



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

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“If there’s a bustle in your hedgerow, don’t be alarmed now! It’s just a spring clean for the May Queen.” (Led Zeppelin)

On a dank late April day recently I wandered toward the orchard at Arcadia, desperately trying to kick start my (already abandoned) resolution to bird every day of the spring migration. At first it seemed it would be one of those days when, inexplicably, the birds simply had not come in overnight. However, as I approached a single large tamarack tree, I heard a plaintive, piping song that is, more than anything else for me, the harbinger of spring. There, silhouetted in the gloom, were no fewer than six Ruby-crowned Kinglets, each determinedly prying open the nascent buds of the tree in search of sustenance. Their quicksilver wing-flicking and gymnastics established their identities beyond the need for closer examination. Few other migrants had arrived by that date, and I was reminded of the hope these tiniest of travelers always kindle, often before their gaudier cousins have reached these latitudes. Hence, in honor of the migrants of that morning, I would like to propose a new collective noun for the species: a “bustle” of kinglets. I hope there’s a bustle in your hedgerow.

In this edition:

- information on this month’s program,
- several florid trip reports, only 33 % of which can be attributed to the editor,
- coming field trips and plugs for the Monhegan and Connecticut Lakes overnight trips,
- the long awaited slate of officers to be nominated at the Annual General Meeting,
- more about the second breeding bird atlas
- disturbing news about Barton’s Cove,
- a plethora of programs from local environmental organizations, and some other snippets.

I hope you find some of it useful.

PROGRAMS

Monday, May 14 at 7:30 PM

Paul Sievert follows the travels of the Short-tailed Albatross

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Short-tailed Albatross were once the most common albatross in the North Pacific, with a population thought to consist of 5 million birds. This situation changed rapidly following the onset of feather hunting in the 1880s, and by 1949 the species was declared extinct. Fortunately, this declaration was premature, as several birds survived at sea and founded the populations that currently nest on Torishima and the Senkaku Islands. This program will take you on a tour of Torishima Island, and around the North Pacific, as we follow the movements of Short-tailed Albatross during the chick-rearing period, and beyond. We will look at the growth of the population, along with present day threats to Short-tailed Albatross, including eruption of the volcano on which they nest!

Paul Sievert is Assistant Unit Leader for the USGS, Massachusetts Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His first studies of Pacific albatrosses began 20 years ago when he examined the effect of plastic ingestion on Laysan and Black-footed Albatrosses in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Since then, he has used satellite telemetry to examine the at-sea movements of the three species of North Pacific albatross, and has collaborated with the Yamashina Institute of Ornithology, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a six-year study of the oceanic travels of Short-tailed Albatross.

Coming Up

June 11, 2007.

Joan Walsh.

The Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas (Two)

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Ashley Ponds. Saturday, April 14.

Anne Lombard, Shirley Hammerschmith, Janet (? an unaffiliated birder from South Hadley) Elissa Rubenstein, **Mike Locher**, and David Peake-Jones, (participants listed in approximate order of fashion sense) visited this piny paradise in Holyoke for the club's traditional sampling of early songbirds. We misplaced Shirley and Anne at the start of the trip, so they went on ahead and scared all the good stuff away. Hence it was that an abbreviated group finally made it to the gates of the reservation and set out. Global warming deniers took great encouragement from this day. Forecast temperatures were in the low fifties, but winter's grip was still clearly evident in the raw winds of the early morning. Song was quite subdued, but at least one **Pine Warbler** sang cooperatively along the track down to the causeway.

As we crossed the causeway, each of us made resolutions related to the temperature. Mike resolved to refer Bob Bieda to a good audiologist, so that he may never again pass this trip off to the field trip coordinator. Janet threatened to quit until we lied to her that it was "only another twenty minutes to the shelter of the trees." Elissa resolved to stay in bed next year, and yours truly resolved to wimper dejectedly, which I did right there and then. We were temporarily warmed by the oscillatory antics of several Palm Warblers toward the end of the reservoir.

We did make it to the comparative shelter of the far side, and were rewarded with nice looks at a close group of Ring-necked Ducks in morning light. Moving along the Maclean reservoir section of the ring road, we were blessed with our first sighting of the world's perkier jogger, and there ensued a tasteless discussion of why she might be running with arms stuck out at 45 degrees to the vertical. She cheerfully informed us that she would be leaving our pedestrian butts in the dust at least another four times, and she was as good as her word. Not to be distracted, we followed the sounds of a suspiciously slow Pine Warbler into the woods, on the strength of Peake-Jones airy assertion that it had to be a Chipping Sparrow. We found, of course, a suspicious, slow Pine Warbler, who blessed us with wonderful views. In this area we also heard **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** (though we never saw it), Red-breasted Nuthatch, and the ethereal spring notes of a Brown Creeper, which again decided to remain invisible.

A little further along, we encountered a **Fox Sparrow** in a tangle of bridal creeper, and an Osprey glided overhead, no doubt up to something fishy. About all we saw for the rest of the trip was the spritely aspiring marathoner, circulating steadfastly with nary a sign of fatigue. We departed for home just as the warmth of the day began to penetrate our chilled bones.

David Peake-Jones



Mid-week Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. Wednesday, April 18, 2007.

Harvey Allen and participants braved cold and wind on the bike path to get good looks at a Pine Warbler (near the ground). They also found a Great Egret and a Great Blue Heron with black head plumes blowing straight out behind the head. There were 3 Osprey, a pair of American Kestrels, 2 Female Harriers, 1 immature Red-tailed Hawk, and a displaying Eastern Meadowlark. There must have been a singing song sparrow every 30 feet!

Mary Alice Wilson



Look Park. Saturday, April 21, 2007.

This year's Look Park excursion, led by Betsy Higgins, commenced on an early and chilly morning under bright and promising skies. As I pulled into the (wrong) parking lot (five minutes late), I spied a cluster of birder's bristling with all manner of Zeiss, Swarovski, and Leica tracking some unseen (to me) object. It was a Northern Goshawk. Alas, let that be a lesson to those of us who are tempted to activate snooze alarms.

Appetites duly whetted, we embarked on a slow circuit of Look Park's perimeters and rushing stream. Though a quieter morning than one may have wished, we were treated to a number of both auditory and visual treats. Heard-but-not-seen were Winter Wren, Louisiana Waterthrush, Pileated Woodpecker, and a "goofy" Field Sparrow. Seen and savored species included both Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Pine Warbler, Hermit Thrush, Red-bellied Woodpecker, wonderfully close views of Common Merganser, and a Double-crested Cormorant flyover. The total number of species seen approximated 25.

Betsy, David, and I decided to get some breakfast at Look Restaurant and then engage in some après-trip birding. As we sauntered toward the restaurant entrance, we were speculating on the start of the Broad-winged Hawk migration. Glancing up, we were treated to a kettle of three rising overhead. As if to mark the moment, we were then strafed by a scolding Belted Kingfisher. Breakfast duly consumed, we headed for Graves Farm. Highlights included gloriously sunlit displays by Tree Swallows and a pair of Eastern Bluebirds, a Cooper's Hawk in hunting mode, a Brown Creeper, and probable Ruffed Grouse.

Leslie Hoffman

* I would like to commend Leslie for (in addition to the generally excellent quality of her trip report) the first documented use of the prefix "après" in the newsletter during my tenure. Ed.

Coming Trips

Please see also the REVISED Winter-Spring-Late Summer Field Trip Schedule.

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. Please meet at the Station Road parking lot.

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)

(continues next page→)

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)

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)

Please note that the **Mt Greylock trip (June 10) has been cancelled** due to the closure of all roads in the Mt Greylock State Reservation for the season.

OVERNIGHT TRIPS

MONHEGAN ISLAND: A Birding Pilgrimage

Memorial Day Weekend (May 26-29), 2007.

There's birds (lots of them, some of them on the beach), there's spectacular seascapes, there's lobster fisherman and lobster dinner, there's the enchanted forest and fairy houses, there's the gentle pace of island life, there's sunsets from the lighthouse bench, there's afternoon visits to art galleries and, and, and,.....

This is really a great trip and there are still a few spaces left!

For further details, or to sign up, call Betsy Higgins (586 7585) or Andrew Magee (586 1509).

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. Winter 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.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Hampshire Bird Club, Incorporated, will be held on Monday, May 14 at 7:30 PM at Immanuel Lutheran Church. The church is located at 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst. The assembled membership will elect the Board of Directors for the club for 2007-2008. The Nominating Committee will nominate the following slate of officers at the meeting.

President: David Gross

Vice-President/Program Chair: Geoff LeBaron

Treasurer: Janice Jorgenson

Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson

Communications Secretary: Elissa Rubenstein*

Members-At-Large: Bruce Callaghan*
Mike Locher
Dennis McKenna
Jaap van Heerden
Lisa Rock*
Scott Turner*

Nominees marked with an * are not currently on the board, though some have held office before. Nominations for any position will also be accepted from the floor.

Second Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas Update!!

With the help from the Hampshire Bird Club and the Athol Bird and Nature Club, newspapers, newsletters, and just good folk working hard, we have more than half the blocks in both Hampshire and Franklin County assigned.

Blocks Still to Be Assigned

As of April 27th, there are still 2 blocks in the most populated areas:

Shaftsbury 3: Amethyst Brook, Mount Orient, Pratt Corner

Ludlow 1: Stony Brook, Bagg Hill, Facing Hills

There are also blocks available in:

Southampton, Westhampton, Huntington, Chesterfield, Middlefield, Worthington, Cummington, Ashfield, Plainfield, Greenfield, Shelburne, Buckland, Hawley, Orange, Northfield, Bernardston, Colrain, Heath, Rowe, and Monroe.

These are beautiful places with great birds. (Some are fabulous; others just very, very good.) There are two approaches to get them covered:

a) **Block Busting**: As soon as everyone is comfortable with the atlas work on their present blocks, we can start having block-busting teams visit some of these great areas. Present atlasers will hear more about this.

b) **More Atlasers**. Please volunteer if you have not already done so, and please contact birding friends and acquaintances who live in these areas. They can sign up at www.massaudubon.org/birdatlas/bba2, or contact Mary Alice Wilson (mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu, 413-548-9078)

Barton's Cove for the Birds?

A permitting process is now ongoing to turn Barton Cove IBA into a water ski park. The area does have a public boat ramp and hunting/ fishing/kayaking is considered recreational use. I do feel that adding more noise to the cove is not in standing with an Important Bird Area designation and am opposed to it. If you feels strongly about this, contact Tony Zaharias at Massachusetts E.P.A., 436 Dwight St.. Springfield, MA. 01103 to express an opinion, which may, or may not, influence a decision on this matter.

Thanks.

Mark Taylor
Northfield, MA
birdnorth@earthlink.net

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Sustainable Farm Tour: *Deb Habib & Ricky Barnuc, Seeds of Solidarity Farm, Orange*
Saturday, May 5, 3 - 5 p.m.

Chicopee Landfill & Methane Recapture Field Trip: *Bob Magnusson*
Wednesday, June 6, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Amherst Butterfly Institute: Classes: Tuesdays, May 1, 15, 29, June 12, and 26, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Field Trips: May 5, 20, June 2, 17, and 30 (or July 1), 10:00 a.m. (time varies)

Birding By Ear: *John Green*
Sunday, April 29, Saturday May 26 and Saturday June 2, 6:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Living With Wildlife: Black Bears of Western Massachusetts: *Ralph Taylor*
Thursday, May 10, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Design & Plant a Native Perennial Garden: *James McSweeney*
Saturday, May 19, 1 - 4:30 p.m. Held at Nasami Farm Native Plant Nursery in Whately, Mass.

Happy Birthday, Rachel Carson! *Donna Dufresne*, Historical Performer, as Rachel Carson
Sunday, May 20, 1 p.m.

Alpine Flora of New England: *Pete Westover and Ted Watt*
Tuesday, June 5, 7 p.m.

HITCHCOCK SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The Natural History of the Everglades and South Florida: John Green & Tom Tynning,

Thursday, May 24, 7-8:30pm.

Members: free/Non-members: \$5

John will start the program with a slide show of some of his most prized photos of the lush natural Floridian landscapes that include intimate looks at the American Alligator, crocodiles, wading birds, and much more. Tom will give a brief overview of the unique ecological communities and remarkable wildlife that abounds in this subtropical mecca. This program will also provide a first introduction to the 8-day natural history excursion to the Everglades and South Florida that John and Tom will be leading in partnership with the Hitchcock Center this coming Winter!

Hiking the Presidentials - An Alpine Wildflower & Birding Trek: *Pete Westover and Ted Watt*

Friday-Sunday, June 15-17, 2007

Members: \$205/Non-members: \$225

Join Ted and Pete for this very special excursion to the Presidential Range of the White Mountains for some of the most spectacular scenery in New England. Planned to coincide with peak bloom of the alpine wildflowers, we will visit Mount Washington's Alpine Garden and other areas both above and below timber line. We will lodge at the 5,000-foot high Lakes of the Clouds Hut on Friday night, hike across the high plateau to the Alpine Garden on Saturday, and hike down to Joe Dodge Lodge at Pinkham Notch for Saturday night. Sunday we'll explore lower elevation areas near Pinkham.

The Art of Falconry: *Chris Davis, Master Falconer.* Saturday, June 2, 10:30am-Noon

Members: \$12/Non-members: \$18. Held at New England Falconry in Hadley

Chris Davis is a Master Falconer, breeder, and the founder and director of New England Falconry. He has been a licensed falconer since 1979 and is the first Master Falconer permitted in this country to offer hands-on falconry education. You will experience the ancient art of falconry while learning about the life history of raptors, their role in the environment, and the efforts underway to ensure their survival and conservation.

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

Birding By Canoe: *David McLain.* Saturday, May 5, 9:00 am-noon

Early Morning Bird Walks: *Various leaders.*

May 5, 7-8:30 a.m. at Marion Sherman Lynes

May 19, 7-8:30 a.m. at Arcadia

May 26, 7-8:30 a.m. at Laughing Book

May 14-18, 6:30-8:00 a.m. at Arcadia

Barton Cove Eagles and Canoe Trip: *Aimee Gelinis.* Thursday, May 31, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Springtime at High Ledges: *Ron Wolanin.* Sunday, June 3, 9:00 a.m. -1:00 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.*

GREAT FALLS DISCOVERY CENTER PROGRAMS

Struggles of a Migratory Bird: *Refuge Staff.* Saturday, May 5, 1 pm

Suitcase for Survival: *Tom Laskowski and Eddy Edwards (federal wildlife officers)*

Thursday, May 10, 7 pm. Held at The Montshire Museum of Science, Norwich, VT. (802 649 2200 x222)

Build-A-Bird: *Refuge Staff.* Friday, May 11, 10:30 am

Bat Explore!: *John Foster.* Thursday, May 17, 7 pm

Great Falls Art Fest: Saturday, May 19 and Sunday, May 20 10 am to 4 pm

Birds of the Connecticut River Watershed: *Refuge Staff.* Friday, May 25, 1 pm

Pre-1840 Rendezvous in Northfield, MA

Sunday, May 27, 10 am – 4 pm

Tuesday, May 29, 10 am – 4 pm

Friends Coffeehouse Series. Wednesday, May 30, 7pm

2nd Annual Family Fish Day! Saturday, June 2, 10 am – 2 pm

Great Falls Discovery Center is located at 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA

Open Fridays and Saturdays from 10 AM to 4 PM

Phone (413) 683 3221

Welcome, New Members!

Jean Marie Casbarian: Northampton

Susan Jones: Monson

Bryan Bridges: Easthampton

Mrianna McKim: Northampton

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!

Well, that seems to be it for this month.

Until June, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor

(413) 529 9541

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