

PROGRAMS

Monday, June 12 at 7:30 PM

Tom French describes the Return of a Raptor: Peregrines in Massachusetts

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program was established in 1984 with funding from a voluntary state income tax check off. The very first new project that was undertaken was the restoration of the Peregrine Falcon. This project was part of the continent-wide effort to restore breeding populations in the east and to enhance the status of this endangered species in the west. With a U.S. population of over 2000 nesting pairs, the Peregrine Falcon was removed from the federal list of endangered and threatened species in 1999, but remains the focus of continued state restoration efforts, particularly in the northeast. Peregrine Falcons are now firmly established in our cities and dominate some of our urban skies. We will look at their feeding strategies, hostile mate replacements, and the management challenges created by their aggressive behavior around their nests.

Tom French: A Biography of our Speaker

Thomas W. French was born and grew up in Atlanta, Georgia. His educational background includes a B.S. in Biology from Georgia State University, an M.S. in Zoology from Auburn University, a Ph.D. in Ecology and Systematics from Indiana State University, and a post doctoral position at Cornell University. He was formerly a zoologist with The Nature Conservancy and an instructor-naturalist and field biologist with the National Audubon Society. Since 1984 he has been an Assistant Director of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, where he serves as Director of the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. Tom has served on numerous committees of scientific societies and conservation organizations, graduate student committees, and endangered species recovery teams. He has written over fifty papers on small mammals, birds and reptiles, and works frequently with the media to foster greater public interest in conservation.

Coming Programs: The 2006-2007 Season Preview

September 11, 2006	Laurie Saunders	Costa Rica
October 3, 2006	Dr. Reuven Yosef	Bird Conservation in Israel
November 13, 2006	Greg Budney	Stories Behind the Making of the McCauley LNS
December 11, 2006	Members' Meeting	Members' Slide Show
January 8, 2007	To Be Announced	
February 12, 2007	To Be Announced	
March 12, 2007	Wayne Petersen	The Massachusetts IBA Program
April 9, 2007	To Be Announced	
May 14, 2007	To Be Announced	
June 11, 2007	Dr. Paul Green	TBA

The following people have agreed to speak to the club at as-yet-undetermined times:

Sam Fried (speaking on his trip along the Dempster Highway in the Canadian Arctic)

Paul Sievert (Short-tailed Albatross research)

Elijah Goodwin (song learning in Red-winged Blackbirds)

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Mt Auburn Cemetery. Saturday, May 13.

Betsy Higgins and David Peake-Jones decided to brave the appalling weather in search of spring migrants, and to fulfill our obligations to the Birdathon. We disembarked in the cemetery around seven, to be greeted by unrelenting rain. We drifted through the under-populated cemetery, hearing the occasional warbler and getting thoroughly wet.

Still without anything striking to our credit, we eventually headed to Great Meadows in Concord, where there had been some truly great birds reported from the previous week. Venturing out onto the causeway in driving rain, we failed to hear any trace of the reported King Rail, but we were able to pick up the frenetic dancing of seven **Red Phalaropes** out on the water, and were thrilled to pick out two foraging **Black Terns** driven inland by the storm. We eventually headed home: wet and cold, but feeling most virtuous!



Mid week Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. Wednesday, May 17

Harvey Allen led a group of ten birders from eight different villages in the valley. We travelled to South Deerfield and Sunderland. At Mt Sugarloaf, we watched torrid interactions between the nesting peregrines and the nesting ravens. The ravens have four large young and the parents were trying to feed them. The falcons periodically dive-bombed the ravens, driving them to the back of the nest. During pauses in the bombing, the irrepressible ravens would move back to the front of the nest. We then visited the manure marsh on Stillwater Road where we had more than twelve Solitary Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, and a Red-necked Phalarope in great light. From the Stillwater Bridge over the Deerfield River, we watched two Spotted Sandpipers picking up food from a floating raft of debris to feed their young.

Harvey Allen, with one adjective by the editor.



Coastal Rhode Island. Saturday, May 20 (from notes by Geoff LeBaron)

Geoff LeBaron led Jim Marcum, Sol Satin, Bob Bieda, Mary Alice Wilson, Joan Duprey and Larry Duprey on a tour of Rhode Island. At Swan Point Cemetery in Providence, the group found **Bay-breasted Warbler** and several thrushes. Scarlet Tanagers provided a graphic illustration of the impending breeding season. At Jerusalem Marsh in South Kingston, there was an **American Avocet**. Amidst the gorgeous flowering shadbush in the thickets there were an **Orchard Oriole**, several **White-eyed Vireos**, Eastern Towhees, **Purple Finches**, and a lot of Yellow Warblers. In the thickets of Ninigret NWR and the Charlestown Senior Center there were more Orchard Orioles, a Prairie Warbler, and a pair of Field Sparrows. To round out the day from the Quonochontaug Breachway, the group had a nice selection of shorebirds, plus a Merlin and Common Nighthawk flying by. At some point in the day, the group had a **Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush**, **White-rumped Sandpipers**, both cuckoos, and two **Cliff Swallows**. The total species count ran to 112, surpassing the totals for both Monhegan and Poor Man's Monhegan this year, and attesting to the avian diversity of this little island that isn't!



Poor Man's Monhegan.: Plum Island/Salisbury/Cape Anne. Saturday, May 27

After last year's great trip with its fall-out of land birds and phalaropes and a new state record thrown in for good measure, it was too much to hope for anything near a repeat this year. But there is a reason why people

hope. This year was every bit as good (minus the new state record). We arrived on Plum Island to find a large group of people pacing the side of the road opposite the Salt Pannes. During the next two hours we had the best collection of land birds most of us have had in a single day in years. These included beautiful looks at **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** and **Philadelphia Vireo**, male and female **Mourning Warblers**, a female **Bay-breasted Warbler**, more Wilson's Warblers than I've seen in one day in a long time, and male and female Canada Warblers. In this area we also had ten other species of warblers, close looks at **Wilson's Phalarope**, a nice show by Least Terns and a good look at **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow**. Good birds continued during

the day with highlights being: flyby Tricolored Heron later in the day, male **Shoveler** and **Blue-winged Teal**, Piping Plover and **White-rumped Sandpipers**, two **Black-billed Cuckoos**, Swainson's Thrush, and great looks at Olive-sided Flycatcher. We finished the day near sunset at the North Pool joining Geoff LeBaron in his successful quest to add **Common Moorhen** to his state list. We totaled 108 species. Even the weather was much better than predicted.

Bob Bieda



Monhegan Island. May 26-29

Betsy Higgins

Christa Glatter

Ed Olmstead

Isabel Higgins

Lisa Rock

Rick McNeil

Shirley Smigel

Pete Westover

Elizabeth McAnulty

Corning Townsend

Joanne Parker

Andrew Magee

Tita Townsend

Lou Peugh

David Peake-Jones

Under sultry skies, **Andrew Magee**, **David Peake-Jones** and thirteen others boarded the Elizabeth Anne at Port Clyde for the annual Monhegan Island trip. As always, we disembarked on the island in anticipation of flycatchers on the beach, and apple trees awash with warblers. As we made our way through town to the Trailing Yew it became apparent that, for now at least, we would have to work for it. There were a few birds popping up here and there, but overall things were fairly quiet.

We went to bed on Friday night hoping for southerlies and an influx of birds the next day. As it turned out, the island had reasonable numbers of migrants all weekend, most giving us wonderful looks at twenty-one species of warblers, amongst other things, but gave up its rarities reluctantly for the entire weekend. The various birders and birding groups on the island got fleeting glimpses of birds which then disappeared, either going to ground in some anonymous corner of the island, or disappearing across Muscungus Bay to the mainland. Exemplifying this kind of experience, Betsy and Shirley, while preparing to head in to breakfast one morning, found a female **Cape May Warbler** in an apple tree right outside the Trailing Yew. We disappeared in to breakfast, and got no further looks at that species for the rest of the weekend. Likewise, Isabel and Andrew were amongst the few who got fleeting good looks at **Mourning Warbler**, despite there being several about. A **Bay-breasted Warbler** was also decidedly reticent. One group got brief looks at a **Philadelphia Vireo** in a frustratingly thick grove of alders by the ice pond, whereupon the bird vanished. A solitary Lincoln's Sparrow provided only a brief reminder of the legions of his/her brethren which had filled the thickets last year. Rick had a brief encounter with his first ever **Black-billed Cuckoo** on the last day, but no-one else saw the bird at all. We never did find the White-eyed Vireo which was reported from the muddy confines of the Underhill Trail.

On the way to Eastern Egg Rock, we were blessed with a **Razorbill** at close range from the boat. **Puffins** were abundant, and for one of the few times in recent memory we got great comparative views of **Arctic, Roseate, and Common Terns** in quick succession.

In a moment of high drama, we realized that we had forgotten to bring copies of the HBC song. It seemed this would be the first trip ever when the graceful strains of this august melody would not send other patrons of the Yew scurrying for the woods. Rick put his guitar and musical skills to good use in cajoling some new and original verses out of the assembled group on Saturday night. Just when it seemed this jerry-rigged version of the historic song would have to suffice, Marian let it slip that she, as the proprietor of the Yew, had filed a copy away in an earlier year. We were able to sing it after all, much to the delight of the Yew staff, who were some of the most enjoyable folks we have had on any trip in my memory.

After a gorgeous weekend's weather and good company, and a gentle boat ride back, we finally said our goodbyes at the dock in Port Clyde, as an immature Bald Eagle rowed its way on some strange errand overhead. It seemed our return to southern New England was an even stranger errand to undertake.

David Peake-Jones

Wildwood walks

The traditional HBC walks at the Wildwood Cemetery in Amherst on Tuesdays and Thursdays in May netted several leaders, participants and bird sightings this year. The weather ranged from frosty cold to warm, from bright sun to rain, and from calm to breezy. There were experienced old-timers and brand new first-timers on the walks. All told we saw or heard at least 40 species of birds including some nice bright Scarlet Tanagers and Indigo Buntings for the first-timers. One can always argue over the best bird seen, and this season it may have been the Black-billed Cuckoo that Elissa Rubinstein hung around to locate and observe on May 11.

There has been discussion by the HBC board about changing the Tuesday/Thursday May walks to be split between Wildwood and the South Amherst Rail Trail. Let Mike Locher or another board member know your thoughts about this proposal.

Dave Gross

Coming Trips

(Note the impromptu addition to this schedule on June 11)

Saturday, June 10 or 17. Westover Air Force Base.

Registration for this trip is now closed.

Sunday, June 11. An Impromptu Trip to Mt Greylock

David Peake-Jones will approach the states highest point from North Adams. We will stop at various locations for short hikes, including the summit and Jones Nose. There are good possibilities for breeding species like Blackburnian, Blackpoll and Mourning Warbler. We may even encounter the odd boreal specialty. Please be prepared to walk up to a mile from the cars at one or two locations. We'll meet at 5:30 AM at Northampton Bowl, and at 5:45 AM at Stop and Shop in Hadley/Amherst. Please contact David to register (529 9541, newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org).

Wednesday, June 21. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) leads birders through the local landscape, seeking out late migrants. Meet at 6:00 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Saturday, July 29. New South Beach, I. All day. David Peake-Jones goes looking for early migrating shorebirds, especially Red Knots. Bring a lunch, a jacket, and \$20 for the boat ride. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (E/M)

Saturday, August 19. New South Beach, II. All day. Bob Bieda leads birders in their quest for late shorebird migrants, including Curlew Sandpipers and Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits. Bring a lunch, a jacket, and \$20 for the boat ride. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register. (E/M)

LIBRARY

HBC has a substantial library at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. **Hours** are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. There are no Saturday hours in the Summer. Items can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. **Henry Lappen** is happy to bring items to meetings, given a few days notice! Call him at **(413) 549 3722**.

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

ALL ABOUT BLUEBIRDS AND MORE: *John Rogers, Bluebird Enthusiast*

Thursday, June 8, 4 p.m. for children and families

Thursday, June 8, 7 p.m. for everyone

THE BEAUTY OF HIGH LEDGES: *Ted Watt, Hitchcock Center Naturalist*
Saturday, June 10, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m

MONARCHS ARE BACK!: *Jennifer Wiest, Hitchcock Center Educator*
Tuesday, June 13, 4-5:30 p.m.

NEW ENGLAND WILD FLOWER SOCIETY (NEWFS)
FIELD IDENTIFICATION TECHNIQUES: *Dr. Julie Richburg, Ecologist*
Saturdays, June 17, 24, July 15, 22, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

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.

GREAT FALLS DISCOVERY CENTER PROGRAMS

Pollinators and Plants: *Dan Conlon (Warm Colors Apiary, So. Deerfield)*
Thursday, June 8. 7 pm – 8 pm

Bird Walk at Fitzgerald Lake in Northampton, MA: Mitch Hartley of USFWS
Saturday, June 17. 7 am – 10 am. North Farms Rd. entrance.

Eagles, Bagels and Video at Barton Cove and Great Falls DC: *7 yrs and Up.* **Saturday, July 1st.** 7 am - 11 am
Fee (\$6 per person) and preregistration required. Call Northfield Mountain at (413) 659 4461
Shop and Save...Birds That Is! (Impact of our shopping habits on birds)
Saturday, July 8th. 1 pm – 2 pm

Wild Edible Plants of Massachusetts: *John Root*
Tuesday, July 11th. 7 pm - 8:30 pm

Beaks and Feet- Bird Adaptations
Saturday, July 22nd. 1 pm – 2 pm

Follow Me to the Beach! (Protecting shorebirds while at the beach: for children)
Friday, August 4th. 11 am – 12 pm

Discovering Jewels of the Air: Ruby-throated Hummingbirds: *Sharon Stichter*
Thursday, August 17. 7 pm – 8 pm.

Migration Headache (for children)
Saturday, August 19th. 11 am - NOON

*Great Falls Discovery Center is located at 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA
Open Fridays and Saturdays from 10AM to 4 PM
Phone (413) 683 32212*

Revamped HBC Web Site!

Thanks to considerable work by Afranio Torres-Neto, the HBC web site has a completely new look. Afranio took the old web site and altered it into a site that has easier navigation and a consistent look. Thanks also go to John Van de Graaff who donated several of his images of local birds for use on the web site. Check it out and let the webmasters know if you can think of additions or improvements to the HBC's presence on the web. The HBC web site address is www.hampshirebirdclub.org.

Recent Reviews for the New Website:

"A convincing argument against Internet Neutrality" (Someone in Big Business)

"We don't want to know what they are saying, just who they are saying it to." (Someone in the Executive Branch)

"Oh sweetie, you know I don't like creepy-crawlies." (my granny)

Volunteer Birder/Teachers Wanted!!

Patti Steinman of Arcadia is looking for one or two educationally-minded folks to join her in facilitating one or more of three short workshops at Springfield College. The subject of each workshop is 'Becoming A Birder', and they are part of a series entitled "Becoming an Outdoorswoman." The audience will be (presumably female) students from Springfield College. This is a voluntary project, run by MassWildlife.

The workshops run from 9 to 11 AM; 11 AM to 1 PM; and 2 to 4 PM on **Saturday July 8, 2006**.

If you are interested, please contact **Patti Steinman** at Arcadia; psteinman@massaudubon.org or 584 3009.

Alternatively, you might wish to contact **Ellie Horwitz of MassWildlife** directly:

Ellie Horwitz

Chief, Information & Education

MassWildlife

One Rabbit Hill Road, Westboro, MA 01581

Tel: (508) 792-7270 ext. 105 ; Fax: (508) 792-7275

HBC Elects Board for 2006-2007

The following were elected to the Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting on May 8.

President: DaveGross

Vice President/Program Chair: Geoff LeBaron

Treasurer: Janice Jorgensen

Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson

Communications Secretary: Marcia Merithew

At-Large Members: Betsy Higgins, Mike Locher, Dennis McKenna, Elissa Rubinstein, Jaap van Heerden, Bob Zimmermann.

Welcome New Members!

Dick Wynne: Northampton

Allison Keeler: Florence

Until next year, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, editor. 529 9541; newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org