



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 39, No. 5
January 2023

Dear reader, I have a MAJOR ANOUNCEMENT to make. The HBC is proud to unveil the Complete Archive of Newsletters dating from the beginning of the CLUB. For the low, low price of \$99 you will receive an NFT that gives you Full Access to the Archives. Nothing FAKE here. If you prefer, you can just download and view any of the archived newsletters for free, just like with all of the other HBC newsletters. They're right there on the website for the grabbin'.

On a serious note, you, the DISCERNING READER, have clearly noted the Complete and Total absence of ANY dripping sarcasm in the above Announcement. You will also have noticed by now, since you immediately went to the website to look at the archive, that the newsletter was much funnier in the adolescent years of the club. That is because Sally Venman was editor back in the day, and she was hands-down hilarious. And then David Peake-Jones with his wry, Aussie style picked right up where Sally left off. As I was sorting the archival files prior to scanning them, I laughed out loud several times. I can guarantee that you will too if you dig into the old newsletters. Aside her humor, Sally was simply a good writer as was David. If you don't know the story of Ruffie, the Rufous Hummingbird, or even if you do, Sally's essay about her in the April 2001 newsletter is a must-read. Ah, for the good old days when we could afford decent newsletter editors!

And finally, in Sally's own words from her last newsletter, "As I believe I have said before, 'A pun is its own reword.'" There are many, many more of those in the newsletters from 1984 to 2001.

NEXT PROGRAM
Tuesday, January 10 at 7:15 PM
Amar Ayyash presents
Getting to Know Your Gulls
Via Zoom

Often approached with apprehension, gulls have gained a love-hate relationship with many birders. Among these larids are some of the most coveted bird species in the world. Amar will highlight key identification field marks for separating our winter gull species, and he will also touch on some of the often-ignored topics in gull-study such as the aging process and molt. Come learn why an increasing number of people are being drawn to this family of birds and are eagerly calling themselves "larophiles".

Amar Ayyash is both an expert on the gulls of North America and an evangelist for "gull recreation". He hosts the popular website anythinglarus.com and is often found speaking at birding events throughout the continent. Much of his free time is dedicated to traveling the world to photograph and study gulls. Ayyash has published a number of articles on gulls and he is the author of the upcoming book *The Gull Guide*. Amar lives in northern Illinois where he teaches mathematics.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

February 14: John Kircher, *Galapagos, Darwin, and Biology's Biggest Discovery* (via Zoom)

March 14: Nathan Senner, *TBA* (via Zoom)

April 11: Joan Walsh, *Full Life Cycle Conservation of Roseate Terns* (Wesley Church, also via Zoom)

May 9: Matt Kelly, *TnT: Where Birding is Dy-No-Mite!* (Wesley Church, also via Zoom)

June 13: BYO Picnic (Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary)

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

December was devoted to the Northampton Christmas Bird Count. Janice Jorgensen offered a workshop for Feeder Watchers, and Janice and Lesley Farlow gave a workshop on what to do and what to expect when participating as a Field Observer.

Coming up on Tuesday, January 17 at 7 PM Mike Locher will offer “Coastal Birding in Winter.” We are so pleased to host another of his wonderful workshops. Note that we are finalizing a simpler form for one-step registration for our workshops through Google Forms and hope to inaugurate the new form with Mike Locher’s workshop. Keep an eye out for an email about the new form.

Upcoming new member bird walks—open to all:

Directions to each meeting place will be posted on the Education page of the website

- Jan. 8, 2023 – 9-11 AM at the Silvio Conte National Wildlife Conservation Area parking lot
- April 23, 2023 – 7-9 AM at Lake Wallace, behind the Belchertown Police Station
- The fourth one will be our usual new member bird walk before the June HBC picnic at Arcadia

Our **Do It Yourself** workshops continue with Laura and Lesley. Our next Do-It-Yourself Field Trip meeting will be on Monday, January 2 at 7 PM on Zoom as usual. We will be reporting on our two-month DIY field trip. For DIY an area is chosen and a leader describes the location and five target species for that area. Anyone interested has time to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the next DIY Zoom meeting. Our November and December field trip location was Ashley Reservoir in Holyoke, and the target birds were Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Osprey, Ring-billed Gull, and Herring Gull. Join our January Zoom to share your November and December sightings and learn of the upcoming field trip.

To register for the January DIY, please email education@hampshirebirdclub.org and put DIY in the subject line, as usual. We will add DIY to the new workshop registration forms in February.

January workshops:

- Monday, Jan. 2, 7-8 PM. DIY on Zoom
- Tuesday, Jan. 17, 7-8 PM. “Coastal Birding in Winter” with Mike Locher

To register: There will be a link to the new registration form on the Education Workshop page. *An email will be going out in the next week with more information.*

Reminder: our programs are now recorded and available at the Hampshire Bird Club website. You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page, <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/>.

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared toward beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: people young in age, from underrepresented minority groups and who have disabilities that make birding difficult. On the third Saturday of each month at 10:00 AM a one hour online educational session is held (half presentation, half discussion) and on the fourth Saturday of the month there is a two hour, in-person, beginner bird walk at an accessible location. All events are free and open to the public. Please help spread the word! The online presentation requires no registration (check the HBC website for the Zoom link). Those interested in attending the walk can register at bit.ly/2023bfe. Upcoming sessions for January and February are

January 21, 2023 10-11 AM: What Gear Do I Need? (Presentation)

January 28, 2023 7:45-10:00 AM: Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, Longmeadow (Walk)

February 18, 2023 10-11 AM.: Learning Bird Song (Presentation)

February 25, 2023 7:45-10:00 AM: Power Canal, Turners Falls (Walk)

WINTER & SPRING FIELD TRIPS

Field Trip Guidelines

1. Field trip participant numbers are determined by the field trip leader.
2. All field trip leaders and participants must be fully vaccinated, are required to wear a mask when asked and must be aware of maintaining a safe social distance during the event.
3. Participants should use the contact information in the trip description if they have any questions or would like to register for the trip.
4. Participants will receive specific information about their trip directly from the leader after they register. Please do not show up for a trip unless you have registered for it.

Thursday, January 19. Old Trolley Line Conservation Area, Easthampton. 8:30 – 10:00 AM.

During the last northern finch irruptive year this area had Redpolls, Pine Siskins, and Pine Grosbeaks. We will search the area in an effort to locate these and other overwintering species. Dress warmly for this walk on flat but potentially icy terrain. For more information and to register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com or 413-221-1941. (E/M)

Sunday, January 29. Springfield Crows – location to be determined. 4 – 6 PM. Jim Lafley and Patti Steinman visit the Springfield winter crow roost for this spectacular avian event. Each year American Crows and some Fish Crows find a site in Springfield to roost for the night. Thousands of birds gather at staging sites and at the final roost so a variety of behaviors and vocalizations can be witnessed. There is no walking involved. Dress for cold weather as we'll be standing around. Binoculars help. To register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com or 413-221-1941. (E)

Sunday, February 12. Old Trolley Line Conservation Area, Easthampton. 9 – 11 AM. Join Laura Beltran to search for those northern finches, Pine Siskins, Common & Hoary Redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, and Pine Grosbeaks all of which were found in this area during the last northern finch irruption. Dress warmly for this walk on flat, but possibly icy terrain. For more information and to register contact Laura Beltran at lauraandnature@gmail.com. (E/M)

Sunday, March 12. Waterfowl of the Connecticut River, Holyoke Dam – Turners Falls. 8 AM – noon. Mike Locher will lead this trip along the Connecticut River starting at the Holyoke Dam and visiting areas along the river up to Turners Falls in search of overwintering and migrating waterfowl. This will be car birding primarily. A scope is helpful. To register contact Mike Locher at (413) 585-5864. (E)

Tuesday, March 21. Quabbin Park HQ, Belchertown. 7 – 10 AM. Join Dave Gross on a leisurely walk around the south end of the Quabbin reservoir on a search for very early migrants and overwintering species. We'll look and listen for birds on land and on the water. Meet at the Quabbin Visitor Center for a walk along the dam and beyond. Depending on our luck we may drive to other spots in the park. Contact Dave at djgross@gmail.com or 413-687-8161 to sign up. (E)

Friday, March 24. American Woodcock Display – Easthampton Community Garden. 6:30 – 8:00 PM. Jim Lafley will meet participants at the garden site and bring them to a site that has been reliable over the years for observing the mating sounds and displays of the American Woodcock. It will be a very short walk from the car but be dressed in subdued colors for camouflage and warmth and in tick discouraging clothing. Binoculars are helpful. To register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com. (E)

Friday, March 31. Waterfowl & Early Migrants – Arcadia & West Meadows. 6:30 - 10:30 AM. Ted Gilliland will meet participants at the Mass Audubon Arcadia Sanctuary parking lot. This is a walk from the parking lot through the sanctuary and out to West Meadows over moderate terrain. Boots and clothing appropriate for the weather outside for four hours are recommended. Binoculars are necessary. To sign-up contact Ted Gilliland at tgillila@mholyoke.edu or 480-381-5617. (E)

Friday, April 14. Westover AFB, Ludlow. 8 – 11 AM. To reach the fence at Westover AFB, Jim Lafley will lead participants along Tilley Road in Ludlow where many species can be heard and seen before reaching the fence. This will be a flat one mile walk along an abandoned road. Scopes are recommended, but the leader will have one available. Upland Sandpipers, Grasshopper Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks, American Kestrels as well as other birds are possible. To register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com. (E)

Sunday, April 16. Ashley Reservoir. 7AM. Half day. Mike Locher looks for early migrants like Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Louisiana Waterthrushes, and possibly holdover ducks. Meet in the Holyoke Elks parking lot (250 Whitney Ave.) near Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Route 91 at 7 AM. Contact Mike (413-585-5864) for more information or to register. (M with one optional S section to listen for the waterthrushes) **Note** - The Elks has a "donate to park" policy, so it would be good to throw a dollar in their box.

Sunday, April 23. Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, Longmeadow. 7:00 – 10:00 AM. Laura Beltran will lead a trip that will include some stationary observations and a walk along a flat, woodland road and trail. The group will be searching for spring migrants through a variety of habitats. To register contact Laura Beltran at lauraandnature@gmail.com. (E/M)

Wednesday, April 26. Park Hill Orchard, Easthampton. 6:30 – 9:30 AM. The Park Hill Orchard with surrounding fields and woodlands can be an excellent place to see a wide variety of spring migrants. Join Jim Lafley as he leads the group around this area with stunning views of the Mt. Tom range. To register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com. (E/M)

Sunday, May 14. Gate 5 at Quabbin Reservoir, Belchertown. 6:30 – 9:30 AM. Greg Brown knows this area well as he lives nearby and birds it frequently. It's a good time and a good location for finding both migrating and resident nesting birds. The variety of habitat along this easily accessed road makes it a great spot. To register contact Greg at gwb@gregorywbrown.com. (E)

Saturday, May 20. All Day, Hilltown Rambles. 6:30 AM. Join Bob Zimmermann and Dave Gross as they ramble around the Berkshire Hilltowns to look for those migrants that prefer higher elevations than the valley provides. We'll be on the lookout for American Bittern, Sandhill Cranes, Blackburnian Warblers and Spotted Sandpipers along with anything else we can turn up. There will be a bit of hiking at the hilly Moran Wildlife Area. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop parking lot at 6:30 AM. Pack a lunch or pick one up at our stop at the Cummington Creamery. For information and to sign up contact Dave (djgross@gmail.com or 413-687-8161) or Bob (raz@umass.edu or 413-585-0405). (E/M/S)

Sunday, May 21. Mt Holyoke. 6:00 AM. Half day. Mike Locher hikes up the park road to the top of this local peak hoping for some later migrants and deep-woods breeding specialties including Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers and Yellow-throated Vireos. Meet at the (gated) entrance to Skinner State Park (at the end of Old Mountain Road in Hadley) at 6 AM. This is an occasionally steep hike on a paved road. For more information or to register contact Mike (413-585-5864). (M/S)

Thursday, May 25 through Sunday May 28, Trip to Monhegan Island with Scott Sumner. The classic HBC field trip. Last fall the trip to Monhegan cost \$475 for double occupancy and \$580 for a single. These figures may be different for this trip because the Trailing Yew hasn't posted any pricing yet for the 2023 year, though these numbers should be a good guess of the cost. Trip limit is 12 people. Contact Scott Sumner at ssurner@aol.com to register.

Field Trip designations:

(E) – Easy walking conditions, fairly accessible for most, usually flat terrain on improved trails or roads.
 (M) – Moderately difficult, more challenging trail conditions, short steep sections, longer hikes involved.
 (S) – Strenuous conditions, muddy or rocky trails, steep sections, difficult footing in part.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Thank you to all of you who renewed your membership this month and welcome to our newest members joining in December, Hannah Durham, Rich Baker – Florence; Rachel Bellenoit – South Hadley; Denise Lelio – Northampton; Joe Oliverio & and Lara Shephard-Blue – Amherst; Vivian Venskowski – Gill; Mary Moriarty – Holyoke; Ling Chin – Longmeadow; and, Al Sylvia – Amherst, NH. We're happy to have you birding among us!

Any questions? You can reach me at membership@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Donna Lee Ubertalli, Membership Secretary

2022 NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

It was a pitch-black, starry night when many of us headed out in the wee hours of December 18. There was little to no wind, and dawn brought along a lovely day with a good amount of sunshine, open water, and temperatures that hovered in the mid-30s. The MANO (Northampton) CBC's 89th year was a rousing success. By all accounts, everyone had a blast! Many thanks to everyone who pitched in.

The count's 260+ participants counted 46,231 individual bird, about 1500 more than last year. Twenty-nine feeder watcher homes counted more than 1400 birds. The final total of 90 species is two shy of our record high count. A continuing exceptionally rare **Smith's Longspur** obligingly stuck around for count day at the Hadley Honey Pot and massive numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles (5,000 of the latter put on a spectacular display at Arcadia's West Meadows) were seen, adding to the day's excitement.

You can view the full spreadsheet of species found on the count at hampshirebirdclub.org/cbc/. This spreadsheet will continue to change as data arrives and the expertise of the Excel operator increases.

Of note in the data is the reduction in numbers of sparrows seen this year. We found a 38% drop in American Tree Sparrows, 40% in Song Sparrows and 45% in White-throated Sparrows. Black Vultures have continued to be seen on the count day. The number of American Robins decreased by over 80% this year due to the absence of the roost site found in previous years. Ruffed Grouse continue to be absent from our counts.

The CBC team is looking to enlarge our team to spread out the tasks. We need people willing to work with the Feeder Counters and participants, organize and conduct the Zoom meetings, and more. Email cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org about your interest, and we will have a meeting to explain more.

Next year's CBC will fall on Sunday, December 17. Please save the date!

Amanda Kallenbach and Janice Jorgensen

THE HBC NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

As mentioned in the introduction to this newsletter, the formerly hardcopy archive of HBC newsletters dating to the beginnings of the club have now been digitized and are available at the HBC website. To get to them one can go to www.hampshirebirdclub.org/newsletter/ and click the appropriate links with their conveniently organized sublinks. Also included for your browsing pleasure are scans of trip announcements that were sent to members but that were not part of a newsletter. And there is one item that is neither of these. It is in the 1987-1988 newsletter subset, and it is called "Venmans' humor". If you'd like a laugh, check it out.

According to club records a few newsletter issues from the 1987-1988 club year are missing from the files. They include October 1987, February 1988 and March 1988. It is also possible that issues from the 1984-1985 club year are also missing, though the records are not clear about this. Those issues include October and November 1984 as well as April and May 1985. If you happen to have a copy of any of these newsletters in your records, please contact newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org so that we can scan and post them.

In the archives you will find the May, 2009 HBC newsletter, David Peake-Jones, editor. In an addendum by Trudy Tynan is chapter 8 of a history of the HBC, done for the club's 25th anniversary year. Here's a summary of the 2005 Christmas Bird Count:

The Northampton Christmas Bird Count was moved up a day to Dec. 15 because of a threatened blizzard, which did blow in as predicted on Dec. 16. The massive winter finch eruption was in evidence, and despite the 8-to-12 inches of snow already on the ground HBC observers, gently chased into the cold by coordinator Mary Alice Wilson, tallied 160 Pine Grosbeaks, along with a count-high 2,194 Cedar Waxwings. It wasn't just finches. The snow-blown crew also counted a surprising new high of 22 very chilly Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. The previous high for sapsuckers was three in 2001.

David Spector, clearly stuck inside with too much time on his hands, filed this report:

A Dozen Not-So-Common Redpolls on the Northampton CBC, 15 Dec. 2007

With red caps and streaks

And triangular beaks,

Some had pink on breast

But not all, not the rest;

Paler than siskins,

Feeding on catkins,

They were a dozen cute finches,

Not big, in length just a few inches,

That found a dozen slender perches

On just one, not a dozen white birches

None, alas, so frosty,

No rumps so streak-free

As to suggest Hoary--

A dozen Commoners they be,

But not so common to me,

Living from redpoll view southerly,

Delighted to see

Every few years

These charming dears.

Well, my compilers and editors worthy,

There's my write up in few words pithy. I know

details are weak,

From tail end to beak--

No tarsal scutellation noted,

No rictal bristles counted,

Just impressions of a quick, happy view;

I hope that they'll pass, I hope that they'll do.

And Mary Alice Wilson, the count compiler, patiently replied in kind:

There once was a redpoll description

That met every Rare Bird restriction.

The words they did rhyme,

It was snail mailed in time:

Your report is accepted as written.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

All programs require registration.

Winter Crows – Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary – Jan. 8, 2:00 – 5:30 PM

Join Patti Steinman to learn about the habits of the American Crow, a common bird with uncommon intelligence. We'll start with a presentation about crows, then head to Springfield in search of a nighttime roost. If we're lucky, we'll observe crows congregating by the thousands - a spectacular winter natural event. We'll watch the skies "as the crows fly," and follow them as they change location.

For more information and to register: <https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/arcadia/84944-winter-crows>

Winter Birding Class at Arcadia – Sundays, January 22 – February 19, 9 AM - noon

What is an irruptive bird species and is this an irruptive year? What birds are at the feeders and how can we learn to identify them? Join naturalist John Green for this three-session indoor/outdoor class. Each class will include an indoor learning session, followed by outdoor time looking for birds.

For more information and to register: <https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/arcadia/85038-winter-birding-class>

TP AND BOREAL FOREST NESTING BIRDS

The National Resources Defense Fund (NRDC) has published a number of reports on the role that paper companies have played in the degradation of the Canadian boreal forest despite claims to the contrary. There is a lot to unwind in the reports that you can find on the NRDC website at www.nrdc.org/save-canadian-boreal. You, the discriminating bird watcher, are also a consumer and you can do your part by buying tissues that have no or minimal impact on the boreal forest. A summary of brands with their ratings that reflect the boreal forest impact of the product can be found at nrdc.org/tissue. Take a copy of this handy list to the store when you go shopping. Do the birds a favor and buy your TP with the boreal forest in mind.

THE HBC QUIZ

The topic for this set of questions is again “Local Connections.”

- 16) Ornithologist Joel Asaph Allen, native of Springfield, has a bird club named for him. He also has an ecological rule named for him; what is “Allen’s rule”?
- 17) What drama professor at Smith College was a coauthor of the 1937 classic *Birds of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts*?
extra credit: Who was his famous student better known for cooking birds than for watching them?
- 18) What Worcester member of a family of taxidermists wrote and illustrated an early (1905) field guide to the birds?
- 19) What novelist with a summer house in Plainfield described urban rioters as moving “like sandpipers swinging around to glean the shore after a furious wave’s recession”?
- 20) What graduate of Smith College wrote what is sometimes considered the first field guide (1890) and went on to write a professional handbook of western birds?

The answers for the quiz questions in the December 2022 newsletter are as follows:

- 11) Mt. Whitney in California and the Elf Owl (*Micrathene whitneyi*) are both named for Josiah Dwight Whitney (1819-1896). His sister Maria Whitney was a friend of Emily Dickinson. His brother William Dwight Whitney made an early collection of birds in Western Massachusetts (now in the Peabody Museum at Yale), was a Sanskrit scholar, and edited the massive *Century Dictionary* (of special interest to birdwatchers because the zoölogical entries were written or edited by Elliott Coues and many natural history illustrations are by Ernest Thompson Seton). Appropriately for a geologist, Josiah Dwight Whitney’s grave in Northampton’s Bridge Street Cemetery is marked by a glacial boulder. He was a third cousin twice removed of ornithologist Jonathan Dwight (1858-1929, known especially for his classic works on gulls and on molt).
- 12) Bobolink. Dickinson mentioned the species in at least 14 poems and letters. In her lifetime the Dickinson home faced a hay meadow.
- 13) Bobolink.
- 14) Bobolink. I won’t add a dozen other New England poets who wrote about this species.
- 15) Song Sparrow. Anson Morse is credited with being a major influence on Northampton mayor (and U.S. president) Calvin Coolidge.

Answers will be in the January newsletter.



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{In an effort to reduce personnel costs, the editor has engaged ChatGPT, the artificial intelligence composition bot, to write this month's editorial commentary. If you like this editorial, kindly keep it to yourself. That's particularly necessary for preservation of the editor's ego should you prefer the bot's humor. The prompting text given to the bot was "Write 200 words about bird watching that starts with 'Dear reader,' and includes humor and a Black-capped Chickadee." The bot produced the following text.}

Dear reader,

If you're anything like me, you love spending time outdoors, and bird watching is one of my favorite activities. I'm sure you've heard of it, but for those of you who haven't, it's basically just like it sounds – you watch birds!

I'm an amateur bird watcher, and I've been able to identify a few of the more common birds in my area, such as the Black-capped Chickadee. I love watching this little bird flit about, hopping from branch to branch and singing its cheerful song. It's so much fun to observe its behavior and learn more about it.

But bird watching isn't all fun and games. It can be quite challenging, especially when you're trying to locate and identify a bird in a large area. I've had my fair share of misadventures, such as the time I accidentally stepped in a mud puddle while trying to get a better look at a Black-capped Chickadee. I'm sure the bird got a good laugh out of it, although I didn't at the time.

NEXT PROGRAM

Tuesday, February 14 at 7:15 PM

John Kricher presents

Galapagos, Darwin, and Biology's Biggest Discovery

Via Zoom

The Galapagos archipelago holds a special fascination for birders, naturalists and biologists worldwide, in large part due to the endemic Darwin's finches and how they shaped Charles Darwin's perception of evolution. The mockingbirds of the same islands are less famous but similarly influenced Darwin's thinking. Over forty bird species, as well as the famous tortoises, Marine Iguanas and many more species are found nowhere else on Earth. Professor John Kricher will fill us in on the finches, mockingbirds and other endemic species of the Galapagos.

Dr. John Kricher is professor emeritus of biology at Wheaton College, where he taught ecology, ornithology and vertebrate evolution for forty-eight years. He is a fellow of the American Ornithologists Union, a former board member of the American Birding Association and past president of the Association of Field Ornithologists, the Wilson Ornithological Society and the Nuttall Ornithological Club.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

March 14: Nathan Senner, *TBA* (Wesley Church, also via Zoom)

April 11: Joan Walsh, *Full Life Cycle Conservation of Roseate Terns* (Wesley Church, also via Zoom)

May 9: Matt Kelly, *TnT: Where Birding is Dy-No-Mite!* (Wesley Church, also via Zoom)

June 13: BYO Picnic (Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary)

HBC NOMINATING COMMITTEE

As required in the HBC bylaws, President Allard has formed the 2023 Nominating Committee to produce a slate of candidates for the HBC Board election in May. The committee members are Carol Fournier, Dave Gross and Kalpesh Krishna. Contact one of the committee members if you would like to learn more about the Board and have an interest in joining. The committee will announce a slate of candidates at the April club meeting at which further nominations can be made.

A COUPLE OF REQUESTS

HBC Boutique

Greetings all! I have enjoyed running the boutique for some years, but for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that I already have two back-to-back, conflicting Tuesday night obligations, I'm looking for someone to take over my post. Running the boutique involves designing or having someone else design club t-shirts, ordering the shirts and all of the various items that we carry in the boutique, coming to in-person meetings to sell things, keeping track of sales, getting money to and communicating with the treasurer, and communicating with the board about money and/or any changes of which they would need to be aware.

If anyone would like to chat about it with me feel free to email or call. My contact information is higgins.elizabetha@gmail.com and 413-320-2026.

Many thanks, Betsy Higgins

Chimney Swift Habitat

Are you interested in Chimney Swifts, habitat loss, and a project to create nesting and roosting sites for these aerial insectivores? Last season, a local chimney habitat was destroyed while swifts were roosting inside. I'm hoping to build, and seek help building, one or more chimney swift towers before the swifts return this year. Please contact me if you would like to help: bjhart1949@gmail.com.

Bruce Hart

HBC TREASURER'S REPORT

Through December, club revenue totaled \$7,050 and expenses were \$2,316. This resulted in a year-to-date surplus of \$4,734. However, keep in mind that most of our revenue, which is primarily from dues and donations, comes in during the fall, while many of our expenses are in the spring. Expenses for the club include speaker honoraria, rent at the live meeting venue and newsletter production and mailing. We also periodically make donations to support local education and conservation activities (e.g., at the Hitchcock Center or Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary). There are also expenses associated with running the club, such as various web services and license fees, as well as insurance, PO Box rental and other administrative costs. The Board reviews club financial data monthly, and at this point is very comfortable in the balance between revenue and expenses. Questions or comments can be sent to treasurer@hampshirebirdclub.org.

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared toward beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: people young in age, from underrepresented minority groups and who have disabilities that make birding difficult. On the third Saturday of each month at 10:00 AM a one hour online educational session is held (half presentation, half discussion) and on the fourth Saturday of the month there is a two hour, in-person, beginner bird walk at an accessible location. All events are free and open to the public. Please help spread the word! The online presentation requires no registration (check the HBC website for the Zoom link). Those interested in attending the walk can register at bit.ly/2023bfe. Upcoming sessions are

February 18, 2023 10-11 AM: Learning Bird Song (Presentation)

February 25, 2023 7:45-10:00 AM: Power Canal, Turners Falls (Walk)

March 18, 2023 10-11 AM: Ducks (Presentation)

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4. Participants will receive specific information about their trip directly from the leader after they register. Please do not show up for a trip unless you have registered for it.

Sunday, February 12. Old Trolley Line Conservation Area, Easthampton. 9 – 11 AM. Join Laura Beltran to search for those northern finches, Pine Siskins, Common & Hoary Redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, and Pine Grosbeaks all of which were found in this area during the last northern finch irruption. Dress warmly for this walk on flat, but possibly icy terrain. For more information and to register contact Laura Beltran at lauraandnature@gmail.com. (E/M)

Sunday, March 12. Waterfowl of the Connecticut River, Holyoke Dam – Turners Falls. 8 AM – noon. Mike Locher will lead this trip along the Connecticut River starting at the Holyoke Dam and visiting areas along the river up to Turners Falls in search of overwintering and migrating waterfowl. This will be car birding primarily. A scope is helpful. To register contact Mike Locher at (413) 585-5864. (E)

Tuesday, March 21. Quabbin Park HQ, Belchertown. 7 – 10 AM. Join Dave Gross on a leisurely walk around the south end of the Quabbin reservoir on a search for very early migrants and over-wintering species. We'll look and listen for birds on land and on the water. Meet at the Quabbin Visitor Center for a walk along the dam and beyond. Depending on our luck we may drive to other spots in the park. Contact Dave at djgross@gmail.com or 413-687-8161 to sign up. (E)

Friday, March 24. American Woodcock Display – Easthampton Community Garden. 6:30 – 8:00 PM. Jim Lafley will meet participants at the garden site and bring them to a site that has been reliable over the years for observing the mating sounds and displays of the American Woodcock. It will be a very short walk from the car but be dressed in subdued colors for camouflage and warmth and in tick discouraging clothing. Binoculars are helpful. To register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com. (E)

Friday, March 31. Waterfowl & Early Migrants – Arcadia & West Meadows. 6:30 - 10:30 AM. Ted Gilliland will meet participants at the Mass Audubon Arcadia Sanctuary parking lot. This is a walk from the parking lot through the sanctuary and out to West Meadows over moderate terrain. Boots and clothing appropriate for the weather outside for four hours are recommended. Binoculars are necessary. To sign-up contact Ted Gilliland at tgillila@mtholyoke.edu or 480-381-5617. (E)

Friday, April 14. Westover Air Force Base, Ludlow. 8 – 11 AM. To reach the fence at Westover AFB, Jim Lafley will lead participants along Tilley Road in Ludlow where many species can be heard and seen before reaching the fence. This will be a flat one mile walk along an abandoned road. Scopes are recommended, but the leader will have one available. Upland Sandpipers, Grasshopper Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks, American Kestrels as well as other birds are possible. To register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com. (E)

Sunday, April 16. Ashley Reservoir. 7 AM. Half day. Mike Locher looks for early migrants like Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Louisiana Waterthrushes, and possibly holdover ducks. Meet in the Holyoke Elks parking lot (250 Whitney Ave.) near Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Route 91 at 7 AM. Contact Mike (413-585-5864) for more information or to register. (M with one optional S section to listen for the waterthrushes). Note – The Elks has a "donate to park" policy, so it would be good to throw a dollar in their box.

Sunday, April 23. Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, Longmeadow. 7:00 – 10:00 AM. Laura Beltran will lead a trip that will include some stationary observations and a walk along a flat, woodland road and trail. The group will be searching for spring migrants through a variety of habitats. To register contact Laura Beltran at lauraandnature@gmail.com. (E/M)

Wednesday, April 26. Park Hill Orchard, Easthampton. 6:30 – 9:30 AM. The Park Hill Orchard with surrounding fields and woodlands can be an excellent place to see a wide variety of spring migrants. Join Jim Lafley as he leads the group around this area with stunning views of the Mt. Tom range. To register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com. (E/M)

Sunday, May 7. Mineral Hills Conservation Area, Florence. 7:00 AM. Half day. Betsy Higgins and Marcia Merithew will co-lead this walk that can feature Prairie Warblers, Eastern Towhees, Ravens, and Red-shouldered Hawks, as well as a variety of warblers and vireos. Meet in the parking area at the end of Turkey Hill Road. This will be a moderate walk on uneven ground with some slight inclines/declines. We'll walk around and into the quarry and along the dirt road if time allows. To sign up email mmerithew@comcast.net. (M)

Sunday, May 14. Gate 5 at Quabbin Reservoir, Belchertown. 6:30 – 9:30 AM. Greg Brown knows this area well as he lives nearby and birds it frequently. It's a good time and a good location for finding both migrating and resident nesting birds. The variety of habitat along this easily accessed road makes it a great spot. To register contact Greg at gwb@gregorywbrown.com. (E)

Saturday, May 20. Westover Air Force Base. 10 AM – noon. We will join the Allen and Brookline Bird Clubs for a bus birding tour of the base hosted by the base naturalist. Each club will have 13 seats, and there is no cost to participants. Interested participants will need to provide information (social security number, address, etc.) to be submitted to Base Security to be vetted prior to the trip. This trip will be limited to HBC members, and seats will be filled on a first come basis. Email stevewinn@comcast.net if interested or with any questions. (E)

Saturday, May 20. All Day, Hilltown Rambles. 6:30 AM. Join Bob Zimmermann and Dave Gross as they ramble around the Berkshire Hilltowns to look for those migrants that prefer higher elevations than the valley provides. We'll be on the lookout for American Bittern, Sandhill Cranes, Blackburnian Warblers and Spotted Sandpipers along with anything else we can turn up. There will be a bit of hiking at the hilly Moran Wildlife Area. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop parking lot at 6:30 AM. Pack a lunch or pick one up at our stop at the Cummington Creamery. For information and to sign up contact Dave (djgross@gmail.com or 413-687-8161) or Bob (raz@umass.edu or 413-585-0405). (E/M/S)

Sunday, May 21. Mt Holyoke. 6:00 AM. Half day. Mike Locher hikes up the park road to the top of this local peak hoping for some later migrants and deep-woods breeding specialties including Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers and Yellow-throated Vireos. Meet at the (gated) entrance to Skinner State Park (at the end of Old Mountain Road in Hadley) at 6 AM. This is an occasionally steep hike on a paved road. For more information or to register contact Mike (413-585-5864). (M/S)

Thursday, May 25 through Sunday May 28, Trip to Monhegan Island with Scott Surner. The classic HBC field trip. Last fall the trip to Monhegan cost \$475 for double occupancy and \$580 for a single. These figures may be different for this trip because the Trailing Yew hasn't posted any pricing yet for the 2023 year, though these numbers should be a good guess of the cost. Trip limit is 12 people. Contact Scott Surner at ssurner@aol.com to register.

Sunday, June 4. Knightville Dam. 7:00 AM. Long half day, often past noon. Betsy Higgins and Marcia Merithew will co-lead a walk at the Knightville Dam area. The trip starts with an exploration at the top of the dam, then a drive down to the road along the East Branch of the Westfield River. Highlights include flycatchers, Bank Swallows, Spotted Sandpipers, several species of warblers, and cuckoos. Meet in the JFK Middle School parking lot on Bridge Road at 7:00 AM. It's about a 20-minute drive to the Knightville area. There will be a combination of walking and driving on dirt roads over moderately uneven terrain. To sign up email mmerithew@comcast.net. (M)

Field Trip designations:

(E) – Easy walking conditions, fairly accessible for most, usually flat terrain on improved trails or roads.

(M) – Moderately difficult, more challenging trail conditions, short steep sections, longer hikes involved.

(S) – Strenuous conditions, muddy or rocky trails, steep sections, difficult footing in part.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

The Old Trolley Line Conservation Area trip planned for January 19 was rescheduled to January 18 due to a 100% rain prediction on the original date. Six out of eight registered participants were still able to make it. On a calm, comfortable day we didn't see any of the northern finches as advertised in the walk description, but enjoyed 18 other species. We had beautiful views of Eastern Bluebirds and the only White-throated Sparrow on the walk. This conservation area is a good location for woodpeckers, and they didn't disappoint. Two Carolina Wrens were singing like it was spring already and the only surprise of the day was a Raven at the end of the walk.

Jim Lafley

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to the 18 newest members joining in January! We hear that many of our new members this year learned about the club through the popular Birding For Everyone series led by Derek Allard and other club volunteers. We hope to meet you on other walks or one of our many Zoom educational gatherings! Our newest members are Kathleen & Jeffrey Auer (Holyoke), Jane Dalton (Northampton), Lorraine & Joseph Golio (Westfield), Joseph & Martha Lellman (Florence), Jonathan & Stephanie O'Keefe (Amherst), Mary Santiago (Amherst), Robin White (Northampton), Jane & James Wing (Gilsum, NH), Ryan S. Willey (Amherst), Aaron Hulsey (Easthampton), Arielle Lifton-Johnowitz (Austin, TX), Joyce Samet (Northampton) and Francis Pike (Granby).

We appreciate our long-time members, too! Thank you to all who responded to the postcard reminder and renewed your membership. Many of you let me know that you had missed renewing since it had been included in the September newsletter without a separate reminder. We are reconsidering our approach for next year. Also, we're working on an update to simplify the online joining and renewal process so that it is (hopefully) easier and less confusing to keep your club membership going from year to year. More to come.

Any questions? You can reach me at membership@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Donna Lee Ubertalli, Membership Secretary

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

Our New Registration Forms: We have a new registration form for our workshops. Here's how it works: go to the Education webpage and find the workshop you wish to attend. Below the workshop description, you will find a link to the registration form. You can register for more than one workshop on this form, too. Enter your email address and name. Check the box next to the workshop(s) and be sure to scroll down to the Submit button. You will receive an automated email response saying we have received your registration. The day before the workshop, you will receive an email with the Zoom link. *PLEASE* register before the day of the workshop. We can't continuously monitor our email to send out Zoom links at the last minute. Thank you! Questions? Email us at education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Mike Locher's terrific workshop on Coastal Birding in Winter— and fun quiz — offered us some handy ID information on the waterfowl we might find on the coast and occasionally around here. If you missed it, see the recording. **Reminder:** our programs are now recorded and available on the Hampshire Bird Club website. You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page.

<https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/>.

Upcoming new member bird walks—open to all:

Directions to the April meeting place will be posted on the Education page of the website

- April 23, 2023 – 7-9 AM at Lake Wallace, behind the Belchertown Police Station
- The fourth one will be our usual new member bird walk before the June HBC picnic at Arcadia

Our next **Do-It-Yourself Field Trip** with Laura and Les will be on Monday, February 6, 7 PM on Zoom. Each month an area is chosen and a leader describes the location and five target species for that area. Anyone interested has a month to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the Zoom meeting the following month. Our January field trip location was the Honey Pot, Hadley, and the target birds

were Horned Lark, Snow Bunting, Northern Flicker, Northern Harrier and American Tree Sparrow. If you'd like to join the February Zoom to share your January sightings and learn of the upcoming field trip, e-mail education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

February workshop:

DIY – Monday, February 6, 7-8 PM

March workshops:

DIY – Monday, March 6, 7–8 PM

Owling 102 – Wednesday, March 15, 7-8 PM

Learning about Merlin ID – Tuesday, March 21, 7–8 PM

To register: There are links to the new registration form on the Education Workshop page.

THE CBC CORNER

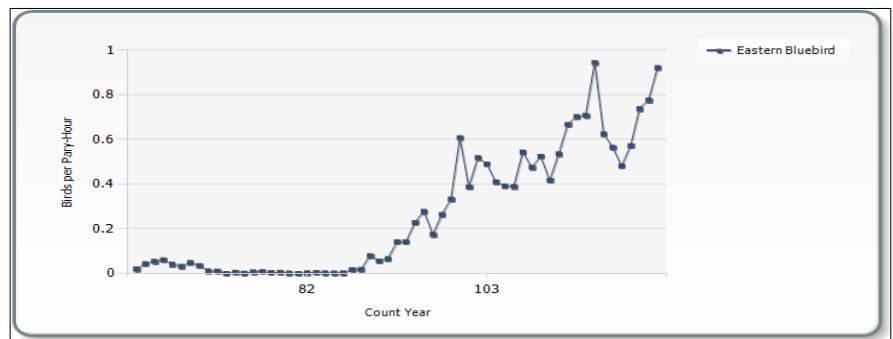
This new feature will highlight in reports and essays the Audubon Christmas Count including its history and impact. The first installment comes from the HBC Newsletter's Belchertown bureau.

Bluebirds, Nothing But Bluebirds, All Winter Long?

by David Spector

Many birdwatchers in Western Massachusetts have noticed an increase in the numbers of Eastern Bluebirds wintering here over the past several decades. A survey of books describing the birds of this area suggests that is the case. In 1890, based on her experiences in Northampton and in northern New York, Florence Merriam wrote that bluebirds are “among the last to leave in the fall,” and in 1906 Hubert Lyman Clark in his *The Birds of Amherst and Vicinity* wrote, “Earliest arrival, Feb. 20; departs in October.” In contrast, the 2003 *Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts* by Jan Ortiz, et al., says that “Flocks are increasingly common in winter.” Those are the impressions of the authors; what about numbers?

The Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) provide a fairly consistently collected set of data for the early winter as shown in the graph below for the Eastern Bluebird. The CBC data for Massachusetts for the past half-century agree with subjective impressions and show a substantial increase in bluebirds. “Count year” is measured from the first CBC in 1900 (thus, e.g., “count year 103” is the December 2002-January 2003 count).



off until around 2:30-3:00 PM which was quite helpful. Several participants reported that the number of birds was low, especially sparrows and especially for locations inside the gates. Every Christmas Count has included birds we expected to see and didn't, and this count had its share, but it wasn't from a lack of effort. The participants did not find a Belted Kingfisher for only the second time, and there were no sightings of Great Blue Heron or winter finches. The numbers of Red Crossbills were also lower than expected.

Ending on a sad note, Chris Page, Leader of Area 8 since the first Quabbin Christmas Bird Count on December 31, 1988, is moving on. It's not that he's gotten better offers from other Christmas Bird Counts (although maybe he has), but rather that he is moving to the Fall River area this year. Chris has been a member of the Hampshire Bird Club since its beginning in 1984 and was the designer of the Hampshire Bird Club logo featuring the Pileated Woodpecker.

Scott Surner

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The following programs are offered at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. More programs can be found at <https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia>

Bald Eagles – February 4, 9 AM - noon

Join us for an indoor presentation to learn about eagles and their success stories and history in Massachusetts, followed by a 2 mile hike to the Arcadia Meadows to search for eagles and other birds.

Register: <https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/arcadia/85039-bald-eagles>. Members: \$20;
Nonmembers: \$25

Woodpeckers, Wood Ducks, and Woodcocks – Mar 11, 18 & 25, 8 AM – 10 AM

Discover the natural history of these special birds found at Arcadia. We'll begin each program indoors, discussing identification tips, courtship and breeding behavior, and conservation. Then we'll go outdoors to listen for and look for the birds. Bring binoculars if you have them.

Register: <https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/arcadia/85764-woodpeckers-wood-ducks-and-woodcocks>. Members: \$55.00; Nonmembers: \$70.00

Birding by Ear – April 8, 9 AM – noon and April 15 & 22, 8 AM – noon

Spring is a time filled with the beautiful sounds of birds, many returning to their breeding grounds. Learn the difference between bird songs and call notes, and how to identify birds by their songs. The first class will be an instructional session; the next two will be morning walks to practice what we've learned.

Register: <https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/arcadia/85811-birding-by-ear>, Members: \$55.00;
Nonmembers: \$65.00

Conte National Wildlife Refuge

“Slow” Birding Series – Feb. 3, 17 & 24 – 9:00-11:30 AM

Explore the concepts of “slow” birding, the art and science of bird observation while enjoying the diverse habitats at the refuge with Bill Randolph. We'll watch for our resident winter birds along the forest-wetland boardwalk, ponds and adjacent grasslands. Learn how bird behavior is an important tool for identifying different species. Expect 1-2 miles of easy, flat walking and dress in layers for winter weather. Appropriate for beginning and intermediate birdwatchers.

For more information and to register email Tasha.Daniels@FWS.gov or call (413)858-5403.

THE HBC QUIZ

The answers for the quiz questions in the January 2023 newsletter are as follows:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 16) Allen's rule is that the appendages (e.g., legs, external ears, etc.) of birds and mammals are proportionately shorter in colder climates. | other students, Julia Child. |
| 17) Samuel Atkins Eliot, Jr., taught, among many | 18) Chester A. Reed. |
| | 19) Ralph Ellison, in his novel <i>Invisible Man</i> . |
| | 20) Florence Merriam, later Florence Merriam Bailey. |

Spoil a good walk: go birding! newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 39, No. 7
March 2023

Dear reader, Tom Ricardi has been rescuing and rehabilitating raptors for over fifty years. Last spring and summer Tom, with the help of HBC members, rebuilt some of the thirty or so enclosures holding his 60+ birds at his Birds of Prey Rehabilitation Center in Conway. During one of our recent winter storms, a large pine tree fell on the enclosures, destroying or heavily damaging some of them. The tree fall killed two Great-horned Owls and a Saw-whet Owl. According to a recent article in the Greenfield Recorder, Tom has rescued 38 birds of prey since the beginning of the year and in the whole of 2022 the number was 165. The article is at www.recorder.com/Fallen-tree-destroys-raptor-enclosures-kills-owls-in-Conway-50003744.

Deb Oakley reports a recent example of Tom's work: Near dark last week, he headed out to pick up a Bald Eagle. The woman who found the bird waited for him, headlights flashing. Tom described the location as "in the middle of nowhere." The juvenile was suffering from Stargazing Disease, a nutritional deficiency that caused its head to turn upside down. When I inquired about the eagle two days later, Tom delivered heartening news. "It's eating like a hog," he said. He said the starving raptor wolfed down 16 five-inch trout in a single day. It's a good thing, too. Its meds are tucked inside the fish.

The cost for removal of the fallen pine tree and repair of the enclosures is substantial. To help Tom continue his great work, the HBC Board has voted to donate \$500 to the center to help pay for the work needed to get his enclosures back in shape and generally to support his work. There are two ways for individuals to donate money to assist with repairs. One is a Go Fund Me page (www.gofundme.com/f/help-tom-ricardi-rebuild-after-storm-damage) set up by Matthew DiCiero. One may also send a check or money order to the Birds of Prey Rehabilitation Center, P.O. Box 26, Conway, MA 01341. The facility is a nonprofit and contributions are tax-deductible. Please don't call Tom offering help. He's being inundated with calls.

NEXT PROGRAM

Tuesday, March 21 at 7:15 PM

Nathan Senner presents

Godwits Gone Global: shorebird migration and climate change

Wesley United Methodist Church, 98 North Maple Street, Hadley; also via Zoom

Shorebirds are the champions of migration: their flights span hemispheres and defy our preconceived notions about what is possible. Hudsonian Godwits are emblematic of this strategy and migrate from the southern tip of South America to breed in Alaska and Canada. This talk will highlight how godwits are altering their migrations and responding to global climate change, as well as what we can do to help them along the way.

Dr. Nathan Senner is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Environmental Conservation at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Following his undergraduate studies at Carleton College, he was awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship to follow Hudsonian Godwits on their epic migrations. He then received his PhD from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at Cornell University. His research group continues to follow godwits but has also branched out to study other long-distance migratory shorebirds.

This month we return to IN-PERSON, HYBRID meetings. The date is one week LATER than usual.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

April 11: Joan Walsh, *Full Life Cycle Conservation of Roseate Terns* (Wesley Church, also via Zoom)

May 9: Matt Kelly, *T 'n' T: Where Birding is Dy-No-Mite!* (Wesley Church, also via Zoom)

June 13: BYO Picnic (Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary)

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

THANK YOU for using our new registration form: As a reminder on how it works, go to the Education tab on the HBC website and find the workshop you wish to attend. Below the workshop description is a link to the registration form. You can register for more than one workshop on this form, too. Enter your email address and name on the form, check the box next to the workshop(s), and scroll down to the Submit button. You will receive an automated email response letting you know we have received your registration. You will receive an email with the Zoom link the day before the workshop.

PLEASE register *before* the day of the workshop. We can't constantly monitor our email to send out Zoom links at the last minute. Thank you! Questions? Email us at education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Our next Do-It-Yourself Field Trip will be on Monday, March 6 at 7 PM on Zoom. Each month an area is chosen and a leader describes the location and five target species for that area. Anyone interested has a month to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the Zoom meeting the following month. Our February field trip location was Brunelle's Marina in South Hadley. The target birds were Greater Scaup, Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, American Black Duck and Common Goldeneye. To join the March Zoom to share your February sightings and learn of the upcoming field trip, register here: docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfCMHyHNyL4P_5Py218FFeG2vY1K9gBfxsBbQtGCFPOVZ4v8w/viwwform.

March workshops

- Dan Ziomek and Heidi Stemple will offer a highly anticipated workshop called *OWLING 101* on **Wednesday, March 15, 7-8 PM.**
- HBC board member Kalpesh Krishna will treat us to *BIRDING IN INDIA* on **Wednesday, March 29, 7-8 PM.**
- *Learning the App: Merlin ID* will be rescheduled.

We have some excellent workshops coming up in April as well. Keep your eyes open for a workshop on Birding in New Hampshire, Birding with Bioacoustics in Conway, MA, and one on Female Bird Song. **To register:** There are links to the new registration form on the Education Workshop page.

Reminder: our programs are now recorded and available on the Hampshire Bird Club website. You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page: hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Let's welcome our February new members – Jean Bergstrom (Leverett), Eric Bowman and Larry Foard (Westfield), Jaymie Zapata (Northampton) and Jenna Royal (Amherst). We hope to meet you at our March 21 in-person program. The club has a lovely tradition in which members volunteer to bring light bites to a meeting. The board asks you to BYOB if you'd like a beverage to accompany your treat. The goal is to grow the club's conservation commitment by reducing waste. If you have questions, you can reach me at membership@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Donna Lee Ubertaini, Membership Secretary

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared toward beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: people young in age, from underrepresented minority groups and who have disabilities that make birding difficult. On the third Saturday of each month at 10 AM a one hour online educational session is held (half presentation, half discussion) and on the fourth Saturday of the month there is a two hour, in-person bird walk at an accessible location. All events are free and open to the public. Please help spread the word! The online presentation requires no registration (check the HBC website for the Zoom link). Those interested in attending the walk can register at bit.ly/2023bfe. Upcoming sessions are

March 18, 2023 10-11 AM: Ducks (Presentation)

March 25, 2023 7:45-10:00 AM: Lake Wallace, Belchertown (Walk)

WINTER & SPRING FIELD TRIPS

Field Trip Guidelines

1. Field trip participant numbers are determined by the field trip leader.
2. All field trip leaders and participants must be fully vaccinated, are required to wear a mask when asked and must be aware of maintaining a safe social distance during the event.
3. Participants should use the contact information in the trip description if they have any questions or would like to register for the trip.
4. Participants will receive specific information about their trip directly from the leader after they register. Please do not show up for a trip unless you have registered for it.

Sunday, March 12. Waterfowl of the Connecticut River, Holyoke Dam – Turners Falls. 8 AM – noon.

Mike Locher will lead this trip along the Connecticut River starting at the Holyoke Dam and visiting areas along the river up to Turners Falls in search of overwintering and migrating waterfowl. This will be car birding primarily. A scope is helpful. To register contact Mike Locher at (413) 585-5864. (E)

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Sunday, June 4. Exploratory Field Trip to Fog Hollow, Southampton. 7 – 9 AM. Bird club members are invited to this exploratory field trip at Fog Hollow in Southampton. An exploratory field trip directs members to a location to both explore the location and discover what bird species are there without a designated leader. Fog Hollow, in the Southampton Wildlife Management Area, is located off Cook Road, Southampton. If you are traveling south on Cook Road, a parking area is on the left near the power lines. See you at 7 AM.

Field Trip designations:

(E) – Easy walking conditions, fairly accessible for most, usually flat terrain on improved trails or roads.

(M) – Moderately difficult, more challenging trail conditions, short steep sections, longer hikes involved.

(S) – Strenuous conditions, muddy or rocky trails, steep sections, difficult footing in part.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

On February 12 a dozen people enjoyed a beautiful winter morning at the Trolley Line Conservation Area in Easthampton. Twenty species of birds were observed with a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers being a highlight. Pairs of Eastern Bluebirds were also observed checking out boxes for possible nest sites. There is a wide variety of habitat on this short walk so it is a good location to check during any season, especially during warbler, vireo, and flycatcher migration.

Laura Beltran

HBC BOUTIQUE REQUEST

I have enjoyed running the boutique for some years, but for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that I already have two back to back, conflicting Tuesday night obligations, I'm looking for someone to take over my post. Running the boutique involves designing or having someone else design club t-shirts, ordering the shirts and other various items that we carry in the boutique, coming to in-person meetings to sell things, keeping track of sales, getting money to and communicating with the treasurer, and communicating with the board about money and/or any changes of which they would need to be aware.

If anyone would like to chat about it with me feel free to email or call. My contact information is higgins.elizabetha@gmail.com and 413-320-2026.

Many thanks, Betsy Higgins

Q: Which side of an Arctic Tern has the most feathers?

A: The outside.

There was a recall on bird seed but most places are offering a refund if you return it. It strikes me as odd that they would encourage you to give bad feed back.

“Orion’s Belt is a big waist of space.” Terrible joke. Only three stars.

THE CBC CORNER

Some Sources for Exploring Bird Populations

by David Spector

Questions about the status of bird populations arise in many contexts—perhaps you see more of a bird than you remember from the past; maybe a Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in which you participate records low numbers of a bird; maybe you read about conservation concerns for a bird. Is the situation in your backyard, your CBC, or your state typical of what is happening with that species overall? Several data sources allow you to explore that kind of question:

The CBC has collected data in a fairly standardized way for nearly a century-and-a-quarter, and its web site (www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count ; click on “CBC Results”) allows you to explore data over time for a single count circle, groups of counts, and particular species. It helps to know the four-letter codes for the CBCs in which you are interested. For the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts the counts and codes are as follows: Athol—MAAT, Cobble Mountain—MACM, Greenfield—MAGR, Northampton—MANO, Quabbin—MAQB and Springfield—MASP. The code for all of Massachusetts is US-MA. Data are recorded by “count year,” with year one being the winter 1900-1901 count.

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) has recorded the numbers of breeding season individuals detected at set locations along road routes since 1966. BBS data can be explored at www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/ ; click on “USGS Analyzed Results” for the easiest to understand results.

For species that breed or winter in the United States or southern Canada, the BBS and CBC data respectively provide initial looks at whether a species is increasing or decreasing in parts or all of its range. Each of these web sites has a substantial learning curve, but playing with them often gives quick answers about population trends. It is important to understand the procedures and limitations of each count; more detailed analysis requires careful use of raw data.

For the breeding distribution of a species in Massachusetts and how that distribution has changed in recent decades, see the two Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlases (BBA) (www.massaudubon.org/our-conservation-work/wildlife-research-conservation/bird-conservation-monitoring/breeding-bird-atlases). Click on BBA2 and then on “Find a Bird” to get a species list; click on a species for an overview of its breeding distribution in the state and of changes between the two atlases (done in 1974-1979 and 2007-2011).

Changes in a species’ population raise “why” questions, which are difficult to answer and require understanding the species’ ecology and changes in its environment. The *Birds of North America* (BNA) species accounts provide many details of life history and references to primary research literature, some of which is freely available through SORA (Searchable Ornithological Research Archive: sora.unm.edu/). BNA accounts usually give far more information about measures like weight, clutch size, or life span, than the single numbers found in field guides or popular web sites. In the BNA averages are often available with ranges by sex, age, geographic region, etc. Hard copy BNAs are in some libraries; an electronic version, for some species updated, is merged into the on-line *Birds of the World*, available through many academic and some public libraries.

[Ed. note: The Belchertown bureau reports in with copy from time to time. Here’s the latest exchange.

BB: Dear editor, attached should be a submission for your consideration for the March HBC newsletter. I hope that you find it acceptable.

Your correspondent in Belchertown

Ed: Attachment was indeed found. Submission was found acceptable. Two editorial changes will be to remove the trailing "s" after the two possessive "species's" in your copy. According to the omniscient World Wide Web, this change will improve readability. Payment for your toil will be in the usual amount.

BB: “The English are temperamentally obsessed with the presence or absence of apostrophes. It remains for many people a divide between civilisation and chaos.”

—John Simpson (former editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*); p. 68 in *The Word Detective: Searching for the Meaning of It All at the Oxford English Dictionary, A Memoir*. Basic Books, New York, 2016.]

[Ed. further note: Ah, the travails of the weary editor.]

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The following programs are offered by Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. More programs can be found at www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia.

Woodpeckers, Wood Ducks, and Woodcocks Series – March 11, 18 and 25 – times vary

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary and Park Hill Orchard (Woodcocks), Easthampton

Birding By Ear Series – April 8, 15 and 22 – times vary

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton

Parking Lot Birding – April 16 and 26 – 8-9 AM

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton

Saturday Morning Bird Walks – May 13, 20 and 27 – 7:00-8:30 AM

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton (May 13)

Graves Farm Wildlife Sanctuary, Williamsburg (May 20)

Laughing Brook Wildlife Sanctuary, Hampden (May 27)

Spring Migration Bird Walks – May 8, 9 10, 11 and 12 – 6:30-8:00 AM

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton

31st Annual Birders Meeting

Our Commonwealth of Birds – April 2 – 8 AM-4 PM

Hogan Campus Center, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA

Our Commonwealth of Birds celebrates the rich diversity of bird species that call Massachusetts and greater New England home. As New Englanders, we are fortunate to have the ability to engage with birds that exhibit both amazing physical and physiological adaptations that allow them to thrive in a variety of habitats. Whether it be the Saltmarsh Sparrow, the pelagic Atlantic Puffin, or the urban Rock Pigeon, all have a fascinating and unique story to share. They also share something in common: all are vulnerable to climate change and its effects on both sea level rise and changes in ocean temperatures. People share these vulnerabilities too.

Our speakers will highlight the intricate tapestry that binds birds, people and environmental pressures together while offering a glimpse at Mass Audubon's work to preserve, protect, and manage critical habitat. This year's speakers include Derrick Z. Jackson, Rosemary Mosco, and David Sibley.

Register here: www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/activities/birding/birders-meeting.

Trustees of Reservations

Since 2010, the Trustees have been conducting volunteer grassland bird monitoring at their reservations with significant grassland habitat. This monitoring enables the Trustees to assess grassland bird populations on their properties and aids in informing management decisions within their pastures, fields, etc. The Trustees are recruiting for the grassland bird monitoring community science program for Trustee properties at Bullitt Reservation, Bryant Homestead, Notchview, North Common Meadow and Jewell Hill.

The monitoring season runs from May 1 through July. Each volunteer is assigned a monitoring property. They are asked to visit the property at least once a month during the season and to conduct point count surveys for grassland birds, with special attention being given to Bobolinks. Before the season starts, monitors are provided with onboarding materials such as monitoring maps and instructions on how to conduct bird surveys and submit results.

For more information and to sign up as a volunteer, please contact Isabel Bronson at ibronson@thetrustees.org. She would love to schedule a Teams meeting to say hello and talk more about the program. More Trustees volunteer monitoring opportunities across the state can be found at volunteer.thetrustees.org/ecology.

THE HBC QUIZ

Here are more quiz questions from our quizmaster. The topic is Western Massachusetts local connections. The answers will be in the April newsletter.

- 21) What is the state bird of Massachusetts and what former Hampshire Bird Club member is famous for her research on this species (among many other species)?
- 22) What Smith College student became well known for her research on prairie chickens, harriers, and other birds?
- 23) What bird makes multiple “dummy nests” in cattails, and what Hampshire Bird Club member is famous for his research on this species (among many other species)?
- 24) Maurice Broun became famous as the curator of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania. Before he went there he opened a sanctuary in Western Massachusetts. Which one?
- 25) What Hampshire Bird Club member has tens of thousands of birdwatchers reporting to him for three weeks every year?
- 26) What Springfield naturalist was one of the last people to see a living Heath Hen (now extinct) and wrote for children about Sammy Jay, Jenny Wren, Bubbling Bob the Bobolink, Mr. Mocker, and many other birds?

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

The following is from page 17 in *Bird Brain-Teasers* by Patrick Merrell, Storey Publishing (ISBN 978-1-60342-080-8). Answers will be in the April newsletter if you are lucky.

Many terms have been coined for flocks, flights, dissimulations, voleries or groups of birds. Count yourself above average if you can match up more than half of these. [Ed. note: Count yourself way above average if you could have written that first sentence.]

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------|-----------------|
| 1. Ostentation of | _____ | A. Chickens |
| 2. Gaggle of | _____ | B. Nightingales |
| 3. Parliament of | _____ | C. Goldfinches |
| 4. Brood of | _____ | D. Owls |
| 5. Murder of | _____ | E. Starlings |
| 6. Charm of | _____ | F. Larks |
| 7. Exaltation of | _____ | G. Geese |
| 8. Conspiracy of | _____ | H. Peacocks |
| 9. Watch of | _____ | I. Ravens |
| 10. Murmuration of | _____ | J. Crows |

From the March 1997 HBC newsletter (Sally Venman, Ed.):

This Challenge was issued last month – change one letter in a non-English phrase and redefine the phrase. Here are some more:

Pro Bozo Publico (Support your local clown.)
Posh Mortem (Death styles of the rich and famous.)
Respondez S’il Vous Plaid (Honk if you’re Scottish.)
Apres Moe Le Deluge (Larry and Curly got wet.)

There was this woman who entered a local paper’s pun contest. She sent in ten different puns, in the hope that at least one of the puns would win. Unfortunately, no pun in ten did.



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 39, No. 8
April 2023

Dear reader, a big-time Boston lawyer went duck hunting in rural Berkshire County. He shot and dropped a bird, but it fell into a farmer's field on the other side of a fence. As the lawyer climbed over the fence, an elderly farmer drove up on his ancient tractor and asked him what he was doing. The litigator responded, "I shot a duck and it fell in this field, and now I'm going to retrieve it." The old farmer replied, "This is my property, and you are not coming over here." The indignant lawyer said, "I am one of the best trial lawyers in Boston and, if you don't let me get that duck, I'll sue you and take everything you own." The old farmer smiled and said, "Apparently, you don't know how we settle disputes in Berkshire County with the 'Three Kick Rule'." The lawyer asked "What is the 'Three Kick Rule'?"

The farmer replied, "Well, because the dispute occurs on my land, I get to go first. I kick you three times and then you kick me three times and so on back and forth until someone gives up." The lawyer quickly thought about the proposed contest and decided that he could easily take the old codger. He agreed to abide by the local custom. The old farmer slowly climbed down from the tractor and walked up to the attorney. His first kick planted the toe of his heavy steel-toed work boot into the lawyer's groin and dropped him to his knees! His second kick to the midriff sent the lawyer's last meal gushing from his mouth. The lawyer was on all fours when the farmer's third kick to his rear end sent him face-first into a fresh cow pie. Summoning every bit of his will and remaining strength the lawyer very slowly managed to get to his feet. Wiping his face with the arm of his jacket, he said, "Okay, you old fart. Now it's my turn." The old farmer smiled and said, "Nah, I give up. You can have the duck."

NEXT PROGRAM

Tuesday, April 11 at 7:15 PM

Ben Nickley presents

Berkshire Bird Observatory: Origins, Current Projects and Tales from the Field

Wesley United Methodist Church, 98 North Maple Street, Hadley; also via Zoom

The [Berkshire Bird Observatory](#) started operations in 2022. Ben Nickley, BBO's founder and director, will discuss its origins, aims, current research projects and future endeavors. He will show plenty of pretty pictures of birds in hands and relate stories from its pilot Spring, Summer and Fall seasons at [Jug End State Reservation](#).

Ben Nickley is a researcher with a passion for birds and the natural landscapes they inhabit. Over the past several years, Ben has traveled across North America to do field studies in many exceptional places, mixing in college and grad school along the way. Of all the places he and his team have been – from the Cypress swamps of the Southeast to the high meadows of the Sierra Nevada – they love nothing more than the Northeastern Deciduous Forest. Ben feels truly privileged to have landed in the Berkshires and to have support from Green Berkshires, BBO's parent organization. BBO contributes data to Green Berkshires' four-year South Taconic biodiversity mapping project. Ben hopes to garner continued support from the Berkshire community to ensure the longevity of BBO as a social, scientific, and conservation institution in this wonderful region.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Tuesday, May 9: Joan Walsh, *Full Life Cycle Conservation of Roseate Terns* (Wesley Church, also via Zoom)

Tuesday, June 13: BYO Picnic (Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to our new members who joined in March – Bill Platenik (Brimfield), Lesley Bourque (Stafford Springs), Claudia Kadra (Ware), Leyla Keough-Hameed (Amherst), Henry Klatz (Easthampton), Andrea LeClair (Southampton), and Abbigail Kelly West (Granby). We look forward to seeing you on the trail or at a meeting!

Donna Lee Ubertalli, Membership Secretary

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared toward beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: people young in age, from underrepresented minority groups and who have disabilities that make birding difficult. A one hour online educational session (half presentation, half discussion) is held prior to a two hour, in-person bird walk at an accessible location. All events are free and open to the public. Please help spread the word! The online presentation requires no registration (check the HBC website for the Zoom link). Those interested in attending the walk can register at bit.ly/2023bfe. Upcoming sessions are:

Saturday, April 15, 2023 10-11 AM: Warbler ID (Presentation)

Saturday, April 22, 2023 7:45-10:00 AM: Fort River National Wildlife Refuge, Hadley (Walk)

VOLUNTEER FOR HBC POSITIONS

Our boutique maven, Betsy Higgins, wants to step down, and thus the club is asking members to pick up the reins for her. Running the boutique involves designing or having someone else design club T-shirts, ordering them and other various items that we carry in the boutique, coming to in-person meetings to sell things, keeping track of sales, getting money to and communicating with the treasurer, and interacting with the board. If you are interested, you can contact a board member (board@hampshirebirdclub.org) or Betsy (higgins.elizabetha@gmail.com and 413-320-2026).

The board is also seeking a person or people to organize field trips for the club. Field trips are an essential part of the HBC and we want to continue offering trips to familiar locations and new trips to new locations. Know that you will not be alone in your duties as our outgoing Field Trip leader, Jim Lafley, has agreed to stay on to make this transition as seamless as possible. If you are detail-oriented and would like to help shape the future of our trips and walks, please contact president@hampshirebirdclub.org.

PROPOSED HBC BYLAWS CHANGE

The Nominating Committee has identified three important issues relating to the upcoming HBC board elections that arise from our bylaws. To summarize the bottom line, the committee proposes three changes in the bylaws that will promote a more inclusive club while also fixing problematic language in the bylaws. The HBC board supports the proposal. Here are the issues:

- 1) Section 10.2 of the bylaws says that board members must be HBC members for at least a year. That prohibits nomination of highly qualified new members.
- 2) Section 10.3 of the bylaws says that the election must happen by written ballot at the May meeting. The only exception to this is if the meeting cannot be held in person. This greatly limits participation in the election. Another technical issue in this section is that it says that 5 or 6 members will be elected (which presumes that there will be no odd things like what happened last year when we had a lot of turnover and there were seven board members on the ballot).
- 3) Section 9.1 of the bylaws says that to conduct any business at a members meeting a quorum must be present. A quorum is defined as 15% of the current membership. Today that number is about 50 people. We rarely get 50 people together at one time unless we get someone like David Sibley to speak.

The current wording of the HBC bylaws (left column with changed portions in strike-through) and the proposed changes (italicized, right column) are as follows:

Article X - ELECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

10.2 Nominations. At the program/members meeting in April, the Nominating Committee shall propose a list of at least five or six nominees (in alternate years) to replace those Board members whose terms are expiring. Board incumbents are eligible for re-election and all nominees must have been members of the HBC for at least one calendar year ~~prior to the election~~. The Nominating Committee shall strive to select nominees that represent the diversity of the HBC membership with respect to gender, color, race, age, and physical ability and, further, reflect any specific directions from the Board regarding diversity.

10.3 Election. ~~The nominees shall be voted on individually by written ballot at the annual program/members meeting in May.~~ Nominations may be made from the floor at the May meeting and, if seconded, added to the list of nominees. Only HBC members may make nominations and vote in the election. Following the vote, ~~the five or six candidates (depending on the year) with the highest vote totals will join the Board. In the event that the members meeting cannot be held in person, the Board can hold the election in an alternate format that will allow all members to participate.~~ In the case of a tie for the final ~~(fifth or sixth)~~ spot, one of the tied candidates will be selected by coin toss. Newly elected Board members shall assume their duties on June 1.

Article X - ELECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

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10.3 Election. Nominations may be made from the floor at the May meeting and, if seconded, added to the list of nominees. Only HBC members may make nominations and vote in the election. *The Board election shall be conducted online with voting commencing the day after the end of the annual program/members meeting in May and ending one week after that meeting. HBC members may vote via paper ballots mailed or delivered to the Membership Secretary no later than one week after the close of online voting.* Following the vote, *the number of candidates with the highest vote totals sufficient to fill all Board vacancies* will join the Board. In the case of a tie for the final spot, one of the tied candidates will be selected by coin toss. *A quorum of HBC members as defined in Section 9.1 must vote in the election for it to be valid.* Newly elected Board members shall assume their duties on June 1.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

We were delighted to have Dan Ziomek and Heidi Stemple offer their wonderful Owling 101 workshop on March 15. As of this writing, we are looking forward to HBC Board member Kalpesh Krishna's workshop on Birding in India on Wednesday, March 29. We hope to see you there.

Once again, THANK YOU for using our new registration form. To use it go to the Education webpage and find the workshop you wish to attend. Below the workshop description is a link to the registration form. You can register for more than one workshop on this form, too. Enter your email address and name on the form, check the box next to the workshop(s), and submit – be sure to scroll down to the Submit button. You will receive an automated email informing you that we have received your registration. The Zoom link for the workshop will arrive via email the day before the workshop. **PLEASE** register before the day of the workshop. We can't constantly monitor our email to send out Zoom links at the last minute. Thank you! Questions? Email us at education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Upcoming Workshops

- Wednesday, April 19, 7–8 PM: Birding in New Hampshire with avian conservation biologist Pam Hunt
- Monday, April 24, 7–8 PM: Birding with Bioacoustics in Conway, MA with Alex Milne and Erika Nesse
- Tuesday, May 2, 7–8 PM: Female Bird Song: She sings, too! with Katie Schroeder and Monique Dumais

Upcoming new member bird walks—open to all:

- Sunday, April 23, 2023, 7–9 AM at Lake Wallace, behind the Belchertown Police Station
- The fourth will be our usual new member bird walk before the June HBC picnic at Arcadia.

Directions will be posted at hampshirebirdclub.org/education-committee/ on the HBC website.

Join the **Do-It-Yourself** field trip! The March DIY trip was to the UMass Campus Pond, Amherst. The target birds were Red-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, House Finch, Song Sparrow and Double-crested Cormorant. Make sure to register for the Zoom discussion on Monday, April 3, 7 PM, to discuss our success at finding our target birds and to learn the DIY location and target birds for April. Please remember to register by using the online form as noted above.

Reminder: our programs are now recorded and available on the Hampshire Bird Club website. You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page: hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/.

SPRING FIELD TRIPS

Field Trip Guidelines

1. Field trip participant numbers are determined by the field trip leader.
2. All field trip leaders and participants must be fully vaccinated, are required to wear a mask when asked, and must be aware of maintaining a safe social distance during the event.
3. Participants should use the contact information in the trip description if they have any questions or would like to register for the trip.
4. Participants will receive specific information about their trip directly from the leader after they register. Please do not show up for a trip unless you have registered for it.

Sunday, April 16. Ashley Reservoir. 7 AM. Half day. Mike Locher looks for early migrants like Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Louisiana Waterthrushes, and possibly holdover ducks. Meet in the Holyoke Elks parking lot (250 Whitney Ave.) near Exit 15 (“Holyoke Mall”) off Route 91 at 7 AM. Contact Mike (413-585-5864) for more information or to register. *Note - The Elks lodge has a "donate to park" policy, so it would be good to throw a dollar in their box.* (M with one optional S section to listen for the waterthrushes)

Sunday, April 23. Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, Longmeadow. 7–10 AM. Laura Beltran will lead a trip that will include some stationary observations and a walk along a flat, woodland road and trail. The group will be searching for spring migrants through a variety of habitats. To register contact Laura Beltran at lauraandnature@gmail.com. (E/M)

Sunday, May 7. Mineral Hills Conservation Area, Florence. 7 AM. Half day. Betsy Higgins and Marcia Merithew will co-lead this walk that can feature Prairie Warblers, Eastern Towhees, Ravens, and Red-shouldered Hawks, as well as a variety of warblers and vireos. Meet in the parking area at the end of Turkey Hill Road. This will be a moderate walk on uneven ground with some slight inclines/declines. We'll walk around and into the quarry and along the dirt road if time allows. To sign up email mmerithew@com-cast.net. (M)

Monday, May 15. Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge. 6–11 AM. Aaron Hulsey and Joe Oliverio will co-lead a walk at Fannie Stebbins to look for a variety of spring migrants and nesting birds. Joe will be able to answer any photography questions participants may have. The walk will be around 3 miles on flat trails through forest and wetland habitats. Trails can be muddy so wear appropriate footwear. We will be meeting at the paved parking area on West Road. For information or to register email Aaron at thomas.hulsey487@gmail.com. (E)

Saturday, May 20. Hilltown Rambles. 6:30 AM, all day. Join Bob Zimmermann and Dave Gross as they ramble around the Berkshire Hilltowns to look for those migrants that prefer higher elevations than the valley provides. We'll be on the lookout for American Bittern, Sandhill Cranes, Blackburnian Warblers and Spotted Sandpipers along with anything else we can turn up. There will be a bit of hiking at the hilly Moran Wildlife Area. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop parking lot at 6:30 AM. Pack a lunch or pick one up at our stop at the Cumington Creamery. For information and to sign up contact Dave (djgross@gmail.com or 413-687-8161) or Bob (raz@umass.edu or 413-585-0405). (E/M/S)

Sunday, May 21. Mt Holyoke. 6 AM. Half day. Mike Locher hikes up the park road to the top of this local peak hoping for some later migrants and deep-woods breeding specialties including Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers and Yellow-throated Vireos. Meet at the (gated) entrance to Skinner State Park (at the end of Old Mountain Road in Hadley) at 6 AM. This is an occasionally steep hike on a paved road. For more information or to register contact Mike (413-585-5864). (M/S)

Sunday, June 4. Knightville Dam. 7 AM. Long half day, often past noon. Betsy Higgins and Marcia Merithew will co-lead a walk at the Knightville Dam area in Huntington. The trip starts with an exploration at the top of the dam, then a drive down to the road along the East Branch of the Westfield River. Highlights include flycatchers, Bank Swallows, Spotted Sandpipers, several species of warblers, and cuckoos. Meet in the JFK Middle School parking lot on Bridge Road in Florence at 7 AM. It's about a 20-minute drive to the Knightville area. There will be a combination of walking and driving on dirt roads over moderately uneven terrain. For more details and to sign up, email mmmerithew@comcast.net. (M)

Sunday, June 4. Exploratory Field Trip to Fog Hollow, Southampton. 7–9 AM. Bird club members are invited to this exploratory field trip at Fog Hollow in Southampton. An exploratory field trip directs members to a location to both explore the location and discover what bird species are there without a designated leader. Fog Hollow, in the Southampton Wildlife Management Area, is located off Cook Road, Southampton. If you are traveling south on Cook Road, a parking area is on the left near the power lines. See you at 7 AM.

Field Trip designations:

(E) – Easy walking conditions, fairly accessible for most, usually flat terrain on improved trails or roads.

(M) – Moderately difficult, more challenging trail conditions, short steep sections, longer hikes involved.

(S) – Strenuous conditions, muddy or rocky trails, steep sections, difficult footing in part.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Connecticut River Waterfowl Trip, March 12: We started at the Holyoke Dam and the South Hadley Canal Park and saw little at either location. There was a Bald Eagle on a nest at the latter location, but there were very few ducks. The Oxbow had plenty of Common Mergansers and a few Hooded Mergs, but little else. The marsh at Arcadia, though, yielded over 40 Northern Pintails (the most I've ever seen together in the Valley) and well over a dozen Green-winged Teal. From there we went to Fitzgerald Lake to see the American Coot, and as a bonus we saw a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks in the woods across from the dock.

Then we headed to Great Pond where Canada Geese, Mallards, and American Black Ducks, usually so common, were few and far between. We did get a single American Wigeon, some Wood Ducks, a few more Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintails, several Hooded Mergansers, and a large group of Ring-necked Ducks in perfect light. At this point most of the group left, but three of us continued to Turners Falls. At Barton's Cove David Peake-Jones picked out one Iceland Gull and I found another (slightly larger and browner) white-winged gull that I'm still researching. We ended at the Power Canal, where we searched in vain for the red phase Eastern Screech Owl that has been spotted there recently, and tallied many Canada Geese, a half dozen Mallards, several Mute Swans, and a pair of Buffleheads. The Buffleheads were diving beside one of the swans, so we had our largest and smallest waterfowl of the day side by side.

Mike Locher

A bunch of birds are chilling in a large group when another bird flies in out of nowhere. "Sorry to intrude lads. I've just arrived from Europe!" says the bird. "Ukraine?" asks one of the group. "Nah mate, I'm a pelican" says the new arrival.

THE CBC CORNER

Some Thoughts About Christmas Bird Count Data

by David Spector

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a wonderful source of data for tracking early winter abundance of birds, but, as with every measurement tool, it has limitations. Some limits are obvious. Coverage is greater where there are more people; across the expanses of boreal forest and tundra in northern North America there are relatively few counts. A species that has not changed its abundance but is wintering further north in response to global warming or habitat change might seem to be in decline because its new range has less overlap with observers. A full picture of a species' population also includes breeding season data.

Even within a single count circle coverage is uneven; for example, here in the Northampton count, areas crisscrossed by roads have much better coverage than do the slopes of the Holyoke Range, and species that frequent suburban habitats are better sampled than are more strictly forest birds. One advantage of the CBC is its multiple decade data base. The counts measure change across large areas as abandoned fields grow into woodlands, woodlands are cut into developments, agricultural and bird-feeding practices change, climate changes, and so forth. Counts also reflect changes in access and visibility. Posting of "no trespassing" signs, opening of new trails, creation or elimination of roadside pull-overs, or construction of houses along the edge of a field, all change access and thus counts of birds, although they may have minimal effects on actual bird populations. Ideally such effects are local, and, like weather events on count days, they "average out." If, though, they represent wider trends then they could bias population estimates.

My first CBC was in an area in which both Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees were common. I asked how I should record chickadees, most of which I could not confidently identify to species. I was told to apply the ratio of those I could identify to all chickadees encountered; thus, if I saw 30 chickadees and identified 6 as Carolina and 3 as Black-capped, I would report 20 Carolinas and 10 Black-cappeds. On another CBC with a large roost of three gull species, many gulls arrived after dark or settled on the water too far for identification; I was told that the ratio method was to be applied – proportions of gull species for those individuals arriving in adequate light and close to observers were applied to the total group.

Unfortunately, the ratio method is based on assumptions that might be false. What if the two species of chickadee differ in how frequently they sing or in how often they learn the other species' song? What if the three gull species differ in time of arrival at roost or where in the roost they settle? It can be frustrating to report birds as "chickadee sp." or "gull sp.", but that is often the best way to record these birds. I have had no connection with these two CBCs in several decades, and I hope that they have changed the way they record those unidentified birds.

A similar problem arises when one member of a pair of difficult-to-distinguish species is locally rare but increasing as is the situation here with crows. When I see a hundred crows overhead or in a corn field in Western Massachusetts I assume that they are all American Crows, unless I hear otherwise, although I know that there might be one or a few Fish Crows in the mix. As Fish Crow becomes more common here, should I start reporting these flocks as "crow sp."? What should one do in an area north of here where Fish Crows have not yet arrived but are expected as their range expands northward? There is no clear answer, but using American Crow as default means that the record of Fish Crow range expansion might lag behind reality.

Some reports on CBCs and similar counts get close scrutiny. Consider my hypothetical report from a Western Massachusetts CBC that includes the following: 1 Roseate Spoonbill, 1 Northern Lapwing, 50 Herring Gulls, 50 Ring-billed Gulls, 2 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 2 Cooper's Hawks, 5 Downy Woodpeckers, and 5 Hairy Woodpeckers. I would be asked for feather-by-feather descriptions of the two records that are easy to identify and that provide minimal information of biological interest. Data on the other species, for which my report will be trusted, can provide information about how similar species respond to environmental changes, but those species are the ones that I am more likely to misidentify. Let's hope that I didn't count the same 50 gulls as Herring when they were 100 feet overhead, but as Ring-bills when they flew back at 1000 feet! Let's also hope that my identifications were not affected by my experience of relative abundance when I learned to identify these species several decades ago. Expectations based on past

experience can bias identification and result in lags in the record of population changes.

Despite these challenges, data from CBCs and similar efforts are very useful and become more so as observers and users of the data become more aware of possible biases and limitations.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The following programs are offered by Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. More programs can be found at www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia.

Quiet Birding–April 15 and 28; times vary

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton

Parking Lot Birding–April 16; 8-9 AM

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton

Saturday Morning Bird Walks–May 6; 7:00-8:30 AM

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton

Spring Migration Bird Walks–May 8, 9 10, 11 and 12; 6:30-8:00 AM

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton

Mass Audubon Bird-a-thon–May 12-13

Registration for Mass Audubon's fortieth anniversary Bird-a-thon opens on March 30 to sign up for fundraising and birding. Bird-a-thon is Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary's largest community fundraiser that makes possible the protection of resilient, bird-friendly landscapes, increasing access to nature and environmental education, and mobilizing to fight climate change in the Valley and throughout Western Massachusetts. This year's 24 hours of birding is from 6 PM on Friday, May 12, to 6 PM on Saturday, May 13. Birding activities include birding in pairs and small groups, an accessible bird walk with naturalist John Green and Birding in Place with Laura Beltran (we'll be working to re-capture the Sitting Duck award!). Rules for this year's Bird-a-thon are on the Mass Audubon website. Contact Carolyn Cushing ccushing@massaudubon.org with any questions.

THE HBC QUIZ

Answers for last month's puzzles:

Quiz:

- 21) Black-capped Chickadee. Susan Smith.
- 22) Frances Hamerstrom.
- 23) Marsh Wren. Don Kroodsma.
- 24) Pleasant Valley Sanctuary in Lenox, Massachusetts.
- 25) Geoff LeBaron, Director of the Christmas Bird Count.
- 26) Thornton Burgess.

Flocks:

- 1 H: Ostentation of Peacocks
- 2 G: Gaggle of Geese
- 3 D: Parliament of Owls
- 4 A: Brood of Chickens
- 5 J: Murder of Crows
- 6 C: Charm of Goldfinches
- 7 F: Exaltation of Larks
- 8 I: Conspiracy of Ravens
- 9 B: Watch of Nightingales
- 10 E: Murmuration of Starlings

While out on an HBC field trip we saw the sheriff arrest two local crows who were sitting together on a fence. They were charged with attempted murder.

And what do you call those two birds when they stick together? Vel-crow.

A woman applied for a job at the circus. The ringmaster asked her what her specialty was. She said that she did really good bird impressions. The ringmaster said, "Sorry, we already have someone who does impressions." "Oh well" said the woman as she flew out of the tent.

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 39, No. 9

May 2023

Dear reader, have you noticed that, no matter what, things change? I've been around long enough that you'd think I knew that. Which brings me to our good old Hampshire Bird Club. You probably have noticed that lots of things about the HBC have changed in the past few years. The names of board members, the names of field trip leaders, and the ways in which we do club business are all quite different than they were just a few years ago. Some of that is the usual turnover as members move on and off committees. However, there has been a conscious commitment by the board and committees to change the face and the direction of the club. We now have a very active monthly program to bring new folks from diverse backgrounds into birding and the club. We have multiple ways to get together with other club members. And now the Conservation Committee is well on its way to reviving its work in one of the stated purposes of the HBC: to conserve birds and bird habitat. I can't help but think that we'll be watching birds together for many years to come.

On a completely different note, I have to share a fabulous bird sighting that happened last week while I was sitting in my living room. There are a few bushes next to the windows, one of which is our "bird bush", a lilac planted a few years ago that regularly attracts birds of all description. I noticed a Red-breasted Nuthatch in the bird bush, a sighting that was a regular event this winter season. This bird was uncharacteristically stationary. Then I noticed movement on the ground under the bush. It was another RB Nut, but he was vibrating his dropped wings and wiggling his backside. This he kept up for 30 seconds. She, in the bush, was admiring him. I can only hope that they set up household somewhere in view from my windows.

NEXT PROGRAM

Tuesday, May 9 at 7:15 PM

Joan Walsh presents

Full life cycle conservation of Roseate Terns

Wesley United Methodist Church, 98 North Maple Street, Hadley; also via Zoom

NOTE: BYOB (non-alcoholic) to the meeting if you want a beverage

Joan is Mass Audubon's Gerard A. Bertrand Chair of Natural History and Field Ornithology. She has been watching and learning from birds for 40 years and was the [Director of Bird Monitoring at Mass Audubon](#) from 2006 to 2017. During her career she has focused on research that has direct implications for bird conservation. This interest led to enlisting hundreds of citizen scientists for the creation of the highly regarded [Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas 2](#) and two [State of the Birds of Massachusetts](#) reports.

She was a [Farallon Island](#) biologist where she studied Elephant Seals, Tufted Puffins, Brandt's Cormorants, Western Gulls, and even did a little Great White Shark work. She went to graduate school in Georgia, where she studied Wood Storks, and was the former Director of Research at [Cape May Bird Observatory](#). Her formative years as an ornithologist were spent on [Great Gull Island, NY](#), home to the largest colonies of Common and Roseate Terns in the North Atlantic.

Joan has traveled in the U.S. (missing only OK, HI, and KY), Canada, Costa Rica, Belize, Mexico, Ireland, Europe, South America, South Georgia Island, and the Falklands (Malvinas). While being particularly keen on seabird and wading bird ecology and behavior, Joan has never met a bird she didn't love. She travels with an eye for culture as well as nature and can think of no better way to spend a day than to be in a new place, with new friends, simply watching birds.

UPCOMING PROGRAM

Tuesday, June 13: BYO Picnic (Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary)

BIRDS OF PREY REHAB UPDATE

Response from bird clubs, businesses, and private individuals was swift and substantial after news broke about damage to enclosures at Tom Ricardi's Birds of Prey Rehabilitation Center in Conway. A massive pine tree had fallen, slicing a raptor enclosure in half. Another enclosure also was damaged. Later that month, a 30-inch snowstorm crushed more enclosures in the same area.

That's when an all-volunteer crew comprising Hobie Iselin, Brian Kuzmeskus, and Mark Fortier got to work, ordering materials and a dumpster, and making a plan. Tom worked right along with the others when he wasn't off doing an educational program or caring for the 45–50 recovering raptors. George Regmund and Jesse Harrison also contributed.

The group set and poured new concrete footings (with great difficulty) and built the framework for a bank of six sturdy new enclosures. As of this writing, screened openings and doors are ready to install. Clear roofing will be placed the last week of April. Debris cleanup and painting will occur at a later date.

These enclosures would not have been built without the generous donations of bird clubs, businesses, and private individuals throughout the region. Special thanks to you, Hampshire Bird Club members, for your immediate financial response. Tom has been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support. "Unbelievable," he says.

I will provide a wrapup, along with a couple of raptor stories (good ones!) soon.

Deb Oakley



Six new enclosures take shape at Tom Ricardi's Birds of Prey Rehabilitation Center. Tom is in the forefront, Hobie Iselin and Brian Kuzmeskus, from left, work on the roof.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to all who joined us in April—Jill Meyers, Marcia Wolff, and Ashley Bernard (Northampton); Andrew Wnuk, Kate Dahlstedt & Ed Tik, and Paula Christian (Belchertown); Adrienne Wax & Leslie Andrews (W. Palm Beach, FL); Genevieve Van de Merghel and Cheryl Pelland-Lak & Robert Lak (South Hadley); Terri Skill (Chicopee); Ann Fisher (W. Springfield); James J. Neeley (Shelburne Falls); Ian & Henry Raphael (Sunderland); Ezekial Jakub (Greenfield); and Sue & Ed Lewis (Worthington). We look forward to greeting you on the trail or at a meeting or program!

Donna Lee Ubertalli, Membership Secretary

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared toward beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: people young in age, or those from underrepresented minority groups or who have disabilities that make birding difficult. A one hour online educational session (half presentation, half discussion) is held prior to a two hour, in-person bird walk at an accessible location. All events are free and open to the public. Please help spread the word! The online presentation requires no registration (check the HBC website for the Zoom link). Those interested in attending the walk can register at bit.ly/2023bfe. Upcoming sessions are:

May 20, 2023, 10–11 AM: Warblers and the Importance of Focusing on One Bird at a Time (Talk)

May 27, 2023, 7:45–10:00 AM: Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton (Walk)

WE NEED A BOUTIQUE VOLUNTEER

Betsy Higgins has kept the HBC boutique in business for years. She needs to step away now. Would you be willing to step up and help? If you are interested and would like to know more, you can contact a board member (board@hampshirebirdclub.org) or Betsy (higgins.elizabetha@gmail.com and 413-320-2026).

HBC BOARD ELECTION

The HBC bylaws amendments passed in the online voting after the April meeting, with 77 members voting in favor of adoption and zero voting against. The revised bylaws are available on the HBC website under the “About” tab. These changes now allow us to officially offer the board election via online balloting and the Nominating Committee is free to nominate club members who have not yet completed a full year of membership. The goal of the changes is to provide broader representation of club members in the voting process and to broaden representation on the board.

Four of the current board members are at the end of their two-year terms. They are Derek Allard, Ruth Garbett, Jim Lafley, and Josh Rose. Ruth and Jim have decided to step down from the board. Derek and Josh are willing to run for another two-year term. The Nominating Committee, peopled by Carol Fournier, Dave Gross, and Kalpesh Krishna, have assembled a slate of candidates: Derek Allard, Cory Elowe, Michealle Larkins, Bill Randolph, and Josh Rose. You, the discriminating reader, will note that there are five candidates for four board openings. Thus, for the first time in the history of the HBC, this will be a real election! To assist your voting analysis, the candidates have produced short summaries of their views of the HBC and why they are interested in serving on the board. You can review the statements at hampshirebirdclub.org/wp-content/uploads/Board-candidate-statements-May-2023.pdf. The candidate statements will also be included with the online ballot.

The election will open on Wednesday, May 10, will be online, and will be available for a week. Current members will receive an email on May 10 with the link to the ballot. If you prefer a paper ballot, please contact newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org, and one will be dispatched to you posthaste.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

Our April workshops, *Birding New Hampshire* and *Birding with Bioacoustics in Conway, MA*, were fascinating and well attended by HBC members and members of the Allen and Hoffman Bird Clubs.

THANK YOU for using our registration form. On the [Education Workshops page](#), click on the link in the workshop description: “To register, click here.” You will receive an email with the Zoom link the day before the workshop. PLEASE register *before* the day of the workshop. We do not monitor the registration after noon on the presentation day. Thank you! Questions? Email us at education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

New member bird walk—open to all: We had to cancel the April 23 bird walk due to rain, but please join us for our usual new member bird walk before the June HBC picnic at Arcadia. *Directions will be posted at* <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/education-committee/>.

Do-It-Yourself Field Trip: Our next DIY Field Trip will be on ~~Monday, May 1~~ **Tuesday, May 16**, 7 PM on Zoom. Each month an area is chosen, and a leader describes the location and five target species for that area. Anyone interested has a month to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the Zoom meeting the following month. Our April field trip location was Bray Lake, Mt. Tom Reservation in Holyoke, and the target birds were Blue-headed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Brown Creeper. If you'd like to join the May Zoom session to share your April sightings and learn of the upcoming field trip, please register as described above. (Date changed after newsletter press time.)

May workshops:

- Tuesday, May 2, 7–8 PM. Female Bird Song: She sings, too! with Katie Schroeder and Monique Dumais
- ~~Monday, May 1~~ **Tuesday, May 16**, 7–8 PM. DIY

If you have an idea for a workshop or are interested in joining the Education Committee, email us at education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Reminder: our programs are now recorded and available on the Hampshire Bird Club website. You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page: hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/.

SPRING FIELD TRIPS

Field Trip Guidelines

1. Field trip participant numbers are determined by the field trip leader.
2. All field trip leaders and participants must be fully vaccinated, are required to wear a mask when asked, and must be aware of maintaining a safe social distance during the event.
3. Participants should use the contact information in the trip description if they have any questions or would like to register for the trip.
4. Participants will receive specific information about their trip directly from the leader after they register. Please do not show up for a trip unless you have registered for it.

Remember that we encourage carpooling. We ask that riders share costs with drivers as a matter of courtesy. The HBC recommends using the current federal mileage reimbursement rate, shared by all occupants, but the rate for a vehicle is entirely up to the driver and passengers and should be determined before leaving.

Monday, May 15. Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, 6–11 AM. Aaron Hulsey and Joe Oliverio will co-lead a walk at Fannie Stebbins to look for a variety of spring migrants and nesting birds. Joe will be able to answer any photography questions participants may have. The walk will be around three miles on flat trails through forest and wetland habitats. Trails can be muddy, so wear appropriate footwear. We will be meeting at the paved parking area on West Road. For information or to register email Aaron at thomas.hulsey487@gmail.com. (E)

Wednesday, May 17. Wildwood Cemetery, Amherst, 7-10 AM. Join Aaron Hulsey, Lesley Farlow, and Steve Winn as they search for warblers, thrushes, and other spring migrants in and around this historic site. Cemetery staff may also stop by to tell us about how the “cemetery movement” of the last century resulted in beautifully designed cemeteries like Wildwood. For information or to register call Steve at 413-530-3256. (E)

Saturday, May 20. Hilltown Rambles, 6:30 AM, all day. Join Bob Zimmermann and Dave Gross as they ramble around the Berkshire Hilltowns to look for those migrants that prefer higher elevations than the valley provides. We'll be on the lookout for American Bittern, Sandhill Cranes, Blackburnian Warblers, and Spotted Sandpipers, along with anything else we can turn up. There will be a bit of hiking at the hilly Moran Wildlife Area. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop parking lot at 6:30 AM. Pack a lunch or pick one up at our stop at the Cummington Creamery. For information and to sign up contact Dave (djgross@gmail.com or 413-687-8161) or Bob (raz@umass.edu or 413-585-0405). (E/M/S)

Sunday, May 21. Mt Holyoke, 6 AM, half day. Mike Locher hikes up the park road to the top of this local peak, hoping for some later migrants and deep-woods breeding specialties, including Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers and Yellow-throated Vireos. Meet at the (gated) entrance to Skinner State Park (at the end of Old Mountain Road in Hadley) at 6 AM. This is an occasionally steep hike on a paved road. For more information or to register contact Mike (413-585-5864). (M/S)

Sunday, June 4. Exploratory Field Trip to Fog Hollow, Southampton. 7–9 AM. Bird club members are invited to this exploratory field trip at Fog Hollow in Southampton. An exploratory field trip directs members to a location to both explore the location and discover what bird species are there without a designated leader. Fog Hollow, in the Southampton Wildlife Management Area, is located off Cook Road, Southampton. If you are traveling south on Cook Road, a parking area is on the left near the power lines. (E)

Field Trip designations:

- (E) – Easy walking conditions, fairly accessible for most, usually flat terrain on improved trails or roads.
(M) – Moderately difficult, more challenging trail conditions, short steep sections, longer hikes involved.
(S) – Strenuous conditions, muddy or rocky trails, steep sections, difficult footing in part.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Quabbin Park, March 21: A group of thirteen HBC members assembled at the Quabbin Park visitor's center at 7:30 AM for a 2 ¼ hour walk and drive around the southern end of Quabbin. We spent a bit of time at Winsor Dam looking at ducks and gulls a very long way up the reservoir at the edge of an ice sheet. As the ducks and gulls woke up, and after much discussion, the ducks turned into Mallards and the gulls were thought to be

Ring-billed. There were many American Robins along the south face of the dam, and by the end of the trip we had counted 115.

We also visited the spillway and Goodenough Dike, locating a grebe at the latter. Once again, much discussion arrived at an assignment of Horned for the grebe, but later examination of photos taken by Harlee Strauss magically converted the Horned into a Red-necked Grebe. In another interesting example of birds converting from one species to another, a raptor viewed at a distance from the dike alternated between Red-tailed Hawk and Bald Eagle. It was a dramatic sight to behold! In all the group found 24 species, including Common Loon, Common Merganser, (common) American Crow, and (uncommon) Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Dave Gross

Easthampton Community Gardens, March 24: About 20 minutes after sunset, HBC members Sally Hills, Donna Lee Ubertalli, Patricia Eagan, Carol Fournier, and sharp-eyed Robin White joined Jim Lafley and were treated to some very close and entertaining American Woodcock displays both on the ground and in the air for about 30 minutes. A couple of birds flew close enough that a few of us ducked. Overall this was a very successful and rewarding trip.

Jim Lafley

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The following programs are offered by Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. More programs can be found at www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia.

Saturday Morning Bird Walks—May 6, 7:00–8:30 AM

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton

Spring Migration Bird Walks—May 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12; 6:30–8:00 AM

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton

Mass Audubon Bird-a-thon—May 12–13

Registration is open and fundraising has begun for the 40th anniversary Bird-a-thon! This year's 24 hours of birding is from 6 PM on Friday, May 12, to 6 PM on Saturday, May 13. Our 2023 goal is to raise \$20,000 to make Arcadia and the West Region's work possible. We are competing to retake both the County Cup and the Sitting Duck Award for Hampshire County! Register at the Mass Audubon website.

Help us achieve your goals by signing up as a fundraiser and/or birder on our West Region team page and clicking the blue "Join Team." You'll be prompted to set a fundraising goal and set up a page and/or sign up to be a competitive birder. This year's rules can be found on the Mass Audubon website.

There are rewards for fundraising! Raise \$125 and receive a Bird-a-thon T-shirt. Raise \$500 by the end of Bird-a-thon and you can go birding with David Sibley and Joan Walsh in September.

Just want to make a donation? That's great! Visit the West's team page and click the orange "Donate Now" button or send a check payable to "Mass Audubon" and include "Bird-a-thon" in the memo, to Arcadia, 127 Combs Road, Easthampton, MA 01027.

Questions? Get in touch with Carolyn Cushing, ccushing@massaudubon.org or 413-276-7620.

Hitchcock Center for the Environment

The annual **Flora and Faunathon** to support the Hitchcock Center will be held on May 6 and 7. You can enter yourself or as a team, you can raise pledges for the center, and you can pledge to a team. You can get a fanny pack! There are contests and prizes! There is a culminating event at the center on Sunday the 7th! To read more about the event, to enter, or to pledge to a team you can visit hitchcockcenterfortheenvironment.sal-salabs.org/floraandfaunathon2023/index.html. [Ed. note: I am on David Spector's team. We'd be happy to have your support. (Blatant self-promotion.)]

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 39, No. 10

June 2023

Dear reader, did you hear about Murphy the Bald Eagle, and his rock? You probably did, because he became a top news item for about five minutes in April. Murphy lives at the World Bird Sanctuary in Valley Park, Missouri, which is just west of Saint Louis. (Having myself grown up in southern Illinois across the Mississippi River and just a bit south of Saint Louis [pronounced “Sant Looess” for the local cognoscenti], I can’t fathom why Murphy would choose such a home, but, as I understand the situation, he has little choice as he has a disability that keeps him grounded.)

As the story goes, Murphy, who is now 31 years old, responded to the demands of nature by constructing a nest in his enclosure. With no partner and no way to produce an egg of his own, he chose a rock of appropriate size but dubious shape as his very own egg to incubate, which he did dutifully for a few



Murphy’s rock.

(Source: World Bird Sanctuary.)



Murphy watching his eaglet stretch its wings on
May 14, 2023.

(Source: Screenshot from World Bird Sanctuary video.)

weeks. A surprising twist to the story occurred in early April when a storm in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri took down an eagle nest. (To continue my tedious youth tale, as it turns out, Ste. Genevieve [pronounced “Sant Genuhveeve” in slow cadence], is directly [pronounced “dreckly”] across the river from my origin town.)

One young eagle survived the fall, and it was brought to Murphy’s enclosure where it was first introduced to Murphy, and then, after about a week, Murphy was allowed to interact with the chick. Murphy knew what to do and began feeding the chick from his own personal fish supply. As of the end of May, the eaglet is nearly Murphy’s size and is exercising its wings.

You can read more about Murphy and his rock at [smithsonianmag.com](https://www.smithsonianmag.com) (search for Murphy and rock). A link in the article to the Facebook page of the World Bird Sanctuary directs you to short videos of Murphy and the eaglet.

NEXT PROGRAM

Tuesday, June 13 at 7:15–9:30 PM

BYO Picnic

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, 127 Combs Road, Easthampton

For our last member meeting before the summer break we will be meeting at a different sort of sanctuary than is our usual venue. On June 13 we will gather at the pavilion at Arcadia for a casual, unintimidating social event to enjoy each other’s company. Bring your own food/snacks/drinks and, of course, binoculars if you have them (we will have extras available as well) as it wouldn’t be unusual for a brief bird walk or bird sit to break out. Hope to see everyone there! Check out the Education Committee report on page three for information about the new members’ bird walk at 5:30 PM prior to the picnic.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to all who joined us in May—Sue & Ed Lewis (Worthington); Ami Pelletier & Benjamin Breton (Easthampton); Ruth Harms & Stephen Hickman and Katarina Hallonblad (Amherst); John Felton (Lee); Robert LeBlanc (Ludlow); Annette Hunt (Holyoke); Basia Bolibok and Susan Bell (Northampton); and Laura Hummel & Lorana Miceli (Hatfield).

Donna Lee Ubertalli, Membership Secretary

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared toward beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: people young in age, or those from underrepresented minority groups or who have disabilities that make birding difficult. A one hour online educational session (half presentation, half discussion) is held prior to a two hour, in-person bird walk at an accessible location. All events are free and open to the public. Please help spread the word! The online presentation requires no registration (check the HBC website for the Zoom link). Those interested in attending the walk can register at bit.ly/2023bfe. Upcoming sessions are:

June 17, 2023 10–11 AM: Herons (Talk)

June 24, 2023 7:45–10:00 AM: Paradise Pond, Northampton (Walk)

HBC BOARD ELECTION

The election for four open positions on the HBC Executive Board was held via online balloting from May 10 to May 16, 2023. A total of 93 ballots were submitted. There was one voter who voted twice; the election monitors (Jim Lafley and Dave Gross) counted the final submission as his vote as per election rules. Another voter had not renewed her membership, so that ballot was invalidated.

Four of the current board members were at the end of their two-year terms. They were Derek Allard, Ruth Garbett, Jim Lafley, and Josh Rose. Ruth and Jim both decided against running for another term. Besides Derek and Josh, three other candidates were on the ballot: Cory Elowe, Michealle Larkins, and Bill Randolph.

The final totals were, for the 91 valid ballots, Derek Allard: 91, Josh Rose: 79, Michealle Larkins: 59, Cory Elowe: 58, and Bill Randolph: 57. Cory, Derek, Josh, and Michealle will start their two-year terms. Continuing on the board are Laura Beltran, Greg Brown, Annemarie Chapdelaine, Dave Gross, Kalpesh Krishna, Donna Lee Ubertalli, and Steve Winn. Under the HBC bylaw governing board elections that was adopted in 2021, the new board will assume its duties on June 1, 2023. For the first meeting of the new board in June, the current President, Derek Allard, will convene the meeting. The first order of business will be to elect the officers for the 2023–2024 club year. The results of that election will be in the September 2023 newsletter.

Thanks are due to all the members of the HBC board who have worked hard to keep the club vibrant and active. Welcome to the new members of the board, Michealle Larkins and Cory Elowe. Special thanks are due to Ruth Garbett and Jim Lafley, who are leaving the board. Ruth has been the club Communications Secretary, on the meeting set-up committee, and also newsletter proofreader. Jim has served on the board as an at-large member as well as field trip chair. When you see them in the field, thank them for their service.

HBC CLASSIFIEDS SECTION

From the August 1997 HBC newsletter (Sally Venman, Ed.):

On their way back from the Monhegan Island trip last May, HBC members Samuel Green, Micky McKinley, and Julie and Dave Gross got to talking about their concern that the rare birds seen might not be able to find a mate. Thank you Micky for placing the following Personal Ad:

B Seeking B

SMHW (Single Male Hooded Warbler) slim, attractive, likes short walks on beach and hip-hop music. Loves the outdoors and long-distance travel. Seeks female of same species for good times and possibly leading to courting behavior and nesting. Must be able to feather own nest.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

Thank you, everyone, for attending our workshops this year and supporting our Education Committee activities! DIY and Ed Committee workshops will resume in September. Please check your email in late August for information on early September activities.

Did you miss a workshop? Our recorded programs are available on the [Hampshire Bird Club website](#). You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page. Scroll down to the bottom of the program videos page to find the workshop recordings.

New member bird walk —open to all. Please join us for our new (and old) member bird walk before the Tuesday, June 13 HBC picnic at Arcadia. We will meet in the parking lot at 5:30 PM.

Upcoming workshops. We will be planning next year's workshops over the summer. If you have an idea for a workshop, email us at education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

We are looking for new committee members! If you would like to join the Education Committee, please email education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

SPRING FIELD TRIP

Field Trip Guidelines

1. Field trip participant numbers are determined by the field trip leader.
2. All field trip leaders and participants must be fully vaccinated, are required to wear a mask when asked, and must be aware of maintaining a safe social distance during the event.
3. Participants should use the contact information in the trip description if they have any questions or would like to register for the trip.
4. Participants will receive specific information about their trip directly from the leader after they register. Please do not show up for a trip unless you have registered for it.

Remember that we encourage carpooling. We ask that riders share costs with drivers as a matter of courtesy. The HBC recommends using the current federal mileage reimbursement rate, shared by all occupants, but the rate for a vehicle is entirely up to the driver and passengers and should be determined before leaving.

Sunday, June 4. Exploratory Field Trip to Fog Hollow, Southampton. 7–9 AM. Bird club members are invited to this exploratory field trip at Fog Hollow in Southampton. An exploratory field trip directs members to a location to both explore the location and discover what bird species are there, but without a designated leader. Fog Hollow, in the Southampton Wildlife Management Area, is located off Cook Road, Southampton. If you are traveling south on Cook Road, a parking area is on the left near the power lines.
(E)

Field Trip designations:

(E) – Easy walking conditions, fairly accessible for most, usually flat terrain on improved trails or roads.

(M) – Moderately difficult, more challenging trail conditions, short steep sections, longer hikes involved.

(S) – Strenuous conditions, muddy or rocky trails, steep sections, difficult footing in part.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Hilltowns Ramble, May 20: A group of seven HBC members defied the rain and perhaps even thunder for the annual Hilltowns Ramble. We started at Graves Farm in Williamsburg, where we found an even larger group of birders led by John Green already assembled. We decided to do a bit of birding at the parking area and leave the rest of the reserve to John's group. Our five minutes of observing produced eleven species seen and heard. We moved a short way along Adams Road to a wetland and spent about half an hour listening and looking. There we found 26 species (including a long look at a perched Osprey), Warbling and Red-eyed Vireos, a Great-crested Flycatcher, six species of warblers, two Scarlet Tanagers, and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

After a brief stop at the Chesterfield Gorge we went to Old Post Road in Worthington and found the pair of Sandhill Cranes with their two chicks foraging in a field relatively close to the road. A neighbor from across the street regaled us with tales of the cranes as well as the multitude of wildlife that he has seen and

photographed from his porch. We also saw Bobolinks, a Great Blue Heron, a distant Red-tailed Hawk, two interacting Red-bellied Sapsuckers, and 23 other species.

We moved on to Cummington, visiting the fairgrounds and Flat Iron Road marsh. At the fairgrounds we found several Painted Trilliums in bloom along with some Starflower and Clintonia along with a Great-crested Flycatcher, a Veery, and a Blue-headed Vireo, plus the usual suspects. At the marsh we failed to see the usually steadfast bitterns and occasional Virginia Rails, but we did see and hear 16 species as it started to sprinkle. After a yummy lunch at The Old Creamery in Cummington, we all agreed that the rain was sufficient to end our day. We ended the day with 52 species on our trip list.

Dave Gross

Mount Holyoke, May 21: Eleven of us started up the mountain at 6 AM and things were a bit slow. It's what field trip leaders fear: a quiet day. However, after getting to the halfway house (at this point the list was three Grey Catbirds, two Common Ravens making raucous calls, a couple of Red-eyed Vireos, and a single distant Worm-eating Warbler), things picked up. Near the stone fence we heard a Winter Wren and saw a singing Worm-eating Warbler (as well as some blooming Columbine). After rounding the curve at Taylor's Notch, and getting on the sunny side of the mountain, things really picked up.

Soon after the turn we had a female Cerulean Warbler feeding in the wet rocks beside the road close to eye level, and a male singing in the trees just above the road. (In all, we saw three Ceruleans well, and probably heard 3–4 others. And when I say “saw them well,” I mean it. These were the most cooperative Ceruleans I've ever had. They were relatively low and right over the road.) Farther up the road, a pair of Yellow-throated Vireos sang and flitted right over the road, and a pair of Black-billed Cuckoos shamelessly mated before our very eyes. (Jim Lafley says that you can't count a bird until you see it poop or mate; we can definitely count the cuckoos.) At this point I was done: we had seen a Worm-eating Warbler, three Cerulean Warblers, two Yellow-throated Vireos, and two Black-billed Cuckoos; what else was there to get? But the group insisted that we push on, and we found an Eastern Phoebe nest with a nestling in the same area. Then more Ceruleans (heard, not seen), a bunch of Pink Lady's Slippers (I know, not a bird, but they are one of the treasures of the mountain), two pairs of Scarlet Tanagers, a Red Fox(!), a Tennessee Warbler (again, heard only), and several Northern Parulas (you guessed it, heard only) before getting a good look at an Indigo Bunting, an immature Bald Eagle, and a Dark-eyed Junco at the summit.

In all, we had about 50 species. (The Allen Bird Club only got 45! We win!)

Mike Locher

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The following programs are offered by Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. More programs can be found at www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia.

Parking Lot Birding—June 10 and July 8, 7:30–8:30 AM

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton

Finding Atlantic Puffins—July 6, 7:00–8:30 PM

Online

OH NO, NOT MORE OF THESE!

More examples of changing just one letter in a non-English phrase or word:

E Pluribum Unum – All of the hobos are forming a union.

Oye Cómb Va – Did you hear about Tito Puente's new haircut?

Ipsa Farto – Known by the odor emitted.

Bog Voyage – Traipse down the boardwalk in Hawley.

Bin Voyage – Head off to a big-box store.

Bun Voyage – Visit the pastry shop.

Kindergarter – Apparatus to hold up the socks of a five-year-old.

C'est La Vid – Movie anyone?

Hasty La Vista – Check out that bird before it flies away!

Faun Pas – Goats and men on Father's Day.

Solo Contendere – Han gets into a fight with Leia.

Gesundheir – Healthy looking kid you've got there!

AN IMPORTANT PUBLIC HEALTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Do You Have A.A.A.D.D.: Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder?

This is how it works:

I decide to wash my car. I start toward the garage and notice the mail on the table. OK, I'm going to wash the car. But first I'm going to go through the mail.

I lay the car keys down on the desk, discard the junk mail and I notice the trash can is full. OK, I'll just put the bills on my desk and take the trash can out, but since I'm going to be near the mailbox anyway, I'll pay these few bills first. Now, where is my check book?

Oops, there's only one check left. My extra checks are in my desk. Oh, there's the coke I was drinking.

I'm going to look for those checks. But first I need to put my coke further away from the computer, so maybe I'll pop it into the fridge to keep it cold for a while. I head towards the kitchen and my flowers catch my eye, they need some water. I set the coke on the counter and uh oh! There are my glasses. I was looking for them all morning! I'd better put them away first.

I fill a container with water and head for the flowerpots-Aaaaaagh! Someone left the TV remote in the kitchen. We will never think to look in the kitchen tonight when we want to watch television so I'd better put it back in the family room where it belongs.

I splash some water into the pots and onto the floor, I throw the remote onto a soft cushion on the sofa and I head back down the hall trying to figure out what it was I was going to do.

End of the Day:

The car isn't washed, the bills are unpaid, the coke is sitting on the kitchen counter, the flowers are half watered, the check book still has only one check in it, and I can't seem to find my car keys! When I try to figure out how come nothing got done today, I'm baffled, because: I KNOW I WAS BUSY ALL DAY LONG!!!

I realize this is a serious condition and I'll get help, BUT FIRST I think I'll check my email...

CINEMA CLASSICS

When Quabbin hydrology engineer Winsor was asked to donate to a charity, his wife warned him, "Frank, my dear, don't give a dam."

What do you call a traffic jam near a cheesy Wild West exhibit? Slowdown at the hokey corral.

What do you call a big snowstorm that happens on March 1, 3 and 5? The blizzard of odds.

What do you say to your friend when they eat too much braunschweiger? "Binge on the liver? Why?"

HEADLINE NEWS

On the front page of the December 31, 2022, *Daily Hampshire Gazette* was the headline "Is the pot pie shrinking?" I was disappointed to find that the article was about marijuana dispensaries, not cooking advice. The subheadline was "Cannabis store owners, advocates question whether marijuana market is oversaturated with outlets". At the *Gazette* there is always a lot of alliteration, allegedly.

THAT'S ALL FOLKS

This is the last newsletter of the 2022–2023 club year. No doubt you are pleased to hear that. Till we chat again in September, I'll put this one to sleep by quoting John Lennon's "Good Night" from *The White Album*. If you want to listen to Ringo singing it, you can try www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qp_djluQ2Cw.

Now it's time to say good night

Good night, sleep tight

Now the sun turns out his light

Good night, sleep tight

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 40, No. 1

September 2023

Dear reader, welcome back to another year's worth of programming, field trips, and fellowship from your very own bird club! You should note that this is the first issue of the 40th volume of this newsletter. Yes, that does mean that this is the fortieth anniversary year for the HBC, in existence since April 1984. Quite a lot has changed in the world in the forty years of the club's existence, but the birds still return each spring and leave each fall. We do have some "southern" avian species that we didn't see very often or at all in 1984, and other old favorites that we only rarely see in the Valley today. For a bit of history of the founding of the HBC, you might look back at newsletter interviews with some of the founders of the HBC. Those include the March 2020 newsletter interview with Jan Ortiz, the April 2020 interview with Harvey Allen, the June 2020 interview with Scott Sumner, and the October 2020 interview with David Spector, all of whom have recollections of the formation of the HBC. You can find these newsletters at the HBC website under the "Newsletter" link.

Aside from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* being the title of a dystopian novel by George Orwell, you might well ask "What else happened in 1984?" Well, for one thing, Apple Computer, Inc. (now Apple, Inc.) introduced its new Macintosh computer during Super Bowl XVII. The Monterey Bay Aquarium opened, and TED Conferences, LLC, the media organization that produces and distributes TED Talks, was founded. (Did you know that TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design? I didn't.) Also in 1984, Chrysler Corporation introduced the minivan to U.S. consumers. Ronald Reagan defeated Walter Mondale for the U.S. presidency.

Bird-adjacent happenings in 1984 included the release of the movie *Birdy* starring Matthew Modine and Nicolas Cage. (I've not seen this one, but it does get an 80% rating on the Tomatometer at Rotten Tomatoes.) In July, Salyut 7 cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya became the first woman to perform a space walk, and in August the space shuttle Discovery had its maiden voyage. In October, astronaut Kathryn Sullivan became the first American woman to perform a space walk. Also in October, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., opened a six-month exhibit of some of John James Audubon's hand-colored double-elephant folio bird illustrations. And, of course, no avian retrospective of 1984 would be complete without a *Birds Eye* commercial from that year: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynfRiehSVUI.

NEXT PROGRAM

Tuesday, September 5, at 6:00 PM

BYO

Wesley United Methodist Church, 98 North Maple Street, Hadley

Note the date and time! This is a week earlier than usual due to scheduling issues. Although originally scheduled at Arcadia, the first meeting of our new club season has moved to Wesley Church. Blame mosquitoes and wet weather for this. We hope you can come for a casual, unimposing social event to enjoy each other's company. Bring your own food, snacks, and drinks. Although it is not likely that we'll see many birds in the church, there might be some opportunities in the fields nearby, so bring along your binoculars. If you have none, or forget yours, Jim Lafley from the Education Committee will have some to share. See page 3.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Are you ready to renew your HBC membership for the 2023–2024 club year? Rarin' to go? Well hold your horses, pardner. The HBC board is in the process of introducing a new payment system and website that will go live October 1, 2023. This move will streamline the renewal process for you and will greatly improve the HBC member database. You will be receiving a postcard in the mail (how quaint, no?) in a few weeks as both a reminder and an introduction to the new system. If you still want to renew using a paper form, that will be possible. Stay tuned.

FIELD TRIPS SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2023

Please contact leaders (if a phone number or email is listed) at least two days in advance of the trip to register, and if you have any questions. It's always wise to bring snacks and dress appropriately. If you want to keep a list of birds seen during the field trips, Mass Audubon has checklists for each of their sanctuaries and these can also be used as trip lists (<https://massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/birds-birding/bird-checklists>). Whether with or without a leader, please follow the American Birding Association guidelines for ethical birding (<https://hampshirebirdclub.org/aba-code-of-ethics/>) and those on our website regarding field trips (<http://hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines/>).

Remember that we encourage carpooling. We ask that riders share costs with drivers as a matter of courtesy. The HBC recommends the current federal mileage reimbursement rate, shared by all occupants, but the rate for a vehicle is entirely up to the driver and passengers and should be determined before leaving.

Sunday, September 10. Mass Central Rail Trail. 7:30 AM to noon. Join Julie Blue and Brian Zylich at the Mass Central Rail Trail. The trail has a good mix of habitats right by the Ware River, making it a good spot for migrating warblers, thrushes, and other songbirds. We will meet at the parking lot on Church St. in Ware (<https://goo.gl/maps/5WYFzw5DSryNZdbW9>). The walk is limited to 12 people. Email Julie at Julie.blue@erg.com to register. Email Brian at brian.zylich@gmail.com for questions about directions. (E)

Sunday, September 10. Skinner State Park. 10 AM to noon. Members of the HBC Education Committee will provide a leader at the Skinner State Park Summit House for watching hawks and other migrants as they traverse the Holyoke Range. There is an accessible ramp where most of the watching will occur. (E)

Monday, September 11. Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. 7 to 10 AM. Join Aaron Hulsey and Joe Oliverio at Arcadia's west meadows where we will look for a variety of fall migrants including warblers, sparrows, and flycatchers. We will meet next to the metal bridge and decide where to walk from there. The terrain is flat but we may end up walking through tall, wet grass and/or mud, so wear appropriate footwear. We will likely cover 1 to 2 miles. Contact Aaron Hulsey at thomas.hulsey487@gmail.com to sign up. (E/M)

Sunday, September 17. 7:30 AM to noon (potentially to 1 pm). Join Julie Blue and Brian Zylich to take a trip into Gill and to Hell's Kitchen in Northfield. We will meet at the Turners Falls Power Canal parking lot on G Street by the gate. The trip will involve easy walking along flat roads and is limited to 12 people. Email Julie at Julie.blue@erg.com to register. Email Brian at brian.zylich@gmail.com for questions about directions. (E)

Wednesday, September 20. Park Hill Orchard. 7 to 9 AM. Join Jim Lafley on a walk around the Park Hill Orchard fields and woods to encounter fall migrants and resident birds getting ready for the winter. Warblers, Vireos, Woodpeckers, Sparrows, and Kinglets are some of the possibilities. We will meet at the Park Hill Orchard store parking lot and walk from there. It is a flat walk, but prepare for wet grass and some muddy spots. Contact Jim Lafley if interested at jimlafley@gmail.com. (E)

Sunday, October 8. East Meadows. 7:30 to 9:00 AM. Join Aaron Hulsey and Hobie Iselin in Northampton to look for migrating sparrows and late warblers in the East Meadows. The trip will involve easy walking on flat ground but may involve mud or wet grass so wear appropriate footwear. We will meet at the gravel lot on the south side of the airport and carpool as there is limited parking in the meadows. Contact Aaron Hulsey at thomas.hulsey487@gmail.com to sign up or for more information. (E)

Wednesday, November 8. Unity Park, Turners Falls. 8 to 11 AM. Meet Jim Lafley at Unity Park in Turners Falls for a tour of the places in the area including Barton Cove, Turners Falls Power Canal, Turners Falls Airport, and other locations in search of waterfowl, sparrows, and other migrating birds. There will be very little walking as we will be birding in parking areas near the cars. Scopes will be especially helpful. Contact Jim Lafley if interested at jimlafley@gmail.com. (E)

Sunday, November 12. Dead Creek WMA and Lake Champlain Valley. All day. Mike Locher heads north for the spectacle of hundreds of Snow Geese rising into the sun as a Rough-legged Hawk cruises by them. In addition to the geese and raptors, we'll look for ducks, grebes, gulls, and loons on Lake Champlain. Meet at Stop & Shop in Northampton (228 King Street) at 5 AM for carpooling. Bring a lunch if you wish (we'll stop

for food) and bring a scope if you have one. Contact Mike (413-585-5864) for further details; there's no need to register, just show up on time. (E/M)

Field Trip designations:

- (E) – Easy walking conditions, fairly accessible for most, usually flat terrain on improved trails or roads.
(M) – Moderately difficult, more challenging trail conditions, short steep sections, longer hikes involved.
(S) – Strenuous conditions, muddy or rocky trails, steep sections, difficult footing in part.

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared toward beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: people young in age, from underrepresented minority groups or who have disabilities that make birding difficult. A one hour online educational session (half presentation, half discussion) is held prior to a two hour, in-person bird walk at an accessible location. All events are free and open to the public. Please help spread the word! The online presentation requires no registration (check the HBC website for the Zoom link). Those interested in attending the walk can register at bit.ly/2023bfe. Upcoming sessions are:

- September 16, 2023 10–11 AM: Hawks (Presentation)
September 23, 2023 7:45–10:00 AM: Mount Tom, Easthampton (Walk)
October 21, 2023 10–11 AM: Bird Feeders (Presentation)
October 28, 2023 7:45–10:00 AM Ashley Reservoir, Holyoke (Walk)

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

Welcome back, everyone, to our fall Education Committee activities!

September 5: Binocular workshop with Jim Lafley—Jim Lafley will do a short workshop on binoculars before the September 5 members meeting either at Wesley Church. He will discuss styles and models of binoculars, how to adjust them, and how to clean them. Please come to the meeting 30 minutes before the scheduled start time and bring your binoculars, if you would like to, or just come and learn about them. We'll have some "practice" pairs available. No need to register, just come.

Do-It-Yourself field trips will resume in October.

Upcoming workshops:

- Tuesday, Oct. 17, 7–8 PM—Birding Cape Cod with Chris Walz
- Loon workshop with Dana Fox—date and time TBA

New member bird walks—open to all:

1. September 10, 2023, 10 AM, at Skinner Park. We'll focus on raptors. Meet in the parking lot just before the gate.
2. November 12, 2023, 8 AM, at the Oxbow/Arcadia. We'll be looking for waterfowl.
3. March 9, 2024, evening (exact time TBA) at Park Hill Orchard in Easthampton. We'll look for woodcocks.
4. May 19, 2024, 7 AM, at Fort River (Silvio O. Conte Refuge), focusing on spring migrants.

More details will be available on the Education webpage, and we'll send out emails.

Did you miss a workshop last year? Well then, you are in luck. Our recorded programs are available on the [Hampshire Bird Club website](https://hampshirebirdclub.org). You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page. Scroll down to the bottom of the page of videos to find Education workshops.

<https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/>

If you have an idea for a workshop, email us at education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

We are looking for new members! If you would like to join the Education Committee, please email education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

It was a busy summer for new members, and we welcome all those who have joined us since June—Diana Kulmizev (Feeding Hills); Beth Bellettieri, William Blatner & Mary Cowhey (Florence); Lina Parra & Faiver Orjuela (Ware); Siobhan Pembroke (Northampton); Christine Lau & Michael Malone, Anna Courtemanche, Mik Dresser (Amherst); Xiaohui & Hugo Restall (Southwick); Dawn Klein (Cummington); Gail Gramarossa (Belchertown); and Christian Carson (Easthampton)

More than 140 new members have joined us this year (wow!), so introduce yourself when you see someone you don't recognize. Chances are, they are new members of our community and would appreciate a warm welcome.

We look forward to meeting you all on the trail or at a program!

Donna Lee Ubertalli, Membership Secretary, membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

A CHAT WITH DONNA LEE UBERTALLI

Donna Lee, who is the HBC Membership Secretary, and I had a chat about bird watching, moving back to the Valley, and the HBC, in early August. What follows is a lightly edited account of our chat.

Newsletter: To start us off, tell me what you do when you're not birding?

Donna Lee Ubertalli: I'm an avid quilter. I've been quilting for about five years, and I love it. I'm always trying to get five or ten minutes in front of my sewing machine. It's a hobby that works great with birding because I can do it when the weather is not good.

N: I know you moved to the Valley not all that long ago. How did you find the HBC?

DLU: I started birding a little more than ten years ago. I've moved around a lot for my job. The first thing I do when I move is to look for fellow bird watchers. When I knew that I was coming back to Western Mass, I wanted to find my birding people. So I looked around, and the Hampshire Bird Club seemed to be a very active club with great field trips. I think field trips are a really great way to go birding and meet other birders. It's friendly, it's casual, it's not dependent on your level of knowledge.

I grew up in the area, but I wasn't a birder when I was growing up. So for me there is a lot of really fun discovery of all these places that I knew growing up but never knew how special they are. The Do-It-Yourself field trips that the Education Committee runs lets participants explore new birding areas. An example is the trip to Lake Wallace in Belchertown. The DIY team supplied a map for the area and made a list of five target birds. Then a month later they had an online meeting for participants to talk about their findings. These trips have been fantastic because they have introduced me to local areas where I now can go birding on my own.

The programs from the Education Committee also have been great. Matt Schenk gave one about coastal

birding in Rhode Island. I grew up going to Misquamicut and the area around it. I knew in childhood the places he was describing but I had no idea about the birds that were there.

N: Yes, the pandemic has changed the way the club operates, with more online offerings and different sorts of offerings. What other things about the HBC do you like?

DLU: I like that the club really is very inclusive, no matter your birding skill level. Also, every time that there is a Birding For Everyone walk, I see, as Membership Secretary, about ten new members join the club. The BFE program introduces people to birding in an accessible way, and that goes a long way toward bringing a more diverse population into bird watching. Our monthly programs are usually very technical, aimed for more experienced birders and possibly intimidating for new birders. So overall the club has beginning, intermediate, and advanced topics—something for everyone.

N: You've been the Membership Secretary a bit more than a year. What's that been like?

DLU: It actually has been a really interesting journey. I have moved many times in my adult life for work and I think the best way to get involved in a new place is to dive in and volunteer to do something. Doing that lets you meet people and build relationships. Some of my best friends are from birding clubs of the past. That was my impetus, but I had no idea what I was getting into.

The job is pretty complicated. The membership list is messy with lots of data in it. I send out letters to all new members. I get little notes from people. I get

many requests to be added to mailing lists and I get many sorts of questions about the club.

For our in-person meetings I sit at the membership table with the name tags right near the front door, right near the cookies. I introduce myself and have that first conversation when people arrive. I know that it's hard to walk into a room where you are the new person. You feel a little self-conscious and you don't know how things work. Probably you don't know anybody, and nobody knows you. So I try to be the friendly face at the front door.

I'm excited about the possibility of a new online membership system that will streamline some of this. I know that would help a lot with the job for all kinds of reasons. It's the right way to maintain a complicated membership list and I think it will make it less daunting for somebody else to take on the job in the future.

N: The Membership Secretary interacts with everybody in the club, so he or she is probably the one person that most everybody knows. The President also is well known because he or she leads member meetings.

DLU: Yes, Derek (Allard, the current club President) is up front and visible. I asked him to welcome new members at club meetings, encouraging new members to raise their hands and introduce themselves. It's nice to see the long-time members greet each other, and I would like to have that for newer members, too.

N: Can you point to something that got you interested in nature and birds in particular?

DLU: My dad's an entomologist. I grew up with the Peterson field guide and a pair of binoculars on our kitchen table. We had bird feeder outside our kitchen window, and I remember the Evening Grosbeaks that stopped there. That was my spark, as people say. I also remember the Northern Cardinals, which were so rare back then. If we got a cardinal at our feeder in Holyoke, that was really noteworthy.

We used to hike up Mount Holyoke at Skinner State Park and my dad would point out the wild flowers and say the scientific names of the trees. He was a real nature guy. My mom's a seamstress, so I got that other side from her. But out in the woods with my dad, he taught me a lot.

N: Your spark bird, the Evening Grosbeak, is the same one for both Scott Sumner [Ed. note: see June 2020 newsletter] and Derek Allard [see November 2022 newsletter]. It seems that having an Evening

Grosbeak as the spark bird is an indicator for an HBC officer position.

DLU: Ha. That's good. How I got involved in organized birding was when I moved from New York City to Croton-on-Hudson, which is up the Hudson River in Westchester County. Eagles nest all around there. I didn't know anything about birds. There was a big eagle fest in February in our town and I thought that sounded like a fun thing to do, so I went with some friends. People there said that, if I was interested, I should meet this guy, Charlie Roberto, and go on a walk that he leads, which I did. From there I took a Raptors for Rookies class and went on a hawk watch in Nyack, New York. That's where I really got started. The watch was with Hudson River Audubon, with very experienced birders who were willing to share their knowledge. Some were collecting data on the hawks for research purposes. So I just got hooked.

N: Do you have a favorite bird watching story?

DLU: One of the first birding trips I ever went on was to Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge in Delaware, and I think it might have been my first traveling trip. The leaders said to meet at a particular birding location at twelve o'clock and to bring a lunch. They didn't give very good directions for where to meet. I was with my dad and, unfortunately, we went to the wrong place but we finally figured out where we were supposed to be and arrived at noon. We were sitting in our car eating our fried chicken and drinking our Dr. Peppers when this woman came up and tapped on the window of the car. She said "Are you the Ubertallis?" We said we were and were glad to see somebody because there was nobody else around. She said that we were late and that everybody else was down the trail. My dad put the chicken in his pocket and kicked over the Dr. Pepper as we scrambled out of the car and ran to the trail. What we didn't realize was that when they said twelve o'clock that meant, even though they said to bring a lunch, that we were to meet at twelve midnight, not twelve noon!

On that trip I realized that these are rules of birding that I needed to learn. I learned how to look through binoculars. I learned what a life list was.

Now I just like being out in the field. I'm not an expert. I've been birding for ten years. Other people are way ahead of me. I am getting to the point that I might be willing to pair up with someone else to help lead a field trip, maybe as the organizer.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE CORNER

This offering begins a series from the Conservation Committee.

Story of a Pollinator Garden

Summer has surprised me with the lushness of my year-old pollinator garden.

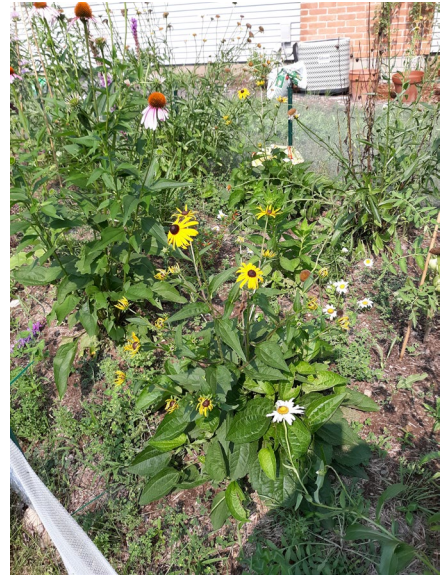
Last July, after months of planning, I installed a pollinator garden. My planning included testing soil, learning about no till gardening to save topsoil, researching native species plants, and reading several books about the importance of native species pollinator gardens. I found sources for native species plants that are not cultivars, which is not as simple as one might think. Then there was the work of laying down biodegradable paper to discourage grass growth, getting assistance in bringing loam and raking it onto the no-till garden plot, adding a bit of organic chicken manure, and applying lots of garden dreams and prayers to create the foundation. I then carefully planted the first ten native species to inhabit this newly hallowed ground. I also planted seeds of other native species in pots that are destined for other locations within the garden, hopeful perennials for the years to come.

Curious neighbors have inquired as to what I am doing, providing an opportunity to educate and encourage them to plant for pollinators. Dog walkers, joggers, families strolling by, and neighborhood children have been watching as the yard is transforming into a wildlife sanctuary.

Every day now I enjoy watching American Goldfinches delighting in Echinacea (Cone Flower) seeds plus Ruby-throated Hummingbirds dining on Cardinal Flower and then gorging themselves on nectar from Hot Pink Phlox (Jeanne). There are also visits by several types of sparrows and finches, Northern Cardinals, Grey Catbirds, Tufted Titmice, Chickadees, and a rare Indigo Bunting along with subtle explorations by

Starlings, Blackbirds, and an occasional Mourning Dove. They are drawn by an abundance of bugs, seeds, a welcoming bird and butterfly bath, and some shade from the tall natives that inhabit its boundaries.

What a year ago had been a combination of grass spotted with clover and violas bordered by non-native day lilies has emerged as a new ecosystem, inviting a variety of butterflies, including Northern Tiger Swallowtails, Cabbage Whites, Bronze Coppers, Mustard Whites, Monarchs, and as well as a variety of moths. The “bunny proof” fencing and posts have provided a resting and hunting perch for the birds. It’s been amazing to watch the transformation and the responsiveness of the birds and other wildlife to a safe, pesticide and artificial-fertilizer-free environment. The garden is a rich reward that brings smiles to my face every time I wander its edges as the sun rises, while I listen to the dawn chorus.



Carol's pollinator garden.

(Photo by Carol Fournier)



Delphinium “False Blue”.
(Photo by Carol Fournier)

Resources: *Bringing Nature Home: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard* by Doug Tallamy; [Home - Homegrown National Park](#); [TALLAMY'S HUB - Homegrown National Park](#); The Nature Conservancy [Climate Change Solutions](#) | [The Nature Conservancy](#); National Audubon [Plants For Birds](#) ([audubon.org](#))

Reflection offered by Carol A. Fournier, HBC Conservation Committee Member

SAVE THE DATE

The Northampton (MANO) Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 17, 2023. Be there or be square.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The following programs are offered by Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. More programs can be found at www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia.

Circle of Nature Art Class—September 23, September 30, October 7, and October 14; 9–11 AM for all

Cultivate nature appreciation through the Circle of Nature process designed by your instructor, Carol Fournier. Using your favorite artistic medium, you'll answer questions and create images that express your relationship to the natural world. You'll work on a portion of your Circle of Nature and have an opportunity to share it with other participants at each of the four sessions of the class, completing your Circle at the last class.

Carol A. Fournier, MA, MS, is a visual artist and art therapist. She enjoys finding and giving expression to beauty in many forms through photography, art, writing, music, gardening, and caring for the natural world. Carol views the arts as a way of telling the story of places, nature, people, all creatures, and culture. Carol is a retired faculty member at the University of Vermont, emerita founder and faculty of the Silver Dove Institute, and an author, photographer, and musician. She is an artist at the Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary Art House and a member of the Hampshire Bird Club. For more information and to register, visit the Mass Audubon Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary website (massaudubon.org/arcadia).

Star Island birding

HBC member Connie Lentz wants to make members aware of September weekend birding on Star Island, off Portsmouth, New Hampshire, run by Eric Masterson. He is an Irish ornithologist who wrote the book *Bird Watching in New Hampshire* and who specializes in migration. Connie reports that she has been going to these weekends for about a decade and that they are inexpensive, a three-hour drive from the Valley, and amazing. She notes that the birding is excellent but that there are drawbacks, including no showers and the need to wash one's own dishes. More information is at <https://ericmasterson.com/star-island-birding-weekends-may-16-18-september-19-21/>.

FAREWELL RBA

When you renew your HBC membership this year, the option for the Rare Bird Alert will not be there. The HBC board decided to retire the RBA since there are several options to follow the bird scene that are updated much more frequently than we could keep up on the RBA.

ONE LAST THING

Back in the early days of the club, before we added the “H” to the name, we were having trouble during our membership drives:



Rhymes with Orange by Hilary B. Price and Rina Piccolo. Reproduced by permission for nonprofit organizations. Visit them at comicskingdom.com/rhymes-with-orange

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 40, No. 2

October 2023

Dear reader, do you have a black hole in your memory circuits? I sure do. As I get older, I find more and more that I lose the connection to my storage area for the names of people and objects. Those names seem to come and go like will-o-the-wisps and always disappear at the most inopportune times. But there are other names that have forever eluded my memory retrieval system. I wish I understood why.

One of those forever elusive names is for a particular, rather common bird species. I can recite all of its characteristics on demand, I instantly recognize it, I know its song and behavior. But I can't bring its name to mind. It's always been that way for me. Even as I write this, I can't get to the name without using a trick.

My trick is to think of a close relative of the bird with a name I can remember. How this works I cannot say, but it does allow me to alert my birding companions that I see the bird if they haven't yet noticed it. It takes a moment or two for me to get there, but I can always do it. My trick is to recall that the similar bird is a bit bigger than the one I can't recall and that the bigger one has an unusual common name that has something to do with rock and roll. The similar bird? It's the Bohemian Waxwing. So now, when you're out with me and there's that big flock of tufted birds eating berries, you will understand why it takes a moment for me to say "Cedar Waxwing".

NEXT PROGRAM

Tuesday, October 10, at 7:15 PM

Chad Witko presents

National Audubon's Migratory Bird Initiative and Bird Migration

Wesley United Methodist Church, 98 North Maple Street, Hadley; also via Zoom

BYOB (non-alcoholic) to the meeting if you want a beverage

The mission of the Migratory Bird Initiative is to secure the future of migratory birds in the Western Hemisphere by reducing threats and protecting critical places across the Americas in coordination with science, conservation, and policy partners. The Initiative brings together the latest spatial information on species distributions and movements across their annual cycles to identify priority areas for 458 species of migratory birds that regularly occur in the United States and Canada. The Bird Migration Explorer guides viewers to the heroic annual journeys made by over 450 bird species and the challenges they face.

Chad Witko is the Senior Coordinator of Avian Biology for the National Audubon Society's Migratory Bird Initiative. Before working at Audubon to help secure the future of migratory birds in the Western Hemisphere, Chad worked on various avian research, conservation, and education projects across the United States. A lifelong birder with strong bird identification and distribution knowledge, Chad has served as an eBird reviewer and seasonal editor for New Hampshire Bird Records. As an ornithologist, he is most interested in migration, patterns of vagrancy, and seabirds. As a birder, Chad believes in community engagement and is the founder of the Antioch Bird Club. He currently lives in southeastern Vermont with his partner and his daughter.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL UPDATE

The club will be launching a new website, complete with new membership software, in October. All members will receive an email notification when the launch happens and at that point you will be able to renew your membership using the new system. The new website will also have a news section for keeping you in the loop more regularly than this monthly rag. It will also have a members-only feature so you can more easily connect with your fellow members away from the prying eyes of all those nasty web trolls. We will send a hard copy postcard as a reminder to renew your membership when all is in place and ready to go.

FIELD TRIPS OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 2023

Please contact leaders (if a phone number or email is listed) at least two days in advance of the trip to register, and if you have any questions. It's always wise to bring snacks and dress appropriately. If you want to keep a list of birds seen during the field trips, Mass Audubon has checklists for each of their sanctuaries and these can also be used as trip lists (<https://massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/birds-birding/bird-checklists>). Whether with or without a leader, please follow the American Birding Association guidelines for ethical birding (<https://hampshirebirdclub.org/aba-code-of-ethics/>) and those on our website regarding field trips (<http://hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines/>).

Remember that we encourage carpooling. We ask that riders share costs with drivers as a matter of courtesy. The HBC recommends the current federal mileage reimbursement rate, shared by all occupants, but the rate for a vehicle is entirely up to the driver and passengers and should be determined before leaving.

October–November. Winsor Dam. Larry Therrien will be hosting impromptu birding trips to Winsor Dam depending on weather conditions. We will update the posting on the HBC's website and HBC's Facebook and Instagram accounts the day prior to the trip if conditions look good for seeing migrating waterbirds at Winsor Dam the next day. Times will be dependent on weather conditions. A scope will be helpful for seeing birds on the reservoir. Conditions are often windy, rainy, and cold, so wear appropriate clothing.

Sunday. October 8. East Meadows. 7:30 to 9:30 AM. Join Aaron Hulsey and Hobie Iselin in Northampton to look for migrating sparrows and late warblers. The trip will involve easy walking on flat ground but may involve mud or wet grass, so wear appropriate footwear. We will meet at the gravel lot on the south side of the airport and carpool as there is limited parking in the meadows. Contact Aaron Hulsey at thomas.hulsey487@gmail.com to sign up or for more information. (E)

Sunday. October 22. Quabbin Park—Hank's Meadow and Gate 52. 7:30 to 9:30 AM. Join Greg Brown to look for late migrant songbirds and various winter ducks along the shores of Quabbin reservoir. Two miles (or less) of easy hiking on mostly flat terrain that is suitable for most folks. Bring good waterproof shoes or boots, binoculars, a spotting scope, a camera, and any other items that may be of use. Bring your own water and snacks. There are no toilet facilities at this location. We will meet at 7:30 AM at Hank's Meadow and explore the area by foot for about 2 hours. Contact Greg Brown at gregorywbrown.music@gmail.com to sign up or for more information. (E)

Sunday. November 12. Dead Creek WMA and Lake Champlain Valley. All day. Mike Locher heads north for the spectacle of hundreds of Snow Geese rising into the sun as a Rough-legged Hawk cruises by them. In addition to the geese and raptors, we'll look for ducks, grebes, gulls, and loons on Lake Champlain. Meet at Stop & Shop in Northampton (228 King Street) at 5:00 AM for carpooling. Bring a lunch if you wish (we'll stop for food) and bring a scope if you have one. Contact Mike (413-585-5864) for further details; there is no need to register, just show up on time. (E/M)

Sunday. November 12. New Member Walk—Arcadia Marsh and Oxbow. 8 to 10 AM. Members of the HBC Education Committee will lead a walk out to Arcadia Marsh and the Oxbow in search of migrating waterfowl. This is not a long walk and is on fairly flat terrain. We will meet at the Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary visitor center parking lot. (E)

Monday. November 25. Cape Ann or Plum Island. All day. Join Scott Sumner on an all day trip to either Cape Ann or Plum Island where we will look for alcids, waterfowl, and more. We will depart at 5 AM and return in the late afternoon. The trip is limited to ten people. Contact Scott Sumner at ssurner@aol.com for more information and to register. (E)

Field Trip designations:

(E) – Easy walking conditions, fairly accessible for most, usually flat terrain on improved trails or roads.

(M) – Moderately difficult, more challenging trail conditions, short steep sections, longer hikes involved.

(S) – Strenuous conditions, muddy or rocky trails, steep sections, difficult footing in part.

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared toward beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: people young in age, from underrepresented minority groups or who have disabilities that make birding difficult. A one hour online educational session (half presentation, half discussion) is held prior to a two hour, in-person bird walk at an accessible location. All events are free and open to the public. Please help spread the word! The online presentation requires no registration (check the HBC website for the Zoom link). Those interested in attending the walk can register at bit.ly/2023bfe. Upcoming sessions are:

October 21, 2023 10–11 AM: Bird Feeders (Presentation)

October 28, 2023 7:45–10:00 AM Ashley Reservoir, Holyoke (Walk)

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The **Do-It-Yourself** field trips will resume in October with Brian Zylich and Lesley Farlow. The date and time for the web session will be sent via email.

Upcoming workshops:

- Tuesday, Oct. 17, 7-8 PM—Birding Cape Cod with Chris Walz
This workshop will introduce participants to some good techniques for identifying the family *charadriiformes* (shorebirds) as seen from the beautiful Cape Cod beaches.
- Tuesday, Nov. 15, 7-8 PM—Woodpeckers, Woodpeckers, and more about Woodpeckers with Dana and Bob Fox
Come and hear Dana and Bob tell a fascinating story about the woodpecker family of birds. With 233 species in the world, they are found worldwide where trees are abundant. We will see how this family evolved, their special biology, and how they live in difficult locations. We have some curious stories about the most interesting species that might surprise you.

To register for a workshop visit the Education Committee page on the HBC website.

New member bird walks are open to all:

1. November 12, 8 AM at the Oxbow/Arcadia. We'll be looking for waterfowl.
2. March 9, 2024, evening, exact time to be announced, Park Hill Orchard in Easthampton. We'll look for woodcocks.
3. May 19, 2024, 7 AM at Fort River (Silvio O. Conte) focusing on spring migrants.

More details will be available on the Education webpage, and we'll send out emails.

Did you miss a workshop last year? Well then, you are in luck. Our recorded programs are available on the [Hampshire Bird Club website](https://hampshirebirdclub.org). You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page.

Scroll down to the bottom of the page of videos to find Education workshops. <https://hampshire-birdclub.org/program-videos/>

If you have an idea for a workshop, email us at education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

We are looking for new members! If you would like to join the Education Committee, please email education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to new members who have joined us this month. We look forward to welcoming them in person at the upcoming membership meeting! Our newest members are Erin Sullivan (Easthampton); Kevin & Judy Mealey (Westfield); Michelle Park (Amherst); Devorah Levy (Northampton); and Jo Ellen Warner (Amherst).

Donna Lee Ubertalli, Membership Secretary, membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

CLEANING BINOCULAR LENSES

It is important to keep the lenses of your binoculars clean so they can operate properly and you can get the most enjoyment from them. Here are some simple instructions for cleaning your binoculars.

Keeping your lens covers on while not using your binoculars is important, especially the eye lens cover, also known as the rain guard or crumb guard. The eye lens tends to get the dirtiest and requires more frequent cleaning. I usually clean the eye lens about twice as often as the objective lens. Avoid overcleaning your lenses as every cleaning has potential for scratching the lens surface. I use my binoculars every day and usually clean them about once a month depending on how dirty they appear.

Equipment required: Air bulb, lens cleaning brush, lens tissue, lens cleaner

1. Use the rubber air bulb to blow air across the lens to remove any loose grit.
2. Lightly brush any remaining grit from the lens surface with the lens brush followed by another squirt from the air bulb. It is important to remove as much grit as possible before wiping the lens.
3. Wash your hands thoroughly to remove any dirt and oil. Take a lens cloth and form a mop by pulling the four corners together.
4. Hold the lens cleaner over the lens cloth mop and drip one or two drops onto the lens cloth. Do not put lens cleaner directly on the lens as it might penetrate under the lens.
5. IMPORTANT: Fog the lens with your breath and immediately wipe with a soft circular motion. This may leave streaks. If this happens, fog the lens again with your breath and use a new clean lens cloth mop with a soft circular motion to thoroughly clean the lens. Fogging the lens with your breath serves important purposes: it reduces the impact of the dry lens paper on the lens, shows where the streaking is located, and hydrates any dust that remains.

Jim Lafley

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE CORNER

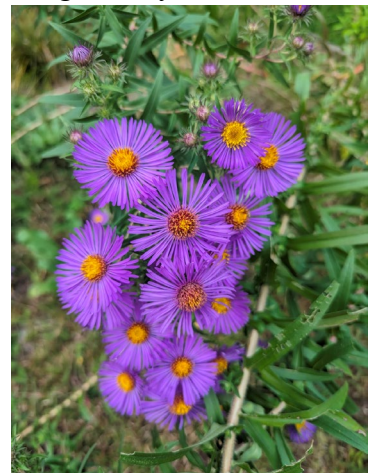
This offering continues a series from the Conservation Committee.

Everyone can garden for birds (and other wildlife)

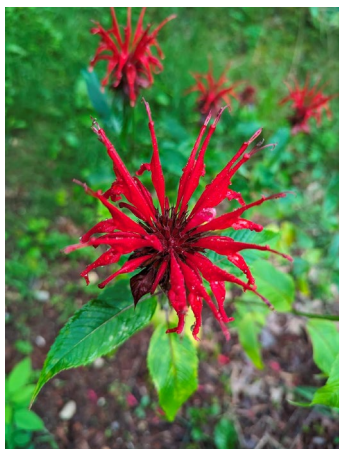
Gardening for birds can be time-consuming and research-intensive, but it doesn't have to be.

I first stumbled upon gardening as a way to attract birds to my yard when spring came last year and a bear tore down my bird feeders. Rather than wait for winter to come again and the bears to go back into hibernation, I learned that I could change what I planted in my yard to encourage more birds to visit even when I couldn't put my feeders out. Native plants offer native birds the fruits and seeds that they love to eat. They also serve as host plants for native insects (which birds also love to eat!). However, it can take a couple of years after planting for some plants to begin producing the foods that bring birds into our yard, so I started right away.

After doing a little research online, I found Native Plant Trust, which has a fantastic nursery for native plants located here in the valley. On their website, they have a tool to help you find native plants that will thrive in any part of your yard, and you can easily filter your search to find plants that attract birds! Rather than spending a lot of time planning out my garden (which is perfectly fine to do if you're so inclined), I created a list of several perennials that were easy to plant and were supposed to attract birds. I picked these up from the nursery, and then I simply looked at the plants' labels to see what conditions they prefer in order to find them a suitable spot in my yard. Some plants went into already established flower beds, and I ended up converting a section of lawn into a pollinator garden to hold the others. This year, I added several native shrubs to my yard and even more perennials. I will be the first to admit that my gardening style is somewhat haphazard. It generally involves browsing the garden shop and adding all of the plants with a bird on the label to my cart, leaving me to find a place for them once I get home. However, this means that I don't get stuck in the planning phase, and slowly but surely it gets results.



New England Aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*)



Scarlet Beebalm (*Monarda didyma*)

I first noticed a difference when my perennials began to flower and hummingbirds buzzed around my yard, feeding at my Scarlet Beebalm and Coral Honeysuckle. Also present were an astounding array of dragonflies and butterflies that were attracted to my Swamp Milkweed, Northern Spicebush, and many types of goldenrod. Recently, I've had Chipping Sparrows, Carolina Wrens, Gray Catbirds, Eastern Towhees, Song Sparrows, Northern Cardinals, Blue Jays, Eastern Phoebe, three species of vireos, and mixed flocks of warblers, chickadees, and titmice all foraging in my yard.

As my garden evolves I continue to learn more about gardening for birds. Birds need water and cover, as well as food. I try to incorporate plants that produce food for birds to cover all seasons of the year. I learn to identify the plants already in my yard and remove invasive species (which often have little to offer our native wildlife) so I can replace them with more beneficial alternatives. Gardening for birds can be a lifetime endeavor, and the learning never ends, but it doesn't have to be difficult to start.

Resources: [Native Plant Trust](#) [PictureThis - Plant Identifier](#) [Cornell Gardening for Birds Course](#)

Reflection offered by Brian Zylich, HBC Conservation Committee Member

SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for the finest Christmas Bird Count on December 17, 2023 in Northampton, Amherst, Hadley, and other towns. This CBC is our 89th. We will have 36 teams covering our CBC circle. We have feeder watchers, car birders, and team members of all ages. You can participate for a few hours or all day. You can even get up at 2 AM and listen for owls in your neighborhood. All is possible.

All are welcome. If you have yet to participate, it is time to join the fun. Do you have to be an excellent birder? No. You will be counting with others. More news about signing up for the CBC will come in the November newsletter. But if you have questions just send them to cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org.

GOOD NEWS FROM MASS AUDUBON

This week, Governor Maura Healey made history by becoming the first Governor in the United States to declare official state biodiversity targets. Mass Audubon has been advocating to protect the diverse species and ecosystems of Massachusetts for decades, and we're incredibly grateful to Gov. Healey for taking this first-in-the-nation action.

With nearly 3,000,000 acres of forest, 1,500 miles of coastline, 2,522 square miles of state ocean waters, and a vast network of rivers and critical wetlands, Massachusetts is rich in biodiversity. But each year, land development, pollution, invasive species, and other factors threaten an increasing number of the species that call our state home. On top of that, climate change is disrupting every ecosystem in Massachusetts.

That's why it's crucial that we commit to protecting the plants and animals of Massachusetts as they face more and more threats every year. Gov. Healey's biodiversity targets do just that, and we're committed to working with her administration to ensure that we achieve our goals for nature.

Show your support for nature by sending a quick email to Gov. Healey to thank her for standing up for biodiversity! You can find a link to make the task easy at the Mass Audubon [website](#).

I went to my twin grandnephews 11th birthday party last week. Here are two jokes that the 11-year-olds told.

1. We just tried a new restaurant that serves clowns. We think the food tasted funny.
2. Q: Why didn't the skeleton cross the road? A: He had no guts.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The following programs are offered by Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. Sign up online. More programs can be found at www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia.

Seeds, Nuts and Berries—October 4; 7:30-9:00 PM; online

Fall is a great time to take a closer look at all the ways plants ensure their next generation successfully develops and thrives. We will explore the inner workings of seeds, nuts, berries, drupes, and more as we review how native plants prepare for winter and the subsequent spring in this online program.

Interested in learning more? This program is one part of a 4-session online Neighborhood Naturalists Series. By registering for the series, you get access to all 4 sessions for the price of 3. You do not need to register for other sessions, or the full series, to enjoy this one.

Birding for Beginners—October 7, 14, and 21; 8–10 AM for all

Are you new to birding? Join naturalist John Green who especially enjoys working with beginning birders. You'll learn how to use and adjust your binoculars, what to look for in a field guide, and tips for spotting birds by listening to their songs and calls and watching for behavioral clues. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. We have a few binoculars to lend if you don't.

Parking Lot Birding—October 15; 8–10 AM

The Arcadia parking lot is a surprisingly good place to look for birds. With the edge of the woods on one side and an open field on the other, we see an unusual mix of woodland and open country birds. Bring your binoculars, a chair, and coffee or tea if you choose—we won't be going far.

Great Falls Discovery Center

Migration Week: Bird Walks with Zeke Jakub

October 12 – 15, One-hour programs each day at: 6 AM, 7 AM., 8 AM, 9 AM, 10 AM, 11 AM, 1 PM., 2 PM, 3 PM, and 4 PM.

Many birds we see during fall migration are flying south to Panama! Join ornithologist Zeke Jakub of Conservación Panamá for one or more FREE hour-long birdwatching adventures. The walks introduce you to these fabulous migratory birds along the Connecticut River. Learn about conservation research and actions, including what you can do. The programs are for ages 14 and up. Bring binoculars and a bird field guide if you have them, dress for the weather, and wear sturdy shoes. Space is limited; register at 413-863-3221.

Thursday, October 12, Mt. Sugarloaf State Reservation—Meet at the top of Mount Sugarloaf in South Deerfield (300 Sugarloaf St.) at the observation tower. Park at the bottom and hike up or drive to the top and park for free (let DCR staff know you are here for the birding program). The park road opens at 9:00 a.m.

Friday, October 13, Canalside Rail Trail—Meet at the parking lot in East Deerfield off McClelland Farm Road.

Saturday, October 14, Migratory Way—Park in the lot at the intersection of G and 15th Streets in Turners Falls at the gate to Migratory Way.

Sunday, October 15, Barton Cove—Meet at Barton Cove Camping and Day-Use Area, 82 French King Highway, Gill, about one mile east of the Discovery Center off Route 2. Park at the day-use area parking lot.

MEET PEANUT, THE WORLD'S OLDEST CHICKEN

This I heard on the very day that the September issue of this fine publication went to press. I would have included it then. If you didn't catch this on NPR's *All Things Considered* on August 30, then you really do need to listen to the podcast about Peanut. It's only four minutes long. Come on, you've got the time. Here's the link: www.npr.org/2023/08/30/1196875233/meet-peanut-the-worlds-oldest-chicken.

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 40, No. 3

November 2023

Dear reader, on October 16, 2023, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service delisted 21 species from the Endangered Species Act list. This was not good news. The reason for delisting was due to, in the judgement of the Fish and Wildlife experts, the extinction of species on the list. The listed species included several mussels, two fish, a bat, and ten birds, including Bachman's Warbler and several Hawaiian species.

Last November I wrote about Native American Heritage Month and my great-great-great-grandmother Eady who likely was familiar with the massive flocks of Passenger Pigeons in North America of the nineteenth century. This year I draw your attention to the May-June 2014 issue of *Audubon* magazine in which is an article by Barry Yeoman about another Native American who told of his Passenger Pigeon observations.

In May 1850, a 20-year-old Potawatomi tribal leader named Simon Pokagon was camping at the headwaters of Michigan's Manistee River during trapping season when a far-off gurgling sound startled him. It seemed as if "an army of horses laden with sleigh bells was advancing through the deep forests towards me," he later wrote. "As I listened more intently, I concluded that instead of the tramping of horses it was distant thunder; and yet the morning was clear, calm, and beautiful." The mysterious sound came "nearer and nearer," until Pokagon deduced its source: "While I gazed in wonder and astonishment, I beheld moving toward me in an unbroken front millions of pigeons, the first I had seen that season."

These were passenger pigeons, Ectopistes migratorius, at the time the most abundant bird in North America and possibly the world. Throughout the 19th century, witnesses had described similar sightings of pigeon migrations: how they took hours to pass over a single spot, darkening the firmament and rendering normal conversation inaudible. Pokagon remembered how sometimes a traveling flock, arriving at a deep valley, would "pour its living mass" hundreds of feet into a downward plunge. "I have stood by the grandest waterfall of America," he wrote, "yet never have my astonishment, wonder, and admiration been so stirred as when I have witnessed these birds drop from their course like meteors from heaven."

That passage and the quotes from Pokagon should give us pause and invigorate us to do everything we can to slow and reverse the havoc we've caused to our environment. See the Conservation Committee article later in this newsletter for some concrete things you can do here and now.

NEXT PROGRAM

Tuesday, November 14, at 7:15 PM

John Nelson presents

Funny Bird Sex: Stories Birds Tell About Birds and People

Wesley United Methodist Church, 98 North Maple Street, Hadley; also via Zoom

BYOB (non-alcoholic) to the meeting if you want a beverage

John's presentation will blend science, literature, and personal observation to explore the distinctive lives of seven bird species in Massachusetts and beyond. It will feature the stories they tell us about sex, family life, song, dance, and adaptability in birds and humans.

John Nelson is the author of *Flight Calls: Exploring Massachusetts through Birds*. His essay "Funny Bird Sex" in the *Antioch Review* was awarded a 2018 Pushcart Prize, and his narrative "Coming of Old Age in Samoa" in *The Missouri Review* was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. A professor emeritus at North Shore Community College, John was the 2021 Visiting Writer at the college. He chairs the Association of Massachusetts Bird Clubs as well as the Conservation and Education Committee of the Brookline Bird Club. He lives in the woods on a hilltop in Gloucester.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

- December 12, 2023. 7:15 PM. **Annual Members' Meeting.**
- January 9, 2024, 7:15 PM. Scott Weidnesaul. **Motus Towers.**
- February 13, 2024. 7:15 PM. TBA.
- March 12, 2024. 7:15 PM. Al and Lois Richardson. **Bhutan.**
- April 9, 2024. 7:15 PM. Ethan Clotfelder. **Tree Swallows and Chickadees.**
- May 14, 2024. 7:15 PM. Kurt Griffin. **Botswana.**
- June 11, 2024. Time TBA. **Club picnic.**

JAAP VAN HEERDEN

I am sad to report that longtime HBC member Jaap Van Heerden died on September 18, 2023 after a long illness. Jaap was a constant presence at member meetings with his irrepressible smile and joyful attitude. He was the guiding light for the club when it came to making speakers and their slides seen and heard at our meetings. He brought the club's audio/visual hardware into the 21st century and he was a steadfast member of the meeting setup committee. You can find out more about Jaap's life at www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/gazettenet/name/jacobus-vanheerden-obituary?id=53223660. Enjoy the symphony as you watch the birds, Jaap.

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared toward beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: people young in age, from underrepresented minority groups, or who have disabilities that make birding difficult. A one hour online educational session (half presentation, half discussion) is held prior to a two hour, in-person bird walk at an accessible location. All events are free and open to the public. Please help spread the word! The online presentation requires no registration (check the HBC website for the Zoom link). Those interested in attending the walk can register at bit.ly/2023bfe. Upcoming sessions are:

November 17, 2023 10 to 11 AM: Owls (Presentation)

November 24, 2023: TBD (Walk)

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

This year's Northampton (MANO) Christmas Bird Count will occur on Sunday, December 17. Counts have been very productive over the last few years (take that, Covid!). We're hoping for another winner and, once again, we need your help. Even if you haven't participated before, please consider joining the longest running community science project in the world and have fun doing it! Let us know via email if you'd like to take part or if you have questions: CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org.

If joining one of the count groups isn't your cup of tea, you can still count birds in your yard or on a walk around your neighborhood! We're delighted to welcome feeder-watchers and new count participants, explain how the CBC works, and answer all your questions. We'll have Zoom orientation meetings for leaders, participants, and feeder-watchers in the coming weeks. In these pre-count sessions, we'll cover everything, including instructions on filling out the forms.

Activities for compilation of the bird counts are to be announced. If you have thoughts or suggestions about that, give us a shout at the above email address.

For updates, continue to check the CBC page on the HBC website (hampshirebirdclub.org/northampton-christmas-bird-count) and the HBC Facebook page (www.facebook.com/groups/HampshireBirdClub). The Northampton (MANO) count circle map can be found at the CBC link above.

Join the CBC team of folks doing the work behind the scenes. We need helpers as we continue to expand and look to do succession planning. What does that mean? Tasks include entering data, working with feeder watchers, leading a small group of families with children on 12/17, helping a retirement center do a feeder count or walk on 12/17, and more. Email Janice or Amanda at CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org.

FIELD TRIPS FALL 2023

Please contact leaders (if a phone number or email is listed) at least two days in advance of the trip to register, and if you have any questions. It's always wise to bring snacks and dress appropriately. If you want to keep a list of birds seen during the field trips, Mass Audubon has checklists for each of their sanctuaries and these can also be used as trip lists (see www.massaudubon.org/places-to-explore/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia/programs-activities/go-birding). Whether with or without a leader, please follow our guidelines for ethical birding (hampshirebirdclub.org/hbc-code-of-birding-ethics-and-conduct) and those on our website regarding field trips (hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines).

Remember that we encourage carpooling. We ask that riders share costs with drivers as a matter of courtesy. The HBC recommends the current federal mileage reimbursement rate, shared by all occupants, but the rate for a vehicle is entirely up to the driver and passengers and should be determined before leaving.

October–November. Winsor Dam. Larry Therrien will be hosting impromptu birding trips to Winsor Dam depending on weather conditions. We will update the posting on the HBC's website and HBC's Facebook and Instagram accounts the day prior to the trip if conditions look good for seeing migrating waterbirds at Winsor Dam the next day. Times will be dependent on weather conditions. A scope will be helpful for seeing birds on the reservoir. Conditions are often windy, rainy, and cold, so wear appropriate clothing.

Sunday. November 5. Berkshire Lakes. 6:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Join Tom Gagnon as he heads to the Berkshire Lakes and joins the Hoffman Bird Club for their annual water bird census. The trip will also stop in Windsor to look for Northern Shrikes. The trip will require little walking. Dress appropriately for standing in potentially cold and wet conditions depending on the weather. A spotting scope is recommended if you have one. We will meet at the JFK Middle School in Northampton at 6:30 AM and carpool from there. To sign up, call Tom Gagnon at (413) 584-6353. (E)

Wednesday, November 8. Unity Park, Turners Falls. 8 to 11 AM. Meet at Unity Park in Turners Falls for a tour of places in the area including Barton Cove, Turners Falls Power Canal, Turners Falls Airport, and other locations in search of waterfowl, sparrows, and other migrating birds. There will be very little walking as we will be birding in parking areas near the cars. Scopes will be especially helpful. Contact Jim Lafley if interested at jimlafley@gmail.com. (E)

Sunday, November 12. Dead Creek WMA and Lake Champlain Valley. All day. Mike Locher heads north for the spectacle of hundreds of Snow Geese rising into the sun as a Rough-legged Hawk cruises by them. In addition to the geese and raptors, we'll look for ducks, grebes, gulls, and loons on Lake Champlain. Meet at Stop & Shop in Northampton (228 King Street) at 5:00 AM for carpooling. Bring a lunch if you wish (we'll stop for food) and bring a scope if you have one. Contact Mike (413-585-5864) for further details; there is no need to register, just show up on time. (E/M)

Sunday, November 12. New Member Walk—Arcadia Marsh and Oxbow. 8 to 10 AM. Members of the HBC Education Committee will lead a walk out to Arcadia Marsh and the Oxbow in search of migrating waterfowl. This is not a long walk and is on fairly flat terrain. We will meet at the Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary visitor center parking lot. (E)

Monday, November 25. Cape Ann or Plum Island. All day. Join Scott Sumner on an all day trip to either Cape Ann or Plum Island where we will look for alcids, waterfowl, and more. We will depart at 5 AM and return in the late afternoon. The trip is limited to ten people. Contact Scott Sumner at ssurner@aol.com for more information and to register. (E)

Field Trip designations:

- (E) – Easy walking conditions, fairly accessible for most, usually flat terrain on improved trails or roads.
- (M) – Moderately difficult, more challenging trail conditions, short steep sections, longer hikes involved.
- (S) – Strenuous conditions, muddy or rocky trails, steep sections, difficult footing in part.

I guess that you know that the opposite of wrinkly is irony.

FREE STUFF

David Spector has some bird and natural history books and a portable blind suitable for observation or photography at a nest or pond available for free. If you are interested contact him at spectord [at] ccsu.edu. He will bring these items to the November meeting.

THE HBC LIBRARY

The HBC has a library! It is stored in the Hitchcock Center for the Environment on route 116 in south Amherst. Any club member can take books out. As the librarian, I bring a selection of books to club meetings and will bring books that you request if you contact me ahead of time. Traveling somewhere and we don't have a guide for that area? I can buy it! The collection includes bird guides for many countries around the globe, how-to books, natural histories, ID guides, bird whodunnit novels, and more. Check it out! The complete list of books can be seen on the HBC website at hampshirebirdclub.org/resources/Documents/HBC-Library-2020-July-PDF.pdf. I generally do not accept book donations due to space limitations, I but will look over any list of books you send me to see if a few would fit our needs.

Henry Lappen, HBC Librarian, library@hampshirebirdclub.org

THE CBC CORNER

Rush Hour and Christmas Count Sparrows

by David Spector

Before considering birds, imagine a rush hour drive into a city. The traffic is much worse today than yesterday—why? Maybe I left five minutes later today and the traffic is always bad at this time; maybe there is a major sporting event in the city today; maybe, by chance, several people on this road have flat tires; maybe I forgot about the box of nails I left on the roof of my car while working on a carpentry project in my garage, and that box fell off yesterday resulting in today's multiple flats. What about the driver of the car next to me? I guess that she is another commuter heading to work—until I notice the out-of-state license plate and the stack of suitcases in the back—a vacationer who happened to be caught in this rush hour en route to a distant destination. Questions have answers, although the correct answer(s), among many plausible ones, might not be easy to determine.

As a birdwatcher and ornithologist I often get questions about bird behavior and abundance. I can sometimes answer these questions with some confidence, but often, as with the rush hour example, I can think of multiple plausible answers. Distinguishing among possibilities is often difficult, and more than one might contribute to an observed pattern, just as several flat tires and a major sporting event might contribute to one morning's traffic jam.

I have been asked why sparrow numbers were down on the 2022 Northampton Christmas Bird Count as compared with the 2021 count, a simple question with potentially complex answers. First I looked at some numbers. Ten species in the New World sparrow family were seen on the 2022 count; their numbers totaled 3341 individuals, down about 13% from the previous year.

Of those ten species, four account for over 98% of the sparrows seen on the 2022 count, and I decided to concentrate on those four. For three of those species, American Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Song Sparrow, the count was indeed down in 2022 compared with 2021; Dark-eyed Junco numbers, though, increased slightly between those years.

Are the changes from 2021 to 2022 within the normal range of fluctuation for the Northampton count? I looked at the last three decades of the count, and the numbers for this question are based on individuals per party hour of effort. Junco* numbers for those two years were well within the typical variability of the count. For Song Sparrow the 2022 count was the lowest in three decades; for White-throated Sparrow the third lowest; and for American Tree Sparrow the second lowest. The American Tree Sparrow low count is not surprising, though, given its steady decline.

Were the trends seen between those two years on the Northampton count peculiar to that count? No. For Massachusetts as a whole, trends matched the local count.

Why? All of these species are “short” distance migrants, remaining in North America without long flights to the tropics. Such species are often facultative migrants, adjusting migration to food availability, snow cover, temperature, and/or winds. Maybe “our” sparrows stayed north a bit later in 2022. I looked at count numbers in New Hampshire, and the counts per hour of effort for Song, White-throated, and American Tree Sparrows were indeed up compared with 2021, while the counts for juncos were down. Québec numbers were similar to those for New Hampshire (except that the small numbers of Song Sparrows counted there went up slightly). Thus, it seems likely that some of the sparrows we might have hoped to see on the 2022 Northampton count remained north of us, at least until later in the winter. I leave it to others to look at weather and seed availability in northern New England and southern Canada for those two Decembers.

I’ve pursued only a few approaches to analyzing these numbers and a limited number of possible explanations. I hope that I’ve given an idea of how complicated even starting to answer a simple question can be, but also given some ideas of how to pursue the answers.** Whether or not you choose to dig deeper into the numbers and the biology, I hope that everyone will enjoy participating in this year’s Christmas Counts.

*Junco numbers on this and other area counts are sometimes reported as “Dark-eyed Junco” and sometimes as “Slate-colored Junco”; it is necessary to combine the two.

**See my article in the March 2023 bird club newsletter for suggestions of websites to find some of the relevant numbers.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

Our big news this month is the new recurring Zoom link for our workshops. No more registration forms! The new link is both on the Education Workshops page, below the photo, and in the workshop description. Simply click on the link when it is time to attend a workshop.

The **Do-It-Yourself (DIY)** field trip is back with Brian Zylich and Lesley Farlow. Join us on Monday, November 6, 7-8 PM. You can use the Recurring zoom link on the Education Workshops page to attend!

Upcoming workshop:

Tuesday, November 15, 7-8 PM—**Woodpeckers, Woodpeckers, and more about Woodpeckers with Dana and Bob Fox**

Come and hear Dana and Bob tell a fascinating story about the Woodpecker family of birds. With 233 species in the world, woodpeckers are found almost worldwide where trees are abundant. We will see how this family evolved, its special biology, and how its members live in difficult locations. We will have some interesting stories about many of the more interesting species, stories that might surprise you.

New member bird walks—open to all:

1. November 12, 8 AM at the Oxbow/Arcadia. We’ll be looking for waterfowl.
2. March 9, 2024, evening—exact time TBA—at Park Hill Orchard in Easthampton. We’ll look for woodcocks.
3. May 19, 2024, 7 AM at Fort River (Silvio O. Conte) focusing on spring migrants.

More details will be available on the Education webpage, and we’ll send out reminder emails.

Did you miss a workshop last year? Well then, you are in luck. Our recorded programs are available on the [Hampshire Bird Club website](#). You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page.

Scroll down to the bottom of the page of videos to find Education workshops.

We are looking for new members! If you would like to join the Education Committee, please email [educa-tion@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org). If you have an idea for a workshop, email us.

All the old-timers in New England know well the four seasons:
almost winter, winter, still winter, and construction.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE CORNER

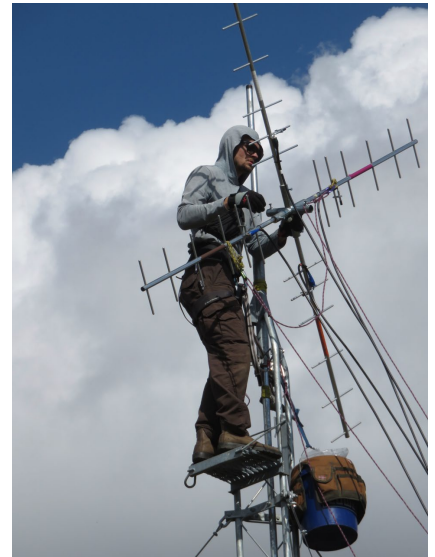
This offering continues a series from the Conservation Committee.

It has been a phenomenal year of birding in Massachusetts, with a number of vagrants spotted in some of our favorite birding hotspots. But as the woods and fields grow increasingly quiet this fall, it's a reminder that these birds are not to be taken for granted. Nationwide, birds are in trouble. And in Massachusetts, a state with great bird diversity, a whopping 22 birds are in decline and many more are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It is a frightening prospect that the excitement of our favorite birding pastime might wane as birds disappear.

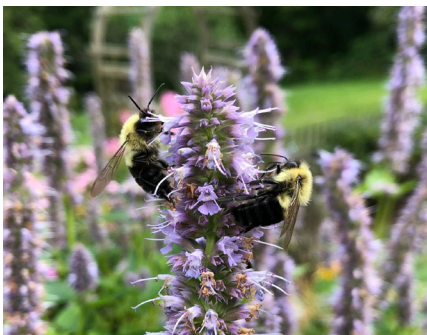
Fueled by an interest in bird conservation, the HBC re-established the Conservation Committee last spring to provide additional focus to the growing needs of birds in our area. The conservation challenge is daunting because of the many social, political, and economic factors that must be navigated to get meaningful conservation projects off the ground. However, the committee has identified several conservation opportunities that are within reach and that could produce conservation dividends. Here's an update on a few of our leading opportunities.

Motus Wildlife Tracking System—Miniature radio transmitters, called nanotags, are revolutionizing our understanding of bird, bat, and even insect movement. One might think that placing a tag on a bird could interfere with flight, but these tags are incredibly lightweight. There are fifteen receiver towers that pick up the signal of these nanotags in Massachusetts. That might sound like a lot, but their detection range is limited to roughly ten miles and there are gaps right here in our area. In collaboration with the Northeast Motus Collaborative, the committee is investigating the potential for sponsoring the construction of a receiver in the hilltowns between the Connecticut River Valley and the Berkshires so that bird movement and habitat usage can be more readily understood. Two committee members observed the installation of a tower at October Mountain State Forest last month to get a sense of what is involved.

Chimney Swift Nesting Tower—One of the great spectacles in a summer evening is the swirling flock of nesting Chimney Swifts returning to their roost. New England has an abundance of old mills and brick buildings which often serve as Chimney Swift roosting or nesting habitat. But as these structures age, it isn't uncommon for communities to remove the buildings and repurpose the land, thereby eliminating the Chimney Swift colony. As a result, and because of old growth forest loss, Chimney Swifts are on the decline and are on a list of birds that could one day go extinct. Intervention is necessary. Designs for nesting towers are readily available, and Bruce Hart is looking into the construction of a tower in Williamsburg to replace a roosting site in the chimney of an old school building that has recently been demolished. While finding suitable locations and willing recipients of a tower is challenging, several locations have been suggested for consideration and the discussion is ongoing.



Working on a Motus tower. Photo credit: Bob Zimmermann.



Bees at work. Photo credit: Bob Zimmermann.

Pollinator Gardens—A vast majority of the world's flowering plants rely on pollinators (insects, bats, and birds) for reproduction. Many birds in our area rely on those very same insects for food. Unfortunately, key pollinators such as wild bees and some butterflies are on the decline owing to habitat loss, climate change, and the indiscriminate use of herbicides, creating concerns for the persistence of our insectivorous birds and natural communities. One option to help reduce this decline, promoted by state and federal agencies and conservation groups, is the expansion of pollinator gardens. Not only do flowering milkweed, sunflowers, cone-flower, and lavender produce pollinator benefits, they are colorful and easy to maintain. The committee is promoting the use of pollinator

gardens as an affordable and effective conservation tool in our area. Several committee members have registered their pollinator gardens with HomeGrownNationalPark.org and have eliminated their lawns in favor of low maintenance pollinator gardens.

Grassland bird monitoring—Isabel Bronson, Land Stewardship Coordinator with the Trustees of Reservations, joined the Conservation Committee to discuss the plight of grassland birds and opportunities to assist in monitoring them on Trustees' properties. Point count surveys during the breeding season on these properties are helping managers and scientists answer key unknowns such as whether timing of migration is changing due to climate change, whether grassland bird arrival coincides with food availability, and what are effective management regimes. The program expanded to include 28 properties this year, and several committee members assisted with point counts on four of them in western Massachusetts. We aim to have the HBC be part of the larger effort to conserve grassland birds such as the Bobolink, which has experienced a significant decline due to habitat loss, and stands to benefit from this program.



Male Bobolink. Image credit: Creative Commons, photo by JanetandPhil.

If you have an interest in making a difference to birds in our area by participating in any of these activities, we welcome you to join the HBC Conservation Committee. Please contact Bob Zimmermann at raz@umass.edu.

Will Duncan, HBC Conservation Committee Member

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

A warm welcome to our new members! This month we launched our brand-new membership software and everyone who set up a new account appears in the system as a new member! Thank you to all who have renewed or joined and set up profiles. The new system has streamlined our membership process and it is much easier to manage! A note about your family members—anyone at the Family Membership level or above can add family members after you set up your own profile. The software calls your family members "bundle members" and you, the primary member, are the "bundle coordinator". Let me know if you need help with this. Profiles—the basic contact information in your profile forms the new online and password protected Membership Directory. You may share your contact information (nothing more) or you can opt to keep your profile hidden. We won't be mailing a membership directory this winter. You can log in and get up-to-the-minute contact information on the website under the member tab. You can also get a new password and update your information and preferences at any time.

So far, the feedback has been that it's easy to join and renew, if you haven't already, I hope you use this note to remind you to renew your membership.

Donna Lee Ubertalli, Membership Secretary, membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The following program is offered by Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. Sign up online. More programs can be found at www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia.

Winter Birds and Bird Feeders—Saturday, December 3, 9 AM–noon

Bird feeding is a popular winter activity and a great way to learn to identify backyard birds. View an indoor presentation on the wintering birds of our area. Learn about the different types of bird feeders, what to put in them, and when to put out food. We will also discuss community science projects and what you can do to help birds thrive. After the indoor presentation we will head outdoors to look for birds. Fall is a great time to take a closer look at all the ways plants ensure their next generation successfully develops and thrives. We will explore the inner workings of seeds, nuts, berries, drupes, and more as we review how native plants prepare for winter and the subsequent spring in this online program.

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 40, No. 4

December 2023

Dear reader, after the downer of a report last month about species being delisted from the Endangered Species Act list because, well, they are no longer, I thought it best to pass along some good news for the holiday season. In a recent article in the *Boston Herald*, there was news of the resurgence of Massachusetts' Piping Plovers. The altogether alliterative headline for the article tells the tale: "Piping plovers popping in Massachusetts: Researchers identify record year for the bird species." The gist of the story is that the number of nesting pairs of Piping Plovers in the state has increased from about 200 in 1986 to 1,145 this year. This is due in no small part to efforts by Mass Audubon with cooperation from local and state governments. Since about half of the worldwide population of Piping Plovers breeds in Massachusetts, this is all very good news.

A year after the 1986 start of the restoration effort for the plovers, the federal government captured all 27 members of the remaining wild population of California Condors and began a breeding program. By late last year, there were 561 California Condors in the world. The situation is tenuous but stable, and we now have condors flying wild once again in California and Arizona.

Do you remember Wisdom, the 72-year-old Laysan Albatross that I wrote about in the April 2021 issue? Well, she was spotted last December on Midway Atoll, but her long-time breeding partner, Akeakamai, did not arrive. Wisdom, who is the oldest known living wild bird, hasn't yet been seen this year, but it is still early for her to arrive at Midway. The best estimates suggest that Wisdom has flown over three million miles in her lifetime. The USGS has had to replace her leg band six times. One might note that Queen Elizabeth II's reign was from February 6, 1952, to September 8, 2022. Wisdom therefore was flying before the start and after the end of Elizabeth's record-setting longest reign of any other British monarch and longest verified reign of any female head of state in the world. Not too shabby for the old girl!

NEXT PROGRAM

Tuesday, December 12, at 7:15 PM

Annual Members' Meeting

Via Zoom

As is our club's tradition, the December meeting is for club members to show-and-tell their favorite pictures and tales of their birding exploits. This year the whole meeting will be on Zoom, so even if you live far from Hampshire County you can be a presenter! Have you ever wanted to talk to the club about something, but not felt like you had enough for a whole program? Did you take a birding trip recently and want to share a few photos? Do you want to tell people about your favorite birding spot, or favorite bird species, or favorite fellow birder? This is the meeting for you! Several club members get to share the night, each one talking for 10-15 minutes and showing a few slides (or not).

Our Program Chair Josh Rose is organizing the program. If you'd like to participate, email him at programs@hampshirebirdclub.org pronto!

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

- January 9, 2024, 7:15 PM. Scott Weidensaul. **Motus Towers.**
- February 13, 2024. 7:15 PM. TBA.
- March 12, 2024. 7:15 PM. Al and Lois Richardson. **Bhutan.**
- April 9, 2024. 7:15 PM. Ethan Clotfelder. **Tree Swallows and Chickadees.**
- May 14, 2024. 7:15 PM. Kurt Griffin. **Botswana.**
- June 11, 2024. Time TBA. **Club picnic.**

NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

It's right around the corner! The Northampton (MANO) Christmas Bird Count (our 89th) will be held on Sunday, December 17. Plans are well underway, and we're hoping for another great count this year! We've developed strong Covid-workarounds, so we'll stick with the protocols that have kept everyone healthy over the last few years. Feel free to discuss this with your team leaders if you have any questions.

Speaking of safety, did you know that we notify the Police Departments in all 14 towns within the count circle? They appreciate knowing what all those folks walking and driving around with binoculars hanging from their necks are up to!

If you haven't yet joined a team, or signed up to be a feeder watcher or a yard watcher, it's not too late. The CBC is one the world's largest community science projects, and the MANO count is the **fifth biggest** in North America. *And it's fun!*

Let us know if you'd like to participate by sending us an email. Even if you don't join one of the count groups or don't have feeders, you can still count birds in your yard or take a walk around your neighborhood. We're delighted to welcome feeder-watchers and yard watchers along with new count participants, to explain how the CBC works, and to answer all your questions. As in years past, we'll have Zoom orientation meetings (how it all works, including filling out the forms) along with a Zoom compilation wrap up (information and links below in the Education Committee section).

Oh, no!!!! Bears!!!! Don't worry if you don't dare put up feeders. You can be a yard birder. How to be a yard birder? First, be sure your yard is in our count circle (Go to the CBC page on the HBC website and click on the Google map link under the "Northampton (MANO) Maps" header. Then type your address in the magnifying glass at the top left. The small red dot is your location. You might need to make the map smaller to see if you are inside or outside the count circle.)

To be a yard watcher

- Look out your windows for a minimum of 15 minutes three times on the 17th.
- Count and record the number and species of birds you see each time.
- Submit to the CBC the highest number of each species seen at any one time.
- Submit the total time your household spent checking your yard.

Please feel free to contact the MANO team to sign up or with questions at CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org.

FIELD TRIP DECEMBER 2023

Please contact leaders (if a phone number or email is listed) at least two days in advance of the trip to register, and if you have any questions. It's always wise to bring snacks and dress appropriately. If you want to keep a list of birds seen during the field trips, Mass Audubon has checklists for each of their sanctuaries and these can also be used as trip lists (see www.massaudubon.org/places-to-explore/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia/programs-activities/go-birding). Whether with or without a leader, please follow our guidelines for ethical birding (hampshirebirdclub.org/hbc-code-of-birding-ethics-and-conduct) and those on our website regarding field trips (hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines). Note that you need to complete the field trip waiver every time that you open or renew your membership in order to participate in HBC field trips.

Remember that we encourage carpooling. We ask that riders share costs with drivers as a matter of courtesy. The HBC recommends the current federal mileage reimbursement rate, shared by all occupants, but the rate for a vehicle is entirely up to the driver and passengers and should be determined before leaving.

Saturday, December 9. Hadley. 7:00 PM. Join Mike Locher to look for owls in the Hadley area. The trip will start at the Hadley Village Barn Shop and we will head out from there. We will be listening for Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, and hope for a Northern Saw-whet Owl. Recordings will be used to locate owls. Birding will be mostly by car. Contact Mike (413-585-5864) for further details. (E)

Field Trip designations:

- (E) – Easy walking conditions, fairly accessible for most, usually flat terrain on improved trails or roads.
- (M) – Moderately difficult, more challenging trail conditions, short steep sections, longer hikes involved.
- (S) – Strenuous conditions, muddy or rocky trails, steep sections, difficult footing in part.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

November 8 trip to Unity Park and environs, Turners Falls.

On a cold and windy day, a small group of dedicated birdwatchers braved the elements to visit Barton Cove, Turners Falls Rod and Gun Club, and the Power Canal. A scope was definitely necessary to see the distant birds, which were few and far between.

At Barton Cove we saw a Bald Eagle trying to feed in the flotsam and jetsam trapped against the barrels while it was being harassed by American Crows. Canada Geese, Mute Swans, and Mallards drifted along the far edge feeding casually. A large raft of Ring-necked Ducks contained some Buffleheads as well as a Pied-billed Grebe on the perimeter of the group.

We moved on to the Rod & Gun Club where we saw a similar mix of geese, swans, Mallards, and a pair of Buffleheads, but were surprised by a Long-tailed Duck. A group of Dark-eyed Juncos were along the edge of the woods with an Eastern Bluebird, while a flock of House Finches and Goldfinches were hiding and feeding in the shoreline weeds.

At the Power Canal we saw a female Common Goldeneye and a Great Blue Heron.

Jim Lafley

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

Thanks to all who joined us for Dana and Bob Fox's fascinating Woodpeckers workshop. Anyone who joined late might not have heard that Bob Fox is one of the few people alive to have seen the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and the Imperial Cuban Woodpecker, both of which are now considered extinct.

The **89th MANO Christmas Bird Count** is the Education Committee's primary focus for December. It takes place on **Sunday, December 17.**

We will offer three pre-CBC Zoom workshops:

CBC Participants Workshop on Wednesday, December 6, 7:00–8:30 PM.

Everything concerning how to be part of this event: rare birds, signs on your windshield, common birds, and more.

CBC Feeder Watchers Workshop on Monday, December 11, 7–8 PM.

For both new and returning feeder watchers.

CBC Team Leaders Workshop on Wednesday, December 13, 7–8 PM.

Everything from signs on your dashboard to using eBird Trip Reports and rare bird sightings.

We will offer one post-CBC Zoom workshop:

Tally Party: 89th MANO CBC Results on Monday, December 18, 7–10 PM.

Share your stories and photos, and we will share the final numbers!

Go to the HBC Education Workshop page for more detailed descriptions and Zoom links for each workshop. They each have a separate link.

Questions? Please email Janice Jorgensen or Amanda Kallenbach at cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org.

The **Do-It-Yourself (DIY)** field trips with Brian and Lesley will resume in January. Enjoy the Christmas Bird Count!

New member bird walks —open to all:

- March 9, 2024, evening—exact time TBA—at Park Hill Orchard in Easthampton. We'll look for woodcocks.
- May 19, 2024, 7 AM at Fort River (Silvio O. Conte), focusing on spring migrants.

More details will be available on the Education webpage and we'll send emails.

Did you miss a workshop last year? Our recorded programs are available on the [Hampshire Bird Club website](#). You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page. Scroll down to the bottom of the videos page to find Education workshops. If you have an idea for a workshop, email us at [educa-tion@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org). **We are looking for new members!** If you would like to join the Education Committee, please email us.

MARTIN NESTING AT FORT RIVER

The Hampshire Bird Club has generously agreed to support a project to attract Purple Martins back to nests again at the Conte Refuge at Fort River. For the past two years, the Martins have been driven away by House Sparrows, European Starlings, and Tree Swallows. After some research by Mary McKittrick and Theresa Ges-sing, it was decided to clean the nest gourds in the fall, erect Tree Swallow boxes in the area, and keep the gourd entrances blocked until the Purple Martins return to the area.

In the first step, after the federal paperwork was deftly completed by Mary McKittrick, a small group of volunteers worked with Jen Lapis of the USFWS to lower and clean the artificial gourds for winter storage. Jim Lafley joined Mary and Theresa at the site to do the cleaning. The gourds were fitted with foam plugs and stored in a garage on the site.

The group plans to do more research this winter to fine tune the effort. The next step will involve building Tree Swallow boxes that will be placed on poles around the area at an appropriate distance from the gourds. George Regmund, Jim Turcotte, and Jim Lafley have agreed to build and erect the boxes on the site.

In the spring the gourds will be installed and monitored regularly in order that the plugs can be removed once the Purple Martins arrive which is usually later than the other species. The aim is to have the competitors establish nesting sites away from the gourds and thus improving the nesting sites for the Martins.

The HBC has dedicated funds to purchase the materials needed to build the boxes and for the poles on which to mount the boxes. We will keep you informed about the project as it progresses.

Jim Lafley

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to all our new members and thank you to all the members who have joined on the new website, activated their membership, and/or completed their online profile. You need to activate your profile to let us know your preferences, including accepting the field trip waiver, which is required to participate in field trips. To activate or edit your profile, first sign in on the club home page and then click on your name. You can make edits right there.

In past years we have mailed a membership directory in January, but we won't be doing that anymore, since the new website enables access to the directory, which is continually updated. The directory is always easily accessible on the website to members. To find it, make sure you are logged in on the website and then click on the "Members Only" tab and then the "HBC Member Directory" link.

Overall, the new website has greatly reduced the time needed to manage your membership, which is a great leap forward! I hope you've found it easy to use. As always, I'm available to answer questions.

Donna Lee Ubertalli, Membership Secretary, membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The following program is offered by Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. Sign up online. More programs can be found at www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia.

Winter Birds and Bird Feeders—Saturday, December 2, 9 AM–noon

Bird feeding is a popular winter activity and a great way to learn to identify backyard birds. View an indoor presentation on the wintering birds of our area. Learn about the different types of bird feeders, what to put in them, and when to put out food. We will also discuss community science projects and what you can do to help birds thrive. After the indoor presentation we will head outdoors to look for birds. Fall is a great time to take a closer look at all the ways plants ensure their next generation successfully develops and thrives. We will explore the inner workings of seeds, nuts, berries, drupes, and more as we review how native plants prepare for winter and the subsequent spring in this online program.

Winter Birds—Saturdays, January 6, 20, & 27, 9–11 AM

How can you tell the difference between a House Finch and a Purple Finch, or a Downy Woodpecker and a Hairy Woodpecker? You'll learn how in this three-session series on the wintering birds found in the Connecticut River Valley.

Winter is the ideal time to learn to recognize the birds that utilize bird feeders, since there are fewer species than at other times of year, and we can see them more easily at feeders and when the trees are bare.

We'll be learning about all the birds found in our area and how to identify them by sight, sound, and behavior.

Each session will be held in person at Arcadia both indoors and outdoors.

Hitchcock Center for the Environment

The following program is offered by the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. Sign up online. More programs can be found at www.hitchcockcenter.org/programs/community-programs/.

Ice and Snow: The Cold Story—Tuesday, December 5, 6:30–8:00 PM with John Green

Winter is beautiful, and John Green's photos will remind you of that fact! Here in New England we are fortunate to have four distinct seasons, although, due to a warming climate, the annual temperature average may be higher now than in the past. In southern New England we still experience the influx of migrating birds and blossoming flowers in the spring; thunderstorms and rainbows during the summer; and colorful foliage, reverse bird migration, and leaf fall in the autumn. However, recent winters have been less dynamic than those we have experienced historically, landscapes are seldom totally transformed by snow cover, and waterways are rarely completely immobilized by icy conditions due to sustained frigid temperatures. Fortunately, John has been photographing wintry conditions dating back to the mid 1970s and this program, *Ice and Snow*, is the result of his love for the season of cold.

EDITORIAL ADVICE

For those of you who aspire to be the next exalted editor of the Hampshire Bird Club newsletter, here follow some points to keep in mind. The current editor always aspires to attend to these attributes.

How to write good: Editor's Edition

1. Avoid. Alliteration. Always.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. Avoid clichés like the plague. They're old hat.
4. Comparisons are as bad as clichés.
5. Be more or less specific.
6. Writers should never generalize.
- Seven. Be consistent!
8. Don't be redundant; don't use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
9. Who needs rhetorical questions?
10. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.
11. Be sure to not split infinitives.

Looking for your 2024 calendar? Make sure that it's in the Gregorian style:

Sunday – Greg
Monday – Ian
Tuesday – Greg
Wednesday – Ian
Thursday – Greg
Friday – Ian
Saturday – Greg

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor