



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 29, No. 2

October, 2012.

Oh, g'day! Thought I'd take a moment away from my Super PAC responsibilities to bring you some news from the bird club.

Aaahh, fall. The house, having been an intolerable sweat box for the entire summer is once again inhabitable. Mornings and evenings are crisp. Air is once again our friend. For those willing to get dewy feet, the woods and fields once again have a shifting cast of characters alongside the ratty post-breeding characters who have been here all summer. The fall migration is different somehow. I was reminded of this while camping up in the Berkshires with family. My brother-in-law called out to me one morning as we breakfasted, "Hey, what's that one. It's got wings like a fighter plane."

There was, indeed, a falcon flying over the campground. The place, the time, and gut-feeling said Merlin, and the binoculars confirmed it. This was not the one-glance-is-all-you-get Merlin we must mostly be content with. The bird teed up repeatedly on a dead snag, and made a series of breath-taking runs at a group of Northern Flickers who were hanging out on a mowed patch. Time and again, the little falcon returned to its launching place, and time and again it dove at the befuddled flickers before departing, looking suspiciously double-chinned. Then it was gone, fueled enough for now, perhaps, to make the next leg of an incredible journey to points south.

Our favorite words to describe birds are usually the most anthropomorphic of those that apply. Merlins, for example, are always being called things like "ferocious," "feisty," "belligerent," "fearless," and "reckless." Our reasons for assigning grace to a Great Blue Heron and royalty to a raptor may have a lot more to do with human culture than with the lives of birds, yet what would our passion be without this indulgence? Could we really be content to describe a Merlin as an agile hunter with a high wing aspect ratio? I, for one, cannot be satisfied with the facts alone. The bird we saw was an indomitable soul, as regal as they get, and I feel blessed to have had a brief audience with it.

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, October 15 at 7:30 p.m.

John Nove tells A Tale of Two Scottish Isles. Adventures in Orkney

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

John Nove fled the coast of Massachusetts four years ago and now lives here in the Pioneer Valley. He led trips for the Brookline Bird Club for 25 years, and was the compiler of the Cape Ann Christmas Bird Count for 15 years. He owns a house in the Orkneys, and has been going there for 22 years. Further enlightenment awaits those who come to the meeting.....

COMING PROGRAMS

November 12, 2012. Don Kroodsma. (Something vocal...)

December 10, 2012. HBC Members. Members' meeting.

January 14, 2013. Chris Rimmer. Bicknell's Thrush.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Crown of Maine. June 14 – June 19, 2012

After a fallow year last year, HBC once again pushed into the northern-most reaches of Maine, a landscape where lobsters are as alien as alligators, and Canada is, well, close, eh!

Those who braved the wilds included Harvey Allen, Ann & Mike Brooks, Ethan Carr, Kenley Clark & Laura Davenport, Katie Fox, Bruce Hart & Ilene Goldstein, Nidhin Joseph, **Geoff LeBaron** and David Peake-Jones.

Our first day of birding began, as threatened, at 4:30, with the assistance of the local Tim Horton's. Our guide, the redoubtable **Bill Sheehan**, led us into the eerie landscape of the former Loring Air Force Base, still closed to the public, but in process of becoming more accessible. Inside the gates, the mosquitoes took a little getting used to, but in the mosaic of fields, spruce bogs, and mixed woods, we found treasures worth the donation of a little blood. We found displaying **Upland Sandpipers** in the same field that hosted them two years ago, but this year, for an encore, we surprised a family with fuzzy young in an adjacent field! A female white-tailed deer touched our hearts with the veracity of her distraction display (to protect a suckling fawn), and we found **Wilson's Snipe** winnowing over the old missile silos, so close we could make out the configuration of the tail feathers when the male spread them in the dive.

For the afternoon, we adjourned to the dikes around Lake Josephine, a former potato chip waste dumping ground, now past it's sludgy hey-day, but still a rich environment for breeding **Redhead**, **Ruddy Duck**, **Green-winged Teal**, **American Wigeon**, **Gadwall**, **Northern Shoveller** and other ducks, none of which were shy about showing themselves. We caught glimpses of **Virginia Rail**, but spent almost an hour within ten feet of one individual which remained hidden for the entire time!!

On June 17, we drove northward through fog-blanketed forests toward Square Lake. Hiking in along a beaver swamp, we were surrounded by iconic elements of the boreal forest. Mink frogs provided a constant chorus and covered every patch of water. Swainson's Thrushes called from the surrounding spruces. Snipe flushed from underfoot, Osprey patrolled the marsh from a huge nest close to the trail, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were their typical rowdy selves, and a Pileated Woodpecker made several eye-catching excursions into the open from a likely nest site. But the real reason for being here revealed itself when we finally managed to triangulate the source of woodpecker nestling begging calls. They were coming from a nest hole close to the road and we witnessed the frenetic activity of male and female **Black-backed Woodpeckers** foraging through the marsh and returning to their demanding offspring. Great looks at one of our target species!

After a challenging but ultimately successful encounter with a **Mourning Warbler** at a roadside logging cut, we continued on to walk through another flooded forest environment (a sort of miniature northern Everglades), and many of us began to droop a little in the gathering heat. We should have remained more alert, for starting up from the roadside ditch and making a wary retreat into the forest was a bird we had promised ourselves we would NOT see: a female **Spruce Grouse**, with three chicks! Foraging **Gray Jays** at close range were yet another reward for a long day!

On June 18 we had a splendid walk on a cool, sunny morning along the Moscovic Road, once again being treated to the essence of the north woods. Northern Waterthrushes were in good voice, along with a calling Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, a gorgeous **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, and an elusive Winter Wren. Another Black-backed Woodpecker led us a merry dance before finally giving us great looks. On a woods road in New Sweden, we found the white variety of Pink Lady's Slipper, as well as the Yellow species of same. A **Canada Warbler** grudgingly offered us one of our few somewhat satisfactory looks at warblers, but the highlight of the day was a big **bull moose** which wandered out into the path and struck awe into our hearts on our way back to the cars. We did some hard sledding in the evening on the margins of the Aroostook refuge, but managed to add only a few more "heard only" birds., including **Bay-breasted Warbler** and **American Bittern**, the latter our reward for venturing onto a mosquito-ridden roadside at dusk. Interestingly, our playing Bay-breasted

Warbler song at one stop was immediately followed by a burst of semi-automatic weapons fire from a nearly firing range. Coincidence, or the birding police in full force? More moose and bear highlights in the gathering dusk as we returned to Russell's Motel: a fitting last evening of a splendid trip!!

David Peake-Jones with help from Geoff.



Knightville Dam. Saturday, August 18.

Betsy Higgins, ably assisted by Marcia Merrithew, lead 7 of us to the Knightville Dam WMA, and the Westfield River. The river is designated as a Wild and Scenic River by the federal government, and the seemingly under-appreciated and under-utilized seven-nine mile stretch up to Chesterfield Gorge is a treat for birders, bikers and hikers alike. Mile upon mile of river bank and no development at all. Betsy and Marcia know the Knightville Dam area especially well, having perused the area over many seasons of the MA Breeding Bird Atlas. Thanks also to a new member who was a big help with bird id.: Eric Huston.

Highlights included an **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, 14 Bobolinks, 5 Indigo Buntings, a **Baltimore Oriole** and a **Red-shouldered Hawk**, among a total complement of 26 species.

A few of us were also treated to a tour of the Higgins estate where we got to watch a Grey Hairstreak emerge from a chrysalis and take first flight. It affixed itself to Betsy's car, knowing, perhaps, her reputation for sedate driving. Separation anxiety, eh Betsy?

Bruce Hart

COMING FIELD TRIPS

Please see the New, Improved and FINAL (third) version of the Fall Field Trip List!! Ta dah!

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**.

NEWS FROM THE BOUTIQUE

We have beautiful new shirts in lots of nice colors just in! I'll have them at the next meeting. Just because of money constraints and complexity of ordering so many shirts in so many sizes, I do not have every shirt, in every color, in every size. So if you want the best selection, come early! The early bird gets the worm and all of that stuff.

Also, hopefully by the next meeting I'll have updated ABA Daily Field Cards.

And....if you have not checked out the new harnesses, come take a look. They are really nice.

Betsy Higgins, Proprietor

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

50TH Anniversary Environmental Film Series

Dirt! The Movie with Peter McLean of Brookfield Farm

Wednesday, October 10, 7–9pm at Amherst Cinema.

Green House Tour with Jonathan and Meg Wright

Saturday, October 13, 10am–12pm

Bark for Beginners at Mount Sugarloaf with Nancy Goodman

Saturday, October 20, 10am–2pm

Green Business Tour at the new Atkinson Family Practice

Sunday, October 21, 2–4pm

Cultural Entomology: How Insects Have Impacted Human Societies with John Stoffolano

Tuesday, October 23, 7–9pm

Quebec's Plan Nord: Towards a New Global Model for Sustainable Development

with Mathew Jacobson

Thursday, November 8, 7–8:30pm

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.

Christmas Count: Mark Your Calendars!

The Northampton Christmas Count will be on Sunday, December 16.

Kaufman Comes to Town

Kenn and Kim Kaufman: the Kaufman Field Guide to the Nature of New England

Tuesday, October 23, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.

Odyssey Bookshop, 9 College Street, South Hadley (right in the center of town)

Phone 413 524 7307

Naturalists Kenn and Kim Kaufman will discuss their Kaufman Field Guide to Nature of New England. This event requires the purchase of the book or a \$5 event ticket.

Birds In Holyoke

I have just been introduced to birdsowntown.wordpress.com

It is a very nice blog about birds in downtown Holyoke. The writer is a reporter for the Springfield Union who came to a Kestrel release at the East Leverett Meadow.

What pleases me is that it is (a) good and (b) city birding.

Mary Alice Wilson (I think...)

This month we are sending the latest version of the **Fall Field Trip Schedule**, which has been messed with more times than Atkins Corner, the **Field Trip Policy**, and the **Field Trip Guidelines**.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC. FIELD TRIP POLICY 2012-2013

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 (one or more nights, 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 twenty dollars (\$20) 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.

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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.

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Field Trip Guidelines for Field Trip Participants and Drivers: 2012-2013

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."

All Participants:

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.

Please call the trip leader at least a few days before the trip. It helps the leader plan the trip and you learn about any special arrangements or any change of plans.

Please do not bring pets and 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.)

Be on time at the meeting place. If you need to meet the group at the birding location, please offer to be early so the group can start promptly upon arrival. If you plan to leave the trip early, you must inform the leader in advance.

Carpooling is essential to allow the group to park when space is limited, reduce delays, reduce the likelihood of auto accidents and to reduce the chances of the group becoming separated. If possible, carpool from the valley. If the caravan has to pause multiple times en route to the birding location to collect participants, this tends to create delays. Even if you meet the group at the birding location, PLEASE be willing to carpool while birding is in progress. The participants (not the leader) are responsible for making all carpool arrangements.

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.

Please share costs with courtesy. We recommend a cost of \$0.50 cents per mile plus tolls and parking to be shared equally among the driver and all passengers, but the rate for your vehicle is entirely up to the driver and passengers. Please agree on a mileage rate or flat contribution BEFORE the trip leaves to avoid misunderstandings. Please bring cash or checks and be prepared to reimburse the driver at the time of the trip.

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.

While birding, please stay close to the group unless you have some specific reason to separate, and inform the leader if you are doing so. This reduces delays and distractions for the entire group.

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.

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC.
FALL FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE, 2012
3rd Edition. Published 9/10/2012

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 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

***Monday, September 17. Mount Tom: Hawk Migration.** Half day. Tom Gagnon goes hawk watching at Goat's Peak, at the Mt. Tom State Reservation. Meet at 8:45 a.m. at the old park headquarters, and expect a 20 minute walk to the tower. If hawks are moving, the trip could last until 3 p.m., but participants may leave earlier on their own. Bring lunch if you plan to stay, and dress for the weather. Call Tom (413-584-6353) for information and to register. Rain date – Tuesday, September 18. (E)

Sunday, September 30. Quabbin Reservoir: Fall Migrants. All day. Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien lead this 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 to twelve participants, and to get meeting information. Rain date – Sunday, October 7. (M)

OCTOBER

***Saturday, October 13. Saw-whet Owls.** Evening. Janice Jorgensen 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 per person. 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)

***Sunday, October 14. Connecticut Valley Sparrows.** Half day. David Peake-Jones will stomp around in some of the weedy fields in the east and west meadows of Northampton, looking for Little Brown Jobs and maybe some late warblers. Northampton Bowling Alley, 6:30 A.M. Contact David newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org (preferred) or 413 529 9541 to register. (E)

***Saturday, October 20. Coastal Rhode Island.** All day. Join Geoff LeBaron on this trip to Rhode Island to see what's flying along the coast. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop at 6:30 a.m. Call Geoff (413-2689281) to register as the date approaches. (E)]

***Saturday, October 27. Satan's Kingdom, Hell's Kitchen, and other more prosaically-named sites.** All day. Joshua Rose (413-835-0093) explores the northern reaches of the valley from Northfield to Turner's Falls. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop on King Street at 7:00 a.m. to organize carpools. (E)

NOVEMBER

***Sunday, November 4. Berkshire Lakes: Southbound Waterfowl.** All day. Tom Gagnon goes to the lakes and ponds of western Massachusetts to find ducks and other migrating waterfowl. Meet at Stop & Shop on King Street in Northampton at 6:30 a.m. for carpooling (be sure to set your clocks back). Tom promises a donut stop at Bartlett's Orchard. (E)

***Saturday, November 10. Dead Creek WMA and Lake Champlain.** All day. Mike Locher (413-585-5864) and David Peake-Jones (413-529-9541) hope Snow Geese show up late this year and look for other seasonal specialties along the shore of Lake Champlain. Meet at Stop & Shop on King St. in Northampton at 5 a.m. for carpooling. (E)

Friday, November 23. Cape Ann: Turkey Trot. All day. Al Richards comes off the DL in style, leading his traditional trip to 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)

Saturday, November 24. East Quabbin. All day. Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien lead their annual trip to the east side of the reservoir to look for water fowl and winter finches. 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 to twelve participants, and to get meeting information. (M)

JANUARY

Saturday, January 5. North Shore: Cape Ann to Plum Island. All day. Bob Bieda goes east to the coast on his annual New Year's migration 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)