



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

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## September, 2009

*“Joy in the Universe and a keen curiosity about it all; that has been my religion.”*

*John Burroughs.*

The usual result of trudging out to the ocean beach from the inner mudflats at South Beach, Chatham is a beautiful view of the expansive and decidedly vacant Atlantic Ocean. Some of us who went along on the shorebirding workshop with Wayne Peterson in August were expecting this as we crested the last dune. However, after some minutes of staring at the incoming waves, a shape materialized at the outer reaches of vision: a burly shape with elegant, long wings, gliding effortlessly over the whitecaps. As we watched in astonishment, the bird slid ever closer to the shore till, like some triumphant pelagic conqueror being feted by our assembled group, it sailed majestically across in front of us before vanishing into its natural realm offshore.

For those who care, it was a **Corey’s Shearwater**, and in fairness, there has been a good show of these and other pelagic species close inshore off the cape this season. But how many of those assembled would have witnessed this beautiful creature were it not for the Hampshire Bird Club? How many of us would have been at the beach that day, or any other day this summer, if not for the convivial encouragement that our bird club provides? Birding is as individual a passion as anyone could name, yet we often need a prompt from a birding buddy or the gentle whisperings of the field trip schedule to get us up and out there. And who can forget the curiosity and inspiration to be drawn from the speakers who visit us every month?

### **Dues are Due!!**

**The bird club is coming off a wonderful anniversary year, and boldly stepping into its second quarter century. We have no sponsors, no advertising revenues, so we need your membership dues to continue! Your dollars keep the club alive, and we are still a great bargain!**

### **Please JOIN or RENEW!**

If you are not already a member, or if you have yet to renew this year, please send us a membership form and dues. The **Membership Form** is attached to the end of this document, along with the **Field Trip Release Form** (required if you are going to go on any overnight HBC field trips), the **Rare Bird Alert Form**, and the **HBC Fall Field Trip Schedule**.

### **www.hampshirebirdclub.org**

As always, the HBC web site has information about upcoming programs, postings of current and past newsletters, and useful links to other birding sites.

All **club officers and activities** chairs can be reached via email that ends in @hampshirebirdclub.org. For example, to ask a question of the president, mail goes to president@hampshirebirdclub.org. All of these new addresses are listed on the “about” link at the HBC web site. You can reach the Webmaster at **webmaster@hampshirebirdclub.org**

## NEXT PROGRAM

**Monday, September 14 at 7:30 PM**

**Susan Benoit and Chris Buelow**

**Habitat Protection and Restoration in Massachusetts**

**For [More Than Just] the Birds!**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

**Susan Benoit** and **Chris Buelow** will briefly review the history and funding of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife then outline the DFW's current monitoring and restoration work on a variety of species of birds across the state, with additional updates on butterflies, turtles, snakes, dragonflies, and more.

**Susan Benoit** directs promotional activities statewide for the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. She was formerly an independent project and organizational coordinator from the Northampton area and currently works in Shrewsbury. **Chris Buelow**, of Hardwick, is a Restoration Ecology Assistant with the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. He implements and oversees habitat restoration and land management projects across the state, mostly to benefit early-succession-dependent species since these are among the most threatened by habitat loss and/or degradation.

You can provide direct support for habitat protection in this state by donating to the Wildlands fund ([http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/habitat/protection/wildlands\\_funding.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/habitat/protection/wildlands_funding.htm))

or MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program:

[http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/nhesp\\_support.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/nhesp_support.htm)

## PROGRAMS SCHEDULED

**October 19. *Greg Butcher.*** Birds and Climate Change.

**November 9. *Chris Davis.*** New England Falconry (with live birds).

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

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

**February 8, 2010 *Bill Benner.*** Birding In Thailand.

**March 8, 2010. *Kathy and Miles Conway.*** Kazakhstan Exploration.

**April 12, 2010. *Brandi van Roo.*** Vireo Research.

**May 10, 2010. *John Van de Graaff.*** Birds of the Massachusetts Coast: Piping Plovers and Much More.

**June 14, 2010. *Geoff LeBaron.*** The Route to Distant Islands.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

**Mt. Greylock. *Wednesday, June 3***

Harvey Allen and I headed up to Mt. Greylock this morning in the cool weather. We stopped in Cummington on the way through and saw a baby otter in the marsh. On Mt. Greylock we saw a **Black-billed Cuckoo**, heard a Ruffed Grouse drumming and saw a mother with 4 little chicks. In various places on the mountain we had 1 male **Mourning Warbler**, 1 **Blackpoll Warbler**, 9 **Blackburnian Warblers**, 1 male Hummingbird and an adult **Goshawk**. The only butterflies we saw were 9 **Canadian Tiger Swallowtails**.

**Monhegan Island, Maine. May 22-25, 2009**

**Participants:** Sandra Leiser, Leanne Ksiazek, Sandy Woodrow, Marty Espinola, Cailin Xu, Peggy MacLeod, Elissa Rubinstein, Kate Parsons, Leslie Hoffman, Henry Lappen, Holly Bell, Isabel Higgins, John van de Graaff, MaryLee Bomboy, and co-leaders Betsy Higgins and Andrew Magee.

The weather, as I recall, was fair, warm, with only a few small squalls or sprinkles, and all 3 boat rides, including out to see the terns and puffins, were exceedingly smooth, excellent for both stomachs and use of binoculars and cameras. We were fortunate to have two avid photographers with us, John and Marty, so we could oft see what we just saw, or what we missed. The "bird-of-the-trip", nominated by me not for fab rarity but for constancy of availability, super-bright plumage, and indefatigable song, was a male Dickcissel, and next, I would rate a fairly often seen first-year male Blue Grosbeak, very richly cinnamon with some blue; at least two (2) differently plumaged male Summer Tanagers; a rather dull female Prothonotary Warbler that I think was seen by all; and the usual uncommons, the Cape-May, Bay-breasted, and Orange-crowned Warblers and Philadelphia Vireo. Also special, a calling Whip-poor-will, and a Black-billed Cuckoo, and, for waterbirds, a Glaucous Gull, a Brant, and some Long-tailed Ducks. The Puffin island boat ride was the best puffin show ever, with roughly 60 of them available all over, fabulous uprisings of Common, Roseate, and Arctic Tern, and one or two excellent Razorbills perched and in flight really, really close. About 123 or so bird species makes this about even with our top numbers over the years. A show of 5 cetacean species completed the ferry-ride back to the mainland. Thanks to all for a good time. Bless the island's wicked, fat felines.

Andrew Magee.



**Hammonasset State Park. Saturday June 13.**

The weather report called for "gloom and doom" (clouds and thundershowers), but in spite of that we had good weather for our trip to Hammonasset Beach State Park. Helga and Nidhin joined me and we enjoyed nice looks at our target birds, **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow**, and **Seaside Sparrow**. We had 46 species including a beautiful **Little Blue Heron**, **nesting Least Terns**, **Northern Pintail**, Purple Martins, Surf Scoter, Common Loons, and the star of the show, an eclipse plumage **King Eider!** A happy surprise and a nice day.

Betsy Higgins

**Contributors Wanted!!**

*When a leader's not engaged in his employment (his employment)*

*When the small brown jobs have all been soundly taught (soundly taught)*

*He loves to lie a-basking in the sunshine (in the sunshine)*

*Far from his mind is any trip report (trip report)*

(Gilbert & Sullivan, almost)

Field trip leaders have a ton of things to do in preparation for a trip, and the trips themselves can be arduous. The last thing they want to do when the trip is over is sit down and dash off a trip report for the newsletter. Fortunately, there is help available. I refer, of course, to YOU, the bright-eyed and enthusiastic participant. By writing a report, you give us a record for posterity, and help to promote interest in future trips. There is nothing to it. Just keep a record of the good birds you saw, any hilarious thrills and spills, and send it in.

Editor

**COMING TRIPS**

Please see the enclosed Fall Field Trip Schedule.

## HBC NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ON-LINE!

The club offers an on-line (or “electronic”) version of the newsletter, as an alternative to the “hard copy” delivered via USPS. You can sign up for it on the membership form.

### “How does that work?”

The newsletter is posted on the HBC website. 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.

## 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](http://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**.

*Here, if you have not already tended to these chores, is your “to-do” list for this month:*

- don’t forget the **Membership** and **Field Trip Release** forms,
- sign up for the **Rare Bird Alert** (RBA) if you wish (form enclosed),
- plan your September field trips (**Fall Field Trip Schedule** enclosed)

That’s all for this month.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

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[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)





# HBC Rare Bird Alert: Where Are the Birds Today?

All of us are interested in knowing what birds are in our area each day. We do this by:

- birding
- talking with other birders
- calling the Voice of Audubon or reading "The Voice" in the newspaper
- checking the Web
- joining the Rare Bird Alert (for those interested in unusual species)

## To check The Voice of Audubon:

Call toll free **1-781 259 8805**

Follow the directions (press 2 to listen to Seth Kellogg, the Western Mass voice). Seth updates The Voice once a week - more often when necessary - so check regularly. (Thanks to Trudy Tynan, the transcript also appears weekly in most of our local papers.)

## To share local sightings with other valley birders via email:

You may wish to join the Allen Bird Club "*Bird News of Western Massachusetts*" network. To join, email Seth Kellogg at [skhawk@comcast.net](mailto:skhawk@comcast.net)

## To check various sources on the web:

Go to the HBC website: [www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org). From the **Related Links** section on the Home Page, you can go to **the Voice** and/or to **Massbird**

## To join the HBC Rare Bird Alert (RBA).

This operates by email ONLY. You will need at least one active email address. Fill in the form below and return (perhaps with your membership form) **by Monday, October 15**. You may turn the form in at the September/October meetings, if you like.

.....

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Rare Bird Alert (RBA) Form: 2009-2010**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

You may provide as many email addresses as you like (within reason, please). Participants automatically receive all RBA announcements.

email address/es (1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

## Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Fall Field Trip Schedule, 2009

*Please register with the field trip leader(s) and check this schedule's information when a phone number is given. The Field Trip Chair (Michael Locher – 413-585-5864) is always looking for new trip ideas and leaders.*

*The Hampshire Bird Club recommends carpooling whenever possible, and suggests that all riders share equally the per-car cost of 50¢ per mile, as well as tolls and parking. See the "Field Trip Guidelines for Participants" (September newsletter or on the Website).*

*Some trips have been marked with an asterisk (\*), which indicates that they are good trips for beginning birders. All trips have been coded as Easy (E) or Moderate (M) to give a rough indication of the pace and/or terrain. However, check all information with the trip leaders.*

### SEPTEMBER

**Saturday, September 5. 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)

**\*Saturday, September 12. East Meadows: Migrating Warblers.** Morning. Bob Bieda and Harvey Allen look for fall migrants (including the elusive Connecticut Warbler) in Northampton's East Meadows. Meet at the commuter parking lot off Rte. 9 (Old Ferry Hill Rd.) 1/2 mile west of Exit 19 off I-91 at 7:30 a.m. This trip is co-sponsored by the Valley Land Fund. Call Bob (413-527-2623) or Harvey (413-253-7963) to register or for information. (E)

**\*Wednesday, September 16. Mount Tom: Raptor Migration I.** Half day. Tom Gagnon goes hawk watching at Goat's Peak, at the Mt. Tom State Reservation. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the old park headquarters, and expect a 20 minute walk to the tower. Call Tom (413-584-6353) for information and to register. (E)

**\*Saturday, September 19. Blueberry Hill: Raptor Migration II.** Half day. Andrew Magee goes to one of the premier local hawkwatching spots (in Granville, MA). Call Andrew for meeting time and place. (E)

**\*Saturday, September 26. Lighthouse Point: Raptor Migration III.** Half day. Andrew Magee goes to another of the prime hawkwatching locations in New England, this time in New Haven, Connecticut. Call Andrew for meeting time and place. (E)

**Sunday, September 27. Quabbin: Fall Migrants.** All day. Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien lead their annual trip to the Quabbin to see southbound birds, late season flowers, butterflies, and mammals. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well in advance to register, because participation is limited, and get meeting information. (M)

## OCTOBER

**\*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)

## NOVEMBER

**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)

## JANUARY

**\*Friday, January 1. New Year's Birding.** Half day. Scott Sumner leads the first trip of the year, looking for any birds that haven't been up too late the night before. The trip departs from the parking lot at Sumner Heating (60 Shumway St. in Amherst) at 7 a.m. (Yep, that's what he said.) For more information call Scott at 256-5438.