

## Hampshire Bird Club -- January 1997

**MONTHLY MEETINGS:** A very special program is planned for the new year. On Monday, January 13, Belchertown photographer Les Campbell will present the multi-media program he calls "The Four Quabbins," created from many thousands of images taken over the years by this award-winning photographer. Those who have experienced his program rave about it. Les worked for the Metropolitan District Commission water quality lab for nearly forty-four years. He and his wife Terry founded the Quabbins Visitors Center and its support group, Friends of Quabbin. This is your chance to see Quabbin, a familiar and favorite birding area, through new eyes.

*Save February 10 (Scott Hall on the Puffin restoration project in the Gulf of Maine); March 10 (Chris Rimmer on the Bicknell's Thrush); and April 14 (Ethan Temeles on hummingbirds).*

**FIELD TRIPS:** Saturday, January 11 -- all-day trip to the North Shore with Bob Bieda (527-2623); Saturday, January 18 -- a morning of local winter birding with Morris Lainer (527-9412); Saturday, January 25 -- all-day trip from Falmouth to Plymouth with Al Richards (665-2761). Don't forget to check the HBC VOICE (253-2218) for up-to-date news about what birds are being seen and where to see them.

**LIBRARY NOTES:** Lost book -- *Shadowbirds, A Quest for Rails*. If you know of its whereabouts call Anne Cann at 253-7753. New -- "The Ultimate Birding VCR Game" Gone Birding. More next letter.

If you are interested in taking Jan Ortiz's Winter Birding Class beginning Saturday, January 18, be sure to call the Hitchcock Center at 256-6006 to register.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER**  
February, 1997

**PROGRAMS**

We are happy to welcome Scott Hall as our program presenter on Monday, February 10, 7:30 p.m. at the Hitchcock Center. Scott is a graduate student in Wildlife Biology at UMass. He has been working as one of the wardens on the Bird Islands off the coast of Maine as part of the Puffin Restoration Project. He will share his experiences and update us on the project.

We have just learned that Chris Rimmer will be in the Dominican Republic on March 10, the evening he was to present a program on the Bicknell's Thrush. At this time March's program has not been set. You'll learn all about who and what in the next letter! You'll still have an opportunity to become a Bicknell's Thrush enthusiast next September when the program has been rescheduled.

On April 14 Ethan Temeles will present a multi-media program on hummingbirds. May 12 brings us Jonathan Atwood from Manomet to speak on the California Gnatcatcher. And for the last program of the year on June 9 we'll be hearing about the compilation of the Christmas Bird Counts from the man in charge, Geoff LeBaron.

**FIELD TRIPS**

At a recent Board meeting it occurred to us that new members and those new to birding may have no idea what to expect should they want go on an HBC field trip. "As a new birder will I feel out of place?" "Will I be welcome?" "Can I keep up with the group?" "Will there be bathroom stops?" First of all, everyone is welcome. It is especially fun for the leader to be able to introduce new birders to new birds and birding places. Certainly the participant is expected to bring binoculars and wear clothing appropriate to the particular trip. A sincere interest in seeing and learning more about birds in places where birds are found is important. (Not many malls advertise rare bird specials.) All are expected to share trip expenses equally (gas, tolls, etc.). If a trip is known to be especially challenging, either physically or because of its fast pace (sometimes it is fun to see as many birds as possible in the time allotted) it will be noted, although obviously the leader cannot predict everything. Comfort is a priority (as much as is possible in -10° weather, high above a wind-swept coast, looking down on Harlequin Ducks).

In this and in future Newsletters I will try to describe the trip more fully and name some of the birds that

the leader expects to see. You are encouraged to call the leader with any questions that concern you -- trust me, they have heard them all. It is not always necessary to register for the trip, but it helps the leader to know who is going when s/he is arranging for car pooling or in the event that plans need to be changed.

A new list covering spring and summer trips is in the works and will be sent to all members in March.

But, for now --

On Wednesday, February 19, Harvey Allen is planning a morning of birding in the Connecticut River Valley. Some of the mid-winter specialities he hopes to find are the white-winged gulls (Iceland and Glaucous), Common and Barrow's Goldeneye and Great Cormorant. Away from the river there are possibilities of seeing Snow Buntings, Horned Larks and maybe a Lapland Longspur. Dress warmly and in layers. Make sure your footwear is appropriate for winter near the river. Feel free to bring snacks. Meet at the Bowling Alley in Northampton, 525 Pleasant St. (Route 5) at 7:00 a.m. Call Harvey at 253-7963 for more information.

On Saturday, March 8, Mark Mount will lead a half-day trip of his own choosing. Call him at home (253-5169) to learn the whats and the wherefores surrounding this mystery tour.

And on Saturday, March 22, Al Richards is off on a half-day search for waterfowl in the Connecticut Valley. Dress warmly and in layers. Make sure your footgear is appropriate for late winter near water. Feel free to bring snacks. Al expects to see Wood Ducks, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintails, American Widgeon, Ring-neck Ducks, Scaups, and Mergansers, plus early migrating hawks, sparrows and warblers. The group will meet at the Hitchcock Center for car-pooling at 6:30 a.m. Call Al at 665-2761 for more information and to let him know you are interested.

#### LIBRARY

Notes from Anne Cann: The "lost" book *Shadowbirds, A Quest for Rails* has been found. The donated video board game *Gone Birding*, was mentioned but not described in the January postcard. You will enjoy Bill Oddie and Peter Alden clowning about on the tape as they lead you here and there to birding hot spots. This ultimate birding VCR game can be played at varying skill levels and provides learning as well as entertainment. Different skill levels can compete in the same game.

New in the library are recent issues of two periodicals from across the Atlantic -- *BIRDS, the Magazine of the R.S.P.B.* and *I.W.C., the Newsletter of the Irish Wildbird Conservancy*. According to Anne, both are a lot of fun to

read through. Want to join a tour with British birders? Want to see Irish birds through the eyes of an Irish leader? These periodicals are full of articles on conservation, birding hot spots, lots of B & Bs and many other enticing things to get you over the winter doldrums.

#### ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS and TRIPS

David Spector will be presenting two programs for the Hitchcock Center. The first, *Owling With An Expert*, takes place on Sunday, February 23, 3:00 a.m. - dawn. Call the Center at 256-6006 to register. There is a fee. The second on Thursday, February 13, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. is one of a series of lectures focusing on historic naturalists of the Connecticut River Valley. David will speak on *Margaret Morse Nice: Ornithologist and Ethologist*. The talk is free.

Also of interest: On Saturday, February 8, 6:45 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Geoff LeBaron (our June speaker) will be leading a *Rhode Island Winter Coastal Birding* trip for Arcadia. Call the Sanctuary at 584-3009 to register. There is a fee.

And a note from long-time HBC members Micky McKinley and Samuel Green about a trip they are taking (*The Birds and Natural History of Venezuela: Coastal Reefs, and Andes and the Llanos.*), March 19-30. They have been with the tour leaders before and think they were excellent. If you are interested in learning more, call them at 367-9791.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Enclosed is the 1996-1997 membership list as of January 31. If you find errors please let Dianne Quilty know (253-7568). I will pass on any additions to the list as I receive them. You will notice that in addition to the members' list, Dianne has listed Board Members, how to get in touch with other Bird Clubs and numbers for the *VOICE of AUDUBON*, East and West.

*Bird News of Western Massachusetts* subscribers can expect the first issue to arrive in late winter. The Winter, 1997 issue contains the records for the Fall, 1996.

#### AND

I don't mean to get personal, but have you been cornered by the dread winter doldrums? If so, the HBC comes to your rescue. What a Club!

Some life-lines to sanity have already been suggested in this letter. Plan a dream trip from those suggested in the pages of the two new periodicals in the library. Take out *GONE BIRDING*, set it at the beginner's level and amaze yourself, your family and your friends with your avian

You could do as one of our members is doing. He can be found sitting in front of his fireplace painlessly ticking off lifebirds gained from recent AOU approved splits that he discovered in Kenn Kauffman's new book *Lives of North American Birds*.

Another member, one who loves to play with words to pass the time sent the following to help those of us in the same pursuit. The Challenge -- change one letter in a non-English phrase and redefine the phrase.

*Harley-vous Francais?* (Can you drive a French motorcycle?)  
*Veni, vidi, vice.* (I came, I saw, I partied.)  
*Cogito, Eggo sum.* (I think, therefore I am a waffle.)  
*Cogito, ergo sup.* (I think, therefore I eat.)  
*Rigor Morris.* (The cat is dead.)

Get the idea? See what foolish fiddle-faddle you can fashion.

**Mazel ton.** (Lots of luck!)

And finally, finally --

A hungry lion (this is for all you naturalist types out there) was roaming through the jungle looking for something to eat. He came across two men. One was sitting under a tree and reading a book; the other was typing away on his typewriter. The lion quickly pounced on the man reading the book and devoured him. Even the king of the jungle knows that readers digest and writers cramp.

And speaking of writers cramp -- I'm out of here!

*Sally*

Sally Venman, Secretary

## HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

March, 1997

I have Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at my feeder. I have Common Yellowthroats and Black-throated Blues at my birdbath. I am awakened each morning by the singing of the Baltimore Oriole. Truth? Fiction? Hallucinations? Visualizations? Spiritual Visitations? -- Only the analyst knows. -- Oh, the sad plight of the aging, snow-bound, winter-weary birder.

### PROGRAMS

For those of us who are definitely unpleasant, ugly and perhaps a bit goofy during the seemingly endless periods of short days, long nights, sleet and slush and so on, there will be a program on Monday, March 10, 7:30 p.m. at the Hitchcock Center to brighten our moods. Using slides and narrative, HBC member Tom Army will be taking us away to the northern and western parts of Australia. He has entitled his presentation ***Back Out to the Outback***. Tom is a professor of Astronomy and Weather at U.Mass. His long-standing love of natural history and birds (he admits to being a fanatic birder) is apparent in his programs. If you have not had the opportunity to hear Tom at earlier Club meetings (this is his fourth appearance) you have a real treat in store.

Save April 14 when Ethan Temeles will present a multi-media program on hummingbirds; May 12 for Jonathan Atwood from Manomet speaking on the California Gnatcatcher; and June 9 when we'll be hearing about the compilation of the Christmas Bird Counts from the man in charge, Geoff LeBaron.

### FIELD TRIPS

Enclosed with this letter is the Field Trip list for April through September. Take a moment to remind yourself that warm weather is coming and to set time aside to take advantage of the offerings. You will note that trips have been described in more detail. You are encouraged to call the leader with any questions you have. Although it is not always necessary to register for the trip it helps the leader to know who is participating when arranging for car pooling or in the event that plans need to be changed.

On Saturday, March 8, Mark Mount will lead a half-day trip (6:30 a.m. - noon) to Quabbin in search of waterfowl and early migrants. He hopes to find Ring-necked Ducks, Mergansers, Scaups, Bufflehead, Bluebirds, Robins, Waxwings, Northern Shrike, Bald and maybe even a Golden Eagle. Be sure to wear plenty of layers and solid footwear for warmth and dryness. Bring snacks if you care to. Call Mark at home (253-5169) to learn where to meet.

On Saturday, March 22, Al Richards will search for waterfowl in the Connecticut Valley. Dress warmly and in layers for this half-day trip. Make sure your footwear is appropriate for late winter near water. Feel free to bring snacks. Al expects to see Wood Ducks, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintails, American Widgeon, Ring-neck Ducks, Scaups, and Mergansers, plus early migrating hawks, sparrows and warblers. The group will meet at the Hitchcock Center for car-pooling at 6:30 a.m. Call Al at 665-2761 for more information and to let him know you are interested.

On Wednesday, April 2 Harvey Allen (253-7963) will lead the first of monthly mid-week trips entitled *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley*. See the list for more detail.

On Saturday, April 12 Bob Bieda (527-2623) searches for early warblers and other migrants at the Ashley Reservoir.

On Saturday, April 19 Morris Lainer (527-9412) heads to Plum Island to search for the rare Ruff.

## **BIRDING with HITCHCOCK**

Jan Ortiz, one of the HBC founders and a past president is a seasoned, dedicated birder with a special gift for communicating her love and knowledge of birds to others. She will again be teaching the Spring Birding Class for the Hitchcock Center marking her tenth year in that position. Jan offers this description: "The classes are geared to birders of all levels, but the pace will be leisurely. Ample time will be given to view and discuss the birds we see. Using slides and bird mounts in the classroom sessions, we will discuss migration, behavior, identification, song and what species we expect to see in the field. We will also take some time each week to note the progression of spring and how it relates to bird migration." There will be two sessions.

Session I (8 weeks, March 19 - May 17 or 18): Wednesday evenings 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. and Saturday or Sunday mornings 7:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (no classes March 26 - 30). This Session includes an all-day trip to Plum Island.

Session II (4 weeks, April 24 - May 16): Thursday evenings 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. and Friday mornings 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Call the Center (256-6006) to register. There is a fee.

## **A CALL FOR ASSISTANCE**

In addition to helping members to enjoy birding, one of the purposes of the HBC as defined by the bylaws is to engage in activities supporting the education of its members. We are especially eager to encourage young people who have shown a serious interest in natural history in general and birds in particular. It seems we have a perfect opportunity to do just this in a very positive way today. One of our members, Zeke Jakub, has an opportunity to attend Camp Chan Chich, an international camp in Belize for young birders offered by VENT and co-sponsored by ABA. The trip is limited to sixteen participants and is designed to give young birders a unique opportunity to become familiar with important neotropical genera, to investigate neotropical bird behavior, and to experience the tropical forest under the tutelage of some of the best naturalists around.

Zeke is not your standard 16-year old. A sophomore at Greenfield High School, he has already proved himself to be a very bright and self-motivated young man. For a special Science Research class at school he cataloged vocalizations of the American Crow making recordings and noting behavior using two crow clans in the area as study subjects. He is now working with Don Kroodsmas researching crow vocal behavior and with Don's help is waiting to receive a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help further his research. Last summer he earned a full three-week scholarship through the National Science Foundation to attend a pre-college course focusing on the diverse birds of Colorado's Central Rocky Mountains. The same summer he took part in training workshops at VINS as a camp councilor at the Summer Discover Day Camp, not only gaining knowledge and experience but also earning a stunning letter of recommendation from the Director. These are just a few samples of his accomplishments.

However, the trip is expensive and Zeke needs help. He has serious scholarship possibilities from both ABA and Victor Emanuel but the amount he could be granted seems dependent upon the amount he can raise on his own. He has come up with several fund-raising possibilities. With the help of his brother he has created a crow and quotation design silkscreened on a T-shirt. He is collecting cans and bottles which he will recycle. And he is offering to do yard work and other odd jobs.

With this in mind, Zeke approached the Board with a request that the HBC help him in any way possible. The Board unanimously agreed that our support is appropriate in this instance and voted to give him \$100 toward the trip. It also voted to encourage the membership to consider helping him by supporting one of his fund-raising projects.

Zeke will be at the March meeting to take orders for T-shirts and to answer questions, or call him at 413-773-7906.

### **IMPORTANT CORRECTIONS**

There were two errors reported on the membership list sent last month. Please make note of the following corrections on your list:

Marty Ortiz's Home Phone Number should read **413-369-4076**.

Voice of Audubon for Eastern MA should read **617-259-8805**.

### **FINALLY**

I am extremely happy to announce that I have finally finished gathering materials for the New Member's packet. It is being sent to all first time members who have joined since September. If somehow I missed you, please give me a call (549-1098). Included in the packet: the HBC By-laws, an HBC Library information sheet, the HBC Membership List (if the new member has not already received it), the HBC Field Trip Policy statement and a Birding Ethics statement issued by the American Birding Association, the Dead Bird Sheet ("Does anybody have a use for this dead bird?"), a Feeder Check List, a listing of Rare Bird Alerts across the country, and the Eight Question Birding Game ("How to Keep Your Friends While Showing Off Your Birding Knowledge.") Should anyone want extra copies of any of these, I'll have them at the meetings or would be happy to send them to you.

### **DEDICATED**

to the premise that it is sinful to leave empty space at the end of an HBC Newsletter -----

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.)

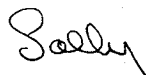
*Posh Mortem* (Death styles of the rich and famous.)

*Repondez 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.

Oh, the sad plight of the aging, snow-bound, winter-weary birder.



HAPPY DUCK HUNTING!

Sally Venman, Sec'y

## HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB -- April, 1997

Early this week the Spotted Salamanders were donning their little earmuffs and waxing their little cross-country skis in preparation for the annual Henry Street crossing. Do you suppose warblers are still sipping cool drinks by southern pools ignoring inner voices urging northerly flight? One evening I was listening to the woodcock's *peent* in the field near my home. The next evening the field was under two feet of snow. The unpredictability of New England weather is certainly with us this year! Enough said!

### PROGRAMS

It is with great pleasure that I introduce our April speaker. On Monday, April 14, 7:30 p.m. at the Hitchcock Center, Ethan Temeles will present his multi-media program on hummingbirds. Dr. Temeles is an Assistant Professor at Amherst College who has published extensively on hummingbirds and birds of prey. The title of his presentation is *The Hummingbird-flower Syndrome: A New Diagnosis*. He aims to shatter the illusion that hummingbirds yearn for red tube-shaped flowers and claims that there is no match between bill form and flower shape. It should be a very interesting evening.

Save May 12 for Jonathan Atwood from Manomet speaking on the California Gnatcatcher, and June 9 when we'll be hearing about the compilation of the Christmas Bird Counts from the man in charge, Geoff LeBaron.

### FIELD TRIPS

- 4/12: Bob Bieda (527-2623) will be searching for early warblers and other spring migrants at the Ashley Reservoir. Meet at the Holyoke Holiday Inn parking lot at 7:00 a.m. Bob hopes to see the first Pine and Palm Warblers of the year. The Fox Sparrow, Hermit Thrush and Ruby-crowned Kinglet are also possibilities. Remember to dress warmly. Bring snacks if you wish. The trip will last for about three hours.
- 4/19: Morris Lainer will again be leading an all-day trip to Plum Island searching for the Ruff, hoping for the male in dramatic breeding plumage. This rare shorebird is a visitor from Europe. Three of the past five years have produced one. This is also a very good time to see the more common early shorebirds and herons, and of course Plum Island is (almost) always good for early songbirds. You'll want to bring lunch, snacks and something to drink for this all-day trip. Be sure to wear layers of clothing and solid footwear for warmth and dryness. Call Morris (527-9412) for more information.

May being the big migration month that it is and Wildwood Cemetery in Amherst being one of the big bird refueling areas, I have been asked to remind you that Wildwood is private property and we must always remember that we are guests on its paths. We have maintained a good relationship with the management over the years, and have been assured that birders are always welcome. Although it may seem obvious, remember to respect the privacy of people visiting grave sites. Park only in the appropriate places -- do NOT park on the lawns. Please respect the management's simple wishes and use common sense and courtesy when birding the facility so that we will continue to be welcome.

- 5/6: Starting Tuesday, May 6, and continuing every Tuesday and Thursday throughout the month, the Club sponsors an early morning bird walk through Wildwood Cemetery. No need to register - just meet the leader at the gate at 6:30 a.m. These walks along the edge of the cemetery usually last until 8:00 a.m. Various club members lead the walks. Some mornings warblers are dripping from the trees and other mornings this is just a nice walk in good company.

Thinking a little deeper into May, you might be interested in considering participating in the North American Migration Count on May 10 and/or the 1997 Birdathon on May 17.

Also of interest is a pelagic trip offered by Massachusetts Audubon. On Saturday, April 26 there will be an all-day trip out of Harwichport heading toward the eastern shoals of Nantucket in search of seaducks, pelagic birds, and marine mammals. Bob Prescott and Wayne Petersen will lead the trip. For more information and to register call 508-349-2615. There is a fee.

I remind you again to call the HBC VOICE (253-2218) to learn what birds are being seen in the area especially now that the spring migration is under way.

### ***BIRDING with HITCHCOCK***

Jan Ortiz, one of the HBC founders and a past president is a seasoned, dedicated birder with a special gift for communicating her love and knowledge of birds to others. She is again teaching Spring Birding Classes for the Hitchcock Center marking her tenth year in that position. The classes are geared to birders of all levels. The pace is leisurely. Slides and bird mounts are used in the classroom sessions in discussing migration, behavior, identification, song and what species are expected to be seen in the field. Time will be taken to note the progression of spring and how it relates to bird migration.

There are two sessions. The eight week session is filled but there is still time to sign up for the second session that runs for four consecutive weeks starting in the classroom on Thursday, April 24 from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. The field work starts Friday, April 25 from 8:00 a.m.- noon. There is a fee. Call the Center at 256-6006 to register.

Saturday, April 20, 9:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.: Karl Meyer, birder and nature writer, will lead a hawk watch at Bray Tower on Mt. Tom. The trip is free. Call the Center at 256-6006 for directions.

**BIRDING BY EAR - ON THE HOLYOKE RANGE:** On Saturday, April 26, Sunday, May 4 and Saturday, May 24 naturalist John Green will tune in to the flood of spring migrants while getting in shape as he leads three great hikes on the Holyoke Range. All walks are free and begin at 7:00 a.m. from the Notch Visitor's Center on Rt. 116 in Amherst.

And don't forget the **GREEN SCENE**, the Hitchcock spring fund-raiser and auction on Friday, May 2, 5:30 - 8:30 pm at the Red Barn at Hampshire College. Join members, friends, volunteers and staff for the Center's once a year fundraising party! Great food! Great music (Oompah band)! Great bargains! Great people! You can't miss and you'll also help support this important environmental organization. Tickets for the function will be available at the April meeting.

### ***CONSERVATION***

From Anne Lombard --

**Birds in Forested Landscapes (BFL)** is an ambitious new project that links volunteer birders and professional biologists in a study of the habitat requirements of the seven species of forest thrushes as well as the Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks. Although thrushes may be common and conspicuous in most forest habitats, many of their populations are thought to be declining. By collecting critical data on distribution and nesting success of these species, participants will directly aid in the development of conservation strategies for these birds.

We will base our surveys on the protocol originally developed for the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's **Project Tanager** which we have participated in for three years. We will be surveying our three nesting thrush species and the hawks in the ten forest sites of various sizes in the Amherst, Northampton and Granby which we used for Project Tanager. Small groups of two to four make two visits to each site in May and June. If you are interesting in participating, please call Anne Lombard

(586-7509) for the Northampton area or Micky McKinley (367-9791) for the Amherst area.

The NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT is a nationwide count held on one day, the second Saturday in May (May 10). New England participation increased to over 500 birders last year. It is like the Christmas Count in that you count all birds seen/heard on that day, but is different in that entire counties are count areas, it has no fees, and it occurs in warm weather at the height of spring migration. Individuals and groups can participate, so if you plan to be out birding that day, all you will need is to keep count. Organized bird walks will also be taking place at the three Audubon Sanctuaries in Hampshire County. Call Arcadia for information. Recording sheets will also be available at the April meeting or by calling Anne Lombard (586-7509).

From Pete Westover --

The Amherst Breeding Bird Census will go into its eighth year of data gathering in June. Because people go on vacation and move away there may be a few circuits not covered this year. Pete is looking for people who are qualified and interested. Almost 95% of the data is gathered by ear so it is necessary that the person have a good knowledge of local bird song. If you interested in learning more please call Pete (256-4045) or David Ziomek at the Hitchcock Center (256-6006).

#### **CALL FOR ASSISTANCE -- an update**

March's letter contained information about Zeke Jakub, the sixteen year old HBC member who is trying to earn enough money to attend Camp Chan Chich, an international camp in Belize for young birders offered by VENT and co-sponsored by ABA. Many of you met and talk to Zeke at the March meeting. It seems appropriate to fill you in on what is happening now.

His crow research won him the top prize at the Umass science fair earning him the right to compete at the state level at MIT in May. He hopes to receive his permit from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which he has applied for with the help of Don Kroodsma in time to allow him to add data to his project for the State Fair. He was on the radio (WHA1) talking about his research and will be doing a "Crow T.V." show on Greenfield local cable channel 6. His work has also been described in several newspaper articles.

Zeke has gathered a lot of support. However, money is still a problem. He will be at the April meeting to deliver t-shirts and take orders. He is offering to do yard work and other odd jobs. Another possible option is finding someone willing to donate frequent flyer miles that will get Zeke from Bradley to Houston where the trip begins. Any help will be greatly appreciated. See him at the meeting or call him at 413-773-7906 if you have questions.

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I am sad to announce the passing of one of Massachusetts's truly great field ornithologists, Richard A. Forster, who died unexpectedly on April 2. A major birding figure in the State, Dick was a prolific writer, a master at field identification and an expert on bird distribution. He leaves a void that will be almost impossible to fill.

Hoping to see you at the April meeting and in the field ---

*Sally*

Sally Venman, Secretary

## HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

August 1, 1997

Remember when as students we returned from summer vacation energized, eager to explore new vistas, convinced that with the fresh maturity gained over the summer we would surely shine academically and socially? Remember the reunions with friends, the smell of new textbooks, the crispness of new clothes? Remember the first English class and the first assignment -- "write a short essay entitled **WHAT I DID ON MY SUMMER VACATION?**" Gone immediately was the joy of reunion, the smell of the new page and the crispness of new cloth. Today's expression "been there, done that" aptly describes the feelings. I wonder if English teachers still use this September transition on their students?

Speaking of which, let me tell you about what I did on my summer vacation (pretty clever segue there, no?) I experienced a migratory fall-out at Point Pelee (an incredible, unforgettable, amazing goose-bump-raising birding experience); took a journey "home" discovering why I am **FROM** my growing-up area and not still living **IN** it; spent an amazing hour with a good friend trying to remain objective as we silently watched a Fisher pilfer the nesting hole of a Pileated Woodpecker pair, seeing and hearing the parent's reaction to this beautiful animal; and lastly challenged the stability of a long-time marriage by painting (with husband Bill) a huge area inside the house during the peak of the heat and humidity wave. I think August will find me with a trashy novel, a wine cooler and a comfortable hammock far away from all things that have any potential for maturing me.

### **IT'S MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME --**

One of the goals of the HBC is to keep cost of membership as reasonable as possible. As with any community organization there is a whole lot of volunteer time that goes into making things happen, but the Club still has two main expenses - the cost of bringing quality programs to the community and the cost of mailings to keep members informed. Our **ONLY** income is from membership dues. As expenses rise, our budget gets tighter and tighter. We do want to continue to bring you the quality programs we are known for but can't do so without the support of the membership. So ---

For a limited time only it is my privilege as representative of the HBC Bird Board to tell you, the discriminating bird watcher, about an amazing back-to-school (please note theme development here) special offer. By acting **NOW** you can become a member of the Hampshire Bird Club for the unbelievably low price of \$12.00 (or \$19.00, or \$30.00, or \$50.00, or \$100.00, depending on choice of membership category). But, **DON'T DELAY!** This offer will be valid only up to and including the firm deadline of sometime in October or maybe November when, if you haven't renewed your membership, you'll receive a truly terrible *reminder* letter which strikes terror in the heart of procrastinating birdwatchers.

You will find all you need to know to join the Club or to renew your membership on the enclosed forms.

### **PROGRAMS --**

We truly have an incredible line-up of programs to offer this fall. Starting our thirteenth year, we are delighted to greet one of our most popular speakers, Arthur Morris, joining us for the third time on

**Monday, September 15, 7:30 p.m. at the Amherst Regional Middle School.**

(Please note that this is a different Monday and a different location from what we are accustomed to. See the attached flyer for more information and for directions.)

Artie's slide lecture "BIRDS, BUCKS and BEAUTY" takes a look at ecotourism at North American birding hotspots. He uses slides taken at Point Pelee, Churchill, the Everglades, Bosque Del Apache, Cape May and other hotspots frequented by birders to weave his story.

The work of this internationally noted nature photographer appears regularly in *Natural History*, *National Geographic*, *Birder's World*, *Nature Photographer*, *Outdoor Photographer* and countless other magazines, books and calendars. Many of his photographs can be found in the new *Stokes Field Guide to Birds*. He is author/photographer of several books including *Bird Photography Pure and Simple* and *Shorebirds: Beautiful Beachcombers*. A selection of books and posters will be available for purchase and signing before and after the program.

On October 20 (place to be announced) naturalist Marcia Wilson and her husband Mark, staff photographer for the *Boston Globe*, will present their slide program entitled "Who's Watching Who? Owls of the Northeast". They plan to bring live owls with them. On November 10 Charles Duncan, founder and director of the Institute for Field Ornithology will join us. On December 8 we gather for the annual holiday party when members show their own natural history slides and plans are made for the Christmas Bird Counts. Details will be in future membership mailings.

## **FIELD TRIPS --**

The HBC offers two different types of trips: regular and fee-based. Regular field trips will be to spots easily reached and explored in one day. No costs other than travel, meals and incidental fees are involved. Please call the trip leader to register so plans can be made for the size of the group and you can be notified if a change is necessary. We carpool whenever possible and share in driving expenses. Transportation costs are calculated on the basis of \$.20 per mile per car plus tolls and parking fees. It is expected that all persons in the car including the driver share costs equally. Fee-based trips are generally for a longer period. Costs are predetermined and participants pay in advance.

Field Trip Chair Bob Bieda is always happy to hear your suggestions of places you would like the Club to visit, or to talk to you if you would be interested in being considered as a trip leader. Contact him at 21 Pomeroy Street, Easthampton, MA 01027; 413-527-2623. The complete fall and winter field trip schedule will be ready to be sent with next month's Newsletter. Meanwhile here are several trips that may interest you:

On Saturday, August 30 Bob Bieda will lead a trip to New South Beach, Cape Cod. Late August can be the best time of year for a variety of shorebirds and terns. We take a short boat trip (\$10.00 in '96) from Chatham to the end of South Beach. We then spend 4-5 hours walking the beach and mud flats. Call Bob (527-2623) for more details and to reserve a place on this full-day trip.

On Wednesday, September 10 Harvey Allen continues with his monthly *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley*. This could be good hawk watching and it's the time of the year to look for the Connecticut Warbler. Call Harvey (253-7963) for more information about this half-day trip.

On Saturday, September 13 Jim Marcum (549-1613) goes to Plum Island for shorebirds and warblers. Fall is the best time of the year for rarities. We always hope a lost shorebird will find itself and us on this all-day trip.

On Saturday, September 20, Bob Bieda (527-2623) will be helping us to sort out the fall warblers in the meadows of Northampton. We hope for the Connecticut Warbler but sometimes the fall version of a Chestnut-sided looks just as interesting. This trip is mostly walking. Meet at the Northampton Bowling Alley at 7:00 a.m. for this three-hour search.

Friday, October 10 marks the start of the fall Monhegan Island trip led by Dianne Quilty. This is a weekend trip leaving Friday morning and returning Monday afternoon. October is the month falcons glide along the cliffs of the island. Previous trips have had up to 15 species of warblers, good numbers of sapsuckers and hundreds of kinglets. Rare possibilities include Western Kingbird, Blue Grosbeak, Orange-crowned Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow and Red-head Woodpecker. Call Dianne at 253-7568 or Scott Sumner at 253-7486 for more information. I believe this trip is filled, but you might want to check with Dianne to be sure.

On Saturday, October 11 Tom Gagnon (584-6353) will lead an all-day trip to Quabbin. We will travel the old roads on the east side of the reservoir which are all that remain of the lost towns. We'll look for late migrating warblers on land and early migrating waterfowl on the water. This is an all-day trip limited to 16 people. Tom agreed to a Sunday rain date for this trip (October 12) since a nice mid-October day at Quabbin is more pleasant than a rainy one. (A rain date for a birding trip? We must be getting old.). Plan to bring snacks, lunch and warm clothes. Call Tom for more information and to reserve a spot.

On Wednesday, October 15 Harvey Allen continues his *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley*, the leisurely paced, once a month, mid-week trip focusing on the seasonal birds in the valley and any rarities recently discovered. This month will concentrate on sparrows that migrate through the Valley. Call Harvey (253-7963) for more information about this half-day trip.

### **HITCHCOCK NEWS OF INTEREST TO BIRDERS --**

More birds can be seen in Massachusetts in September than at any other time of the year. The FALL BIRDING CLASS will take you through the heart of the migration with shorebirds, songbirds and hawks all vying for attention. A late November trip to the North Shore will reveal wintering species. Jan Ortiz, well-known local birder, will again be teaching her popular class during her favorite birding season. Relaxed and comfortable, this eight-week class is for beginning as well as more experienced birders. According to Jan, "I realize that among the participants there will be different levels of interest, experience and birding skills but that should not interfere with my first objective for the class which is simply for each to enjoy the birds and enjoy learning about them. Everyone will have a chance to contribute and learn at his or her own level and pace." This sixteen-session class (eight Wednesday evening lectures starting September 3 followed by eight Saturday (or Sunday) half-day field trips starting September 6 (or 7) will include all-day trips to Plum Island (September 13) and to the North Shore (November 29). There is a fee. Registration through Hitchcock (256-6006) is required. As always, you are welcome to call Jan (549-1768) for information.

Two Hawk Watches, led by seasoned HBC birders Harvey Allen and David Spector are also offered through Hitchcock. On Saturday, September 13 Harvey will lead a trip to Quabbin, car-pooling from the Center at 8:00 a.m. and returning about 11:00 a.m. On Saturday, September 20 David will be viewing the migration from Mount Tom, carpooling from the Center at 9:00 a.m., returning about 1:00 p.m. Both trips are free.

On Thursday, September 25, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Center, Bill Danielson and Barbara Skelly will present a free program on wildlife rehabilitation entitled "Tending to Tattered Thrushes (and Other Injured Wildlife)."

### **MISCELLANEOUS --**

Sadly I report the untimely death of HBC member Joshua Nove who is presumed dead after disappearing into the deep waters of an Alaskan lake on July 3. At the time of the accident he was conducting research on birds for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Josh, 23, a native of Ipswich, Massachusetts was an active member of our club during his student days at Amherst College.

Conservation coordinator Anne Lombard reports that the Club's involvement in the *Birds in Forested Landscapes (BFL)* project, a three-year study out of Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology aimed at gathering information about forest thrushes, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, went very well. She will share the results with us as she gets them from Cornell. Special thanks go to participants Carol Blinn, John Bowe, Anne Cann, Linda Coates, Sue Emerson, Julie Gross, Shirley Hilborn, Anne, Micky McKinley, Marcia Merithew, Deedee Minear, Lola Reid, Pat Sanborn and Carol Walker. Anne also thanks all who were involved in the *North American Migration Count* and who sent responses to her. She looks forward to people's participation next spring.

People new to birding or to the area should know that the Kestrel Trust and the Hampshire Bird Club have put together a book entitled *BIRDING WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS: THE CENTRAL CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY*, which is a good guide to where to look and what to look for in this area. The book sells for \$12.00 and is available at the meetings.

I am pleased to report that Zeke Jakub did make it to Belize where he attended Camp Chan Chich, an international camp for young birders offered by VENT and co-sponsored by ABA. HBC had supported Zeke in his work to raise enough money which, added to the scholarship help he received, made the trip a reality. He had a wonderful experience which he will share with us. Thanks to all who helped him realize his dream.

and **FINALLY** --

Congratulations! You have arrived at the end of this letter! Now for the moment of truth! Take pen in hand, fill in the blank spaces on the membership form (if you want to be a member), sign the release form (if you want to go on field trips), sign the Rare Bird Alert form (if you want to be alerted), and sign a personal check or equivalent (if you want us to take you seriously). Place all in a stamped envelope and send to Dianne Quilty, 831 Main Street, Amherst, MA 01002-2401. PRESTO --- your BIRDING PROBLEMS are solved and the YEAR OF THE BIRD, 1997 - 1998 becomes a reality!

As an added incentive *BACKYARD BIRDS* at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton is happy to offer a 10% discount to all HBC members for ALL PURCHASES.

If you prefer to join at the first meeting, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE bring your completed forms with you. We'll say THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!

If by any chance you could possibly have any questions after plowing through the above illumination, other than "why does she write so much?" please feel free to call me at 549-1098, or Dianne at 253-7568.

Sincerely,



Sally Venman, Secretary

Just before leaving to take this Newsletter to the printer, the following poignant message arrived via E-MAIL. I was moved to tears. Can you be of help?

Friday, August 1, 1997

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 this year. 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 possibly leading to courting behavior and nesting. Must be able to feather own nest.

***Hampshire Bird Club  
Amherst, Massachusetts***



**Arthur Morris is coming to Amherst!**

On Monday, September 15, the Hampshire Bird Club will take a look at ecotourism at North American birding hotspots. Noted photographer **Arthur Morris's** title, "Birds, Bucks, and Beauty" says it all. Wet and wild lands were formerly thought of as being economically worthless, but today, in great part due to the efforts of former Cape May Bird Observatory Director Paul Kerlinger, the word is out: bird watchers spend tens of millions of dollars annually!

Artie's technically perfect, artistically designed images of birds of North America will show us what all the excitement is about. And his slides of both local and traveling birders reaching for their wallets (sound familiar?) will leave every birder either laughing hysterically or wondering why we — as a group — have so little political voice.

But — this is **not our usual date or the usual place!**

The date:	Monday, September 15
The place:	Amherst Regional Middle School Auditorium (directions on other side)
The time:	This much is the same — 7:30 p.m.
More information:	Call Sally Venman - 549-1098

### Directions to the Amherst Regional Middle School

**From the Amherst Town Common at the intersection of Rts. 9 and 116:** Drive north on North Pleasant Street past 3 stoplights (Amity Street, Kellogg Street and Triangle Street). Beyond the 3rd light continue straight. North Pleasant Street turns to the left at the light to the University, and you want to be on **East** Pleasant Street. Look for the second right, which is Chestnut Street. (The first right is Chestnut Court.) The Middle School is about a quarter of a mile ahead on the left side of Chestnut Street, just before Chestnut Street veers around to the right and becomes High Street (after all, this is Massachusetts). Turn left into the parking lot in front of the school and look for the middle entrance, which leads directly into the auditorium.

**From the east:** Take Route 9 east into Amherst. Look for the stoplight by the Town Common, which will be on your right. At the stoplight, turn right. Follow the directions from the Town Common above.

**From the west:** Take Route 9 east into Amherst. At the stoplight at the top of the hill (at the Town Common) turn left and follow directions from the Amherst Town Common above.

**From the south:** If you are coming in on Route 116, pick up the directions from the Amherst Town Common above. If you are coming in on Route 91, take exit 19 and follow directions from the west, above.

**From the north:** Take Route 116 south to Route 9. Turn left on Route 9 and follow directions as though coming from the west.

### HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB -- General Information

The Hampshire Bird Club, founded in 1984, is a good source of information for bird watching newcomers as well as for the more experienced birder. Our members range from the casual observer to the avian-possessed. Members receive monthly mailings describing regular programs, field trips and bird related events in the area, have access to the ever-expanding lending library for birders located at the Hitchcock Center, earn the privilege of getting frostbite by participating in local Christmas Bird Counts (not mandatory), and can have a place on the Rare Bird Alert telephone tree if desired. Through the VOICE (an up-to-date recorded telephone service) you'll learn what birds are being seen and where, be reminded about meetings and trips, and get up-to-date birding news that may not have been covered in the Newsletter. All this, and as a new member, you receive the treasured and truly amazing MEMBERSHIP PACKET filled with membership-only kinds of information. (And you thought this was just another Bird Club!)

Our membership year runs from September through August. Meetings are usually held at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst on the second Monday of each month September through June at 7:30 p.m. Exceptions to the meeting location occur when the program is expected to draw an unusually large number of people and to the meeting date when the second Monday falls on a holiday. The *Newsletters* will keep you informed. All meetings are free and open to the general public. Field trips are scheduled throughout the year.

Look over the forms and if you would like to become a member, fill them out and return them to Dianne Quilty, 831 Main Street, Amherst, MA 01002. Please make checks payable to the Hampshire Bird Club. Should you be interested in becoming more involved in the Club, you will find a spot on the Membership Form to check off your interests. Your name will be passed on to the appropriate person.

If you have questions call the Club's President, Shirley Hilborn (253-6462), Membership Secretary, Dianne Quilty (253-7568) or Newsletter Editor, Sally Venman (549-1098).

## HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER -- October, 1997

*If you take a deep breath and read really fast, you may be able to finish this letter before the October meeting. Go for it!*

### PROGRAMS

On Monday, October 20, 7:00 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst we are delighted to offer a program designed to appeal to birders of all ages and to those who hang out with birders of all ages. Naturalist Marcia Wilson and photographer Mark Wilson will share their passion for owls in a program titled *Who's Watching You? Owls of New England*. Marcia will introduce all twelve species that have been found in New England with a slide show of photos taken by her husband Mark, a well-known wildlife photographer and staff photographer at the *Boston Globe*. She'll imitate the owls' calls, give hooting lessons, then bring out live birds. Marcia brings over thirty years of experience in biology, field ornithology and environmental education to this colorful program. Mark is a bird columnist, photojournalist and an avid birder. His ability to interpret animal behavior and light brings a special dimension to his photographs and educational programs. Marcia and Mark make a charismatic team -- photographing, teaching and sharing their passion for the natural world.

Please note that, because we expect a large turnout, we have changed the location of the meeting, and in order to make it more accessible to families, we have moved up the time. Here's how to get to Immanuel Lutheran Church:

Immanuel Lutheran Church is on the east side of North Pleasant Street in Amherst just north of the UMass School of Education. From the center of Amherst follow North Pleasant Street and the signs to UMass. Turn right at the lights at the Newman Center and follow North Pleasant through the University. At the next light (at the north end of campus) keep an eye out on the right side just beyond the School of Education for the sign indicating the entrance to Immanuel Lutheran. From the center of North Amherst (at the lights) drive south on North Pleasant Street about a half a mile and look for the sign for Immanuel Lutheran on the left.

Then, it's back to the Hitchcock Center when on Monday, November 10 Charles Duncan, Professor of Chemistry & Environmental Studies at University of Maine at Machias and founder and director of the internationally recognized Institute for Field Ornithology will join us. He will speak on the distribution, abundance and ecology of Red-necked Phalaropes. On December 8 we gather for the annual holiday party when members show their own natural history slides and plans are made for the Christmas Bird Counts. Details will be in future membership mailings.

### FIELD TRIPS

Enclosed with this letter is a list of the field trips planned through March 21, 1998. I'll be reminding you of the monthly trips in each newsletter, but you might want to take a moment now to mark your calendars for those that especially interest you. Please read the *FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION SHARED COST* statement attached to the trip list. It explains the Club policy. And as always, call the leader if you have questions.

The Field Trip Committee thought you might like reading about trips already taken. This will become a new monthly feature in the Newsletter if the readers are interested and if the leaders fill out the trip report forms. What do you think?

On an overcast, mild, *perfect* August 30th Saturday, Bob Bieda and Al Richards led 17 people to Cape Cod's South Beach. 56 species of birds were seen, 18 of which were shorebirds. There were very large numbers of Roseate Terns, many white-rumped sandpipers and lots of Hudsonian Godwits. "The scenery was GREAT!"

On a mild, cloudy September 20th, Bob led a group of 10 on the "Fall Warblers in the Meadows of Northampton" trip. The group worked hard for only a few warblers (a quick look at a Wilson's, good looks at Parula and Redstart). A total of 34 species were recorded which included many Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Red-eyed Vireos and a perfect Lincoln's Sparrow. The trip finished with a flock of Golden Plovers.

Trips for now (consult the trip list for more complete descriptions):

Saturday, October 25: To learn Zeke Jakub's secret birding hot spots in Deerfield join this new HBC leader and explore the Deerfield marsh and meadows and the hillsides around the Eaglebrook School. This half-day trip will start at 7:00 a.m. Call Zeke (773-7906).

Saturday, November 1: A full-day trip to Plum Island with leader Morris Lainer (527-9412).

Sunday, November 9: A full day trip to the Berkshire Lakes of Western Massachusetts with Tom Gagnon (584-6353).

Wednesday, November 12: Harvey Allen continues his monthly morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley focusing on early winter migrants and valley waterfowl. Call Harvey (253-7963).

I remind you to call the HBC VOICE (WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS VOICE OF AUDUBON), at 253-2218 to learn what birds have been seen in the area. Scott Sumner keeps the list up to date. To report sightings, call 256-1836, leave your name and phone number, identify the bird(s), and say when and where spotted and how many. To receive information about birds being seen in Eastern Massachusetts Call the EASTERN VOICE at 617-259-8805.

When you are birding please keep in mind the American Birding Association's *Principles of Birding Ethics*. A brief summary reminds you to

- ...Promote the welfare of birds and their environments,
- ...Respect the law and the rights of others,
- ...Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe, and that
- ...Group birding, whether organized or impromptu requires special care.

I have copies of *Principles of Birding Ethics* in the complete form if you are interested. Call me (549-1098) or pick one up at a meeting.

#### LIBRARY

Librarian Anne Cann reports that the HBC Library keeps growing. We continue to receive a subscription to the American Birding Association (ABA) publications *Birding* and *Winging It*, both rich sources of birding information. Also look for the *ABA Membership Directory* and the *Yellow Pages - A Birder's Resource Guide* for just about anything and everything about birding.

New birding guides are being purchased with funds approved by the HBC Board. Recent files of *Living Bird* and *Birder's World*, donated by HBC member Marilyn Gonter are being cataloged and will be ready soon. Thank you, Marilyn.

Borrowing & returning materials - The library is located at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment and you can borrow and return materials whenever HBC meetings are held there. Or - you are always welcome to use the library at the Center Wednesday through Saturday (9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.).

Instructions for borrowing are posted at the library shelves. Please try to return books after four weeks so as many members as possible can have a chance to use them.

Your ideas for strengthening the library collection through suggestions for purchase are greatly appreciated. And, if readers have usable birding books, guides or resources such as *DeLorne Atlas/Gazetteers* which they would like to donate, please contact Anne at HBC meetings or by phone (253-7753) or leave them at the library.

### MORE for BIRDERS

or - There's a whole lot out there to tempt the birder away from things like homework or jobs or families or writing Newsletters!

Beginning on Sunday, October 12 at 5:00 p.m. on Channel 57, PBS premieres *BirdWatch with Don and Lillian Stokes*, a unique thirteen-part television series that promises entertainment and enlightenment for all levels of birdwatchers. Weekly programs will cover identification, behavior, hot spots, feeding, tips for improving your skills and much much more.

On Saturday, October 25, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Massachusetts Audubon Society is offering a Nantucket Shoals Pelagic Cruise leaving from Harwichport on the Cape to observe seaducks, pelagic birds and marine mammals. Pre-registration is required. There is a fee. Call 508-349-2615 to register or for more information.

If the *corvus* family is of special interest to you or if you just want to know more about crows and ravens you might want to check out two programs on Saturday, November 1 at the Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. From 11:00 a.m. - noon Patti Steinman, Trailside Teacher/Naturalist will help answer the question "Is it a raven or a really big crow?". Then, from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Mark Skinder, birder and Arcadia camp counselor will be carpooling to Mt. Tom to look and listen for ravens in their typical habitat. There is a fee. Questions? Call 584-3009.

AND - on Saturday, November 22, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. the *Ninth Annual Massachusetts Birders' Meeting*, cosponsored by Mass Audubon and the Athol Bird and Nature Club will take place at the Northfield Mount Hermon School (Blake Student Center) in Gill. The keynote speaker will be Dr. John Hagan who will talk on the *Implications of Forestry to Bird Populations in New England*. There will be presentations by Shawn Carey, Geoff LeBaron, Jennifer Megyesi, Tom Litwin and Tim Storrow. A choice of two of three workshops led by Steven Arena (Confusing Look-Alike Species), Jackie Sones and Sarah Jennings (At a Glance Bird Identification) and by Don Crockett (Virtual Birding with a Virtual Birder: Birding the Internet) will round out the day. Registration is required. For more information and fee call 617-259-9506, Ext. 7401 or e-mail [vrule@massaudubon.org](mailto:vrule@massaudubon.org).

## MISCELLANEOUS

Tom Arny has been a valued member and supporter of the HBC since day one. He has presented many delightful programs, several of which he put together at the last possible moment when the scheduled speaker became unavailable. He has been a willing committee member, and a delightful birding companion. When the Club was formed he made it possible for us to offer the weekly recorded bird sightings on the HBC VOICE, now the VOICE of WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS. And - he's done it again! For those who have access to the internet he has set up an HBC homepage. The following is the information he asked me to pass on to the membership:

The Hampshire Bird Club has the beginnings of a homepage on the internet. The address is

[donald.phast.umass.edu/~arny/hampbird.html](http://donald.phast.umass.edu/~arny/hampbird.html)

To view the page, start up your computer. Open your web browser program - for example Netscape or Microsoft Explorer. Make sure you are connected to whatever access you have to the internet (the phone connection via a modem to your internet provider or whatever link you use). Then enter the address above (exactly as shown - no capitals) in the "open" box in your browser. The address tells the computer to go to the remote computer named "donald" in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at UMass, then to find Arny's files and then to look for the file "hampbird.html." The RhtmlS stands for HyperText Markup Language, the RcodeS needed to make the information in the file displayable on your computer screen. The home page is very simple. It has our logo, a list of officers, a list of upcoming meetings and field trips, and links to other web pages that might be of interest to birders, including the Brookline Bird Club's home page. The list of links is by no means complete. It would be almost impossible to make it so as there are probably hundreds of sites that birders might find fun. If you have suggestions of links you would like to see added, please let me know. Similarly, if you'd like to see a different page layout, let me know. It is easy to change background color for example (though some care is needed to make sure the color looks the same on different computers). I'm relatively new at this stuff, so the page isn't terribly fancy. Making changes is not difficult, although it does take some time. Massive additions may require that someone else do some of the typing. Pictures can be added, but they must be submitted in digital form electronically or on a computer diskette. Keep in mind that nice pictures eat up enormous amounts of computer space and take a very long time to down load over phone lines to your computer. It is probably easiest to reach me by e-mail at

[arny@daisy.phast.umass.edu](mailto:arny@daisy.phast.umass.edu)

Thank you so much, Tom, for all your good works!

I thought it might be useful for you to know the names and home phone numbers of the HBC Board members and other individuals you might wish to contact. Board meetings are open to all members. Let us hear from you.

Officers:

President: Shirley Hilborn (253-6462).  
V. Pres. & Program Chair: Dennis McKenna (256-8439).  
Treasurer: Mark Mount (253-7580).  
Membership Sec'y: Dianne Quilty (253-7568).  
Communications Sec'y: Sally Venman (549-1098).

Members at Large:

Bob Bieda, (527-2623).  
Sue Emerson (584-6736).  
David Norton (256-1767).  
Jan Ortiz, (549-1768).  
Elaine Pourinski (582-0786).  
Scott Sumner, (253-7486).

Others:

Conservation Committee Chair: Anne Lombard (586-7509).  
Decals and Patches: Dianne Quilty (253-7568).  
Field Trip Chair: Bob Bieda, (527-2623)  
Library: Anne Cann (253-7753).  
Rare Bird Alert: Shirley Hilborn (253-6462).  
Refreshments: Laura Barr (665-7855) and Sue Emerson (584-6736).  
T-Shirts: Joanne Parker (369-8095).

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And finally, it is with sadness that I report the death of HBC member Margaret Brown who died at home on August 24 following a brief illness. Being with Margaret, a fairly new birder, and experiencing her joy with each new sighting reminded us of our own early birding experiences and why we were drawn to it in the first place.

Condolences can be sent to her daughter Karen Sims, East Hill Branch Rd., Leyden MA 01337. Memorial gifts may be made to Hospice Life Center, 330 Whitney Ave., Suite 400, Holyoke, 01040; or to St. Francis Church, 100 Park St., Belchertown MA 01007.

Hope to see you and hear you hooting away with the best of them next Monday -

Sally

Sally Venman, Secretary

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER -- November, 1997



Where have all the Phalaropes gone? Good question and one that Charles Duncan, our next speaker will use as the subject for his presentation entitled *The Case of the Missing Phalaropes*.

After two meetings "away" we return to where we know the location of the light switches and where to plug in the coffee pot. You'll find us at the same old place, the same old second Monday of the month, at the same old time: Monday, November 10, 7:30 p.m. at the Hitchcock Center.

For years beyond memory Red-necked Phalaropes gathered in the waters along the border of Maine and New Brunswick feeding and fattening before their migration south. Flocks numbering in the hundreds of thousands as recently as the 1970s dropped to a few hundred individuals in the 1990s. Why? To look at the puzzle, we turn to Charles D. Duncan, teacher, sound recordist, photographer, avid birder and enthusiastic promoter of the role of amateurs in ornithology. Charlie is a Professor of Chemistry and Environmental Studies at the University of Maine at Machias, and Director of UMM's internationally recognized Institute for Field Ornithology which offers workshops that many HBC members have enjoyed and benefited by. He was recently elected President of the prestigious Association of Field Ornithologists.

Come join us and learn more about this ecological mystery.

Save Monday, December 8 for the annual holiday show-and-tell extravaganza when members share their own natural history slides, plans are made for the annual Christmas Bird Counts and we start our personal training programs striving for excellence in holiday food consumption.

Then on Monday, January 12 biologist Kent McFarland of the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) will join us to present a program on the Bicknell's Thrush. Details will be in future membership mailings.

FIELD TRIPS (etc.)

As a new feature in the Newsletter I'll be including reports on trips already taken. I have one report to pass on to you.

Tom Gagnon had a "glorious!!" all-day trip to Quabbin Reservoir on October 11. The group recorded a total of 55 bird species including a Great Cormorant and a Red-shouldered Hawk, 6 butterfly species including a Compton Tortoiseshell Butterfly, and 6 mammal species including 2 cow Moose and 2 Otter. The foliage was outstanding!

Here is a short November trip reminder. For more complete descriptions and information, please refer to the blue Field Trip list sent to you last month.

On Sunday, November 9 Tom Gagnon (584-6353) leads a full-day trip to the Berkshire Lakes of Western Massachusetts. Bring lunch and snacks and wear warm clothing. Meet at the Northampton Stop and Shop at 6:15 a.m.

On Wednesday, November 12 Harvey Allen (253-7963) leads the monthly "Morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley" trip focusing this time on early winter migrants and waterfowl.

NOTE: Tom Arny advises that early morning meteor showers occurring this year about the 17th of November will be excellent.

On Friday, November 28 Al Richards (665-2761) leads a full-day trip appropriately called the "HBC Turkey Trot to Cape Anne and Plum Island." Meet at the Dairy Mart in Sunderland where Rts. 47 and 116 cross at 5:00 a.m. Bring lunch and snacks and plenty of warm clothing.

On Wednesday, December 10 Harvey Allen (253-7963) leads his monthly "Morning sweep to the Connecticut River Valley."

Call the HBC VOICE (WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS VOICE OF AUDUBON) at 253-2218 to learn what birds have been seen in the area. For birds in Eastern Massachusetts Call the EASTERN VOICE at 617-259-8805.

By the time you receive this letter, the new Rare Bird Alert should be activated. I remind you that the RBA will be updated in January if enough people wish to be added. Shirley Hilborn (253-6462) is the person to call.

Enclosed with this letter is a green sheet with the updated list of Rare Bird Alert numbers to call across the country. Whether you're planning a trip or just fed up with even anticipating New England in the winter, it's fun to find out what is being seen in far-away places.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

I remind you that on Saturday, November 22, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. the *Ninth Annual Massachusetts Birders' Meeting*, cosponsored by Massachusetts Audubon and the Athol Bird and Nature Club will take place at the Blake Student Center at Northfield Mount Hermon School in Gill. Please refer to the October Newsletter for complete information or call Massachusetts Audubon at 617-259-9506, Ext. 7401. The e-mail address is [vrule@massaudubon.org](mailto:vrule@massaudubon.org).)

A note of appreciation to the birding community was received from Karen Sims and Dale Quinn, daughters of Margaret Brown whose death was announced in the October Newsletter. I would like to share a part of it with you.

"She really loved the birds and found such joy and comfort being with her birding friends. After a birding trip she would always call and share what birds she had seen and how excited she was. Please know how much it means to our family that Mom was part of your group."

BACKYARD BIRDS at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton is happy to offer a 10% discount to all HBC members for ALL PURCHASES. Since we do not have membership cards, the store will accept a Newsletter with a mailing label showing that it has been sent to you by the HBC as proof of membership. Simply show it when you make your purchase. The offer is good through August, 1998 and is for members only. And you thought that these mailings were just for sharing information. Well, think again! Aren't you lucky to be a member?

\*\*\*\*\*

On occasion I like to remind the membership that every day is worthy of at least one moment of celebration. November has more than Thanksgiving to recommend it. For example --

- 11/3: In 1900, New York City hosted the first automobile show on this date. You might want to celebrate by hosting your own car show. Start by lining up toy cars according to size. Next, line them up again from oldest model to newest. Isn't this fun?
- 11/4: Celebrate election day by being politically correct, remembering that Susan B. Anthony was arrested for attempting to do so in 1875.
- 11/10: Stanley said, "Dr. Livingston, I presume" in Central Africa in 1871. Skunks hibernate.
- 11/27: Thanksgiving Day. The first in-the-air-in-an-airplane wedding was performed in 1929.
- 11/28: Yourwelcomegiving Day. National Leftover Awareness Week begins.
- 11/29: Archaeologist Howard Carter opened King Tutankhamen's tomb on this date in 1922. You might want to celebrate by wrapping your friends like mummies using toilet paper and masking tape.

And with that I close.

Hope to see you at the November meeting --

*Sally*

Sally Venman, Secretary

# North American Rare Bird Alerts

## United States

### Alabama

Statewide (205) 987-2730

### Alaska

Statewide (907) 338-2473  
Fairbanks (907) 451-9213  
Kachemak Bay (907) 235-7337  
Seward (907) 224-2325

### Arizona

Phoenix (602) 832-8745  
Tucson (520) 798-1005

### Arkansas

Statewide (501) 753-5853

### California

Arcata (707) 822-5666  
Los Angeles (213) 874-1318  
Monterey (408) 375-9122;  
updates 375-2577  
Morro Bay (805) 528-7182  
Northern Calif. (415) 681-7422  
Orange County (714) 487-6869  
Sacramento (916) 481-0118  
Southeastern (909) 793-5599  
San Diego (619) 479-3400  
San Joaquin/S. Sierra  
(209) 271-9420  
Santa Barbara (805) 964-8240  
Southern (818) 952-5502

### Colorado

Statewide (303) 424-2144

### Connecticut

Statewide (203) 254-3665  
Eastern (860) 599-5195

### Delaware

Statewide (302) 658-2747

### District of Columbia

Districtwide (301) 652-1088

### Florida

Statewide (561) 340-0079  
Miami (305) 667-7337  
Lower Keys (305) 294-3438  
N. Florida (912) 244-9190

### Georgia

Statewide (770) 493-8862  
S. Georgia (912) 244-9190

### Idaho

Northern (208) 882-6195  
Southeast (208) 236-3337  
Southwest (208) 368-6096

### Illinois

Central Illinois (217) 785-1083  
Chicago (847) 265-2118  
Dupage (630) 406-8111  
Northwestern (815) 965-3095

### Indiana

Statewide (317) 259-0911

### Iowa

Statewide (319) 338-9881

### Kansas

Statewide (913) 372-5499  
Kansas City (913) 342-2473  
Wichita (316) 681-2266

### Kentucky

Statewide (502) 894-9538

### Louisiana

Baton Rouge (504) 768-9874  
SE Louisiana (504) 834-2473  
SW Louisiana (318) 988-9898

### Maine

Statewide (207) 781-2332

### Maryland

Statewide (301) 652-1088  
Baltimore (410) 467-0653

### Massachusetts

Boston (617) 259-8805  
Cape Cod (508) 349-9464  
Nantucket Is. (508) 228-8818  
Western Mass. (413) 253-2218

### Michigan

Statewide (616) 471-4919  
Detroit (810) 477-1360  
Sault Ste. Marie (705) 256-2790

### Minnesota

Duluth (218) 525-5952  
Statewide (612) 780-8890

### Missouri

Kansas City (913) 342-2473  
Statewide (573) 445-9115  
St. Louis (314) 935-8432

### Montana

Statewide (406) 721-9799  
Big Fork (406) 756-5595

### Nebraska

Statewide (402) 292-5325

### Nevada

~~Statewide (702) 649-1616~~  
Northwest (702) 324-2473

### New Hampshire

Statewide (603) 224-9900

### New Jersey

Cape May (609) 861-0466  
Statewide (908) 766-2661

### New Mexico

Statewide (505) 662-2101

### New York

Albany (518) 439-8080  
Buffalo (716) 896-1271  
Ithaca (607) 254-2429  
Lower Hudson Valley  
(914) 666-6614  
New York (212) 979-3070  
Rochester (716) 425-4630  
Syracuse (315) 668-8000

### North Carolina

Statewide (704) 332-2473

### North Dakota

Statewide (701) 250-4481;  
5pm-7 am M-F,  
24 hrs weekends/holidays

### Ohio

Cincinnati (513) 521-2847  
Cleveland (216) 526-2473  
Columbus (614) 221-9736  
Blendon Woods Park  
(614) 895-6222  
SW Ohio (937) 277-6446  
NW Ohio (419) 877-9640  
Youngstown (330) 742-6661

### Oklahoma

Oklahoma City (405) 373-4531  
Statewide (918) 669-6646

### Oregon

Statewide (503) 292-0661  
Klamath Basin (541) 850-3805  
Northeastern (208) 882-6195

### Pennsylvania

Allentown (610) 252-3455  
Central (717) 255-1212, x 5761  
Philadelphia (215) 567-2473  
Reading/Berks County  
(610) 376-6000, x 2473  
Schuylkill County (717) 622-6013  
Western Penna. (412) 963-0560  
Wilkes-Barre (717) 825-2473

### Rhode Island

Statewide (401) 949-3870;  
reporting (401) 949-5454

### South Carolina

Statewide (704) 332-2473

### South Dakota

Statewide (605) 773-6460  
West River (605) 584-4141

### Tennessee

Statewide (615) 356-7636  
Chattanooga (423) 843-2822

### Texas

Statewide (713) 964-5867  
Abilene (915) 691-8981  
Austin (512) 926-8751  
Central (817) 622-4390 (254-299-8170)  
Corpus Christi (512) 265-0377  
Lubbock (806) 797-6690  
Northcentral (817) 329-1270  
Northeast (903) 234-2473  
Lower Rio Grande Valley (210)  
969-2731  
San Antonio (210) 308-6788

### Utah

Statewide (801) 538-4730

### Vermont

Statewide (802) 457-2779

### Virginia

Statewide (757) 238-2713;  
(301) 652-1088

### Washington

Statewide (206) 933-1831;  
reporting (206) 454-2662  
Southeastern (208) 882-6195  
Lower Columbia Basin  
(509) 943-6957

### West Virginia

Statewide (304) 736-3086

### Wisconsin

Statewide (414) 352-3857  
Madison (608) 255-2476  
NE (Green Bay) (414) 434-4207

### Wyoming

Statewide (307) 265-2473

## Canada

### Alberta

Calgary (403) 237-8821  
Edmonton (403) 433-2473

### British Columbia

Vancouver (604) 737-3074  
Victoria (250) 592-3381

### New Brunswick

Provincewide (506) 382-3825  
Shediac/Moncton (506) 532-2873  
(French).

### Nova Scotia

Provincewide (902) 852-2428

### Ontario

Oshawa (905) 576-2738  
Ottawa (613) 825-7444  
Sault Ste. Marie (705) 256-2790  
Toronto (416) 350-3000, x 2293  
Windsor/Detroit (810) 477-1360  
Windsor/Pt. Pelee  
(519) 252-2473  
Hamilton (905) 648-9537

### Quebec

Eastern Quebec (French)  
(418) 660-9089  
Sagueny/Lac St. Jean (French)  
(418) 696-1868  
Bas St. Laurent (French)  
(418) 725-5118  
Coeur-du-Quebec (French)  
(819) 370-6720  
Montreal (French) 514-978-8849  
Western Quebec (French)  
(819) 778-0737  
Montreal (English)  
(514) 989-5076

### Saskatchewan

Regina (306) 949-2505

Note: Please notify us of changes by writing to ABA's Colorado Springs office, or by calling *Winging It* at (719) 634 7736.

Rev: 8/14/97; 10/27/97

3:00 a.m.: A frigid vigil by a railroad crossing. Dark ears listen -- listen -- a call -- an owl's call -- Could it be a Long-eared? ..... Drat -- the gusting wind.

Dawn: An icy trudge through open fields. Expectant ears listen -- listen -- a chip -- a sparrow's "chip"! Could it be a Clay-colored? ..... Nuts -- a cold Savannah.

Sunset: Even though weary, cold and hungry, our birder's eyes and ears are on fire with excitement. No identification questions this time. The climactic moment of the day has arrived as our hero zeros in on and begins the count of the Starlings in the trees along the Connecticut River: 5432 ... 5433 ... 5434 ... 5435 ... 5436 .....

AHHHHHH!      WHAT ECSTASY!      THE GREAT DAY COMETH!      WOW!

The Annual CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT will be plotted and planned at the next meeting of the



**HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB**  
December 8, 1997

The CBC is a census of birdlife taken annually at the end of the year across the Continent. It was started in 1899 as an alternative to the traditional Christmas "side hunt," a time when hunters would go out after Christmas dinner, choose sides and compete to see which group could shoot the most birds. The count is sponsored by the National Audubon Society and is undertaken by volunteers who count not only the different species of birds but also the actual number of individuals. Thousands of birdwatchers participate in this major information-gathering event. Data fed into the computer show densities of wintering bird populations and help to point out cyclical movements and evidence of changes in populations.

You don't have to be an expert birder. You don't have to count all day. If you are a beginner, you can be put with an experienced birder. Or -- you can participate by simply counting birds at your feeders in the warmth of your own home.

Our local count (Northampton Christmas Count) is being organized by Jan Ortiz and will take place on Sunday, December 21. It covers an area on both sides of the river. A \$5.00 fee to cover costs of compiling and publishing the results is required from all field observers. The fee does not apply to feeder watchers unless they wish to be listed with participants in the special CBC issue of *Field Notes* now being published by American Birding Association. If you are interested in participating in this local count but can't attend the meeting, please call Jan Ortiz (549-1768) for information and assignment. Jan notes that she is especially eager to attract feeder watchers this year. Early signs point to a good winter finch season, something that we have not had for several years, and feeders are great places to find them. Please consider helping in this way. Other counts:

Springfield, Saturday, December 20 (call Bruce Kindseth at 1-860-745-9593);

Greenfield, Sunday, December 28 (call Mark Fairbrother at 367-2695) and

Quabbin, Saturday, January 3 (call Scott Sumner at 253-7486).

## PROGRAMS

On Monday, December 8, 7:30 pm, at the Hitchcock Center the Club will hold its annual holiday party when members show their own natural history slides (no more than ten, please) and we start our annual personal training program striving for excellence in holiday food consumption. Everyone is asked to bring a snack or a dessert to share. Christmas Count planning will follow the meeting.

A special highlight of this year's gathering will be the drawing of the ticket that will determine who wins Mark Wilson's wonderful photograph of the Snowy Owl that he and Marcia Wilson gave to our Club at their owl program in October. In case you have missed out on purchasing a ticket for the drawing there will be an opportunity to do so at the meeting or call me (Sally at 549-1098) and we'll figure some way to accomplish this. Tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00.

Save Monday, January 12 when biologist Kent McFarland of the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) joins us to present a program entitled "A Year in the Life of a Bicknell's Thrush." Future programs include Susan Smith, who will share her recent arctic adventure with us on March 9 and Tom Martin, who will show his many beautiful slides from Monhegan Island on April 13. Our speaker for February 9 will be announced in the next Newsletter.

## FIELD TRIPS

On Wednesday, December 10 Harvey Allen (253-7963) leads the monthly "Morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley" trip. Hopefully a rare winter visitor will be in the area. If not, Harvey will start scouting for the upcoming Christmas Bird Counts.

December Christmas Bird Counts for the area are held. Refer to the paragraph under PROGRAMS for more information.

On Thursday, January 1 be ready for the famous BIRD BLITZ offered by Scott Surner (253-7486). Each species takes on special interest the first time it is seen each year and on New Years Day every bird is a new year bird. He'll be leading this half-day blitz to local hot spots. It's a great way to start the year, and coming just after the Christmas Counts, Scott should know where to find the birds.

On Saturday, January 3 Scott Surner (253-7486) will lead the Quabbin Christmas Bird Count.

On Saturday, January 10 Bob Bieda (527-2623) will lead an all-day trip to the North Shore of Massachusetts. It's great to see the first Common Eider and White-winged Scoters of the year. Add to this the possibility of Razorbill and the slight possibility of Snowy Owl and who cares how cold and windy it is (Yeah, sure Bob!). Meet at the Dairy Mart in Sunderland at 6:00 a.m. for this annual trip. Wear warm clothes, and bring lunch and snacks.

On Wednesday, January 21 Harvey Allen (253-7963) leads the monthly "Morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley" trip. Hopefully longspurs and Snow Buntings will be in the meadows.

On Saturday, January 24 Al Richards (665-2761) leads a trip to the Cape (Falmouth to Plymouth) leaving from the Hitchcock Center at 5:00 a.m. or the Ames parking lot near the Palmer turnpike entrance at 5:30 a.m. Bring lunch and snacks and plenty of warm clothes.

See the note from Jim Marcum at the end of this letter and be tempted.

## MISCELLANEOUS and RECYCLED INFORMATION

Just for fun and to enhance your winter feeder viewing pleasure I have enclosed a copy of the HBC Feeder Check List. Get copies of the chart made at your local copy place so that you can continue recording throughout the winter.

The bird-finding guide *Birding Western Massachusetts: The Central Connecticut River Valley*, published jointly by the Kestrel Trust and the Hampshire Bird Club will be available for purchase at our meetings. The price is \$12.00.

Don't forget that *BACKYARD BIRDS* at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton is happy to offer a 10% discount to all HBC members for ALL PURCHASES. Use one of the newsletters as proof of membership.

By this time everyone who has a decal, a patch, and/or a T-shirt coming to them as a membership premium or as purchased at the time of becoming a member should have it (them) in hand. If you do not, please see Dianne Quilty at a meeting or call her (253-7568). Also by this time, you should have received by mail copies of HBC Field Trips through March (blue sheet), and North American Rare Bird Alerts (green sheet). If you were missed, or if you want additional copies see Sally Venman at a meeting or call her (549-1098).

I remind you that the Rare Bird Alert telephone tree will be updated in January if enough people wish to be added. Shirley Hilborn (253-6462) is the person to call.

Finally, coming next month (if the computer gods remain friendly), the new members will receive the NEW MEMBERS PACKET with all kinds of wonderful information available only through HBC! And, early in '97 all members will receive a list of all HBC members giving addresses and phone numbers as recorded by you on your membership form. Call Dianne (253-7568) or Sally (549-1098) if you prefer not to be listed or if there are errors or changes we may not have.

When there is room in the Newsletter, it has been the Club's policy to include items of interest to birders from HBC members. This is from Jim Marcum:

*Did you see the Andean-Cock-of-the-Rock, the Bearded Helmetcrest, the Torrent Tyrannulet, the Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager, the 6,000 American Falmingos, the Burnished-buff Tanager? Where? Where? Venezuela!!! Those birds are just a sample of what you may see if you travel with Jim Marcum to Venezuela October 14-28, 1998.*

*Bird from cloud forest to coastal deciduous forest, along Andean mountain streams and glacial lakes, on the treeless paramo above 8,000 feet, in Henri Pittier and Sierra Nevada national parks. Henri Pittier has a bird list of over 500 species including 30 species of hummingbirds and the paramo's espeletia with its composite flowers will be in bloom. Visit the lovely city of Merida set on a plateau surrounded by the country's highest peaks, Pico Bolivar and Pico Espejo, both over 16,000 feet. Although the trip is designed to focus primarily on the montane areas of the Andes and the coastal range, participants will also visit the Morrocoy National Marine Park and some of the surrounding lowland areas.*

David Ascanio, Venezuelan naturalist will serve as local guide on this trip handled by Caligo Ventures, Inc. For further information contact Jim at 549-1613 or email him at [marcums@fnr.umass.edu](mailto:marcums@fnr.umass.edu)

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Sally

Sally Venman, Secretary

PROGRAMS

On May 12 we will be presented a program on the California Gnatcatcher by California native Jonathan Atwood, a senior scientist at Manomet Observatory. He joined the staff in 1986 as banding coordinator and is now director of Manomet's Endangered Species Program. Years in the field studying the reproductive success, dispersal behavior and territory requirements on populations of California Gnatcatchers have not only led to his PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles, but will ultimately yield crucial data for conservation planning. He has been in the thick of the fight to put the California Gnatcatcher on the list as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. It should be a very interesting evening.

A short business meeting will precede the program. We are required by our By-laws to elect Board officers and members for the coming year at our May meeting. The nominating committee chaired by Jan Ortiz with members Sue Emerson and Harvey Allen will present the following slate for your approval: Shirley Hilborn (President), Dennis McKenna (Vice President/Program Director), Mark Mount (Treasurer), Sally Venman (Communications Secretary), and Dianne Quilty (Membership Secretary), and Board members Bob Bieda, Susan Emerson, David Norton, Jan Ortiz, Elaine Pourinski and Scott Surner. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor, if seconded. Board meetings are open to the general membership.

The Christmas Bird Count is a census of birdlife taken nationally and internationally at the end of the year. It was started in 1899 as an alternative to the traditional Christmas "side hunt," a time when hunters would go out after Christmas dinner, choose sides and compete to see which group could shoot the most birds. The count is sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Thousands of volunteers participate counting not only the different species of birds but also the actual number of individuals. Feel like we're back in December? Before you reactivate the snow blower, ask yourself what happens to all that data we collect every year at holiday time. Why do we do it? Join us on Monday, June 9 for the last program before summer recess when Geoff LeBaron, Christmas Bird Count Editor of the Christmas Count edition of National Audubon Society magazine *Field Notes* will be our guest. He will talk about the compilation of approximately 1,700 counts which occur annually in every state and province in the U.S. and Canada, every nation in Central America and parts of South America and the West Indies. Geoff pulls all of these data together and puts them into book form. He promises to shed some light on the significance of the findings. Geoff also leads natural history tours for the National Audubon Society

ZOUNDS!!!!

The Purple-breasted, Eight-toed, Ridge-crested Sapfoolery bird made its first Western Massachusetts appearance on April 1, 1991 in a dogwood tree in my back yard, not 20 feet from my kitchen window. It preened and posed in perfect light for at least 10 minutes and I have no doubt as to its identity. Unfortunately, I was alone at the time and my camera was without film so Scott Surner refused to accept it as a legitimate sighting. I guess I can understand that. It was an unusual bird.

Then last weekend on April 26, 1997, a perfect spring day (temperatures in the high 60s, gentle winds out of the South, scattered clouds) the bird reappeared in the birch tree next to the dogwood. It was a perfect male in breeding plumage seen in perfect light preening and posing. I was alone and could not reach anyone. But this time I had a camera with film! Feel the tension mount?

Alas! The battery was dead.

I am sure that Scott will again refuse to accept the bird, even with my careful and complete description and accompanying water-color portrait. It seems that once again I've missed my chance to get my name "in the book." Oh, the perils and frustrations inherent in identifying a rare bird. The road to fame is indeed a rocky one.

Spring is certainly a time when unusual sightings are possible and the HBC is giving you lots of opportunities to get out there to make them with other people so that your truthfulness will not be questioned.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Remember to call the HBC VOICE (253-2218) to learn what birds are being seen in the area especially now that the migration is heating up.

I remind you again that one of the big bird refueling areas in Amherst is Wildwood Cemetery which is private property. We are guests on its paths. We have maintained a good relationship with the management over the years, and have been assured that birders are always welcome. Park only in the appropriate places, and walk on the paths. Please respect the management's simple wishes and use common sense and courtesy when birding the facility so that we will continue to be welcome.

- 5/1: Starting Thursday, May 1, and continuing every Tuesday and Thursday throughout the month, the Club sponsors an early morning bird walk through Wildwood Cemetery. No need to register. Meet the leader at the gate at 6:30 a.m. These walks along the edge of the cemetery usually last until 8:00 a.m. Various club members lead the walks. Some mornings warblers are dripping from the trees and other mornings this is just a nice walk in good company.
- 5/10 The North American Migration Count, as described in last month's Newsletter occurs on this date. For more information and to obtain recording sheets please contact Anne Lombard at 586-7509.
- 5/14 Harvey Allen continues his once-a-month, mid-week sweep of the Connecticut River Valley with a focus on rails. It could also be the height of this year's warbler migration. Call Harvey at 253-7963 for more information about this half-day trip.
- 5/17 is the date for the 1997 Massachusetts Audubon Birdathon which Tom Gagnon is coordinating. Officially it begins at 6:00 p.m. Friday the 16th and runs through 6:00 p.m. Saturday. It's your chance to join a team traveling to many parts of Massachusetts. Teams vary from groups doing general birding to a team of two or three people chasing a single target bird. Teams bird from a few hours to all day. Call Tom at 584-6353 for more information and assignment.
- 5/23 is the start of the Monhegan Island week-end getaway. Leaving early Friday morning and returning on Monday afternoon, this is the Club's annual long weekend on an island off the Maine coast. Scott Sumner will be the organizer of the trip. Bob Bieda and Morris Lainer will lead the bird walks. Call Scott at 253-7486 for more information.
- 5/31 Al Richards will lead a full-day trip to Plum Island looking for shorebirds and warblers. This used to be called "the poor birder's Monhegan," running on the Saturday of Memorial Day week-end. This year the Field Trip Committee decided to go for the date that offers a wider variety of shorebirds and late warblers. Call Al at 665-2761 for more information.

- 6/1 On this Sunday, under the leadership of Charlie Quinlan we will be searching the hillsides and marshes of Cummington and Windsor, MA for the Mourning Warbler and American Bittern. Last year's trip also discovered a possible nesting Dickcissel. Charlie asks that we meet him at the old Berkshire Snow Basin Ski Area on Rt. 9 in Cummington at 7:30 a.m. for this half-day trip. If you have questions Charlie can be reached at 634-0334.
- 6/7 Al Richards will take us on a half-day search for the rare Golden-winged Warbler. This trip is limited to 10 people and depends on one of these increasingly rare birds being located in the area. Call Al at 665-2761.
- 6/11 This month's morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley led by Harvey Allen (253-7963) could visit the marshes in South Windsor looking for the Least Bittern.
- 6/14 Early morning: During the breeding season the hour before dawn is magic. In the semi-light, birds sing songs heard at no other time. Unravel the magic with bird song expert, Don Kroodsma. This experience runs from 4:30 until 7:00 a.m. and is limited to 12 people. Call Don at 253-5519.
- 6/14 Early evening: We'll have the chance to hear the Whip-poor-will song from dusk until dark if the conditions are right (calm weather and continued access to the Montague plains). Al Richards will lead this trip. Call him at 665-2761.
- 6/21 A trip still in the planning: Bob Bieda would like to repeat last year's popular half-day trip to the grasslands of Westover Air Reserve Base looking for Grasshopper Sparrow and Upland Sandpiper. Call Bob at 527-2623. The trip is limited to 16 participants.

There are a number of trips planned for July, August and September that are described on the Field Trip List sent with the March Newsletter. If you have misplaced yours I would be happy to send you another. Call me at 549-1098 after the first of June.

### ***BIRDING with HITCHCOCK***

The *GREEN SCENE*, Hitchcock's spring fund-raiser and auction is on Friday, May 2, 5:30 - 8:30 pm at the Red Barn at Hampshire College. Join members, friends, volunteers and staff for the Center's once a year fundraising party! Great food! Great music (Oompah band)! Great bargains! Great people! You can't miss and you'll also help support this important environmental organization. Tickets for the function will be available at the door.

***BIRDING BY EAR - ON THE HOLYOKE RANGE:*** On Sunday, May 4 and Saturday, May 24 naturalist John Green will tune in to the flood of spring migrants while getting in shape as he leads three great hikes on the Holyoke Range. All walks are free and begin at 7:00 a.m. from the Notch Visitor's Center on Rt. 116 in Amherst.

On Thursday, May 15, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. there will be an informal evening of good food, conversation, fond memories and a bird walk on Larch Hill ***REMEMBERING GERRY BOZZO ... TEACHER and FRIEND.*** A conservation trail named in the memory of Gerry will be dedicated. Last June the HBC honored Gerry by making him a life member of the Club. Bring a potluck dish to share and your binoculars. Beverages, plates and utensils will be provided.

Call the Center at 256-0660 if you have questions.

## **LIBRARY**

From Anne Cann, HBC Library coordinator --

Thanks to our past president Jan Ortiz, the Hampshire Bird Club Library has a membership to the Manomet Bird Observatory. The benefits include a subscription to their magazine *Conservation Sciences Quarterly*, their annual report and discounts on publications and merchandise. All Manomet material is in the MANOMET magazine holder in the library, which is located on the first floor of the Hitchcock Center.

If members have books or guides which they think should be added to the library, please let Anne know. You can see her at the monthly meetings or call her at 253-7753.

## **CONSERVATION**

From Anne Lombard, coordinator --

The BIRDS in FORESTED LANDSCAPES (BFL) project was described in last month's Newsletter. Briefly, this survey, aimed at gathering information about forest thrushes, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, follows the protocol originally developed for Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Project Tanager which we have participated in for three years. If this interests you, please call Anne Lombard (586-7509) for the Northampton area or Micky McKinley (367-9791) for the Amherst area.

The NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT (also described in last month's Newsletter) is a nationwide count held this year on May 10. All birds seen or heard on the one day are counted. If you plan to be out birding that day and would be interested in participating, call Anne Lombard (586-7509) for a recording sheet. Organized bird walks will also be taking place at the three Audubon Sanctuaries in Hampshire County (8:00 - 9:30 a.m.).

## **AND**

Don't forget that *BACKYARD BIRDS* at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton is happy to offer a 10% discount to all HBC members for ALL PURCHASES. The offer is good through August, 1997 and is for members only. Use one of the newsletters as proof of membership.

CONGRATULATIONS: You have made it all the way to the end of this letter! It's long (no fooling) because you get two for the price of one this month. I'll be gone most of May (the call of the ancient Point Pelee) so this covers both months. The next letter coming your way will say

**IT'S AUGUST! WE NEED YOUR MONEY!**

Until then,

**HAVE A WONDERFUL BIRD-FILLED SUMMER**

*Sally*

Sally Venman, Secretary

June, 97?

**Hampshire Bird Club**

**MONHEGAN ISLAND**

Columbus Day Weekend - October 10 - 13, 1997

A wonderful trip has just been added to the list. Led by Dianne Quilty, we'll travel to this special island off the coast of Maine to view the late migration. Previous trips have had great looks at Merlins and Peregrine Falcons, up to 15 species of warblers (including 2 appearances of the Yellow-throated), good numbers of Sapsuckers and hundreds of Kinglets. Rare possibilities include Western Kingbird, Blue Grosbeak, Orange-crowned Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow and Red-headed Woodpecker.

The group will leave early Friday morning and return Monday evening. Accommodations will be at the Trailing Yew Annex. Cost is estimated between \$220.00 - \$240.00, plus shared car expenses, tips, lunches, etc. The number of participants is limited. Call Dianne **BY JULY 31** at (413)253-7568 for more information and to register.

Sincerely,

Sally Venman, Sec'y.