



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc

## Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

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**January, 2002**

### PROGRAMS

*All programs are held at 7:30 pm in Immanuel Lutheran Church, Amherst. The church is located at 867 North Pleasant Street. Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.*

**Monday, January 14:** *"Birds, Butterflies and Beyond"* with *Dave Small*.

There is a strange enchantment falling over our happy little birding community. You've seen others fall under the spell and maybe you have even felt insidious fingers dragging your binoculars to an angle no birder would ever allow.

You're in the meadows under the expert tutelage of one of the wonderful birders for whom the club is known. As you turn to fumble in your daypack for one of those little cheese and cracker sandwiches, the silhouette of an accipiter flashes into the extreme limits of your peripheral vision. You fumble for the binoculars, and finally get them targeted on the retreating backside of the bird. Phrases like "head protrudes well beyond the leading edge of the wing"; "rounded or squared-off tail"; and "pale supercilium" wander aimlessly through your head, looking for some way to be useful. Finally, as the bird vanishes into the distance you rediscover the power of speech and ask, with feigned nonchalance,

"Hey Josephine, did you get a look at that one?"

Imagine your surprise when you find your companion, directing their glasses at the ground, four feet away.

"Well, I think it's an Early Hairstreak, but those wing markings are a little odd."

**Dave Small** will take a more serious look at the way birders diversify their interests into other areas of natural history, using the skills they develop while observing birds. Mr. Small is the Forest and Park Regional Coordinator for the Quabbin Section of the Metropolitan District Commission. He is also President of the Athol Bird and Nature Club and the Millers River Watershed Council. Dave directs the Millers River Environmental Center and sits on the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership Board. He co-founded the Dragonfly Institute (of Athol and Worcester) and teaches at the well-known Butterfly Institutes, run by the Massachusetts Butterfly Club.

### Coming Up

**February 11:** Bill Danielson about bird rehabilitation.

**March 11:** Lori Sanders goes behind the radio show.

**April 8:** Andrew Farnsworth explores radar ornithology.

The *Washington Post* asked readers to take any word, alter it by adding, subtracting or changing one letter, and then supply a new definition. One of the entries:

**sarchasm:** the gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the recipient who doesn't get it.

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

The 2001 **Turkey Trot to Cape Ann/ Plum Island and Cherry Hill Reservoir** on **November 23** yielded 70 species, including 21 species of waterfowl. The group found all three scoters, guillemots, gannets, Harlequin Ducks and Purple Sandpipers. The redoubtable Mr. Bieda picked out a Pacific Loon, (seen only in flight by most), and a King Eider served to swell the life lists of some birders. Thanks Al, for this unsolicited trip report!

**Harvey's mid-week group** on **December 12** ventured to Windsor in search of the Gray Jay. As many found when they arrived at the site, the bird was immediately visible and very cooperative. For Sue Fletcher this was evidently enough to complete a wonderful day of birding. She let out a jubilant squeal, leapt straight back in the car, and returned to the valley!\* The rest of the group found Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, briefly enjoyed the hospitality of Charlie Quinlan, and lunched at The Creamery under the giant cow before sauntering back to civilization.

\*In fairness to Sue, some of us do have commitments.....

### Coming Trips (see also the Winter-Late Summer Trip List)

**Wednesday, January 16. Feast or Famine: Winter birding in January.** Harvey Allen looks for winter finches, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, Horned Larks and other capricious winter fare. Meet Harvey at 8 AM across from Atkins Farms.

**Saturday, January 19. Winter finches.** Shirley Hillborn will spend up to three quarters of a day looking for Purple Finches, siskins, redpolls, crossbills and their ilk. Meet at the Hitchcock center at 8 AM.

**Saturday, January 26. Coastal Rhode Island.** Geoff LeBaron will explore areas like Ninigret Pond, Point Judith, and Napatree Point. The milder temperatures prevailing over this region accommodate a slightly different set of wintering species, possibly including Red-shouldered Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Redhead, Canvasback and Short-eared Owl. Meet at the Northampton Stop and Shop on King St. at 6:30 AM. Please call Geoff at (413) 268 9281 for details and to register.

**Saturday, February 2. Maine's South Shore.** Scott Sumner will go looking for winter specialties and almost anything is possible. Real northern species like Great Grey Owl and Ivory Gull are not impossible. Call Scott at (413) 253 7486 for details and to register.

**Saturday, February 9. Plymouth/Falmouth.** Al Richards and Shawn Smolen-Morton will explore this intriguing winter birding area, which includes Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary. Some previous highlights include Yellow-breasted Chat, Eurasian Wigeon, Redhead, Long-eared and Short-eared Owls. Meet at Al's house at 5:30 AM. Call Al (413 665 2761) or Shawn (413 863 4569) for further details or directions.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:jtortiz@aol.com) or 413-549-1768.

## CHRISTMAS COUNT

The **Northampton Count** took place on **Sunday, December 16**. There were 18 feeder watchers, 24 owlers, 94 daytime participants, and a lot of wonderful birds. The **Quabbin Count** occurred on **Saturday, December 29** in spite of recent concerns about security. More than forty participants located 67 species, including the highlights listed below.

Northampton (High Counts)		Quabbin (Highlights)	
Red-tailed Hawk	116	Common Loon	18
Merlin	3	Horned Grebe	16
Wild Turkey	127	Wood Duck	1
Ring-billed Gull	996	Ring-necked Duck	41
Belted Kingfisher	23	Greater Scaup	5
Red-bellied Woodpecker	63	Common Goldeneye	79
Tufted Titmouse	583	Hooded Merganser	108
White-breasted Nuthatch	391	Bald Eagle	10
Carolina Wren	25	Golden Eagle	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	332	Ruffed Grouse	26
Eastern Bluebird	298	Black-headed Gull	1
Hermit Thrush	7	Barred Owl	10
<b>Nashville Warbler</b>	1	Northern Saw-whet Owl	9
		Common Raven	16
		Boreal Chickadees	2
		Brown Creeper	32
		Golden-crowned Kinglet	242
		Purple Finch	8

(Note that Nashville Warbler is a new species for the Northampton Christmas Count).

**Thanks** are due to all who participated in both counts. **Special thanks** are due to **Jan Ortiz** and **Mary Alice Wilson** (Northampton) as well as **Scott Sumner** and **Bill Lafley** (Quabbin) who coordinated the respective counts. This involves enormous investments of time, effort, and patience. An **honorable mention** goes to **Joanne Parker** who set up and broke down the wonderful Northampton potluck. In addition, the Quabbin organizers acknowledge the cooperation of the MDC management and rangers, the State Police, and the National Guard, without whom the Quabbin Count could not have proceeded.

## LIBRARY

HBC has a substantial library, located at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst. **Anne Cann** maintains a collection of birding resources including field guides, bird-finding guides to almost every major birding destination in the U.S., and some overseas locations, natural histories, periodicals and videos. Why *buy* for that once-in-a-lifetime trip to the Rio Grande valley, when you could *borrow*? Items can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement.

**The collection is cataloged on our website. You can reach it in person during Hitchcock hours (9-3 Tuesday-Friday). Please contact Anne (413-253-7753; cann@uhs.umass.edu) if you would like her to bring something to the January meeting.**

### FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Many of you have helped folks find care for injured birds by having them call **Barbara Skelly's Center for Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW)**. Now CROW has an opportunity to provide both a permanent rehabilitation and volunteer training center at the cabin they have been using in Hawley. The 73 acres will also be protected from development (by a permanent Conservation Restriction to the Franklin Land Trust) and will be a great birding/wildlife site. *If you can help in any way with the fund-raising (\$80,000 for 73 acres, deadline January 15), contact **Barbara (413-625-2595)** or send a tax-deductible contribution for the CROW project to the **Franklin Land Trust, PO Box 216, Ashfield, MA 01330 (413-628-4696)**.*

### Massachusetts Birder's Meeting

**Date:** Saturday, February 2, 2002 at 8 am

**Location:** Ecotarium, 222 Harrington Way, Worcester, MA 01604.

This meeting is intended to create awareness of the Massachusetts Important Bird Areas (IBA) program and will also feature "Birds in Art" displays. Registration will take place from 8:00 to 8:45 am. **Wayne Petersen** will then provide a General Introduction and Welcome. **Bob Durand**, Secretary of Environmental Affairs in this state, will address the forum on the subject of "Biodiversity in Massachusetts." **Henry Woolsey** and **Robert Askins** will then follow with presentations concerning the Massachusetts Biomap Project, and "Restoring New England's Birds," respectively.

Perhaps the big hook for many will be the keynote address, given by **David Allen Sibley**, followed by workshops on birds in art and a book signing.

For more information, and a registration form, please call (781) 259 9506 ext. 7401, or go to [www.massaudubon.org/iba](http://www.massaudubon.org/iba). The cost is \$24 for Mass. Audubon members, and \$30 for non-members. Space is limited.

### Arcadia Programs

#### Tracking: Relearning an Ancient Art

John McCarter, Naturalist, Paul Rezendez Nature Programs

Saturday, January 26: 9:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

*For more details, and to register for programs at Arcadia, contact **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton MA 01027. Telephone (413) 584-3009.***

### Oh and By the Way.....

Don't forget **Backyard Birds** on Strong Avenue in Northampton (near the Eastside Grill). They really are in our backyard, and they offer HBC members a 10% discount on their extensive range of books, audio resources, gifts, feeders and other avian paraphernalia. This is LOCAL at its best. Your dollar stays here!

## Hitchcock Programs

**Moods of Nature and Painting** - Rebecca Burrill, Ed.D., Artist  
Saturday, January 19 from 1 - 4 p.m.

**Moonless Magic** - Ron Woodland, Astronomy for All  
Thursday, January 17 at 7 p.m.

**The Art of Aromatherapy** - Carrie Desmarais, Affinity Herbal Practice  
Saturdays, January 26, February 9 from 1 - 4 p.m.

**Winter Festival** - Hitchcock Center staff and local storytellers  
Saturday, February 2 from noon-3 p.m.

**An Icelandic Evening** - Ted Watt (naturalist); Marybeth Bridegam (Cross Culture, Inc.)  
February 12, 2002 at 7:00 p.m.

**Spring Birding Class** - Scott Sumner, Birder  
Classroom Sessions: Wednesdays 7 - 9 p.m. March 27, April 3, 10, 17, 24, May 1, 8, 15, 29  
Field Trips: Saturdays 7a.m - noon. March 30 - June 1, 2002  
Members: \$145. Non-members: \$175

The ever-popular Spring Birding Class is back for the 24th year. Scott has been birding for over 25 years, served as the President of the Hampshire Bird Club, and the Voice of Audubon for Western Mass. During this 10-week course, Scott will emphasize identification, bird topography, distribution, and overall migration patterns. The majority of the field trips will be half days with an all day trip to Plum Island at the end of May.

*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](http://www.hitchcockcenter.org).*

Well, prior to this newsletter, I was lost in a deep and profound post-“*Lord of the Rings*” reverie. Now, if you don’t mind, I am going to return to it. Farewell for now!

David Peake-Jones: 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com