



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 40, No. 1

## September 2023

Dear reader, welcome back to another year's worth of programming, field trips, and fellowship from your very own bird club! You should note that this is the first issue of the 40<sup>th</sup> volume of this newsletter. Yes, that does mean that this is the fortieth anniversary year for the HBC, in existence since April 1984. Quite a lot has changed in the world in the forty years of the club's existence, but the birds still return each spring and leave each fall. We do have some "southern" avian species that we didn't see very often or at all in 1984, and other old favorites that we only rarely see in the Valley today. For a bit of history of the founding of the HBC, you might look back at newsletter interviews with some of the founders of the HBC. Those include the March 2020 newsletter interview with Jan Ortiz, the April 2020 interview with Harvey Allen, the June 2020 interview with Scott Sumner, and the October 2020 interview with David Spector, all of whom have recollections of the formation of the HBC. You can find these newsletters at the HBC website under the "Newsletter" link.

Aside from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* being the title of a dystopian novel by George Orwell, you might well ask "What else happened in 1984?" Well, for one thing, Apple Computer, Inc. (now Apple, Inc.) introduced its new Macintosh computer during Super Bowl XVII. The Monterey Bay Aquarium opened, and TED Conferences, LLC, the media organization that produces and distributes TED Talks, was founded. (Did you know that TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design? I didn't.) Also in 1984, Chrysler Corporation introduced the minivan to U.S. consumers. Ronald Reagan defeated Walter Mondale for the U.S. presidency.

Bird-adjacent happenings in 1984 included the release of the movie *Birdy* starring Matthew Modine and Nicolas Cage. (I've not seen this one, but it does get an 80% rating on the Tomatometer at Rotten Tomatoes.) In July, Salyut 7 cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya became the first woman to perform a space walk, and in August the space shuttle Discovery had its maiden voyage. In October, astronaut Kathryn Sullivan became the first American woman to perform a space walk. Also in October, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., opened a six-month exhibit of some of John James Audubon's hand-colored double-elephant folio bird illustrations. And, of course, no avian retrospective of 1984 would be complete without a *Birds Eye* commercial from that year: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynfRiehSVUI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynfRiehSVUI).

## NEXT PROGRAM

**Tuesday, September 5, at 6:00 PM**

**BYO**

Wesley United Methodist Church, 98 North Maple Street, Hadley

Note the date and time! This is a week earlier than usual due to scheduling issues. Although originally scheduled at Arcadia, the first meeting of our new club season has moved to Wesley Church. Blame mosquitoes and wet weather for this. We hope you can come for a casual, unintimidating social event to enjoy each other's company. Bring your own food, snacks, and drinks. Although it is not likely that we'll see many birds in the church, there might be some opportunities in the fields nearby, so bring along your binoculars. If you have none, or forget yours, Jim Lafley from the Education Committee will have some to share. See page 3.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Are you ready to renew your HBC membership for the 2023–2024 club year? Rarin' to go? Well hold your horses, pardner. The HBC board is in the process of introducing a new payment system and website that will go live October 1, 2023. This move will streamline the renewal process for you and will greatly improve the HBC member database. You will be receiving a postcard in the mail (how quaint, no?) in a few weeks as both a reminder and an introduction to the new system. If you still want to renew using a paper form, that will be possible. Stay tuned.

## FIELD TRIPS SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2023

Please contact leaders (if a phone number or email is listed) at least two days in advance of the trip to register, and if you have any questions. It's always wise to bring snacks and dress appropriately. If you want to keep a list of birds seen during the field trips, Mass Audubon has checklists for each of their sanctuaries and these can also be used as trip lists (<https://massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/birds-birding/bird-checklists>). Whether with or without a leader, please follow the American Birding Association guidelines for ethical birding (<https://hampshirebirdclub.org/aba-code-of-ethics/>) and those on our website regarding field trips (<http://hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines/>).

*Remember that we encourage carpooling. We ask that riders share costs with drivers as a matter of courtesy. The HBC recommends the current federal mileage reimbursement rate, shared by all occupants, but the rate for a vehicle is entirely up to the driver and passengers and should be determined before leaving.*

**Sunday, September 10. Mass Central Rail Trail.** 7:30 AM to noon. Join Julie Blue and Brian Zylich at the Mass Central Rail Trail. The trail has a good mix of habitats right by the Ware River, making it a good spot for migrating warblers, thrushes, and other songbirds. We will meet at the parking lot on Church St. in Ware (<https://goo.gl/maps/5WYFzw5DSryNZdbW9>). The walk is limited to 12 people. Email Julie at [Julie.blue@erg.com](mailto:Julie.blue@erg.com) to register. Email Brian at [brian.zylich@gmail.com](mailto:brian.zylich@gmail.com) for questions about directions. (E)

**Sunday, September 10. Skinner State Park.** 10 AM to noon. Members of the HBC Education Committee will provide a leader at the Skinner State Park Summit House for watching hawks and other migrants as they traverse the Holyoke Range. There is an accessible ramp where most of the watching will occur. (E)

**Monday, September 11. Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary.** 7 to 10 AM. Join Aaron Hulsey and Joe Oliverio at Arcadia's west meadows where we will look for a variety of fall migrants including warblers, sparrows, and flycatchers. We will meet next to the metal bridge and decide where to walk from there. The terrain is flat but we may end up walking through tall, wet grass and/or mud, so wear appropriate footwear. We will likely cover 1 to 2 miles. Contact Aaron Hulsey at [thomas.hulsey487@gmail.com](mailto:thomas.hulsey487@gmail.com) to sign up. (E/M)

**Sunday, September 17.** 7:30 AM to noon (potentially to 1 pm). Join Julie Blue and Brian Zylich to take a trip into Gill and to Hell's Kitchen in Northfield. We will meet at the Turners Falls Power Canal parking lot on G Street by the gate. The trip will involve easy walking along flat roads and is limited to 12 people. Email Julie at [Julie.blue@erg.com](mailto:Julie.blue@erg.com) to register. Email Brian at [brian.zylich@gmail.com](mailto:brian.zylich@gmail.com) for questions about directions. (E)

**Wednesday, September 20. Park Hill Orchard.** 7 to 9 AM. Join Jim Lafley on a walk around the Park Hill Orchard fields and woods to encounter fall migrants and resident birds getting ready for the winter. Warblers, Vireos, Woodpeckers, Sparrows, and Kinglets are some of the possibilities. We will meet at the Park Hill Orchard store parking lot and walk from there. It is a flat walk, but prepare for wet grass and some muddy spots. Contact Jim Lafley if interested at [jimlafley@gmail.com](mailto:jimlafley@gmail.com). (E)

**Sunday, October 8. East Meadows.** 7:30 to 9:00 AM. Join Aaron Hulsey and Hobie Iselin in Northampton to look for migrating sparrows and late warblers in the East Meadows. The trip will involve easy walking on flat ground but may involve mud or wet grass so wear appropriate footwear. We will meet at the gravel lot on the south side of the airport and carpool as there is limited parking in the meadows. Contact Aaron Hulsey at [thomas.hulsey487@gmail.com](mailto:thomas.hulsey487@gmail.com) to sign up or for more information. (E)

**Wednesday, November 8. Unity Park, Turners Falls.** 8 to 11 AM. Meet Jim Lafley at Unity Park in Turners Falls for a tour of the places in the area including Barton Cove, Turners Falls Power Canal, Turners Falls Airport, and other locations in search of waterfowl, sparrows, and other migrating birds. There will be very little walking as we will be birding in parking areas near the cars. Scopes will be especially helpful. Contact Jim Lafley if interested at [jimlafley@gmail.com](mailto:jimlafley@gmail.com). (E)

**Sunday, November 12. Dead Creek WMA and Lake Champlain Valley.** All day. Mike Locher heads north for the spectacle of hundreds of Snow Geese rising into the sun as a Rough-legged Hawk cruises by them. In addition to the geese and raptors, we'll look for ducks, grebes, gulls, and loons on Lake Champlain. Meet at Stop & Shop in Northampton (228 King Street) at 5 AM for carpooling. Bring a lunch if you wish (we'll stop

for food) and bring a scope if you have one. Contact Mike (413-585-5864) for further details; there's no need to register, just show up on time. (E/M)

**Field Trip designations:**

(E) – Easy walking conditions, fairly accessible for most, usually flat terrain on improved trails or roads.

(M) – Moderately difficult, more challenging trail conditions, short steep sections, longer hikes involved.

(S) – Strenuous conditions, muddy or rocky trails, steep sections, difficult footing in part.

## BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared toward beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: people young in age, from underrepresented minority groups or who have disabilities that make birding difficult. A one hour online educational session (half presentation, half discussion) is held prior to a two hour, in-person bird walk at an accessible location. All events are free and open to the public. Please help spread the word! The online presentation requires no registration (check the HBC website for the Zoom link). Those interested in attending the walk can register at [bit.ly/2023bfe](https://bit.ly/2023bfe). Upcoming sessions are:

September 16, 2023 10–11 AM: Hawks (Presentation)

September 23, 2023 7:45–10:00 AM: Mount Tom, Easthampton (Walk)

October 21, 2023 10–11 AM: Bird Feeders (Presentation)

October 28, 2023 7:45–10:00 AM Ashley Reservoir, Holyoke (Walk)

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

Welcome back, everyone, to our fall Education Committee activities!

**September 5: Binocular workshop with Jim Lafley**—Jim Lafley will do a short workshop on binoculars before the September 5 members meeting either at Wesley Church. He will discuss styles and models of binoculars, how to adjust them, and how to clean them. Please come to the meeting 30 minutes before the scheduled start time and bring your binoculars, if you would like to, or just come and learn about them. We'll have some "practice" pairs available. No need to register, just come.

**Do-It-Yourself** field trips will resume in October.

**Upcoming workshops:**

- Tuesday, Oct. 17, 7–8 PM—Birding Cape Cod with Chris Walz
- Loon workshop with Dana Fox—date and time TBA

**New member bird walks—open to all:**

1. September 10, 2023, 10 AM, at Skinner Park. We'll focus on raptors. Meet in the parking lot just before the gate.
2. November 12, 2023, 8 AM, at the Oxbow/Arcadia. We'll be looking for waterfowl.
3. March 9, 2024, evening (exact time TBA) at Park Hill Orchard in Easthampton. We'll look for woodcocks.
4. May 19, 2024, 7 AM, at Fort River (Silvio O. Conte Refuge), focusing on spring migrants.

More details will be available on the Education webpage, and we'll send out emails.

**Did you miss a workshop last year?** Well then, you are in luck. Our recorded programs are available on the [Hampshire Bird Club website](https://hampshirebirdclub.org). You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page. Scroll down to the bottom of the page of videos to find Education workshops.

<https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/>

If you have an idea for a workshop, email us at [education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org).

**We are looking for new members!** If you would like to join the Education Committee, please email [education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org).

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

It was a busy summer for new members, and we welcome all those who have joined us since June—Diana Kulmizev (Feeding Hills); Beth Bellettieri, William Blatner & Mary Cowhey (Florence); Lina Parra & Faiver Orjuela (Ware); Siobhan Pembroke (Northampton); Christine Lau & Michael Malone, Anna Courtemanche, Mik Dresser (Amherst); Xiaohui & Hugo Restall (Southwick); Dawn Klein (Cummington); Gail Gramarossa (Belchertown); and Christian Carson (Easthampton)

More than 140 new members have joined us this year (wow!), so introduce yourself when you see someone you don't recognize. Chances are, they are new members of our community and would appreciate a warm welcome.

We look forward to meeting you all on the trail or at a program!

Donna Lee Ubertalli, Membership Secretary, [membership@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org)

### A CHAT WITH DONNA LEE UBERTALLI

Donna Lee, who is the HBC Membership Secretary, and I had a chat about bird watching, moving back to the Valley, and the HBC, in early August. What follows is a lightly edited account of our chat.

*Newsletter: To start us off, tell me what you do when you're not birding?*

Donna Lee Ubertalli: I'm an avid quilter. I've been quilting for about five years, and I love it. I'm always trying to get five or ten minutes in front of my sewing machine. It's a hobby that works great with birding because I can do it when the weather is not good.

*N: I know you moved to the Valley not all that long ago. How did you find the HBC?*

DLU: I started birding a little more than ten years ago. I've moved around a lot for my job. The first thing I do when I move is to look for fellow bird watchers. When I knew that I was coming back to Western Mass, I wanted to find my birding people. So I looked around, and the Hampshire Bird Club seemed to be a very active club with great field trips. I think field trips are a really great way to go birding and meet other birders. It's friendly, it's casual, it's not dependent on your level of knowledge.

I grew up in the area, but I wasn't a birder when I was growing up. So for me there is a lot of really fun discovery of all these places that I knew growing up but never knew how special they are. The Do-It-Yourself field trips that the Education Committee runs lets participants explore new birding areas. An example is the trip to Lake Wallace in Belchertown. The DIY team supplied a map for the area and made a list of five target birds. Then a month later they had an online meeting for participants to talk about their findings. These trips have been fantastic because they have introduced me to local areas where I now can go birding on my own.

The programs from the Education Committee also have been great. Matt Schenk gave one about coastal

birding in Rhode Island. I grew up going to Misquamicut and the area around it. I knew in childhood the places he was describing but I had no idea about the birds that were there.

*N: Yes, the pandemic has changed the way the club operates, with more online offerings and different sorts of offerings. What other things about the HBC do you like?*

DLU: I like that the club really is very inclusive, no matter your birding skill level. Also, every time that there is a Birding For Everyone walk, I see, as Membership Secretary, about ten new members join the club. The BFE program introduces people to birding in an accessible way, and that goes a long way toward bringing a more diverse population into bird watching. Our monthly programs are usually very technical, aimed for more experienced birders and possibly intimidating for new birders. So overall the club has beginning, intermediate, and advanced topics—something for everyone.

*N: You've been the Membership Secretary a bit more than a year. What's that been like?*

DLU: It actually has been a really interesting journey. I have moved many times in my adult life for work and I think the best way to get involved in a new place is to dive in and volunteer to do something. Doing that lets you meet people and build relationships. Some of my best friends are from birding clubs of the past. That was my impetus, but I had no idea what I was getting into.

The job is pretty complicated. The membership list is messy with lots of data in it. I send out letters to all new members. I get little notes from people. I get

many requests to be added to mailing lists and I get many sorts of questions about the club.

For our in-person meetings I sit at the membership table with the name tags right near the front door, right near the cookies. I introduce myself and have that first conversation when people arrive. I know that it's hard to walk into a room where you are the new person. You feel a little self-conscious and you don't know how things work. Probably you don't know anybody, and nobody knows you. So I try to be the friendly face at the front door.

I'm excited about the possibility of a new online membership system that will streamline some of this. I know that would help a lot with the job for all kinds of reasons. It's the right way to maintain a complicated membership list and I think it will make it less daunting for somebody else to take on the job in the future.

*N: The Membership Secretary interacts with everybody in the club, so he or she is probably the one person that most everybody knows. The President also is well known because he or she leads member meetings.*

DLU: Yes, Derek (Allard, the current club President) is up front and visible. I asked him to welcome new members at club meetings, encouraging new members to raise their hands and introduce themselves. It's nice to see the long-time members greet each other, and I would like to have that for newer members, too.

*N: Can you point to something that got you interested in nature and birds in particular?*

DLU: My dad's an entomologist. I grew up with the Peterson field guide and a pair of binoculars on our kitchen table. We had bird feeder outside our kitchen window, and I remember the Evening Grosbeaks that stopped there. That was my spark, as people say. I also remember the Northern Cardinals, which were so rare back then. If we got a cardinal at our feeder in Holyoke, that was really noteworthy.

We used to hike up Mount Holyoke at Skinner State Park and my dad would point out the wild flowers and say the scientific names of the trees. He was a real nature guy. My mom's a seamstress, so I got that other side from her. But out in the woods with my dad, he taught me a lot.

*N: Your spark bird, the Evening Grosbeak, is the same one for both Scott Sumner [Ed. note: see June 2020 newsletter] and Derek Allard [see November 2022 newsletter]. It seems that having an Evening*

*Grosbeak as the spark bird is an indicator for an HBC officer position.*

DLU: Ha. That's good. How I got involved in organized birding was when I moved from New York City to Croton-on-Hudson, which is up the Hudson River in Westchester County. Eagles nest all around there. I didn't know anything about birds. There was a big eagle fest in February in our town and I thought that sounded like a fun thing to do, so I went with some friends. People there said that, if I was interested, I should meet this guy, Charlie Roberto, and go on a walk that he leads, which I did. From there I took a Raptors for Rookies class and went on a hawk watch in Nyack, New York. That's where I really got started. The watch was with Hudson River Audubon, with very experienced birders who were willing to share their knowledge. Some were collecting data on the hawks for research purposes. So I just got hooked.

*N: Do you have a favorite bird watching story?*

DLU: One of the first birding trips I ever went on was to Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge in Delaware, and I think it might have been my first traveling trip. The leaders said to meet at a particular birding location at twelve o'clock and to bring a lunch. They didn't give very good directions for where to meet. I was with my dad and, unfortunately, we went to the wrong place but we finally figured out where we were supposed to be and arrived at noon. We were sitting in our car eating our fried chicken and drinking our Dr. Peppers when this woman came up and tapped on the window of the car. She said "Are you the Ubertallis?" We said we were and were glad to see somebody because there was nobody else around. She said that we were late and that everybody else was down the trail. My dad put the chicken in his pocket and kicked over the Dr. Pepper as we scrambled out of the car and ran to the trail. What we didn't realize was that when they said twelve o'clock that meant, even though they said to bring a lunch, that we were to meet at twelve midnight, not twelve noon!

On that trip I realized that these are rules of birding that I needed to learn. I learned how to look through binoculars. I learned what a life list was.

Now I just like being out in the field. I'm not an expert. I've been birding for ten years. Other people are way ahead of me. I am getting to the point that I might be willing to pair up with someone else to help lead a field trip, maybe as the organizer.

## CONSERVATION COMMITTEE CORNER

This offering begins a series from the Conservation Committee.

### Story of a Pollinator Garden

Summer has surprised me with the lushness of my year-old pollinator garden.

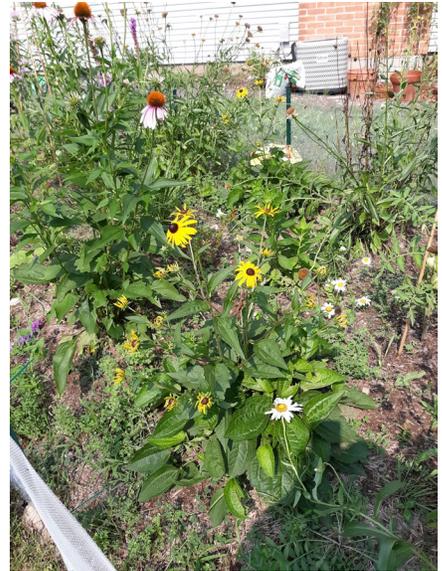
Last July, after months of planning, I installed a pollinator garden. My planning included testing soil, learning about no till gardening to save topsoil, researching native species plants, and reading several books about the importance of native species pollinator gardens. I found sources for native species plants that are not cultivars, which is not as simple as one might think. Then there was the work of laying down biodegradable paper to discourage grass growth, getting assistance in bringing loam and raking it onto the no-till garden plot, adding a bit of organic chicken manure, and applying lots of garden dreams and prayers to create the foundation. I then carefully planted the first ten native species to inhabit this newly hallowed ground. I also planted seeds of other native species in pots that are destined for other locations within the garden, hopeful perennials for the years to come.

Curious neighbors have inquired as to what I am doing, providing an opportunity to educate and encourage them to plant for pollinators. Dog walkers, joggers, families strolling by, and neighborhood children have been watching as the yard is transforming into a wildlife sanctuary.

Every day now I enjoy watching American Goldfinches delighting in Echinacea (Cone Flower) seeds plus Ruby-throated Hummingbirds dining on Cardinal Flower and then gorging themselves on nectar from Hot Pink Phlox (Jeanne). There are also visits by several types of sparrows and finches, Northern Cardinals, Grey Catbirds, Tufted Titmice, Chickadees, and a rare Indigo Bunting along with subtle explorations by

Starlings, Blackbirds, and an occasional Mourning Dove. They are drawn by an abundance of bugs, seeds, a welcoming bird and butterfly bath, and some shade from the tall natives that inhabit its boundaries.

What a year ago had been a combination of grass spotted with clover and violas bordered by non-native day lilies has emerged as a new ecosystem, inviting a variety of butterflies, including Northern Tiger Swallowtails, Cabbage Whites, Bronze Coppers, Mustard Whites, Monarchs, and as well as a variety of moths. The “bunny proof” fencing and posts have provided a resting and hunting perch for the birds. It’s been amazing to watch the transformation and the responsiveness of the birds and other wildlife to a safe, pesticide and artificial-fertilizer-free environment. The garden is a rich reward that brings smiles to my face every time I wander its edges as the sun rises, while I listen to the dawn chorus.



Carol's pollinator garden.

(Photo by Carol Fournier)



Delphinium "False Blue".  
(Photo by Carol Fournier)

**Resources:** *Bringing Nature Home: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard* by Doug Tallamy; [Home - Homegrown National Park](#); [TALLAMY'S HUB - Homegrown National Park](#); The Nature Conservancy [Climate Change Solutions](#) | [The Nature Conservancy](#); National Audubon [Plants For Birds](#) ([audubon.org](#))

Reflection offered by Carol A. Fournier, HBC Conservation Committee Member

## SAVE THE DATE

The Northampton (MANO) Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 17, 2023. Be there or be square.

## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The following programs are offered by Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. More programs can be found at [www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia](http://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia).

### **Circle of Nature Art Class—September 23, September 30, October 7, and October 14; 9–11 AM for all**

Cultivate nature appreciation through the Circle of Nature process designed by your instructor, Carol Fournier. Using your favorite artistic medium, you'll answer questions and create images that express your relationship to the natural world. You'll work on a portion of your Circle of Nature and have an opportunity to share it with other participants at each of the four sessions of the class, completing your Circle at the last class.

Carol A. Fournier, MA, MS, is a visual artist and art therapist. She enjoys finding and giving expression to beauty in many forms through photography, art, writing, music, gardening, and caring for the natural world. Carol views the arts as a way of telling the story of places, nature, people, all creatures, and culture. Carol is a retired faculty member at the University of Vermont, emerita founder and faculty of the Silver Dove Institute, and an author, photographer, and musician. She is an artist at the Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary Art House and a member of the Hampshire Bird Club. For more information and to register, visit the Mass Audubon Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary website ([massaudubon.org/arcadia](http://massaudubon.org/arcadia)).

### Star Island birding

HBC member Connie Lentz wants to make members aware of September weekend birding on Star Island, off Portsmouth, New Hampshire, run by Eric Masterson. He is an Irish ornithologist who wrote the book *Bird Watching in New Hampshire* and who specializes in migration. Connie reports that she has been going to these weekends for about a decade and that they are inexpensive, a three-hour drive from the Valley, and amazing. She notes that the birding is excellent but that there are drawbacks, including no showers and the need to wash one's own dishes. More information is at <https://ericmasterson.com/star-island-birding-weekends-may-16-18-september-19-21/>.

## FAREWELL RBA

When you renew your HBC membership this year, the option for the Rare Bird Alert will not be there. The HBC board decided to retire the RBA since there are several options to follow the bird scene that are updated much more frequently than we could keep up on the RBA.

## ONE LAST THING

Back in the early days of the club, before we added the “H” to the name, we were having trouble during our membership drives:



*Rhymes with Orange* by Hilary B. Price and Rina Piccolo. Reproduced by permission for nonprofit organizations. Visit them at [comicskingdom.com/rhymes-with-orange](http://comicskingdom.com/rhymes-with-orange)

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)

Dave Gross, Editor