



**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
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**November 2015.**

The November newsletter did not go out this month before the program. Hopefully we will get back on track for the December newsletter. This, the belated November edition, contains:

- the **Dead Creek** trip report,
- some **up-coming trips**,
- information about the **Education Committee**,
- the **Northampton Christmas Count**,
- **Hitchcock Programs**, and
- a few other tid-bits.

I hope you find some of it useful!

**NOVEMBER PROGRAM**

**Drew Vitz** speaks about **Conservation at MassWildlife**  
**Monday, November 9 at 7:15 p.m.**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

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

Drew will discuss the various programs being conducted at the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife that are related to bird conservation in the state. Topics that will be addressed include Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon restoration, Piping Plover and tern programs, American Kestrel conservation, managing for grassland and shrubland birds, and various other topics.

Andrew Vitz received a B.S. degree from the University of Wisconsin and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the Ohio State University where he studied the effects of forest management on migratory songbirds. Following graduate school, he was an avian ecologist at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pennsylvania, where he managed the Powdermill Avian Research Center. Andrew is currently the State Ornithologist for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife where his focus is on bird conservation throughout the state.

**COMING PROGRAMS**

**December 14, 2015. HBC Members.** The Members Meeting.

**January 11, 2016. Dave Wiley.** Tracking Great Shearwater Migration.

**February 8, 2016. Scott Weidensaul.** Project SNOWstorm and other studies of owls.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### **Dead Creek WMA and Lake Champlain Valley. October 25, 2015.**

**Mike Locher**, Andrew Magee, Devin Griffiths, Aidan Griffiths, David Peake-Jones.

The group only fully assembled along the roadside close to Addison itself, marveling at a gorgeous dark **Merlin** hunting a farmyard. Thence we proceeded to Addison, turned westward onto Route 17 and proceeded to the goose watching station. We struck it rich immediately. The fields right in front of the viewing shelter were solid white with a mass of snow geese: about 1700 by our estimate. We could find nary a Ross's Goose amongst them, but that did nothing to detract from the beauty of these wondrous creatures assembled at close range. A **Peregrine Falcon** perused the gathering from a dead tree. After some scanning and marveling we proceeded northward to Pantown Road and an inauspicious little slang beside the road. Perched in the mud, as reports had said it would be, was perhaps the most auspicious shorebird in the recent history of the trip. A **Hudsonian Godwit**, fully eclipsed but nevertheless a stately and very unexpected bird, perched on the mudflats along with a smattering of Killdeer. Just to remind us where we were, a duo of hunters dispatched a flock of **Green-winged Teal** which, moments before, had sailed serenely past us up the muddy waters of the slang.

Adjourning to the more open waters of Lake Champlain, we stopped first at Button Bay State park where we encountered a lone Horned Grebe (by contrast with the 26 we encountered last year at this location), a Common Loon and a Bald Eagle sitting in a cottonwood at close range. From Potash Bay, a little further south, we spied a raft of Common Mergansers, four (4) **Red-necked Grebes** and at least eight (8) **Bonaparte's Gulls** out in the middle of the lake before our gazes were turned inland by a flurry of songbird activity in a copse by the lakeshore. One by one, as we scanned the elusive critters flitting about in the undergrowth, we came up with **Fox Sparrow**, **Rusty Blackbird**, **Yellow-rumped Warbler** and **Baltimore Oriole** in addition to some more typical November residents.

In similar circumstances at the Tri-town water district we were able to add some Black Scoters to the water bird mix, before heading still further south to the Champlain narrows. Under the remarkable arches of the new Fort Henry bridge we found a series of unremarkable birds, which did include a large number of Double-crested Cormorants and some White-winged Scoters. South of the bridge in the muddy surrounds of McKuen's Slang and Whitney Creek we came up with **Greater Yellowlegs**, 2 Great Blue Heron lingering and a lurking **Dunlin**.

Returning to the Dead Creek NWR for a last sojourn with the geese, we found them not so accessible. From the end of Gage Road we were able to watch them flying in strings into the sheltered sloughs of the refuge, almost like someone were uncoiling and recoiling a rope braided with birds. Another Peregrine Falcon flashed past us in the beautiful late evening light, a fitting end to our day in the Champlain Valley.

## COMING TRIPS

**Saturday, November 21. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. Friends of the Fort River Refuge lead birders through the refuge to look for whatever happens to be around. Meet at 8 a.m. at the lower parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley). This trip is co-sponsored by the HBC and the FFRR. (E)

**Saturday, December 5. Connecticut River Meadows CBC warm-up.** All day.

Josh Rose works northward from Hadley hoping for pipits, buntings, longspurs, larks, raptors and all the bounty of early winter! Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot of the Hadley Village Barn Shops, 41 Russell Street, Hadley. Call/email Josh (413-835-0093; ophi-at-mindspring dot com) to register and for more information.

**Wednesday, December 9. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. Friends of the Fort River Refuge lead birders through the refuge to warm up for the Christmas Bird Count. Meet at 8 a.m. at the lower parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley). This trip is co-sponsored by the HBC and the FFRR. (E)

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

How to attract more young people to birding? Do most HBC presentations really hold childrens' interest? How do we get kids out into the field? What to do when physical issues due to aging, illness or accident won't allow one to participate at meetings or in the field as before?

The Education Committee tries to reach out to people who might otherwise never have a chance to learn about birds and birding.

School presentations, senior walks and programs, live bird interactions (captive and wild), visits to raptor centers, learning about falconry, organizing boy & girl scout merit badge events, member workshops, purchasing and/or reading natural history and bird books to children, these are just a few of the ideas on the table. You can donate to support the work of the committee via your membership form, but just as importantly, we need your input and energy. What ideas do you have? Let us know! Or better still, join the committee!

Contact the committee at [education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org)

## NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

During the annual Christmas Bird Count, CBC volunteers across the world count birds over any 24-hour period from late December through early January and submit the data to the Audubon Society to be compiled. You can be part of one of the most important citizen science efforts in history.

Join the 83rd Northampton (MANO) CBC on December 20, 2015. We have 36 teams during the daylight hours and about 10 owling teams. At dusk we sit down to a yummy potluck at the Hitchcock Center to compile the results and share the thrills and spills of the day. Be there or be square. To join a team or be a feeder counter contact Janice Jorgensen and Jan Ortiz at [cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org)

### The Feeder Watch

The organizers ESPECIALLY want to increase participation in the feeder watch part of the CBC. If you'd like to be part of the Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 20 but aren't able to be in the field and are within our count area, your help would be appreciated. Please email the compilers at [cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org) or Sally Hills at [sara09@charter.net](mailto:sara09@charter.net).

### The Potluck

#### *Food Contributions Needed!*

It is NOT too late to pledge a contribution to the culinary extravaganza that is the potluck. Please email or call Sue Emerson if you can chip in. Whatever you can provide, we, I assure you, can consume! HBC and all volunteer counters thank you!!

## LIBRARY

HBC has a substantial library at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. **Hours** are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. Items are catalogued in the "About" section of the HBC Website and can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. **Henry Lappen** is happy to bring items to meetings, given a few days notice! Call him at **413) 549 3722 or email** [library@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:library@hampshirebirdclub.org).

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**Exploring Larch Hill – All Welcome Monthly Sunday Nature Walk:** *Leader TBA*  
Hitchcock Center, Amherst. 1-3 pm.

**Animal Tracks and Signs at the Quabbin:** *George Leoniak*  
Sunday, December 13: 9am-2pm. Fee.

**Trees of the Connecticut River Floodplain:** *Ted Watt and Nancy Goodman*  
Sunday, November 22: 10 am-1pm. Directions to meeting point at registration. Fee.

*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).*

## WINTER SPRING-SUMMER FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE.

### Trips and Leaders Needed

Fall is giving way to winter as we speak. Mike Locher is charged with coming up with the Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule and he needs YOUR help! We need to keep our field trip offerings fresh and add new offerings to the tried and true range of trips we have at the moment.

If you have an area that you love to bird, or some wonderful birding niche that others would appreciate sharing, please consider leading a trip. Your new trip could become the next beloved HBC standard, but no-one will ever know unless you take the plunge and give it a shot!

If you have ideas for new trips, please contact Mike Locher: [fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) or 413 585 5864. We have to have the schedule set for the January newsletter!!

*Backyard Birds* (on Strong St. in Northampton) offers a wide range of birding books, audio resources, gifts, feeders, and other paraphernalia. I was in there this past month to buy a replacement for my aging Sibleys, and the owner gave me a 10% discount without my even asking for it!! (The discount is current for all HBC members). It's a great, locally-owned company, and when you shop locally, your money stays here!

That's all for this month.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

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