



**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
www.hampshirebirdclub.org  
Volume 32, No. 7  
**March, 2016.**

This month:

- The **program** for this month and the **upcoming offerings**,
- **Field trip reports** and a packed schedule for the spring including **Monhegan 2016**,
- The 2015-2016 **Nominating Committee** and **CBC Help Wanted**,
- A **pelagic birding opportunity**,
- A flyer for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual **Valley Birding Festival**,
- **Quabbin Count** results from 2015, and
- remembering **Ann Kearns**.

**Monday, March 14 at 7:15 p.m.**

**Scott Sumner** scampers around on the **Big Chicken Run**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

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

Scott was first scheduled to present this program in February of 2015. A snowstorm put paid to that meeting. Thirteen months later, in a winter that is so far almost snow-free, but which has already seen two programs cancelled, Scott once more steps up to the plate. Self-effacing as he is, the program information Scott gave us is about the same length as the printable portion of the last GOP debate, so here is a reprise of last years introduction.

Otherwise known as the **Grouse Grand Slam**, the trip Scott will be describing generally takes about ten days, spent quartering the windswept prairies in Colorado and Kansas for Greater and Lesser Prairie Chickens, Greater and Gunnison's Sage Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. These are all lekking species, meaning that males display in mysteriously well-defined areas, where their (often bizarre) displays are perused by visiting females. The grand slam trips involve grueling travel itineraries and a lot of huddling in blinds near the leks in the pre-dawn. A trip to make (or break) friendships.....

**Scott Sumner** is a founding member of the Hampshire Bird Club and has had more terms as president than the Bush and Clinton families combined, (though the math may need to be re-checked in 2016.....). He has led wonderful trips both locally and across the country for HBC and is the current teacher of the annual Hitchcock Birding Class, which brings many new people to birding every year. Scott is a long-time valley resident (actually grew up here), small business owner, master-birder, and, recently, star of local radio. He has a genial style and tons of great photos! Second time is a charm! Hope to see you there!

## **COMING PROGRAMS**

**April 11, 2016. Gary Langham.** Audubon's Climate Study: Version 2.0.

**May 9, 2016. Andrea Jones.** A Perspective on Bird Conservation in California.

**June 13, 2016. Mike Braun.** The Red Siskin Project.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### Connecticut River Meadows. Saturday, December 5 with Josh Rose

This trip focused on fields near the Connecticut River. We started on Aqua Vitae Road, where we saw two Red Foxes and 20 bird species including flyovers of **American Pipit** and **Horned Lark**.

Next was the Hadley Honeypot. The area seemed pretty blank from the car, except for another flock of Horned Larks that flew across the road. But once we parked the car and went for a walk at *That's A Plenty Farm*, we noticed a LOT more activity. The most noteworthy single bird was an immature **White-crowned Sparrow** but the most shocking sight was probably a flock of over 150 House Finches that we flushed, the largest number I have ever seen together. We spent some time looking for other birds in the group, but its only other members were about 40 Goldfinches.

After a pit stop we crossed the river to check out the Hatfield Great Meadow. It was disappointing for meadow birds, though we did have another pipit and a few more larks fly over. The main excitement here was on the river, where a flock of at least 33 Common Goldeneye was feeding.

Josh Rose



### Coastal Rhode Island. Saturday, January 30, 2016.

**Geoff LeBaron** led Tim Carter; Andre & Laura Charron; Aidan & Devin Griffiths; Sally Hills, and Scott Schwenk on this annual favorite. Temperatures varied between the mid-twenties and thirties with light but increasing breezes and generally cloudy skies.

Napatree Point extends enticingly into Long Island Sound and its windswept beaches and dunes offer the prospect of great birds in return for effort. This year the weather and the group dynamic led us to do the entire hike to the tip. We were rewarded with close looks at a **Red-throated Loon** feeding in the surf, spectacular close-range views of **Sanderlings** and **Purple Sandpipers** at the water's edge, a lovely immature Bonaparte's Gull and adult Great Cormorants.

The breakers were rather bare at East Beach, Charlestown, but Ninigret Pond boasted a dense flock of around one thousand (!) **Greater Scaup**, seasoned with four (4) **Redhead** and one **Lesser Scaup**. Ninigret Wildlife Refuge is still host to its resident **Lesser Black-backed Gull** and Scarborough beach sported not the reported one, but **TWO Black-headed Gulls** in flight.

Sachuest Point near Newport was sadly and inexplicably devoid of Harlequin Ducks, but we were compensated by a glorious sunset and a group of unusually confiding White-tailed Deer at close range. A most respectable tally of 57 species for the day.

Geoff LeBaron

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

At this time each year, the Nominating Committee assembles. Their task is to make sure that any vacancies occurring on the Board of Directors at the end of this year can be duly filled, ensuring the viable management of the club for 2016-2017. The Committee must first establish whether any current Board members are stepping down at the end of this board year, and then locate willing nominees for those positions.

The confirmed members of the Nominating Committee so far are **Bruce Hart** (brucehart-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org) and **David Peake-Jones** (newsletter-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org). There are a number of other volunteer inquisitors who shall be identified in due time. For now, if you are eager to serve on the board starting in June 2016, please contact Bruce or David.

## COMING FIELD TRIPS

**Wednesday, March 9. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund and other leaders explore the trails of the Fort River Refuge. Contact George (413-255-0628) for information. Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 8:00 a.m. This trip is co-sponsored by the FFRR. (E/M)

**Saturday, March 19. 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)

**\*Sunday, March 20. Connecticut River Waterfowl.** Half day. Josh Rose seeks out the ducks and geese migrating up the Connecticut River to their breeding grounds. Contact Josh (413-835-0093 or [jrose@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:jrose@hampshirebirdclub.org)) for more information. Meet at the Hadley Village Barn Shops, (41 Russell St., Hadley) at 7 a.m. This trip is co-sponsored by the Athol Bird and Nature Club. (E/M)

**\*Saturday, March 26. Fort River Refuge: Really Early Spring Migrants.** Morning. George Regmund and others lead birders in looking for avian signs of spring at the Fort River Refuge. Contact George (413-255-0628) for information. Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 8 a.m. (E/M)

**\*Saturday, April 9. 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/M with one optional S section)

**\*Sunday, April 10. Look Park.** Half day. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) reprises her annual spring trip to Look Park to find warblers and other early migrants, including Louisiana Waterthrushes. Meet at the JFK Middle School parking lot (100 Bridge Road, Florence) at 7 a.m. (E/M)

### Monhegan Island, 2016 with Scott Sumner

#### Memorial Day Weekend (Friday, May 20 to Monday, May 23)

Please note that this is the weekend BEFORE Memorial Day weekend. Mon 5/23 is NOT a holiday. You can see the spring migration almost anywhere, but if you have ever wanted to steep yourself in the glorious warblers of May, while losing yourself in the gentle rhythms of an idyllic island, Monhegan is for you.

We will travel to Port Clyde, Maine on Friday morning, take the ferry during the mid – afternoon (without vehicles), and arrive on the island in time to get a taste of the birds already there. From here on, we immerse ourselves in the gentle rhythms of island life. We'll find migrant songbirds throughout the tiny village of Monhegan, sheltering in the numerous apple trees, sometimes picking through the sea wrack on the town beach for sand fleas, or even hiding in the lobster pots piled almost everywhere. Each day will bring fresh migrants to the island, and a storm could even produce one of the fallouts of birding legend. When the birding slows down, we can venture off on any of the island's numerous walking trails to Lobster Cove, the stupendous seaward cliffs, the Seal Rocks (aptly named), or the Enchanted Forest.

We'll stay at the rustic Trailing Yew, which will lay on breakfast and dinner each day, including a local lobster dinner. This is the perfect opportunity to slow down, REALLY learn the birds, and remember what life *should* be about.

Registration is by deposit. For further details about the trip, contact **Scott Sumner** ([president@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:president@hampshirebirdclub.org); 413 256 5438). For cost information and/or to register, contact **Mike Locher** ([fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org); 413 585 5864)

## Northampton Christmas Count Help Wanted

The MANO CBC team is expanding. Jan Ortiz and Janice Jorgensen are looking for team members to assist with the following tasks:

**Publicity**—Help sending notices get sent to 10+ police departments, some newspaper blurbs about the CBC and how to participate, and creating and maintaining a MANO Facebook page.

**The MANO webpage.** Currently have three pages within the HBC website, however Jan and Janice are not WordPress savvy and need someone to keep those pages current. Most of the work is done right before and after the CBC.

**MANO area data.** We want to begin to collect notes; maps or whatever leaders and participants have about their area. When a leader is not able to participate; it becomes much easier to hand over the area when there is that data we can pass on.

**MANO CBC beginning birders.** We are hoping to expand and introduce more new birders to the CBC, but continue to do it in a controlled way so as to not interfere with existing areas and teams counting. We need to brainstorm and make a plan to do this.

If you can help, please contact Jan and Janice. You can reach them at [cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org)

## FALL FIELD TRIP SUGGESTIONS

Spring is almost upon us and we are just getting into the heart of the birding year. However, **Mike Locher** continues to lie awake at nights thinking about the NEXT field trip schedule. That's right, come the summer, Mike will need to put together the FALL field trip schedule. It's never too early to come up with something new and different to add to our schedule. It might even become the next annual HBC favorite. If you have ideas for field trips in the fall of 2016, especially if you are prepared to lead them, please contact Mike at [fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org).

## CAPE ANN WINTER BIRDING CRUISE

**Saturday, March 12, 2016. 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

**Presented by the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce**

**Conducted by 7 Seas Whale Watch; 63 Rogers Street, Gloucester.**

Stellwagen Bank is probably best known for its large concentrations of whales (Humpback and Finback especially) which attract tens-of-thousands of eager whale watchers each Spring through Fall. But the activity continues all year long! Even in winter many species of marine wildlife can be seen, and while this trip will focus primarily on the birds of Stellwagen Bank, the possibility of marine mammals including returning whales is certainly there.

Highlights of this trip in recent years include:

Black-legged Kittiwakes, Iceland gulls, Glaucous gulls, Razorbills, Dovekies, Common Murres, Thick-billed Murres, Atlantic Puffins, Common Eiders, King Eiders, Long-tailed Duck, all three scoter species, Greater Scaup, Northern Gannet, Bufflehead, Common Loon, Red-throated Loon, Horned Grebes, Red-necked Grebes, and even a Snowy Owl.

Details

Cost: \$75

More Information: Call Kerry at the Chamber: 978 283 1601

You can register at <http://web.capeannchamber.com/events/Winter-Birding-Boat-Trip-2238/details>

### **Remembering Ann Kearns**

Hampshire Bird Club mourns the passing of Ann Kearns, who died on March 2. Ann was a long-time HBC member, active both at meetings and in the field. She was also a passionate conservationist and an extraordinary musician. She will be sadly missed by our birding community and our deepest condolences to her family.

That is all for this month.

The Quabbin Count results for 2015 are attached, as is a flyer for the 2016 Valley Birding Festival.

David Peake-Jones, Editor

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

## Quabbin Count 2015 and Historical

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

Species	2015	High Year	High Count	Species	20135	High Year	High Count
<b>Snow Goose</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>new</b>		American Coot	0	unusual	
<b>Canada Goose</b>	<b>236</b>	1999	193	Black-headed Gull	0	unusual	
Mute Swan	0	unusual		Ring-billed Gull	153	2011	185
Wood Duck	0	unusual		Herring Gull	7	1990	280
American Wigeon	0	unusual		Glaucous Gull	0	unusual	
Black Duck	76	1993	349	Great Black-backed Gull	0	1990	47
Mallard	49	1994	975	Rock Pigeon	192	1999	339
Northern Pintail	0	unusual		Mourning Dove	283	1999	440
Green-winged Teal	0	unusual		Eastern Screech Owl	2	1989	4
<b>Blue-winged Teal</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>new</b>		Great Horned Owl	2	1994	24
Ring-necked Duck	3	2001	41	Snowy Owl	0	not yet	
Greater Scaup	0	2001	5	Barred Owl	5	1993	21
Lesser Scaup	0	unusual		Long-eared Owl	0	unusual	
White-winged Scoter	0	(10 cw)		Saw-whet Owl	7	1994	61
Black Scoter	0	unusual		Belted Kingfisher	3	2010	6
<b>Long-tailed Duck</b>	<b>2</b>	unusual		<b>Red-bellied Woodpecker</b>	<b>41</b>	2010	35
Bufflehead	3	1994	28	Yellow-bell'd Sapsucker	0	occ.	
Common Goldeneye	2	1992	105	Downy Woodpecker	59	1994	169
Barrows Goldeneye	0	unusual		Hairy Woodpecker	17	2012	62
Hooded Merganser	82	2006	186	Northern Flicker	5	2010	10
Common Merganser	231	199	1127	Pileated Woodpecker	19	2010	61
Red-breasted Merganser	0	unusual		Eastern Phoebe	0	unusual	
Ruddy Duck	0	unusual		Northern Shrike	1	1995	10
Ring-necked Pheasant	0	1994	16	Blue Jay	436	1993	1140
Ruffed Grouse	8	1994	42	American Crow	192	1995	395
Wild Turkey	38	2009	248	Common Raven	20	2013	62
Common Loon	16	2014	28	Horned Lark	0	1998	59
Horned Grebe	2	1997	195	Black-capped Chickadee	849	1993	2516
Red-necked Grebe	0	1995	2	Boreal Chickadee	0	unusual	
Double crested Cormorant	0	unusual		<b>Tufted Titmouse</b>	<b>298</b>	1998	297
Great Cormorant	0	unusual		Red-breasted Nuthatch	63	1993	1886
Great Blue Heron	0	1991	2	White-breasted Nuthatch	199	2001	303
Turkey Vulture	0	unusual		Brown Creeper	14	1996	82
Osprey	0	unusual		Carolina Wren	5	2011	12
Bald Eagle	16	1994	38	Winter Wren*	0	1997	4
Northern Harrier	1	unusual		Golden-crowned Kinglet	28	1996	312
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1993	12	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	0	1996*	3
Cooper's Hawk	3	2010	6	Eastern Bluebird	54	2014	88
Northern Goshawk	0	2007*	3	Hermit Thrush*	2	2006	4
<b>Red-shouldered Hawk</b>	<b>2</b>	unusual		American Robin	121	2013	2501
Red-tailed Hawk	22	2001	28	Gray Catbird	0	2008*	1
Rough-legged Hawk	0	unusual		Northern Mockingbird	9	1991	45
Golden Eagle	0	1997*	2	European Starling	397	1999	1690
American Kestrel	0	unusual		Bohemian Waxwing		Not yet	
Merlin	0	unusual		Cedar Waxwing	134	1997	550
<b>Peregrine Falcon</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>new</b>		<i>(Continues next page)</i>			

## Quabbin Count 2015 and Historical (continued)

Species	2015	High Year	High Count	Species	2015	High Year	High Count
Yellow-r'd Warbler*	0	unusual		House Finch	25	1992	429
Pine Warbler	0	unusual		Red Crossbill	0	1993	240
Eastern Towhee	0	2009	3	White-winged Crossbill	0	1993	27
American Tree Sparrow	41	1998	611	Common Redpoll	0	1997	1357
Field Sparrow	0	1999	2	Hoary Redpoll	0	unusual	
Fox Sparrow	0	unusual		Pine Siskin	7	2008	137
Song Sparrow	16	1994	50	American Goldfinch	202	1994	664
Lincoln's Sparrow	0	Not yet		Evening Grosbeak	0	1989	413
Swamp Sparrow	1	2014	3	House Sparrow	641	2004	1032
White-throated Sparrow	29	2009	584				
White-crowned Sparrow	0	unusual					
D'-eyed (pink sided) Junco	0	unusual					
D'-eyed (slate-co') Junco	791	2009	2297				
Snow Bunting	0	2013	230	<b>Write Ins</b>			
Northern Cardinal	95	2005	123				
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	0	unusual					
Red-winged Blackbird	0	2006	309				
Rusty Blackbird	0	2011	51				
Common Grackle	0	2006	100				
Brown-headed Cowbird	0	2006	553	Number of species this year			64
Pine Grosbeak	0	2007	154	# of <u>new</u> species this year			2
Purple Finch	13	1992	169	Cumulative # of Species (historically)			120

Species counted in fewer than five (5) years between 1988 and 2015 are described as "unusual."

On January 2, 2016 forty-two (42) observers took part in the 2015 Quabbin CBC. Overall the weather was pretty good and just about every bit of water was open, but a snow/ice storm from the previous Monday made for icy conditions on most of the roadways inside the gates. Some roads were completely impassable, and to venture from the car was to risk slipping on sheer ice in many areas. Observers who had brought along their Yaktrax's got their money's worth this day. We recorded 64 species, including three (3) that were new to the count and five (5) others that were high counts for the history of this circle.

Species observed for the **first time** this year included **Snow Goose, Blue-winged Teal and Peregrine Falcon**. Other **high counts** (including tied high counts) included **Canada Goose, Long-tailed Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Tufted Titmouse**.

## CELEBRATE BIRDS

### The 2nd Valley Bird Festival

**Saturday, May 7, 2016 from 6:30 a.m. 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 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.**

- **Early morning bird walk with George Regmund of Friends of Fort River**

#### **At Conte Refuge (Fort River)**

**69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley**

**8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.**

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

#### **At Arcadia Sanctuary**

**127 Coombs Road, Easthampton**

**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.

#### **Festival Organizers include:**

- ◆ Hampshire Bird Club,
- ◆ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
- ◆ Mass Audubon,
- ◆ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife),
- ◆ Kestrel Trust
- ◆ Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation,
- ◆ Hitchcock Center for the Environment,
- ◆ Friends of the Fort River Division and
- ◆ Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environment Center

#### **Help Wanted**

If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please contact Jim Lafley through the Hampshire Bird Club.