



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

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PROGRAMS

Monday, March 12 at 7:30 PM

Wayne Petersen speaks about The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.

The greatest single global threat to bird populations is the destruction and degradation of habitat. In response to this situation *BirdLife International*, an international bird conservation organization based in the U.K., established the Important Bird Area (IBA) Program. *BirdLife*, using globally appropriate avian habitat and abundance criteria and working with a network of international bird conservation partners, set an agenda to identify IBAs around the world. *BirdLife's* U.S. partner, the *National Audubon Society*, assumed the lead for coordinating state-based IBA programs in the United States.

In 2001, *Mass Audubon*, in cooperation with *National Audubon*, initiated an IBA Program in Massachusetts. By working with knowledgeable birders, representatives from state and federal agencies, NGO organizations, and avian scientists, 79 IBAs throughout the Commonwealth were identified, nominated, and officially recognized.

Wayne will illustrate how IBAs are rapidly becoming the “*currency for international bird conservation.*” The program will also include a description of some of the more important Massachusetts IBAs, their habitats and special bird life, and the particular conservation problems existing at different sites. In addition, Wayne will discuss how local bird clubs can help advance the success of the IBA Program throughout the Commonwealth.



Wayne R. Petersen is Director of the Massachusetts Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program at the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Wayne was the senior Field Ornithologist at Mass Audubon for 15 years before assuming the position of IBA Director in 2005. As co-author of *Birds of Massachusetts* (1993) and co-editor of the *Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas* (2003), his knowledge of the habitats, distribution, and status of the Commonwealth's bird life is both extensive and wide-ranging.

As New England Regional Editor for *North American Birds* magazine and editor of the *New England Christmas Bird Count*, Wayne's knowledge of the seasonal distribution of New England bird life gives him a wide perspective when thinking about Important Bird Areas in Massachusetts and beyond. He is the recent past Chair of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC) and is an associate member of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee.

Coming Up

April 9, 2007.

Sam Fried.

Birding the Dempster Highway (North-West Territories).

May 14, 2007.

Paul Sievert.

The Short-tailed Albatross.

June 11, 2007.

To Be Announced

June Program Up In the Air!

Our June speaker, Paul Green, has had to cancel his proposed program. He is moving to Arizona. Geoff LeBaron is working on a replacement.

FIELD TRIPS

Please see the **Revised** *Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule*. This replaces the previous schedule issued in January (on green paper).

Connecticut Lakes, New Hampshire. Friday, June 22 – Sunday June 24, 2007.

Mike Locher and David Peake-Jones will be doing their best to deputize for Tom Gagnon this year on our trip to the “Great North Woods.”

Less than a mile south of the Canadian border in extreme northern New Hampshire, our beloved Connecticut River begins as a stream one can almost literally step over at Fourth Connecticut Lake. From here, the river flows through the progressively larger Third, Second, and First Connecticut Lakes, and Lake Francis, before hurrying through Pittsburg, New Hampshire, and on to points south. The streams, lakes, swamps and spruce woods of the Connecticut Lakes are superbly scenic, and provide the closest large tract of boreal forest for us in New England. We will stay in comfortable cabins at Powderhorn Lodge, and make our way daily along Rt 3 (part of which is aptly nicknamed Moose Alley) and adjacent logging roads to visit the various habitats which make up the lakes experience.

There should be great opportunities to observe nesting warblers, including Bay-breasted and Blackpoll, perhaps even the rare Cape May Warbler. Northern finches like Evening Grosbeak and Pine Siskin should be around, along with boreal specialties such as Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Olive-sided Flycatcher and White-winged Crossbill. If we are really lucky, we might come across jewels like the Spruce Grouse or Black-backed Woodpecker.

Please contact David Peake-Jones (413 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com), or Mike Locher (413 585 5864, mlocher@yahoo.com) for further information or to sign up.

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 2

Breeding Bird Atlas projects enlist the skills and enthusiasm of hundreds of volunteers to record changes in breeding bird populations for the purpose of conserving our native bird life. In 1974 Mass Audubon organized Breeding Bird Atlas 1, the first attempt in North America to systematically map the status of breeding birds on a statewide scale. You can read about this project at www.massaudubon.org/birdatlas/bbportal

More importantly, Mass Audubon has decided to repeat the survey to examine the current status of breeding birds in Massachusetts, beginning this year. This will be known as the Breeding Bird Atlas 2 Project. If you are interested in being part of this effort, this is how we recommend you proceed.

1. Research

Go to www.massaudubon.org/birdatlas/bbportal, click on “Atlas 2” and read about the project. You will also want to read the “Atlas Methodology” link at the bottom of the “Atlas 2” page.

2. Sign Up

If you are interested, sign up using the “How You Can Help” link on either of the previous two Web pages. Shortly after you have signed up, one of the following regional coordinators will receive your name and contact details:

Hampshire/ Franklin counties: Mary Alice Wilson
 Hampden County: Seth Kellogg
 Quabbin region: Mark Lynch

3. Confirmation Information to Regional Coordinator

(For Hampshire County) If you send Mary Alice your confirmation information by March 17, you will receive a block assignment by March 20. After that, the assignments will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

4. Training

Come to a workshop to learn more about techniques and strategies:

Monday, March 26, 2007, 7 PM, Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 325 South Pleasant Street, Amherst. Led by Joan Walsh, Atlas 2 Coordinator, and Simon Perkins, Field Ornithologist. Sponsored by Mass Audubon and the Hampshire Bird Club (more information at hampshirebirdclub.org).

Wednesday, April 11, 2007, 7 PM, Millers Falls Environmental Center, 110 Main Street, Athol. Led by Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll. Sponsored by Mass Audubon and the Athol Bird and Nature Club (more information at www.millersriver.net)

Breeding Bird Atlas 2: Background

A block is a rectangle approximately 3 miles on a side. To see what the blocks look like, visit the Mass Audubon Website referred to earlier.

One person (the “**Primary Atlaser**”) agrees to spend a minimum of 20 hours in a block (alone or with a team). Mass Audubon suggests that no one sign up as Primary Atlaser for more than 4 blocks. Each of the 133 blocks in Hampshire-Franklin Counties needs a Primary Atlaser.)

Regional Coordinators will assign a Primary Atlaser for each block ONLY from the group of people who sign up at the Mass Audubon Website. Priority (until March 17) will be given to those birders who participated in Atlas I (1974-1979), including (for Hampshire/Franklin counties): Harvey Allen, Bob Bieda, Al Richards, and Scott Turner. If you are not on the list and should be, let Mary Alice know.

The “**Secondary Atlasers**” are folks who are willing/able to report breeding birds in a given block (as a member of a team with the Primary Atlaser, or just as someone who regularly birds that area (home, work, commuting route, favorite spot). There is no limit to the number of Secondary Atlasers in any block. Observations made by primary and secondary atlasers will overlap, and this is perfectly OK.

Atlas 2 is entirely web-based. You will be entering your own data AND you will be able to see results for this first year of the 5-year project by the end of the summer. Those birders in our community who are not computer users will need a computer buddy. If you need help offering (or getting) computer assistance, call Mary Alice and she will help find a match for you.

Feel free to contact Mary Alice Wilson with questions
mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu; 413-548-9078

On Guard

On February 27, 2007 - a beautiful clear day - I drove from Sunderland across the bridge, turned onto River Road, parked, and got out to see if the peregrines were around. Nothing stirred.

Then I heard a scream behind me and the male (I think it was the male) came right over my head and began flying over the Sugarloaf cliff. All of a sudden the female came over, headed to the cliff, turned and flew very fast parallel with the cliff right into a Red-tailed Hawk.

The red-tail tried to fend off the attack, but the second peregrine arrived and together they drove the red-tail to the ground. They then headed back to Sugarloaf and continued patrolling the cliff. I could not get to where the red-tail was (back in the trees along the edge of the cliff), but I stayed for a while and it didn't come up.

Harvey Allen

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Spring Birding Course: *Scott Sumner, Instructor*

Evening Classes: February 28, March 21, 28, April 11, 25, May 2, 9, 16, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Field Trips: March 3 (5 a.m.), March 24 (5 a.m.), April 7, 14, 21, 28, May 5, 12, 19 (5 a.m.), June 2 (5:30 a.m.), generally 7 a.m. – noon

Virtual Visit to Mt. Tom: *Speaker to be announced.*

Tuesday, March 13, 6:30 p.m. Held at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls

Quabbin Reservoir: The Place of Many Waters: *Clif Read, Department of Conservation and Recreation*

Tuesday, March 27, 7 p.m. Held at the Quabbin Visitor Center, Belchertown

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 PROGRAMS

Introduction to Birding: *Arcadia staff and Volunteers*

Thursdays, March 15, 29, April 5, 26, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Saturdays March 17, April 7, 28 mornings.

Dance of the American Woodcock: *Nan Childs and Patti Steinman*

Saturday, March 31, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Big Night Family Enchanted Forest: *Arcadia Staff and Volunteers*

Saturday, March 24, 5:30-9:00 p.m.

*For more details of these and other programs go to www.massaudubon.org (select "Sanctuaries", then "Choose a Sanctuary: Arcadia") or call the sanctuary at the number below. To register for programs contact **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary**, 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton MA 01027. Telephone (413) 584-3009.*

LIBRARY: A New Volume

Henry Lappen reports that we have acquired the following title for the library:

Birds of Southern South America and Antarctica, by DelaPena and Rumboll, 1998.

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. on Saturday. 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**.

The Birdhouse Network: A Decade of Dedication

Citizen scientists keep tabs on the lives of nesting birds

For 10 years, a network of dedicated birders has made it their mission to help birds by providing nest boxes where birds can raise their families, and by recording information for scientists. Together, they've kept a decade of meticulous records about when the birds build their nests, how many eggs they lay, and when the gawky fledglings take their first flights. Combined, they have sent nearly 70,000 nest records to *The Birdhouse Network*, a citizen-science project of the *Cornell Lab of Ornithology*. These efforts have helped expand scientific knowledge about bluebirds, Tree Swallows, House Wrens, and other cavity-nesting birds for whom the motto may be rephrased, "Hole Sweet Home."

Getting Oriented: Using records from participants, scientists have examined factors that affect the success of nesting birds across time and space. They have found, for example, that in northern latitudes, nest boxes facing east or northeast produce more fledglings. The hypothesis is that cavity entrances facing toward the sunrise remain warmer on cold spring mornings, increasing survival rates. In contrast, the orientation of the nest box has no effect in southern latitudes.

Some Don't Like it Hot: A significantly higher number of eggs fail to hatch in the South than in the North. Researchers are investigating whether prolonged warm temperatures cause some of the eggs to start developing before the female begins incubating, leading to abnormal development. Birds in warmer climates tend to produce more broods, perhaps to balance the loss. Scientists will be keeping close tabs on rates of hatching in the face of global climate change.

The Birdhouse Network also invites participants to help in a special study called Personality Profiles. Participants follow an experimental protocol and observe how birds react to harmless novel objects placed near nest boxes. Scientists use the information to learn more about birds, such as why some species fare better in cities or around people. They invite anyone interested in animal behavior to help by joining the study.

People of all ages and skill levels can be part of The Birdhouse Network. "Without the data sent in by participants, we would not be able to track large-scale trends in the reproductive cycles of these birds," says project leader Tina Phillips. "Whether they monitor one box or 100, our participants are so dedicated to the birds, and the data they provide us year after year are incredibly powerful."

To sign up or find out more about The Birdhouse Network, visit www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse, or call (800) 843-2473. The project fee is \$15 (\$12 for Lab members). Join in this spring to help scientists develop a clearer picture of the intricate and fascinating lives of cavity-nesting birds.

Don Kroodsmas presents "The Singing Life of Birds"

The presentation occurs on **March 25** from **2:00 to 4:00 PM** at the JBR Conference Room at the **Eagle Hill School**, on Rte. 32A in Hardwick.

This program is co-sponsored by the Enrichment Outreach Program at Eagle Hill School, the East Quabbin Land Trust and the East Quabbin Bird Club. Partial funding is provided by the Hardwick/New Braintree Cultural Council. To RSVP call 413-477-8229.

Cynthia Henshaw, Executive Director, East Quabbin Land Trust
P.O. Box 5, 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick, MA 01037

A Note On the RBA

HBC operates a Rare Bird Alert to help birders locate rare birds, especially in the local region, but not every rare bird that appears is the subject of an RBA. A couple of cases in recent months have occasioned some discontent amongst members, and these cases bear some further examination.

In the fall, a Painted Bunting was coming to a feeder in the hilltowns. The owner of the property specifically asked that the location not be publicized, but did let individuals or small groups go by appointment. In this case, the rare Bird Alert Committee did not activate the alert in order to protect the privacy of the property owner.

More recently, a Long-eared Owl was found in Hampshire County. In this case the committee's decision took into account the fact that this species is notoriously susceptible to disturbance, especially when observers intrude too close to day-time roosting sites. Moreover, the committee had direct evidence that this bird had already been disturbed in this manner. Disturbance can and does lead to injury, exhaustion, and mortality for these birds.

In both cases, informal word-of-mouth amongst birders allowed a number of local birders to see these birds. Given that birders are finding out about the bird anyhow, many argue that the RBA should have been activated in the interests of fairness, and used as a tool to encourage responsible behavior by visiting observers. Unfortunately, huge numbers of birders can find out about rare birds via the internet, and this can greatly increase the volume of visitors and the chances of disturbance.

The Rare Bird Alert Committee has to weigh a great number of complex factors in determining whether a given bird should be the subject of an RBA. Sometimes, the interests of property owners or the bird itself take precedence over the obvious desire to share these wonderful creatures with others in our region. We hope you will understand.

Editor

Backyard Birds

17 Strong St., Northampton (near Eastside Grill). Phone 586 3155

Your local source for birding and bird-feeding supplies, including feeders, optics, gifts, written and audio-materials. Ten percent discount for members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Remember, with local merchants, your dollar stays here!

That's it for this month

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor
(413) 529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

REVISED Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule, 2007

(Replaces the original field trip schedule (Green) issued in January.)

Please register with the field trip leader(s) and check this schedule's information when a phone number is given. The Field Trip Chair (Michael Locher – 413-585-5864) 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 \$0.40 per mile, as well as tolls and parking. See also the "Field Trip Guidelines for Participants" (September newsletter or on the Website).

Some trips have been marked with an asterisk (), which indicates that they are good trips for beginning birders. All trips have been coded as Easy (E) or Moderate (M) to give a rough indication of the pace and/or terrain, while a new coding (A) indicates that the trip is accessible. However, check all information with the trip leaders.*

MARCH

***Saturday, March 10. Great Falls Discovery Center/Turners Falls.** 10 AM to Noon. Jan Ortiz investigates bird life at this wheelchair-accessible and lively location. Binoculars and scopes are available for use as well as other assistive technology such as portable folding chairs, large print field guides, monopods, and listening devices. Meet at the Discovery Center. Please contact Jan Ortiz (549 1768) or the DCR (545 5758) for further information. (E/A)

Wednesday, March 21. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) leads a local trip to find seasonal specialties, probably migrating waterfowl. Meet at 7:30 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Saturday, March 24. Connecticut River Waterfowl. Half day. Al Richards shows you to the waterfowl migrating along the Connecticut River. Call Al (413-665-2761) for meeting information as the date approaches. (E)

APRIL

***Saturday, April 14. Norwottuck Rail Trail/Station Road, Amherst.** 10 AM to Noon. Jan Ortiz investigates bird life at this wheelchair accessible and lively location. Binoculars and scopes are available for use as well as other assistive technology such as portable folding chairs, large print field guides, monopods, and listening devices. Meet at the Station Road rail trail parking lot. Please contact Jan Ortiz (549 1768) or the DCR (545 5758) for further information. (E/A).

***Saturday, April 14. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher tries to fill Bob Bieda's shoes in searching out early migrants. We're hoping to find Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and migrating Broad-winged Hawks and Ospreys. Meet at the Holiday Inn parking lot, Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7:00 a.m. (If anybody is interested, we may listen for American Woodcock nearby in the predawn hours. Call Mike (413-585-5864) to express interest and get meeting details.) (E)

Wednesday, April 18. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) looks for the early migrants Bob missed. Meet at 7:30 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

***Saturday, April 21. More Migrants.** Half day. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) looks for migrants, starting around Look Park in Northampton. Meet at 6:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the JFK Middle School on Bridge Street in Northampton. (E)

MAY

On the first three **Tuesdays** in May, we will offer guided walks at Wildwood Cemetery (E) in Amherst from 6:30 - 8:30 a.m. Meet in the small parking area just outside the entrance on Strong Street. On the first three **Thursdays** in May, we will offer guided walks along the rail trail (E/A) from 6:30-8:30 a.m. Look to the newsletter for leaders and more details as the time approaches.

Saturday, May 12. Spring Migration in the Quabbin. All day. Tom Gagnon guides birders through the Quabbin in search of its varied avifauna. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well ahead of time for meeting information and to register. (M)

Saturday, May 12. Norwottuck Rail Trail/Station Road, Amherst. 10 AM to Noon. Jan Ortiz investigates bird life at this wheelchair accessible and lively location. Binoculars and scopes are available for use as well as other assistive technology such as portable folding chairs, large print field guides, monopods, and listening devices. Meet at the Station Road rail trail parking lot. Please contact Jan Ortiz (549 1768) or the DCR (545 5758) for further information. (E/A).

Sunday, May 13. Mt. Auburn Cemetery. All day. David Peake-Jones goes to Boston's most historic cemetery, which is also one of the Eastern Massachusetts' birding hotspots, to see what happens to fly in. The numbers and variety can be astonishing. Call David (413-529-9541) for meeting information. (E)

Wednesday, May 16. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) shows off his favorite birding spots. Meet at 7:00 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Saturday, May 19. Coastal Rhode Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron heads to our petite southern neighbor for the warm (really, this time) season to track down migrants and other seasonal specialties. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for meeting information and further details. (E)

Friday, May 25 – Monday, May 28. Monhegan Island. Overnight trip. Betsy Higgins and Andrew Magee guide birders on the Hampshire Bird Club's annual pilgrimage to this charming Atlantic isle. Not only is the island charming, but the migrating birds can be astonishing. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) to register. (E/M)

Saturday, May 26. Poor Man's Monhegan. All day. Bob Bieda guides the rest of us to Massachusetts' less artsy, but no less birdy, isle. Past trips have found Wilson's Phalaropes, Piping Plovers, Seaside Sparrows, Orchard Orioles, and Evening Grosbeaks. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and get meeting information. (E)

JUNE

Saturday, June 2. Westover Air Force Base. Half day. Pending permission, Bob Bieda will lead his annual trip into New England's premier grassland habitat, looming for Upland Sandpipers, Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only, and is wheelchair accessible. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E/A)

Saturday, June 2. Norwottuck Rail Trail/Station Road, Amherst. 10 AM to Noon. Jan Ortiz investigates bird life at this wheelchair accessible and lively location. Binoculars and scopes are available for use as well as other assistive technology such as portable folding chairs, large print field guides, monopods, and listening devices. Meet at the Station Road rail trail parking lot. Please contact Jan Ortiz (549 1768) or the DCR (545 5758) for further information. (E/A).

***Saturday, June 9. West Quabbin ramble.** Half day. Dave Gross offers a trip “through his backyard” and will be listening for nesting migrants, permanent residents, and hiking through blooming Mountain Laurel. If this sounds appealing, email or call David (413-253-2897) for further details. (M)

Sunday, June 10. Mt. Greylock. Full Day. David Peake-Jones will revive this never-predictable trip to our states’ highest point. We can expect some high altitude breeders, great views, and maybe even the elusive Mourning Warbler. Please expect to hike up to a mile or two on the AT and other rough hiking trails. Please call David (413-529-9541) for meeting details. (M)

Saturday, June 16. Hammonasset Beach State Park, CT. All day. In a new trip for the Hampshire Bird Club, Betsy Higgins goes to the coast of Connecticut to find unusual sparrows, rails, and other seaside denizens. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for details as the date approaches. (E)

Wednesday, June 20. 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)

Friday-Sunday, June 22-24. Connecticut Lakes, NH. Overnight trip. David Peake-Jones and Mike Locher fill in for Tom Gagnon this year. They will be leading this trip to northern New Hampshire. Migrants, boreal specialties, and moose abound. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Contact David (413-529-9541) or Mike (413-585-5864) to register. (M)

JULY

Saturday, July 28. New South Beach, I. All day. David Peake-Jones goes looking for early migrating shorebirds, especially Red Knots. Bring a lunch, a jacket, water and \$20 for the boat ride. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (M)

AUGUST

Saturday, August 25. 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. (M)