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# Feathers

## **PNOM PENH, ANGKOR WAT AND BIRDING CAMBODIA – (PART 1 OF 2 PARTS)**

by Bernie Grossman

Chris and I traveled to Cambodia during the period February 14 through March 2. We had intended to spend four days with our California son and family prior to this, but had to shorten to two days due to the big East Coast snowstorm that cancelled our original flight. The trip started with a near disaster when my big dollar Swarovski binoculars broke while we were on a whale watching excursion with our younger grandson. Fortunately, my older brother, who also birds, lives in Los Angeles, and I was able to borrow a pair from him.

We flew from Los Angeles to Phnom Penh via Seoul, Korea, in two steps. First, there was a thirteen hour hop to Seoul, and then a five hour flight to Phnom Penh where we were picked up by an arranged taxi.

Our plan was to spend two days prior to the regular tour visiting the sights of Phnom Penh on our own. On the second day, we had arranged for a guided tour with an English speaking guide. It turned out that the other five tour participants joined us for this very interesting day. The two extra nights in the hotel cost \$100 total; the tour was only \$60; while the food was very good and inexpensive.

Phnom Penh was laid out by the French, so its major streets are wide boulevards. Traffic can only be described as anarchic, and while there are rules, they are obeyed as mere suggestions. Because there is no public transportation, everyone moves around by car, small motorcycle, or tuk-tuk, a kind of rickshaw pulled in this case by a small motorcycle. There are few traffic lights, so crossing a street is an adventure.

The first day, we walked to the vast Central Market that was near our hotel. It is a collection of many little businesses all under one roof. Clothes, food, jewelry, and cell phones made up most of the action. After touring through the Market, we walked along the banks of the large river that passed through the city. It is a major tributary of the Mekong and its junction with the Mekong was visible. After lunch we walked back to the hotel to escape the heat and get some rest.

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## President's Corner

My name is Jory Langner. And little did you know that last month you elected me to be president of the bird club for the upcoming year.

One of my responsibilities is to write this column. And as I write, I wonder "will you read it? And if you read it, how will I know? And what will you think?" All good questions. So if you read this, let me know ... email me at [president@hmhc.net](mailto:president@hmhc.net). Even if it's nothing more than "yes, I read it." And, of course, let me know what you think.

### Current State of the Club

The club is doing fine. Really fine. We might be one of the most active bird clubs around ... with 50 field trips a year, a dozen or so programs a year, a very active listserv called HMBirds and this, our regularly-published newsletter, Feathers. These four items are the ones that people speak with me about the most, yet there is more that we do. We maintain the beautiful Reist Sanctuary, we have a conservation effort, maintain our website, and much more.

Administratively we are doing fine as well. Our membership levels have been steady for many, many years. And our financial position is strong and in good order.

Last night we held our first board meeting of this year. I am glad to say that we had five past presidents attend that meeting, showing the strength of our leadership and that our institutional memory goes back a long way.

### So what is there to do?

Currently there are a number of areas that the club can pursue. The one that jumps out to me for immediate attention, however, is our youth program. It is clear how important this is, yet the program has been active only intermittently in recent years.

Young birders of today, of this moment, are the next generation of birders. We need our youngsters to become aware of and become interested in birds and birdlife in our area. For them to understand how environmental factors affect birds and to enjoy the outdoors as much as we do. Right next door to you is a future Roger Tory Peterson, Rachel Carson or David Sibley. Closer to home, right next door to you is a future Sam Madison or Tom Palmer. We want these youngsters to appreciate nature in all of its beauty and chaos.

What a gift we can bring to them and what a gift they can bring to us all.

In this regard, we are lucky to have George Steele as a new board member. He has a long and varied background working with children in schools and in other settings, specifically around birds and nature. George is heading up the Youth Committee and three members have already stepped up to participate with him. There was active discussion during our board meeting last night with many ideas already starting to bubble up. I can see many good things coming from our efforts. Expect to hear more about this in the near future.

If you have questions, comments or would just like to say hello, drop me a line.

Jory Langner  
[president@hmhc.net](mailto:president@hmhc.net)

### 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:

***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: 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**

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### QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

What would you like the new president of the club to know?

Rules:

1. Be kind.
  2. Send your email to [Jory.Langner@gmail.com](mailto:Jory.Langner@gmail.com).
- 

## Field Trip Reports

### **Vosburg Marsh**

*Saturday, April 27, 2013*

Thirteen birders took part in the trip, braving a chilly start to the day. Highlights included OSPREYS (6 at the mouth of Stockport Creek), BALD EAGLES, and BONAPARTE'S GULLS on the river. The marsh offered both BLUE-WINGED TEAL and GREEN-WINGED TEAL, WOOD DUCK, AMERICAN WIGEON, HOODED MEGANSER and COMMON MERGANSER, and AMERICAN COOT. Nesting MUTE SWANS and CANADA GEESE were prominent.

Passerines were scarce, with Yellow Warblers and Palm Warblers the only warblers. Blue-headed Vireo and Pine Siskin rounded out the highlights. Thanks to all who took part, especially to Rich Guthrie, who shared his considerable local knowledge.

- Alan Mapes

## Field Trip Reports *(continued)*

### **RamsHorn Livingston Sanctuary**

*Sunday, April 28, 2013*

On a dazzling late April morning, seven birders joined Audubon Education Coordinator Larry Federman on a trek around RamsHorn Livingston Sanctuary in Catskill. After a cool start to the day, temperatures warmed nicely under clear blue skies, and light winds. By early afternoon it was downright warm, and the birds kept on singing. We identified 53 species, including seven warblers.

Right at the parking area, there were YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS in the trees. A BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER was checking out tree trunks and limbs, and a BLUE-WINGED WARBLER, singing an alternate song, gave splendid views to the group. As we headed down the old farm road towards the marsh, we noticed many groups of BLUE JAYS heading north. Our semi-carefully recorded count of them was 119 for the day. An OSPREY made a few circles over the marsh and then slid out of sight.

At the boardwalk to the observation tower, a small kettle of raptors was riding a thermal overhead. It consisted of two BROAD-WINGED HAWKS, two SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS, and a COOPER'S HAWK. It was instructive to watch the three accipiters soaring together, and their respective flapping behaviors when coming out of a glide.

From alongside the marsh, the nest of a BALD EAGLE pair can be observed to the west at some distance. A closer view can be obtained from a different angle along the woodland trail, and we could see two eaglets popping their heads up and moving around. A parent would come off the nest occasionally to soar near the marsh.

Two YELLOW WARBLERS showed off their striking color in the willows where the trail runs into RamsHorn Creek, which is tidal here along the Hudson River (it was going out.) From that point, a series of loop trails circle the pine-hardwood hillside habitat. A BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER made an appearance, a PINE WARBLER was very well seen, and we later heard a BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER in the central upland section.

Probably the most remarkable sighting of the day was spotted at the edge of the marsh on the west side of the property. When Larry uttered a phrase normally associated with finding a hundred dollar bill lying on the ground, we knew he had found something good. Two GREAT EGRETS were perched in a most unlikely spot, about five or six feet off the ground in shrubby, fallen-tree habitat. They were in full breeding plumage; one was showing off its aigrettes as it preened on one leg.

Thank you to all of today's participants, we had a great day, and special thanks to Larry for guiding us around the place and sharing his wealth of local knowledge. A wonderful time spent in the field!

*- Tom Williams*

## Field Trip Reports *(continued)*

### **Birds and Breakfast**

*Saturday, May 11, 2013*

This morning at the Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar, Albany County, HMBC conducted its annual celebration of spring migration with its Birds and Breakfast event.

A steady overnight rain ended just in time, and the 6:00, 7:00, and 8:00 groups were able to get out in pleasantly cool spring weather. Collectively, 24 observers tallied 68 species, not bad given the complete absence of non-resident warblers. Many thanks go to trip leaders Alan Mapes, Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen, and John Kent, and especially to Peggy Rudis for getting there so early with all the food!

Highlights included WOOD DUCK, DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT, GREAT BLUE HERON (flyover, Beaver Pond), GREEN HERON, BALD EAGLE (adult, flyover), KILLDEER, SPOTTED SANDPIPER (spillway at south end of Beaver Pond), YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, NORTHERN FLICKER (clearing out a nest hole), PILEATED WOODPECKER (feeding for an extended period at a log on the ground near the Vlomankill), LEAST FLYCATCHER, EASTERN KINGBIRD, VEERY, WOOD THRUSH, BROWN THRASHER, SCARLET TANAGER, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW, ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK, BOBOLINK (numerous, in several field locations), EASTERN MEADOWLARK, and BALTIMORE ORIOLE. Warblers included BLUE-WINGED, NORTHERN PARULA, YELLOW, PINE, PRAIRIE, BLACK-AND-WHITE, OVENBIRD, LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH, and COMMON YELLOWTHROAT.

Thanks again to all who participated.

*- Scott Stoner and Denise Hackert-Stoner (Coordinators)*

### **Vischer's Ferry,**

*Sunday, May 12th 2013*

Nearly 30 birders started their Mother's Day with a morning walk around parts of the Vischer Ferry Preserve. The day started off with relatively benign weather -- cool, but no wind. Later in the morning, a strong north breeze picked up, making the conditions feel quite a bit colder and making ear birding more challenging. Summer-resident breeders were numerous and conspicuous, especially ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, WARBLING VIREO, YELLOW WARBLER and SWAMP SPARROW. Migrant species were harder to come by, but the group did manage to tally CHIMNEY SWIFT, LEAST FLYCATCHER, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW and 9 warbler species. Highlights among the latter included NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, CHESTNUT-SIDED and BLACK-THROATED BLUE warblers. Other highlights included an adult BALD EAGLE, one pair of non-vocalizing YELLOW-THROATED VIREOS, a single late RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET and a SCARLET TANAGER heard by a few members of the group. The trip total of 53 species was a little on the low side of typical for this trip.

*-Gregg Recer and Cathy Graichen*

## Upcoming HMBC Programs

### **Africa 2: Birding in the South of Africa**

**Speaker: Don Morton**

June 3, 2013 - 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Colonie Library

Don has been interested in birding since High School and since retiring has been able to spend time birding in Australia, Central and South America and in many places in the United States and Canada. He and his wife; Ann, recently participated in a Safari to South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia. When Don told the guides that he was really more interested in birds than animals he discovered that not only were they excellent birders but that they also made every effort to stop and point out new birds and allow Don to photograph them. He was able to add 115 new birds to his life list and to photograph many of them. Tonight he will present some of the pictures he was able to obtain of the unique African birds as well as pictures of the many large mammals they were able to observe.

## Upcoming Audubon Programs

*Unless Otherwise Specified, All Programs To Be Held At:*

**William K. Sanford Colonie Town Library**

**629 Albany-Shaker Road, Loudonville, NY 12211**

No programs scheduled at this time.

## On Nature

### **Valley of Life**

*by Denise Hackert-Stoner and Scott Stoner*

It's the hottest place on earth, and the lowest and driest place in North America. At 282 feet below sea level, it averages a scant 2 inches of rain per year; some years it receives none. Its world record high temperature stands at 134 degrees, and summer days routinely reach 120. With places like Coffin Peak, Funeral Mountains, Furnace Creek, Devil's Cornfield, and Badwater, Death Valley seems a foreboding place.



Yet there is much beauty here, and a surprising amount of life.

We visited here in March, our six days barely scratching the surface of the vast salt pan of nature in this 3.4 million acre national park, the largest in the Lower 48. . Even this late winter was hot; with daytime shade

## On Nature *(continued)*

temperatures in the upper 90's, well above normal even for here. Park staff conveyed the blunt message, "hydrate or die," and carry lots of extra water whether you are

exploring by car or by foot...The restrooms even had charts showing urine color as an indicator of dehydration!

The landscape was stark and stunningly beautiful. A vast salt flat, surrounded by mountains, with dunes, badlands, and a

Copyright Scott Stoner



fascinating human and natural history. Birds were not numerous, not by any means. Nor were plants. Some places there were no plants at all, just mile after mile of bare ground with great mountains in the background, intercepted by huge alluvial fans. The hardiest plant was desert holly, a blue-green shrub that seemed to survive on nothing. They grew where even the creosote bush could not. The creosote bush has small leaves covered in oil to preserve moisture, and three sets of roots. One shallow and broad to catch any rainwater, one mid-depth to steal water from neighboring plants, and one that goes down deep to reach water. The roots even emit a substance that prevents other plants from growing! The oil is what gives it its distinctive odor, and, we suspect, its name. This odor is particularly evident in the desert after a rain, something that we did not experience on this trip.

There are several dune fields in the park; the easiest to reach are the Mesquite dune field, near the visiting area of Stovepipe Wells, elevation zero. A visit first thing in the morning offered photo opportunities before they are covered by human footprints, and a chance to see tracks of beetles, sidewinders, and kangaroo rats which were out overnight.

Human history was abundant in this park, with a monument to the forty-niners (1849) who passed through and barely survived on their way west to seek gold. Borax provided barely a 10-year boom – remember the Twenty Mule Team borax when you were young? It was mined and refined right there in Death Valley, and pulled by teams of 20 mules a couple hundred miles to the train depot.

Badwater is another iconic place there, at 280 feet below sea level, it offers access to the vast salt pan where one can go out and explore. Walk a few miles to descend the last 2 feet, but bring plenty of water. Amazingly, while photographing salt crystals, Denise came upon a tiny spider in this most desolate and hostile of environments!

Few if any birds were in these parts. However, where there was water were also birds. And there are a few wet areas in Death Valley. One is Salt Creek, where we had Say's Phoebe; another was at the Furnace Creek visitor complex, complete with swimming pool, palm trees, golf course (the lowest in north America), ponds, and even grass. The sight of 50 American Coot in the pond and walking on the golf course more than 200 feet below sea level seemed almost unreal. Other birds at Furnace Creek included Lesser Goldfinch, Black Phoebe, House Finch, White-crowned Sparrow, Pied-billed Grebe, and Ruddy Duck!

## On Nature *(continued)*

One afternoon, taking a walk around the furnace creek ranch (lodging/dining area), Scott was absorbed with trying to photograph some of the common birds there – Common Raven, Eurasian Collared Dove, Great-tailed Grackle, he suddenly realized that Denise was gone. Looking around, he saw her in the distance, running farther away. Thinking there was some emergency, Scott began running after her. What was lost in the distance and heat was her yelling and

yelling ““Roadrunner”! She had spotted one behind one of the lodge buildings. Scott caught up to her, and immediately began photographing this brightly colored individual which the photos would later reveal had three prey items in its mouth! We watched it move around behind the lodge building, even going onto a guest room’s patio at one point. We believe it had a nest in the area and was collecting food to bring back. Needless to say, the bird attracted quite a bit of attention, and was our bird of the trip!

One final reminder of life in Death Valley found us on our drive out of the park. On the long and little traveled road south of Badwater, we saw something at the roadside, way up ahead. We asked each other, is that a bush or an animal? We stopped the car, and it began moving toward us. The Coyote came closer and closer, finally stopping right next to the car. Clearly accustomed to handouts, it stayed there for many minutes, while we photographed it at will, through the glass. As we drove off, it remained unfed and likely disappointed, and, we hope, willing to find non human sources of food.



Happy Birding to all,  
Denise Hackert-Stoner and Scott Stoner

## Who Will Be the Next Roger Tory Peterson?

*by George Steele*

Who is going to be the Roger Tory Peterson, Ken Kaufman or David Allen Sibley of the future? Will it be a boy or girl from Guilderland or Schoharie or Troy, or not? Perhaps that budding ornithologist will never catch the excitement of

## Who Will Be the Next Roger Tory Peterson? *(continued)*

birds because they have no adult to share the passion with them. Who got you interested in birds? Was there an adult that shared the wonders of the bird world with you when you were a child?

As an environmental educator, I've felt strongly about this for many years. I've always felt those of us that marvel at nature's beauty and secrets have a responsibility to share this with others. And who better to share with than children, the young people who will be tomorrow's ornithologists, birders, leaders, citizens.

I think every bird club has a responsibility to pass on this interest in birds to the youth of our community. I know that we try our best to share the excitement of birding with our children, our grandchildren, our close friends. But what about the hundreds and hundreds of children who have no one to share with them the joy of finding a bluebird, or hearing the song of a wood thrush or smiling in amazement at the majesty of a bald eagle.

What might this effort look like? Here are some thoughts that focus on schools, where students learn about life cycles, habitats, endangered species, environmental issues, conservation and stewardship as part of the science, social studies and language arts curriculum. Birds fit so well into this learning environment. Teachers just need a little help in bringing this book/video/digital learning to life, in the real world with real living things--birds.

- provide school libraries with bird ID books and materials
- visit schools with the club's classroom set of binoculars lead bird surveys on the school grounds, leading to a check list of birds of the school and surrounding community
- set up and maintain bird feeder stations at schools, complete with bird identification materials and help in setting up feeder watch efforts
- build, install and maintain bird nest boxes and show students how to take care of and monitor bird nesting success
- lead birding events as afterschool special events for students and their families such as an evening owl prowl, or Saturday morning bird feeder making workshop
- with success in these areas take the student/teacher interest to start bird watching clubs at schools where they can participate in early morning bird walks before school or birding adventures on weekends or during school vacations.

Can this happen? I'm certain it can. It must! How? Only if someone like you is willing to step forward and take part in this most important of tasks, a challenge but a marvelous challenge – to see the magic in a child's eye as they explore nature and the wonders of birds. And who knows, one day is the child that becomes a Peterson, Kaufman or Sibley.

If you are up for this adventure, contact me. I'm George Steele, a newly-elected member of the HMBC board with responsibility for working with our club's youth programming. Send me an e-mail at [silphidae@aol.com](mailto:silphidae@aol.com).

## Phnom Penh, Angkor Wat and Birding in Cambodia *(continued)*

The National Palace complex was the first stop on our guided tour. The buildings were typical SE Asian/Chinese design with pointy extensions at peaks and roof ends. Inside there was much gilding and silk draping. The next stop was the Silver Pagoda with its famous Emerald Buddha. The “Silver” name comes from the fact that the floor of the pagoda is tiled with silver parquets made from coins reclaimed when the country shifted to paper money. The seated Buddha looked as if it was carved from a light green jade.



**Phnom Penh - spire at royal palace**

The tone of the tour changed after lunch when we visited the infamous S.21. The Khmer Rouge converted the #21 school into an interrogation center used to gain “confessions” from primarily government officials. The Khmer Rouge used starvation and brutal methods that would shame even the Nazis. Prisoners were assigned a number and photographed upon admission, and they were usually dead within a month. Lastly we drove out to the infamous Killing Fields where over 8000 prisoners from S.21 were killed. Bullets were too precious, so people were just battered to death.

The Khmer Rouge drove everyone out of the cities to labor in the fields usually at starvation-level rations. Over two million people died reducing the country’s population

from seven to four+ million people. Later in the trip, I noted that there were few gray haired people. We realized that almost everyone who would now have gray hair was dead.

There is no Cambodian family who hasn’t suffered a loss from this period. For example, one of the directors of the Sam Veasna Center (SVC) in Siem Reap was kidnapped by the Khmer Rouge and forced to be a child soldier. He was wounded in the fighting.

Sam Veasna was a Cambodian ornithologist who studied the bird life of the country. He began a push to preserve habitat and important species such as the Sarus Crane. After his early death



**The Killing Fields – Excavated Mass Graves**

## Phnom Penh, Angkor Wat and Birding in Cambodia *(continued)*

from malaria, his family and friends started the SVC to continue his work. The SVC provided in-country services such as accommodations, transportation, and guides for our tour with a portion of tour profits donated back to the SVC by Field Guides. Our in-country guide was Srunh, a 29 year old with boundless knowledge and enthusiasm.

Siem Reap is home base for touring Angkor Wat. Visitors to the temple complex have grown to about 3 million/year in a short time, and the city has expanded accordingly. The temple complex is about 7 kilometers north of the city, and our general plan was to leave the hotel about 5 AM; drive to a temple to be there for sunrise; eat breakfast and bird for a few hours; then tour the temple. After lunch in the city, we would return to the hotel to escape the heat and, then in mid-afternoon, go to a temple area for more birding until about 6 PM. We were frequently asleep by 9:30 PM.

The Angkorian Empire ruled much of SE Asia from about 900 CE to about 1500 CE. The area's official religion would change back and forth between Buddhism and Hinduism as a new king rose to power. With the collapse of the empire, the temples slowly decayed and were covered by the forest. They were re-discovered by the French, the colonial rulers, in about 1850, and reconstruction projects begun. This ended in 1955 when the French left. The Khmer Rouge didn't disturb the temples, but they did destroy all the French paperwork.

The major complexes, Angkor Thom and Angkor Wat are huge, several square kilometers each. The temples themselves are surrounded by large moats and a high wall. When a new king with a new religion took over, he would alter the existing iconography accordingly. We saw examples on a long wall where a completed section of carvings was altered, a section was partially changed, and then a barely begun section following these.

### **Good Spirit Guardians at the entrance to Angkor Thom Palace Complex**

Entering a temple, we had to climb steep stairways, step over high sills, and clamber over tumbled blocks. Angkor Wat and Thom were crowded with other tourists, but we did visit a few other smaller, much less crowded temples, and these were a real pleasure.

One day of the Siem Reap portion of the tour was spent on Lake Tonle Sap and one of its tributaries that led to an area called Preaek Tol. The lake is part of the Mekong River system, and it provides a large portion of the fish consumed in the region. Since we were in Cambodia during the dry season, the lake was at its lowest level. It was so low that trips up



## Phom Penh, Angkor Wat and Birding in Cambodia *(continued)*

the tributary were unable to go the days before and after our journey. We were lucky. At the peak of the wet season, the lake's water level will be 30 feet higher. The lake is also famous for its floating villages. We cruised by one, and could

see houses, stores, night clubs and even a Christian church.



**Cotton Pygmy Goose at Angkor Wat moat**

At the mouth of the tributary, we transferred to three small boats powered by gasoline motors. The propeller was at the end of a ten foot long shaft, so the boatman could adjust for the water's depth. Large numbers of herons, egrets, cormorants, and ducks flushed as we sped up the river. We also saw numbers of Spot-billed Pelicans and then ibis and stork species. It was a photographer's heaven.

After about half an hour, we turned into a second, narrower stream that led us to our goal, the viewing platform, one of 29 run by the SVC. This turned out to be about 30 feet up

in a tree and was reached by climbing steep bamboo ladders. Even though I was assured that the ropes holding things together had been replaced this season, there was no way I was going to climb that. Chris and most of the others did climb, and they were able to see both Milky Stork and Greater Adjutant. The latter is a very rare stork that I fortunately saw on a fly over. (to be continued in the next issue of Feathers)

**Spot-billed Pelican at Preak Tol**



**Lesser Adjutant - a rare stork**

## Upcoming Field Trips

### JUNE

#### **Saturday, June 1 SCHODACK ISLAND STATE PARK** (Rensselaer County; morning)

Coordinator: Tom Williams 857-2176 [trwdsd@yahoo.com](mailto:trwdsd@yahoo.com)

Local leader: Eric Latini of Capital Region

Audubon 782-9736 [paco67@nycap.rr.com](mailto:paco67@nycap.rr.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 thrushes, vireos, Cerulean Warblers and American Redstarts, and a Great Blue Heron rookery. Resident songbirds are plentiful.

Eric Latini of the Capital Region Audubon Society did field work at Schodack Island SP in 2012, making observations and collecting data about Cerulean Warblers. He will share his knowledge during the walk out to the Cerulean Warbler habitat, and help us locate this often elusive species.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Kmart plaza on Rt. 9 and 20 in East Greenbush to carpool as there will be a per car fee charged at the State Park.

#### **Sunday, June 2 DOODLETOWN** (Rockland County; morning-early afternoon)

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

Doodletown is the site of a former isolated hamlet near Bear Mountain in the town of Stony Point, NY. The site was settled in the 1760s and reached its peak population in the 1940s. After the Second World War, the Palisades Interstate Park Commission began to purchase many of the homes and in the 1960s the remaining properties were acquired through eminent domain. The stone remains of some of the homes can still be seen. For birders, it is renowned for the diversity and abundance of its species, especially warblers. Cerulean, Hooded, Kentucky and Worm-eating are all present here along with some of the more common warblers. You might also expect Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Black Vulture and an assortment of vireos, flycatchers and other woodland species. We should be at Doodletown between 8:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

We will meet at 5:30 a.m. at Colonie Center in Albany, Sears Auto Center at the intersection of Central Ave. and Wolf Rd. We will be on the Wolf Rd. side of Sears Auto Center. Our return time to Colonie Center should be approximately 2:00 p.m. **Reservations are required for this trip.** Please contact the trip coordinator by **May 18th** if you plan to attend.

#### **Saturday, June 8 BIRDING SCHOHARIE COUNTY** (Schoharie County; morning-early afternoon)

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

We will spend the morning visiting sites that will introduce participants to a variety of habitats and many of the resident birds of Schoharie County. Old Route 30 on the eastern side of Max V. Shaul State Park rises above the creek and hosts a diverse group of woodland birds. Canada, Black-and-white and Cerulean Warblers breed there, and Cliff Swallows are seen along the creek by the Route 30 bridge. Burnt-Rossman Hills State Forest has extensive stands of conifers along with the higher elevation breeders including Blackburnian Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Purple Finch and Common Raven.

## Upcoming Field Trips *(continued)*

We will also stop at the NY Power Authority site in North Blenheim, which offers a visitors center observation area, before continuing on to the nature trail there. This area offers open scrub, edge and marsh habitat, along with the nearby reservoir.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Colonie Center in Albany, Sears Auto Center at the intersection of Central Ave. and Wolf Rd. We will be on the Wolf Rd. side of Sears Auto Center. Please contact the trip coordinator if you plan to attend.

### **Sunday, June 9 SHENENTAHA CREEK PARK/ZIM SMITH TRAIL** (Saratoga County; morning)

Coordinator: Ellen Pemrick 882-9163 [lnmp@nycap.rr.com](mailto:lnmp@nycap.rr.com)

On this trip, we'll look for thrushes, warblers, vireos, and other spring migrants within the park. We will also walk for up to a mile south along the Zim Smith Trail, which traverses wooded areas and offers views of a ravine on one side. Keep in mind that the paved trail is used by cyclists and joggers, so we'll need to stay along the outer edges of the corridor.

Meet in the main parking lot at Shenentaha Creek Park at 8:15 AM.

Directions: Take the Northway (I-87) to Exit 12 and head west on Route 67. Continue on 67 until it intersects East Line Road at a stop light; you'll see a Stewarts across the street. Turn left on East Line and drive about 1/2 mile to the park entrance on your left. Follow the entrance road to the parking area.

### **Saturday, June 15 DYKEN POND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER** (Rensselaer County; morning)

Coordinator: Jim de Waal Malefyt 283-2362 [dewaalmalefyt@gmail.com](mailto:dewaalmalefyt@gmail.com)

Dyken Pond Environmental Education Center is located on the Rensselaer Plateau near Cropseyville. It is an elevated wet woodlands with a system of loop trails. This trip will take the group down to the edge of the pond, then through thick woodlands, across the boardwalk at Dustin Swamp and back to the entrance road. Birds such as Blackburnian, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green and Magnolia Warbler, Ovenbird, and Blue-headed Vireo are common, along with Scarlet Tanager, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco. It is a wet environment so proper footwear is advised.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Walmart Plaza on Route 7 (760 Hoosick Road) in Troy, at the plaza entrance directly across the road from Dunkin' Donuts.

### **Sunday, June 16 H.G. REIST SANCTUARY** (Schenectady County, morning)

Coordinator: Don Gresens 370-3923 [dgresens@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dgresens@nycap.rr.com)

Join us at the Club's sanctuary to look and listen for summer and year-round resident species and to try to add new species to the sanctuary's bird list. The sanctuary is a woodland habitat, so woodland species are the highlight of this trip. Several species of thrushes, flycatchers, vireos and warblers as well as woodpeckers, wrens, and Scarlet Tanager have been observed here. The walk is on easy, level trails.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Hummingbird Manor entrance on Oakmont Street in Niskayuna.

### **Saturday, June 22 CHERRY PLAIN STATE PARK** (Rensselaer County; morning)

Coordinator: Phil Whitney 377-9050 [philandmargewhitney@earthlink.com](mailto:philandmargewhitney@earthlink.com)

## Upcoming Field Trips *(continued)*

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 29 FIVE COMBINES FEEDER CANAL PARK** (Washington County; morning)

Coordinator: Jim Ries 792-4477 [jimries@roadrunner.com](mailto:jimries@roadrunner.com)

Joint trip with Southern Adirondack Audubon

We will walk the bike trail for about 2 miles along the Five Combines and Feeder Canal. The habitat ranges from field edges to wetland areas to stands of tall hardwood trees and should provide for some great birding.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Five Combines Feeder Canal parking lot off of Burgoyne Avenue.

Directions: From Northway Exit 17 turn north on Rt. 9, travel about one mile to Rt. 197 (Reynolds Rd.), turn right and travel five miles into Ft. Edward. Turn left onto Rt. 4, drive one-half mile, then take a right turn on Maple Avenue just past Ft. Edward Elementary School. Bear left onto Burgoyne Avenue and travel about one and one-half miles to the parking lot, just past Jones Avenue, on the right.

## JULY

### **July 6, Saturday THE VLY/BOTHERATION POND** (Warren County, all day)

Coordinators: David Harrison 909-996-1037 [david.harrison57@earthlink.net](mailto:david.harrison57@earthlink.net)

Don Gresens 518-269-9161 [dgresens@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dgresens@nycap.rr.com)

This will be a walk along a cross country ski trail in the Gore Mountain area of Warren County. The walk in to The Vly, (pond swampy area), is about a mile, further on Botheration Pond, is another mile or so. Depending on conditions, we can turn around at the Vly or continue. We should be able to see some of the northern bird species not normally seen in the Capital District except during migration.

Meet at 6 a.m. at Northway Exit 16 Park and Ride lot just east of Exit 16.

We will carpool about 2 hours to the North Creek Ski Bowl Park to meet with David Harrison, who will lead us the rest of the way.

Please contact trip coordinators if you plan to attend.

## AUGUST

### **August 21- August 31 COUNTING COMMON NIGHTHAWKS** (Albany County; evening)

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

The Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) is a member of the "goatsucker" group that also includes whip-poor-wills. It is an aerial insectivore that feeds on the wing at dusk and dawn. It has a notched tail and long, slender, pointed wings with white patches on the primaries. They breed throughout much of North America, although they may be in decline as they are no longer observed during the summer in many urban and suburban areas. They are one of the last birds to arrive at

## Upcoming Field Trips *(continued)*

their breeding grounds in spring, and one of the first to leave in late summer. Common Nighthawks migrate up to 6,000 miles, arriving on their wintering grounds in South America by October.

In the Capital Region, the bulk of migration is seen from mid-August until early September; the peak is often centered around August 24-25th. Continuing an informal project that was begun in 2012, we will observe the skies each evening (weather permitting) between the 21<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of August, recording our sightings for a final summary. We will conduct our viewing from the parking lot at the Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center, which is located on Rt. 155 (New Karner Road) in Albany. Bring a chair and binoculars. We will begin each night at 6:30 p.m.

**Sunday, August 25 PEBBLES ISLAND STATE PARK / COHOES FLATS** (Saratoga/Albany Counties; morning)

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

The wooded areas of Peebles Island are good for seeing a variety of songbirds including some of the migrant warblers. The river area and rocky flats around the island are usually good for Peregrine Falcon, Osprey, Bald Eagle as well as sandpipers, yellowlegs, herons, egrets, Chimney Swifts and ducks. From the meeting place, we will check out the Cohoes Flats and then consolidate vehicles before proceeding to Peebles Island since there is a fee for each car entering.

Meet at the NY State Dam Recreation area behind the U-Haul Rental in Cohoes at 8:30 a.m. From I-787 going north, turn right onto Route 470 (Ontario Street) in Cohoes. Then turn left onto Clark Ave. and proceed to the end.

### *Feathers*

**Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club**

**c/o Five Rivers EEC**

**Game Farm Road**

**Delmar, NY 12054**