



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 30, No. 7

**March, 2014.**

In this edition:

- **this month's program** and the coming slate,
- an **URGENT** appeal for a volunteer on the **Nominating Committee**,
- a **field trip report** and **coming trips**,
- firm dates for the **Mount Mansfield** trip,
- a chance to **volunteer with HBC at WFCR**,
- **Hitchcock Programs**,
- a meeting about **kestrel nest boxes**,
- last chance for the **MassAudubon Birders Meeting**,
- results of the **Quabbin CBC**, and
- a few other tid-bits, including a **guide to bird rehabilitators in the valley**.

I hope you find some of useful!

## **NEXT PROGRAM**

**Monday, March 10, at 7:15 p.m.**

**Chris Dwyer**

presents

### **Common Eider Die-Off in Massachusetts**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

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

## **COMING PROGRAMS**

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

**May 12. Joan Walsh.** Birds and Agriculture.

**June 9. Steve Kress.** Puffins and Other Seabirds.

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

### **Help ~~Wanted~~ Needed Urgently**

The Nominating Committee will be in session from the March meeting this year until the Annual General Meeting in May. The committee is charged with finding nominees to replace any members of the current HBC board who are leaving the board at the end of this year.

We **URGENTLY** need one volunteer from the membership at large to join Bruce Hart and Jan Ortiz on the committee. Please contact one of the following if you are willing to serve:

**Bruce Hart:** brucehart-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org; 413 584 4176

**Jan Ortiz:** jtortiz-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org; 413 549 1768

Your bird club thanks you!

## TRIP REPORTS

### Saturday, February 8. North Shore

Al Richards dubbed this trip Mission 004, because as we left Al's house early in the morning, it was 0 degrees, we had 0 species, and there were 4 of us. As we headed east on Route 2, both the temperature and our species count rose steadily, and the weather on the coast was remarkably sunny and windless, if not exactly warm. In fact, the weather may have been too good for some seabirds, but nonetheless we racked up a respectable count of species.

We started on the south coast of Cape Ann, exploring the beach around the Fisherman's Monument in Gloucester. There we got some good ducks, including Gadwall, Common Eider, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Lesser Scaup, and Ruddy Duck. The first four species were found at other stops, and Al commented on how common Gadwall had become. We took our place at the end of the line of three bird clubs circumnavigating the island, and managed to see a few good birds that the quicker clubs had located. We continued through Gloucester, hitting the Granite Pier, Fish Pier, and Eastern Point Wildlife Sanctuary, where we picked up Purple Sandpipers, **Harlequin Ducks**, **Iceland Gulls**, a **Thick-billed Murre**, a **Dovekie**, and a Gray Seal, in addition to many other gulls and ducks.

We then headed north along Atlantic Avenue toward Cathedral Ledge and Andrews Point. At this point the calmness of the sea was striking, and perhaps because of that, the birds had apparently moved away from the shore. We saw a **Red-necked Grebe** at Cathedral Ledge and a probable **Razorbill** around Andrews Point (although we didn't identify it as such at the time). We then went to Plum Cove to try to find the Barrow's Goldeneye that had been reported, but had no luck. Instead, we found a Brant and some Long-tailed Ducks.

We then traveled to Ipswich to see the resident **Red-headed Woodpecker**, which we found without difficulty after we spotted several birders staring at a tree along the road. Most of the rest of the day was spent looking for **Snowy Owls** around Plum Island. We got good looks at three owls, and additionally saw Horned Larks and a **Northern Shrike**. In all, we got 50 species, turning Mission 004 into Mission 30504 (30 degrees, 50 species, and still 4 participants). Thanks to Al for a great trip to the coast.

Mike Locher

## COMING TRIPS

Please note that the Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule (3rd Edition) is now at  
[www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)

**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)

**\*Saturday, April 12. 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 Holyoke Elks parking lot (250 Whitney Ave.), near Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7 a.m. (E)

**\*Sunday, April 13. Northampton Migrants.** Half day. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) goes to Look Park to find waterthrushes and other early migrants. Meet at the JFK Middle School parking lot (100 Bridge Road, Florence) at 7 a.m. (E)

## Whoops!

Scores of alert readers noted that there were some mistakes in the provisional Northampton Christmas Count results, published in January. These were entirely the result of some formatting issues during editing. For the official count results from national Audubon, you can go to:

<http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/CurrentYear/ResultsByCount.aspx>

The code for the Northampton count is MANO.

## OVERNIGHT TRIPS

*We now have confirmed dates for the Mount Mansfield trip in June!*

### **Mount Mansfield. Bicknell's Thrushes in Vermont. Overnight trip.**

**Tuesday, June 17 – Wednesday, June 18.**

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

Bicknell's Thrush is a species that looks almost identical to Gray-cheeked Thrush, but whose closest relative is actually the Veery. The species breeds in balsam fir forests across south-eastern Canada, and is still found in shrinking pockets of high-altitude habitat in northern New England. The species is also experiencing severe habitat loss in its winter range in the Caribbean, and numbers are declining sharply. 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" in northern New England which still support breeding populations of Bicknell's Thrush. Our VCE guides will be helping us not only look for this species 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. Mike is compiling a list of accommodation options and can share them with you. 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. Please contact **Mike Locher** (fieldtrips-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org); 413 585 5864 if you are interested.

Please note that the confirmed dates for this trip are reflected in the revised Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule (3rd Edition), now at [www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)

## VOLUNTEERING FOR WFCR

Once again this March a group from the HBC will help our local NPR station, WFCR, during its Spring fund drive. We will be taking calls at the station on Saturday, March 8, from 8-11 AM. It's easy (training is provided). It's fun (you get to see radio behind-the-scenes). It's exciting (watching the drive totals increase is great motivation). Breakfast in the form of goodies from Henion Bakery and lots of coffee is provided; all you need to do is bring yourself (and friend if you wish) and answer pledge calls as they come in. If you'd like to join the fun, sign up by calling or emailing Dave Gross at 253-2897 or [dgross@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:dgross@hampshirebirdclub.org).

*Date: Saturday, March 8*

*Time: 8-11 A.M.*

*Location: WFCR studios, Hampshire House, UMass campus*

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**Naturalists and Novelists: The Birds of the Brontës:** *David Spector*

Tuesday, March 4, 7 pm- 8:30 pm.

**Our Avian Neighbors: Birds in Our Local Conservation Areas:** *Melanie Klein and Dave King*

Wednesday, March 5, 7 pm-8:30 pm

**Connecticut River Floodplain: Tree ID Using Bark and Habitat Clues:** *Nancy Goodman*

Saturday, March 15, 10 am – 2 pm. South Deerfield

**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. CLASS FULL. Try in January next year!

*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).*

### **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**

### **MassAudubon Birders Meeting: 2014**

#### **Extinction is Forever: What Have We Learned?**

*March 8, 2014, Bentley University, Waltham.*

Co-hosted by Mass Audubon, the Museum of Comparative Zoology, and the Harvard Museum of Natural History. 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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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.*

For more information, go to <http://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/birds-birding/birders-meeting>.

That's all for this month. Quabbin Count provisional results follow.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

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

## Quabbin Count 2013 and Historical

Species with high counts this year are listed in **bold** and the previous high count is also listed

Species	2013	High Year	High Count	Species	2013	High Year	High Count
Canada Goose	7	1999	193	Black-headed Gull	0	occ.	
Mute Swan	0	occ.		Ring-billed Gull	32	2011	185
Wood Duck	0	occ.		Herring Gull	11	1990	280
American Wigeon	1	occ.		Glaucous Gull	0	unusual	
Black Duck	35	1993	349	Great Black-backed Gull	9	1990	47
Mallard	129	1994	975	Rock Pigeon	10	1999	339
Northern Pintail	0	occ.		Mourning Dove	86	1999	440
Green-winged Teal	0	occ.		Eastern Screech Owl	0	1989	4
Ring-necked Duck	0	2001	41	Great Horned Owl	7	1994	24
Greater Scaup	4	2001	5	Snowy Owl	0	not yet	
Lesser Scaup	0	occ.		Barred Owl	12	1993	21
White-winged Scoter	0	occ.		Long-eared Owl	0	unusual	
Black Scoter	0	occ.		Saw-whet Owl	5	1994	61
Long-tailed Duck	1	occ.		Belted Kingfisher	5	2010	6
Bufflehead	4	1994	28	Red-bellied Woodpecker	33	2010	35
Common Goldeneye	10	1992	105	<b>Yellow-bell'd Sapsucker</b>	<b>3</b>	occ.	
Barrows Goldeneye	0	Occ.		Downy Woodpecker	103	1994	169
Hooded Merganser	49	2006	186	Hairy Woodpecker	31	2012	62
Common Merganser	134	199	1127	Northern Flicker	8	2010	10
Red-breasted Merganser	0	occ.		Pileated Woodpecker	12	2010	61
Ruddy Duck	0	occ.		Eastern Phoebe	0	unusual	
Ring-necked Pheasant	0	1994	16	Northern Shrike	0	1995	10
Ruffed Grouse	5	1994	42	Blue Jay	287	1993	1140
Wild Turkey	127	2009	248	American Crow	122	1995	395
Common Loon	6	1999	23	Common Raven	62	2013	62
Horned Grebe	9	1997	195	Horned Lark	0	1998	59
Red-necked Grebe	0	1995	2	Black-capped Chickadee	845	1993	2516
Double crested Cormorant	0	occ.		Boreal Chickadee	0	unusual	
Great Cormorant	0	occ.		Tufted Titmouse	197	1998	297
Great Blue Heron	0	1991	2	Red-breasted Nuthatch	10	1993	1886
Turkey Vulture	0	occ.		White-breasted Nuthatch	180	2001	303
Osprey	0	occ.		Brown Creeper	17	1996	82
Bald Eagle	37	1994	38	Carolina Wren	10	2011	12
Northern Harrier	0	occ.		<b>Winter Wren*</b>	<b>4</b>	1997	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	1993	12	Golden-crowned Kinglet	79	1996	312
Cooper's Hawk	2	2010	6	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	0	1996*	3
Northern Goshawk	0	2007*	3	<b>Eastern Bluebird</b>	<b>65</b>	2011	45
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	occ.		<b>Hermit Thrush*</b>	<b>4</b>	2006	4
Red-tailed Hawk	26	2001	28	<b>American Robin</b>	<b>2501</b>	2009	1878
Rough-legged Hawk	0	occ.		Gray Catbird	0	2008*	1
Golden Eagle	1	1997*	2	Northern Mockingbird	2	1991	45
American Kestrel	0	occ.		European Starling	453	1999	1690
Merlin	0	occ.		Bohemian Waxwing		Not yet	
American Coot	0	occ.		<i>(Continues next page)</i>			
<i>(Continues next column)</i>							

## Quabbin Count 2013 and Historical (continued)

Species	2013	High Year	High Count	Species	2013	High Year	High Count
Cedar Waxwing	78	1997	550	House Finch	29	1992	429
<b>Yellow-r'd Warbler*</b>	<b>1</b>	unusual		Red Crossbill	0	1993	240
Pine Warbler	0	unusual		White-winged Crossbill	0	1993	27
Eastern Towhee	0	2009	3	Common Redpoll	0	1997	1357
American Tree Sparrow	51	1998	611	Hoary Redpoll	0	unusual	
Fox Sparrow	0	unusual		Pine Siskin	0	2008	137
Song Sparrow	43	1994	50	American Goldfinch	125	1994	664
Lincoln's Sparrow	0	Not yet		Evening Grosbeak	0	1989	413
Swamp Sparrow	0	2008	3	House Sparrow	514	2004	1032
White-throated Sparrow	27	2009	584				
Dark-ey' (Slate Co') Junco	372	2009	2297	<b>Write Ins</b>			
<b>Snow Bunting</b>	<b>230</b>	1988	157				
Northern Cardinal	50	2005	123				
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	0	unusual					
Red-winged Blackbird	0	2006	309				
Rusty Blackbird	0	2011	51				
Common Grackle	0	2006	100	Number of Species this year	62		
Brown-headed Cowbird	0	2006	553	# of new species this year			0
Pine Grosbeak	0	2007	154	Cumulative # of Species	120		
Purple Finch	1	1992	169				

\*Most recent high year

Species counted in fewer than five (5) years between 1988 and 2012 are described as "occasional (occ.)."  
 Species recorded in fewer than three (3) years between 1988 and 2012 are described as "unusual."

This year saw *high counts* for **Common Raven** (62), **American Robin** (2501), **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** (3) and **Snow Bunting** (230).

High counts were *tied* for **Winter Wren** (4), **Hermit Thrush** (4), **Yellow-rumped Warbler** (1) and **Eastern Bluebird** (65)