

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
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WOW! What a bird club! This edition contains the field trip schedule through next summer, which boasts no less than *thirty* trips, five of which are new. What with that, the monthly program introduction, a couple of trip reports, and the general business of the club, this editorial has to end on the next line. How lucky for you, gentle reader! Maybe I have just enough room to tell you about what happened to me on the way home from

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PROGRAMS

On **Monday, November 12**, *Sam Fried* will talk about one of the most exciting birding destinations on Earth when he presents **Bolivia: The Lost World of Noel Kempff Mercado National Park**.

Sam is a Past-President of the Hartford Audubon Society. Hundreds of his photographs and dozens of his articles have appeared in birding media worldwide, including *National Audubon*, *Birder's World*, *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Birding*, and *Living Bird Quarterly*. Sam wrote several chapters of the new *Insight Guides* book on birding in North America, (published by the *Discovery Channel*), and writes a weekly column as the wildlife expert for *Gorp.com* on AOL.

Mr. Fried co-founded Flights of Fancy Adventures, Inc., a birding and natural history travel company offering small-group, low-cost, high-quality trips to North-, Central-, and South American destinations. Sam reckons he has seen 730 species in North America, and photographed 702.

We will travel with Sam by plane to the forests, savannas, floodplains, plateaus and awe-inspiring waterfalls of one of the most remote and pristine national parks in South America. This area has changed little since Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote about it some ninety years ago in "The Lost World." In these vast, uninhabited forests, dissected by dark rivers, birds and animals thrive in one of the world's largest contiguous wildernesses. The park, about the size of Massachusetts, has a bird list of almost 700, and 130 known mammals, with new species being discovered constantly. It is tempting to imagine, as Conan Doyle did, that a dinosaur may be among them!

Coming Up.....

December 3: Members meeting.

January 14, 2002: Dave Small on Birds, Butterflies and Beyond.

February 11, 2002: Bill Danielson on bird rehabilitation.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Geoff LeBaron and two others took a swing through **the Connecticut River Valley** on **September 29**. Highlights were one Northern Goshawk, one Peregrine Falcon, and one female Connecticut Warbler. In finding this bird for the first time, Betsy Higgins breaks a long-standing pact with the editor. The group also had a few late broadwings, more than 50 American Pipits, a significant number of migrating Northern Flickers and tons of Red-winged Blackbirds, amongst a total of 55 species.

Cape May, New Jersey. October 5-8.

Some places in North America have taken on almost mythological significance for birders. Think of the Rio Grande Valley, south-eastern Arizona, Point Pelee, and Hawk Mountain. Perhaps the most hyped of all is Cape May. Reading Pete Dunne, Clay Sutton and others, or perhaps listening to the awed recollections of some lucky mortal, one gets the impression that warblers drip from every tree, and migrating hawks swirl like gnats in the skies. If, however, you have been there while the cape languished in a soup of still, hot, humid air, with nary a migrant to be seen, you might be forgiven for wondering what all the fuss is about. Well, there are now nineteen Hampshire birders out there promulgating the myth as well!

The tone was set on Friday as we birded Brigantine (the Forsyth National Wildlife Refuge), just north of Atlantic City. There were several peregrines, a nice group of Pectoral Sandpipers, an American Bittern (yards away), two American Avocets, and a large flock of mixed waterfowl, including hundreds of Snow Geese, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Gadwall, and teal, being harassed at intervals by a Bald Eagle. Saturday was rainy, but highlighted by a nice show of Royal and Forster's terns obligingly close to the (dry) pavilion at Cape May Point State Park, and thousands of tree swallows boiling in the air north of the deserted hawk-watch platform. The weather report promised passage of a cold front overnight, bringing with it stiff north-westerlies, and lots of birds!

On Sunday morning we arrived, clutching coffee, (or whatever other stimulants were needed) at Higbee Beach, an area of managed fields, hedgerows and woods, very close to the tip of the cape itself. The brisk northerlies were indeed in evidence, and prevented us from hearing more than a few chips from above. However, as dawn broke over the hedgerows, it revealed birds by the hundreds streaming through the undergrowth and overhead. During a couple of hours at our location, we estimated several thousand Palm Warblers, hundreds of Yellow-rumped Warblers, and numerous other migrants. Dozens of flickers flashed yellow in the low morning sun as they wheeled and darted over the fields. Sharp-shinned Hawks and kestrels beat their way northward, having been driven unwittingly to the tip of the cape on the wind, diving mercilessly in pursuit of unseen targets amongst the brush. We simply stood in front of a sunny patch and waited as the sparrows, buntings, and warblers emerged to warm up. When eventually we made our way to the hawk-watch platform, the parade of accipiters, kestrels, merlins, harriers, eagles and peregrines, (plus a surprising number of Broad-winged Hawks), was fully revealed.

There is much else that could be said about the hundreds of skimmers on the beach, the Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Higbee, the encore performance on Monday morning, and the 141 species totalled on the trip. However, perhaps the best thing that can be said is that the club hopes to go again next year!

Coming Trips (see also the Fall Field Trip Schedule, sent previously)

November 4. Berkshire Lakes. All day. Migrating waterfowl and non-migratory donuts. Call Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) for information and to register.

November 14. Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. Half day. Meet Harvey Allen across the road from Atkins Farms in Amherst at 8 am. Call Harvey at 413-253-7963 for more information.

November 18. East Quabbin. This trip has not yet been cancelled, but the prognosis is not good at the time of writing, due to access restrictions. Please call Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) to register your interest, and he will keep you informed.

November 23. Turkey Trot to Cape Ann. Sea ducks, alcids, maybe a Snowy Owl. No access restrictions here, save the ones you impose on yourself through over-consumption of poultry at Thanksgiving. Call Al Richards (413-665-2761) to register.

December 12. Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. With Harvey (413 253 7963). You know the drill.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Rain or shine, snow or sleet, ready or not, it's time for the 101st National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count! Take this opportunity to contribute to the longest running database in ornithology! Join the more than 50,000 volunteers in the US, Canada, the Caribbean, Latin America and Pacific Islands as they take to the field to count birds! You don't have to be an expert and you don't have to devote the entire day to this effort. You can also contribute from the warmth and comfort of your own home by being a feeder watcher. Everyone is welcome!

Some of the HBC December meeting is devoted to allowing area leaders and volunteers to get together and begin planning their efforts for the Northampton count. For most, the day starts at dawn, but for the die-hards, the owl can start at midnight. There is typically a compilation of results which commences in the late afternoon.

The **Northampton Christmas Count** (in its 68th year) will be held on **Sunday, December 16**. For information contact Jan Ortiz (413) 549-1768 jtortiz@aol.com or Mary Alice Wilson (413) 548-9078 mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu. A potluck supper will be held at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst the evening of the count. If you cannot participate in the field but would like to help by preparing food that would also be appreciated.

The **Quabbin Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 29**. For information contact Scott Surner (413) 253-7486 ssurner@aol.com. Please note that as of this writing, parts of the Quabbin Reservoir remain closed.

The **Springfield Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 15**. For information contact Bruce Kindseth (860) 745-9593 kindsebr@aol.com

The **Athol Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 15**. For information contact David Small (413) 249-2094 dhsml@gis.net.

The **Greenfield Count** occurs on **Sunday, December 30**. Contact Mark Fairbrother at (413) 367-2695

RARE BIRD ALERT

The **Rare Bird Alert** is now in place for the 2001-2002 year. The telephone tree is fixed until September 2002, but new members may be added to the email list by contacting Merry Cushing (413-253-5266; cushing@oit.umass.edu). Don't forget the **Voice of Audubon at 1-888-224-6444**, which is a frequently-updated account of interesting birds being seen in our region. Jan Ortiz welcomes your reports (include numbers seen, please). You can reach her at jtortiz@aol.com or 413-549-1768.

BOUTIQUE LAUNCHES NEW PRODUCT LINE!!

Before you call that overly-red Song Sparrow a Fox Sparrow, wouldn't it be good to know when they are supposed to be here? There is an HBC home-grown **field guide supplement** which will help you know just that. Through the efforts of HBC alumnus Dianne Quilty, and more recently, resurrective work by the stalwart Bill Venman, there is now a series of labels, covering all birds on the Mass. Daily Field Card. These identify birds as permanent residents, or give their dates of arrival and departure in this state. They also indicate whether the bird breeds locally, and abundance information. The labels are adhesive-backed, and can be affixed next to species descriptions in your favorite field guide.

All the above for \$4 at meetings (from the Boutique, of course) or \$5 by mail from Sue Fletcher (413-253-2102; scfletch@aol.com). What are you waiting for?

LOTS MORE GOOD STUFF

The following folks helped with the recent **WFCR fund drive**: John and Merry Cushing, Sue Fletcher, David Gross, Mary Alice Wilson, Bob and Hannah Zimmerman. **Thanks** for getting our name out there, and helping a good cause.

Anne Cann wants you to know that the **library** is still at Hitchcock, but that it is not currently open on Saturdays. It is open on Tuesday to Friday, 9 am – 3 pm. Don't forget that Ann can bring materials to meetings, given a few days notice. She asks that you return outstanding library materials, if you have them, at the December meeting.

The **Holyoke Range Ecological Working Group** would like you to know about an exciting opportunity to learn about and participate in local wildlife conservation. Susan Morse, the Founder of Keeping Track, will present a program on **New England wildlife at 7 pm on Tuesday, December 4, at the Chapin Auditorium, Mt. Holyoke College** in South Hadley. The program is intended to introduce the animals of the region and techniques used in recording and monitoring their populations. Keeping Track is a conservation organization, based in Vermont and active nationally. They aim to establish a long-term wildlife-monitoring program on the Mt. Holyoke Range, employing trained local volunteers. The December 4 program will also introduce this effort. If you would like to know more, please contact Kristin DeBoer of the HREWG at 413-253-6720, or kdeboer@restore.org.

If You Cannot Make It to Meetings.....

A number of members are unable to attend meetings because of long-term health concerns which make driving difficult or impossible. We hope there are other members who can offer a ride to someone from the same geographic area who needs one.

If you need a ride to meetings, or can offer one, please contact **Sally Venman (549 1098)**. She will attempt to match people from each group. We want to emphasize that this is intended for those with long-term medical concerns, and not to solve short-term difficulties such as car trouble.

PROCRASTINATORS READ THIS NOW!!!

If you have been a member in recent years, but have **not** paid a membership fee this year (since September, 2001), you will find the dreaded Dunning Letter enclosed with this newsletter. We'd hate to lose you. Please rejoin today!

That's all for now!

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