



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

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On a recent trip to the land of my birth, referred to unassumingly by expatriates as “God’s Own Country,” I had cause to reflect on the relationship between environment and self. As a child, I awoke every morning to Australian Magpies caroling in the fields near home. I was accustomed to seeing Eastern Rosellas (parrots) feeding on the lawn, to the urgent, sometimes aggressive foraging of New Holland Honeyeaters amongst the flowering eucalyptus in the yard, and the furtive visits of tiny Eastern Spinebills to the same flowers when the New Hollands were not looking. I was familiar with the shocking white splash of Sulfur-crested Cockatoos against the dark foliage of the pine tree at the gate. I took for granted that the huge skeletons of dead *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gums) by the creek would be adorned at sunset by boisterous flocks of rose-breasted Galahs (cockatoos), gleaming almost supernaturally in the fading light.

I found that returning to these birds inspired a great deal more than nostalgia. I found in fact, a visceral connection with the birds of my childhood which had been neglected, but not broken, since I moved away. This connection shook me on more than one occasion with its depth and permanence.

Perhaps, for a New Englander, it might be the first kinglet of April, robins guarding the lawn, or broadwings kettling on a September morning that clutch at the heartstrings. I hope that, as we make our way through an increasingly impermanent world, we will find ourselves treasuring the birds of “our place.”

PROGRAMS

All programs are held at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant St. in Amherst.

On **Monday, May 13**, **Jeff Podos** will speak to us on **Galapagos Finches**. Dr. Podos is an Assistant Professor of Biology at UMass, Amherst. He has a B.A. from Franklin and Marshall College, and a Ph.D. from Duke University. Jeff did post-graduate work at the University of Arizona from 1998-2000, and is primarily interested in how the physiology, biomechanics, and development of organisms affect the evolution of their behavior. He works extensively on birdsong, in the eastern United States, Brazil, and the Galapagos Islands.

The Galapagos (or “Darwin’s”) Finches are a fabled group of birds. Darwin observed many species, each exquisitely adapted to a specific ecological niche on one or more of the many islands in the archipelago. Dr. Podos will help us understand how scientists since Darwin have elaborated on his great idea.

COMING UP

June 10: Marta Hersek on Ovenbirds

September 9: Wayne Petersen takes us to Iceland.

FIELD TRIPS

REPORTS

David Spector sends this report on his “**Woodcock and Owls**” jaunt of April 6.

At sunset we waited a bit
 In an Amherst preserve, Podick;
 A woodcock flew low
 And peented "hello"
 To provide for our lists a nice tick.

To bring in an owl we tried--
 We hooted, whistled, and cried;
 But no bird was fooled
 Silence then ruled--
 The owls in no way complied.

Many stars brightening the night,
 With company fit to delight,
 A nice evening's walk,
 A well-viewed woodcock,
 All made this club trip come out right.

Bob Bieda reports that, on **April 13**, six HBC members had a fairly quiet but beautiful morning walking around **Ashley Reservoir** in Holyoke. Highlights included: about 50 Ring-necked Ducks, first Osprey of the year, a duet of Brown Creeper song, a dozen Pine Warblers heard and two seen fairly well, and the first Rufous-sided Towhee of the year. Strange by their absence were Tree Swallows, Palm Warblers, Wood Ducks and water birds in general.

Thanks to Shawn Smolen-Morton for this report on his “Leisurely and Local” expedition.

On **Saturday, 20 April**, while a lucky few ogled the Eurasian Kestrel just off Morris Island, Cape Cod, I led a cheerful crew looking for early migrants in the **Turners Falls area and Great Pond in Hatfield**. Before the trip even began, the early morning earthquake in Plattsberg, New York, gave us cause to reflect on the power and wonder of the natural environment. Waterfowl were a bust, but land birds offered adequate compensation. We were all impressed with the apparent mating behavior of an enthusiastic Ruby-crowned Kinglet. This bird had the most extensive red feathering on the crown that most of us had ever seen- not so much a crest as a red mohawk. The female reciprocated with infant-like begging and wing fluttering. Of the 51 species noted, birds of interest were: Pine-, Palm-, Yellow rumped-, and Black and White- warblers; Tree- and Northern Rough-winged- Swallows; 1 Chimney Swift; a mysteriously large and dark falcon; Field Sparrow; Blue-headed Vireo; Brown Thrasher; and Vesper Sparrow. Curiously, we observed no Broad-winged Hawks.

On **Saturday, April 27**, Betsy Higgins spent another “Leisurely and Local” morning in the **Florence** area. Our group started out at Look Park, where Betsy audaciously predicted that we might find a favorite of hers from past years, in its usual haunt along the Mill River. Sure enough, cutting through the noise of the river and the innumerable Chipping Sparrows were some penetrating slurred notes that turned out to be from a very cooperative Louisiana Waterthrush. Walking back through the park, we also found several warblers, Solitary Vireo, and Pileated Woodpecker. Our next stop was Fitzgerald Lake, where Shirley Hillborn directed us to the nest of a mysterious raptor, right above the Lake Trail. We heard both accipeter-ish and Red-Shouldery calls in the vicinity, and could make out movement in the nest, but the exact identity of the bird remains a mystery. Further along, an Osprey circled lazily over the dam, a Swamp Sparrow held court at the blind, and an elusive Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher finally revealed itself to at least some of us.

UPCOMING TRIPS

More details on the **Wildwood Walks** in bucolic Wildwood Cemetery, off Strong St. in Amherst. The leaders of each walk have now been conscripted. We publish them here to discourage them from backing out.

Thursday, May 2: Chris Page

Tuesday, May 7: Harvey Allen

Thursday, May 9: Scott Sumner

Tuesday, May 14: Al Richards

Thursday, May 16: Harvey Allen

Tuesday, May 21: Al Richards

Thursday, May 23: Jim Marcum

Each walk begins at **6:30 am** and runs until **8 am**, though of course you may freelance a little longer if you wish. Meet the leader at the main entrance. Make sure you park in the designated parking areas and not on the lawn. Remain on the roads and paths in the cemetery, and respect the solemnity of the site. Thank you.

May 4. Leisurely and Local Saturday Mornings. Half day. Shirley Hilborn and Ann Lombard will continue to lead members to their favorite local hot spot, Grave's Farm. Perhaps, the first Cliff Swallows will have arrived. Meet Shirley and Ann either at 6:30 AM at the Hitchcock Center or at 7:00 at Graves Farm.

May 11. The Quabbin Reservoir: spring migration. Full Day. Tom Gagnon plans to lead this traditional search of the Quabbin area for migrating neotropical birds. Due to access restrictions, the trip is limited to five vehicles. The Quabbin Reservoir has been closed to such trips in September and October 2001, and the trip is dependent on the lifting of these most recent restrictions. Call Tom (413-584-6353) in advance to make reservations and to get the details of time and place.

Sunday, May 12. Bird-song. Half day. Don Kroodsma will revive his popular early morning exploration of bird-song as migration peaks and breeding begins. Before and during the dawn, birds make a wonderful array of songs, some of which are heard only at this time. Don will help us sort them out and identify the unique patterns. Of course, visual observation will not be discouraged. Meet at 5:00AM in the bike path parking lot on Station Road in South Amherst. You can call Don at 413-253-5519 for further details.

Wednesday, May 15. Midweek, half-day in the Connecticut River Valley. A warbler walk with Harvey Allen. Meet at 6:00 AM across the street from the Atkins Farms, on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Harvey plans to walk along the Swift River in Belchertown. Heavy rain will cancel this trip. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

Sunday, May 19. Mt. Auburn Cemetery. Full day. David Peake-Jones will lead a **NEW TRIP** for the club to this historic birding locale in the greater Boston area between Watertown and Cambridge on the Charles River. Renowned for its neotropical migrants, this cemetery is also a botanic garden. David plans to continue the trip from Mt. Auburn to other hot spots, like Marblehead Neck, along the Massachusetts mid-coast, time and interest permitting. Bring snacks, lunch, and gear for inclement weather. Please call David at (413-529-9541) for meeting time and place.

Memorial Day Weekend: May 24-27. Monhegan Island. This overnight trip is full and has a waiting list.

Saturday, May 25. Poor Man's Monhegan: Plum Island and vicinity. All day. Al Richards and Bob Bieda lead the unfortunate souls to a lesser paradise. With a little effort, last year's group recorded 101 species, including Wilson's Phalarope, Piping Plover, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Seaside Sparrow, Orchard Oriole, and Evening Grosbeak (wow!). Pack a lunch. For further information or questions call Al (413-665-2761) or Bob (413-527-2623).

Saturday, June 1. Connecticut Marshes. Al Richards will lead a **NEW TRIP** for the club to the Station 43 area in Windsor, Connecticut. Fertile wetlands and fields in this spot often yield productive birding during breeding season. Possibilities include: American and Least Bitterns, Sora, Virginia Rail, and Sedge Wren

(present last year), as well as a variety of shorebirds. The trip will then progress to Bradley airport for grassland species, most notably Upland Sandpiper. Meet at the Hadley Stop and Shop at 5:30 AM. Call Al (413-665-2761) for further details or directions.

Saturday, 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.

FIELD TRIP ANNOUNCEMENTS

The annual trip to the grasslands of **Westover Air Force Base** will take place on **Saturday, June 22**, as announced in the Winter-Late Summer Field Trip List. Our thanks to Bob Bieda who has managed to negotiate the new tighter security arrangements to get us on base.

Following the tremendous success of last year's trip, a second **Cape May** trip will take place over the **Columbus Day** weekend, leaving on Friday October 11, and returning on Monday, October 14. Leaders will be Scott Sumner and Dan Ziomek.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The **Annual General Meeting** will take place immediately before the program on **Monday, May 13**. The nominating committee (Jan Ortiz, Sally Venman, Jim Marcum) will present the following slate of officers for your consideration.

President: Mary Alice Wilson

Vice-President/Program Chair: Geoff LeBaron

Treasurer: David Gross

Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson

Communications Secretary: Jan Howard

Members-at-Large: Sally Hills, Michael Locher, Dennis McKenna, Jan Ortiz, Sally Venman, and Bob Zimmerman.

These prospective members will be nominated at the opening of the meeting. Further nominations will be accepted from the floor, provided they are seconded. Once all nominations have been made, a voice vote will be held to determine the composition of the Board.

CONSERVATION

Fitzgerald Lake Trail Days

Perhaps you are one of the many Hampshire birders who have frequented this beautiful and surprising conservation area on the outskirts of Florence, MA. Perhaps it is one of those places you have birded "in theory," without ever actually wandering in. Either way, it is a jewel of grassroots conservation, and the Broad Brook Coalition would like your help to keep it that way.

The coalition will be holding the **Fitzgerald Lake Trail Work Day** on **Saturday, May 4** from **9 AM to 1:30 PM**. The rain date is Sunday, May 5. Show up with whatever hand tools (loppers, saws, shovels) etc. and/or call Carmen Ahearn (586 3787) with questions.

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. Contact her at (413) 586 7509, or aslombard@attbi.com

LIBRARY

HBC is selling off some books that are never borrowed. With the money, the club plans to expand the most used sections including field guides and bird-finding guides to new regions. Before the club spends money to do this, I encourage you to look through all those field- and locality- guides gathering dust in your home and decide if they could be donated or loaned to the club. Please let me know. *If you are planning a trip and need a book, check out our library at the Hitchcock Center, look on the website (hampshirebirdclub.org), or call me at 413-549-3722.*

Your faithful librarian, Henry Lappen.

HITCHCOCK CENTER

Permaculture: Ecological Design for Our Lives - Jono Neiger, Biologist

Tuesday, April 30, 7 PM

Hug a Bug is Back- A Biodiversity Family Day Event

Saturday, May 4, 10 AM - 1 PM

Everything Grows: A Native Plant Sale & Children's Fair!

Saturday, May 11, 10:00 AM – 4 PM

Amherst Common

The Living Clock: The Orchestration of Biological Rhythms - John Palmer

Tuesday, May 14 at 7 PM

Biothon - Volunteers wishing to help the Hitchcock Center

Friday, May 17 at 6 PM to Saturday, May 18 at 6 PM

The Heat is Up! - Steve Roof (Biologist) and Stephanie Ciccarello (Energy Coordinator)

A Global Climate Change in Amherst Update

Tuesday, May 21, 7 PM

Birding by Ear: John Green

Saturday, June 1, 7 AM to 9 AM

Medicinal Herbs and Plants with Carrie Desmarais

Saturday, June 1, 1 PM to 4 PM

Across the Meadows and Forest with Carla Racine

Sunday, June 2, 10 AM to 4 PM

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.

ARCADIA

Spring Migration Bird Walks: *Guest Leaders.* Monday-Friday, May 6-10, from 6:30 AM to 8 AM

Wednesday Wildflower Walks: *Janet Bissell* Wednesdays, 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM

Arcadia on May 8, and June 5; Graves Farm on May 15, and June 12; Lynes Sanctuary on May 22, and June 19

The American Woodcock; *Nancy Childs and Patti Steinman.* Friday, May 10, from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Saturday Early Morning Bird Walks: *Invited Leaders.* Saturdays, 7 AM to 8:30 AM

Arcadia on May 18 and June 8; Graves Farm on May 4 and May 25; Lynes Sanctuary on May 11 and June 1

Great Blue Herons: *Patti Steinman.* Saturday, May 25 from 4 PM to 6 PM

Grassland Birds: *Andrea Jones.* Saturday, June 1 from 9 AM to 11 AM

Valley Native Americans and Landscape Ecology: *Dietrich Schlobohm.* Thursday, June 6 at 7PM

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

ODDS 'N' SODS

HBC Needs You!!

The **2002 Wetlands Festival** (organized by US Fish and Wildlife Service, along with a coalition of local conservation groups) will be held on the Amherst Town Common on **Saturday, June 1**. This is it, people! Hampshire Bird Club needs to be there, and we need several more volunteers to talk about the activities of the club and answer questions from the public. *If we don't get more help, we will not be represented at the event.* **Please contact Mary Alice Wilson (413-548-9078), as soon as possible if you can help.**

Immortalize your Wetland Photographs!

The US Fish and Wildlife Service would like to offer the public a free wetland screensaver as we did at the Wetlands Festival last year. This year's theme is wetland wildlife, so I am asking you to submit photos of wetland animals for consideration. We may also use these photographs for other publications in the future. Submissions can be slides or prints. If you want to send a digital image it should be at least 72 dpi (screen resolution) or higher. If scanning an image for submission, please size it at 6"x9", scan at 72 dpi or better and save it as a .jpg file.

Please send submissions via email (gabriel_dealessio@fws.gov) or by mail to:

R. Tiner, USFWS. ES-NWI
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035

If you have general questions, feel free to call me at 413-253-8620, or for questions on scanning specifications, contact Gabe DeAlessio at 413-253-8651. Closing date for submissions is May 7. This will give us enough time to prepare the screensaver in advance of the Wetlands Festival. Thanks for your cooperation.

Ralph Tiner

Welcome New Members!!

Diana Day Coccoluto: 30 Murphy Terrace, Northampton, MA 01060; 413-584-4603

Suzan Smith & Peter W. Shea: 23 Stagecoach Rd., Amherst, MA 01002; 413-256-1012

Nancy Young: 63 Vernon St., Northampton, MA 01060; 413-585-9380
nyoung@noho.com

Mikkel Thyorpe: 48 High St. Florence, MA 01062; 413-585-0986
mthorup@research.att.com

Deborah Reiter: PO Box 989, Amherst, MA 01004; 413-665-9515

Kevin Weir: 760 Pratt Corner Rd., Amherst, MA 01002; 413-322-1801
addison@aol.com

Jean Mann: 196 Gill Rd., Greenfield, MA 01301; 413-773-3490

Dana Carnegie & Steven Toutant: 14 Greenwich Road, Amherst, MA 01002; 253 3220
danasea@attbi.com; offline999@hotmail.com

Roger Conant: 153 N. Valley Rd., Pelham, MA 01002; 413-256-4827
conant@ecs.umass.edu

Mainus Sultan: 990 N. Pleasant St., Apt. E-2, Amherst, MA 01002-1398; 413-546-5876
sultan@educ.umass.edu

Do not forget that **Backyard Birds**, on Strong Ave. in Northampton should be your source for all your birding paraphernalia. Demonstrate your membership in the HBC and they will even give you a 10% discount

There will be a **bird walk** at the **East Leverett Meadow, Sunday, May 19, 7-9 AM**, led by Harvey Allen. Call Jean Bergstrom, (413 367-2842) for information. Sponsored by the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust. Free and open to the public.

That is all there is for this month. Until next time, "Talk softly and carry a big scope!"

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