



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

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June, 2008

June 9 is the last program for this club year, and after this wonderful presentation, we recess to some degree till September. You will be getting a break from the newsletter till that time, which means you will need to find other material to read/use in the bathroom, and will be able to concentrate more fully on finding the balance point of your hammock, or stomping across the vast swampy expanses of your atlas block being virtuous, as the case may be. Don't forget the club never fully grinds to a halt: there are a series of great field trips planned over June, July and August. In this edition:

- the **June program**, and the **schedule for next year**,
- a desperate plea for people to join us at the **Connecticut Lakes**,
- **field trip reports** and **summer trips**,
- **anniversary and library news**,
- **the new Board**,
- **Hitchcock programs and news of the Boreal Birds Initiative**.

PROGRAMS

Monday, June 9 at 7:30 PM

Bruce Beehler takes us to A Lost World in Western New Guinea

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

In November 2005 a team of Indonesian, American, and Australian scientists shuttled by helicopter into a mist-shrouded lost world atop the isolated Foja Mountains of Papua, Indonesia's easternmost and least-explored province on the western side of the great tropical island of New Guinea. There they discovered dozens of species new to science, and an environment entirely free of human impact. The most remarkable of their discoveries include:

- A new species of honeyeater, the first new bird species discovered on the island of New Guinea since 1939,
- The formerly unknown breeding grounds of the Six-wired Bird of Paradise,
- First photographs of the Golden-fronted Bowerbird displaying at its bower,
- A new large mammal for Indonesia, the Golden-mantled Tree Kangaroo,
- More than twenty new species of frogs, including one less than 14 mm long,
- A remarkable white-flowered rhododendron with the largest rhododendron flower on record, and
- Four new butterfly species.

Bruce Beehler is an ornithologist, ecologist, and conservationist, currently serving as Vice President for Development and Science within the Indo-Pacific Field Division at Conservation International in Arlington, Virginia. Dr. Beehler has spent much of his scientific career studying the birds of the Southwest Pacific and South Asia. After conducting pre-doctoral and doctoral fieldwork in Papua New Guinea, Bruce worked for 10 years at the National Museum of Natural History, followed by stints at the Wildlife Conservation Society, U.S. Department of State, and Counterpart International. Today he supports and advises a decentralized field program that conducts conservation initiatives in the tropical Pacific and Indonesia.

The Program for 2008-2009 is on page 2. Yet one more reason to read on.....

Book Sales at June Meeting

Dr. Beehler is author or co-author of several natural history books, including *Birds of New Guinea* (Princeton), *The Birds of Paradise* (Oxford), *A Naturalist in New Guinea* (Texas), *A Biodiversity Assessment for Papua New Guinea* (Biodiversity Support Program), and *Ecology of Papua* (Periplus). His upcoming book from Yale, entitled *Lost Worlds*, focuses on research and conservation in rainforests around the world.

Copies of Bruce Beehler's Book "*Lost Worlds: Adventures in the Tropical Rainforest*" will be for sale at the June meeting (if you indicated your interest at the May meeting). We thank the fine folks at **Amherst Books** for making these sales possible at affordable prices. Dr Beehler will be happy to sign copies, regardless of their origin. Details of the book at the end of the newsletter.

Programs Next Year

September 8, 2008	David Spector	Ralph Ellison's Invisible Bird Literature.
October 20, 2008	Chan Robbins	Wintering with the Neotropical Migrants.
November 10, 2008	Norman Smith	From Snowy Owls to Saw-whet Owls.
December 8, 2008	HBC Members' Meeting—	Club Memories
January 12, 2009	Don Kroodsma	(To be determined)
February 9, 2009	Mark Lynch/Sheila Carroll	Boids and Ahrt
March 9, 2009	Scott Weidensaul	(to be determined)
May 11, 2009	Susan Smith	Chickadee Research.
June 8, 2009	Kenn Kaufman	Wings of the Imagination: Why We Need Birds.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Friday, May 9. South Quabbin.

Eight birders accompanied Tom Gagnon, two of whom had never been on a Hampshire Club trip before. The group found two **Wild Turkeys** (one of which was in full display), one adult **Bald Eagle**, and two **Common Ravens**, tending three nearly full-grown young, still in the nest. There were 16 species of warblers, represented by 86 individual birds. Thanks to Larry Therrien for record-keeping.

Tom Gagnon

Saturday, May 10. Quabbin (with Tom Gagnon)

On the tenth day of May my true love gave to me: ten Wood Duck squealing, two Black Duck schmoozing, two Hooded Merganser lurking, eight Common Merganser patrolling, three Ruffed Grouse drumming, one Common Loon quavering, four Double-crested Cormorants trolling, two Osprey fishing, six Bald Eagles scavenging, one American Kestrel hovering, three Solitary Sandpipers teetering, one Ruby-throated Hummingbird rocketing, four Pileated Woodpeckers trumpeting, sixteen Least Flycatchers che-beking, three Great Crested Flycatchers promenading, four Eastern Kingbirds arcing, four Yellow-throated Vireos rasping, ten Red-eyed Vireos enquiring, six Common Ravens marauding, ninety five Tree Swallows vacillating, one Northern Rough-winged Swallow roughing it, five Ruby-crowned Kinglets fluttering, seven Veerys skulking, one Swainson's Thrush peering, two Blue-winged Warblers wheezing, one Northern Parula wash-boarding, six Magnolia Warblers exhibiting, twenty-six Black-throated Blue Warblers foraging, seventeen Yellow-rumped Warblers boring, forty

six Black-throated Green Warblers overpopulating, eleven Blackburnian Warblers smouldering, twenty six Pine Warblers trilling, twenty four Black-and-white Warblers fossicking, twenty-five American Redstarts stuttering, forty-three Ovenbirds over-emphasizing, six Scarlet Tanagers blushing, two White-crowned Sparrows balding, thirty one Baltimore Orioles embellishing, and two Purple Finches running out of verbs.

Editor, from information supplied by Larry Therrien.

Sunday, May 11. Mt Auburn Cemetery, Watertown.

David Peake-Jones, Nancy Goodman, and Mike Kotarba journeyed to this fabled place of rest, and promptly proceeded to do anything but!

As always the cemetery was abuzz with birders, enthralled by the sometimes-overwhelming song, and comings and goings of warblers in migration.

Moving through the golden green spring foliage and delicate blossoms of flowering trees, we quickly latched onto the more common warblers: Black and White's scurried about on the still-visible tree trunks, while Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green plied the outer branches. **Nashville Warblers** announced themselves from the blossomy depths with their signature "Tick-a, tick-a, tick-a, shwee, shwee, shwee, schwee," but made us work hard to clap eyes on them. Several **Blackpolls** stuck stubbornly to the highest branches and taunted us with their ventriloquial hisses. Chestnut-sided Warblers were apparently "Pleased, pleased. pleased to meet us." A **Louisiana Waterthrush** prospected along the shores of Auburn Lake, and at least two **Orchard Orioles** pierced the morning with their staccato whistles. Bobolinks chimed rather ironically from the tree-tops. The shady depths of the dell gave forth an Eastern Towhee, great close looks at Ovenbirds, and both Hermit and Wood Thrushes. We wandered back along Indian Ridge Path in the noon hour with a rather ordinary 52 species (only 15 warblers) to our credit, song echoing in our addled brains, and, for now, having to be content. There will be next year!

David Peake-Jones

Friday, May 16th. Mt. Holyoke.

11 people showed up to hike to the top of Mt. Holyoke via the hard top road. Highlights of the walk were the following:

Cerulean Warbler 4
Tennessee Warbler 1 heard singing
Worm-eating Warbler 1
Scarlet Tanager 8

Yellow-throated Vireo 3
Broad-winged Hawk 1
Swainson's Thrush 5

The display of Wild Columbine at the top was just spectacular. There probably is not a better display in the entire state of Massachusetts!

Tom Gagnon

May 17, 2008. Coastal Rhode Island

Geoff LeBaron, Chris Ellison, Sue Emerson, Andrew Magee, Jim Marcum and Sol Satin toured our petite southern neighbor under partly sunny skies with temperatures in the upper 30s.

1. **Napatree Point, Watch Hill, Westerly**: just as the skies cleared...and winds picked up...we hiked to the base of Napatree Point. Lots of terns, and an "interesting" but still immature Double-crested Cormorant, graced our views, but given the very high tide and windy conditions we did not (as ever) walk to the point.
2. **Misquamicut & Weekapaug**: long study of one particular...but still Least...Sandpiper, plus a lovely colony of Purple Martins.
3. **Quonochontaug Pond ("Quonnie")**: gorgeous spot and high tides, with aquascapes reminiscent of the Florida Keys. A Green Heron and alternate-plumaged Dunlin, plus an especially interesting...maybe...maybe not...yet definitely "runt" Willet!

4. **Ninigret Park, Charlestown: Prairie Warblers** galore, but no visuals on House Wrens.
5. **Kimball Wildlife Refuge, Charlestown:** fantastic views of a Yellow-throated Vireo pummeling and dismembering a large beetle, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers constructing their nest, and a very territorial male Ruby-throated Hummingbird.
6. **Trustom Pond N.W.R and Matunuck area:** communing with the AMC crowd and a shocking paucity of birds, but marvelous views of various swallows and multiple Ospreys.
7. **Jerusalem Marsh and Galilee:** deafening clapping from a Clapper Rail, but not a feather to be seen!
8. **Richmond Turf Farms:** five Greater Yellowlegs, but no other shorebirds “of note.”
9. **Carolina Management Area and White Brook Fish Hatchery:** escaping the wind, lots of warblers by voice, and wonderful views of a Broad-winged Hawk soaring overhead and a very “nesty” male Red-breasted Nuthatch. Upon departure, amazing daytime views of a healthy adult **Gray Fox** on King’s Factory Road.
10. **Point Judith:** a lovely sunset, gonzo surfers, gannets, and five **Manx Shearwaters** to end the day.

A total for the day of **104 species!**

Geoff LeBaron

May 24, 2008. Poor Man’s Monhegan.

Bob Bieda, Al Richards, Henry Lappen and David Peake-Jones took a trip to Plum Island and environs. Henry, after being forced to participate in the artery-clogging breakfast at the local McDonalds, made perhaps the most premature pre-supper enquiry in the history of HBC when he piped plaintively, “Where will we be having dinner?”

We began at the Newburyport marina, where a covey of Brant made an impressive show on the shore, matched by impressive numbers of shorebirds fossicking over the exposed mudflats in the Merrimack estuary. They included large numbers of Least Sandpipers, some Semi-palmated, and a liberal sprinkling of **White-rumped Sandpipers**, and dark-bellied Dunlin. We went on to Plum Island, where Blackpoll and Nashville Warblers sang from behind the Lot 1 bathrooms, and a **Brown Thrasher** made a brief cameo! A **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** flitted amongst the tussocks of the saltmarsh, and the salt pannes managed to produce a couple of Gadwall.

Moving on to Hellcat, we found a **Canada Warbler** sporting in a suitable tangle close to the edge of the marsh. From the edge of the reeds (site of the former blind), we listened indolently to the frenetic chittering of a myriad of **Marsh Wrens**, some of which also allowed themselves to be seen, and waited stubbornly for some exotic thing to materialize amongst the silent cat-tails. Wonder of wonders, things did. A **Virginia Rail** appeared briefly, as did a **Blue-winged Teal**. Finally, a crowning piece of good fortune: a **Least Bittern** forsook the depths of the reeds for a cinnamon-flashing moment, before vanishing into the inscrutable depths again.

Proceeding down the island a little, we found Osprey nesting at the pines, and a **Great Horned Owl** sharing a nest with a very large downy chick. From here, we made our way to Pikuls farm, for perhaps our most exotic birds of the day: at least four pairs of **Wilson’s Phalaropes**. These delicate and fastidious little shorebirds reverse the typical pattern of sexual dimorphism and life history. Males are comparatively drab, and do the bulk of the care-taking for eggs and young. The striking females, with their chestnut striping, cut an impressive dash in the shallow flooded fields of the farm.

Not content with these birds, we rounded out the day with a visit to some nearby wet meadows, where some thirty or forty **Glossy Ibis** probed the mud for whatever delicacies they could find. When we eventually tallied the day at a nearby restaurant, we found ninety five species on the list. Poor we were in pocket, but not in experience!

David Peake-Jones

An urgent appeal !!

Wanted: birders to participate in an affordable trip to the headwaters of the Connecticut River, with the chance to see a myriad of breeding neo-tropical migrants, and boreal specialties.

Just such an opportunity is afforded by this year's HBC trip to Connecticut Lakes, but the trip is desperately short of participants!! Only you can correct this state of affairs!! ***If you are certain that you would like to go, please contact David Peake-Jones before the end of Thursday, June 5.***

Connecticut Lakes, New Hampshire.

Friday, June 20 – Sunday June 23, 2008.

Mike Locher and **David Peake-Jones** will lead 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**.

Cost estimate is \$150, not including food and transport. Car pooling will occur from the valley!!

Please contact David Peake-Jones (413 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com) IMMEDIATELY for further information or to sign up. **The deadline is Thursday, June 5.**

Coming Up

Saturday, June 14. Hammonasset Beach State Park, CT. All day. Betsy Higgins goes to the coast of Connecticut to find sparrows, rails, and other seaside denizens. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for meeting time and place as the date approaches. (E)

Sunday, June 15. West Quabbin ramble. Half day. Dave Gross offers a trip from Pelham into the Quabbin and will be birding and hiking through blooming Mountain Laurel. Contact David (413-253-2897) for further details. (M)

Saturday, June 21. October Mt. State Forest. Half day. Ed Neumuth goes where no HBC trip leader has gone before (at least, in recent memory). Recent work in the area has provided excellent habitat for Mourning Warblers. Call Ed (413-623-0186 or 413-884-4961) for meeting information. (E)

Friday, June 20 - Sunday, June 22. Connecticut Lakes, NH. Overnight trip. David Peake-Jones and Mike Locher head to the boreal forests of 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)

Coming Field Trips (continued)

Rescheduled

Saturday, August 2. 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. (M)

Rescheduled

Saturday, August 30. 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)

Next Year

In September, 2008, Hampshire Bird Club will be co-sponsoring a walk in the East Meadows with our friends at Valley Land Fund. The walk will likely be followed by an **Open House** at the new Valley Land Fund office in Northampton, featuring a **continental breakfast**.

Now, if you are anything like me, the word “breakfast” now has you reaching for the calendar, and drawing some representation of a bird sitting on a donut over the whole mid-September weekend, but there is perhaps a broader reason for interest here (not that one is necessarily required). We, as birders, will not only have the usual opportunity to indulge in our peculiar passion fore the fall migration, but will also give us a chance to share our interest in the meadows and their habitats with members of the VLF and interested public.

The date has yet to be finalized, but will likely be mid-September. I encourage all in the Hampshire Bird Club to consider participating in this effort to broaden our involvement in the valley conservation scene. Watch the September newsletter and Fall Field Trip Schedule for further details.

DA BOARD

After a pitched battle at the May meeting, “Swift-boating” of alternate candidates, ballot-rigging, allegations of voter fraud, and calls for the votes of members who have relocated to Florida and Michigan, the following were elected to office for the 2008-2009 club year, which begins at some murky time over the summer.

President: Scott Surner

Vice President/Program Chair: Geoff LeBaron

Treasurer: Janice Jorgensen

Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson

Communications Secretary: Elissa Rubinstein

Members-at-Large: David Gross, Mike Locher, Dennis McKenna, Lisa Rock, Jaap van Heerden, and Joe Wicinski.

Please join me in thanking the following for their wonderful service to HBC:

David Gross (as President), **Bruce Callahan** (member-at-large), and **Scott Surner** (member-at -large).

ANNIVERSARY

HBC 25th Anniversary "Club Read": Scott Weidensaul's *Return to Wild America*.

Fifty years after Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher's classic birding adventure, *Wild America*, Scott Weidensaul revisited their route and investigated the status of birds and habitats around the U.S. We will hold three discussions (or more depending on member interest) on different sections of this book to focus on a specific conservation issue and share member's experiences. This is a wonderful opportunity to prepare for Weidensaul's visit to the HBC in March! **Copies of the book will be available for purchase at the September meeting.**

Come September, preparations for the anniversary will kick into high gear. Stay tuned!!

LIBRARY

We now subscribe to the **Bird Observer of Massachusetts**. It's a New England-based bimonthly journal for birders, with sightings from the last few months and articles of interest on various topics. We also have a new book: "*The Race to Save the Lord God Bird*", by Phillip Hoose, about the search for the Ivory Billed Woodpecker. Check them out!

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**.

Henry

ATLAS (shrugged)

Great stories are coming in. Some are informative ("I used google earth pictures to plan ways to get into - and out of - a wetland I had never visited"); some useful ("I can help on Sunday morning"); and at least one indicate major hallucinations ("attached is a picture of a Canada Goose nesting in a Heron rookery 30 feet above the water").

And all the worry about safe dates is (almost) behind us. The last safe date (Blackpoll Warbler and Cedar Waxwing) is June 10th. Remember you can ignore safe dates for "C" and all COfirmated codes.

Feeling left out, guilty, bored or kind and considerate? No problem, there are still 9 blocks available. See Mary Alice at the June meeting, or contact her (mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu) even if you can only do ONE MORNING of atlasng.

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Citizen Science. Monarch Caterpillar Research Project: *Ken Lindsay*
Sunday, June 15, 2008, 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Plants of Barton's Cove: *Roland "Boot" Boutwell*
Co-sponsored by the New England Wildflower Society
Sunday, July 6, 2008, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Hitchcock Programs (continued)

Responding to the Natural Landscape: *Barbara Milot*

Co-sponsored by the New England Wildflower Society
Thursdays, July 10, 17, and 24, 2008, 9 to 11:30 a.m.

Connecticut Valley Wild Edibles: *Russ Cohen*

Co-sponsored by the New England Wildflower Society. Held at the Nasami Farm, Whately
Sunday, July 13, 2008, 2 to 5 p.m.

Quigong (Chi Kung) [Summer series]: *Rema Boscov,*

Sundays, July 13 to August 24, 2008, 8:30 to 9:45 a.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.

Boreal Birds Initiative

The spring migration is winding up, and, as June begins, so do the breeding cycles of most of the neo-tropical migrants. I'd like to encourage you to support a petition to protect the primary breeding grounds for countless thousands of these migratory birds - Canada's boreal forest. Several Canadian conservation organizations are spearheading the Save Our Boreal Birds campaign, which is calling on the Canadian government to protect more of the boreal forest: North America's bird nursery.

The Save Our Boreal Birds web site is: <http://www.saveourborealbirds.org/>. This site contains information on the importance of the boreal forest region to waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds; details threats to Canada's boreal forest; lists everyday actions to help protect the boreal; and contains the on-line petition letter to be sent to Canada's prime minister. I encourage you to join the thousands of people who have already signed the petition, and pass the link along to a friend!

Matthew Medler. Science Coordinator
Boreal Songbird Initiative
matthewmedler@borealbirds.org

Backyard Birds (on Strong St. in Northampton) offers a wide range of birding books, audio resources, gifts, feeders, and other paraphernalia. They also offer a 10% discount to Hampshire Bird Club Members. Remember, when you shop locally, your money stays here!

That's all till September.
Until then, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor
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