wildlife Sanctuary, Old Chatham

Coordinator: Kathy Schneider 518-248-8665 fallline@nycap.rr.com

This 145-acre preserve has been owned and managed by the Alan Devoe Bird Club since 1959. It features a beaver pond with an observation blind, neighboring farm fields, and Dorson's Rock, a sandstone ledge that offers good hawk watching and a panoramic view of the Hudson Valley. There are 3 miles of moderate, well-marked trails throughout the sanctuary, which is mostly woods. The club's list for this site has more than 200 species, including 20 species of warblers.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Wilson M. Powell Wildlife Sanctuary, 75 Hunt Club Road, Old Chatham.

From the junction of County Route 13 and Albany Turnpike in the hamlet of Old Chatham, travel southwest on County Route 13 for 0.9 miles to Pitt Hall Road on the left, where two signs mark the road to Powell House and the sanctuary. Follow Pitt Hall Road 0.25 miles, then bear left (east) onto Hunt Club Road and continue 0.25 miles to the main parking lot.

Friday-Sunday, April 29-May 1, BRIGANTINE AND GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES (New Jersey, out of area trip; overnights)

Location: New Jersey

Coordinators: Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen 518-330-4552 (GR, c) gregg.recer@gmail.com

Get a jump on spring migration by spending a weekend in New Jersey. We plan to cover two excellent NJ refuges—Great Swamp and Forsythe (Brigantine). Brigantine is one of the premier year-round birding sites in the northeast, and it should be a reliable spot for migrant waterfowl, shorebirds, terns, gulls, waders, rails, and land birds. Great Swamp is an extensive area of hardwood swamp and upland forest, and it should provide good opportunities for migrant warblers, vireos, and sparrows. Other possibilities include Barred Owl, American Woodcock, Wilson's Snipe, Red-headed Woodpecker, and Orchard Oriole.

Reservations by Sunday, April 3. There will be a limit of 8 participants (including the coordinators) for this trip. Contact the coordinators for reservations and logistics details.

Sunday, May 1, HANNACROIX CREEK PRESERVE (Greene County; morning)

Location: New Baltimore

Coordinator: Rich Guthrie 518-756-9094 richardpguthrie@gmail.com

On this trip we'll be looking for migrant warblers, vireos and of course, (New) Baltimore Orioles. The moderately easy trail goes around attractive nesting and migrant songbird habitats with a scenic creek and waterfall. Louisiana Waterthrush nest here regularly and migrant warblers are drawn to the varied habitats along the trailsides. Let's see if we can add some interesting species to the Breeding Bird Atlas and to the list of over 120 species recorded for this eBird Hotspot. We will start at the main entrance to the Preserve. If time permits, we will also explore the trail leading down to the Hudson River where Bald Eagles and migrant waterfowl are often seen.

Meet at 8:00 AM at the main entrance, just off NYS Rt. 144, just south of the Albany/Greene County line (Coeymans/New Baltimore).

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS *(continued)*

Saturday, May 7, BIRDS & BREAKFAST AT FIVE RIVERS EEC (Albany County; morning)

Location: Five Rivers EEC Delmar, NY

Coordinators: Tom and Colleen Williams twill0526@gmail.com

Our annual celebration of spring migrants will be held at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, located along Game Farm Rd. in Delmar. The center has an excellent trail system through a variety of habitats. You can expect to see and hear many resident and migrant species, including warblers, thrushes, vireos, and orioles, along with a few waterfowl and herons. A typical year results in about 70 species; a good year for migrants can top 80!

An early group will meet in the parking lot at 6:00 a.m. Additional 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 the new Visitors Center at 10:30 a.m. for coffee, bagels, fresh fruit and a list compilation. The breakfast is free, but donations are welcomed!

Sunday, May 8, VISCHER FERRY NATURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVE (VFNHP) MIGRANTS (Saratoga County; morning)

Location: Vischer Ferry NHP, Clifton Park

Coordinators: Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen 518-330-4552 (GR, c) gregg.recer@gmail.com

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 herons and rails.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the VFNHP main entrance, at the intersection of Riverview and Van Vranken Rds. in Clifton Park.

Sunday, May 15, BOZENKILL PRESERVE (Albany County; morning)

Location: Altamont

Coordinators: Tom and Colleen Williams twill0526@gmail.com

Bozenkill Preserve is a MHLC property that features out-and-back trails which run alongside the creek. Flowing from the Helderberg Escarpment, the Bozen Kill is little known beyond Altamont and the Hilltowns. The stream originates from wetlands in Schenectady County and Duane Lake near Delanson and flows through the largely inaccessible Bozen Kill ravine before passing Altamont, eventually entering the Watervliet Reservoir in Guilderland. The Bozen Kill ravine is largely unexplored by birders. Expect typical closed-canopy, woodland species, but there are open fields near the trailhead with edge habitat, and the creek should add some species as well.

Due to limited parking this trip will be capped at twelve persons, please RSVP the coordinator in advance.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the preserve parking lot on Westfall Rd. in Altamont.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS *(continued)*

Saturday, May 21, CENTURY RUN (NYS Region 8; all day)

Location: Region-wide

Compiler: Larry Alden 518-861-6087 overlook@nycap.rr.com

This is the Club's 77th consecutive Century Run, where teams of birders try to find as many species of birds as possible on count day within the eleven county NYS Region 8. Each group must stay together and jointly identify species reported. The Century Run is not so much a field trip, but a challenge where you or your group tries to identify as many birds as possible within a set 24-hour period. A good Century Run (so named for the goal of reaching a "century", or at least 100 species) calls for proper planning to hit a wide variety of habitats at the best time. Some groups try to cover the whole HMBC area; others limit themselves to a smaller geographic area – a single county, town, etc. Also, there is nothing that says you can't go out on your own and bird where you want and at your own pace to see what you can find. Groups informally compete for bragging rights, but the results do provide a good snapshot of what birds can be found in our area in a single day.

Reports should be emailed to the compiler by May 28th in order to be counted and published in "Feathers", the Club newsletter. Reports should include the following: species identified, hours afield, team members, and geographical areas (counties) covered. Also, please send an e-mail to the HMBirds group (groups.io/g/hmbirds/messages) with the total number of species observed, and highlights for your group.

Sunday, May 22, SCHODACK ISLAND STATE PARK (Rensselaer County; morning)

Location: Schodack Island, Castleton

Coordinator: Naomi Lloyd 518-596-5964 naomi_kestrel@yahoo.com

Schodack Island State Park sits along the eastern shore of the Hudson River just south of Castleton-on-Hudson. Approximately seven miles of Hudson River and Schodack Creek shoreline bound the 1,052-acre site. A portion of the park shelters a Bird Conservation Area (BCA) that is home to Cerulean Warblers, and a Great Blue Heron rookery. Resident songbirds are plentiful. Previous Club trips have seen about 50 species, including a dozen or more warbler species. Keep your windows open as you drive along the park entrance, it is a very "birdy" stretch of road. Depending upon where the Cerulean Warblers are nesting, we will walk about 3-4 miles along level paths.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Schodack Island State Park main parking lot at its south end. There is no admission fee before 8:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 28, FOX HILL RD. (Saratoga County; morning)

Location: Meet at Saratoga County Airport

Coordinator: John Hershey 518-371-3114 hersheyj@nycap.rr.com

On this trip we will travel through the remote forested and wetland areas along Desolation Lake Rd. and Fox Hill Rd. in Saratoga County. We will bird from the roadside, and explore areas recently acquired by New York State for conservation and recreation. Higher elevation breeders will be the main target. As many as 15 or more breeding warbler species are possible including Nashville, Canada, and Mourning Warbler. Other breeding species that have been seen in the past include American Bittern, Northern Goshawk, Broad-winged Hawk, and Swainson's Thrush.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS *(continued)*

Because we will be birding from the road, it will be necessary to share vehicles and to limit the number of participants to 16. Waterproof footwear is recommended. Contact the coordinator for reservations, and other information.

Meet at the Saratoga County Airport parking lot off Geysers Rd. at 7:30 a.m.

Sunday, May 29 BEGINNING BIRDER WORKSHOP

Location: SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND BATTLEFIELD (Saratoga County; morning)

Coordinators: Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen 518-330-4552 (GR, c) gregg.recer@gmail.com

Saratoga Battlefield is a great location to learn many of the common grassland and open-country breeding species of the region such as Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Savannah and Field Sparrows, American Kestrel, Eastern Towhee, and several wood-warbler species. We will cover some of the park trails on foot, as well as bird from the one-way tour road, and can expect to spend the entire morning.

This trip will be geared toward novice birders, but all are welcome.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot near the park's visitor center off SR 32.

Sunday, June 5, 2022, CHERRY PLAIN STATE PARK (Rensselaer County; morning)

Location: Cherry Plain State Park

Coordinator: Naomi Lloyd 518-596-5964 naomi_kestrel@yahoo.com

Cherry Plain State Park is situated on the Rensselaer Plateau of the Capital District. The relatively high elevation, cool climate and a variety of forested and wetland habitats make this a good area for northern species. Nesting species include Least Flycatcher, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Scarlet Tanager, Common Raven, Broad-winged Hawk, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Black-and-White and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Veery, Hermit Thrush and Winter Wren also nest here.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Hannaford parking lot on the right side of Route 43, just past the intersection of Route 150 in West Sand Lake, to carpool to the park.

Saturday, June 11, 2022, Strawberry Fields Nature Preserve (Montgomery County, morning)

Location: Strawberry Fields Nature Preserve

Coordinators: Ellen Pemrick 518-366-5360 lnmp@nycap.rr.com; John Loz 518-708-7825 jjjazz5@hotmail.com

Strawberry Fields is located on Cranes Hollow Road in the Town of Amsterdam. It includes a nature preserve protected under a conservation easement with MHLC, a family home, and a working farm, and features 2.5 miles of trails through fields and forest. Birds found here include Bobolink, Eastern Bluebird, Baltimore Oriole, Common Yellowthroat and Ovenbird. We'll walk the trails and see what turns up. Be prepared for possible wet or muddy conditions and tall grass.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the designated parking area at the preserve.

Directions can be found at [the MHLC website](#).

WRITERS PAGE



“Woody”

By: Marilyn Hamecher 3/19/22

The Pileated Woodpecker, his name inspired his nickname “Woody”.
He is a beautiful bird, standing very tall and one of the big Woody’s

Pileated comes from the Latin word pileus for a round brimless skullcap.
If Woody is around you, his loud call will undoubtedly, disturb your nap.

He’s most impressive with his striking feathers of Black, White and Red.
He is one of the largest woodpeckers made obvious by the size of his head.

“Woody” has a wingspan of up to 30 inches wide and up to 16-19” long.
You will instantly recognize his unique call or his loud distinctive song.

He is very shy and wary and was hunted and sold at the market as food.
Because of his diet of carpenter ants, his meat was very bitter and crude.

The Woody’s eat so many of these ants that they can save a dying tree.
Those who sampled Woody’s meat said perhaps he heard the trees’ plea.

They play an important role in digging cavities in the trunks of dead trees.
Providing shelter for other small mammals and many small bird species.

Logging has destroyed their habitat eliminating roosting and feeding sites.
It had an impact on their existence, made it hard to find beetles and mites.

We are thrilled that we can often see “Woody” in areas that are woody.
And grateful to be living with this unusual bird, we nicknamed “Woody”.

ON NATURE

A Tale of Two Curve-bills by Scott Stoner

On our February 2022 trip to Hawaii, Denise and I were privileged to see two highly sought-after birds. They were very different, their habitats were different; they were not even on the same island! But they are both fascinating, and, coincidentally, both have curved bills.

I am not suggesting any type of convergent evolution here, just a way to tie together two very disparate species in a single column!

The first was on Oahu, the small and highly populated island that most visitors see when they go to Hawaii. It is no wonder that it is called the gathering place. The beaches are lovely, the hotels and food are aplenty, and most of the long overwater flights land at Honolulu. Oahu is the island; its government is the City and County of Honolulu. Few native birds remain there, but the lowlands are full of introduced species. Few migrants pass through, or to, Hawaii but one has a species draw to birders, and a special meaning for us. It is the **Bristle-thighed Curlew** (*Numenius tahitiensis*).

While not currently listed as endangered, there are less than 10,000 of these birds left. It is also a very difficult bird to see on its Alaskan breeding grounds. As I've noted in previous articles in this newsletter, it involves a 70-mile drive inland from Nome, over bad roads, followed by a rigorous climb up a "hill" in the arctic tundra that is best described as walking on grass-covered bowling balls in a sea of grease! Yes, it is a difficult hike! I've made the hike three times, once in 2008 when we did briefly see, but not photograph the curlew. Then, in 2021 our group made two attempts without even a single sighting. The birds had been there several weeks earlier; we're not sure why they had seemingly abandoned their nesting area so early in the season.

The viewing in Hawaii was refreshingly easy. While the flight was longer, the walk was only five minutes along a fairly level trail bordering a golf course, with guides Michael and Cecilia Walther. The weather was better, and the mosquitoes far

fewer! No head net required. We went with a guide, saw at least six individuals, and had excellent views and photo opportunities. In the pictures below, note the bristles at the thighs of the birds, for which they are named!



ON NATURE (CONTINUED)



While I love both Alaska and Hawaii, and have visited each state the same number of times, if you just need this one bird I recommend traveling to our 50th rather than 49th state for it!

The second bird can't get much more different than these curlews. It is a tiny songbird, about 6 inches long and weighing just a single ounce, a honeycreeper, a native and non-migratory bird of the higher elevations, the rain forests, on the Big Island of Hawaii. It's endangered, with fewer than 2,000 individuals remaining. Threats to its survival include low reproductive potential, mosquito-borne avian disease, predation, habitat degradation and risks from small population size. In Hawaii, mosquito borne diseases have decimated native bird populations at lower elevations, leaving the remaining birds struggling to survive in colder higher habitats. With global warming, however, mosquitoes are able to live at higher and higher altitudes, raising concern about the long-term viability of these native birds. The '**Akiapola'au** (pronounced ah-kee-ah-POH-LAH-OW), or "Aki" for short (*Hemignathus munroi*, in the family Drepanididae), is difficult to see, in areas that restricted and difficult to access. The one we saw was at the Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge on the Big Island of Hawaii, in tropical rain forest on the slopes of Mauna Kea, one of the two giant volcanoes in the center of the Big Island.

Folks who have been to the Big Island some years ago may recall the infamous "Saddle Road," a narrow, rough poorly marked passage, off-limits to rental cars, across the center of the island, in the valley between Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa. I'd been on that road twice before, but only on tours. When we were directed to meet our guide at a milepost on this road, I naturally asked...how can we get up there? But, we were pleasantly surprised to learn, and then to discover, that the upgraded, now Daniel K. Inouye Highway, is the nicest road on the island! About halfway between Kona and Hilo is where we met our guide, Jack Jeffrey, bird photographer and retired biologist from the Hakalau Forest NWR. Jack provided a wealth of information about this rare forest and its feathered inhabitants.

ON NATURE *(CONTINUED)*

Despite the saddle road improvements, Hakalau Forest NWR remains difficult to get to. It is only accessible by permit with a guide, and via a 10-mile grueling drive over a 4WD road. But it is here that some of the few remaining Aki hang on in high elevation, cold weather mixed forests of 'ohi'a and koa trees.

We learned from Jack that this species has a territory of 60 acres, and that one male there has held a territory for 18 years. The bird we saw and photographed was a female; not sure if she was his mate. This species only lays one egg every two years, and has the longest parental care period of any songbird in the world, up to one year. Largely, this is to teach the young how to feed. And that is where the strangely curved bill comes into play. Take a look at the image below, and please read on.



ON NATURE (CONTINUED)

The lower mandible resembles that of a woodpecker. With no woodpeckers in Hawaii, the Aki seems to somewhat fill that niche in two different ways. In one approach, it uses its straight lower mandible as a chisel, holding its beak open to keep the long curved upper mandible out of the way. It then uses its deeply decurved upper mandible to as a hook or probe to remove exposed insect (especially beetle) larvae from the wood. 'Akiapola'aus primarily forage for larvae under the bark of koa trees. Please see photos below of Aki foraging activity and larva.



In a different feeding strategy, the Aki also feeds on sap, an example of convergent evolution with mainland US sapsuckers such as Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Although they do not drink nectar like most of the other Hawaiian honeycreepers, their use of sap may be an alternative. They seek out 'ohi'a trees as sources of sap, apparently selecting trees based on high sap flow, microhabitat and tree characteristics. Their shorter lower mandible is used to drill 3 mm deep holes through the bark; subsequently the birds tilt their head back, insert their bill partway into the hole, and collect sap with their tongue.

Hawaii is a very distant, very beautiful place, and with some degree of effort, a great place to see, photograph, and especially learn about birds that are sadly facing significant threats to their survival.

Upcoming HMBC Programs

HMBC Annual Meeting and Program

Date: April 5, 2022, 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM (Program begins at 7:30. Members check email for in-person and Zoom options)

Location: Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar, NY

Presenter: Yun Wang

Topic: The Penguin Story – With Antarctica Photo Show

Yun Wang is an acclaimed international award-winning photographer and explorer based in Toronto, Canada. Born and raised in Beijing, China, Yun immigrated to Canada in 2003 and began seriously photographing nature in 2014. Soon after, she actively competed in many international photography competitions, winning numerous awards including multiple Gold medals, two consecutive "Distinguished Canadian Photographer" awards, two "Wildlife Photographer of the Year" awards, "Nature Photographer of The Year Award," and "The World Class Photographer Award," and "FIAP Best Author Award" of the 125th Toronto International Salon of Photography.

She started professional explorer training program for "Quark Expedition" in 2017, and became a member of Quark Expedition Team as a Photography Guide for Antarctic and Arctic expedition tours.

Her program focuses on penguins and Antarctica, and will cover penguin species and habitats, the evolution of penguins, their breeding cycle, and opportunities for what humans can do for these species.

Save the date and plan to join us to learn about penguins through the eye and lens of this award-winning photographer and penguin tour guide!



Upcoming HMBC Programs *(continued)*

Monday May 2, topic: Avian Research at the Albany Pine Bush with field ecologist Amanda Dillon. Details available soon on the HMBC website

Monday June 6, topic: Editing your bird photos, with Gregg Recer. Details available soon on the HMBC website

Volunteer Point *(continued)*

Once we arrived at Volunteer Point we stepped through a shoe sanitizing solution then walked down to the beautiful wide white sand beach. King penguins were everywhere! We made our way up to a large King penguin colony and observed many juveniles in varying degrees of molt.

This colony was also very noisy with a lot of continuous repetitive braying. The penguins did not seem to react to the visitors at all.



We saw a few King penguins standing with their eggs. King penguins do not build nests.

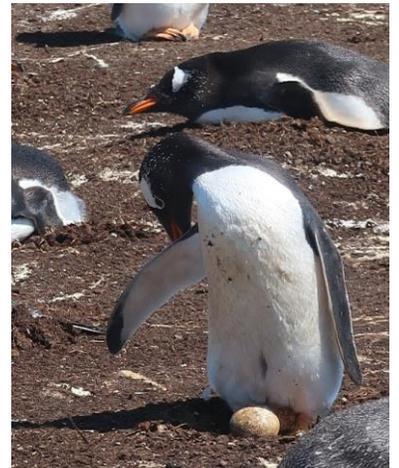
Volunteer Point *(continued)*

We walked on to a Gentoo penguin colony. Gentoos are similar in size to the King but lack the brilliant yellow head coloration. We observed a different nesting pattern.



Here the penguins were sitting or lying on nests, occasionally standing up and rearranging themselves and their eggs. There were radial spokes of penguin poop staining the ground around the circular nests. The Gentoo penguins were much quieter than the king penguins, and the juvenile population, if present, did not appear different than the adult population.

We then walked to the more extensive area roped off for the Magellanic penguin nesting sites. The Magellanic birds are smaller than either the King or the Gentoo species. While there were many nesting burrows evident, there were fewer penguins visible in this area. A few King penguins strolled by while we watched.



Volunteer Point *(continued)*



Back at the beach, we watched two large groups of King penguins line up, face each other, join ranks and then head into the water en masse. Suddenly, before every bird was in the water, the leader abruptly turned back and then each bird quickly returned to waddle ashore to safety. This was probably due to the presence of a large predatory sea lion nearby. We glimpsed him later just off shore, and learned from a ranger stationed at the site that he or she was picking off about 5 penguins a day for food. The ranger let me take a photo from his camera, taken earlier that day, showing the sea lion with the unmistakable body of the penguin victim in his mouth.



Volunteer Point_(continued)

Weather is a factor in any itinerary to this region and schedules may change. Stanley can be a tricky port in bad weather as larger ships must anchor offshore and tender passengers to the port. While our itinerary originally scheduled two days in Stanley, due to an approaching storm we had just a single great day among the penguins at Volunteer Point, then cruised south and west to our next port.



Penguins at Volunteer Point share this habitat with grazing sheep

Feathers

Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club

c/o Five Rivers EEC

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