



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

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"He's there again, Sven. First the overwhelming smell of geraniol and then those oversize detachable eyes peering in on us. Same one as last year, I think. And you know what? I actually think it's affirming for me in some way. Oh yes, my angel, the price of this passion has been these feelings, feelings I can't ignore, this nagging sense of deceit and shame, this knowledge that I was dirty, guilty, nothing more than a common Yellowthroat.

I started to doubt you, doubt how I felt here in this pondside lovenest with the jewelweed screen. I even began to doubt that there even was a scandinavian branch of the yellowthroats, and that we small warblers actually need personal trainers. I became skeptical about the downhill skiing and the mountainside spa, if you would really make them mine, after all. But the big biped with the notebook and the peanut butter breath makes me believe again. After all, if what we are doing is so wrong, how can it be so interesting to the hominids? I mean, he wasn't in the least interested when I was keeping house with dear, boring, solid old Cuthbert in the goldenrod.

Oh Sven. We have only days till Bertie returns, and till I must take up with him again. . I mean, watching your muscular bouts with the roadside yellowthroats makes my heart beat like a hummingbird, but my head says Cuthbert the Provider. We both know the fledglings will be yours, and you know I will see your dashing mask every time their dear little gullets open skyward, but our genetic legacy needs Cuthbert, patiently harvesting the inchworms, and convinced in his trusting little heart that our chicks are his.....

Sven, Sven dearest, let's declare our love right here in the Swamp Azaleas, whose sparse foliage will reveal just enough to Mr. Atlas. Only then can we feel like this is all legitimate. Oh my love, he is writing, writing a "C."! No, wait! Sometimes the "c" word is not really a "C," if you know what I mean. Here. Just hold this nesting material a moment my darling..... I think he got it! We're in the book! Sven and Constance in a story that shall never end...!"

Migration is virtually over, and the scandalous machinations of the breeding season are underway. Mary Alice would like you to remember that this is the final field season of the **Atlas**. Please contribute if you can.....

If you can stomach going any further, you may find:

- an introduction to the last **program** of the year (pg. 2),
- **next year's stunning program schedule**,
- **field trip reports** which vividly illustrate the vagaries of birding....,
- the **summer field trips** still to come,
- a welcome to the **new board** and **thanks to a departing member**,
- news from the **Education Committee**,
- **Hitchcock** programs,
- some dubious **Atlas** research, and
- one or two other bits and pieces.

I hope you find some of it useful

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, June 13 at 7:30 PM

David Spector and John Van de Graaff connect **Words and Birds**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

In this program David and John take a brief look at some of the words of avian origin that have entered the English language and the origins of some bird names. David and John say that this **auspicious** program, if done with **panache**, will be a **feather** in their collective cap, unless they **chicken** out, in which case they will be **crestfallen**, with **egg** on their faces. David's discussion of etymology should **dovetail** with John's beautiful photographs. Knowing the two speakers, one might guess that there will be a mention or two of warblers and of Piping Plovers. Can they really tell the club what the 22nd (and 24th) president of the United States has to do with bird names?

David says this show will prove beyond doubt that **John Van de Graaff** is the best bird photographer this side (or any side) of the Mississippi. After retiring from the last of some four previous careers in 2000, John plunged into shooting birds. It has been immensely fun and gratifying, not least due to his warm reception at HBC.

David Spector has done research on warbler song and is working on a book on birds in literature. He is a former board president of the Hitchcock Center for the Environment and teaches biology at Central Connecticut State University.

John and David have each given more programs at this and other bird clubs than anyone can count.

NEXT YEAR'S PROGRAMS.

The indefatigable Geoff LeBaron has already put together a provisional schedule for next year. Here it is, so far.....

September 12, 2011. Paul Sievert. The Short-tailed Albatross Story.

October 17, 2011. Sam Fried. Warblers and Vireos.

November 14, 2011. John Cecil. IBAs from Top to Bottom.

December 12, 2011. Members Meeting.

January 9, 2012. Geoff LeBaron. Panama and Costa Rica.

February 13, 2012. John Nove. A Tale of Two Scottish Isles: Adventures in Orkney.

March 12, 2012. Jeff Boettner. Birds & Bugs.

April 9, 2012. Gina Nichol. Hummingbirds: Feathered Gems.

May 14, 2012. Bret Whitney. Birds of Brazil.

June 11, 2012. Scott Sumner. Birding Alaska.

Sallymeandering

"This month is national Turkey Lover's month and two birthdays will be celebrated. Donald Duck will be 57 on the 9th and Garfield the Cat's special day is the 19th. (May I suggest a catnip cake, cat-shaped of course, with sparklers serving as candles and whiskers?) On the 21st we celebrate the official adoption of the eagle as our national symbol. Ben Franklin wanted to see the turkey in that spot. Speaking of which, does anyone remember what president said,

"Sure we make mistakes, but point them out and we will correct them. Let's not throw the baby out though, with the dishes." Clue: the year was 1987 and the same president once said that "trees pollute the air."

June, 1999.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Look Park. Sunday, May 1.

Betsy Higgins, Sharon Tuohey, Elissa and Bernie Rubenstein, Sarah LaPointe, Carol Gabranski, John Gabranski, Sonia Krotkov, Nidhin Joseph, Marcia Merithew, and David Peake-Jones took an early morning bird walk in Look Park on Sunday, May 1st. For the first time in my memory, it did not rain for the Look Park walk! We had a beautiful morning and 40 species of great spring birds. We heard my target bird, a distant **Louisiana Waterthrush**, but never did spot it. A drake Wood Duck perched on a rock in the river for a nice look. He watched us warily as Wood Ducks will do. The brilliant colors of the Baltimore Oriole and the Scarlet Tanager always stun me no matter how many times I see them. But I think that the highlight of the morning may have been the Red Fox that Sarah spotted running along the bank of the river! It was a very pleasant morning and thanks to all for coming along.

Betsy Higgins

Quabbin Reservoir (Prescott Peninsula). Saturday, May 7.

Larry Therrien led birders into this, the most remote and sealed section of the reservation.

At the Pelham overlook, the group had a Prairie Warbler, and from gate 22 to the water, the highlights were seven Common Loons, a **Louisiana Waterthrush**, and four (4) **Blackburnian Warblers**.

Highlights from the peninsular included seven (7) Ruffed Grouse, a Spotted Sandpiper, fourteen (14) Least Flycatchers, 3 Red-breasted Nuthatches, and eight species of warblers, including **Blue-winged**, **Northern Waterthrush**, and **Nashville**. Perhaps the most exciting bird of the trip, unfortunately flying over only, was a **Sandhill Crane**.

From information from Larry Therrien.

Rails and Marsh Birds. (Northampton Rail Trail). The Evening of May 20.

We had 23 people show up for the Rail Trail Rail Walk! We were able to hear 3 Virginia Rails but had no sightings, even though one was less than 8 feet from us in the grass! Much to our disappointment, we never heard or saw a Sora. We did manage to see a Solitary Sandpiper, Fish Crows in the parking lot of Stop and Shop, several warblers, 2 Common Nighthawks and 1 Beaver. Thank you all for coming out for a "New Walk".

Tom Gagnon

- Note: this is certainly a recent record for attendance on a club walk: possible an all-time high mark!!

Plum Island. Saturday, May 21, 2011.

Geoff LeBaron led Harvey Allen, Jesse Brownback, Ray Chapin, Betsy Higgins, Nidhin Joseph, Elissa and Bernie Rubenstein to this Massachusetts jewel, which solidified its reputation as the place to be in May (well, arguably any time). The group totaled a startling 110 species. WOW.

From the extreme end of Plum Island (Sandy Point) the group found a huge and very vocal group of 800-1,000 predominantly first-year Bonaparte's Gulls. Among them (fleetingly), and unfortunately only seen by group leaders, were both Little and Black-headed gulls. We also found two **Roseate Terns** and had great looks at a flock of **White-rumped Sandpipers** and a **Piping Plover** on its nest. For the afternoon we predominantly birded the Hellcat Swamp area of the Refuge, finding lots of warblers of many different descriptions, plus a great assortment of different flycatchers.

On the way home, one car stopped at the **Montague Sand Plains** to listen for Whip-poor-wills. Though it took a few stops to find some Whips, we did have a wonderful aural experience at two places; first with a huge movement of **American Toads** into Green Pond (where we also found an **Eastern Spadefoot Toad** and heard a **Northern Saw-whet Owl!**) and then along Old Northfield Road where we heard Whips, Barred Owl, and night-singing Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, and Field Sparrows.

Geoff LeBaron

Mt Auburn Cemetery. Saturday, May 28, 2011.

Sometimes you da windshield, sometimes, you da bug.

It was our turn to play the entomological role as Henry Lappen, Betsy Higgins, Nidhin Joseph, Carol and John Gabranski, and David Peake-Jones took off for the fabled birding paradise of Mt. Auburn cemetery on Saturday, May 28. The day started out badly as Peake-Jones, mind addled with fantasies of Warblers Mourning in every bush and Olive-sided hawking beer in a cemetery, sailed blithely past the Palmer exit, where Nidhin and Henry waited patiently. Fortunately, Henry had the presence of mind to locate our phone number, and we reunited at the exit 10 Park and Ride, only half an hour behind schedule. Proceeding on, we found the cemetery ominously quiet as we set off down Indian Ridge path past an un-encouraging Longfellow. Our spirits rose as we found a Blackburnian Warbler singing, and narrowly missed locating a singing **Black-billed Cuckoo**. However, apart from a ventriloquial Blackpoll, a few Black-throated Greens, and a late Yellow, these were our only warblers!!! YE GADS!!

But, as life taketh away, it also giveth, and we were guided by a local enthusiast to a female **Great Horned Owl** and her **two recently-fledged young** in a white pine. The family have been quite the *cause de célèbre* at the cemetery this year and we located all three roosting quietly in the pine. Mobbing crows led us to the male sitting in a nearby copper beech. We also found nesting Baltimore Orioles at Willow Lake and witnessed two Song Sparrows desperately working to keep a hulking cowbird fledgling adequately nourished!

Yet more unrequested excitement occurred when Henry discovered that he had left his car keys somewhere on the ground in the cemetery. Owing to a public-spirited citizen, these have now been returned to him!

David Peake-Jones

COMING TRIPS

***Thursday, June 2. Holyoke Fish Ladder.** Half day. Tom Gagnon reprises his trip to the Holyoke Fish Ladder to look for birds and fish. (Last year the group saw seven species of fish and eels.) To carpool, meet at the Park & Ride parking lot near the Three County Fairgrounds in Northampton at 11:30 a.m., or else meet the group in Holyoke. Bring a lunch, if you want one. Call Tom (413-584-6353) for information. (E)

Saturday, June 4. Westover Air Force Base. Half day. Pending permission, Bob Bieda will lead his annual trip into New England's premier grassland habitat, looking for Upland Sandpipers, Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Bob (413-527-2623) at least two weeks ahead of time to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E)

Saturday, June 11. Hammonasset Beach State Park, CT. All day. Betsy Higgins goes to the coast of Connecticut to find sparrows, rails, and other seaside denizens. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for meeting time and place as the date approaches. (E)

Sunday, June 12, Blockbusting in Stephenton 4. All day. Contact Mike Locher (413-585-5864) to venture into utterly unbirded territory (at least as far the Breeding Bird Atlas is concerned). There should be opportunities for both hikers and drivers. (M)

Saturday, July 30. New South Beach (Early). All day. David Peake-Jones will look for Red Knots and other early shorebird migrants. We'll be walking a long way over wet sand. Bring sun protection, water, food, and \$20 for the boat ride. Call David (413-529-9541) BEFORE July 6 (please) to register. Note: if you register late for this trip, I may not be able to get back to you to confirm till right before the trip. (M)

Saturday, August 27. New South Beach (Late). All day. Bob Bieda leads birders in their quest for late shorebird migrants, including Curlew Sandpipers and Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits. Bring a lunch, a jacket, and \$20 for the boat ride. Note: the date may change depending on the tides. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register. (M)

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Coming Trips (continued)

***Saturday, September 10. Knightsville Dam.** Half day. Betsy Higgins repeats her trip to Knightsville Dam WMA. This is a rich habitat where almost anything could turn up. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for meeting details. (E)

HBC at WFCR

Looking for something a little different to do with your fellow HBC members? A group of us will be helping local NPR affiliate WFCR with their upcoming fund drive. A group of us will be answering incoming pledge calls on the last morning of the fund drive, **Saturday, June 25**, from **8-11 AM**. Join us for a fun and exciting 3 hours. Training is simple (ever answer a phone call? – you’re already trained!), a light breakfast is provided (usually from Henion’s), and birder gossip is plentiful. If you would like to be part of the group, please get in touch with **Dave Gross** (dgross@biochem.umass.edu or 253-2897).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Following an epic discussion and vote at the 2011 Annual General Meeting on May 9, the following were elected to the HBC Board of Directors for 2011-2012, and will assume their posts on June 14, 2011. All except Josh Rose are returning board members.

President: Scott Sumner

Vice-President/Program Chair: Geoff Lebaron

Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson

Communications Secretary: Elissa Rubinstein

Treasurer: Janice Jorgensen

Members-at-Large:

Bruce Hart

Mike Locher

Jan Ortiz

David Peake-Jones

Jaap van Heerden

Josh Rose

Thanks, Joe!

We thank **Joe Wicinski** for his service on the board for the past three years. In documenting Joe’s virtues as a board member one hardly need look past the fact that he consistently contributed high quality refreshments to our gatherings. In fact, it was due to the persistent offerings of Joe and a few others that the board meetings became the gourmet affairs they are today.

More seriously, Joe brought something to our meetings that is beyond price and not always present: the Voice of Reason. Amid sometimes-contentious debate on financial and policy matters, Joe would wait patiently while hotter heads laid out their positions. Then, and without a hint of rebuke, he would quietly chime in with a simple and common-sense contribution to allow a way forward.

We’ll miss Joe’s gastronomic and intellectual contributions and hope that perhaps he may serve on the board again (down the road).....

Hampshire Bird Club

Sallymeandering

*Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, but when they lit a fire in the craft it sank, proving **you can’t have your kayak and eat it too.***

*Samuel Langhorne Clemens went to the bakery to buy bread. He found that the baker had mistaken shredded lemon peel for leavening and had produced an uneatably sour and dense bread. Clemens then told the baker, **“Remember that yeast is yeast and zest is zest or never Mark Twain shall eat.”***

LIBRARY

Henry Lappen, our esteemed librarian, informs me that there are some (rather wonderful) additions to our collection, housed at the Hitchcock Center. Remember, Henry always brings a selection of titles to meetings, and can find something specific for you, given a day or two's notice. You can find him online at library@hampshisrebirdclub.org. The collection is catalogued online: see hampshirebirdclub.org. The **new titles** are:

Birds of Australia, Eighth Edition. *Princeton Field Guides/Simpson and Day.*

A Neotropical Companion: Introduction to the Animals, Plants and Ecosystems of the New World Tropics. *John Kricher.*

Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs: Eastern and Western Box Set (CD).

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The HBC Education Committee is up and running and we welcome any members who would like to get involved in this part of our club. We clearly would like to focus on attracting young folks to birding and also seniors in need of support for their interest in birding. Generous contributions have been made to the committee and we are currently formulating an application for young birders who would like to be funded in an activity related to birding.

Sally has led two bird walks for seniors in the area and we are in discussion with Tom Ricardi about a live bird program for HBC families. This summer, we are working on a program to introduce members to applications (or "apps") on birding for their computers or smart phones and also are planning an introduction to E-Bird. Janice is tentatively planning the "Apps" program for June and would be happy to send you information on the program.

A long standing problem has been finding children who would like to grow in this activity or introducing this love of our lives to the young neophyte. We would especially like to hear about your recommendations of young birders who could use some support with their interest in birding. We plan to have specific programs for them and their families.

That's just a part of what we've been considering and other activities are being explored. Feel free to contact an Education Committee member (like Bruce Hart: bhart@hampshirebirdclub.org) or board member if you'd like to join us or offer a suggestion.

Bruce Hart

Sallymeandering

A group of chess enthusiasts checked into a hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about an hour the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse. "But why?" they asked as they moved off. "Because I can't stand chess nuts boasting in an open foyer!"

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

New England Mammal Ecology: *John Foster*

New England Naturalist Training Center Indoor Introduction and Slideshow: Saturday, June 11, 9-11 a.m.
Field Sessions: Sunday, June 12, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, July 9, 1-5 p.m., Saturday, July 16, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Fee.

Field Botany Course: *Ted Watt*

Saturdays, June 18, July 9, 23, August 6, 20, and September 10, 9 a.m.-noon. Fee.

Plum Island Natural History: *Ted Watt, Edward Belt*

Wednesday, August 24, 7 a.m.-5 p.m. (Rain Date: Thursday, August 25. Fee.

Fort River Celebration Day

Saturday, June 4, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Please visit www.fortriverdiscovery.org for more information and further program and event listings.

For details and registration for all Hitchcock programs, please contact the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 525 South Pleasant St., Amherst MA 01002. Telephone (413) 256 6006, or on the web at www.hitchcockcenter.org.

Trustees Of Reservations Programs

Bobolinks at the Bullitt Reservation

Saturday, June 18, 10 AM.

Time with the bobolinks in the meadow and discussion of their nesting needs and ways to manage fields for bobolinks. To register or for more information please contact Layla Hazen, lhazen@ttor.org, 413-628-4485.

Wood Thrush Nests Wanted!!

David King, Scott Schlossber, Steve DeStefano, of the [USGS Coop Unit](#) and **Mitch Harley** of the USFWS Hadley are doing a **Wood Thrush** survey throughout Franklin and Hampshire Counties. They are especially interested in following up on Wood Thrush nests in areas of extensive housing. If you come upon Wood Thrush nests, please send Dave the location and date of observation. A selected number of nests will be monitored, with the young radio-tagged. Contact Dave at dking@fs.fed.us – thank you.

Backyard Birds

17 Strong St., Northampton (near Eastside Grill). Phone 586 3155

Your local source for birding and bird-feeding supplies, including feeders, optics, gifts, written and audio-materials. Ten percent discount for members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Remember, with local merchants, your dollar stays here!

The Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts.

UMass Extension (the Center for Agriculture) announces perhaps the **last opportunity** to get a copy of this wonderful local birding resource.

Of the three thousand copies of this book printed, one thousand remain unsold. The manufacturer would like to sell the remainder and there are no current plans for a reprint.

Accordingly, the book is being made available at the following rates:

- **Bulk Purchases: (five copies or more) : \$9.00 (reduced from \$17.97).** (All bulk sales are final).
- **Single copies : \$20.00 (reduced from \$29.00).**

You can order as follows:

- a) Online at <http://umassextensionbookstore.com/catalog>
- b) By Phone at 413 545 5537.
- c) Shipping and handling costs apply. You may avoid these by picking orders up directly at 101 university Dr., Suite A4, Amherst, MA 01002.

For more information:

UMass Extension (Center for Agriculture)
101 University Drive, Suite c-1.
Amherst, MA 01002.

Phone 413 545 4764. Fax: 413 545 6555. Email: <http://extension.umass.edu> (contact).

Atlas-Related Research

Recent advances in sound recording and translation has allowed researchers to convert Blackpoll Warbler song into English. When high-pitched song was converted into “stupid safe date, I’m out of here,” \ the team wondered if it was a software glitch until one of the team, who is also an BBA2 Atlaser, explained that Blackpoll Warblers and Cedar Waxwings are the last two birds to reach safe date status (June 10th). Those blackpolls were clearly insulted. Thank goodness for the few, patient blackpolls who stay to nest on Mt. Greylock – the only confirmed nesting area in the state.

The same researchers were unable to interpret the Cedar Waxwings’ voices, possibly because the waxwings were too busy stealing nesting materials from orioles to sing in complete sentences. All the other breeding birds appear to have adjusted to their summer job as atlas data points – although the team suspects that some of the unexpected birds recently seen in the area are planning to nest here as soon as the atlas is over. Their songs included something about “just wait until next year, won’t those atlasers be mad!”

Mary Alice Wilson

Sallymeandering

Here is how Sally closed her last newsletter to the club in June of 2001.

*“Word Botcher turns Bird Wotcher
A bus station is where a bus stops
A train station is where a train stops, and on my desk I have a work station....*

The time has come for me to stop, hang my HBC Word files out to dry, and move on to the next challenge. I have been doing this for a long, long time. My first letter was prior to the first HBC meeting on April 26, 1984. This, my last, makes a total of somewhere in the vicinity of 165 communications (or 153 short of Bob Bieda’s 318 species seen in one year, for those who count).

For the most part, it has been a wonderful experience, one that has enriched my life beyond imagination. I have learned much about the beauty and mystery of birds and the natural world. I have been to amazing places. I have had the privilege of meeting with and learning from really special people who have given me support, insight, and lots of laughs. And I have learned what great fun putting words together can be. Not bad for having started out not knowing the difference between a word processor and a food processor!...

The birds and the words are calling me. Thanks for the years of encouragement and support and terrible puns! Thanks to all those really special people who have been my teachers and have held my hand along the way!

But...I have to admit to having mixed feelings right now.

I believe I have said before, “A pun is its own reward.” But have you ever noticed that pun spelled backward is NUP. Well....a nup is a nup is a nup. I’m out of here! See you in the field.”

Sally Venman. Editor at HBC from 1984 to 2001.

That’s it for me as well, till the next club year begins in the fall. Enjoy your summer!

Until August, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

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