



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

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April, 2015.

In this edition:

- The next program by **John van de Graaff** and the schedule for the remainder of the year,
- **Field trip reports** and coming trips,
- Another reminder about the first annual **Celebrate Birds** birding festival in May.
- Hot political intrigue regarding the **Nominating Committee** and the **AGM**,
- Two **new** offerings from the **Education Committee**,
- The **Rusty Blackbird Blitz**,
- **Hitchcock** programs
- **Broad Brook Coalition** programs,
- **Birds of Hawai'i** in Greenfield?
- An update on the **kestrel nest-box project**.

I hope you find some of it useful.

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, April 13 at 7:15 p.m.

John van de Graaff shows us **Fabulous Birds: The Americas 2001-2014**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

For those who may not be familiar, John is an extraordinary photographer who just happens to make his home right here in the valley. His photography includes the kinds of spectacular images of high-profile subjects that can excite the masses, but he is also known for finding subtle and often humorous beauty in the more mundane and humble elements of the natural world. His work is not to be missed.

Here's what John has to say about the program....

"I took my first bird photo trip – with just a 300 mm lens and slide film – to southern California in January 2001, and I've barely looked back. I switched to digital in April 2003, with two dozen rolls of Velvia 50 in the fridge, which I ended up giving to a camera club.

For this presentation I've started very much at the beginning, and in fact I've put a distinct emphasis on the first six or eight years. A fair number of those images appeared in earlier shows, but I've improved the Power Point presentation of them, and I've pulled out quite a number of new ones. I cover everywhere I've been in the Americas, from Central America and the Galapagos, through Alaska, across Canada, and up to Maine. Birds are simply wonderful creatures. Even picking at random from my archives wouldn't have been bad, but I trust I've done better than that."

COMING PROGRAMS

May 11, 2015. Jonah Keane. New Visions for Arcadia Sanctuary.

June 8, 2015. Mario Cohn-Haft. What's so Special about Amazonian Birds?

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Plum Island. Saturday, March 7

Geoff :LeBaron, Tim Carter; Andre, Elizabeth, and Laura Charron; Aidan, Devin, & Rae Griffiths; Arn Krugman.

After meeting at Joppa Flats, the group ventured forth into the snowy canyons of the Parker River NWR. The saltmarsh landscapes were dotted with thousands of white blobs, most of which were snow, but any of which MIGHT have been a **Snowy Owl**. One bird was observed fleeing across the dunes out into the estuary.

Sea-watching from Lots 1 and 3 yielded a nice selection of sea ducks, a Red-throated Loon, several Red-necked Grebes and several Common Loons struggling to swallow flatfish that looked like small flounder. Downtown Newburyport and Cashman Park offered great looks at Common Goldeneyes, Bufflehead, Common- and Red-breasted Mergansers, along with (especially) stunning Long-tailed Ducks.

Breeding-plumage Great Cormorants were further away than usual (but still visible) at the Chain Bridge due to lingering ice on the Merrimack.

A dead Thick-billed Murre was the only bird of note in the icy wastes of Salisbury State Reservation, but a Red Fox provided some mammalian diversion.

In a slight break with the traditional itinerary, the group headed up Route 1A into New Hampshire. At the 1A rest area in Seabrook, we found a wonderful adult **Glaucous Gull** and an immature (Kumleins) **Iceland Gull** with some tantalizing (but illusory) resemblance to a Thayers Gull. At Rye State Park, the only evidence of the winter-long Snowy Owl that has been in residence were some fresh pellets which the group field-dissected with interest.

Geoff LeBaron



Connecticut River Waterfowl. Saturday, March 28

Only Harvey Allen braved the icy winds with me today but it was a good day of birding nonetheless. We started the day with Fish Crow and Golden-crowned Kinglet, both at the Turners Falls power canal. The ice has now broken big-time pretty much all along the river from Turners Falls to Hadley - no more birding around little holes in the ice! We saw Ring-necked Ducks, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, as well as Hooded- and Common Mergansers at several stops along the river including the just de-iced Barton Cove and Turners Falls Rod & Gun Club.

A flock of 60-ish Horned Larks was in the field near the south end of Mill Village Road in Deerfield. We found several Wood Ducks at Great Pond in Hatfield. Not far away there were a few more woodies plus a Pileated Woodpecker on the Mill River at Bridge Street. A half-dozen Green-winged Teal were in a muddy field at the Honeypot, where we enjoyed a very tasty lunch to-go from Andino Market. Finally, we wound up at a completely different Mill River near the east end of Hadley Street, where we found a **Merlin** plus a few more Wood Ducks.

Josh Rose

COMING TRIPS

***Sunday, 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)

***Saturday, April 18. Northampton Migrants.** Half day. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) reprises her annual spring trip to Look Park to find warblers and other early migrants. Meet at the JFK Middle School parking lot (100 Bridge Road, Florence) at 7 a.m. (E)

***Monday, April 20. Fort River Refuge: Spring Migrants.** Morning. The HBC Monday Morning Birders seek out warblers, vireos, and other neotropical migrants at the Fort River Refuge. Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E)

Wednesday, April 22. Spring hawk watching at Goat Peak. Half day. Tom Gagnon leads his annual spring raptor (and butterfly) trip up the tower on Mount Tom State Reservation. Meet at the old park headquarters building at 9 o'clock for a 20 minute walk to the tower. Contact Tom (413-584-6353 or tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com) to register. (M)

MAY

**On Tuesdays in May, there will be birding walks through the Fort River Refuge. All walks start at 6:30 a.m. Dates and leaders are as follows:*

May 5, Janice Jorgensen;

May 12, Bob Bieda;

May 19, Pat Lynch;

May 26, George Regmund.

Meet at the refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley). These walks are co-sponsored by the HBC and the Friends of the Fort River Refuge. (E)

Saturday, May 2. Belchertown Hotspots: Herman Covey WMA and Lake Wallace. Half/Full day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths go where no HBC trip leader has ever gone before (at least according to my records). Explore these two sites with a pair of local experts, then perhaps head over to the Quabbin headquarters to see what's on the water. Contact Devin (413-323-8417) to get meeting details and for more information. (M)

***Saturday May 9. Mitch's Way.** Half day. Josh Rose takes a walk along the river looking for neotropical migrants. Depending on interest, a more challenging walk into adjacent Skinner State Park to look for Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers could be arranged. Lunch and ice cream will be at the Barstow Creamery. Meet at 6 a.m. at the parking lot of the Hadley Village Barn Shops, (41 Russell St., Hadley), near the Ecuador Andino store. Any questions, contact Josh (413-835-0093 or opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com). (E/M)

FALL FIELD TRIP SUGGESTIONS

Even with phoebes barely here and woodcocks bemused by the still-frozen ground, our Field Trip Chair, **Mike Locher** is already beginning to think about the **Fall Field Trip Schedule**. If you have **new ideas** for trips to be done between September and the new year, especially if you are prepared to lead these trips, please let Mike know. You can find him at fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org or by phone at (413) 585-5864.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee for 2015-2016 was appointed at the March meeting and consists of Sharon Dombeck, Stephen P. Baker, and Harvey Allen. The committee is engaged in preparing a slate of nominees for the Board of Directors for 2015-2016. At the time of writing, we do have at least one nominee for all positions. If you have an interest in serving on the board for 2015-2016 or in the future, please contact the chair of the Nominating Committee: Sharon Dombeck: communications@hampshirebirdclub.org

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Hampshire Bird Club Inc. will be held on Monday, May 11, 2015 at 7:15 p.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Amherst. The meeting will immediately precede our May program. The sole agenda item, at this time, is the election of the Board of Directors for the club for 2015-2016. The slate of nominees will be announced at the April meeting and will appear in the May newsletter. Nominations will be accepted from the floor during the meeting.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Not one but TWO presentations you might be interested in.

Plants Birds Love and Where to Put Them in Your Yard

May 14, 2015. 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Hadley Garden Center

HBC member Dan Ziomek will host this workshop which is sure to give you some wonderful gardening ideas. Attendees are asked to make a donation so we may buy a tree that birds will love and plant it in Amherst. Rain date is May 21. Open for all Hampshire Bird Club members.

Spring Bird Photography Workshop

HBC member John Van de Graaff, will be offering a photography workshop later this spring. The location will likely be the Rail Trail in Amherst. The date will be announced at April HBC meeting. This will be open to all Hampshire Bird Club members at no fee. More information will be available after April 7.

To see John's work go to <http://www.birdsbyjohn.com/index.htm>

Broad Brook Coalition Programs

Birding for Children: Marcia Merithew and Bruce Hart

Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, Northampton.

Saturday, May 9, 9-11 a.m.

Please help to spread the word about this birding program meant to help introduce children to the wonders of birding and the outdoors and fuel the fires for those already engaged. We'll have a few leaders and extra binoculars and we'll complement the program with 'live' photographs of some of the birds we see. Meet at the old Moose Lodge entrance, (Boggy Meadow Road, top of Cooke Ave., off Hatfield Street).

Birding: Bob Zimmermann

Saturday, May 23, 7-9 a.m.

Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, Northampton. North Farms Rd. entrance

As migrating songbirds return from Central and South America, they busy themselves with staking out territories, finding mates and building nests. We'll use sight and sound to see who's returned to the FLCA as we walk along the Lake Trail from North Farms Road to the lake, the dam and Cooke's Pasture. The group will meet at the North Farms Rd. entrance.

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

What's That Tree? At Lawrence Swamp: *Nancy Goodman*

Saturday, April 11, 10am-2pm

All About Bluebirds - and More: *John Rogers*

Tuesday, April 14, 7pm

Sustainability Festival on the Amherst Town Common

Saturday, April 25, 10am-4pm

Vernal Pool/ Wetland Exploration at Our New Site: *Charley Eiseman*

Saturday, April 25, 2pm-4pm

Annual Biothon

May 1-3 or 8-10

Biothon Bird Walks

with *Scott Sumner* at 7AM on Sunday, May 3rd in Hadley OR

with *John Green* at 7AM on Friday, May 8th in Belchertown

Spring Bird Walk: *John Green*

At Trustees of Reservations property, Mt. Warner, Hadley, MA

Saturday, May 2, 7am-10am

Spring Wildflowers of the Valley at Mount Toby: *Nancy Goodman*

Sunday, May 3, 10am-2 pm

Tour the Orchard Arboretum at Applewood: Dan Ziomek and Anne Cann

Wednesday, May 6, 3:30pm

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.

MISCELLANEOUS PROGRAMS

Birds of Hawaii: *Josh Rose*

Saturday, April 11, 2015, 10:00 a.m.

Greenfield Savings Bank, 282 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA

You know about the ocean, the craggy volcanic mountains. Maybe you have seen a humuhumunukunukuapu'a (Hawai'i's state fish). But, ah! Na Manu (The birds)! Area naturalist Joshua Rose is a bird enthusiast who spent time in Hawai'i, especially the Big Island. Josh will present slides of these truly gorgeous creatures and add his knowledge and insights. Come fly with us.....

This program is presented by the Pioneer Valley Hawai'ian Island Style Meetup.

CITIZEN SCIENCE: The Rusty Blackbird Blitz

The Rusty Blackbird Migration Blitz was initiated in 2014 in response to the dramatic and mysterious decline documented for this species over the last several decades. The project is coordinated by the Vermont Center for Ecostudies and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and challenges birders to scour the landscape for Rusty Blackbirds during this species' northward migration.

Last year, between 1 March and 15 June, **4750 birders** submitted **13,400 checklists** containing Rusty Blackbird observations to eBird. This provides a springboard for the project to start focusing on migratory hotspots and areas of special concern. Your help is needed this year!
It's easy- bird as you normally do during the Blitz window (15 March through April for Massachusetts)

And for the Over-Achievers in the Group.....

Based on data from last year, there seem to be some areas that may be of particular importance to Rusty Blackbirds. The coordinators would love to get more observation from these Areas of Interest which you can find at <http://rustyblackbird.org/outreach/migration-blitz/2015-areas-of-interest/>

To learn more about Rusty Blackbirds and the Blitz effort, please visit the Migration Blitz website (<http://rustyblackbird.org/outreach/migration-blitz/>), or check out the Blitz Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/rustyblackbirdspringblitz>).

Kestrel Nest Project

The Kestrel Trust currently maintains 12 kestrel boxes in the Pioneer Valley. Five of these are in the Fort River Division of the Conte Wildlife management Area and there are seven (7) others scattered in farmland around the area. A total of ten (10) chicks fledged from the boxes in 2014.

The trust plans to install three (3) new boxes this year: one at Chris Davis' falconry property on Huntington Road in Hadley, and two at the newly-converted wildflower meadows at Hampshire College.

Two (2) kestrels banded as part of this project have so far been recovered. A bird banded in the valley on June 13, 2013 as a nestling was recaptured alive in Florida in October of the same year. Another valley-banded bird was recovered, unfortunately dead, at Washington-Dulles airport a year after banding.

Want to Get Involved?

The trust is looking for **volunteer nest monitors**. This involves checking the box frequently throughout the nesting season and reporting findings to the Trust.

All kestrels that fledge from Kestrel Trust boxes have field-readable bands. The Trust would love to hear from you if you observe **banded kestrels** in the valley.

To volunteer or report banded kestrels, please email office.kestrreltrust.org

That's all for this month. A flyer for the Celebrate Birds festival is on last page.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

CELEBRATE BIRDS

The first Valley Birding Festival

Saturday, May 30 from 8:00 am to 2:30 p.m.

Join environmental organizations from throughout the valley for a fun-filled and family-oriented day of learning about our feathered friends. The festival will feature events at Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge (Fort River Division)* in Hadley and then later at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary** in Easthampton. Both venues are **accessible** to all.

At Conte Refuge (Fort River) from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

- **bird walks,**
- **a bird banding demonstration, and**
- **a falconry demonstration by Chris Davis**

At Arcadia Sanctuary from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.:

- **games, information and activities** for all ages, and
- **“Eyes on Owls.** 11 a.m. AND 1 p.m.

This wonderful demonstration of six (6) species of **live owls** from New England and beyond will occur at 11:00 a.m. and AGAIN at 1:00 p.m. Don't miss this unique opportunity to learn about these amazing birds.

The **venues** are:

*The Silvio Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge
(Fort River Division)
69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley

**Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Massachusetts
Audubon Society)
127 Coombs Road, Easthampton.

Festival **organizers** include

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Hampshire Bird Club, ◆ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ◆ Mass Audubon, ◆ Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife), ◆ Hitchcock Center for the Environment, ◆ Friends of the Fort River Division and ◆ Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center. |
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Festival **sponsors** include

- ♣ Springfield Naturalists Club and
- ♣ Hadley Garden Center.
- ♣ The Kestrel Trust

Bird Festival Volunteers

The **Hampshire Bird Club** through the **Education Committee** is one of the partners in the upcoming Valley Bird Festival on Saturday, May 30.

We are looking for **volunteers** from the HBC to assist with the event that day.

If you are interested in volunteering or finding out more about the volunteer opportunities please contact **Jim Lafley** at Jim.Lafley@state.ma.us or at (413) 221-1941.