



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 28, No. 1

September, 2011.

Red Phalarope here, reporting live from the Hampshire Bird Club Board meeting.

It's been another heated and contentious meeting. The two factions sat on opposite sides of the table this evening and there seems little prospect of a resolution to the debt ceiling crisis any time soon.

Les Seryellowlegs, speaking for the hard line Revitalists, continued to insist that increasing membership dues on the wealthy would be like *'hanging a phone book around a hummingbird's neck'*. He went on to say,

"Low dues are the engine that gets people to pony up every September. Increase dues and people will stay home updating their Facebook pages on Monday nights. The only answer is to reduce entitlements. Why do we need ten newsletters? A simple daily tweet would do just fine. Field trips? Wet, cold and messy, with no guarantee of birds. We should do a live Skype feed from the Museum of Natural History and people can post their ID's to the Facebook page."

Bart Ailedgodwit, from the minority Demagogues, was on his feet instantly with this retort.

"Our friends on the other side of the six packs and nachos would like us to balance the HBC budget on the backs of everyday birders, folks who are struggling to distinguish between a Semi-pal and a Sanderling. Put them on Goat Peak with a Sharpy and a Cooper's Hawk, and they need some assistance. Podcast the monthly program? What about those who still can't tell an ipad from an ibath? It's time for the birding elites to pay their fair share. Anyone with a life-list above a thousand should be paying extra. We can name a field trip after them if it will make them feel better."

And so it goes. Caught in the middle of all this uproar are the long-suffering HBC members, who are left wondering, as usual, whether they should pony up their dues this year, or just sit at home watching Nature re-runs. From the Hitchcock Center in Amherst, this is Red Phalarope signing off.



Thankfully, the above is a complete FICTION. HBC continues to offer fantastic programs and stimulating field trips throughout the year, and our treasury has a modest but healthy positive balance! However, we do depend entirely upon your contributions to sustain our programs, field trips, and the other membership benefits we offer. Our basic membership rate is unchanged this year, and, if you so choose, you can contribute at a higher membership rate and/or contribute additionally toward the work of the Education Committee.

Please Renew Your Membership NOW using this handy-dandy checklist

- Choose your membership contribution for this year,
- Make a donation for the work of the Education Committee if you wish,
- Complete the Membership Form and the Field Trip Release Form on the back,
- Check the "Bird Finding In Western MA" form (sign up for the Rare Bird Alert if you wish), and
- Mail the above (with your check if needed) to the club, or bring them along on Sept. 12.

Your membership status is shown on the cover page. Please renew before October 1 by mail, or at the September meeting. Thanks!

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, September 12, 2011 at 7:30 PM. Paul Sievert discusses **Earthquakes, Tsunamis, and Other Challenges for North Pacific Albatrosses**

Populations of North Pacific albatross were decimated by feather-hunters in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and have recently suffered due to high rates of bycatch in longline fisheries. In addition to these human-induced stressors, albatross colonies can also be at risk from volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis. This past year, the earthquakes in Japan affected albatross colonies as far away as Hawaii, and demonstrated how natural disasters can have major effects on albatross populations. This program will update us on the status of North Pacific albatross populations, describe the influence of the 2011 Japanese earthquakes and associated tsunamis, and provide results from the first 4 years of chick translocations aimed at re-establishing a historic Short-tailed Albatross colony.

Paul Sievert is Assistant Unit Leader for the USGS, Massachusetts Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His first studies of Pacific albatrosses began 24 years ago when he examined the effect of plastic ingestion on Laysan and black-footed albatrosses in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Since then, he has been involved in studies of the movements of North Pacific albatross, modeled their population growth, and collaborated with the Yamashina Institute of Ornithology, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to re-establish an extirpated colony of short-tailed albatross.

COMING PROGRAMS (The schedule for this year...)

October 17, 2011. Sam Fried. Warblers and Vireos.

November 14, 2011. John Cecil. IBAs from Top to Bottom.

December 12, 2011. Members Meeting.

January 9, 2012. Geoff LeBaron. Panama and Costa Rica.

February 13, 2012. John Nove. A Tale of Two Scottish Isles: Adventures in Orkney.

March 12, 2012. Jeff Boettner. Birds & Bugs.

April 9, 2012. Gina Nichol. Hummingbirds: Feathered Gems.

May 14, 2012. Bret Whitney. Birds of Brazil.

Jun 11, 2012. Scott Sumner. Birding Alaska.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Hammonasset Beach State Park. Saturday, June 11.

Betsy Higgins, Andrew Magee, Sarah LaPointe, Elaine Pourinski, and Joan and Larry Duprey left the valley expecting precipitation, and drove through some heavy rain on the way down. It was very cool, damp and windy all day, but fortunately, we only got poured on for a few moments, and really did not have much rain for the day. The colors of the salt marshes and the ocean were beautiful and the weather kept the crowds down.

We totaled 51 species. All of the stars were in attendance. The wind kept the birds hunkered down some, but we still had reasonably good looks at Seaside Sparrow and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Little Blue Heron and Glossy Ibis were in their full, rich breeding plumages. Clapper Rail and Marsh Wren were heard. Other highlights were Least Tern, Piping Plover, Brown Thrasher, many Osprey, Purple Martins in the nest boxes, and a Monk Parakeet working on nest building.

Finally, we saw a doe circling around the trees in the marsh, with a tiny spotted fawn bounding after her. A 10 on the cuteness scale! We did NOT swim!

Betsy Higgins

ON-LINE NEWSLETTER: Please read this!!

The club offers an on-line (or “electronic”) version of the newsletter, as an alternative to the “hard copy” delivered via USPS. Last year, about half our membership received most of the newsletters this way, saving us considerably on labor and postage. Please consider getting the newsletter this way if you are comfortable accessing the Internet.

“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.

“What’s in it for me?”

Well, to be honest, this is mostly designed to reduce wear and tear on the editorial staff and keep costs down, but you can file the newsletters digitally, if you wish, to reduce paper clutter. Also, there are sometimes additions or corrections that get made to the on-line version that don’t get into the paper version.

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. To get the online newsletter, we need an email address on file to send you the monthly reminders.

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.

How come I got a paper copy of this newsletter?

We send the September and October newsletters to all members via USPS (paper version) because there are multiple forms associated with them, and we want to make sure that everyone gets these letters. The newsletters from November to June are available on line for all those who choose on-line delivery.

COMING FIELD TRIPS

Please see the enclosed Fall Field Trip Schedule.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE GATHERS STEAM

How to attract more young people to birding? Do most HBC presentations really hold childrens' interest? How do we get kids out into the field? What to do when physical issues due to aging, illness or accident won't allow one to participate at meetings or in the field as before?

In answer to these troubling questions, the HBC board has created an Education Committee to function in an outreach capacity. We hope that, through innovative, targeted programming and collaboration with other organizations, we can help address these issues.

School presentations, senior walks and programs, live bird interactions (captive and wild), visits to raptor centers, learning about falconry, organizing boy & girl scout merit badge events, member workshops, purchasing and/or reading natural history and bird books to children, these are just a few of the ideas on the table. You can donate to support the work of the committee via your membership form, but just as importantly, we need your input and energy. What ideas do you have? Let us know! Or better still, join the committee! Contact **Bruce Hart**: bhart@hampshirebirdclub.org or call 584-4176.

“The purpose of the HBC is to help members and the general public enjoy birding and to educate them about birds, bird watching, and bird habitats.”
(HBC Bylaws)

2nd Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas. 2006-2011

It's OVER (well, almost)!! A few last bits of data need to be entered/finalized/reviewed, but mostly it is time to celebrate 5 years of incredible atlas work all over the state (but especially – of course - here in Hampshire and Franklin Counties). The number of species, levels of confirmation, etc. aren't available in time for this newsletter. However, it is time to thank the 80 local birders (and another 10 living in other counties) for their elegant work. All 143 blocks had many hours beyond the 20 hours minimum. Thanks to each and every atlaser not only for work in Hampshire/Franklin Counties, but in other parts of the state. And special thanks to the Hampshire Bird Club for funding training workshops and administrative costs and being so supportive – carrying the atlas in the newsletter and giving time at every meeting.

Now, listen carefully to the tentative clicking sounds from outside. These are not the tiny ticks of Black-throated Blue Warblers taking care of their young, they are the sounds of atlasers trying to remember how to make loud noises after 5 years of creeping around every summer! First you will hear a little yip and maybe a tiny song, then a loud yell, then honking the horns of their atlasmobiles, and, then, the shouting and yelling and singing and dancing! Hooray!!!!

Mary Alice Wilson

An Atlas Tribute

It is, indeed, over, and Mary Alice is accurate in describing a certain sense of relief some of us are feeling, in some cases along with the inevitable guilt about not having done as much as we might have wished to. However, it is all water under the bridge, now.

However, there is one person here in Western Massachusetts for whom the work is not over yet. This is the same person who began working over a year before the Atlas field period even started, to recruit volunteers for the 143 Atlas blocks in this region, see to their training, answer their queries, patiently prompt them for late data, organize block-busting trips to points near and far, and stand up again and again at meetings in search of even a single extra hour in the field. I cannot imagine how many hours of poring over computer files and data it has taken for her to coordinate all our efforts.

I refer, of course, to **Mary Alice Wilson**, Connecticut River Valley Regional Coordinator for the Atlas effort. As we have seen over the years through the Northampton Christmas Count, this is a woman who believes that if something is worth doing, it is worth doing well, and if a few feathers are ruffled along the way, well so be it! There is probably no-one else they COULD have approached to coordinate the atlas effort in the Pioneer Valley, and certainly no-one else crazy enough to have taken it on! She is thorough, persistent, resilient, and not above stirring the pot when it needs to be stirred, but above all, always there with a smile and an anecdote, getting things done and helping the rest of us do so also.

I hope you will join me in thanking Mary Alice for helping all of us contribute to the most important citizen science effort in Massachusetts in many decades.

Thank you, Mary Alice!!!

Enclosed with this newsletter are the Membership and Field Trip Release forms, the Fall Field Trip Schedule, and the Bird Finding/RBA form.

That's it for now.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Date received:	Payment: __ cash, __ check, \$ _____	Release Form signed?	Newsletter Choice?	Data entered:
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For administrative purposes only

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC. MEMBERSHIP FORM: 2011-2012

Please note that contact information may be shared with other members of the club, unless you request otherwise below.

Name(s):	How would you like to get the HBC newsletter? (For the "online" version, we need to have an email address for you.) <input type="checkbox"/> Download from the HBC Website (club will send reminders), OR <input type="checkbox"/> Send me the newsletter via US mail						
Address:							
City:							
State: _____ ZIP: _____							
Home Phone(s):							
Work Phone(s):							
E-mail(s):							
May we publish your contact information in the annual club membership list (sent to members)? <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Yes</td> <td style="text-align: center;">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		Yes	No		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please check any activities listed below which you would like to participate: <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally provide refreshments <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Field Trip Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Lead field trips <input type="checkbox"/> Share info. on birding locations <input type="checkbox"/> Education Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe)
	Yes	No					
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
May we contact you via email with time-sensitive information such as cancellations, impromptu trips etc.? <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Yes</td> <td style="text-align: center;">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		Yes	No		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Yes	No					
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Please choose a level of membership below. Our supporting membership categories are essential in financing our outstanding programming. **All membership contributions are tax deductible** (if you itemize your deductions).

MEMBERSHIP - REGULAR: Tax deductible

Individual @ \$18.00

\$

Family @ \$30.00

\$

MEMBERSHIP – SUPPORTING: Tax deductible

Downy Woodpecker @ \$40.00

\$

Northern Flicker @ \$60.00

\$

Red-bellied Woodpecker @ \$100.00

\$

Pileated Woodpecker @ \$250.00 or more

\$

OUTREACH ACTIVITY

Donation to Education Committee (Optional)

\$

Please make checks payable to the Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. and send (with this form) to: Hampshire Bird Club, P.O. Box 716, Amherst, MA 01004-0716.

Bird Sightings in Western Massachusetts

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

To check various sources on the web:

Go to the HBC website: 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.

To join before October 11:

Fill in the form below. Return it with your membership form or turn it in at the Sept./Oct. meetings.

To join anytime:

Provide name/s and email address/es to the HBC Webmaster at webmaster@hampshirebirdclub.org

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Rare Bird Alert (RBA) Form: 2011-2012

Date: _____

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, 2011

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.*

AUGUST

Saturday, August 27. New South Beach (Late). 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. Note: the date may change depending on the tides. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register. (M)

SEPTEMBER

***Saturday, September 10. Knightsville Dam.** Half day. Betsy Higgins repeats her trip to Knightsville Dam WMA looking for early southbound migrants and other species. This is a rich habitat where almost anything could turn up. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for meeting details. (E)

Friday, September 16. Mt. Tom State Reservation. Half day. Join Tom Gagnon for hawk watching at Goat's Peak. Meet at the gate near the old park headquarters at 9:00 a.m. If the hawks are moving we can stay till early afternoon. Call Tom (413-584-6353) for details. (E)

***Saturday, September 17. East Meadows: Migrating Warblers.** Morning. Bob Bieda looks 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. Call Bob (413-527-2623) for more information. (E)

***Saturday, September 24. Hadley/Northampton.** Half day. Join Scott Sumner looking for warblers and shorebirds in the local towns. Call Scott (413-256-5438) for information and meeting time; meet at Stop & Shop on Route 9 in Hadley. (E)

***Sunday, September 25. Hardwick.** Half day. Join Chris Beulow on a visit to some of the East Quabbin's best birding spots. From Hardwick Common, we will visit Mandell Hill to see the Chris Ellison Memorial Bird Blind (under construction), Moose Brook Valley, and the Winimuset Wildlife Area (looking especially for migrating sparrows and waterfowl). Meet at the Hadley Stop & Shop Parking Lot (TJMaxx end) at 7 a.m. to carpool. We will meet Chris at the Hardwick Common at 8. For questions, contact Chris by email (dryoptera-at-yahoo-dot-com) or phone (413-477-6343). (E)

OCTOBER

Saturday, October 1. Quabbin Reservoir I. All day. Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien co-lead an early version of their annual fall trip into the wilds around the reservoir. You must be a member of the Hampshire Bird Club to participate in this trip. Participation is strictly limited, so call Tom Gagnon early to sign up (413-584-6353). (M)

***Saturday, October 8. Middleboro.** All Day. Explore the Cumberland Farms Fields in Middleboro with Scott Sumner, looking for shorebirds, sparrows, and late warbler migrants. Meet at Sumner Heating at 60 Shumway Street in Amherst at 5:30. Call Scott (413-256-5438) for details. (E)

***Saturday, October 15. Coastal Rhode Island.** All day. Geoff LeBaron leads his annual trip to the southeast to see what's flying along the coast. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) to register and get meeting information as the date approaches. (E)

***Saturday, October 29. Saw-whet Owls.** Evening. Janice Jorgensen and Sue Emerson will join Strickland Wheelock and his crew at Lookout Rock in Northbridge, MA for an evening of netting and banding Saw-whet Owls. Visitors help check the nets for owls every 45 minutes, then observe as crew members weigh, measure, and band the owls. Visitors often participate in releasing the owls. Bring a camera to record a great evening in the outdoors and, with luck, an owl or two. More information will be available at the September meeting. This trip is limited to 12 participants and costs \$20. (If participants want to jointly rent a van with a driver, there will be an additional \$15 charge.) For information and to register call Sue Emerson (413-584-6736) and to reserve a place send a non-refundable check for \$20 payable to "HBC" to Janice Jorgensen (HBC; 150 River Drive; Hadley, MA 01035). (E)

NOVEMBER

***Saturday, November 5. Champlain Valley, VT.** All day. Geoff LeBaron heads north to the shores of Lake Champlain looking for Snow Geese and perhaps a Ross' Goose or two (around Dead Creek WMA), as well as other winter specialties for the area (Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, Rough-legged Hawks, etc.). As the date approaches, call Geoff (413-268-9281) for details and meeting information. (E)

Sunday, November 6. Berkshire Lakes. All day. Join Tom Gagnon for his annual trip seeking out migrating water fowl and donuts. Meet at Stop & Shop on King Street in Northampton at 6:15 a.m. Call Tom (413-584-6353) for further details. (M)

***Week of November 14-18. Connecticut.** $\frac{3}{4}$ day. Henry Lappen leads a new trip looking for unusual species in our southern neighbor. In the last few years, these have included Calliope Hummingbird, Northern Lapwing, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Barnacle Goose, and more. The actual date depends on weather, birds, and Henry's schedule. Call Henry (413-549-3722) well in advance to register, or to get more information. (E)

***Saturday, November 19. Cape Ann/Plum Island.** All Day. Join Scott Sumner for a pre-Thanksgiving trip to Cape Ann and Plum Island. Work off those Thanksgiving calories before they happen. Call Scott (413-256-5438) for meeting time. The trip will leave from Sumner Heating at 60 Shumway Street St. in Amherst. (M)

Sunday, November 20. Quabbin Reservoir II. All day. If you thought the first trip was good, wait until you go on the sequel. Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien go back to the Quabbin, and this time, the birds don't stand a chance. You must be a member of the Hampshire Bird Club to participate. Participation is limited, so call Tom early to sign up (413-584-6353). (M)

END