



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

## Amherst, Massachusetts

[www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)

Volume 26, No. 3

### November, 2009

## NEXT PROGRAM

**Monday, November 9 at 7:30 PM**

**Greg Butcher speaks about Birds and Climate Change**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

The northward and inland movement of North American birds, confirmed by thousands of citizen-observations, provides new and powerful evidence that global warming is having a serious impact on bird populations. Analyses of data from the past 40 years of the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) reveal that 58 percent of the 305 widespread species that winter on the continent shifted their ranges significantly north since 1966, some by hundreds of miles. Range shifts were detected among species of every type, including more than 70 percent of highly adaptable forest and feeder birds. Only 38 percent of grassland species mirrored the trend, reflecting the constraints of their severely-depleted habitat and suggesting that they now face a double threat from the combined stresses of habitat loss and climate adaptation.

We all know that birds, in general are highly adaptable, and that range changes occur in most species, for a variety of reasons. Dr. Butcher, however, questions how far they will be able to move in the face of climate change before they run out of habitat, food or even luck.

"The long term picture is not good for many species, and even in the short term, a single harsh winter could have a devastating impact on birds that have moved too far," he states.

Greg writes in a recent Audubon report on climate change and birds,

"Birds are showing us how the heavy hand of humanity is tipping the balance of nature and causing ecological disruption in ways we are just beginning to predict and comprehend. Common sense dictates that we act now to curb the causes and impacts of global warming to the extent we can, and shape our policies to better cope with the disruptions we cannot avoid."

**Greg Butcher** is *Director of Bird Conservation* for the *National Audubon Society*, working with the *State of the Birds* reports, the *WatchList* of birds of conservation need, effects of global warming on North American bird populations, analysis of Christmas Bird Count data, *BirdLife International*, the *North American Bird Conservation Initiative*, *Partners in Flight*, and policy issues related to migratory birds. He has a Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Washington. He has previously served as Director of Bird Population Studies at *Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology*, Executive Director of the *American Birding Association*, Midwest Coordinator for *Partners in Flight*, and Editor of *Birder's World* magazine. Greg is a Fellow of the *American Ornithologists' Union (AOU)*, past president of the *Association of Field Ornithologists*, and past chair of the nongovernmental organizations and monitoring committees of *Partners in Flight*.

## COMING PROGRAMS

**December 7, 2009. *HBC Members' Meeting:*** Members' Slideshow.

**January 11, 2010. *Mark Picard.*** The Challenges of the Wildlife Photographer.

**February 8, 2009. *Bill Benner.*** Birding In Thailand.

## COMING FIELD TRIPS

*(See also the Fall Field Trip Schedule)*

**Sunday, November 8. Berkshire Lakes: Migrating Waterfowl.** All day. Tom Gagnon goes to the lakes and ponds of the mountains of western Massachusetts to find ducks and other migrating waterfowl. Meet at Stop & Shop in Northampton at 6:15 a.m. to arrange carpooling and depart. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to register and get more information. (E)

**Saturday, November 21. East Quabbin.** All day. Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien go to the east side of the reservoir to see what they can find. You must be a Hampshire Bird Club member to go on this trip. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well in advance to register, because participation is limited, and to get meeting information. The rain/snow date is Sunday, November 22. (M)

**Friday, November 27. Cape Ann: Turkey Trot.** All day. Al Richards helps you work off those third helpings by birding along the east coast. Expect sea ducks, Purple Sandpipers, a few alcids, and a cool breeze. Bring snacks and warm clothing. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting information. (E)

## CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Tired of birding with the valley in full leaf? Do you chafe against the visual obstructions created by Nature's little carbon fixers? Well folks, you are hereby invited to contribute to the noble cause of citizen science in a season when the bare bones of our happy little valley are laid bare, along with the birds which call this halcyon place their home.

Every December, we get together to count all the birds in a circle of radius five miles around the Northampton GPO. The count circle is divided up into smaller areas, each counted by an experienced leader or leaders, with assistants. Groups plan who will participate, for how long, and how to divide up the count area.

To take part, all you really need is a willingness to cope with the vagaries of December birding, and a willingness to count everything in a scientific manner. The coordinators can hook you up with a team that needs members in your area. The Northampton count culminates in a pot luck and compilation session at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst during which those still standing come together to exult/commiserate and pool results. The sense of camaraderie and shared purpose is palpable and rarely equaled in birding! And you won't feel the blisters till your feet actually thaw, usually only a matter of a few days!

Believe it or not, there is also a count in the Quabbin region for those who want better birds and cushy weather!

### Mark These Dates!!

**Northampton:** Sunday, December 20. *Mary Alice Wilson* (413 548 9078; [mwilson@k12.phast.umass.edu](mailto:mwilson@k12.phast.umass.edu)),

**Quabbin:** Saturday, December 26. *Scott Sumner* (413 253 5999; [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com))

## ANNIVERSARY DONATIONS

**Thank you to all those who donated to the HBC Anniversary fund.** The money collected was used for the following:

- cake and associated supplies for the 25<sup>th</sup> birthday party,
- supplies for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary displays, assembled by Trudy Tynan,
- copies of Don Kroodsmas's latest book for resale to club members,
- raffle prizes,
- expenses involved in throwing a potluck dinner for Kenn Kaufmann,
- the production of the anniversary T-shirt,
- bringing Wayne Peterson to western Mass. and Chatham for our shorebird workshop, and
- a few other things.

Such was your generosity, oh members, that there was even an anniversary surplus, which currently gathers interest in the club savings account, awaiting other noble uses.

None of the money donated went to bailing out national mortgage clearing houses, or car companies, or providing bonuses for insurance company executives.

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**Celebrating Amherst Conservation Lands: Lawrence Swamp: *Harvey Allen.***

Sunday, November 15, 2 – 4 p.m. No charge.

**Birds Of Prey, Live! *Tom Ricardi.***

Saturday, November 7, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Fee.

**Hike the Holyoke Range: *Ted Watt.***

Sunday, November 8, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Fee.

**Forests of Wonder (Old Growth Forests in Massachusetts): *Bob Leverett.***

Wednesday, November 18, 7-9 p.m. Fee.

**Splendors of the Night Sky: *Ron Woodland.***

Saturday, November 21, 7-9 p.m. Fee.

*Pre-registration is required 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](http://www.hitchcockcenter.org).*

That's all for now.

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

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