



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

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Birders are into milestones. Many of us list species seen by time periods and geographic areas. The great advantage of this is that you can compare your list/s with that/those of anyone from the hotshots at Cape May to the neighbor who still hasn't returned your leaf rake. In addition, there is nearly always the possibility for adding one more bird, even if it is "Snail Kite in Hampshire County".

But what of we sad souls who eschew the statistical aspects of birding? How are we to measure the progress of a birding career? For me, it is through the acquisition of greater skill in the process, not the outcome, of birding.

Most years, as April gets into its stride, I take the first walk of the spring through Arcadia, often along the old trolley line. There is a time before the flood of transitory birds begins when the woods are filled with the songs of early Pine Warblers, the occasional Palm Warbler, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and a generally inconspicuous resident which seems to take this part of the spring as a time to advertise itself as at no other time. In the first year I heard it, I don't think I ever found the origin of this ethereal, tinkling song. For the next two years, I stomped around amongst the skunk cabbage muttering something like "I know I've heard that before!" before catching a lucky glimpse of the singer.

But this year, as I heard the first glissade of notes, the name, and likely location sprang immediately to mind. I refer, of course, to the Brown Creeper. It's finally in the memory bank, hopefully to stay. Each time I hear it now, brings to mind all the effort to reach this point, and adds another comforting dimension of understanding to each dawn chorus. A small step forward, but mine own! I hope your spring is replete with whatever milestones make the road interesting for you! Good luck!

PROGRAMS

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

This Month

Monday, May 10 at 7:30 PM

Jan Ortiz narrates "Life on the Edge - An Arctic Adventure"

Jan describes a trip by six members of the Hampshire Bird Club from the small Inuit village of Pond Inlet on Baffin Island to the edge of the arctic ice pack. The group traveled on sleds pulled by snowmobiles across the frozen surface of the Arctic Ocean to the tundra of Bylot Island, and then beyond it to the edge of the ice. The edges of polar ice packs generally attract a diverse assemblage of marine and bird life. Camping on the ice, the adventurers fell asleep to the dulcet tones of snoring Narwhals close by, and found Thayer's Gulls, Ivory Gulls, and Pomerine Jaegers fighting over seal blubber near the camp in the morning!

In exchange for a unique scenic, cultural, zoological, and botanical experience, the group endured grueling travel over the ice, and extreme weather, each of which added genuine danger to the journey.

Jan Ortiz taught birding classes at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst, MA for ten years and has led numerous birding trips. She is one of the founding members of Hampshire Bird Club and a past president. She has taken part in many local migrant and breeding bird censuses and is a co-compiler for the Northampton Christmas Bird Count. She is a former member of the Massachusetts's Avian Records Committee and was an editor and contributor to a *Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts*.

Coming Programs

June 14, 2004. Harvey Allen et al. The Gambia Experience

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

In search of "More Migrants", **Betsy Higgins** and four others explored **Look Park and Arcadia** on **Saturday, May 24**. They found thirty (30) species, including Double-crested Cormorant, Pine Warbler, Black-and-White Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, several Red-bellied Woodpeckers, (including a nesting pair) and (one) Black Bear.

Michele and Betsy continued on to Arcadia for a short while. There, they had 14 species, including Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-throated Sparrow, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Eastern Comma Butterfly, Milbert's Tortoiseshell Butterfly, and a Garter Snake.

Betsy Higgins

Contributors Wanted!!

When a leader's not engaged in his employment (his employment)

When the small brown jobs have all been soundly taught (soundly taught)

He loves to lie a-basking in the sunshine (in the sunshine)

Far from his mind is any trip report (trip report)

(Gilbert & Sullivan, almost)

Field trip leaders have a ton of things to do in preparation for a trip, and the trips themselves can be arduous. The last thing they want to do when the trip is over is sit down and dash off a trip report for the newsletter. Fortunately, YOU can help. By writing a report, you give us a record for posterity, and help to promote interest in future trips. There is nothing to it. Just keep a record of the good birds you saw, any hilarious thrills and spills, and send it in.

You can file your report with me (the editor) via email, hand-delivery at meetings, USPS or by phone (messages are OK). My contact details are at the end of the newsletter. I promise to acknowledge you, or keep your identity secret, as you prefer. I will edit all contributions as necessary. Make a trip leader happy when next you venture out!

dpj

While taxiing at New York's LaGuardia, the crew of a US Air flight departing for Ft. Lauderdale made a wrong turn and came nose to nose with a United 727. An irate female ground controller lashed out at the US Air crew, screaming,

"US Air 2771, where the h*** are you going? I told you to turn right onto Charlie taxiway! You turned right on Delta! Stop right there. I know it's difficult for you to tell the difference between Cs and Ds, but get it right!"

Continuing her tirade to the embarrassed crew, she was now shouting hysterically.

"You've screwed everything up! It'll take forever to sort this out! You stay right there and don't move till I tell you to! You can expect progressive taxi instructions in about half an hour and I want you to go exactly where I tell you, when I tell you, and how I tell you! You got that, US Air 2771?"

"Yes ma'am," the humbled crew responded.

Naturally the ground control frequency went terribly silent after the verbal bashing of US Air 2771. Nobody wanted to engage the irate ground controller in her current state. Tension in every cockpit at LGA was running high.

Then an unknown pilot broke the silence and asked; "Wasn't I married to you once?"

Coming Trips

Please register with the trip leader(s) and check this schedule's information when a phone number is given. The Field Trip Chair (Michael Locher—413-585-5864, mlocher@yahoo.com) is always looking for new trip ideas and leaders. The Hampshire Bird Club recommends carpooling whenever possible, and suggests that all riders share equally the per-car cost of \$0.30 per mile, as well as tolls and parking. See also the "Field Trip Guidelines for Participants" (in the September newsletter or on the Website).

Wildwood Walks

On a gentle rise in the heart of Amherst lies the Wildwood Cemetery. Migrating songbirds are drawn to this little island, and each year the club hosts morning bird walks here during May, each led by a club member. This year walks are scheduled for the following:

Tuesdays: May 4, 11, and 18

Thursdays: May 6, 13, and 20

Each 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, off Strong Street. 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.

Saturday, May 1. Graves Farm. Half day. Anne Lombard (413-586-7509) and Shirley Hilborn (413-253-6462) will guide birders through Graves Farm, looking for migrants and local specialties. Meet at the Hitchcock center at 6:30 a.m., or Graves Farm at 7:00 a.m. (E)

Saturday, May 8. Quabbin Reservoir migration. All day. Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) leads a trip into the Quabbin to track down its varied avifauna. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call to register. (M)

Saturday, May 15. Mt. Auburn Cemetery. All day. David Peake-Jones (413-529-9541) will lead birders into this historic cemetery near the Charles River. Anything can show up here, so be prepared for some unusual species. Call ahead for details. (E)

Sunday, May 16. Bird song. Don Kroodsma (413-253-5519) will again offer this popular trip focusing on vocal, instead of visual, clues to identification. Call Don for details.

Wednesday, May 19. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will go where the birds are. Meet at 7:00 a.m. on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin's Farm. Call for more information as the date approaches. (E)

Friday, May 21 - Monday, May 24. Monhegan Island. Overnight trip. David Peake-Jones (413-529-9541) and Andrew Magee (413-586-1509) will lead birders for a long weekend of birding off the coast of Maine. The trip is full. (E/M)

Saturday, May 29. Poor Man's Monhegan: Plum Island and vicinity. All day. Bob Bieda (413-527-2623) and Al Richards (413-665-2761) take the rest of us to Massachusetts' own little gem. Past trips found Wilson's Phalarope, Piping Plover, Seaside Sparrow, Orchard Oriole, and Evening Grosbeak. Call to register. (E)

Rescheduling

The club trip to Westover Air Force Base, originally scheduled for June 19, has been moved up to June 12.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The **Annual General Meeting** of the **Hampshire Bird Club, Incorporated**, will take place on **Monday, May 10**, at the **Immanuel Lutheran Church: 867 North Pleasant St., Amherst, commencing at 7:30 p.m.** At this meeting, the Board of the HBC for 2004-2005 will be elected by the members present.

Leaving the Board this year are Lisa Bertoldi and Leslie Scott. The club thanks them for their service. The Nominating Committee (Mary Alice Wilson, Marcia Merithew, and Sue Emerson) respectfully proposes the following slate of officers for the coming year.

President: Dennis McKenna

Vice President (Program Chair): Geoff LeBaron

Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson

Communications Secretary: Jan Howard

Treasurer: David Gross

Members-at-Large: Betsy Higgins

Marcia Merithew

Mike Locher

Bob Zimmermann

Elissa Rubenstein

Jaap van Heerden

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

CONSERVATION

Western Massachusetts Electric Company Customers!

If you would like the company to offer power from wind generation sources, please call Nancy Creed, Director Of Public Relations for WMECO, at 1-800-286-2000, and tell her about your interest. The company would like to gauge customer support on this issue, with a view to offering such sources. MassElectric already offers power from wind generation to its customers. To see how this works, go to masslectric.com and click on "GreenUp". They offer several suppliers for a little more on your bill. For more information, call Ann Kearns at 549-8773.

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@comcast.net

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

ALL ABOARD! TO THE CHASE HILL FARM

Sunday, May 16, 11:30 - 4pm

THE SPECIAL ECOLOGY OF MT. TOM AND LITTLE TOM: *Jose Garcia, Naturalist*

Tuesday, May 4, 7-9pm

Held at Holyoke Heritage State Park, call 534-1723

DRAGONFLIES: *Fred Morrison, Naturalist*

Thursday, May 20, 7-9pm

Held at Northfield Mountain Recreation Area, call 800-859-2960.

BIRDING BY EAR: *John Green, Naturalist*

Saturday, June 5, 7-8:30am

