



## Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 18, No. 10

**June, 2002**

June is here. Birds have pretty much gotten to where they need to be for the earnest, wonderful, and unforgiving business of procreation. No doubt many of us are settling down for a summer season of vacation, home improvement, long days by the pool, birding trips to distant, exotic locations, and all manner of things that were neglected during the warbler-bright days of May. I suppose procreation cannot be ruled out for a small minority of we birders, also.

This publication will neither be procreating, catching up on neglected chores, or having the grandkids over. It is going to aestivate for a couple of merciful months. Who knows what strange literary form will emerge when the chrysalis splits in September?

The club, on the other hand, never truly stops. As I write, Al Richards and friends are running afoul of the State Police at Bradley Airport. There are great trips scheduled throughout June, July and August, including the rejuvenated Connecticut Lakes weekend, Mt Greylock, Westover, New South Beach and Harvey's mid-week exploration of breeding birds in Shutesbury. I want to draw your attention, in particular to the Bartholemew's Cobble trip, scheduled for June 15. This collaboration with the Trustees of Reservations is a new venture for the club, and a chance for us to become better acquainted with the business of actually saving habitat for the birds we love to watch. Don Reid will be our guide, and his knowledge of the broader ecology of the reservation promises to provide birding with a difference. Please note also that the contact details for this trip have changed from those published in the Winter-Late Summer Field Trip Schedule.

### PROGRAMS

*Programs are held at Immanuel Lutheran Church: 867 North Pleasant St., Amherst at 7:30 p.m.*

Please join us on **June 10**, as **Dr. Marta Hersek** looks into the secret life of that most vocal but cryptic forest denizen, **the Ovenbird**.

Marta Hersek completed a Ph.D. in Animal Behavior at the University of California, Davis in 1990, focusing on the behavioral interactions between Ground Squirrels and Northern Pacific Rattlesnakes. Since that time, she has taught at U.C., Davis, Drexel University, and Rutgers before moving to Northeastern University. Her research has extended to the behavior of the Northern Mockingbird, and detailed studies of Ovenbirds in forest fragments.

Dr Hersek has been active in outreach and adult education programs at the National Zoological Park. She consulted for a *National Geographic* special on Ground Squirrels and rattlesnakes, and solicits/edits feature articles for *Bird Observer* magazine. She currently teaches at Northeastern University in Boston, where she is the Associate Director of the ELMO program. Far from being concerned with shrill, red muppets, this program brings quality science education to non-science majors, and, according to Marta, new perspectives to science educators.

## Coming Programs

The program for next year is shaping up to be full of interest, and with the potential for a couple of “BLOCKBUSTER” events. Here is the latest from Geoff LeBaron, our program chair.

- September 9, 2002:** **Wayne Petersen** on *Iceland*  
**October 21, 2002:** To be announced  
**November 18, 2002:** **Bob Askins.** “*Ecology and Conservation of Birds of Open Habitats*”  
**December 9, 2002:** Members Meeting  
**January 13, 2003:** **Robert S. Ridgely** on the *Jocotoco Foundation*  
**February 10, 2003:** **Paul Baisich.** “*A Shade-Grown Coffee Future: Optimism for Birds*”  
**March 10, 2003:** To be announced  
**April 14, 2003:** **Tom Litwin** about the *Harriman Expedition*  
**May 12, 2003:** **Kenn Kaufmann.** “*Migration from the Bird’s Point of View*”  
**June 9, 2003:** To be announced

Waiting on our mystery speaker before they are assigned dates are **Mara Silver** (Connecticut River Valley Swallows), and **Geoff LeBaron** (Galapagos Islands). Stay tuned!

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

**Shirley Hillborn** and **Anne Lombard** met about seven others to continue the “**Leisurely and Local**” series at **Graves Farm on May 4**. The Cliff Swallows had not yet returned. However, lots of Tree Swallows and one Barn Swallow sufficed quite well. Birds of note included a Blackburnian Warbler and a great look at a Broad-winged Hawk. The group heard Black-throated Green Warbler, saw nesting Robins, a Black and White Warbler, Baltimore Orioles and Eastern Bluebirds. Later, four people went to Fitzgerald Lake to view the mystery nest (finally identified as that of a Cooper’s Hawk) and two Brown Creepers nesting in a precarious piece of bark hanging from a tree.

Thank you, Shirley, for this report.

Fourteen early risers met **Don Kroodsm**a at the Station Road entrance to the bike path at five a.m. on **Sunday, May 12**, identifying each other in the dark by voice and general size and shape. As the group assembled, we listened to Titmice, and Great-horned Owls and Woodcock in the distance. Then we heard the dawn song of the Blue-winged Warbler—not the bee-buzz of later in the day—and it was the Western Massachusetts dialect, not the song noted in the Sibley book, which is the Upstate New York dialect! As we moved slowly down the path, listening carefully to the songs around us, Don discussed research and theories about what the males are doing, and how the females are reacting. "They all know each other. They know exactly who's who." He noted the songs of birds answering each other, subordinate birds changing their songs to match dominant birds, Song Sparrows singing one song for a while, then pausing before beginning a new song. (Actually, just pausing, but they were SUPPOSED to begin a new song.) Harvey Allen drew the group's attention to a Cuckoo calling in the distance, Mary Alice Wilson and Merry Cushing showed us a Brown Creeper nest and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher nest. We spent some time watching and listening to a Wilson's Warbler, and stepped out into a field to hear Bobolinks, a Meadow Lark, and a Savannah Sparrow. At around 8:15 conversation turned to favorite breakfast foods, and the group headed back to the parking lot, thanking Don for a truly fascinating morning walk.

I believe thanks are due to the Prez, Mary Alice Wilson (Herself) for this report.

On **Sunday, May 19**, a great group of birders went with **David Peake-Jones** to **Mt. Auburn Cemetery** in the Watertown-Cambridge area of greater Boston. This inaugural HBC trip was a great success, despite some problems with wind (meteorological, not alimentary). Amongst the highlights were 18 species of warblers (including Bay-breasted- and Mourning-). Swainson's Thrushes were abundant and obvious as they perched on the gravestones. Amongst them were at least two Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's types. After some trouble with the notoriously bad Boston street signage (we could not find Route 2), the group moved on to Great Meadows NWR in Concord. There we found Marsh Wrens singing at arm's-length, and a wonderful show of Tree-, Northern Rough-winged-, Barn-, Bank-, AND Cliff-Swallows, all flying together. A Virginia Rail sang once, but remained otherwise unavailable. In all we found 92 species for the day. Thanks to all the participants for a wonderful trip.

### **Monhegan Island. May 24-27, 2002**

Some of the past few years have been seen slim pickin's on the island. I am pleased to report that this was not one of them. An eclectic group of eighteen HBC members led by **Andrew Magee** and **David Peake-Jones** enjoyed one of the birdiest trips in recent memory. We had great weather, and were blessed with 121 species, including Broad-winged Hawk, Merlin, Wood Duck, Short-billed Dowitcher, Least Sandpiper, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and 25 species of Warbler.

One often-noted irony of birding at Monhegan was well illustrated by a hapless Palm Warbler, eking out a living amongst the seaweed mulch of a Trailing Yew flowerbed. This (very late) bird was clearly not doing very well when we arrived. Bill Sweet later observed a young local lad prying it out of the jaws of one of the Monhegan feline contingent. When Bill enquired after it, the urchin replied thoughtfully, "It's going to die, but I'll take it home and keep it company."

The really special birds of the weekend were a **Hooded Warbler** in a yard along the Burnt Head Trail, and a **Golden-winged Warbler**, which materialized near the Lupine Gallery. There was a remarkable influx of **Black-billed Cuckoos** on Saturday night. Most of the group saw at least one on Sunday, and Betsy Higgins found no less than five (5) individuals in one day! Bill Schafer found the lone Wood Duck in a (probably rain-diluted) tide pool while rambling along the ocean-side shoreline near Burnt Head. Andrew Magee and Elaine Pourinski independently glimpsed a bird that just *might* have been a Bell's Vireo. This elusive critter was causing a general commotion amongst the hotshots on the island, but when we left, its actual identity remained unclear.

The trip to Eastern Egg Rock was very rough and cold, but offered the intrepid great views of Puffins, Roseate-, Common-, and Arctic-Terns, and Purple Sandpipers, plus a couple of Wilson's Storm-Petrels on the ride.

### **HELP WANTED**

We need a **Publicity Chair**. We advertise our programs, in the local media as a way to involve the general public in our activities, and to help meet the educational component of our charter. If you believe you can maintain existing links with the local media, make new connections as necessary, write articles describing our programs for said media, and undertake to provide material to them in a timely fashion, HBC needs you. *If you believe you may have the skills for this important position, please contact Mary Alice Wilson (413 548 9078; mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu), or any member of the Board.*

## Coming Trips

**June 8. Mount Greylock.** All day. Stacy Adams will lead a group up the mountain for local specialties. Possibilities include: Winter Wren; breeding warblers like Blackpoll, Mourning, and Yellow-rumped; and Purple Finch. Contact Stacy (413-367-0177) for meeting time and location.

**June 12. Midweek, half-day in the Connecticut River Valley.** Local Nesters. Half day. Harvey Allen looks for birds on territory in Shutesbury. Meet at 6:00 AM across the street from the Atkins Farms, on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Heavy rain will cancel this trip. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

**June 15. Bartholomew's Cobble.** All day. David Norton will lead members on a **kinda' new trip** to Bartholomew's Cobble. Once there, Don Reid, the regional ecologist for the Trustees of Reservations, will guide the club through the property and afford an unique opportunity to delve a little deeper into the site. As we explore the property, Don will be able to explain why it is so special and how the Trustees manage it. Breeding birds, especially Black Vulture, are the focus, and Don knows where they are.

*Note: the contact person for this trip has changed, and the meeting time place are not as published in the Winter-Late Summer Field Trip Schedule*

**David Norton** will be the HBC contact person for this trip. Please email him: [dnort@attbi.com](mailto:dnort@attbi.com) (or phone if you do not have internet access at **413 256 1767**) to register, and for details of meeting time/place.

**June 22. Westover AFB: grassland birds.** Half day. Bob Bieda will lead this ever-popular and successful trip to some of the largest contiguous grasslands remaining in the northeast. Past trips have usually seen Upland Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow and Eastern Meadowlark. Call Bob at 413-527-2623 to register and for meeting details.

**July 27. New South Beach, part A.** David Peake-Jones will lead this **NEW TRIP** to catch the early part of the Fall shorebird migration, during which a different mix of birds than on the later, traditional trip in August. As always, big-sky aesthetics are a certainty. Bring sun protection, plenty of water and food, and footwear for wet sand and mud. A surf landing from the beach taxi and a long walk are parts of this trip. Space will be limited; register by calling David Peake-Jones at 413-529-9541.

**August 24. New South Beach:the original.** Full Day. Bob and Al will again lead this always popular all day trip to the National Seashore in Chatham on Cape Cod. Registration is required, since the trip is limited to 12 people. Since there are no facilities on this isolated beach, bring a hat, sunscreen, water, and snacks. Be prepared to get wet as part of the adventure. The shorebird migration brought an impressive number of individuals and species to this outer beach in August 2000. Among other birds observed last year: Wilson's Storm-petrel (from shore!), Piping Plover, American Oystercatcher, Whimbrel, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Red Knot, Parasitic Jaeger, Forster's, Black and Roseate Terns. Tentatively, the group will depart from the South Hadley Stop and Shop parking lot at 5:00 AM and meet Bob in Palmer at approximately 5:30 AM. As the date approaches, Call Al Richards at 413-665-2761 or Bob Bieda (413-527-2623) for further details, directions and registration.

## LIBRARY

Henry Lappen has just breathed a huge sigh of relief. A court recently ruled that libraries could not be expected to censor material viewed by the public via their public library Internet connection. The court ruled that due to filtering errors made by the filtering software during a test, important information was being withheld from the public. There is probably some pretty kinky stuff in our collection- birds being often polygamous, polygynous, promiscuous, and/or downright randy according to the dictates of natural selection. Rumor has it that, prior to the ruling, Henry had his thermos and pillow packed, ready to stand guard at the Hitchcock Center, in order that none of this explicit material should be seen by some unwitting browser.

All this means you still have unfettered access to 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. The library is open during Hitchcock Center hours (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, closed Saturdays in summer). Items can be borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. Henry is happy to bring items to meetings, given a few days notice. You can reach him at **(413) 549 3722**.

## HITCHCOCK CENTER

**Scott Sumner** will be leading a **Fall Birding** class through Hitchcock Center. The class schedule has not yet been published, but for early registration or further information, contact the center.

*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).*

*Mr. Russell Crow, of "The Roost" in Hartford is ripped. Ever since his human namesake, Russell Crowe, was nominated for an Oscar, Mr. Crow says his life has been ruined, in a case of mistaken identity. Hanging out with a disreputable bunch of conspecifics near a city landfill, Mr. Crow complained, "What a difference an 'e' makes. If I get asked to do one more endorsement for shady clothing or Marilyn Manson, I'm going to croak!"*

*Mr. Crow continued, "What really irks me is this whole "bad-boy" thing. You want bad boy? Spend a day in my world! The head-bobbing and cawing, the intimidating groups, harassing raptors, the sitting around on rotting carcasses all day- that stuff is hard work, not to mention gross. This guy trashes a couple of Hollywood hotel bathrooms and wears his cowlick a tad askew, and suddenly he's Mr. Nasty. I'll be glad when all this blows over and he heads back to whatever antipodean roost he sprang from!"*

*As we left, Mr. Crow was engaged in a heated discussion with the director of his current photo shoot. Apparently, rather than wheeling menacingly over the company's new-release muscle car, Mr. Crow insists on fluttering around the rear-view mirror like a kinglet, and messing on the hood.*

## CONSERVATION

*If you are interested in conservation of birds and birding habitat, you may like to share information and effort with others in the club. **Anne Lombard** is our conservation chair. She often coordinates breeding-bird surveys, and is usually involved in various cutting-edge conservation issues. Contact her at (413) 586 7509, or [aslombard@attbi.com](mailto:aslombard@attbi.com)*

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Backyard Birds**, at 17 Strong Ave., Northampton offers members a 10% discount on all purchases from their stock of birding books, feeders, birdhouses, and numerous other items.

### Welcome New Members

**Lou A. Peugh:** Flornce, MA: 413-584-3122: [peugh@gcc.mass.edu](mailto:peugh@gcc.mass.edu)

**Ilina Singh & Dawn Josefski:** Amherst, MA 413-548-4972: [isingh@valinet.com](mailto:isingh@valinet.com)

**Susan Stanley:** Amherst, MA: 413-549-0979: [Susan.stanley3@verizon.net](mailto:Susan.stanley3@verizon.net)

**Leslie Breger:** Amherst, MA: 413-253-4099: [lesliebreger@hotmail.com](mailto:lesliebreger@hotmail.com)

**Chris Gentes & Heather McQueen:** Hadley, MA: 587-0992  
[nohobirdclub@hotmail.com](mailto:nohobirdclub@hotmail.com); [vireo99@hotmail.com](mailto:vireo99@hotmail.com)

**Sally Crawford:** Pelham, MA: 413-256-6814

**Marion Rhodes:** Sunderland, MA: 413-665-3517: [Mbr@chemistry.umass.edu](mailto:Mbr@chemistry.umass.edu)

## Email Address Changing???

If your email address is changing, please notify Sue Emerson at [wle33@aol.com](mailto:wle33@aol.com) a week or so ahead of time. It is important for the newsletter reminder. Thank you.

## THANK YOU!

*As this membership year winds to a close, it is worth taking a minute to reflect on the efforts of those who keep this club running. In no particular order, and at risk of leaving someone out (THANK YOU TOO), here are some of them.*

Leaving his post as the chair of the Field Trip Committee is **Shawn Smolen-Morton**. During his tenure, Shawn and the committee have planned the entire field trip schedule; dreamed up new and unconventional trips; cajoled, bribed, and encouraged new leaders; and sent me printer-ready versions of the schedule *on time!* Those who have birded with Shawn can no doubt trace his enthusiasm and commitment to the field in the vibrant field trip program we now have. Thank you Shawn, and we'll see you in the field.

(continues over)

Cycling off the Board are **Stacy Adams, David Peake-Jones, and Scott Sumner.**

Stacy has been on the Board for a number of years, during which time she has served as a Member-at-Large, member of the Field Trip Committee, and Program Chair. She has also led numerous trips including Monhegan, and her annual signature exploration of Mt. Greylock. Thank you Stacy!

Mr. Sumner has been just about everything in the club since its inception. He leads numerous trips and is one of those with HBC in his blood. His experience has been invaluable over recent years on the Board, and it is hard to imagine him escaping the call of duty for very long. Nonetheless, we wish him well during this short rest.

Peake-Jones claims he is cycling off to devote more energy to the newsletter. Hah! A likely story!

**Marion Gorham** is resigning this year as Publicity Chair. This is one of those behind-the-scenes jobs that would be really obvious if someone weren't doing it! Through Marion's efforts we have no doubt recruited many new members, and welcomed members of the public to our programs. Thank you, Marion!

Joining the Board for the first time are **Mike Locher** (who will also be the Field Trip Chair), **Sally Hills**, and **Bob Zimmermann**. Thank you!

Back in harness (as you knew she would be) is **Sally Venman** who, like Scott, has been in the thing from the start, and will probably never get away. We welcome her years of experience to the Board. Sally, incidentally, would like to thank **all those who have brought refreshments** to meetings (you know who you are). All those who have consumed them (we know who we are), are grateful, too!

Finally, we recognize many others who keep this whole thing going. They include field trip leaders: **Harvey Allen, Bob Bieda, Tom Gagnon, Betsy Higgins, Shirley Hillborn, Zeke Jakub, Don Kroodsmma, Geoff LeBaron, Anne Lombard, Andrew Magee, Al Richards, and David Spector.** There are also a multitude of club officers including **Jan Ortiz, Sue Fletcher, Merry Cushing, Henry Lappen, Denis McKenna, David Gross, Jan Howard, Sue Emerson, and Mary Alice Wilson.**

And if you pay dues, go on trips, come to meetings, put away chairs, help put the newsletter together etc. then you are included.

**SO, IS THAT EVERYONE?  
THE LOVE-FEST IS NOW CONCLUDED.**

Now, as promised, I offer you a brief respite from this monthly journalistic onslaught. Until September, I bid you adieu. Till then, walk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, 413 529 9541  
davidpj@the-spa.com