



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 30, No. 6

February, 2014.

Oh, g'day. No time for pontification, prevarication, obfuscation or antidisestablishmentarianism this month. Just buckets of information about birds, birding, and even other bits of the biosphere. You can read about:

- the **monthly program** and the **upcoming schedule**,
- a **field trip report**,
- **new field trips** including a **new overnight** offering,
- **Nominating Committee help wanted**,
- **Website help wanted**,
- **Hitchcock** programs,
- the **Rusty Blackbird Blitz!** (no blackbirds to be harmed),
- provisional **Northampton Christmas Count** results,
- the annual **MassAudubon Birders Meeting**,
- **entomological digressions** involving two of our members, and
- more besides!

I hope you find some of it useful.

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, February 10 at 7:15 p.m.

Robert Jonas and Tom Adams

present

Harvey Allen and the Kestrel Land Trust

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Weather-related cancellations announced via the HBC email list and local media.

Harvey Allen is an honorary member of the Hampshire Bird Club. He has been a powerful formative influence in our club since its inception. Chances are, if you have ever been on an HBC field trip, you have found yourself in quiet conversation with Harvey, sharing his unique insights into local birds and their habitats. This program presents the story of Harvey and another organization with whose roots he is deeply intertwined: the Kestrel Trust. Harvey has been at the forefront of land conservation through the trust for decades, to the point where a film has been made about his dedication to the organization and its cause. This is that film and we are honored to bring it to you.

COMING PROGRAMS

March 10, 2014. Chris Dwyer. Common Eider Dieoff in MA

April 14, 2014. David Spector. Amherst's Ornithologist: Margaret Morse Nice.

May 12, 2014. Joan Walsh. Birds and Agriculture.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

November 30. East Quabbin

A small group led by **Tom Gagnon** headed into the cold gates of (hell?) East Quabbin on November 30, a date changed by request of the folks at Quabbin. All beaver ponds were frozen but, we were able to come up with 38 species, 2 short of Tom's goal. A bitter cold day but we all had a great time. Here are some of the highlights.

Common Loon - 9
 Red-necked Grebe - 2
 Horned Grebe - 5
 Hooded Merganser - 279
 Common Merganser - 50
 Common Goldeneye - 2
 Bald Eagle - 4

Song Sparrow - 2
 Ruffed Grouse - 3 heard drumming
 House Wren - 1 (Craig Allen)
 Common Raven - 1
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 1
 River Otter - 3

Tom Gagnon

COMING FIELD TRIPS

The revised **Winter-Spring-Late Summer Field Trip Schedule** (2nd Edition) is at the HBC Website:
<http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org/trips.html>

The South Shore (Feb. 8) and Connecticut River Waterfowl (March 15) trips will meet at the HADLEY Stop and Shop, not the Northampton one as previously announced.

*****Changed meeting place*****

Saturday, February 8. South Shore. All day. Al Richards and Mike Locher scour the coast south of Boston for seasonal specialties like Harlequin Ducks, Short-eared Owls, and other waterfowl and seabirds. Meet at Stop & Shop (at 456 Russell St.) in **HADLEY** at 6:00. For further information and to register, call Al (413-665-2761). (M)

Saturday, March 1. Plum Island, Newburyport, and Salisbury. All day. Geoff LeBaron looks for migrants and residents at one of Massachusetts' premier birding locations. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) as the date approaches for meeting time and information. (E)

*****Changed meeting place*****

Saturday, March 15. Connecticut River Waterfowl. Half day. Al Richards and/or Bob Bieda seek out the ducks and geese migrating up the Connecticut River to their breeding grounds. Meet at Stop & Shop (at 456 Russell St.) in **HADLEY** at 6:30. Contact Al (413-665-2761) for more information and to register for the trip. (E)

New Trip

Wednesday, July 2. Bobolinks and Baltimore Checkerspots at Bullitt Reservation. Tom Gagnon leads the Massachusetts Butterfly Club and the Hampshire Bird Club to look for birds and butterflies at a 265 acre old New England farm now managed by The Trustees of Reservations. The farmhouse is now open to the public as a showcase for energy-efficient technologies that work for New England homeowners. There should be plenty of Bobolinks and gorgeous Baltimore Checkerspots. Rest rooms available. Contact Tom at (413) 584-6353 or tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com for more information or to register for the trip. (M).

Directions will be published later. If you want them now, go to the Trustees of Reservations Website and look for Bullitt Reservation, or see the revised field trip schedule on the HBC Website.

OVERNIGHT TRIPS

Mount Mansfield. Bicknell's Thrushes in Vermont.

Late June (Target dates June 25-26. Actual dates being negotiated with VCE)

Mike Locher and representatives from the Vermont Center for Ecostudies will look for Bicknell's Thrush, Blackpoll Warbler, Sandhill Crane, Black-billed Cuckoo and other species.

Bicknell's Thrush is a threatened species that is facing critical habitat loss in both its breeding and wintering grounds. Research demonstrates that this species has a fascinating life history structure which reflects its tenuous grip on existence. Mount Mansfield is one of a few "sky islands" of balsam fir forest in northern New England which still support breeding populations of this reclusive creature. Our VCE guides will be helping us not only look for the bird in its breeding habitat, but also allow us to spend time with researchers banding and studying the species. We may get to see individuals in-hand.

We will leave the valley early on the first day and bird through the Champlain Valley on the way north, stopping in the area of Dead Creek WMA, in Addison, Vermont, and hoping for breeding Sandhill Cranes in the area of Bristol Pond, Vermont. Upon arrival at Mt Mansfield, we'll check into accommodations in the village of Stowe, and make a late afternoon visit to the banding and research area before retiring for the evening. The second day will begin before dawn as we meet our VCE guides and travel up the mountain for a morning at the banding station, hoping to encounter Bicknell's Thrush and other species of the high altitude fir forests. We will check out of our lodgings around the middle of the day and proceed home, with the possibility of some stops along the way.

Participants will book and pay for their own accommodation and meals. The club will ask participants to pay a fee to cover the leader's accommodation and travel, club insurance, and a contribution to the work of the VCE. This cost is likely to be in the range of \$40-50, and the overall cost (depending on accommodation availability and choice) is likely to be in the range of \$225 – 275 per person.

More details will follow in March. Please contact **Mike Locher** (fieldtrips-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org) if you are interested.

Nominating Committee: Help Wanted

Each year about this time, a small group of the faithful set about making sure we have a viable board for next year.

The Nominating Committee is active from now until (potentially) the May meeting. It is charged with polling the current membership to determine their plans for next year, then seeking nominees to fill any anticipated vacancies. The ideal committee members have a wide range of contacts within the club and persuasive communication skills. We need at least one person who is NOT on the current board to serve on the committee.

Bruce Hart has volunteered to chair this year. Please contact him (brucehart-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org, 584 4176) if you would like to help.

Website Help Wanted

Hampshire Bird Club is looking to hire professional help in the hosting, design and maintenance of our Website. We need an outfit that is **local**, capable of providing **high quality service** to a small non-profit, and **affordable**. This is NOT a volunteer opportunity.

If you know of such a company or professional individual, please contact **Scott Sumner** (president@hampshirebirdclub.org)

Mass Audubon Birders Meeting: 2014

Extinction is Forever: What Have We Learned?

March 8, 2014, Bentley University, Waltham.

Using the passenger pigeon as an iconic example of what can happen to a super-abundant species in a relatively short span of time, the 22nd annual Birders Meeting will focus on the extinction phenomenon from a variety of perspectives.

The keynote speaker will be Joel Greenberg with “*A Feathered River Across the Sky: The Passenger Pigeon's Flight to Extinction.*” Other speakers include:

- *Patrick Comins*
- *Matthew Kamm,*
- *John Kricher,* and
- *Michael Reed*

Co-hosted by Mass Audubon, the Museum of Comparative Zoology, and the Harvard Museum of Natural History. For more information, go to <http://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/birds-birding/birders-meeting>.

Friends of the Fort River Division?

The US Fish & Wildlife Service is scheduling a meeting to organize a Friends of Fort River Division. The Fort River Division is the land on Moody Bridge Road where Bri-Mar Stables was located; it is now is a tract of the Silvio Conte NWR, and volunteers are building new boardwalks, observation decks, and other structures to make the area much more enjoyable for birders and other visitors. There will be a brief presentation and time for questions, followed by a visit to the Fort River Division. Meeting information:

US Fish and Wildlife Service, Westgate Center Drive, Hadley.

Friday, March 7.

Time :TBA

Anyone interested in attending, contact Artie McCollum at arthur_mccollum@fws.gov or 413-548-8002 X 119

Rusty Blackbird Blitz

Although scientists have made huge strides in understanding Rusty Blackbirds on their breeding and wintering grounds, we know surprisingly little about the migratory requirements and habits of this species. Are there hot spots where many individuals congregate during migration? Are similar migratory stopover areas used by Rusties each year? Are stopover areas protected, or might availability of these areas be limiting Rusty Blackbird survival?

To address these questions, the International Rusty Blackbird Working Group, in partnership with eBird, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, is coordinating a Spring Migration Blitz for 2014. This Blitz will challenge birders to seek out the elusive Rusty Blackbird throughout its migratory range, from the southern United States, through the Midwest and along the East Coast, and up into Canada. **The Spring Migration Blitz** will kick off in **March of 2014**; each state, province, or territory is assigned target dates for conducting the Blitz based on estimated peak migration periods. To find out more and/or to participate, please go to:

<http://rustyblackbird.org/outreach/migration-blitz/>

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Green “Dollhouse” Challenge: Model Fun Houses and Sustainable Landscapes: *Susan Reyes*
Thursday, February 6, 4:30-6:30pm

Finding Place in Nature Based Writing: *Cheryl Anne Lautner*
Saturday, February 8, 9am-12pm

Parenting and Climate Change Discussion: *Colleen Kelley, Ruthie Ireland, and Casey Beebe*
Tuesday, February 11, 6pm-8pm

Hitchcock Center Spring Birding Field Trips – 2014: *Scott Surner*

Scott ‘s wonderful birding class this winter and spring will be entirely field-based, without evening classroom lectures. Saturdays, plus the June weekend. Sign up for the whole series only. Fee. Registration required • Space is limited.

Moose In Massachusetts: *Dave Wattles*
Wednesday, February 26, 7pm-8:30pm.

The Native Bee and Native Plant Connection: *Tom Sullivan,*
Wednesday, February 26, 6:30-8:30 pm at Nasami Farm, Whately, MA

Henry Street Salamander Tunnel Maintenance: *Ted Watt*
A weekend in March determined by the weather and snow cover.

Naturalists and Novelists: The Birds of the Brontës: *David Spector*
Tuesday, March 4, 7pm-8:30 pm

Our Avian Neighbors: Birds in Our Local Conservation Areas: *Melanie Klein and Dave King*
Wednesday, March 5, 7pm-8:30pm

Connecticut River Floodplain: Tree ID Using Bark and Habitat Clues: *Nancy Goodman*
Saturday, March 15, 10am - 2pm. South Deerfield

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.

Birds of Prey: Their Lives and Challenges **Julie Collier, Licensed Raptor Rehabilitator**

Birds of prey, like **hawks, eagles, falcons, and owls**, are powerful and fascinating hunting birds. Please join us for a special presentation with these amazing birds known as "raptors" to learn about their place at the top of the food web, the different hunting adaptations each species uses, and how they are faring in a rapidly changing world. Some are doing well, but others are facing declining populations and other serious challenges.

Sunday, February 23 at 2 p.m.

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary Auditorium
 127 Combs Road, Easthampton, MA 01027
 \$8/\$4 donations requested.

Puffins and Climate Change

As many of us who have visited it in the course of our annual pilgrimages to Monhegan Island can attest, Eastern Egg Rock is a tiny symbol of hope in the Gulf of Maine. The Rock was a seabird breeding haven until the 1800s, when fishermen plundered its breeding bird colonies, primarily for eggs and feathers. As a result of their depredations, the Atlantic Puffin had been reduced to a single breeding pair in the waters of the Gulf of Maine by 1901. Eastern Egg Rock was a focus for the Audubon Society's Project Puffin. Starting in 1970's, biologist Steve Kress and others gradually re-introduced puffins to the rock, and, in recent years, the island has played host to an inspiring array of nesting seabirds, including 104 pairs of nesting puffins in 2012.

However, just as the island demonstrates the power of human conservation efforts and the resilience of bird species, the future of puffins, and indeed the whole northern Atlantic ecosystem is increasingly threatened by a far more intractable foe. Last year, ocean temperatures in the Gulf of Maine were the warmest on record, resulting in a cascading series of effects on the food chain. Herring, normally a staple of puffins and vital for their young, never arrived around Eastern Egg Rock at all. In their place were increasing numbers of a southern species called the butterfish - too big for pufflings. Nesting success was reduced and it seems that, for the first time since the inception of the project, puffin success on the islands of the Gulf of Maine may be declining.

Just to be clear, the solution to this problem is no less daunting than to find a solution to global warming itself.

Information Source: National Public Radio: All Things Considered. August 21, 2013 (available at NPR.org)
More detail at http://projectpuffin.audubon.org/sites/default/files/documents/eru_2012.pdf

A Massachusetts Insect Almanac: Josh Rose

Saturday, March 8th, 1:30 PM

Norcross Sanctuary; 30 Peck Road. Monson, MA

Journey through the year and find out how to attract, find, and identify the most conspicuous, charismatic and interesting insects of each month.

Free. Reservations Required. Call 413-267-9654 or email Lduthie@norcrossws.org.

Kestrel Nest Boxes in the Pioneer Valley

Last year, the **Kestrel Land Trust** installed a number of boxes designed for nesting kestrels around the valley and established a network of monitors, including some HBC members, to keep tabs on the outcomes. The trust plans to report on the progress of the kestrel nest box project and, presumably, plans for the future in the following presentation:

Kestrel Nest Boxes in the Pioneer Valley.

March 26, 2014, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Forbes Library, 20 West Street, Northampton

Northampton Christmas Bird Count, 2013

Summary results are shown on the following pages. Please be aware that these are provisional only. To get the full Monty, use your search engine with "Christmas Bird Count." Quabbin count next month.

That's all for now.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Northampton Count 2013 and Historical (unofficial)

High counts in bold

New species in bold italics

*Unusual Species**

(Name) = no recent records, hopeful...

Species	2013	High Year	High Count	Species	2013	High Year	High Count
Gr'ter Wh'-fr'ed Goose	0	n.a.t.		Bald Eagle	11	2009	9
Greylag Goose	0	n.a.t.		Northern Harrier	6	2010	11
Snow Goose	0	n.a.t.		Sharp-s'd Hawk	15	2007	22
Brant	0	n.a.t.		Cooper's Hawk	25	2010	26
Canada Goose	1933	1999	7, 977	Northern Goshawk	1	n.a.t.	
Cackling Goose	0	n.a.t.		<i>Red-s'd Hawk*</i>	3	1957	4
Mute Swan	8	2002	29	Red-tailed Hawk	142	2010	149
Wood Duck	11	2010	19	Rough-l'd Hawk	0	1989	12
Gadwall	0	2012	6	American Kestrel	2	1974	31
American Wigeon	0	10	1999	Merlin	4	2008	4
Am. Black Duck	163	1992	286	Gyrfalcon	0	n.a.t.	
Mallard	874	1994	1,338	Peregrine Falcon	4	2011	4
Northern Pintail	0	1991	10	Virginia Rail	0	n.a.t.	
<i>Green-winged Teal*</i>	c.w.	n.a.t.		American Coot	0	n.a.t.	
Canvasback	0	n.a.t.		Killdeer	0	n.a.t.	
<i>Ring-necked Duck*</i>	1	n.a.t.		<i>Wilson's Snipe*</i>	1	n.a.t.	
Greater Scaup	0	n.a.t.		American Woodcock	0	n.a.t.	
Lesser Scaup	0	n.a.t.		Ring-billed Gull	187	2006	1,088
White-winged Scoter	0	n.a.t.		Herring Gull	20	1986	2,196
Long-tailed Duck	0	n.a.t.		Iceland Gull	0	n.a.t.	
Bufflehead	0	n.a.t.		Lesser Bl'-backed Gull	0	n.a.t.	
Common Goldeneye	20	1992	109	Glaucous Gull	0	n.a.t.	
Barrow's Goldeneye	0	n.a.t.		<i>Great Bl'-b'd Gull*</i>	<i>cw</i>	<i>n.a.t.</i>	
Hooded Merganser	40	2012	60	Rock Pigeon	538	1988	2,778
Common Merganser	111	2012	227	Mourning Dove	1,706	1998	3,904
Red-b'd Merganser	0	n.a.t.		E. Screech-Owl	48	2006	82
Ruddy Duck	0	n.a.t.		Great Horned Owl	37	2003	48
Ring-n'd Pheasant	4	1960	196	<i>Snowy Owl*</i>	<i>cw</i>	n.r.r	
Ruffed Grouse	1	1966	37	Barred Owl	8	2012	19
Wild Turkey	91	2010	187	<i>Long-eared Owl*</i>	1	2004	3
Red-throated Loon	0	n.a.t.		<i>Short-eared Owl*</i>	2	<i>n.a.t.</i>	
Common Loon	0	n.a.t.		N. Saw-whet Owl	1	2006	5
Pied-billed Grebe	0	n.a.t.		Selasphorus sp.	0	n.a.t.	
<i>Horned Grebe*</i>	1	n.a.t.		Belted Kingfisher	18	2001	23
Do'-c'd Cormorant	0	n.a.t.		Red-b'd Woodpecker	145	2010	159
(Great Cormorant)	0	nrr		Yellow-b'd Sapsucker	19	2007	22
Great Blue Heron	10	2006	27	Downy Woodpecker	316	2004	452
Green Heron	0	n.a.t.		Hairy Woodpecker	77	1974	192
Turkey Vulture	0	n.a.t.		Northern Flicker	70	1998	77

Species	2013	High Year	High Count	Species	2013	High Year	High Count
Pileated Woodpecker	29	2010	34	<i>Clay-c'd Sparrow*</i>	2	n.a.t.	
Eastern Phoebe	0	n.a.t.		Field Sparrow	0	1982	58
Northern Shrike	0	1995	15	Vesper Sparrow	0	n.a.t.	
(White-eyed Vireo)	0	nrr		Harris's Sparrow	1	n.a.t.	
Blue-headed Vireo	0	n.a.t.		Savannah Sparrow	41	2000	46
Blue Jay	1310	1977	1,686	Fox Sparrow	1	1943	20
American Crow	1,124	1997	5,836	Song Sparrow	406	1992	559
Fish Crow	2	2008	6	Lincoln's Sparrow	0	n.a.t.	
Common Raven	11	2010	13	Swamp Sparrow	2	1992	23
Horned Lark	1,056	1993	2,504	White-t'd Sparrow	456	2009	1,008
Black-c'd Chickadee	1,270	2005	2,096	White-c'd Sparrow	4	1999	9
Tufted Titmouse	497	2006	894	Dark-eyed Junco	2,019	2006	3,585
Red-b'd Nuthatch	9	1993	295	Oregon Junco	0	n.a.t.	
White-b'd Nuthatch	357	2005	489	<i>Lapland Longspur*</i>	8	1989	31
Brown Creeper	23	1973	53	Snow Bunting	80	1989	706
Carolina Wren	139	2006	96	Northern Cardinal	449	2004	649
House Wren	0	n.a.t.		Indigo Bunting	0	n.a.t.	
Winter Wren	9	1998	7	Dickcissel	0	n.a.t.	
Golden-c'd Kinglet	52	2001	332	Red-winged Blackbird	26	2008	304
Ruby-c'd Kinglet	0	1973	6	(Eastern Meadowlark)	0	nrr	
Eastern Bluebird	332	2006	474	Rusty Blackbird	7	2008	100
Hermit Thrush	6	2005	9	Common Grackle	2	2006	501
American Robin	9,899	2006	7,555	Brown-h'd Cowbird	204	2006	876
Gray Catbird	2	2005	5	Baltimore Oriole	0	n.a.t.	
N. Mockingbird	137	1999	238	Pine Grosbeak	0	n.a.t.	
Brown Thrasher	0	n.a.t.		Purple Finch	15	1976	221
European Starling	8,072	1985	94,630	House Finch	356	1994	2,215
American Pipit	0	2010	66	Red Crossbill	0	n.a.t.	
(Bohemian Waxwing)	0	nrr		White-w'd Crossbill	0	n.a.t.	
Cedar Waxwing	373	2007	2,194	Common Redpoll	0	1959	1,069
<i>Yellow-r'd Warbler*</i>	2	n.a.t.		Hoary Redpoll	0.	n.a.t.	
Palm Warbler	0	n.a.t.		Pine Siskin	20	1993	372
<i>Eastern Towhee*</i>	<i>1</i>	n.a.t.		Amer. Goldfinch	1,019	2006	2,094
Amer. Tree Sparrow	698	1992	2,637	Evening Grosbeak	0	1969	3,000
<i>Chipping Sparrow*</i>	<i>1</i>	1974	11	House Sparrow	1,571	1961	2,662

In the event of equal high years, the most recent is shown.

For High counts in 2013, the previous high count and year are shown.

n.a.t. = now and then. Recorded in fewer than five (5) years between 1999 and 2013.

Some species seen extremely rarely have been excluded in the interests of space.