



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
25TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Volume 25, No. 4
December, 2008
www.hampshirebirdclub.org

PROGRAMS

Monday, December 8 at 7:30 PM

Members Meeting: Anniversary Reflections

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

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

The **December Meeting** has traditionally involved lots of conversation, cookies and our own slides. This year we want to encourage members to bring slides that highlight HBC memories – trips from years past, pictures with members from years ago, and the like. Of course, we also welcome current birding slides as well. As in past years, please limit your show to 10 or fewer slides.

To Share Your Memories

By 6 PM on December 7:

Please send an email confirmation about your slide presentation to either **Jaap van Heerden** (jvanheerden@hampshirebirdclub.org) or **Geoff LeBaron** (programs@hampshirebirdclub.org).

We Need to Know:

- Are your slides digital or 35 mm format?,
- If digital, are the images in Powerpoint format or just stand-alone images?
(If you bring digital images, please have them on a memory stick or CD-ROM disk).

See you On December 8!!

CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Northampton Christmas Count Bullets

- **Date:** Sunday, December 14, 2008.
- **Potluck Set-Up:** Hitchcock Center, 2 PM.
- **Potluck Supper:** Hitchcock Center, 4:30 PM.
- **Compilation of Results:** Hitchcock Center, 6-7 PM.

Quabbin Count Bullets

- ❖ **Date:** Saturday, December 27, 2008.
- ❖ **Contact:** Scott Sumner: president@hampshirebirdclub.org; 413 256 5438.

COMING PROGRAMS

January 12, 2009	Don Kroodsma	Birdsong By the Seasons.
February 9, 2009	Mark Lynch/Sheila Carroll	Boids and Ahrt.
March 9, 2009	Scott Weidensaul	Return to Wild America.

**** 25TH ANNIVERSARY ****

RAFFLE, RAFFLE, RAFFLE, RAFFLE, RAFFLE

To raise money toward our anniversary year, the HBC will be conducting a raffle. The prize, donated by an HBC member, is a **rare print after John James Audubon by J. T. Bowen: Townsend's Cormorant, Plate 418 from *Birds of America***. This hand colored lithograph, circa 1845, was part of a series by James Bowen who received permission from Audubon to reproduce his engravings in lithography in a smaller size than the original series. A representative from Christie's has valued this print at \$500.

Please note that the time to purchase tickets for the raffle has been extended. Tickets will now be on sale for \$10 each at the December, January, February and March meetings. The print will be available for viewing at each of these meetings. The raffle will be drawn at the April meeting: the theoretical birthday of the club. If you would like to purchase tickets at other times or have any questions, please contact Betsy Higgins at 586-7585.

HBC BOOK DISCUSSION

***Return to Wild America* by Scott Weidensaul.**

In 1953 Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher made an epic journey around the United States and published their classic account of that adventure, *Wild America*. Fifty years later Scott Weidensaul followed in their footsteps. His goal was to observe changes in bird populations and habitats and to see if "wild America" still exists. The result: his thought-provoking book, *Return to Wild America*. We are excited to have Scott Weidensaul, Pulitzer Prize finalist, as our guest speaker in March.

In honor of that event, we've planned a series of book discussions. There was lively participation (and refreshments!) at our first meeting in November. The second will be held on **Monday, January 5th, 2009 at the Hitchcock Center at 7pm.**

During this session we will focus on a specific issue using material from both books, in addition to sharing personal experiences and observations. While it is not necessary to read *Wild America* to participate fully in the discussion, we would encourage anyone who has the interest to do so.

Session #2: "The Border". Jan. 5th

Locale: Texas and Arizona

(Chapters 7 and 9 in Weidensaul; Chapters 17, 19, 20-21 in Peterson/Fisher)

If you have any questions, please call discussion co-leaders Anne Lombard (586-7509) or Elissa Rubinstein (549-5078). Look forward to seeing you on Jan. 5th!

FLORENCE SAVINGS BANK GRANT PROGRAM

Florence Savings Bank customers can vote for a nonprofit organization to share in \$50,000 to be donated by the bank. The Hampshire Bird Club and the Hitchcock Center for the Environment are both eligible non-profit institutions. If you are an FSB customer, we ask that you take the time to vote for your favorite non-profit. And we know which one that is, right?

I will leave you in the skillful hands of Trudy Tynan, who has put together the third chapter of an HBC history! Until next month, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor
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newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB HISTORY

CHAPTER THREE: Ethics to Wozzles 1989-1993

By Trudy Tynan

The Hampshire Bird Club is a group of people who enjoy watching birds, either as a casual hobby or to the point of an addiction. We are a good source of information for those just getting started or for those who would enjoy knowing more about the natural history of birds. Anyone interested in birding regardless of experience or level of expertise is welcome.

We meet monthly, September through June, to hear guest speakers, see slide presentations, and review recent sightings and experiences. The Club also sponsors field trips throughout the year and participates in the annual Christmas Count. Members have access to a lending library, a rare bird alert and current birding information available through the Voice, an up-to-date recorded telephone service.

Sound familiar? That's how Sally Venman described us in a newsletter 20 years ago, and it still holds true.

1989-90 featured some good birds. The reports to the HBC Hotline included a Common Black-headed Gull and Hudsonian Godwit in Hadley in October, a Green-tailed Towhee in Brattleboro, Vt., in December, a Cassin's Finch in Athol in February and a Ross' Gull in Gloucester. March brought a Yellow-headed Blackbird to Northampton.

It also brought a new focus on birding ethics following an incident at the American Birding Association's national convention when 70 overeager birders harassed a yellow rail. The HBC responded by formally adopting the ABA Code of Ethics in January and distributing it to all members. The club followed up in April with a panel discussion on birding ethics by John Green, Mark Lynch, Jim Marcum and Susan Smith, moderated by David Spector.

Other programs included Greg Budney, curator of Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Library of Natural Sounds, on "The History of Bird Recording;" Scott Sumner on Appledore Island; John Green on The Everglades; and Dave Ziomek and master falconer Chris David on Barn Owls in western Massachusetts. Tom Arny, UMass astronomer and birder, shared his sabbatical in a program entitled "Birds and Billabongs, Cockatoos and Kangaroos, Aussies and Arny." Brian Cassie, bird tour leader and coordinator of the Butterfly Atlas, spoke on "Birding Argentina." John and Rita Squires, owners of Cassowary House a bed and breakfast in Kuranda, Australia, presented a program on "Australian Birds."

Jim Marcum served a second term as president. Also reelected were Vice President Jan Ortiz, Secretary Sally Venman and Treasurer Al Richards. Bob Bieda, Ged Dorman, Chris Page and Marny Price served on the board.

1990-91 saw the first dues increase since the HBC was founded in 1984 to help finance fees and transportation costs for speakers. The \$2 boost brought the dues for individuals to \$9. Continuing as officers were President Jim Marcum, Vice President Jan Ortiz, Secretary Sally Venman, and Treasurer Al Richards.

Chris Page opened the year's programs with birding Grand Manan, followed by Thomas Martin, a master diemaker and naturalist, who worked amid the skyscrapers of New York City, David Klingener of UMass on the mechanics of flight, and Chris Davis on falconry. Don Kroodsma returned with a program on wrens, followed by Wayne Peterson of MassAudubon on shorebirds, Norm Smith on Snowy Owls at Logan Airport, John Kricher of Wheaton College on "Winter Migrants in Belize," and Paul Rezendes, former Quabbin Loon Warden, on "A Year with the Common Loon." In addition to the regular field trips, Scott Sumner and Jan Ortiz led a trip to south-east Arizona in July.

The HBC Voice became the Western Massachusetts Voice of Audubon – still with a local Amherst phone number. Some 1990-91 sightings were a Sandhill Crane in Belchertown (11/4), a Clay-colored Sparrow in Hadley (11/11), a Northern Hawk-Owl in Springfield, Vt. (12/22), a Snowy Owl at the Quabbin (12/27), a Lark Sparrow in Northampton (1/13), a Tundra Swan in Northampton (3/24), a Wilson's Phalarope in Hatfield (5/1) and a Glossy Ibis in Hadley (5/10). [In 2008, the Western Voice is also on the Internet and appears weekly in the Boston Globe, Springfield Republican, Daily Hampshire Gazette, Berkshire Eagle, and North Adams Transcript.]

In 1991-92 Jan Ortiz took over as president, Morris Lainer became vice president, Sally Venman continued as secretary and Al Richards as treasurer. Board members were Bob Bieda, Shirley Hilborn, Pat Lynch and Scott Surner.

David Spector, about to leave Amherst for a new job with the National Zoo, opened the year's programs with "Naturalists and Novelists" with emphasis on the Brontes. He was followed by Noble Proctor of Southern Conn. State on "Birding Alaska," Todd Highsmith, director of field training at Manomet on the genetic relationship between Blue-winged and Golden-winged warblers, and Mark Lynch and Sheila Carrol on Lord Howe Island. H. Warren Harrington spoke on "Great New England Birds" in February,, followed by former tern warden Peter Trull on Roseate Terns, George Clark of UConn., on "The History of Bird Populations in the Northeast," author Julio de la Torre on "Owls of North America." and Christopher Leahy of MassAudubon on Antarctica. The club teamed up with the Hitchcock Center, to cosponsor workshops by Wayne Peterson on waterfowl, gulls and shorebirds and Tom Gagnon led the first of his popular trips to Yellowstone in June.

Sally made sure we didn't let an obsession with birds allow us to forget these red-letter days: *To add to your October calendar: The 15th: National Grouch Day and/or World Poetry Day (take your pick or read poetry grouchily.) The 16th (1701) Yale founded by Congregationalists unhappy with liberal Harvard. The 26th (1785): Mules arrive in the U.S.*

Favorite February moments designed for Frolic, Feasting and Fun: 10th – First day of National Kraut and Frankfurter Week, 11th _ White Shirt Day in Michigan, 20th _ Toothpick making machine patented in 1872 And finally ---- Heed this timely warning: Feb. 28 is the day that Ice Houses MUST be off Minnesota Lakes.

Ostrich mating season begins May 8. On May 10, you can celebrate the day skunks are born as well as honoring Mom. Looking ahead a bit to one of my own personal favorites we find that on June 1, 1938, Velveeta Cheese was introduced.

1992-93 saw the introduction of white t-shirts with the HBC logo. A trail in the Lawrence Swamp Conservation Area in Amherst was named in honor of HBC charter member Harvey Allen, and the club donated a slide projector stand and flood lights to the Hitchcock Center in thanks for continuing to host club meetings.

The year's programs started with Scott Surner's presentation on Monhegan Island. Noble Proctor spoke on Kenya, Susan Smith of Mount Holyoke College updated her chickadee research and artist Barry VanDusen spoke on New England birds. Julie Sibbing of Manomet updated the club on the Birder's Exchange Program to provide optics to Central and South America. Tom Arny spoke on birding Brazil, photographer Mark Picard gave a presentation on Great Blue Herons, Julio de la Torre returned to talk on warblers and Paul Roberts, past president of the Hawk Migration Association of North America gave a program on identifying hawks in flight.

Jan continued as president. Pat Lynch became vice president, Sally continued as secretary and Al as treasurer. Board members were Bob Bieda, Shirley Hilborn, Morris Lainer, Jim Marcum and Scott Surner.

Sally warned us to take special care because November is National UFO Abductions Month (*We would hate to lose you, even though we have your dues.*) Then she wowed us with Wozzles when the Nashoba Valley Bird Club and Sally Hoffman, its secretary-treasurer, foolishly threw down the Gannet to challenge us with plays on bird names:

Woody, would you peck her?

As a native of Bridgeport once said, there may be a sucker hatched every minute, but I'm no sap. So the Nebbish Valley folks have picid a fight? They don't have a flicker of a chance once we buckle downy. Hear ye! Hair ye! Oh, members of the HBC don't let any undertones of humor in what you have read belie the seriousness of the situation, but pile at it. Whenever members of the Club, born and bred, head to battle, we never (though we may appear as rabble) lack backedbone, but we gain courage by singing songs of Wood Guthrie to educate ourselves.