



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

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Peregrine Falcons have tiny hair-like structures growing from the yellow skin of the cere which partially obstruct the nostrils or nares. Hard to see the point of this, until you realize that while diving at close to 200 miles per hour in pursuit of prey, air driven into the lungs through the nares would burst them if not for the interference created by these tiny projections. The dark teardrop on the face of a peregrine acts, like the dark paint footballers use for night games, to reduce visual interference from light reflecting off the cheek. If human eyes were comparatively as large as those of a peregrine, they would weigh four pounds. This explains, in part, why peregrines can see at least 8 times as well as humans, especially in low light.

These are but a few of the things that make the Peregrine Falcon so special. Hawkwatchers and ornithologists speak about it in reverential tones, and there was a time when it was so rare and threatened that a sighting was truly a miraculous experience. So how on earth could my birding partner and I be looking at one perched on a light pole in Hadley during the Christmas Count? That is what makes the count so special. We humble citizens can find not only working class birds of field and hedgerow (dare I say the ornithological 99%), but we can rub shoulders with avian royalty, and leave a record of the meeting for posterity.

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, January 9 at 7:30 PM

Geoff LeBaron takes us birding in **Panama and Costa Rica**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.

Join us for the first meeting of 2012, when we'll take a journey to Costa Rica and Panama. This expedition was an "interesting" one as it coincided with "Operation Just Cause"--the US invasion of Panama to capture Manuel Ortega Noriega. We'll experience the splendors of the Panama Canal and the Panamanian and Costa Rican rainforests, as well as the excitement of being caught in the middle of an international skirmish.

Geoff LeBaron has a B.Sc. from the University of Miami in Florida, and a master's degree in Zoology from the University of Rhode Island. He has been the Christmas Bird Count Director for the National Audubon Society since 1987. Prior to that, he has worked for the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, where he was Curator of Collections at Vireo.

Geoff has done field work on birds for Audubon in New Hampshire and Rhode Island, and spent over 3,000 hours documenting marine mammals, turtles, and birds off the eastern coast of North America. He has been an environmental educator in Rhode Island, and led seabird/whale watches off Cape Cod for three years.

Geoff has led natural history tours to Alaska; Big Bend and the Texas Hill Country; Baja California; Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands; Panama and Costa Rica; the Galapagos Islands and Ecuador; Argentina, the Falkland Islands, and Antarctica; and Australia and New Zealand. We know him best as an energetic and committed field trip leader, and our outstanding Program Chair.

COMING PROGRAMS

February 13, 2012. Scott Sumner. Birding Alaska.

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

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

COMING FIELD TRIPS

Please see the enclosed Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule

LIBRARY

The **HBC Library** is 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. Our librarian, **Henry Lappen**, is happy to bring items to meetings, if you give him a few days in advance. You can reach him at library@hampshirebirdclub.org or (413) 549 3722.

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Through the Seasons With Wildflowers Slideshow: *Ted Watt*

Wednesday, February 1, 7-8:30 p.m. Fee.

Honeybees And Beekeepers—Today's Challenges, Tomorrow's Solutions: *Dan Conlon*, (Beekeeper)

Tuesday, February 7, 7-8:30 p.m. Donation Requested.

Hardworking Native Perennials: *Melinda Reid, Landscape Designer.*

Saturday, February 11, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (Snow Date: Sunday, February 12). Fee.

Co-Sponsored with New England Wildflower Society

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.

Singers Needed!

HELP WANTED, finding singing birds. I'm starting a project for which I need lots of birdsong from lots of local species. The species I'm after are common, yet finding a good recording location in a quiet setting can often be a challenge. Maybe you know of a nice grackle colony, for example, or where swallows breed in the valley. I'd be grateful for any help HBC members could provide. If you're willing to help, please send me an email (dekroodsm@yahoo.com), and I'll be in touch this spring when the birds begin to sing.

Thank you! . . . Don Kroodsm

Christmas Count Potluck Thank You

Many thanks to all who generously contributed a special dish to our fun filled evening. The "elves" were so pleased with all the assistance that we wish to send our thanks and greetings for a wonderful New Year.

Best wishes from Sally Hills, Helga Beatty, Merry & John Cushing, Jan & Carlos Ortiz, Mary Alice & Bill Wilson, Sue & Wayne Emerson. Oh, AND ALL THE COUNTERS!!!!

Northampton Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 18, 2011

The Northampton CBC was held on a chilly, clear day with moderate winds. Low overnight temperatures and wind reduced the owl count somewhat, and the overall numbers of birds were on the low side, despite a generally mild December. However, the overall diversity was quite good, and though there were only five high counts, two of these were new species for this count circle.

High counts were recorded for **Hooded Merganser**, **Peregrine Falcon** (equal high), **Rusty Blackbird**, **Indigo Bunting** (new bird for the count), and **Pied-billed Grebe** (new bird for the count).

33, 094 individual birds were counted, representing 83 species, by 36 teams, consisting of 114 people.

Provisional results are shown below. **High or equal high counts are in bold type.** *Unusual species are in italics.*

Species	Number	Species	Number	Species	Number
Canada Goose	4,745	Red-bellied Woodpecker	157	Fox Sparrow	7
Mute Swan	3	Yell.-b'ied Sapsucker	6	Song Sparrow	226
Wood Duck	1	Downy Woodpecker	249	Swamp Sparrow	1
American Black Duck	96	Hairy Woodpecker	58	Wh.-throated Sparrow	481
Mallard	528	Northern Flicker	46	Wh.-crowned Sparrow	2
Common Goldeneye	17	Pileated Woodpecker	20	Dark-eyed Junco	2,392
Hooded Merganser	55	Northern Shrike	3	Northern Cardinal	489
Common Merganser	66	Blue Jay	1,000	Red-winged Blackbird	213
Ruffed Grouse	3	American Crow	2,637	Rusty Blackbird	189
Wild Turkey	85	Common Raven	11	Br.-headed Cowbird	116
Great Blue Heron	1	Horned Lark	221	House Finch	485
Bald Eagle (adult)	4	Black-capped Chickadee	1,100	Common Redpoll	2
Northern Harrier (adult)	2	Tufted Titmouse	470	American Goldfinch	878
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6	Red-breasted Nuthatch	6	House Sparrow	1,659
Coopers Hawk	15	White-breasted Nuthatch	295		
Red-tailed Hawk	85	Brown Creeper	16	<i>Unusual Species</i>	
American Kestrel	2	Carolina Wren	52	<i>Red-shouldered Hawk</i>	1
Merlin	2	Winter Wren	4	<i>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</i>	1
Peregrine Falcon	4	Golden-crowned Kinglet	63	<i>Red-br. Merganser</i>	1
Ring-billed Gull	228	Eastern Bluebird	298	<i>Eastern Meadowlark</i>	4
Herring Gull	10	Hermit Thrush	8	<i>Eastern Towhee</i>	1
Gull sp.	1	American Robin	4,316	<i>Dickcissel</i>	1
Great Bl.-backed Gull	1	Grey Catbird	2	<i>Yell.-rumped Warbler</i>	1
Rock Pigeon	797	Northern Mockingbird	133	<i>Indigo Bunting (new)</i>	1
Mourning Dove	1,855	European Starling	4,732	Chipping Sparrow	1
Eastern Screech Owl	74	Cedar Waxwing	798	Green-winged Teal	2
Great Horned Owl	15	American Tree Sparrow	524	<i>P-billed Grebe (new)</i>	1 (cw)
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	Field Sparrow	3		
Belted Kingfisher	11	Savannah Sparrow	29		

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

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule.
January 1, 2012.

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 also 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. Please check all information with the trip leaders.*

JANUARY

Saturday, January 7. North Shore: Cape Ann to Plum Island. All day. Bob Bieda leads his annual New Year's pilgrimage to the coast in search of wintering specialties like Eared Grebes, Barrow's Goldeneyes, Harlequin Ducks, Purple Sandpipers, and much more. Dress for cold weather. For meeting information call Bob at 413-527-2623. (E)

FEBRUARY

***Saturday, February 11. Coastal Rhode Island.** All day. Geoff LeBaron repeats his annual cold-weather trip to the coast of Rhode Island, looking for gulls, ducks, Short-eared Owls, and whatever else may be there. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for information and meeting details. (E)

MARCH

***Sunday, March 18. Connecticut River Waterfowl I.** Half day. Mike Locher travels from Holyoke to Hatfield looking for any waterfowl migrating through the valley along the Connecticut River. Call Mike (413-585-5864) for information, or just meet at the Hadley Elementary School parking lot (on Route 47, about a mile north of the Route 9 intersection) at 7 a.m. (E)

***Saturday, March 24. Connecticut River Waterfowl II.** All day. Joshua Rose scours the Turner's Falls environs for waterfowl bound northward and late gulls. Meet at Stop & Shop on King Street in Northampton at 7 a.m.. (E)

***Saturday, March 31. Plum Island.** All day. Geoff LeBaron braves the weather along the coast to find you the birds! Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for information about when the trip will leave, and where people should meet. (M)

APRIL

***Sunday, April 15. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher (413-585-5864) looks for early migrants like Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Northern Waterthrushes. Meet in the Friendly's parking lot, near the Holiday Inn, close to Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7 a.m. (E)

***Sunday, April 29. Early Migrants.** Half day. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) looks for migrants, starting around Look Park in Northampton. Meet at 6:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the JFK Middle School on Bridge Road in Northampton. (E)

MAY

***Saturday, May 5. Forest Park/Fannie Stebbins, Springfield.** Half to $\frac{3}{4}$ day. David Peake-Jones leads a new HBC trip to what is generally considered to be “the Central Park of Springfield.” There is a possibility of an extension to the Stebbins refuge depending on interest and what’s being seen. Call David (413-529-9541) for meeting time and place. (E)

Sunday, May 6. MacLeish Field Station, Northampton. Half day. In a new trip for the HBC, Bill Benner explores a newly-opened property managed by Smith College. Call Bill (413-320-4422) as the date approaches for meeting information. (E)

Saturday, May 12. East Quabbin Reservoir. All day. Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien lead the HBC’s annual trip to the east side of the reservoir, looking for spring migrants. You must be a Hampshire Bird Club member to attend this trip, which is limited to 15 people plus the leader. Call Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) to register no later than April 15. (M)

***Sunday, May 13. Mount Auburn Cemetery, Watertown, MA.** $\frac{3}{4}$ day. David Peake-Jones will again lead birders through this historic and beautiful garden cemetery which is also a fabled migrant trap. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (E)

Wednesday, May 16. Mount Holyoke. Half Day. Tom Gagnon hikes up Mt. Holyoke looking for birds (think Cerulean Warbler) and wildflowers. Meet at the LOWER parking lot near the entrance at 7 a.m. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to register. (M)

***Sunday, May 20. Moody Bridge Road, Hadley.** Half day. Josh Rose explores the Fort River Division of the Silvio Conte NWR by looking for migrants of all sorts in this recently-acquired parcel. Meet at 6 a.m. at the former Bri-Mar Stables on Moody Bridge Road, west of South Maple Street, in Hadley. (E)

JUNE

Saturday, June 2. Mount Greylock. All day. David Peake-Jones explores the only Blackpoll Warbler breeding habitat in Massachusetts. Mourning Warbler is also a possibility as well as a number of mountain specialties. Be prepared for a mile or two of hiking on rough trails. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (M)

Sunday, June 3. 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)

Saturday, June 9. Westover Air Force Base. Half day. Pending permission, Bob Bieda will lead his annual trip into New England’s premier grassland habitat, looking for Upland Sandpipers, Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Bob (413-527-2623) at least two weeks ahead of time to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E)

Sunday, June 10. October Mountain State Forest. All day. Ed Neumuth explores the habitat on October Mountain and ventures to surrounding areas like Post Farm and Tyringham Valley. October Mountain has recently been a fairly reliable spot for Mourning Warblers, as well as a number of other unusual species. Call Ed (413-884-4961) around trip time for meeting time and place. (E)

JULY

Saturday, July 28. New South Beach. All day. David Peake-Jones will look for Red Knots and other early shorebird migrants. We'll be walking a long way over wet sand. Bring sun protection, water, food, and \$20 for the boat ride. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (M)

AUGUST

***Saturday, August 11. Knightsville Dam.** Half day. Betsy Higgins repeats her trip to Knightsville Dam WMA. This is a rich habitat where almost anything could turn up. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for meeting details. (E)