



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 33, No. 10
June, 2017.

This month:

- Just the basics you need to get you to the end of June, dear reader.
I hope you find some of it useful!

NEXT PROGRAM

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

David Spector (with help from Sam himself)
introduces us to

Sam Peabody and Friends: A Look at Bird Song Interpretation
Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Transliterations, mnemonics, transcriptions—whatever you call them, this program might help you “cheer up cheerily,” as David, a “teacher, teacher, teacher,” tells the club that we can always look forward with the chickadees to “spring soon, spring’s coming.” Did Sam Peabody ever meet Miss Beecher? Will the club refreshment table have “potato chips” or a “tea kettle, tea kettle, tea kettle?” David probably won’t answer these questions, but he will discuss the history and context of some of the transliterations that many of us use to remember bird songs.

David Spector has been a member of the club since its first meeting and has given approximately umpteen club programs. The identity of his co-presenter is a bit obscure.

COMING PROGRAMS

Young Frankenstein, Doctor No, Grandpa in the Munsters, Geoff LeBaron. What do they all have in common?

No it is not their universal critical acclaim. Each, dear reader, has a LABORATORY. In the case of Grandpa, it is pronounced “Laboaratoary.” Young Frankenstein’s lab includes various high voltage equipment designed to animate his monster. Doctor No’s underground lair includes an atomic-powered radio beam, and Grandpa’s cellar contains a bunch of fake chemicals and spider webs (animated by the genius of Al Lewis).

The Lebaron laboratory is more virtual than physical. Using contacts built up over the years (inscribed, no doubt, on index cards), a strange, ancient device called a land line telephone, and the wonders of the internet (with some dry ice thrown in for effect), our Program Chair Geoff LeBaron is in the lab now, feverishly concocting the same kind of eclectic blend of the sublime and the ridiculous which has kept us intrigued, enthused and amused, lo these many years!

The program for next year is still embryonic at this time. Check the September newsletter for the birth announcement.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Sunday, June 4. Montague Sand Plains with Jeremy Coleman.

On June 4, Ray Chapin, Gail Demers, Howie Faerstein, Jan Lamberg, Mike Locher, Dave Maxcy, Marianna McKim, Naila Moreira and David Peake-Jones accompanied leader **Jeremy Coleman** to a truly unique and under-appreciated ecosystem.

We met just south of the Turners falls airport, where Jeremy alertly located a **Grasshopper Sparrow** (without the aid of song), spending time in an overgrown field at the foot of West Mineral Road. **Blue-winged Warblers** sang in this prime habitat and, though none were seen, it was lucky we did hear them since they were barely evident in the rest of the sandplain habitats we visited later. A Chestnut-sided Warbler singing a truncated song teased us from a grove of sumac. However, it was time to move on.

We travelled in convoy into the depths of the sandplain, eventually getting out on Old Northfield Road for a walk in along a power-line access. **Prairie Warblers** were immediately evident in numbers, as were **Eastern Towhees** singing every variation of the tea-drinking invitation one can imagine. Several cooperated visually as well. **Field Sparrows** popped up in the brushy sections of the power-line access, too preoccupied with eggs and young to give us much song, but treating us to their beautiful pale faces and pink bills. Eastern Kingbirds gave their usual extroverted performances. Scarlet Tanagers and a Baltimore Oriole demonstrated their versatility in this pine-oak-dominated community. An Indigo Bunting finally cooperated from the edge of the woods. We had cameo performances from Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Raven, Eastern Wood Peewee, Northern Flicker and Least Flycatcher.

After a brief drive across the sandplain to another corner of the plain, we went in off Plains Road to a slightly more closed forest. Pine Warblers sang here, predictably duelling with Chipping Sparrow and a dark-eyed Junco. The three trills had us staring into the Pitch Pine canopy for extended periods. Resulting satisfaction levels ranged from ‘Yep, a nice bright Pine’ to ‘Well, sometimes it’s more interesting not to know*.’ At least one pair of Pileated Woodpeckers trumpeted and flashed, pterodactyl-like through the trees. Red-breasted Nuthatches lorded it (numbers-wise) over their White-breasted cousins. Several Brown Thrashers belted out their duplex phrases from (sadly distant) corners of the woodland. Hermit Thrushes did the ‘I’ll fly in front of you then hide behind a tree’ schtick, but we were equal to the task. Ovenbirds sang in the denser sections, and a few Red-tailed Hawks forced us to dust off our ‘hawks at distance’ skills.

Undoubtedly, the highlight of the morning for most came as we extended our morning a little. An inauspicious bird flying into a tree proved to be one of a group of about half a dozen **Red Crossbills** which clambered about among the cones of several Pitch Pines for just long-enough to give everyone a decent look before mysteriously vanishing, as they are wont to do. It’s been a while since we did an organized day trip into this remarkable and eminently bird-able environment. Al Richards goes on Wednesday June 7 in the evening for the crepuscular version of the trip. I hope we as a club will make a concerted effort to get to the plains more regularly as time goes on.

David Peake-Jones

*This is the polite birding equivalent of an expletive.

COMING TRIPS

Wednesday, June 7. Whip-poor-wills at Montague Plains WMA. Evening. Al Richards heads to the Montague Sand Plains to listen for Whip-poor-wills. As the sun sets, Eastern Towhees and Prairie Warblers may be singing. Meet at Al's house (7 South Main St., Sunderland) at 7:30 p.m. Contact Al (413-665-2761) for further information. (E)

Saturday, June 10. Fort River Refuge. Morning. George Regmund and co-leaders look for late migrants and resident nesters at Fort River. Meet at the lower parking area at 7 a.m. (E/M)

Saturday, June 17. October Mountain. All day. Bob Bieda goes west in search of Mourning Warblers, but that's not all. A Brookline Bird Club trip at this time last year netted 46 species! The date on this trip may change (to June 18) depending on the weather. Contact Bob (413-527-2623 or blbieda-at-gmail-dot-com) to register and get meeting information. (E/M)

Wednesday, June 21. Fort River Refuge. Morning. George Regmund and Josh Rose close out the spring walks at Fort River. There will be warblers in the brush, bobolinks in the field, and dragonflies everywhere. Meet at the lower parking area at 7 a.m. (E/M)

FALL FIED TRIP SCHEDULE

Risk-Takers Wanted

Somewhere in Hadley, a man is tossing and turning in his sleep and if you staked out the road to the top of Mt Hitchcock some night, you might see a spectral, pajama clad form clambering up through the hairpins muttering stuff about confusing fall warblers and why leaders can't make up their minds. Sources close to the Hampshire Bird Club report that the man behind these stories is Mike Locher. Mike, for those who may not know, is our Field Trip Chair and the source of his restlessness may not be immediately apparent to you. He does not obsess about the Winter-Spring Summer Field trip schedule, for that is already published and replete with a great selection of trips for every taste. Neither is he worried about last year's field trip schedules, since that is water under the bridge and there is no use crying over spilt milk (or mixed metaphors, for that matter). No, dear reader, Mike's preoccupation is with a trip schedule that is yet to take form, save in his fevered imagination.

I refer, of course, to the Fall Field Trip Schedule. While the rest of us (and, in fact, Mike himself) are dodging the showers in this aqueous spring, midst breeding warblers in full summer finery and in full breeding song, Mike must find a way to match the eclectic trips of past years with this year's autumn offerings. This is where you come in. We need leaders. Not necessarily hot-shots, but common and garden-variety birders who are willing to take a chance. A field trip leader does not HAVE to pick the Cackling Goose from amidst the 1,223 Canada Geese on the power canal, or to pull a Connecticut Warbler from some anonymous thicket, though no-one will complain if you can do either. A good trip leader has a passion for a place and time of year and gets other birders there to experience it. Provided the trip is safe and well-organized, responsibility for success rests with the group and, of course, lady luck.

So if you have a birding location and time to share, take the leap of faith and drop Mike a line at fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org. You may be surprised at the magic that can happen.

BOARD of DIRECTORS

The **Annual General Meeting** of the **Hampshire Bird Club Incorporated** took place on **Monday, May 8, 2017** at the **Immanuel Lutheran Church** (867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst).

At the meeting, the **Board of Directors** for 2017-2018 was elected. The following will officially take up the cudgels for next year on June 12.

President: Scott Sumner

Vice-President/Program Chair: Geoff LeBaron

Treasurer: Stephen Baker

Membership Secretary: Lissa Ganter

Communications Secretary: Sharon Dombeck

Board Members at large:

Bruce Hart

Mike Locher

Carol Mardeusz

David Peake-Jones

Josh Rose

Jaap van Heerden

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

What Can YOU Do About Climate Change?

June 10, 2017 1:00- 4:30pm FREE

Our Living Building Tour Program

Wednesday, June 21 at 12 Noon.

Tree and Wildflower Nature Walk: *Nancy Goodman and Ted Watt*

Saturday, June 24, 9 am to noon

The Hawley Bog! *Glenn Motzkin*

July 1, 8:30 am – noon

Ants in Your Plants: *Elizabeth Farnworth*

Saturday, July 15, 2017, 1:00-3:30 pm

Fun with Ferns: *Elizabeth Farnworth*

Thursday, July 20, 2017, 10:00am – 2:30 pm

River Flood Plain Explorations: *Ted Watt*

Saturdays, July 22, August 5 & August 26, 9am-noon

For details and registration for all Hitchcock programs, please contact the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 845 West St., Amherst MA 01002. Telephone (413) 256 6006, or on the web at www.hitchcockcenter.org.

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Arcadia Bird Camp

For young people ages 11-16. Financial aid available.
June 26-30.

For more details and/or to register for all Arcadia programs, go to

www.massaudubon.org/arcadia

*You may also contact **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary** direct at 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton MA 01027 or telephone **(413) 584-3009**.*

LIBRARY

If you need some light reading to while away the long summer days, HBC has a substantial library at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst.

Hours are those of the Center: Tuesday – Thursday 9AM-5:30PM, Friday 9AM-5PM, and the second and third Saturdays 9AM-1PM. Items 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-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org**.

OK. That's it for a while. The club goes on summer recess for July and August, but please note the last program for this year on June 12 and the remaining field trips.

You will be hearing from us again in preparation for the new club year which starts in September.

Until late August, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor
529 9541
newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org