

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB

January 1998



Date: January 2, 1998.

Task: Write HBC Newsletter.

Approach Attitude: Procrastination Preferred.

Action: Delay Action. Clean out Drawers.

Surprise: An article (date unknown) torn from magazine (name unknown) titled *The Amazing Flight of Thrush No. 1231-40012*. With the article a picture -- a Kent McFarland holding a bird, a thrush -- a Bicknell's Thrush (a new species the result of a recent species split).

Coincidence: Kent McFarland from the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) is to be our speaker on Monday, January 12, 7:30 p.m. at our new home, the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst. His subject will be the Bicknell's Thrush!

THERE ARE NO COINCIDENCES

The recent Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush split has complicated the reporting and recording process. According to *Bird Observer* (October 1997) the identification of the two thrushes is so difficult that "until the interspecific identification points have been worked out and we have all gained more experience with this new species pair [we] will relegate all these thrushes to the category of Gray-cheeked-types."

Kent joins us to help us unravel some of the identity problems that bother birders. His program is titled *A year in the life of a Bicknell's Thrush*. He will relate the results of studying this "new" species on its breeding ground in Vermont and winter habitat in the Dominican Republic.

Mr. McFarland, a graduate of Allegheny College with a Masters degree from Antioch New England in Keene, NH has studied the Bicknell's Thrush for six years. He has completed a monograph on the Tennessee Warbler for the *Birds of North America* series and he will write on the Bicknell's Thrush for that series next.

This will be the first of regular monthly meetings at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst. It is with sadness that we leave the Hitchcock, home since our beginnings in 1984, but our membership has grown to a point where attendance at many of our programs is greater than the Center can comfortably and safely accommodate. The HBC owes the Hitchcock a tremendous thanks for the many years of space and support. Our growing library will remain at the Center and you will continue to be informed of events at Hitchcock of special interest to birders through this Newsletter.

The new site is really very nice as the 160 people who attended the Owl program in October will surely attest. It's easy to get to, there's lots of parking and there's a lovely big meeting space. However, the Program Committee will be needing some help from the membership. Next month I will send you a wish list of needed goods and services and a plea for help. Right now we know we will need people willing to help on the set-up and/or clean-up detail. Call Dennis McKenna (256-8439) or Sally Venman (549-1098) if you can lend a hand.

DIRECTIONS: The Immanuel Lutheran Church is on the east side of North Pleasant Street in Amherst just north of the UMass School of Education. **From the South:** 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 North:** 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.

FIELD TRIPS

Trip reports --

The last field trip of November, the annual "Turkey Trot," was led by Al Richards. He reports that the day began as a sunny, cold one then turned cloudy with light snow. Conditions at Cape Ann were "most pleasant." Six participants saw 52 species. An abbreviated list included Razorbills, Harlequins, Purple Sandpiper, Guillemots, an adult King Eider, all the Scoters, Gannett, and Black-legged Kittiwake. A highlight was a melanistic Chickadee. The bird had a black cowl with the rest of the body shades of dark gray, no white at all.

The first field trip of the year, the annual "Day One Bird Blitz," was led by Scott Sumner. Weather was clear and very cold. Six well-padded, hearty participants saw 44 species. Highlights included a Carolina Wren, Wild Turkeys, a Yellow-rumped Warbler, Peregrine Falcon, a very friendly, rather bizarre Ruffed Grouse brought to the group by Scott's hand clapping, Savannah Sparrow, a Dickcissel and a Northern Harrier. We apparently missed a Northern Shrike by minutes. Even with that miss it was a great way to start the new year!

Coming up --

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.

LIBRARY UPDATE

Anne Cann (253-7753) reports that the following guides have been purchased for the collection: *ABA Birder's Guide to Virginia, 1997*, *ABA Birder's Guide to Florida, 1996*, and the *ABA Birder's Guide to Colorado, 1997*.

The library of Margaret Brown, an enthusiastic HBC member who recently passed away, has been given to the HBC library in her memory by her daughter. It includes a wonderful variety of bird materials. There are video tapes, audio tapes, illustrated books and classics such as Konrad Lorenz' book on the behavior of the Greylag Goose. HBC member Susan Smith's book titled *The Black-capped Chickadee, Behavioral Ecology and Natural History* is also available.

We have been given duplicates from the Hitchcock Center Resource Library. If your interests in birds and travel leads you to Egypt or East Africa or Southeast Asia, there now are birding guides for you. Or, check out the recent issues of *Bird Watch Ireland* also donated to us by a friend. **Much appreciation to all who have given to enrich our library collection.**

Until further notice, you will find the HBC Library at the Hitchcock Center which is open for Wednesday through Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Please check the schedule around vacation times as it may not be open then.

P.S. - Last chance to get your name on the updated RBA (Rare Bird Alert) (for people who didn't sign up in the fall).

Call Shirlev Hilborn (253-6462)

Guess that's it -
Happy New Year!
Salley

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

February, 1998



PROGRAMS

Digging back into the ancient records of the HBC, I find that the Club's very first program on April 9, 1984 featured Dave Nelson whose presentation was titled "Quabbin Eagle Reintroduction." Now, fourteen years later, the Bald Eagle population in Massachusetts will again be the subject of the program at our meeting on Monday, February 9, 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church. Long-time HBC member Clifton Read will discuss the return of the Bald Eagle to the state with emphasis on the Eagle Restoration Project at Quabbin Reservoir. He will also share the findings of the recent mid-winter eagle survey.

Clif is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire and has a master's degree from Antioch New England in Keene, New Hampshire. He is Supervisor of Interpretive Service for the Metropolitan District Commission at Quabbin Reservoir. I first knew Clif as Public Programs Coordinator for the Hitchcock Center and later as the Center's Acting Director. As a new birder I took the Center's Spring Birding Class which he taught. Also digging back into the ancient HBC files I find that Clif presented programs to the Club on Tanzania, Senegal and Gambia. It's great to welcome him back.

Future presentations include Susan Smith on March 9 sharing her recent arctic adventure; Tom Martin on April 13, showing his outstanding slides from Monhegan Island; Jennifer Megyesi on May 11 who will take us to Hawaii; and Al Hinde on June 8 who will talk about the massive raptor migration through the Israeli port city of Eilat on the Red Sea.

FIELD TRIPS

TRIP REPORTS: On January 10 Bob Bieda led a group of 12 (14 for part of the time) on the annual winter trip to the North Shore. The weather was "the best ever - mild, clear, no wind." 57 species were seen. Highlights included Harlequin Duck (30+), Purple Sandpiper, Black-headed Gull, Snowy Owl, Red Crossbill and White-winged Crossbill.

On January 21 Harvey Allen "swept" the Connecticut River Valley on a day featuring a wind that was blowing a gale (Sounds wonderful, Harvey.) In spite of the cold, the group was able to get great views of Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs showing themselves a mere 10 yards from the road in the East Meadows.

Coming up --

CHANGE IN SCHEDULE -- On Wednesday, February 18 (NOT February 25) Harvey Allen (253-7963) leads the monthly "Morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley." Wouldn't it be nice to clear your mind of winter? Is it too early to see and hear the first Red-winged Blackbird, or the spring song of the Cardinal or the Mourning Dove? Join Harvey and hope of an early Valley wake-up call.

Saturday, February 21: February is tough for birding, so let's escape to Maine. (So you prefer Jamaica? Good luck!) Scott Sumner (253-7486) loves Maine and will lead this annual full day trip to the southeast corner of the state. Past trips have had Great Gray Owl, Ivory Gull and Bohemian Waxwing. Call him for more information and the meeting time and place.

March's "Sweep" on Wednesday, March 4 will find Harvey searching for early returning blackbirds and ducks. And as usual there is always the hope for the rarity at someone's feeder.

HBC LIBRARY NEWS

Notes from Anne Cann:

The HBC library is housed at the Hitchcock Center and is available to members for browsing and borrowing from Wednesday to Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The most recent copy of *Winging It*, the ABA Newsletter, has a very comprehensive article on pelagic trips from Newfoundland to Alaska, along the Canadian and North American coasts. And thanks to a member's gift, there is a nice small collection of brochures and maps of local state forests and some western parks that can be borrowed or copied.

Anne will be bringing a small assortment of books and journals for members to borrow at HBC meetings. Borrowed materials can also be returned at that time. If there is something you specifically wish to borrow, she will be happy to bring the item from the Hitchcock Center to the meeting as long as you call her by the Friday prior to the Monday meeting.

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!

BIRDING COURSES at HITCHCOCK: The Center is happy to welcome back an old friend, naturalist Andrew Magee who will be teaching the birding courses this year. Andrew has a wide-ranging appreciation of birds and birding, and brings a decades-long combination of professionalism, intuition, book knowledge, field experience and, especially, enthusiasm to his teaching. He has been birding in the Valley since his early childhood and has conducted breeding bird surveys in Litchfield, CT for three decades. These courses are geared for both beginning and experienced birders.

WINTER BIRDING: 4 Saturday mornings - February 21, 28; March 7, 14 (7:00 a.m. - noon.)

SPRING BIRDING: 8 Tuesday evening indoor class sessions beginning March 17 (7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.) followed by 8 Saturday sessions in the field starting March 21 (7:00 a.m. - noon). A trip to Plum Island is also planned.

BIRDING MONHEGAN ISLAND with HITCHCOCK: Led by Dianne Quilty and David Ziomek, this traditional birding trip over the long Memorial Day weekend, May 22 - May 25, is being offered through the Center to HBC and Hitchcock members only. The group departs from Port Clyde, Maine on Friday and spends all day Saturday and Sunday enjoying migrant birds, wildflowers, hiking, eating, laughing and the special wonders of this island paradise.

Preregistration is required for the classes and the trip. They fill quickly. Please call the Center soon at 256-6006. There is a fee.

WINTER BIRDS AT PLUM ISLAND through ARCADIA: On Saturday, March 7 (6:45 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.) Geoff LeBaron will be leading a winter field trip to this favorite birding spot. The group will travel by van from Arcadia. Call the Sanctuary (584-3009) for fee information and to register.

Also at **ARCADIA: GANNETS OF BONAVENTURE**, a program presented by John Green, Naturalist and Nature Photographer, on Saturday, February 28 (1:30 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.) And on Saturday, March 7, (1:00 - 2:00 p.m.): **GRASSLAND BIRDS**, a program presented by Andrea Jones, Mass Audubon Grassland Conservation Coordinator. There is a fee.

MISCELLANEOUS

RARE BIRD ALERT: Shirley Hilborn has updated the RBA for Valley & Beyond and has sent copies to the people on that list. If, by chance, you have not received yours please give Shirley a call (253-6462). There were no changes to the Valley Only list.

The 1997-1998 membership list is almost ready and will be sent to you soon. Let Dianne Quilty know (253-7568) if there are changes that should be made.

Bird News of Western Massachusetts subscribers can expect the first issue to arrive in late winter. The 1998 Winter issue contains the records for the Fall, 1997.

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.

In addition to helping members to enjoy birding, one of the purposes of the HBC 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. Last year we had a perfect opportunity to do just this when we helped HBC member Zeke Jakub realize his dream of attending Camp Chan Chich, an international camp in Belize for young birders offered by VENT and co-sponsored by ABA. The trip, limited to sixteen participants was designed to give young birders a unique opportunity to become familiar with important neotropical genera and to experience the tropical forest under the tutelage of some of the best naturalists around. It was an incredible experience for Zeke - one that he worked extremely hard to see realized! Zeke has proven himself over and over!

Now he has been accepted into another young ornithologists program, this one sponsored by the Ornithology Department from The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and the Panama Audubon Society under the direction of Sally Conyne and Dr. Ridgely running April 4 - 13. The purpose of the trip is to combine cultural and canal tourism with birding, habitat study and field work assisting scientists involved in canal zone bird studies. Zeke will be staying an additional week to continue to study and to bird with a Panamanian student he met at the Chan Chich camp.

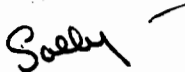
Most of the cost of the trip is being covered by a scholarship awarded to Zeke from The Academy of Natural Sciences but he does need to raise an additional \$800. We can help him by purchasing his most recent T-Shirt creation based on reflections while raising two crows, Corvus and Coraz, in his back yard - a story in itself. The T-Shirt is gray with black print of two crows and the text "EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LIFE I LEARNED FROM CROWS." He is taking orders now. He is also available for a slide presentation on raising his crows and his research for which he asks a donation. For more information give Zeke a call at 413-773-7906.

I talked to Jim Marcum recently and he asked me to let the membership know that there is still room on the list for the trip to Venezuela, October 14-28, 1998. Jim Marcum and HBC friends will 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. Andean-Cock-of-the-Rock, Bearded Helmetcrest, Torrent Tyrannulet, Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager, 6,000 American Falmingos, Burnished-buff Tanager is just a sample of what you may see. 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 marcum@fnr.umass.edu

Guess that does it for another fun-filled sit at the computer. Hope you can soften winter a bit by taking in some of the events described above. See you at Clif's program on Monday?

Sincerely,



Sally Venman
Newsletter Editor

P.S. Well folks, the impossible, the improbable and the down-right unbelievable has happened. Your humble scribe and passer-along of important information has surrendered to passage of time and explosion of technology. No longer able to bear the weight of abuse from my tacky, techy friends I have joined the masses (oh defeat -- sad, sad, sad defeat), given up another thread of independence, and have registered my name on the great computer network of the sky. I, Sarah G. Venman, succumbing to pressures no longer bearable can now and forever after be reached and informed through email!!! Let the drums roll!!! My email address is:

svenman@external.umass.edu

Now if I can ever figure out how to get into husband Bill's computer where I can read volumes of mail I'll really have this technical phobia thing licked. Right! Don't I wish.

Let it be known, however, that I still answer the telephone, read and answer letters. (Well - most of the time.)



PROGRAMS:

Travels in the Arctic will be the featured program at the next meeting of the HBC on Monday, March 9, 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst. Long-time Club member and author Susan Smith will share her recent adventure to the far north with slides and narrative. She will also include photographs of travels in Alaska.

Susan is a professor of biology at Mount Holyoke College. For the past nineteen years she has studied a color-banded population of Black-capped Chickadees in South Hadley and has authored two books on the subject, *The Black-capped Chickadee, Behavioral Ecology and Natural History* (1991) and *Wild Bird Guides: The Black-capped Chickadee*. The former can be found in the HBC library. She has also done the species account for the *Birds of North America* series.

This will be the seventh time Susan has presented a program for the Club. She is a delightful presenter and a real gift to our organization and the birding community.

Future programs include Tom Martin, who will show his slides from Monhegan Island on April 13, Jennifer Megyesi who will take us to Hawaii on May 11 and Al Hinde who will tell us about the massive raptor migration through the Israeli port city of Eilat on the Red Sea on June 8.

FIELD TRIPS:

Last year I sent some general information to members that seems worth repeating now. 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 going to the places where birds can be seen is important. (Not many malls advertise *rare bird specials*.) 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.) All are expected to share trip expenses equally (gas, tolls, etc.). Trips are described in the Newsletters and some of the birds that the leader expects to see are named. 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.

Enclosed with this letter is the Field Trip list for trips through September as compiled by the Field Trip Committee, Bob Bieda, chair (413-527-2623.) Take a moment to remind yourself that warm weather is coming and to set time aside to take advantage of the offerings.

For now --

March's "Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley" on Wednesday, March 4 will find Harvey Allen (253-7963) searching for early returning blackbirds and ducks. And as usual there is always the hope for the rarity that someone has noticed at his/her feeder. Join Harvey as the valley starts to wake up.

On Saturday, March 21 Al Richards will be searching the Connecticut River Valley, a natural flyway for ducks and geese returning north. This annual half-day trip will explore the coves of the river from Hadley to Turners Falls so dress warmly and with waterproof foot wear. The trip will meet at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst at 6:30 a.m. Call Al at 665-2761 if you have questions.

LIBRARY

I remind you that Anne Cann will be bringing a small assortment of books and journals for members to borrow at HBC meetings. Borrowed materials can also be returned at that time. If there is something you specifically wish to borrow, she will be happy to bring the item from the Hitchcock Center to the meeting as long as you call her by the Friday prior to the Monday meeting. The HBC library is housed at the Hitchcock Center and is available to members for browsing and borrowing from Wednesday to Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

CONSERVATION:

We will be continuing the Birds in Forested Landscapes (BFL) 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 base our surveys on the protocol originally developed for the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Project Tanager in which we participated 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 and Northampton areas which we used for Project Tanager. Small groups of two to four make two visits to each site in April, May and June. Mary Alice Wilson will be taking over the coordination of the Amherst area sites, a project which Micky McKinley has done for the past four years. If you are interested in finding out more about the project and/or participating, please contact Anne Lombard (586-7578) (lombarda@javanet.com) for the Northampton area or Mary Alice (548-9078) (mwilson@k12.oit.umass.edu) for the Amherst area.

HITCHCOCK BIRDING:

SPRING BIRDING COURSE taught by naturalist Andrew Magee begins with a Wednesday night class on March 17 (7:00 - 9:00). Eight evening sessions are followed by eight field sessions beginning on March 21. (7:00 a.m. - noon). A trip to Plum Island is also being planned. Andrew has a wide ranging appreciation of birds and birding, and brings a decades-long combination of professionalism, intuition, book knowledge, field experience and, especially, enthusiasm to his teaching. He has been birding in the

Valley since his early childhood and has conducted breeding bird surveys in Litchfield, CT for three decades. These courses are geared for both beginning and experienced birders. Preregistration is required. Please call the Center at 256-6006 for more information.

There are still a few open spots on the BIRDING MONHEGAN ISLAND trip which will be led by Dianne Quilty and Andrew Magee. David Ziomek will assist on this traditional birding trip over the long Memorial Day weekend (May 22 - 25). It is being offered through the Center to HBC and Hitchcock members only. We depart from Port Clyde, Maine on Friday and spend all day Saturday and Sunday enjoying migrant birds, wildflowers, hiking, eating, laughing and the special wonders of this island paradise. Call Dave at the Center at 256-6006 soon for more information on lodging and fees.

ARCADIA BIRDING:

WINTER BIRDS AT PLUM ISLAND: On Saturday, March 7, 6:45 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Geoff LeBaron will be leading a winter field trip to this favorite spot. The group will travel by van from Arcadia.

GRASSLAND BIRDS: a program presented by Andrea Jones, Mass Audubon Grassland Conservation Coordinator on Saturday, March 7, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

BIRDING BY EAR: AN INTRODUCTION TO BIRDSONG. On Saturday, March 28, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Dick Walton, author of Peterson's *Birding by Ear* series will be leading this popular workshop.

Call the Sanctuary (584-3009) for fee information and to register.

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CALL FOR ASSISTANCE: Would you be willing to be called *occasionally* to give an hour of assistance late Sunday afternoon helping the Board set up for our monthly meetings at the Lutheran Church? If so, please call Shirley Hilborn at 413-253-6462.

RARE BIRD REPORTING: In order to streamline the process in reporting rare birds we are making some procedural changes. As it now stands, routine daily and weekly sightings will continue to be phoned into the *VOICE* (operated by Scott Sumner) at 413-256-1836. This information is passed on weekly in the recorded message received by dialing 413-253-2218. However, the reporting number is **NOT** monitored daily so is not the appropriate way to report a rare or potentially rare bird (one that will possibly result in the Rare Bird Alert telephone tree being activated.) With this in mind we would like to recommend the following procedure: Call Scott Sumner at 413-253-7486, Jan Ortiz at 413-549-1768 or Shirley Hilborn at 413-253-6462 with your sighting. If it deserves immediate attention, one that you assume will result in a Rare Bird Alert, please continue to phone until you speak to someone personally. If none of the above folks can be reached, remember that anyone on the telephone tree can start the Alert. If you are not comfortable doing this on your own, try to reach an HBC board member (we're on the membership list). Thanks for your help.

BIRD NEWS of WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS subscribers can expect the first issue to arrive in late winter. The Winter, 1998 issue contains the records for the Fall, 1997.

The 1997-1998 **MEMBERSHIP LIST** was sent to you this past week. If you find errors please let Dianne Quilty know (253-7568). I will pass on any changes or 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 **VOICES of AUDUBON** and others.

NEW MEMBERS' PACKET: I am extremely happy to announce that I finally got it together and it is being sent this week. If you are a new member and you don't receive it soon, please give me a call (413-549-1098.) Included in the Packet are the By-laws, the Dead Bird Sheet (Does anybody have a use for this dead bird?), a copy of the ABA *Code of Birding Ethics* and the HBC *Field Trip Policy* sheet, an HBC library information sheet and a list of Rare Bird Alerts across the country. Should anyone desire an extra copy of any of these, I'll always have them at the meetings or would be happy to send one to you.

That's all she wrote, folks!

Sincerely,

Sally

Sally Venman
Newsletter editor

Hold on to your binocs, my friends. This is a long one!
On your mark, get set, go -----

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER
April, 1998



PROGRAMS

Before retirement, Thomas W. Martin was a master diemaker who worked and lived amid the skyscrapers of Manhattan. Weekends and holidays were spent photographing nature. Now retired and still living in New York, he enjoys being a naturalist-photographer. On Monday, April 13, 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst we will experience his work, his wit and his wisdom in a program entitled "Birds of Monhegan Island."

Tom's work is praised by wildlife and photographic experts alike. His photos have been in *National Geographic*, *Audubon* and on television. 175 of them were used in the Audubon Field Guides.

Many HBC members have met Tom on Monhegan Island and have seen his slides and been entertained by his many stories. He has shared his knowledge of the birds on the Island and has taken us on wildflower walks when the birding was slow. Always a part of our weekend, he greets us at the dock on Friday and waves goodbye to us on Monday. His yard, just a short walk from our accommodations, is where many of his photographs are taken and is the best known bird feeding station on the Island. Hundreds of pounds of seed and many dozens of oranges are used to attract the birds. We check it several times a day hoping for rarities which are often found there.

Come enjoy his beautiful slides and laugh with this informal and imaginative naturalist as he shares his experiences with us. An unpredictable and entertaining evening is in store!

Future programs include Jennifer Megyesi who will take us to Hawaii on May 11 and Al Hinde who will tell us about the massive raptor migration through the Israeli port city of Eilat on the Red Sea on June 8.

FIELD TRIPS

Last month's mailing included a copy of Field Trips being offered through the Club for the spring and summer. If somehow you were missed give me a call at 549-1098 or e-mail me svenman@external.umass.edu. I'll also have copies at the meetings.

For now --

4/11: 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.

4/18: A NEW trip this spring to the **BARTHOLOMEW COBBLE** area of southwestern Massachusetts is being led by Morris Lainer. First came the Mockingbirds and Titmice, then Carolina Wrens and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. Now Black Vultures are moving up from the south to our area. The group will try to locate some of these new members of the Massachusetts avifauna on this full-day trip. Call Morris (527-9412) for more information.

4/22: "The Wednesday Morning Sweep of the **CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY**" for April will find leader Harvey Allen searching for whatever is being reported. These monthly half-day trips in the fall, winter and spring are leisurely-paced and focus on seasonal birds in the valley as well as rarities discovered in the past week or so. Meeting places might vary and some trips might dip into northern Connecticut. Call Harvey (253-7963) for more information.

4/25: Scott Sumner will be leading an all-day trip to **PLUM ISLAND** searching for the Ruff, hoping for the male in its dramatic breeding plumage. This rare shorebird visitor from Europe has been seen on three of the past six years that the Club has made this trip. It 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 footgear for warmth and dryness. Call Scott (253-7486) 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. 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.

5/5: Starting Tuesday, May 5/5, 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.

Dave Ziomek tells me that there are two spots open on the **BIRDING MONHEGAN ISLAND** trip which will be led by Dianne Quilty and Andrew Magee. David Ziomek will assist on this traditional birding trip over the long Memorial Day weekend (May 22 - 25). It is being offered through the Center. Call 256-6006 for more information.

There is still room on the trip to **VENEZUELA**, October 14-28, 1998, being arranged by Jim Marcum. Venezuelan naturalist, David Ascanio, will serve as local guide on this trip that is handled by Caligo Ventures, Inc. If you are interested give Jim a call at 549-1613 or email him at marcum@fnr.umass.edu

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.

CONSERVATION

The **CONTE MIGRATORY BIRD HABITAT SURVEY** moves into its third and last year with a meeting at Arcadia on Tuesday, April 7, at 7:00 p.m. If you plan to participate in the survey this year it is very important that you attend this meeting. If you have questions or if you are absolutely unable to make this meeting please call Wayne Petersen at 781/259-9506, x7412.

The fourth **NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT** is a nationwide count held on the second Saturday in May (May 9). Similar to the Christmas Count in that you count all birds seen/heard on that day, it 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. We would like to increase and improve the organization of Hampshire County participation this year. We are looking for one or more participants from each town. You go to your favorite spots, keep count and record what you see/hear on a sheet which will be sent to you or will be provided at the April meeting. If you would like to go birding with a group that day, organized morning bird walks will be taking place at all three Audubon Hampshire Sanctuaries. Call Arcadia for more information. For questions and recording sheets call Anne Lombard (586-7509).

Last month's mailing spoke about our continuing the **BIRDS IN FORESTED LANDSCAPES (BFL)** project linking 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. Please refer to the March *HBC Newsletter* for complete information. Mary Alice Wilson will be taking over the coordination of the Amherst area sites. You can reach Mary Alice by phone (548-9078) or by e-mail (mwilson@k12.oit.umass.edu). Anne Lombard will continue coordinating the Northampton area. She can be reached by phone (586-7578) or by e-mail (lombarda@javanet.com).

The **AMHERST BREEDING BIRD CENSUS** will go into its ninth 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 Westover 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).

The **BIRDERS' EXCHANGE** is another way you might want to contribute to the conservation effort. It's explained on a separate sheet enclosed with this Newsletter. Check it out.

LIBRARY

The HBC library is housed at the Hitchcock Center and is available to members for browsing and borrowing from Wednesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Anne Cann will also bring a small assortment of books and journals for members to borrow at HBC meetings. Borrowed materials can also be returned at that time. If there is something you specifically want, she will be happy to bring the item from the Hitchcock Center to the meeting as long as you call her by the Saturday prior to the Monday meeting.

Our subscription to the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences has been renewed thanks to the generosity of an HBC member. The quarterly journal describes their conservation projects and philosophy from the Bay of Fundy to Tierra del Fuego.

BIRDING with HITCHCOCK

On Friday, May 1, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m., at the Red Barn at Hampshire College come join members, friends, volunteers and staff for the Hitchcock Center's once a year fundraising party and auction, the **GREEN SCENE**. Great food! Great music (Oompah band)! Great bargains! Great people! You can't miss and you'll also help support this important environmental organization.

BIRDING BY EAR - ON THE HOLYOKE RANGE: On Saturday, April 25, Sunday, May 3 and Sunday, 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 but pre-registration is required. Call the Center (256-6006) for more information.

GIBBOUS MOON/LUNAR BIRD COUNT STAR PARTY: On Thursday, May 7, 8:00 - 9:30 p.m. Ron Woodland, teacher and Planetarium Director of Bassett Planetarium at Amherst College will talk about the constellations of spring and weather permitting will show us the thrill birds migrating north silhouetted in front of the nearly full moon. This program is geared for adults as well as for families with children.

BIRDING with ARCADIA

The fourth **NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT DAY** will be marked by organized morning bird walks at all three of the Sanctuaries on May 9.

Starting April 18 and running through June 20 Arcadia is offering Saturday morning **BIRD WALKS** from 8:30 - 10:00 a.m. at the three Sanctuaries: Arcadia, Graves Farm and Lynes.

Call Arcadia (584-3009) for more information.

#####

ELECTIONS: May is the month we elect Board officers and members for the coming year. The nominating committee, chaired by Jan Ortiz, with members Al Richards and Anne Lombard is in the process of drawing up a slate for your consideration. If you wish input, now would be the time to get in touch with one of them.

HBC WEB PAGE: In the beginning, Tom Arny very generously set up an HBC Web Page for early World Wide Web followers and searchers. We are very grateful to him! Interest grew beyond what Tom wanted to be responsible for and he hoped he could be replaced by another interested soul. HBC member Merry Cushing, a skilled Web surfer, came to our rescue and is going at it with great enthusiasm and skill. There is a whole lot of good stuff to be found on the Hampshire Bird Club Web Site. Check it out, especially the related links! The new address to the site is:

<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~hampbird/>

While on the subject of information gathering and giving, the HBC now has a post office box address. If you want to get in touch but you're not sure who to get in touch with send your letter to the HBC, P.O. Box 716, Amherst, MA 01004-9716. It is checked regularly and letters will make their way to the proper person.

This winter many people observed a Peregrine hanging around, making dinner out of Rock Doves and perching on top of the Campus Center and the Library Tower.

Because of this, Dave Ziomek, Pete Westover and Tom French decided to place a nesting box on the Library Tower to see what might happen. With the help of the Umass Physical Plant, it was put in place on Friday, March 27. When a Physical Plant employee went back on Monday, March 30, he found a bird checking out the box. The bird has also been observed exhibiting territorial behavior. Falcons are in migration now and April is egg laying time - perfect timing for catching the eye of passing Peregrine.

According to Tom, there is about a 30% chance for successful nesting in the first year. According to Dave, the box is there for the long haul but it's hard not to be "cautiously optimistic" for success this year.

You can easily see the box on the Library roof with your naked eye from the pond side. Check all four sides of the Tower for the roosting bird. Stay Tuned -----

#####

NO MORE, NO MORE, NO MORE: And to think I really do this every month because I really choose to? Next month is

BAD-JOKE-MONTH . . .

LITTLE-KNOWN-DATES-WORTH-CELEBRATING-MONTH . . . and

WORD-CHALLENGE!

'til then --

Sally -

Sally Venman

Your cross-eyed Newsletter editor-type person

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

May, 1998

PROGRAMS

Seabirds of the Northwest Hawaiian Islands will be the featured program at the May meeting of the Hampshire Bird Club on Monday, May 11 at 7:30 at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst. Biologist Jennifer Megyesi will present a slide show highlighting her research as manager of a tiny wildlife refuge on a remote uninhabited island in the Hawaiian chain. During her three years associated with the US Fish and Wildlife Service her focus was on 17 species of seabirds, including Laysan and Black Footed Albatross. She will also speak about the endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal and the Green Sea Turtle.

Jennifer received her Bachelors degree at the University of Vermont and her Masters at Umass. In addition to her work with Hawaiian seabirds she has been involved with the avian restoration program on Monomoy Island off Cape Cod. She has worked at the Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge, and as an intern at the Vermont Institute of Natural Sciences. Most recently she has done research on the Magnificent Frigate Bird.

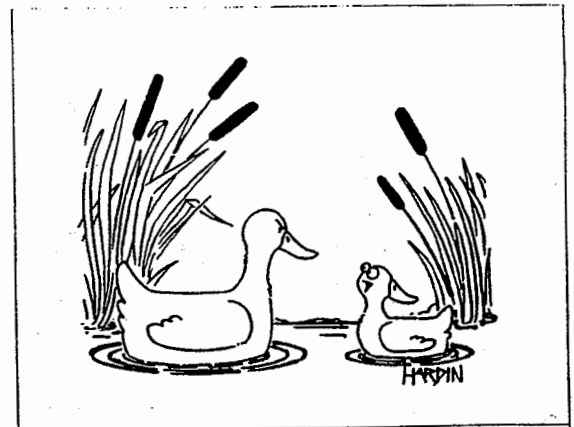
A short business meeting will precede the program in order to elect Board officers and members for the coming year. The nominating committee (Jan Ortiz, chair, Harvey Allen and Anne Lombard) will present the following slate for your approval: Jim Marcum (President), Mary Alice Wilson (Vice President/Program Director), Mark Mount (Treasurer), Sally Venman (Communications Secretary), Dianne Quilty (Membership Secretary), and Board members Susan Emerson, Shirley Hilborn, Dennis McKenna, Jan Ortiz, Elaine Pourinski and Scott Sumner. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor, if seconded.

The last program before the summer break on June 8 will feature Al Hinde who will talk about the massive raptor migration through the Israeli port city of Eilat on the Red Sea.

FIELD TRIPS

I have one field trip to review this month. On 4/25 Scott Sumner and four participants, undaunted by northwest winds and afternoon rain, recorded 72 species on Plum Island. It was spring hawk migration time and the group observed Broadwing Hawk, Northern Harriers, Ospreys, and many Kestrels and Merlins moving at eye level - quite a treat! Another treat was spotting 8 Glossy Ibises in flight, close enough for a good look. Also high on the list of special sightings were 2 Piping Plovers. AND the group found a new place to eat seafood! A very good day!

Heard in passing early last week:
"But Mom, all the kids wearing the bill in back."



Coming up --

- 5/5 Starting Tuesday, 5/5, and continuing every Tuesday and Thursday throughout the month, the Club sponsors an early morning bird walk through **Wildwood Cemetery**. Meet the leader at the gate at 6:30 a.m. These walks usually last until 8:00 a.m. I remind you that Wildwood is private property. Please park only in the appropriate places and use common sense and courtesy when birding the facility so that we will continue to be welcome.
- 5/9 is the fourth **North American Migration Count**.
- 5/13 This month's focus for Harvey Allen's popular mid-week, half-day trip will be on rails (birds, not trains - another of Harvey's hobbies.) It could also be the height of the warbler migration. Call Harvey at 253-7963.
- 5/16 is the 1998 **Massachusetts Audubon Birdathon** which Tom Gagnon is coordinating. Officially it begins at 6:00 p.m. Friday the 15th 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 an assignment.
- 5/22 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. The trip is now managed by the Hitchcock Center in Amherst with Scott Sumner as organizer, and Dianne Quilty and David Ziomek leading the bird walks. Call the Hitchcock Center (256-6006) or Scott (253-7486) for more information.
- 5/30 The Shorebird migration is reaching its peak, late warblers are dropping into Hellcat, and the greenheads are still larvae. Need to keep the May birding fix going a little while longer? To help in this process Bob Bieda will lead a full-day trip to **Plum Island**. Call him at 527-2623.
- 6/6 Are there Mourning Warblers in **Cummington, MA**? Charlie Quinlan (634-0334) will try to answer that question and look for the American Bittern as well. Meet him at the old Berkshire Snow Basin Ski Area on Route 9 in Cummington at 7:30 a.m. for this half-day trip.

Remember 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.

CONSERVATION

(Please refer to the April letter for details.)

The fourth **North American Migration Count** as described in last month's Newsletter will take place on Saturday, May 9. For more information and to obtain recording sheets please contact Anne Lombard at 586-7509.

I remind you about the Birds in Forested Landscapes (BFL) project. Mary Alice Wilson will be coordinating the Amherst area sites. Reach her by phone (548-9078) or by e-mail (mwilson@kl2.oit.umass.edu). Anne Lombard will be coordinating the Northampton area. Reach her by phone (586-7578) or by e-mail (lombarda@javanet.com).

The Amherst Breeding Bird Census is looking for qualified people who could fill in for vacationing participants. If this interests you call Pete Westover (256-4045) or David Ziomek at the Hitchcock Center (256-6006).

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The HBC library is housed at the Hitchcock Center and is available to members for browsing and borrowing from Wednesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. HBC Librarian Anne Cann will be bringing a small assortment of books and journals to the meeting. If there is something you specifically want, she'll be happy to bring them as long as you call her by the Saturday prior to the Monday meeting.

BIRDING with HITCHCOCK

(Call the Center, 256-6006 to register.)

Gibbous Moon/Lunar Bird Count Star Party: On Thursday, May 7, 8:00 - 9:30 p.m. Ron Woodland, teacher and Planetarium Director of Bassett Planetarium at Amherst College will talk about the constellations of spring and, weather permitting, will show us birds migrating north silhouetted in front of the nearly full moon.

Birding by Ear on the Holyoke Range: On Sunday, May 24 naturalist John Green will tune in to bird song while getting in shape as he leads a hike on the Holyoke Range.

BIRDING with ARCADIA

(Call Arcadia, 584-3009, for more information)

Starting April 18 and running through June 20 Arcadia is offering Saturday morning **Bird Walks** from 8:30 - 10:00 a.m. at the three Sanctuaries (Arcadia, Graves Farm and Lynes.)

Arcadia will mark the fourth **North American Migration Count Day** with organized morning bird walks at all three of the Sanctuaries on May 9.

MISCELLANEOUS

Something a little different and special from long-time HBC member David Spector will take place on Friday, May 8, 7:30 p.m. at the Clapp Memorial Library in Belchertown when he presents a program titled "Naturalists and Novelists." He gave this program to our Club several years ago. At that time I wrote that his topic joins Thomas Bewick and the Bronte sisters through slides and talk demonstrating how the great 19th century English naturalist's bird references and insights influenced the sisters in their story telling. It was a terrific program!

TRUE CONFESSIONS

Your Newsletter Editor has added a new "oops" to her "Oops" Life List. Living somewhere in my computer room there is a very secretive, cleverly diabolical gremlin. I call him Dingbat. Never actually seen and with mischief well disguised, he skulks silently about looking for ways to get me in trouble. It was purely by accident that I discovered his latest trick.

When April's Newsletter was written, rewritten, spell-checked, signed and delivered to the printer with a huge sigh of relief (last month's edition seemed endless) I celebrated. Three weeks after sending it to the membership I discovered that a complete page had been left out. Somewhere between computer (which printed it without a sigh) and print shop (which is blameless) it simply disappeared.

Hmmm --

So here are two parts of that page (parts that still apply).

ZEKE: HBC member Zeke Jakub is in the papers again! In case you missed the announcement, the latest coup of this 17-year-old Greenfield High School student was being named overall winner at the Regional Science Fair at the University of Massachusetts. His study project, "Acoustic Communication and Behavior of the Captive American Crow," earned him a free trip to the International Science and Engineering Fair in Houston in May. By the time you read this, Zeke will be participating in another young ornithologists program in Panama assisting scientists involved in canal zone bird studies. The Club has helped Zeke realize this latest dream trip. He asked me to let you know that he will be taking another order for his "EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LIFE I LEARNED FROM CROWS" t-shirt as soon as he returns on April 22. If you are interested, call his home (413/773-7906) or e-mail him (corvus4@juno.com) to place your order. Make note of the e-mail address - it is different (but correct) from the one on the membership form.

Zeke is back from Panama and had a terrific time! Surprised? He is still taking t-shirt orders.

and

HAPPY TO MEET YOU, JONATHAN: Jonathan Gottsche spoke to the meeting in March about the Conte Migratory Bird Habitat Survey which I covered in the April Newsletter. On a more personal note he wrote in a letter to me (and I pass on parts to you) - "I am endeavoring to become a wildlife photographer and I would greatly appreciate any opportunity to collect subject material within the Connecticut River Valley. I am interested in being notified of photographic occurrences ornithological ... I would love to reach Hampshire birders and try to capture on film what it is that makes us so enamored with birds." Jonathan comes to the area with a whole lot of experience working and studying in the natural world as a naturalist and an educator. At present he is trying to assemble a decent bird photography portfolio. He hopes to use his photographic work to "disseminate information about birds, birders, and birding, promote ethical birding practices and bring into being economic and environmental values." He would love to talk to any of you about any of this. Jonathan can be reached by phone (413/586-9158) or by e-mail (gotch@javanet.com).

THE HBC STORE: First the decal, then the patch, third the t-shirt and bumper sticker, then the guide book, and now --- drum role --- the ever-expanding HBC store is making available to you, our valued members, for the unbelievably low sum of a quarter (\$0.25) the Massachusetts Daily Field Card Check List. **WHAT A CLUB!** You might even want to start your Holiday shopping early this year.

NOW FOR THE REALLY SERIOUS STUFF

Always on the search of new words to expand my vocabulary the following were suggested for my consideration.

The task: Work one word per day into a sentence.

AQUADEXTROUS (ak wa deks trus) adj. Possessing the ability to turn the bathtub faucet on and off with your toes.

LACTOMANGULATION (lak to man gyu lay shun) n. Manhandling the "open here" spout on a milk container so badly that one has to resort to the 'illegal' side.

PEPPIER: (pehp ee ay) n. The waiter at a fancy restaurant whose sole purpose seems to be walking around asking diners if they want ground pepper.

DE-JA-MU: (day jah moo) n. The feeling that you have heard this bull before!

The challenge: Create your own words, send them to me and be *PUBLISHED*.

and

While involved in a major archaeological dig into Sally's World, starting with the HBC files, I spent quality time on the year 1993. It was there that I found the following and knew that the membership needed it NOW, in the spring, in order to evaluate birding skills in self and prospective mates and/or buddies. Pin it up in a place of prominence for daily perusal. Let it be your guide. You'll thank me.

Performance Factor	Far Exceeds Norm	Exceeds Norm	Meets Norm	Needs Some Improvement	Does not Meet Minimal Standards
Pursuit Ability	Leaps trees with a single bound	Needs a running start to leap trees	Can leap large bushes	Crashes into bush when attempting to leap over it	Catches poison ivy
Locating Birds in Binoculars	Faster than a Peregrine Falcon	Fast as a Chimney Swift	Not quite as fast as a Chimney Swift	Would you believe a slow Chimney Swift?	Has trouble locating chimneys
Field Work	Walks on water consistently	Walks on water in emergencies	Needs log to get over water	Drinks water	Spills water
Credibility	Talks with God	Talks with Roger Tory Peterson	Talks with himself	Argues with himself	Loses arguments
Sight Identification	Eyes of an eagle	Eyes of a Blue Jay	Needs binoculars	Needs binoculars in good light	Can't find binoculars
Sound Identification	Can recognize birds from a single chip	Can recognize birds by song	Can identify some birds by song	Can hear songs	Eh?

Have a GREAT Month!
Sally

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER
June, 1998



PROGRAM: The last program before summer break will feature Alan J. Hinde showing slides and sharing his experiences during the massive raptor migration at the raptor banding station in Eilat, an Israeli port city on the Red Sea. The program is titled "Eilat: A Birdwatcher's Paradise" and will be presented on Monday, June 8 at 7:30 at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst.

Al's lifelong fascination with raptors developed in the late 1970's while searching for Red Kites and Golden Eagles in Wales and Scotland. Starting in 1980 he spent four summers monitoring and color banding Peregrine Falcons at eyries in Southwest England. Two summers were then spent reintroducing Peregrines in New Hampshire and Vermont for Cornell University. He received his Federal Master Banding permit in 1985. He began his own projects banding and monitoring wintering raptors in the Great Basin of Nevada and Utah in collaboration with HawkWatch International, and radio-tracking Cooper's Hawks in New Mexico and Bald Eagles on the San Carlos Apache Reservation in Arizona. He spends each fall banding raptors at Cape May Observatory in New Jersey.

In 1988 he and Bill Clark (raptor field guide, author and director of Cape May banding) established a raptor banding project in northern Israel. And in 1996 they established a banding project in southern Israel which Al now directs and from which he has just returned. This project monitors the largest flyway of birds of all types in the world (estimated to be 2 1/2 billion - WOW!).

Al will have slides of raptors in hand, local habitat and scenery, and I suspect some very interesting tales to tell. Hope you can join us.

FIELD TRIPS: Before getting to the lists I want to acknowledge and thank Bob Bieda for his many years of service to the Club as Field Trip chairman. We have one of the most active Clubs in New England and this is due in part to the many trips offered. Bob has coordinated this constantly growing list, not an easy and often a thankless job. He has decided it's time to bird more and plan less - he certainly has earned it. Thank you, Bob!!! Scott Sumner has volunteered to carry on. Thank you, Scott.

To save time and space I'm simply listing the destination and leaders for summer trips and ask you to refer to the yellow trip list for more details. I have extra copies if you have lost yours. Call the HBC VOICE (253-2218) to learn what birds are being seen in the area.

Saturday, June 6: Search for Mourning Warblers in Cummington. Charlie Quinlan (634-0334).

Wednesday, June 10: Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. Harvey Allen (253-7963).

Saturday, June 13: Search for Golden-winged Warbler. Al Richards (665-2761).

Friday, June 19: Whip-poor-will Evening. Al Richards (665-2761).
Saturday, June 20: Grasshopper Sparrows and Upland Sandpipers at
Westover Air Reserve Base. Bob Bieda (527-2623).
Sunday, July 26: Seabird trip from Provincetown with the Allen Bird
Club. Seth Kellogg (569-3335).
Monday, August 3: Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley.
Harvey Allen (253-7963).
Saturday, August 29: South Beach, Chatham, Cape Cod for shorebirds.
Bob Bieda (527-2623).

Tom Gagnon, one of the best all-round naturalists in our club, will be
leading butterfly walks for the Massachusetts Butterfly Club this
summer. Call him for information (584-6353).

In case you are fortunate enough to be planning a birding trip to Alaska
this summer please note and pay heed to the following public service
announcement: *Hikers are warned to wear tiny bells on their clothing
when in bear country. The bells warn away most bears. Watch the trail
paying particular attention to scat in order to be alerted to the
presence of Grizzly Bears. One can easily identify Grizzly droppings by
the tiny bells in it.*

SUMMER BIRDING CLASS: Naturalist, teacher, artist, author and HBC
member Andrew Magee has a wide-ranging appreciation of birds and
birding. He taught the very successful winter and spring birding
courses through the Hitchcock Center this year, drawing on a
decades-long combination of professionalism, intuition, book knowledge,
field experience and, especially, enthusiasm for teaching. He has been
birding in the Valley since his early childhood and has conducted
breeding bird surveys in Litchfield, CT for three decades. His courses
are geared for both beginning and experienced birders.

He is now proposing a logical step beyond spring migration -- a class
focusing on breeding birds. It will meet on the four Saturdays in June
with a possible fifth on May 30. Classes will run from 5:30 a.m. to
3:00 p.m., a time frame that takes advantage of early light and dawn
song and that allows the group to go farther afield to more diverse,
interesting spots where birds can be found on their breeding grounds.
He described what he has in mind for this new class at our May meeting.
It sounds very appealing. If you are interested call him NOW at
665-3768.

In order to prevent brain deterioration over the summer, here are two
more words to work into your vacation vocabulary:

PHONESIA (fo nee zhuh) n. *The affliction of dialing a phone number and
forgetting whom you were calling just as they answer.*
PUPKUS (pup kus) n. *The moist residue left on a window after a dog
presses its nose to it.*

CONSERVATION: From Ann Lombard: A group of Northampton area members of the Hampshire Bird Club have adopted the Lake Trail at the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. We will do ongoing maintenance of this fine birding trail several times a year. The first gathering to walk the trail will be on Saturday, June 6, National Trails Day. If interested please contact Anne by phone (586-7578) or by e-mail (lombarda@javanet.com).

Pete Westover is still looking for 3 qualified people to participate in the **Amherst Breeding Bird Census** in June. If interested call Pete (256-4045).

➔ **VACATION POINTER # 1:** -- A Point to ponder peacefully on a quiet summer beach: *Why Yawning is Contagious: You yawn to equalize the pressure on your eardrums. This pressure change outside your eardrums unbalances other people's ear pressures, so they must yawn to even it out.*

LIBRARY From Anne Cann, Librarian: The HBC Library is located at the Hitchcock Center and is available to you during the summer at the usual hours (9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday). Check the many guides and resources to increase your summer trips and birding enjoyment. The ABA journals, *Birding* and *Winging It* are great for those rainy summer days, and if you are lacking bird guides, tapes, or gear the ABA Sales Catalog has every imaginable birding resource to tempt you.

We have received some donations which will soon be cataloged and on the shelves. If you have some bird books which you are no longer using that you think HBC members might enjoy, please pass them along to the library.

Most of the time books come and go without difficulty. However -- the following are lost. It would be wonderful if they could be found and returned:

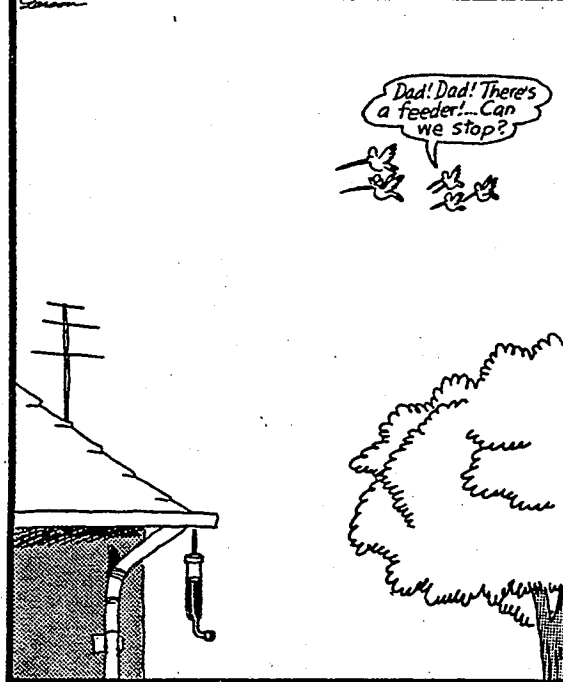
Martin Bramwell ed, *The World Atlas of Birds*, Mitchell Beazley London, 1974.

Roger Tory Peterson, *A Field Guide to the Birds, Eastern*, 2nd edition, 1987

Birding, ABA Journal, V.XXVII, No. 1, February, 1995.

Anne can be reached by phone (253-7753) or e-mail (cann@uhs.umass.edu).

VACATION POINTER # 2: -- A Point to ponder politely on a magnificent mountain peak: *If an infinite number of rednecks riding in a infinite number of pickup trucks fire an infinite number of shotgun rounds at an infinite number of highway signs, they will eventually produce all the world's great literary works in Braille.*



Hummingbirds on vacation

Here is a list of the newly elected Board members, what they do for the Club and how to contact them. We appreciate your input. Let us hear from you.

Officers:

President: Jim Marcum (549-1613) (jmarcum@fnr.umass.edu)
V. Pres. & Program Chair: Mary Alice Wilson (548-9078) (mwilson@kl2.oit.umass.edu)
Treasurer: Mark Mount (253-5169) (msmount@pltpath.umass.edu)
Membership Sec'y: Dianne Quilty (253-7568) (dquilty@phast.umass.edu)
Communications Sec'y: Sally Venman (549-1098) (svenman@external.umass.edu)

Members at Large:

Sue Emerson (584-6736) (wemerson@javanet.com)
Shirley Hilborn (253-6462)
Dennis McKenna (256-8439)
Jan Ortiz, (549-1768) (jtortiz@aol.com)
Elaine Pourinski (582-0786) (epourinski@aol.com)
Scott Sumner, (253-7486) (ssurner@aol.com)

Others:

Conservation Committee Chair: Anne Lombard (586-7509) (lombarda@javanet.com)
Field Trip Chair: Scott Sumner (253-7486) (ssurner@aol.com)
Library: Anne Cann (253-7753) (cann@uhs.umass.edu)
Newsletter Editor: Sally Venman (549-1098) (svenman@external.umass.edu)
Rare Bird Alert: Shirley Hilborn (253-6462)

VACATION POINTER # 3: -- A Point to ponder poetically by a gentle meadow brook: *When a cat is dropped it always lands on its feet, and when toast is dropped, it always lands with the buttered side facing down. I propose to strap buttered toast to the back of a cat; the two will hover, spinning inches above the ground. With a giant buttered cat array, a high-speed monorail could easily link New York with Chicago.*

ZEKE takes his caws to the State Science Fair
(as reported by Don Kroodsma, advisor and friend)

Kresge Auditorium, MIT, Cambridge, MA, May 2, 1998:

Hundreds of students, parents, teachers and friends had gathered for the closing awards ceremony. At stake were awards worth over \$200,000.00. Zeke, our local crow enthusiast, was among the hopeful recipients.

Honorable mentions were named first. Dozens of students walked across the stage to gather their awards. Zeke was not among the awardees.

Third place awards and then second place awards were called. Dozens more students walked across the stage. Still no Zeke.

So it was Top Honors or nothing! Suspense built as each student's name was called. And as each name was called, it seemed less and less likely that Zeke would be recognized. I began searching for counseling words: "Judges are idiosyncratic." "Your work is so different." "It's the luck of the draw." Nothing felt right.

"And those are all your first place winners," the master of ceremonies announced.

Wait! We had been told that there were two more awards, the Grand Prizes so to speak. These two awards were beyond first place. I glanced over at Zeke. He was visibly nervous. He was truly at the point of "all-or-nothing." And then ...

"EZEKIEL S. JAKUB --- WINNER"

I lost track of details at this point. Relief! Jubilation! Whew! Zeke received a significant college scholarship to go anywhere and is an alternate for a major scholarship at Umass.

!!!!!!! CONGRATULATIONS ZEKE !!!!!!!

VACATION POINTER # 4: -- A Point to Ponder Profoundly -- Period!!!!!!
Rene Descarte is in a bar. At last call, the bartender asks him if he'd like another drink. Descartes says, "I think not" and disappears.

Sally

Have a great summer

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 716, Amherst, MA 01004-9716
<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~hampbird/>

June 25, 1998: It was dusk in Newfoundland's Gros Morne National Park. We were camped on one of the planet's oldest geological treasures, in eye contact with a family of soon to be fledged, extremely raucous ravens on the next-door cliff. I was occupied defending myself against giant mosquitoes and black flies bent on carrying me off as sacrificial meat to the great god ITCH when a "who-who-who" broke through all other sounds. It was repeated. The ravens quieted. Seeing no HBCers around to make fun of my vocal attempts I "who-who-who"'d back. Surprise of surprises - my "who-who-who" was answered. A conversation ensued. I knew from the call that the "who-who-who"er was moving toward me, but no movement, no sight confirmed this. Being a graduate of many Hitchcock Birding Courses I declared it to be an OWL! But, which one? The field guides and an ancient Newfoundland bird list helped me narrow the field down to two possibilities.

Every night the conversation was repeated. I spent much of one night outdoors bathed in citronella, flashlight at the ready carrying on a conversation with my rapidly improving "who-who-who"ing. The owl was there, but not to my eyes.

The next camp site we visited had two of the "who-who-who"ers to torment me. Same story. By now, with help from a ranger, I knew I was being haunted and teased by the illusive Boreal Owl - a bird I have searched for unsuccessfully when it has wintered in our area. I can still hear and answer the call in my sleep. I know they saw me, but, no, I never saw them. **LIFE BIRD!** Do I count it?

July 12, 1998: Still in Newfoundland, summer home to thousands of Northern Gannets, Puffins, Murres, many warblers, boreal finches and others. Also for the looking were whales, including a pod of migrating Orcas, bears, including one that visited us one evening just as we were finishing dinner, moose, caribou, snow peaked mountains, amazing stretches of wilderness, bogs, incredibly beautiful wildflowers looking impossibly delicate in such rough surroundings, glacial rock, ocean, and interesting, welcoming, genuinely friendly people. I not only recommend Newfoundland as a summer destination, I REALLY recommend it! We picked up about every brochure and map in existence and would love to talk to anyone interested in a summer holiday there.

August 28, 1998: The end of August is in sight and I can no longer put this off. So once again I call for a little help from my friends, Mr. Chocolate, Ms. Diet Coke and the aging genderless Apple word processor, and . . . with huge expenditure of energy, I pull myself out of the lawn chair. An excruciating climb up the stairs brings me to the computer room. A tremendous, soggy "kerthupp" places me in a chair facing the darkened screen. With my last ounce of energy I flip the switch that starts the computer that leads to the program that writes the Newsletter that informs all HBC members and would-be members that the HBC year runs from September to August, and it's

DUES-PAYING TIME!!!

I have been looking over the programs and field trips that have been offered over the thirteen years we have been around and am really amazed at how we have grown into the active and exciting Club we are today. Our speakers (many our own members) are some of the best academic and field ornithologists and nature photographers of our time. We have been informed, challenged and entertained by them. Our field trip offerings have taken us to local spots for morning birding or further afield for all-day trips. At present we are working to find ways to be able to continue to offer trips of longer duration (weekends on Monhegan Island and the Connecticut Lakes, and week-long trips to Arizona and Yellowstone for example) which have been led by our own knowledgeable people. We have also gone outside our club and arranged with professional groups to take us to Trinidad and Tobago and to Costa Rica. Our membership also enjoys use of the HBC lending library and opportunities to work with others on conservation programs directly related to birding.

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. Both of these costs are on the rise and our budget is getting tighter and tighter. Our ONLY income is from membership dues, which remain unchanged. Simply stated, **IF THERE IS ANY WAY THAT YOU COULD JOIN AT A SUPPORTING LEVEL (Birder, Big Birder or Rare Birder) IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL.**

You will find all you need to know to join the Club or to renew your membership on the enclosed Membership and Release forms. Please note that on the Membership form we are asking for your e-mail address if you have one. This information will be included on the Membership list sent to members in January. Also enclosed is the Rare Bird Alert form. Note that this form needs to be in no later than October 1 if you wish to be on the new tree.

PROGRAMS

David Holmes will inaugurate the fall season as featured speaker on Monday, September 14, 7:30 p.m at the Immanuel Lutheran Church, 827 North Pleasant Street in Amherst. The topic, illustrated with slides, will be "Tale of Two Islands: Appledore Island, Maine, and South East Farallon Island, California."

Holmes has been juggling his two life passions for music and birds since childhood. His formal studies were in music and with that training, he runs a private studio teaching piano and flute. Using his more informally amassed birding knowledge, he has been heavily involved in a migration banding station on Appledore Island in the Isles of Shoals, six miles off the New Hampshire coast for over 20 years. The station is part of the Shoals Marine Laboratory, run by Cornell and the University of New Hampshire. He is one of the initial group of "Trainers" for the North American Banding Council, has served twice on the Maryland/D.C. Rare Bird Records Committee, and has conducted 320 official U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Survey Routes. He has also been involved in mist-netting projects in the mid-Atlantic region and American tropics. He currently teaches birding skills at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and regularly presents programs for bird clubs throughout Maryland.

We are indeed fortunate to have David as our first speaker! I hope to greet many of you at that meeting.

Future Programs:

- October 19: Jon Dunn speaking on "Sparrows of New England, Native and Vagrant: Basic ID, Status and Distribution."
- November 9: Dan Albano on "Queen of the Stream" - the Behavioral Ecology of the Belted Kingfisher (in the Pioneer Valley and Beyond.)
- December 7: Holiday Meeting with members' slides, Christmas Count planning and great food!
- January 11, 1999: Jan Ortiz - "From the Desert to the Sky Islands: Birding Southeastern Arizona."
- February 8: Wayne Petersen on "Birding Trinidad and Tobago, The Birders' Exchange."
- March 8: Julio de la Torres on "A Fresh Look at Flying Felines: New Perspective on North American Owls."
- April 12: Sylvia Halkin on "The Remarkable Lives and Songs of Cardinals."
- May 10: TBA
- June 14: Jackie Sones on "Dragonflies and Birds: Life History Similarities and Differences."

FIELD TRIPS

The HBC offers field trips 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.

Field Trip Chair Scott Sumner 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 253-7486 (home) or 256-0559 (work). The completed fall and winter field trip schedule should be ready next month. Meanwhile here are several trips to tempt you:

September:

- On Wednesday, September 9 Harvey Allen leads his "Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley," a leisurely-paced, once-a-month, mid-week trip focusing on the seasonal birds in the valley and any rarities recently discovered. This month 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 12 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 the three-hour search.

- On Saturday, September 19 Steve Johnson (259-1712) will travel 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. Plan to bring snacks, lunch and seasonal clothes.
- On Sunday, September 20 join Tom Swocek and other Allen Bird Club members for a morning of hawk watching on top of Mt. Tekowa. Meet Tom at the Westfield City Hall (59 Court St.) at 7:30 a.m. The hike up to the Hawk Lookout takes about 30 minutes and is strenuous. Call Tom (413-568-0342) if you would like more information.
- On Saturday, September 26 Seth Kellogg will lead an all-day trip to the Connecticut Shoreline to search for hawks and late shorebirds. Call Seth (413-569-3335) for more details and the meeting place. Plan on bringing snacks, lunch and seasonal clothing.

October:

- On Sunday, October 4 Stacy Adams will be leading a half-day trip in the Hadley/Northampton area during the peak of the sparrow migration to B.T.B. (Beat the Bushes) for whatever is passing through. Besides sparrows, late warblers are always a possibility. Meet in the Hampshire Mall KMART parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Call Stacy at 367-0177.
- On Saturday, October 10 Tom Gagnon will lead an all-day trip to Quabbin. He will travel the old roads on the east side of the reservoir which are all that remain of the lost towns. He'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. **You need to commit to the whole day. There can be no leaving early!** Plan to bring snacks, lunch and warm clothes. Call Tom (584-6353) for more information and to reserve a spot.
- On Saturday, October 10 Jim Marcum will lead an all-day trip to Plum Island leaving at 5:30 a.m. He'll be searching for shorebirds, warblers, other late migrants and of course, sparrows. Bring snacks, lunch and warm clothing. Call Jim (549-1613) for more information and meeting place.
- On Wednesday, October 14 Harvey Allen will lead his mid-week "Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley," concentrating this month on sparrows that migrate through the Valley. Call Harvey (253-7963) for more information about this half-day trip.

HBC LIBRARY

Librarian Anne G. Cann reports that the Library continues to be located at the Hitchcock Center on South Pleasant Street in Amherst. Hours are 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Saturday. It is better to call first if you are making a special trip as the schedule sometimes changes. Materials which can be borrowed include periodicals, guides, books and miscellaneous bird related subjects, such as help in planning your birding travel and trips. Instructions for borrowing are posted at the library.

Anne brings a few things to each of the meetings. If there is something you especially want, please call her at 253-7753 by the Friday before the meeting.

FALL BIRDING COURSE AT HITCHCOCK CENTER

More birds can be seen in Massachusetts in September than at any other time of the year. The FALL BIRDING CLASS, led by naturalist Andrew Magee, will take you through the heart of the migration with shorebirds, songbirds and hawks all vying for attention.

Join Andrew for eight Saturday field trips, including one on Plum Island at the migration's height (Sept. 12, 19, 26; Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31) and four Tuesday evening class-gatherings (Sept 8, 22; Oct. 6, 20).

The deadline to register for this popular class is September 4. For more information and fee schedule call the Center at 256-6006 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Saturday.

MISCELLANEOUS

Sadly I report the deaths of two HBC members. Arnold Rhodes, husband of Grace Rhodes and father of Natalie Drake died this spring. He and his family were original members of the Club and familiar faces in the field searching out the rare bird.

Miles F. Hollister died in May. Although fairly new to the area he and his wife, who died in December, actively welcomed birders to their backyard on the Hadley Cove where we spent many spring days observing migrating waterfowl.

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 and is available at the meetings.

HBC WEB PAGE: In the beginning, Tom Arny very generously set up an HBC Web Page for early World Wide Web followers and searchers. We are very grateful to him! Interest grew beyond what Tom wanted to be responsible for and he hoped he could be replaced by another interested soul. HBC member Merry Cushing, a skilled Web surfer, came to our rescue and is going at it with great enthusiasm and skill. There is a whole lot of good stuff to be found on the Hampshire Bird Club Web Site. Check it out, especially the related links! The new address to the site is

<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~hampbird/>

While on the subject of information gathering and giving, the HBC has a post office box address where you will be sending your membership forms. If you want to get in touch but you're not sure who to get in touch with send your letter to the HBC, P.O. Box 716, Amherst, MA 01004-9716. The box is checked regularly.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW, a new birding store opened August 1st in the Village Commons (corner of Routes 116 and 47) in South Hadley. Owner and HBC member Judy Mitrolka is happy to offer a 10% discount to Hampshire Bird Club members on all purchases including binoculars and scopes (Bauch and Lomb, Nikon, Zeiss, Kowa etc.) which are already discounted 20% off list price and which you are invited to try. Former Club president Shirley Hilborn is working at the store Thursday nights and Saturdays and would love to see you.

BACKYARD BIRDS, the birding store at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton continues to offer a 10% discount to all HBC members for ALL PURCHASES as has been its practice.

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 Hampshire Bird Club, P.O. Box 716, Amherst, MA 01004-9716. PRESTO --- your BIRDING PROBLEMS are solved and the YEAR OF THE BIRD, 1998 - 1999 becomes a reality!

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 contact me by phone (549-1098) or e-mail (svenman@external.umass.edu).

Sincerely,



Sally Venman,

Secretary

Hampshire Bird Club
Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~hampbird/>

October, 1998



Hold onto your binoculars and bring them with you to the next HBC meeting because

Jon Dunn is coming to Amherst!

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to the next Bird Club meeting on Monday, October 19, at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church when acclaimed author, teacher, consultant and birding tour leader Jon Dunn will be with us to present a program titled *Sparrows of New England, Native and Vagrant: Basic ID, Status and Distribution*.

Sparrows are abundant, widespread and among the most difficult birds to identify. Jon will help to demystify these birds. He will focus on both native and vagrant species of sparrows found in New England and will discuss their basic identification, status and distribution. He asks that you **bring your binoculars** to the meeting to help you focus on the more difficult identification problems.

Jon has devoted most of his life to the close study of birds in North America and other parts of the world. He served as one of the Chief Consultants on the *National Geographic Guide to the Birds of North America* and his columns and comments on bird identification have appeared in virtually every major American bird journal. He has been a director of the successful bird tour organization WINGS, INC. for many years. He is a popular instructor in warbler and sea bird workshops at the Institute for Field Ornithology at the University of Maine at Machias and every other year he co-leads a week-long Sparrows workshop in Arizona for the Institute.

Dunn recently completed ten years of work on the identification and distribution of warblers, and co-authored with Kimball Garrett the long awaited and highly acclaimed *Peterson Field Guide to the Warblers of North America*. The book will be available for purchase at the meeting if you wish and he will be happy to sign it for you.

On Wednesday, October 14, Harvey Allen leads a mid-week Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley, this month concentrating on sparrows. Call Harvey at 253-7963 for more information. And on Sunday, November 8, Tom Gagnon travels to the Berkshire Lakes of Western Massachusetts. This is an all day trip. Bring lunch, snacks and plenty of warm clothing. Participants meet and leave from the Northampton Super Stop and Shop at 6:15 a.m. and **you must call Tom** at 584-6353 to register.

And that's the news of the month from Ridgecrest Road. Hope to see you all at the presentation. We'll have extra chairs, good cheer, great food and Jon Dunn.

Don't forget your binoculars.

Sally Venman – your newsgatherer

Hampshire Bird Club Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~hampbird/>



November, 1998

Dear Friends –

Last month we had the joy of welcoming Jon Dunn as our speaker. He walked us through the many paths to sparrow identification. This morning I face an even greater challenge, one which will take me well into the next millennium I fear. After 15 years of penning prose and poetry (sorry about that) on my old friend, the Apple //gs computer/word processor – older than the original Mac to anyone who counts that sort of thing – I am facing a new technical challenge. It seems that the old friend is close to dotting its last period and if I wish to continue to do newsletters and other things that require a built in spell checker I have to make a change. So, I bid goodbye to my old Clunker – yes, a Clunker, but a Clunker I know – and hello to Windows 95 and Microsoft Word. As I say, October was Jon Dunn, today is Chaos.

PROGRAMS

All programs start at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst. The 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.

Monday, November 9

In which species of bird does the female have the brighter plumage and is the one that travels south in the winter while the male remains behind? Which area was chosen to represent this bird when the BBC Natural History Unit filmed it for a segment of their big new series on birds of the world? And, whose expertise was called upon as consultant to this project and an earlier one for the David Attenborough program focusing on this bird? We'll learn the answers to these questions and many more at our November meeting when the "who," Daniel Albano, shares his research and experiences along the "where," the Connecticut River Valley, while re-

searching the "what," the Belted Kingfisher. His slide presentation is titled *Queen of the Stream, the Behavioral Ecology of the Belted Kingfisher*. He will discuss these distinctive birds by contrasting their behavior and evolution with other bird species. He will focus on differences in sex roles including coloration, parenting and migration that he learned in his research.

David served twice as consultant to the British Broadcasting Corporation Natural History Unit, which filmed kingfishers here in 1994 for David Attenborough programs and returned in 1997 for a new series on birds of the world. Currently a doctoral student at UMass, he received his masters degree in Zoology from Southern Illinois University where he studied nest-site selection and reproduction success of Carolina Chickadees.

Monday, December 7:

Because Hanukkah falls on the second Monday of December this year, we have moved our meeting to December 7. Save that date for the annual holiday show-and-tell extravaganza when members share their own natural history slides, plans are made for the Christmas Bird Counts and we start a personal training program striving for excellence in holiday food consumption. (Lots of great food!)

FIELD TRIPS

On Sunday, October 4 Stacy Adams and five birders enjoyed crisp sunny weather on a half-day trip to local hotspots. Aqua Vitae Rd. harbored the usual fall sparrows with especially good views of Swamp and Lincoln's Sparrows. Other species included Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, several female Indigo Buntings and the first big flock of Yellow-rumped Warblers seen this fall. Water Pipits and White-

crowned Sparrows were added to the list at the Honeyptot. The next stop was the Ibis pool where about 30 Cedar Waxwings came through. 3 lingering Bobolinks added a nice touch. Seen by the bridge were a Golden Plover, a Horned Grebe, a Common Loon, Solitary Sandpiper and an Osprey.

Tom Gagnon led ten enthusiastic birders on an all-day trip to Quabbin Reservoir on Saturday, October 10. The group re-

corded 54 species of birds including a Peregrine Falcon, 5 Loons, 3+ Ruffed Grouse with great close looks at one perched in a tree at eye level, 50+ Ruby-crowned Kinglets, white-crowned Sparrows and Black-throated Blue Warblers. 5 mammals were seen, but no sun so no butterflies this year. Weather could have been better - heavily overcast with intermittent mist. The last ½ hour treated us to a torrential downpour. It was a GREAT day!

Trips through December:

Sunday, November 8 - Tom Gagnon will take birders on an all-day trip to the Berkshire Lakes of Western Massachusetts. Bring lunch and snacks and wear warm clothing. Tom asks that you call him at 584-6353 if you want to join the group, which will leave from the Northampton Stop and Shop at 6:15 a.m.

Wednesday, November 18 - Harvey Allen's mid-week monthly *Morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* will focus on early winter migrants and waterfowl. Call him at 253-7963.

Saturday, November 21 - Tom Gagnon returns to Quabbin Reservoir for an annual all-day trip he has led for members of the Holyoke Wildlife Club for many years. This

Call the HBC Voice (Western Massachusetts Voice of Audubon) at 413-253-2218 to learn what birds have been seen in the area. For birds in Eastern Massachusetts, call the Eastern Voice at 617-259-8805.

The new Rare Bird Alert list will be activated soon. Jim Marcum (413-549-1613) will send the list to all that were in-

AND

Start your holiday shopping early!

If all goes as planned, the latest addition to the HBC boutique and souvenir shop will have arrived by Monday's meeting. Now you can wear the winter edition of the HBC logo on a heavy weight gray 50/50 sweatshirt. It comes in sizes Small to XX Large and it's yours for \$20.00. I remind you of other birding goodies you can purchase at the meetings - the guide book *Birding Western Massachusetts* (\$12.00), the logo T-shirt (\$10.00), the logo patch (\$3.00) and decal (\$1.25), the

That seems to do it for this month.
Hope to see many of you at the meeting on November 12

Sincerely,
Sally Venman
Newsletter Editor



year he is inviting 10 HBC members to join the group. You need to call Tom at 584-6353 to reserve a place. As for all full-day trips remember to bring lunch and snacks and be sure to wear warm clothing.

Friday, November 27 - Al Richards (665-) leads a full-day trip, appropriately called the "HBC Turkey Trot to Cape Anne and Plum Island," leaving from the Dairy Mart in Sunderland where Rts. 47 and 116 cross at 5:30 a.m. Bring lunch, snacks and plenty of warm clothing. And be sure to call Al to register.

Wednesday, December 16 - Harvey Allen's mid-week monthly *Morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* will focus on what's being seen - maybe a rare winter visitor. This is a good "warm-up" to the Christmas Bird Counts.

Speaking of which, you might want to start now thinking about this annual event. **Christmas Bird Counts:** Saturday, December 19 (Springfield - Bruce Kindseth at 860-745-9593), Sunday, December 20 (Northampton - Jan Ortiz at 413-549-1768), Saturday, December 26 (Cobble Mountain - Seth Kellogg at 413-569-3335), Saturday, January 2 (Quabbin - Scott Sumner at 253-7486). I'll write much more on this in next month's newsletter.

Counts.

terested in being part of the tree. The RBA will be updated in January if enough people wish to be added.

Enclosed with this letter is a blue sheet with a list of Bird Alert numbers to call across the country. Whether you are planning a trip or are just not happy with the New England winter, it's fun to find out what is being seen in far-away places.

Massachusetts Daily Field Card (\$.25) and finally the bumper sticker that announces that this is a car the Breaks for Birds (\$.25).

Also a reminder that the birding stores **Birds Eye View** in the Village Commons in South Hadley and

Backyard Birds at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton are happy to offer a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases.

256-4090

Hampshire Bird Club
Amherst, Massachusetts
<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~hampbird/>
December, 1998



DECEMBER!! YES! DECEMBER!! No way! Wasn't the Fourth of July just the day-before-yesterday? The rapid approach of the "giving" season is already giving your All-Purpose, There For You Secretary (APTFYS) fits of anxiety. Your APTFYS suspects that she can't possibly be alone in her panic and has found a way to help herself and others similarly impaired. You will find the fruits of her research at the end of this Newsletter.

But, there is one annual December event that your APTFYS anticipates with great joy and about which she happily passes on information and an invitation to you, the

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

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 National Audubon Society sponsors the count. Volunteers count not only the different species of birds but also the actual number of individuals during a twenty-four hour period. 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 20. It covers an area on both sides of the river. A \$5.00 fee to cover cost of 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* published by American Birding Association. If you are interested in participating in this local count either in the field or at your feeder and can't attend the meeting, please call Jan Ortiz (413-549-1768) for information and assignment. Jan notes that she is especially eager to attract feeder watchers. There will be a compilation party for all participants after the Count at the Hitchcock Center. This will be a potluck dinner organized by Marty Ortiz. If you are interested in contributing to the potluck (not mandatory) please give Marty a call at 413-7720580.

Other counts: Springfield, Saturday, December 19 (call Bruce Kindseth at 860-745-9593); Cobble Mountain, Saturday, December 26 (call Seth Kellogg at 413-569-3335); and Quabbin, Saturday, January 3 (call Scott Sumner at 413-253-7486).

PROGRAMS

All programs start at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst. The 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) start 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.

Because Hanukkah falls on the second Monday of December this year, we have moved our meeting to December 7. This is

the date for the annual holiday show-and-tell extravaganza when members show up to ten of their own natural history slides, plans are made for the Christmas Bird Counts and we feast on snacks and desserts brought by members. Come join your birding friends for an early holiday party. Bring your slides and food to share. (*DON'T stay away if you don't have time to prepare food. We have lots of cookies-in-a-bag for back up.*) It's a nice way to start the season.

Troglons, tanagers, orioles, buntings and spectacular scenery—birds and beauty to warm us on a dark cold January evening. Plan to be at the meeting on Monday, January 11, 1999 when Jan Ortiz will give a slide show sharing her experiences "From the Desert to the Sky Islands: Birding Southeastern Arizona."

If you have a brand new, empty 1999 calendar that is begging for entries you might want to make note of future programs.

February 8: Wayne Petersen on Birding Trinidad and Tobago

March 8: Julio de la Torre on North American Owls
April 12: Sylvia Halkin on the lives and songs of Cardinals
May 10: Mark and Marcia Wilson on the Arctic Summer
June 14: Jackie Sones on Dragonflies and Birds

FIELD TRIPS

Reminder – The HBC field trip policy states that automobile transportation cost for long-distance trips be set at twenty cents (\$.20) per mile per car (a real bargain) plus tolls and parking fees. All persons in the car (including the driver) will be expected to share the cost equally. It is understood that the driver keeps track of the mileage and all riders pay at the end of the trips. This is club policy and no driver should expect to be paid more and no rider should expect to pay less than the twenty cents a mile.

Reports -

Harvey Allen's monthly *Morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* trip on October 18 took eleven people to the Ashley Reservoir in Holyoke. Temperatures were cool but the sun shone. The Reservoir and its mixed habitat gave the group good looks at woodland as well as water birds. Thirty-five species were seen including Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Common and Hooded Merganser, and excellent looks at an Osprey and a Raven.

On November 8 Tom Gagnon led an all day trip to the Berkshire Lakes. Sixteen participants viewed Northern Shovelers, Coots, Gadwalls, Ruddy Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, Red-heads, Green-winged Teals, American Wigeons, Buffleheads, one Lesser Scaup, one male Pintail and six hundred Ring-neck Ducks! At Barry Mountain in the Pittsfield State Forest Red-tail Hawks, one Sharp-shinned and two Ravens were spotted. The highlight of the day was found at the Moran Refuge where an adult Goshawk perched on top of a tree was observed for fifteen minutes.

On November 21, four birders (including leader Tom Gagnon) saw four Bluejays, four Winter wrens, four Blue Birds and four Snow Buntings at Quabbin. The weather was great but the birds were not in abundance. There were no northern finches. There were, however, fifteen species of waterfowl spotted, among them thirteen Common Loons, four Red-necked Grebes and fifty-six Hooded Mergansers. Other

sightings included seven Bald Eagles, twenty wild Turkeys and two Snipe. When traveling with Tom you can also expect to see other specialties of the natural world. The group counted three deer, three otters and two porcupines. In the flora category Poison Sumac and the very unusual Cut-leaved Grape Fern were seen.

Upcoming Trips:

Wednesday, December 16 is the date for Harvey Allen's *Morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley*. Hopefully a rare winter visitor will be in the area. If not, Harvey will start scouting for the Christmas Bird Count. Call him at 413-253-7963 for more information.

On Friday, January 1 be ready for the famous *Bird Blitz* led by Scott Sumner (413-253-7486). Each species takes on special interest the first time it is seen on New Years Day. He'll be leading this half-day blitz to local hot spots. A wonderful, if cold, way to start the New Year! Dress warmly!

On Saturday, January 9 Bob Bieda (413-527-2623) will lead group to the Massachusetts North Shore. It's great to be able 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!) This annual all-day Club trip starts at 6:00 a.m. in Sunderland. Call Bob for more information and to register. Bring snacks, lunch and plenty of warm clothes.

Wednesday, January 13 is the date for Harvey Allen's *Morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley*. Hopefully there will be longspurs and Snow Buntings in the meadows. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for more information.

And a NEW trip is being planned for Saturday, January 23 when Stacy Adams will take birders on a half-day "Quabbin Roundup." For more information give Stacy a call at 413-367-0177.

LIBRARY NEWS

The HBC library created and maintained by Anne Cann has a new location in the main room on the first floor of the Hitchcock Center and a new bookcase to house the collection. It is very easy to use the library. Instructions are posted at the bookcase along with cards, pencils, etc. There are field guides, lists and books on birds of North America, Eastern and Western U.S., South America and other foreign countries

as well as miscellaneous birding books, photographs, maps, periodicals, games, videos, audio tapes and recordings. For those who have access to the Internet, there is a listing of titles on the HBC webpage. There is also a list you can examine at meetings. And, of course you can go to the Hitchcock Center to browse during business hours. Anne is happy to pick books up for you from the Center and bring them to the

meeting if you call her at 413-253-7753 by the Friday prior to the Monday meeting.

o items from the library have disappeared and Anne has no name to track them down. Anne would really like the lost to be found.

1. Roger Tory Peterson, *A Field Guide to the Birds, Eastern*, 2nd Ed., 1987
2. *Birding*, ABA Journal, Vol. XXXVII, No 1, Feb. 1995

MISCELLANEOUS

The new Rare Bird Alert has been activated. Just this past Thanksgiving weekend people were alerted to two Short-eared Owls spotted in the East Meadows in Northampton. Jim Marcum reminds you that the RBA will be updated in January if enough people wish to be added. Call him at 413-549-1613 if you are interested.

If all goes well and the computer angel smiles upon us in early '99, you will receive a list of HBC members giving addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses as recorded by

you on your membership form. Call Dianne Quilty (413-253-7586) or me (413-549-1098) if you prefer not to be listed or if there are changes we may not have.

Enclosed with this letter is a Feeder Checklist to enhance your winter feeder viewing pleasure. This is just for fun – we're not doing a survey (surprise!). Get copies of the chart made at your local copy place so recording can continue past January.

AND —

Your APTFYS personal shopper has again been researching the catalogues in hopes of taming the shopping monster and offers the following:

You have no doubt seen the ads for the singing bird clocks so popular this year. "Learn to identify wild bird songs in the comfort of you own nest" promises one. It's the sort of thing your Great Aunt Matilda would buy for you if only it was not so expensive. Imagine HBC member Regina Van Heerden's surprise when she found one advertised for a mere \$5.00. Gina is a very good birder and looking closer, she became puzzled. "That Nashville just doesn't look right." "What a strange looking chickadee." "What are these birds?" Upon an even closer look (with a magnifying glass I would bet) she made out the names: *Caculus canorus*, *Presella collais*, *Zosterops japonica*. A quick trip to her book on the two-part Latin scientific names showed her that she was looking at birds of Japan. Now that's a gift for a very special person. She has translated all the Latin names into English and I'm sure she would be happy to discuss this unique gift with you in more detail. Thank you, Gina.

For the serious birder on your list, consider the *Night Mariner Binocular* for spying on nocturnal wildlife. It is shock proof, waterproof and floats in case of a capsizing canoe. And, it's only \$2,395.00. For personal safety on those nighttime explorations, you might want to add the *Flashing Airplane Strobes*. They clip to the belt or hat making you visible to vehicles (cars, planes or canoes). The claim is that you'll stand out like a neon sign from up to 2,600 feet (1½ miles)

away. This personal strobe light is yours for only \$12.95 – the perfect stocking stuffer to make sure that your favorite birder stays safe at night.

For birders who are also indoor cat people, there are two items of interest. First is the *Deluxe Indoor Cat Playground* with plush acrylic hammocks for cat napping and carpet covered corrugated tube beams for claw sharpening and climbing. The deluxe model comes with a spring-action cat toy and can be yours for \$59.95. On a more delicate subject, the *Self-Cleaning Litter Box* is available for \$179.95. A built-in microprocessor-controlled system automatically cleans up after the cat, signaling a sifting comb, which moves through the length of the box, scooping up waste and depositing it into a PVC plastic holding cartridge.

For those of you who do not appreciate whimsy in brightly wrapped holiday packages I remind you that the HBC boutique has added the logo sweatshirt to its list and that the birding stores **Birds Eye View** in the Village Commons in South Hadley and **Backyard Birds** at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton are happy to offer a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases.

I hope I have been some assistance. And I hope to see you at the church for the December meeting and in the field for the Christmas Bird Count.

Have a wonderful holiday season.

Sincerely,

Sally Venman (APTFYS for short), Newsletter Editor

