

October 2019  
Volume 79 No 5



*Bi-monthly publication of the  
Hudson-Mohawk  
Bird Club, Inc.*

## Program Location

HMBC will be moving its program location back to the visitor center at Five Rivers for its November and December programs. The October program will be at the Boght Fire Station. Stay tuned to the website ([hmhc.net](http://hmhc.net)) for information about future program locations.

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

No President's Column for this issue

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**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](mailto: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](mailto:DeniseHStoner@aol.com).

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**Denise Hackert-Stoner**

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**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](mailto: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

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## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### **Sunday, August 11, 2019 – Chohoes Flats/Peebles Island**

We had a small group of 7 birders for the HMBC Chohoes Flats/Peebles Island field trip yesterday morning. This trip is scheduled in hopes of coinciding with the unpredictable waves of migrant shorebirds that arrive at the Flats in August as well as some early songbird migrants at Peebles Island. Neither of these possibilities worked out very well but with some hard work we were able to identify some of the more common birds with several enthusiastic, beginning birders. Some of the species we found at the Flats include: Osprey, Merlin, Spotted Sandpiper, Great Blue Heron, Double-crested Cormorant, Chimney Swift, and Belted Kingfisher.

We then drove to Peebles Island and walked mostly around the perimeter of the island. Both Turkey and Black Vultures were seen as well as a Cooper's Hawk from the perimeter. Songbirds were hard to find in the trees but we did manage to spot lots of Cedar Waxwings, plus Red-winged Blackbirds, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, and Baltimore Oriole. The beginners were able to independently discover an immature Bald Eagle as well as a Semipalmated Sandpiper, several Killdeer, and Greater Yellowlegs. Downy, Pileated, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers were found as well as Northern Flicker. The final tally came out to 43 species, plus many lifebirds for the beginners who we hope will return for future field trips.

John Hershey

### **Saturday, August 31, 2019 - Huyck Preserve**

A group of eight birders visited the Huyck Preserve in Rensselaerville this morning for HMBC's annual field trip. The water level in Myosotis Lake was surprisingly low, which means that there was a lot of excellent shorebird habitat at the north end of the lake. Killdeer were the most numerous, as usual, but we also had Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpipers, Spotted Sandpipers, and two Wilson's Snipes, which were foraging in the shallow water with the other shorebirds. The other highlights were a Great Egret, which was a new species for Huyck in eBird, and a Green Heron, which is uncommon there. The list of raptors was short this year -- Bald Eagle, Broad-winged Hawk, and a possible Red-tailed Hawk. We saw little in the way of migrating songbirds, and even the local breeding warblers were mostly absent, with just a single Common Yellowthroat seen by some. We found one Bank Swallow mixed in with the Tree and Barn Swallows that were foraging over the lake. Thanks to all who attended.

John Kent  
Selkirk

## Field Trip Reports *(continued)*

### Sunday, September 15, 2019 - Albany Pine Bush Preserve

The HMBC fall migrant field trip at The Albany Pine Bush Preserve this morning got off to a busy start. We had only just reached the trailhead when the group encountered a nice mixed flock of warblers. Cape May, Tennessee, Northern Parula, Magnolia and Bay-breasted Warblers were among the birds foraging in birch and cherry trees. Thereafter, we alternated lulls and quick bursts of birds. A nice surprise for many, and a life bird for at least one participant, was a Yellow-billed Cuckoo hopping slowly through the upper branches of an oak tree.

The original plan of doing the full 3-mile loop trail around Karner Barrens East was abandoned about two hours into the trip, due to the time it took to sort through all the birds we were seeing- a nice problem to have! The group agreed to turn around when we reached the open area by the stump pond in the vicinity of the landfill. No sooner had we started to retrace our path than a second Yellow-billed Cuckoo was observed in the open, in excellent lighting, capturing and consuming caterpillars.

On the return journey we had occasional flurries of birds but things had quieted down for the most part. Pitch pine/scrub oak denizens such as Eastern Towhee and Red-breasted Nuthatch were quite vocal and visible. All the expected woodpecker species were present. Migrating vireos included Blue-headed and Red-eyed. The final warbler list consisted of:

Ovenbird  
 Black-and-white  
 Tennessee  
 Nashville  
 Common Yellowthroat  
 Cape May  
 N. Parula  
 Magnolia  
 Bay-breasted  
 Chestnut-sided  
 Blackpoll  
 Pine  
 Black-throated Green

Thanks to everyone that turned up this morning! We had good luck running into so many foraging flocks, and I heard several “warbler-neck” comments by the end of the trip. I hope to see you all on future HMBC trips!

Tom Williams  
 Colonie

## Upcoming HMBC Programs

**Date and Time:** October 7, 2019, 7-9 PM

**Location:** Boght Community Firehouse, 8 Preston Drive, Cohoes, NY 12047

**Speaker:** John Hershey

**Topic:** Indian Safari

In this program John will share experiences and photos he took on a birding tour and safari in northern India in March 2019. Some of the beautiful birds that will be illustrated include Indian Peafowl, Red Junglefowl, Ruddy Shelduck, Painted Stork, Crested Serpent Eagle, Great Hornbill, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Rufous Treepie, Indian Paradise-flycatcher, Indian Roller, and many more. In addition, he will show safari photos of some of India's endangered and charismatic mammals including Bengal Tiger, Asian Elephant, and Indian Rhinoceros. There should also be time for a few photos pertaining to the rich culture of India as well as its people.

**Bio:** John is a former Secretary and Director for HMBC. He has been leading HMBC field trips to Vischer Ferry Preserve, Peebles Island, and Fox Hill Road for many years. Birding has led him to travel throughout North America and more recently to Ecuador, Costa Rica, Panama, and India. He has presented a number of HMBC programs on some of his favorite birding trips. He is semi-retired and works part time as a psychologist in private practice.

**Date and Time:** November 4, 2019, 7-9 PM

**Location:** ~~Boght Community Firehouse, 8 Preston Drive, Cohoes, NY 12047~~  
Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Game Farm Rd, Delmar

**Speaker:** Gregg Recer

**Topic:** Birding Ghana

West Africa is a regional avian endemism hot-spot, and Ghana is a favored country in the region for organized birding tours. The country spans a diverse range of habitats from coastal wetlands to Afro-tropical rainforest to wet and dry savannas, all in a package roughly the size of Minnesota. This travelogue program will cover the gamut, highlighting birds, mammals, and cultural aspects seen during a 3-week tour of the country.

Gregg Recer is a former HMBC president. He and his wife, Cathy Graichen, have been HMBC members for 30+ years and over that time have become avid world birders.

**Date and Time:** December 2, 2019, 7-9 PM

**Location:** Five Rivers EEC

**Speaker:** Rich Guthrie

**Topic:** "The Changes I've Seen in 60 Years of Birding - and What's New and Different "

HMBC holiday party and program. Feel free to bring a non-alcoholic drink or dessert to share

## UPCOMING ASCR PROGRAMS

**Bird Walk-Tivoli Lake Preserve** - October 5, 2019 : 9am - 10:30am

Come join the Audubon Society of the Capital Region (ASCR) and the [Friends of Tivoli Lake Preserve and Farm](#) for an early morning bird walk in one of the largest urban parks in the Capital Region. ASCR VP and volunteer, Erin will guide us through this hidden urban gem as we look for birds. Walk will be approximately 1 hour. Meet in the parking lot off Livingston Avenue where we will go over basic birding skills and resources.

All experience levels are welcome! This event is designed for new birders or those looking to develop their new interest. Some binoculars will be provided, but bring your own if you have any. Families welcome! The length and rigor of the bird walk will be tailored to those attending. No experience necessary, but sturdy shoes and bottled water are recommended. If you have questions regarding this walk, please contact [info@capitalregionaudubon.org](mailto:info@capitalregionaudubon.org)

**Bird Talk: Birds, Insects and their Urban Environments** - October 26, 2019 : 12noon - 1:30pm

On Saturday October 26, 12 noon come join ASCR at Peebles Island State Park as we host Joe Corra, active ASCR volunteer, in his delivery of his graduate work on Aerial Insectivorous Birds, and how they are interrelated with urban landscapes, water quality and climate.

## ARTISTS' PAGE

No Submissions for Artists' Page for this issue

## WRITERS' PAGE

### Octobers Breath

By Eric Molho

October's breath blew the leaves  
dandelion-like  
from the trees.

A brief exhalation lifted  
the delicate flock,  
then a settling as the earth relaxed.

Thoughts of us  
carried upward together -- suspended,  
destined to land in each other's arms.

### Firebirds

Marilyn Hamecher

Black-backed Woodpeckers have adapted to burned-out forests.  
Innate instincts tell them not to worry about wandering tourists.

They seek out charred trees for beetle larvae to feed their chicks.  
Other Firebirds take flight and fly straight for the burned-out sticks.

Even the Western Wood Pewee, far from home, shows up for dinner.  
The Olive-Sided Flycatcher calls out "quick-three beers" it's a winner.

The first to arrive of the Firebirds is the Black-backed Woodpecker.  
Others like a Townsend Solitaire, Downy and the Northern Flicker.

The sudden plethora of life after a forest fire is not accidental.  
And the patches of burned-out patterns are not coincidental.

Miraculously, flora and fauna appear, when the flames disappear.  
And when all the Firebirds begin to arrive, it becomes very clear.

That Mother Nature has given them an instinct, driven by hunger.  
It's time to feast and gratify their appetites from burned-out lumber.

A smorgasbord of beetle eggs and larvae buried in burned-out trees.  
Denizens like Thrushes, Flycatchers and Finches are easily appeased.

Burned-out forests are shocking and seem like nothing could survive.  
Then The Mountain Bluebird, Hermit Thrush and Tanagers arrive.

Nature created a beetle buffet from a disastrous fire ready to serve.  
A Tree Swallow hankers for the blackened bark, like no other bird.

## ON NATURE

### On Nature: Unexpected Guests

Denise Hackert-Stoner

Each spring and early summer we and our fellow bird feeding enthusiasts enjoy the return of birds that have flown off to warmer places for the winter. We love to see the Red-winged Blackbirds as they stop by to bulk up on sunflower seed before setting up their territories at local wetlands like Ann Lee Pond. We wait to hear the whine of the catbird, and when we do finally see one we run out with offerings of raisins to encourage it to stay and nest down the scrubby hill in our backyard. Eventually they all return, and our mornings swell with the music of the House Wren, robin, cardinal, and all the other birds in the chorus.

As the summer progresses, the singing slows down. Our birds have established their territories and are busy nesting and rearing young. Not long after that we start seeing the young at our feeders and enjoy a whole new dimension of bird life.

Around about that time this year, maybe early-August, we began to hear an unusual sound emanating from our neighbor's yard. Definitely a bird sound, but not one we were accustomed to. Scott noticed an occasional Cooper's hawk flying from that direction and we came to the conclusion that there was a nest back there and the sound we heard was the young calling for the adults to come feed them. Not wanting to stare into our neighbor's yard with binoculars, we decided to wait and see what developed with this family of accipiters.

We continued to feed our birds as usual, and watched as our daily offering of suet, sunflower seed and peanuts dwindled by each evening. Whole families of birds really consume a lot! One morning while drinking my tea I looked up from the table to find a young but very large hawk in the birdbath! We have had Cooper's Hawks in the yard before, but usually they either come in quickly and pick off a dove, or sit on top of our brush pile in the winter trying to get at the shivering sparrows taking shelter there. Never have I seen one in the birdbath. He sat there for a while, his blue eyes taking in the chickadees and titmice at the feeders (who surprisingly did not seem afraid of the death machine sitting in their bathing area). Then he seemed to realize he was in water on a hot morning, and he began to bathe, shaking his tail, and trying to get his enormous body into the small bowl. With his bathing complete, he began to call out, presumably for a parent to come and feed him one of those tasty-looking morsels on the feeders. The adult never came, and the hawk flew off.

We stopped filling our feeders as a precaution, but the young hawks (there were at least three of them) continued to hang around our yard for a few weeks. They visited our birdbath a few more times and probably learned to hunt our songbirds, although we never did witness this. We never saw an adult, but the three young birds were quite amusing, and an unusual addition to our backyard. After a while they stopped coming by. We have resumed bird feeding as usual, and are now enjoying a family of young cardinals every morning. But we will remember those young Cooper's Hawks for a long time!

**ON NATURE** *(continued)*



## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

**Saturday, October 12, THE BIG SIT! AT ANN LEE POND** (Albany County; all day)

Coordinators: **Tom and Colleen Williams** 518-857-2176 [trwdsd@yahoo.com](mailto:trwdsd@yahoo.com)

We will have registered a count circle for the 2019 Big Sit, which will be conducted from the open picnic area at the north end of Ann Lee Pond in Colonie. If you aren't familiar with the Big Sit, you'll find more information here:

[About the Big Sit](#)

The idea is for a group of birders to observe as many species as possible in a 24-hour period from a 17-foot diameter circle set up in a strategically located spot. We will only attempt to do the daylight hours for our purposes. A small group of us will set up the location at 7:30 a.m. and staff it until noon. Anyone who wishes to come by at any point during the day is welcome!! Even if you can only stay for an hour, that will enable others to leave the circle for a short time to forage for food and facilities at nearby businesses. Bring a portable chair, your binoculars, and some snacks and drinks. If you want to stretch your legs, there is a nice loop trail around the pond, too. We hope to see you there!

**Sunday, October 13, FIVE RIVERS EEC** (Albany County; morning)

Coordinator: **John Kent** 518-424-2234 [jwkent@fastmail.fm](mailto:jwkent@fastmail.fm)

We'll walk about 2 miles over generally flat terrain with some small hills, passing through a variety of habitats. Migrating sparrows are often abundant at this time of the year, with a good chance of Lincoln's and White-crowned as well as more common species. Both species of kinglet may be present, as well as Yellow-rumped Warbler, Palm Warbler and Blue-headed Vireo. A late Nashville, Black-throated Green, Blackpoll or Magnolia Warbler might be found. Wood Duck and other waterfowl are possible, as well as Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks and Merlin. Wet grass and muddy spots may be encountered, so waterproof footwear is recommended.

**Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot at Five Rivers EEC in Delmar.**

**Friday, October 25, DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS, Rhode Island Coast/Sachuest NWR**

**Reservation Deadline Only. Field trip is November 8-11**

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

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED.** Contact the coordinators by October 25th for reservations and logistics details.

**Saturday, October 26, COLLINS LAKE** (Schenectady County; morning)

Coordinator: **Bill Lee** 518-374-3426 [bileeje@hotmail.com](mailto:bileeje@hotmail.com)

We will visit Collins Lake to view late migrating waterfowl from the beach and the east side of the lake. We will also take a walk east along the north side of the Mohawk River for fall sparrows. Fox Sparrows have been seen in previous years. Foliage will be off the trees to make finding LBJs (Little Brown Jobs) a bit easier.

**Meet at 8:00 a.m. near the western end of the Gateway Bridge at Jumpin' Jacks in Scotia. Bring a scope if you have one.**

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS *(continued.....)*

**Saturday, November 2, TOMHANNOCK RESERVOIR** (Rensselaer County; morning)

Coordinator: **Naomi Lloyd** 518-596-5964 [naomi\\_kestrel@yahoo.com](mailto:naomi_kestrel@yahoo.com)

Join us for a morning trip around the Tomhannock Reservoir. We hope to find a variety of waterfowl as resident and migrant passerines and possibly shorebirds. Rarities have turned up at the Tomhannock in the fall and we often find Bald Eagles.

**Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the parking area at the intersection of Lake Shore Dr. and NY Route 7 at the west end of the causeway. Bring a scope if you have one.**

**Sunday, November 3, VISCHER FERRY NATURE AND HISTORICAL PRESERVE** (Saratoga County; morning)

Coordinator: **John Hershey** 518-371-3114 [hersheyj@nycap.rr.com](mailto:hersheyj@nycap.rr.com)

On this trip we'll be looking for migrant waterfowl and winter residents. Rusty Blackbirds are often observed at this time of year. We will start at the main entrance to the Preserve. We will also explore some of the lesser known areas of the Preserve, such as Ferry Drive and the area around the Vischer Ferry Power Plant where Bald Eagles and migrant waterfowl are often seen. The new hike/bike trail from the Clamsteam Tavern location to Ferry Dr. is completed, and this will open new areas to the east of the Whipple Bridge. The leader may choose to go in this direction.

**Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the VFNHP main entrance, at the intersection of Riverview and Van Vranken Rds. in Clifton Park.**

**Friday-Monday, November 8-11, RHODE ISLAND COAST/SACHUEST POINT NWR** (Out-of-area trip)

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

This trip to the Rhode Island coast will focus on late fall migrants and wintering loons, grebes, gulls, waterfowl and shorebirds. Sachuest Point NWR generally hosts large numbers of wintering Harlequin Ducks, along with scoters, eider, goldeneye and long-tailed duck, and is usually a good spot for purple sandpiper and great cormorant. We'll also cover other coastal locales such as Pt. Judith, East Providence and Galilee searching for white-winged gulls, wintering hawks, open-field birds and alcids. We plan to leave early Saturday morning and stay 2 nights in the Newport area. There will be a limit of 10 participants (including the coordinators) for this trip.

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED: Contact the coordinators by October 25th for reservations and logistics details.**

**Saturday, December 14, SCHENECTADY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

Coordinator/Compiler: **Larry Alden** 518-861-6087 [overlook@nycap.rr.com](mailto:overlook@nycap.rr.com)

**Saturday, December 28, SOUTHERN RENSSELAER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

Coordinator/Compiler: **Naomi Lloyd** 518-596-5964 [naomi\\_kestrel@yahoo.com](mailto:naomi_kestrel@yahoo.com)

**Saturday, January 4, 2020, TROY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

Coordinator/Compiler: **Larry Alden** 518-861-6087 [overlook@nycap.rr.com](mailto:overlook@nycap.rr.com)

*Feathers*

**Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club**

**c/o Five Rivers EEC**

**56 Game Farm Road**

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