



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 26, No. 2

October, 2009

It is October, and if you can drag yourself away from the parade of sparrows filling every weedy patch in our fall landscape, you might turn your attention briefly to your HBC membership. Your membership status is shown on the front of the newsletter. If you have already renewed, thank you! If you need to renew and have misplaced the form that came in September, you can find a membership form at the club website: www.hampshirebirdclub.org. I hope you will renew if you have not already done so. It does cost money to bring you the blend of stimulating programs and field trips for which we are known, and a strong financial base contributes directly to the quality of both.

You can still download a sign-up form for the on-line **Rare Bird Alert** if such is your fancy. It is cleverly concealed in the “read more” link in the “trips/rba” section of the HBC homepage!

In this edition:

- a brief introduction to the **October program**,
- **field trip reports** and coming field trips,
- the HBC **Field Trip Policy** and **Field Trip Guidelines**,
- a plug for the **Library** and the looming **Christmas Count**,
- the **HBC Directory**, and
- **Hitchcock Programs**.

I hope you find some of it useful!

PROGRAMS

Monday, October 19 at 7:30 PM

**Chris Davis speaks about New England Falconry
(with live birds in attendance!)**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

The art of falconry likely originated in Mongolia around 4,000 years ago, perhaps as a method of hunting. It reached its zenith as a signal of status in medieval Europe and Japan since nobles in these feudal societies were drawn to the inherent power of raptors, and had the considerable time and resources needed to pursue the activity.

Chris and other modern falconers are hardly the nobility, though partnering with a hunting bird of prey certainly inspires a sense of awe and privilege in those who invest the necessary energy and dedication in the activity. Since falconers typically emphasize that their relationship with their birds is a business partnership, it is not surprising that modern falconry has pragmatic applications. In many parts of the world, including the vineyards of California, falconers are working with birds of prey to drive starlings and other pest birds from valuable croplands.

Chris Davis runs *New England Falconry*, a business devoted to sharing the art of falconry with willing learners. He also works part-time for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and lives in Shutesbury, MA. He has been involved in falconry for the better part of thirty years.

Coming Programs

November 9, 2009. *Greg Butcher.* Birds and Climate Change.

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

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

HBC Newsletter Available On-Line

If you are about to renew your membership, you may wish to consider the On-Line version of the HBC newsletter.

“How does that work?”

The newsletter is posted on the HBC website. Each month, participants receive an email notification, whereupon they can view and/or download the newsletter from the website at their leisure. You need to give us an email address on the membership form in order to get the on-line version.

“What’s the point?”

You can archive our publication electronically, without accumulating paper files. You reduce postage costs for HBC, which keeps dues down for all of us.

What if I encounter technical difficulties?

Most users last year had no difficulty. In the event that you find the system does not work for you, a simple communication with the Membership Secretary will get you back on the “Hard Copy” mailing list.

What are the computer/software requirements?

The newsletter will be posted on the Website in PDF format. This means you will need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader software (version 5.0 or later) on your system. If you do not have it already, this software is available FREE via a link at the club Website.

How do I sign up?

Sign up in the upper right hand corner of the Membership Form.

I signed up last year. Do I need to sign up again?

We ask all members to decide each year how they want to receive the newsletter.

Regardless of how you got the newsletter last year, please make your choice of how to receive the newsletter this year on this year’s membership form.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

New South Beach. August 15, 2009.

Wayne Peterson led a large group of us to one of the hottest shore-birding sites on the east coast. Not only were we blessed with great birds, but we also had a rare opportunity to learn from one of the premier birders in the region. Not only did Wayne give us great tips on distinguishing the myriad of similar shorebirds, but he gave us great background on the miracle of shifting shoals and sands that is the Chatham-Monomoy region.

Highlights of the day included **Black** and **Forster’s** Terns, and **Hudsonian Godwit**, amidst 25 species of gulls, terns and shorebirds.

Undoubtedly, the WOW bird of the day was a **Cory’s Shearwater**, which came close inshore right in front of us as we stood on the ocean beach.

This was a fitting and spectacular finale to the 25th anniversary of Hampshire Bird Club.

David Peake-Jones

New South Beach (Two). Saturday, September 5.

At 5:10 am, **Bob Bieda**, Betsy Higgins, Dan Marchant, and Mary Lou Splain set off toward South Beach in Chatham. In Chatham, we met Bob Zimmerman, and Sandy and Bob Manceli (from Rochester, NY. who found the HBC trip online). On this beautiful, calm and sunny day, the Outermost Harbor Adventures boat deposited us at the end of South Beach and we happily set about the very serious business of identifying each and every little brown bird on the beach.

While the numbers of birds did not seem to be anywhere near what we have seen in past years, the diversity of species did not disappoint. Of note on the mud flats were **2 Black Terns**, numerous Roseate Terns, **2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, 1 lone White-rumped Sandpiper, **9 Hudsonian Godwits**, 6 Piping Plover, **2 American Golden Plover**, 50 Red Knot, 2 Dunlin, a few Whimbrels and Horned Larks and many Black-bellied Plover. We were dazzled when a **Peregrine Falcon** put every bird on the beach up in swirling, shimmering clouds, shifting first white, then dark as they raced for safety. The HBC contingent of folks trekked over to the ocean side and were rewarded with a wonderful Parasitic Jaeger chasing terns. Four Grey Seals watched us as we walked by. The folks from Rochester did not go over to the ocean side. They walked back along the inner shore, and arrived at the boat with a picture of a probable **Wilson's Plover**. (Alas, for Betsy, who may have missed a lifer!).

And, in case anyone is wondering, NO, we did not see the Great White Sharks! We did, however, see the spotting plane and the cluster of boats (at some distance) where the sharks were being tagged. We totaled 45 species, 18 of them shore birds. All in all, a very fine day.

Betsy Higgins



Blueberry Hill in West Granville, MA. September 19

Participants: Gladys Nicholson, Bruce Hart and Ilene Goldstein, Justin Baldwin, Elaine Pourinski and Susan Yarmac, Betsy Higgins and **Andrew Magee**.

A pre-dated hawkwatch in migration is a total crapshoot. We lucked out pretty good, with those remaining stalwarts clocking over 800 birds (overwhelmingly broad-wings, of course) kettling and streaming, by the late afternoon. Conditions were ideal. Ten species of raptors including some aberrant storks commonly referred to as New World Vultures were observed, a squadron of four distant **Black Vultures** perhaps being the highlight- the first of the season on Blueberry. Blueberry is not known for a lot of close-ups, yet 2 Bald Eagles, including a gorgeously mottled juvenile, provided that. We also coincidentally hit upon the Allen and Pittsfield birdclubs' annual gourmet picnic, to some of our invited satisfactions (to John H.: SUCH yummy chicken!!). Possibly we could ask about formally joining?

Andrew Magee



Lighthouse Point, New Haven, CT. September 26

Participants: Al Grimstad and Nora Hanke, Bruce Hart and Ilene Goldstein, Elaine Pourinski and **Andrew Magee**.

This was the other side of the crapshoot. Ending some 14 hours earlier the day BEFORE, 2300 hawks were counted, (mostly Sharpies), perhaps the highest September record ever at this spot. (Early October is usually peak). OUR left-overs in 4 hours or so came to about 20 hawks. Alas. However, we did see a gorgeous perched adult Peregrine Falcon and a Red-shouldered Hawk. I managed to call out the season's first Red-headed Woodpecker going over, the 7 butterfly species were fun, and we made lemonade from the lemons, as the saying goes.

Andrew Magee

Coming Trips

***Sunday, October 18. Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area: Snow Geese.** All day. Mike Locher heads north to Vermont to see the annual spectacle of thousands of Snow Geese (and with any luck, a Ross's Goose or two) fueling up for their southern migration. We'll meander home along the eastern shore of Lake Champlain. Call Mike (413-585-5864) to register and get meeting information. If the Snow Goose migration is late, the trip may be postponed until October 25. (E)

***Saturday, October 24. Plum Island.** All day. Geoff LeBaron heads to one of Massachusetts' premier birding spots to see what's flying along the coast. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) to register and get meeting information as the date approaches. (E)

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)

LIBRARY

HBC has a substantial library, located at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst.

Hours are those of the Hitchcock Center:

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. from Tuesday through Friday, and

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday.

The collection is catalogued on-line at www.hampshirebirdclub.org.

The library contains birding resources in various media, including field guides, bird-finding guides to almost every major birding destination in the U.S., and overseas, natural histories, periodicals and videos. Items can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. Henry Lappen, the librarian, is happy to bring items to meetings, if you give him a few days in advance. You can reach him at **(413) 549 3722**.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Tired of birding with the valley in full leaf? Do you long to pursue our noble art untroubled by Nature's little carbon fixers? Well folks, you are hereby invited to contribute to the vital 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/comiserate 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 Count:** Sunday, December 20.**Quabbin Count:** To Be Announced.

For further information, watch coming newsletters, or contact **Mary Alice Wilson** (413 549 1768; mwilson@k12.phast.umass.edu, Northampton Count) and **Scott Surner** (413 253 5999; ssurner@aol.com, Quabbin Count)

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS**Fall Birding Trips:** *Scott Surner*

Sunday, October 11, 6am-1pm - Great Meadows/Concord Area-Waterfowl

Saturday, October 24, 7am-noon- Local-Quabbin Reservoir

Sunday, November 8, 6am-2pm- Berkshire Lakes-Waterfowl, Hawks, Sparrows.

Pre-registration required. Fee.

Celebrating Amherst Conservation LandsOctober 18. Podick with *Ted Watt*. 2 – 4 p.m.November 15. Lawrence Swamp with *Harvey Allen*. 2-4 p.m.

Pre-registration required.

What Does Nature Do? A Biomimicry Walk: *Tim McGee and Ted Watt*.

Saturday, October 17, 10am–1pm at Mount Toby. Pre-registration required. Fee.

Birds of Prey Live! *Tom Ricardi*.

Saturday, November 7, 10:30-11:30am. Pre-registration required. Fee.

Hike the Holyoke Range: *Ted Watt*.

Sunday, November 8, 10am–3pm. Pre-registration required. Fee.

Forests of Wonder: *Bob Leverett*.

Wednesday, November 18, 7-9pm. Pre-registration required. Fee.

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.

Welcome New Members

Gladys Nicholson

John Nove

Nora Papian

Joshua Stuart Rose

Hadley

South Deerfield

Amherst

Amherst

The HBC Directory is on the following page, followed by the HBC Field Trip Policy, which has been lying fallow for a time but now springs forth again in the full glory of 12 font! Since I can no longer read without optical assistance of some kind, I have decreed that 10 font shall hereafter be banned in this and any other publication over which I have jurisdiction (unless it is stuff I don't actually want you to know). (alert readers will note the font used for the guidelines)

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

HBC Directory: October, 2009

President – *Scott Sumner*: (413) 256 5438; president@hampshirebirdclub.org

VP/Program Chair - *Geoff LeBaron*: (413) 268 9281; programs@hampshirebirdclub.org

Membership Secretary - *Sue Emerson*: (413) 584 6736; membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

Treasurer - *Janice Jorgensen*: (413) 585 0145; treasurer@hampshirebirdclub.org

Communications Secretary - *Elissa Rubinstein*: (413) 546 5978;
communications@hampshirebirdclub.org

Board Members -

Bruce Hart: brucehart@hampshirebirdclub.org; (413) 584 4176

Mike Locher: mlocher@hampshirebirdclub.org; (413) 584 5864

Jan Ortiz: jtortiz@hampshirebirdclub.org; (413) 549 1768

Larry Therrien: larrytherrien@hampshirebirdclub.org; (413) 323 6714

Jaap van Heerden: jvanheerden@hampshirebirdclub.org; (413) 253 5569

Joe Wicinski: jwicinski@hampshirebirdclub.org; (413) 320 4422

Field Trip Chair - *Mike Locher*: (413) 585 5864; fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org

Conservation Committee -

Anne Lombard (Chair): (413) 586 7509; *Bob Zimmermann*: (413) 585 0405
conservation@hampshirebirdclub.org

Boutique Proprietor - *Betsy Higgins*: (413) 586 7585; boutique@hampshirebirdclub.org

Librarian - *Henry Lappen*: (413) 549 3722; library@hampshirebirdclub.org

Publicity Chair - *Trudy Tynan*: (413) 348 2037; publicity@hampshirebirdclub.org

Webmaster - *David Gross*: (413) 253 2897; webmaster@hampshirebirdclub.org

Newsletter Editor - *David Peake-Jones*: (413) 529 9541; newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Refreshments - *Sally Hills*: (413) 549 5550; *Helga Beatty*: (413) 253 2410
refreshments@hampshirebirdclub.org

Rare Bird Alert - *Bob Bieda*: (413) 527 2623

Geoff LeBaron: (413) 268 9281

Jan Ortiz: (413) 549 1768

Scott Sumner: (413) 256 5438

alert@hampshirebirdclub.org

FIELD TRIP POLICY: 2009-2010
HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC. 9/10/2009

1. Field trips are an essential activity of the Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. (HBC). They are an important way to increase members' interest in and knowledge of birds, birding, and bird habitat. Field trips are announced in the HBC newsletter, on the website and at monthly meetings.
2. Each year, all HBC members are asked to sign the HBC Release Form. Minor children (under 18) must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or another adult who has written authorization to be responsible for the child's care and conduct. Please request a form from HBC if you want to authorize another adult to accompany your child.
- 3 The HBC conducts two different types of field trips: Day Trips and Overnight Trips.

Day Trips are planned by the Field Trip Committee, who prepare the schedule and select leaders. Day Trips generally do not require extensive planning by the trip leader. No costs other than travel (see #4 below), meals, and incidental fees will be involved. If requested to do so in the newsletter, participants must call the trip leader in advance to express interest in the trip. This allows the leader more flexibility and the opportunity to change the trip itinerary should that seem desirable. Day trips are open to both HBC members and non-members unless restricted to members by the host site.

Overnight Trips (2 or more days, reasonable driving distance) are planned by the Field Trip Committee and approved by the HBC Board at least 3 months in advance (see #5 below). Such trips generally require more planning by the trip leader, including, for example, arranging for lodging and travel. Participants will be charged an amount equal to actual predetermined costs (including liability insurance) plus a prorated amount to cover reimbursement of the leader's expenses (see #5 below). All fees, including the trip deposit, shall be paid to the HBC Treasurer. In the event of a cancellation, if the vacancy can be filled, the trip fee will be refunded, less a 10% processing charge. If the vacancy cannot be filled, the trip fee will be refunded, with the following exceptions:

- a) the portion of the trip fee that covers a share of the leaders costs,
- b) the portion of the fee that covers the insurance charge, and
- c) any portion of the fee which has already been paid to another party and cannot be recovered by the club.

Any excess fees remaining after costs have been met will be refunded, unless they are less than ten dollars per person, in which case they will revert to the HBC treasury. Overnight trips are open only to HBC members who have signed a release form and who have completed a medical information form.

4. The HBC Board recommends that passengers reimburse owners of vehicles used on HBC trips for costs associated with vehicle operation. The maximum recommended reimbursement is the federal government employee mileage reimbursement rate, rounded down to the nearest 10 cents, plus tolls and parking to be shared equally by all persons in the car including the driver. The participants (not the leader) are responsible for making carpool arrangements.

Continues on Page 2 ►►

5. Leaders of Overnight Trips shall:
 - a. Submit a trip plan to the Field Trip Committee, which must be approved by the Board at least 3 months in advance of the trip. The plan should describe in writing the nature of the trip as completely as possible. Include an itinerary, estimated cost, conditions of lodging and lead time needed for reservations, roughness of terrain, pace of the trip, extra costs not covered by the fee, date of deposit and final payment, date after which fee is not refundable, and provide a list of any specialized items that participants should take on the trip. Repeat trips led by the same leader need only submit necessary changes to the previous plan. The Board can waive the 3-month planning time if there is a special birding opportunity.
 - b. Consult with the membership secretary before the trip to make sure that all participants have signed the HBC Release Form and obtain a signed Medical Information Form from each participant.
 - c. Be reimbursed for all costs associated with planning (i.e. long-distance calls, postage), lodging, and transportation during the trip. The maximum reimbursement for automobile travel shall be one quarter of the costs incurred by a single vehicle under clause 4 of this policy.
 - d. Upon return, provide the HBC Board with an itemized account of all income and expenses related to the trip including receipts for major expenses.
6. The Field Trip Chair will send all participants in overnight trips the Field Trip Evaluation Form and a Medical Information Form. The completed evaluation form, to be returned to the Field Trip Chair, will help the Field Trip Committee plan future trips and provide feedback for leaders. Participants should give their signed Medical Information form to the trip leader prior to departure.
7. Leaders of both Day and Overnight Trips are asked to submit a Trip Highlights Report to the newsletter editor for publication in the next HBC newsletter.
8. HBC may ask professional bird touring organization to organize trips further away than the Overnight Trips. All responsibilities for planning the trip and all liability will be assumed by the touring organization. Such trips must be approved by the Board at least 6 months in advance.

Field Trip Guidelines for New Field Trip Participants and Drivers: 2009-2010 Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Field trips are one of the best ways to help the Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. (HBC) achieve its purpose: "to help its members and the general public enjoy birding and to educate them about birds, bird watching and bird habitats."

While these Guidelines are written primarily for new HBC Participants and Drivers, we hope that everyone will review this document, the ABA's Principles of Birding Ethics, the HBC Field Trip Policy, and the HBC Release Form.

All Participants:

1. Most trips described in the newsletter ask you to call the trip leader in advance. Please do so. It helps the leader plan the trip and you learn about any special arrangements or any change of plans.
2. Check with the leader before bringing children on a trip. Many of the trips are not appropriate for children. (All minor children (under 18) must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or an adult who has written authorization to be responsible for the child's care and conduct. See the Field Trip Policy for more information.)
3. All HBC members are asked to sign the HBC Release Form each year. If you did not receive a copy, please contact the Membership Secretary or check the "Join" section of the HBC Website
4. Be on time at the meeting place. If you plan to leave the trip early, you must inform the leader in advance.
5. Be prepared with binoculars, appropriate clothing (including protection from ticks), food and water. Assume the weather will be more extreme on the trip than at home and prepare accordingly.
6. Do not bring pets.
7. HBC encourages participants to carpool, both to reduce the environmental impact of the trip and to make the trip as safe as possible for all participants. We ask that the cost (presently \$0.50/mile plus tolls and parking) be shared equally among the driver and all passengers. You should estimate the probable cost of the trip so that you will be able to reimburse the driver at the end of the trip. The participants (not the leader) are responsible for making carpool arrangements.
8. HBC always encourages new birders to participate in trips. It is the responsibility of all trip members, leader and participants, to help new birders learn both identification techniques and bird observing skills.
9. All participants are responsible for their own safety. Use common sense if you feel that any part of the trip is too arduous for you. Always check with the trip leader if you have any questions or medical concerns about the trip.

Drivers:

1. It is the responsibility of the car owner to meet all registration, insurance, and inspection regulations.
2. Please fill up your tank before the trip and set your odometer at the beginning of the trip.
3. If the trip is going to caravan, follow common sense rules to make sure no one is put in danger or lost.

Stay in the same order so that you know which car is in front of you and which car is behind you.

If the car behind you is stopped by a light, pull safely to the side of the road so that you can wait until that car catches up.

If you are driving the car or cars catching up with the group, slow down so that the lead/stopped cars can pull in front of you.

It is a good idea for all caravan drivers to have their lights on.

4. Always have a description of the next major stop from the trip leader so that, should the caravan become separated, you can join the group at the next major stop.