



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 31, No. 5

January, 2015.

This month:

- the **program** for January 12 and the **up-coming slate**,
- the long-awaited **trip report** from our **Halloween Extravaganza**,
- the **Winter-Spring-Sumer Field Trip Schedule**, featuring some wonderful new offerings, and
- our **Field Trip Policy** in all its obfuscatory glory.

I hope you find some of it useful!

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, January 12 at 7:15 p.m.

Don Kroodisma brings us **Bird Song: The Hour Before Dawn**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

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

Photographers wait until they have good light. It's the same for bird-*watchers*, as birds can't be seen until after sunrise. What everyone misses is one of the greatest shows on earth, the dawn chorus, when (almost) every singer is at his finest. In that hour before sunrise, the motivation to sing is highest, and song performances are especially energized, with males typically telling all the songs they know in the shortest amount of time. For other species, especially for wood-warblers, special songs are invoked at dawn, songs that are rarely heard at any other time of the day. And then there are the exceptions. Going where few ornithologists and birders go, we'll tour a few of the finest and most intriguing dawn performances among North American passerines, and dream of all the fine listening available before sunrise. If only it didn't all happen so early in the morning.....

It was the spring of 1968, my last semester in college, when I became hooked on birds in general, and a few months later on birdsong in particular. And it's been a rush since then, over 45 years, first in academic circles (until 12:01 A.M., January 1, 2004), and since then as a man freed to pursue birdsong full time. I am a life-long scientist, one who asks questions, seeking answers and increasingly deeper understandings. No longer entrenched at the University, I am eager to encourage a deeper appreciation of birds and their songs by the tens of millions of others who also treasure birds.

Don Kroodisma

For a more complete biography, please visit donaldkroodisma.com

COMING PROGRAMS

February 9, 2015. Scott Sumner. The Big Chicken Run.

March 9, 2015. David Sibley. The New Sibley Guide to the Birds.

April 13, 2015. John Van de Graaff. Fabulous birds!

FIELD TRIPS THIS MONTH

Please see also the **Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule** (enclosed)

Saturday, January 17. South Shore. All day. Al Richards and Mike Locher will go to the Massachusetts coast south of Boston to look for seasonal specialties like sea ducks, gulls, alcids, and unseasonable rarities. 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)

***Monday, January 19. Fort River Refuge: No Spring Migrants.** Morning. Jim Lafley, George Regmund, and Janice Jorgensen perambulate the trails of the Fort River Refuge clockwise in what Janice assures me will be a walk without any spring migrants. But there will be plenty of winter birds, so bundle up and come on out! Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 8:30 a.m. (E)

***Saturday, January 31. Coastal Rhode Island.** All day. Geoff LeBaron repeats his annual cold-weather trip to the coast of Rhode Island, looking for gulls, ducks, Short-eared Owls, and whatever else may be there. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) to register. Meet at Northampton Stop & Shop (228 King St.) at 6:30 a.m. (E)

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

The Halloween Extravaganza: Satan's Kingdom, Hell's Kitchen and Beyond with Josh Rose. Saturday, October 25.

My annual pre-Halloween birding trek to Satan's Kingdom and Hell's Kitchen was mostly slow but bookended with some excitement. The five of us met up to form carpools at the Turners Falls power canal, and we decided to take a short walk there before driving off. The "short" walk turned out to last nearly 2 hours and tally 30 bird species. The drake **Common Goldeneye** first spotted on Thursday by James Smith was still present, but now joined by two hens. A previously reported **Ruddy Duck** also continued.

Eventually a flock of land birds pulled our attention away from the water. Among several other species it turned out to include a late Northern Parula. As we were heading back to the cars a flock of **Pine Siskins** flew over. Another flock of mixed insectivores brought our attention to a berry-eating **Hermit Thrush**.

We finally got up to Hell's Kitchen, but found rainfall from the recent nor'easter had submerged nearly all the shallow areas and mudflats which normally harbor shorebirds and dabbling ducks. Satan's Kingdom was also almost bird-less save a Winter Wren and a Red-breasted Nuthatch. Another flock of Pine Siskins flew over, stopping only for a few moments in the top of a large and cone-heavy pine tree. We walked back to the parking area and heard a Brown Creeper nearby and a Pileated Woodpecker further off. After some departures from the group and unproductive visits to the fields of Caldwell and Munns Ferry Roads, we headed back to Gill for lunch at the Wagon Wheel. The outdoor lunch tables paid dividends. As we ate, one member of our group observed a "Turkey Vulture" which flapped suspiciously quickly and flashed white wing patches. It was actually a **BLACK Vulture!** To further validate choice of lunch venue, an adult Bald Eagle cruised by relatively low overhead shortly afterward.

Josh Rose

We will try AGAIN to get the East Quabbin and Dead Creek reports in the February edition. Ed.

That's all for this month.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

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Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule, 2015
January 4, 2015

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.*

JANUARY

Saturday, January 17. South Shore. All day. Al Richards and Mike Locher will go to the Massachusetts coast south of Boston to look for seasonal specialties like sea ducks, gulls, alcids, and unseasonable rarities. 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)

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FEBRUARY

***Monday, February 16. Fort River Refuge: Really Early Spring Migrants.** Morning. Stephen LaValley, George Regmund, and Janice Jorgensen explore the trails of the Fort River Refuge in what Janice assures me will be a walk that might have a spring migrant or two. If that kind of bold prediction doesn't get you out, nothing will. Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 8:00 a.m. (E)

MARCH

Saturday, March 7. 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) to register. Meet at Northampton Stop & Shop (228 King St.) at 6:30 a.m. (E)

***Monday, March 16. Fort River Refuge: Early Spring Migrants.** Morning. George Regmund and Janice Jorgensen lead birders in looking for avian signs of spring at the Fort River Refuge. Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E)

Saturday, March 28. Connecticut River Waterfowl. Half day. Josh Rose seeks out the ducks and geese migrating up the Connecticut River to their breeding grounds. Meet at the parking lot near Migratory Way (near 109 G St.) in Turner's Falls at 6:30. Lunch will probably be at the Wagon Wheel in Gill. Contact Josh (413-835-0093 or opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com) for more information and to arrange a possible southern meeting place for carpooling. (E)

APRIL

***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)

Saturday, May 9. Quabbin Park and East Quabbin. All day. Tom Gagnon leads his annual spring trip to the eastern side of the reservoir in search of spring migrants. Participation is limited and you must be a member of the Hampshire Bird Club to participate. To register, contact Tom (413-584-6353 or tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com). Please register early. (M)

Thursday, May 14. Mount Holyoke. Half day. Tom Gagnon leads a hike up Mt. Holyoke in search of Cerulean Warblers and other spring migrants. Plan to stop along the way to look at some of the flora of Mt. Holyoke. Meet at 7 a.m. at the gate of Mt. Holyoke. For information contact Tom (413-584-6353 or tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com). (M)

Saturday, May 16. Bartholomew's Cobble. All day. Mike Locher travels to the southwest corner of the state to the unique habitat of Bartholomew's Cobble. There should be Bobolinks in the fields and woodland migrants in the forests around the cobble. The cobble is a haven for ferns and wildflowers found nowhere else in the state. Meet at Northampton Stop & Shop (228 King Street) at 6 a.m. and bring a lunch. Call Mike (413-585-5864) for further details. (M)

***Saturday, May 30. Wentworth Farm.** Half day. Josh Rose leads an easy walk looking for breeding Orchard Orioles, Brown Thrashers, Bobolinks, Green Herons, and whatever else he can find. If the weather is suitable we will also probably look at butterflies and dragonflies. Meet at 6 a.m. at the Stanley St. trailhead in Amherst. Any questions, contact Josh (413-835-0093 or opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com). (E)

Sunday, May 31. Grace Robson State Wildlife Sanctuary. Half day. Mike Locher goes in search of Hooded Warblers, who have been singing here for several years, but will stop for any of the numerous warblers that haunt this little-known reserve. If time and energy permit, we could extend the trip to bird around Mt. Tekoa. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop (228 King Street) at 6:30 a.m. Call Mike (413-585-5864) for further details. (M)

JUNE

Saturday, June 6. Westover Air Force Base. Half day. Bob Bieda hosts the HBC's annual trip to New England's premier grassland habitat, looking for Upland Sandpipers, Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Bob (413-527-2623) at least two weeks ahead of time to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E)

***Sunday, June 7. Knightville Dam.** Half day. Betsy Higgins and Marcia Merithew explore Knightville Dam for spring migrants and local residents. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for details. Meet at 7 a.m. at the John F. Kennedy Middle School (100 Bridge Road; Florence, MA). (E)

JULY

Saturday, July 11. Milford Point and Sherwood Island. Full day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths head down to southern Connecticut to find Piping Plovers, American Oystercatchers, terns of various sorts, and many other coastal specialties. Contact Devin at (413-323-8417) for meeting details and more information. (M)

Wednesday, July 22. Bobolinks and Baltimore Checkerspot. Half day. Tom Gagnon leads us to look for birds and butterflies at the Bullitt Reservation in Ashfield and Conway (399-401 Bullitt Road, Conway – do not attempt to drive the impassable North Poland Road to get there), 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. We will explore some of the many fields and trails. There should be plenty of Bobolinks and gorgeous Baltimore Checkerspot. Restrooms available. Contact Tom (413-584-6353 or tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com) for meeting information and to register for the trip. (M)

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC.
FIELD TRIP POLICY
Last Amended February 2, 2012

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 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.

Continues on Page 2 ►►

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.