



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 29, No. 10

**June, 2013.**

June is upon us, and with it, the club takes a bit of a hiatus from programs. Thank you to all who have worked throughout the year to keep our birding community thriving and connected. Field trips will continue through the summer, and, before you know it, the first newsletter of the new year will be upon you.

I hope your summer is relaxing and filled with birds, or some other enjoyable diversion. Meanwhile, here is the June newsletter. It has:

- details of the **program** this month, **field trip reports** and the **schedule** for the next couple of months,
- the new **Board of Directors**,
- news from the **Education Committee**,
- **breeding bird survey** and Neighborhood **Nestwatch** opportunities,
- **Hitchcock** programs, and
- a few other excrescences from my hard drive.

I hope you find some of it useful.

## **NEXT PROGRAM**

**Monday, June 10 at 7:30 p.m.**

**Joey Mason** presents **Keeping Company With Kestrels**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Joey will share her extensive research and experiences with American Kestrels in southeastern Massachusetts during the past 23 years. She will describe how she monitors her nest boxes and what she has found in them through the years, including things which were *not* kestrels. She will present evidence about what these raptors eat and why they often prefer to nest in cranberry bog habitats. These small falcons are in decline in Massachusetts, and Joey will provide insight and speculation on why this may be happening. She will mention the projects she is working on to help birds of prey in her area. Her presentation will include a live male Merlin and Kestrel for us to see up close. Take a look at [www.keepingcompanywithkestrels.org](http://www.keepingcompanywithkestrels.org) to read more.

In the early 1980s **Joey Mason** got hooked on watching birds of prey during fall migration after numerous visits to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania. In 1985 she learned how to band hawks in Cape May, NJ, where she continues to band raptors for the Cape May Raptor Banding Project in the fall. Joey learned much about falcon behavior while working on the peregrine recovery team for the Colorado Division of Wildlife during the summers of 1987 and 1988. With the help of Mike Maurer in 1989 she initiated a nest box project for American Kestrels in southeastern Massachusetts on properties owned by cranberry growers. Joey has been banding young and adult American Kestrels, and monitoring kestrel nest boxes ever since. In 2000, she spearheaded the Raptor Retrofit Project to prevent osprey electrocutions on privately owned utility poles, and has been responsible for placement of numerous osprey nesting platforms. Joey has just completed a report on better management practices for landfills, to prevent raptors from getting injured by methane burners.

## COMING PROGRAMS

Despite the toils of our Program Chair, Geoff LeBaron, a recent cancellation means that the schedule for 2013-2014 is not quite final yet. You'll be able to read the schedule for next year in the September newsletter, which will get to you in August.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### Hilltown Ramble. Sunday, May 5

Five hearty souls, led by **David Gross** and **Bob Zimmermann**, braved spectacular clear skies and lovely spring temperatures for a spin around the hill towns. Five (now reliable) **Fish Crows** made their presence known at the Stop & Shop parking lot as the group assembled. Cummington Marsh produced 100 Red-winged Blackbirds and the absolute highlight birds of the trip: a pair of very cooperative **American Bitterns**. The male (in full breeding plumage) called his wonk-a-chonk song while we were observing the pair for over 20 minutes. Also at the marsh were eight Yellow Warblers plus Swamp and Song Sparrows and a number of other species including the day's only Baltimore Oriole.

At the marsh along Spruce Corner Road the group saw and heard a number of species including a pair of **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers**. At Judy Williams' farm in Ashfield, we found lone Rose-breasted and **Evening Grosbeaks** along with a large contingent of Tree Swallows and two laggard Dark-eyed Juncos. As the day wore on, avian activity diminished, but near Burnett Pond in the Savoy State Forest we heard two Broad-winged Hawks chatting back and forth. Moran Wildlife Management Area was very quiet at 4 in the afternoon, save for three Blue Jays keeping watch over the three remaining trip participants as they beat the bushes for one last Little Brown Job.

David Gross



### Mount Holyoke. Wednesday, May 15.

Twelve people, led by Tom Gagnon, took part in the club's annual walk to the top of Mt. Holyoke via the main road, enjoying birds and butterflies along the way. Highlights included nice looks at a pair of **Barred Owls** that Tom called into view, a **Swainson's Thrush**, a **Winter Wren** singing his little heart out, three **Worm-eating Warblers** and a **Cerulean Warbler**, heard singing near the top of the mountain. On the walk back down the hill we enjoyed looks at our first Eastern Wood Pewee of the season.

Tom Gagnon



### Westover AFB. Saturday, May 18.

This was the first time in several years that the trip was in May instead of June and it was interesting to compare the difference. The activity and numbers of **Bobolink** were greater while the numbers and activity of the **Upland Sandpipers** were much less. **Eastern Meadowlark** numbers were down a little and **Grasshopper Sparrow** activity was similar to that seen in the past.

Upland Sandpiper numbers have steadily decreased over the past several years from 150 adults in 2003 to 81 in 2012 according to official Mass. Natural Heritage June surveys. A possible clue as to the cause was a playful group of mammal pups (either red foxes or coyotes) we observed. I imagine that, as adults, they could cause problems for ground nesting birds. Special thanks to Eric Huston, who worked on Westover surveying birds last summer, for giving us interesting breeding details and to Drew Milroy, of the Westover staff, for coordinating the trip.

Bob Bieda

## **Monhegan Island. May 24 – May 27.**

Wet, cold, windy and warblers on the beach!

105 species for the weekend, 21 species of Warblers. **White-eyed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Summer Tanager** and lots of flycatchers. The big event was lots of American Redstarts, Magnolia, Canada, Wilson's and Blackpoll Warblers...everywhere.!

Scott Sumner

## **COMING TRIPS**

**Wednesday, June 5. October Mountain and Tyringham.** All day. Ed Neumuth goes to one of his favorite spots (October Mountain) looking for Mourning Warblers and other local specialties. Bring lunch and be prepared to hike. Call or email Ed (413-844-4961) or enenumuth-at-gmail-dot-com for meeting time and place. The trip is limited to 7 participants. (M)

**Wednesday, June 12. Windsor and Savoy Forest.** All day. Ed Neumuth explores a relatively unbirded part of the Berkshires looking for, among other things, Mourning Warblers. Bring lunch and be prepared to hike. Call or email Ed (413-844-4961) or enenumuth-at-gmail-dot-com for meeting time and place. The trip is limited to 7 participants. (M)

**\*Saturday, June 29. Birding by Ear.** Half day. Back by popular demand, Don Kroodsma will head to a birdy part of Amherst to listen for early morning bird song (and he promises to bring recording equipment too, for anybody who wants to see the master in action). Call Don (413-247-3367) to get meeting details. (E)

*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.*

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

### **Help for Young Birders!!**

HBC is offering financial help for young birders who would like to attend a conference or camp.

Applications for the HBC Education Committee Youth Scholarship can be made by or on behalf of anyone ages 12 to 18 who is or has a family member who is an HBC member.

A link to the scholarship application can be found on the HBC Homepage:

[www.hampshirebirdclub.org/Application](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org/Application).

For further information, please email the HBC Education Committee:

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

The scholarship is made possible entirely through the generous donations of HBC members.

## **Board of Directors**

Almost unbeknownst to the assembled membership at Immanuel Lutheran Church, HBC held its Annual General Meeting on May 13 at 7:30 p.m. Not coincidentally, this was only minutes before the wonderful program of songs and photographs presented by David Spector and friends.

There was a single, but critical item of business on the agenda, and this was to elect the Board of Directors to serve during the 2013-2014 club year. A quorum was successfully lured into the auditorium, with the assistance of some stellar refreshments, courtesy of Sally, Helga and those who gave of their time to prepare them. After a threatened filibuster was narrowly averted, and a couple of poison-pill amendments died in committee, the following slate of folks were appointed without opposition.

**President:** Scott Sumner

**Vice-President/Program Chair:** Geoff LeBaron

**Treasurer:** Stephen Baker

**Membership Secretary:** Sue Emerson

**Communications Secretary:** Sharon Dombeck

**Board Members at large:**

Bruce Hart  
Mike Locher  
Jan Ortiz  
David Peake-Jones  
Josh Rose  
Jaap van Heerden

Please note that Sharon and Stephen are joining the Board for the first time, and are most welcome.

We say goodbye to Janice Jorgensen and Donna Rickerby. Janice has been our Treasurer for several years and done a superb job of both managing our finances, and presenting the financial picture to the board in a way that allows us to understand its every nuance. Donna has documented our proceedings with reliability and precision, as well as advising us on a number of important issues facing the club.

## **BROAD BROOK COALITION**

**Introduction to the Broad Brook Gap Parcel: Northampton's Newest Conservation Area.  
Co-Sponsored with Laurel Park  
Sunday, June 9 at 9:30 AM.**

Laurie Sanders, a naturalist who did an ecological assessment of the Kubosiak property, reported that the land supports seven different habitat types, including one of the most unusual swamp forests in Northampton. The area also includes a marsh that contains some of the best black bear habitat in the state and includes a stretch of Broad Brook that is upstream from known habitat for three state-listed freshwater mussels, including one that is federally endangered, according to Sanders.

The citizens of Northampton, through their Community Preservation Funds, state land grant funds, and generous donations to the Broad Brook Coalition, helped to bring this parcel into the public domain.

Meet at Normal Hall, Laurel Park: Routes 5 & 10, Northampton, near the State Police Barracks, for introductory remarks, then the group will walk across Coles Meadow Road to the new conservation parcel.

**Backyard Citizen Scientists Wanted**  
**Neighborhood Nestwatch**  
**The Smithsonian Institution and US Forest Service (at UMass)**

The **Neighborhood Nestwatch** citizen science program seeks to partner citizens and scientists to gather data about birds nesting in residential backyards. As urban sprawl reduces bird habitats across the region at an alarming rate, it is important to learn how birds make use of backyards, and how these habitats can best be used to protect them.

The project offers the opportunity to learn about bird biology in your own backyard. If you live in the Springfield, MA area (Westfield, Chicopee, Longmeadow, Amherst, Northampton area), then you are eligible to participate in a mentored experience in which scientists visit your backyard once every summer to band birds and help you find nests. They'll also teach you how to keep track of the banded birds, collect nesting data and monitor year-to-year survival for scientific study. Ultimately, Neighborhood Nestwatch will provide scientific data and public awareness to aid in the associated goals of conservation and responsible growth.

If you are interested in participating in this citizen-science project, email Susannah Lerman: [slerman@cns.umass.edu](mailto:slerman@cns.umass.edu) or call: 413 545 5447.

**Volunteers Needed**  
**Breeding Bird Survey: Department of Conservation and Recreation**  
**Quabbin Reservoir**

DCR is looking for volunteers to assist with an annual breeding Bird Survey they conduct in the following areas at Quabbin: Gate 40, Prescott Peninsula, and Dana Common.

I imagine that participants need to be able to identify bird song to species. Volunteers will work for two (2) days from about 5 AM to 7:30 AM. The dates are in "early June" but otherwise not specified (perhaps flexible?).

If you are interested, please contact Jillian Pereira. Phone (508) 792-7423 extension 206; or email [Jillian.Pereira@state.ma.us](mailto:Jillian.Pereira@state.ma.us)

Jim Lafley

**HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS**

**Citizen Science: Firefly Watch: *Ted Watt***

Wednesday, June 12, 7-9:30pm

**Ants!: *Elizabeth Farnsworth and Aaron Ellison***

Saturday, June 22, (rain date June 23), 12-2:30pm

**Massachusetts Walking Tour: Lawn Concert**

Saturday, June 22, 6-9pm

**Tracking Intensive: *Sue Morse***

(Spans October, 2013 - April 2014)

*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](http://www.hitchcockcenter.org).*

## Welcome New Members

Klara Grape  
 Linda Abrams  
 Scott Schuark & Roxanne Bogart  
 Deborah Rubin  
 Anne & Rocky Adriance  
 Judy Alfano

Easthampton.  
 Amherst.  
 Amherst.  
 Amherst.  
 Leverett.  
 Ware.

## Backyard Birds

*17 Strong St., Northampton (near Eastside Grill). Phone 586 3155*

Your local source for birding and bird-feeding supplies, including feeders, optics, gifts, written and audio-materials. Ten percent discount for members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Remember, with local merchants, your dollar stays here!

That's it for this month.  
 Until next month, talk softly and carry a big scope!

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