

## HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB

January, 1999

**January Program:** On Monday, January 11, 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst, Jan Ortiz will share with us the joy and beauty experienced on eleven trips *From the Desert to the Sky Islands: Birding Southeastern Arizona*, the title of her slide presentation. Trogons, tanagers, orioles, buntings, sparrows, owls, hawks, hummingbirds and more! Few places in North America can compare with the wonderful birds and spectacular scenery of Southeastern Arizona. Five hundred species of birds have been recorded on the valley floor where the Sonoran Desert from the west meets the Chihuahuan Desert from the east and in the five life zones that emerge as the southern limits of the Rocky Mountains reach toward the northernmost extension of the Sierra Madres. Jan is past president of the Hampshire Bird Club and one of its founding members. She taught birding classes at the Hitchcock Center for ten years and has led numerous birding trips. She has taken part in many local migrant and breeding bird censuses and is the compiler for the Northampton Christmas Bird Count. She is currently serving on the Massachusetts Avian Records committee. Her love of birds has inspired travels from the high Arctic tundra to neotropical rain forests.

**Field trips:** On Saturday, January 9 Bob Bieda (413-527-2623) will lead a group on an all-day trip to the Massachusetts North Shore leaving at 6:00 a.m. On Wednesday, January 13 Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) leads his half-day *Morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley*. On Saturday, January 23 Stacy Adams (413-367-0177) will take birders on a half-day "Quabbin Roundup." Call leaders for more information.

Sally Venman, Secretary

# **Hampshire Bird Club**

## **Amherst, Massachusetts**

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

**February, 1999**



The weekend mail brought me a post card picturing three Aves Tropicales: Tucan, Paloma del Espiritu Santo and Lapa. The Sender found the "beauty of this birding/naturalist trip unbelievable" and assures me that I "would go wild there." I can't wait to share with him the fact that while he was enjoying tropical heat, I was building New England character communing with ice and sleet and freezing rain. While he was hearing unfamiliar bird songs, I was hearing familiar radio voices telling me to "stay tuned for the list of cancellations." My friend has missed a joy not to be recaptured. 'Tis a pity. But before the joy of building character overwhelms me I want to bring you the HBC news filled with warm tidings and thoughts of spring. (Please make note that not one word has been spoken concerning the heat in Washington.) On January 11, one of the coldest of the cold nights so far, Jan Ortiz treated us to the warmth and beauty of Arizona. One hundred and ten of us saw slides of birds and scenery and heard commentary that transported us out of the current iciness. Many of us relived our own experiences in the Arizona magic, and others were ready to sign up and leave the next day, well maybe the day after that. It was the perfect way to start 1999. This first meeting of the new year begins a line-up of some pretty special programs.

### **PROGRAMS**

All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst.

On Monday, February 8 it is with great pleasure that we welcome Wayne Petersen back for another of his special programs, this one titled *Birding Trinidad and Tobago*. Wayne, a Field Ornithologist at the Massachusetts Audubon Society, has been a frequent and popular speaker at our meetings. He has led many birding trips to the islands of Trinidad and Tobago and in his slide presentation will introduce us to the wonders of typical Neotropical birds found in the area including motmots, jacamars, toucans, woodcreepers, ovenbirds, antbirds, cotingas and manakins. He lectures widely and has presented birding workshops for many organizations including the American Birding Association and the Institute for Field Ornithology. He serves as a New England Regional Editor for the American Birding Association's *Field Notes*, chairs the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, and is Vice President of the American Birding Association. Among his various publications are *Birds of Massachusetts* (co-authored with Richard Veit) and the National Audubon Society *Pocket Guide to Songbirds and Familiar Backyard Birds (East)*. He has also contributed accounts to *The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding*, *Bird Finding in New England*, and *A Birder's Guide to Eastern Massachusetts*. He is a well known contributor to birding publications and has lead numerous birding tours throughout North and Central America, Iceland, Africa, and Madagascar for the Massachusetts Audubon Society and for Field Guides, Inc.

And on the same program, Betty Petersen will bring us up to date and briefly discuss the Birder's Exchange; a program devoted to collecting used binoculars and optical equipment for distribution in underdeveloped areas.

Quoting from Betty Petersen's article *Behind the Plain Brown Wrapper* found in the April, 1998 issue of *Birding*: "The Birder's Exchange is a joint project of Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences and the American Birding Association. It aims to assist in the conservation of Neotropical migrant and resident birds by filling a need for basic equipment and tools in Latin America and the Caribbean." Tools we take for granted in our bird counts - binoculars, scope, field guides, etc., etc., etc. are sorely lacking in Central and South American countries where important work is being done. Imagine yourself trying to identify and count species and numbers of shorebirds, for example, at expansive staging areas in Argentina with only your naked eyes. You get the idea. Old binoculars and scopes in usable condition, field guides and ornithology texts, camera and camping equipment donated in years past by Club members are now at work in the hands of Latin American biologists and teachers helping to protect birds, preserve habitats and educate the public on conservation issues. The need continues to be great. Betty will give us an update on the program and tell us how we can best help. Jan Ortiz at (413) 549-1768 or through e-mail at [jortiz@aol.com](mailto:jortiz@aol.com) has again agreed to act as the local collector.

To come:

March 8: Julio de la Torre - *A Fresh Look at Flying Felines: New Perspective on North American Owls.*

April 12: Sylvia Halkin - *The Remarkable Lives and Songs of Cardinals.*

May 10: Mark & Marcia Wilson - *Arctic Summer: So Much Light, So Little Time*

June 14: Jackie Sones - *Dragonflies and Birds: Life History Similarities and Differences*

## FIELD TRIPS

### Monhegan Island:

The annual Monhegan Island, Memorial Day Weekend trip, the hallmark of HBC Field Trips since the Club's beginnings is being planned again this year by Scott Sumner. *If you have told Scott at some time, any time, that you plan on joining the group don't assume that he remembers. Don't assume that you are on the list, even if you have gone every year! As of now NO ONE is on the list.* Scott has a clean sheet of paper and is taking reservations NOW.

The group leaves from Port Clyde, Maine, on Friday May 28 and spends all day Saturday and Sunday on the Island enjoying the migrating birds, the spring wild flowers, hiking, eating, laughing and having a wonderful "escape," returning to the mainland on Monday, May 31. The cost is approximately \$220.00 per person (a bit higher if you stay at the Monhegan House) plus shared mileage cost if you carpool to Port Clyde, tips, lunches, snacks and an optional lobster dinner on the Island. The trip will be led by Dianne Quilty and is limited to twenty people. Another leader will be added if more people are interested.

Call Scott NOW (or as soon as possible) at 253-7486 for more information or to sign up. He needs to get space reserved.

### Reports:

Bob Bieda's trip to the North Shore on Saturday, January 9 had to be cancelled because of the weather. However, he did want me to pass on to you that the East Coast birding has been excellent. The Thick-billed Murre sightings off Andrew's Point have been the best in ten years. And if you are in the right place at the right moment there have been regular sightings of Dovekies. It is also a good year for Short-eared Owls. Bob suggests that you check the Eastern Voice of Audubon (781-259-8805) for what is being seen where.

On Wednesday, January 13 a warmish overcast day Harvey Allen and eleven participants searched local fields and h spots for wintering birds. More than two hundred Snow Buntings and two hundred Horned Larks in the Hadley Fields, two Carolina Wrens in back of the Hitchcock Center, and a Kestrel on Bay Road in Hadley were the highlights before rain sent everyone home.

And, on Saturday, January 23 Stacy Adams led four intrepid birders to Quabbin. The weather was drizzly, cold and foggy, decreasing visibility a great deal. Not a very birdy day, only fourteen species were seen or heard. Highlights on the wide-open reservoir were Common Mergansers and twenty Scaup. At the tower parking area, two Ravens were taking a snow bath and five Snow Buntings appeared out of the mist. No finches were sighted. The usual mix of chickadees and titmice were present, as were ten Robins. And the group had great looks at a Golden Crowned Kinglet – nice and low and close. Ah – winter birding!

### February Trips:

Saturday, February 13 is Scott Sumner's day to escape the local scene for birding in Maine (so you prefer Jamaica? Dream on.) Scott 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. Maybe not this year, but the coast has been pretty good for other sought after birds of winter. Call him at 413-253-7486

Wednesday, February 17 is the tentative date for Harvey Allen's *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 for an early Valley wake-up call. Call him at 413-253-7963 to make sure of the date.

## BIRDING WITH HITCHCOCK CENTER

The Center is happy to welcome back naturalist Andrew Magee who will be teaching the birding courses again 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 enthusiasm to his teaching. There are to be three separate courses designed to flow into each other. All are geared for both beginning and experienced birders. The first, a WINTER/EARLY SPRING class is designed to give everyone

a mid-winter break and take advantage of brighter sunlight that brings the early spring migrants to the Valley. The 7:00 a.m. – noon field classes will meet on March 6, 13 and 27. There will be an all-day coastal trip on March 20. For more information call Andrew at (413) 369-9920. For fee schedule and to register, call the Hitchcock Center at (413) 256-6006. The next Newsletter will contain information about the next two courses.

## BIRDING WITH ARCADIA

Join Geoff LeBaron, Christmas bird Count Editor for the National Audubon Society on Saturday, February 13 when he leads a group to some of his favorite birding spots along the

Rhode Island coast. The group will travel together from Arcadia in a van departing at 6:45 a.m. Call Arcadia (413-584-3009) for more information, fee schedule and to register.

## LIBRARY

From Anne Cann, librarian:

The HBC Board has appropriated funds for the purchase of three new books:

1. *Birders' Guide to Northern California*, Lolo and Jim Westrick, 1996
2. *San Francisco Peninsula Bird Watching*, Sequoia Audubon Society, 1991
3. *More Birding by Ear: Eastern and Central*, Richard Walton and Robert Lawson, 3 cassettes.

The library is at the Hitchcock Center in a wonderful new bookcase making it much easier to see what's there. It's in the main room where we used to have our refreshments, just outside the office of Tom Alworth, the new director. We ap-

preciate the generosity of the Center for making a home for our library.

A request – Anne is looking for some help. Her intent is to arrange the materials by geographic area for the most part, but as we get more books, that may need some rethinking. If there is anyone who would be interested in working with her to develop a clearer system of organizing the books, please see her at a meeting or call her at 253-7753. And as always, Anne is happy to pick up your choice of book from the library and bring it to the meeting if you call her no later than the Friday before. Returns can also be made at that time.

## MISCELLANEOUS

Enclosed with this Newsletter is the HBC membership list that Dianne Quilty has compiled for us. It contains all members as of January 13, 1999, a list of Board members, a list of other Bird Clubs and stores and additional telephone numbers often used by birders. Take a moment to check your name, etc, to make sure the information is correct. If not, call me (413-549-1098) and I'll make corrections in future Newsletters along with additions as new people join the Club.

## AND ...

Welcome to February, the short month when we celebrate groundhogs and sweethearts and Presidents and winter's mid point (the 4<sup>th</sup>). Those of you who have been receiving the HBC Newsletters over the years know that your editor sometimes likes to give the readers reasons for celebrating, not always obvious on the calendars of today.

For example – how many of you know that February is *Home-baked Fudge Month* or that the 11<sup>th</sup> is *White Shirt Day* in Michigan? I'm sure you don't have to be reminded that February 18 is the 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of Pluto, but did you know that the 28<sup>th</sup> marks the day that all ice houses MUST be off Minnesota lakes, the same day that some communities can be found celebrating *International Underlings Day*?

But – let's get serious now! How about February 14, Valentine's Day? No Sweetheart, you say? *HBC to the Rescue!* What a Club! If you really desire to spend *that special day* with *that special person* try this foolproof method: Go outdoors and count one hundred red convertibles, or snowmobiles if more appropriate. Then look for a tall woman in a purple dress and red shoes and a short man with a green bow tie wearing a hat with a cardinal's tail feather in the brim. The next person you speak to will be *that special person*.

Wishing you a warm February, Gladsome Groundhog's Day Greetings, luck in finding a cardinal, and please, please, please remember to celebrate!

Keep Warm! Think Migration! Hang in there!



Sally Venman, Newsletter Editor  
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## ADDITIONAL FIELD TRIP

On Saturday, February 6 Shawn Smolen-Morton will lead an all-day trip to the South Shore. Target birds will be the Pink-footed Goose (if it is still being reported), the Short-eared and Long-eared Owls, Rough-legged Hawk and the Yellow-breasted Chat. The group will meet at the Dairy Mart in Sunderland at 5:30 a.m. Bring lunch and snacks and dress warmly. Shawn asks that you call him at 665-5196 if you plan to join the group.

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

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

**March, 1999**



## PROGRAMS

All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst.

The first order of business is to recycle a bit of the HBC Newsletter dated May 1992. "Have we got a show for you!!! **Julio de la Torre** (well known naturalist, lecturer, free lance editor, translator, author, natural history consultant, former opera singer, announcer, narrator and teacher) is coming to Amherst." On Monday, March 8 this multi-talented dynamic speaker returns for the third time to present a program to our club. In his program, titled *A Fresh Look at Flying Felines: New Perspective on North American Owls*, de la Torre will share with his audience his extensive knowledge of these often elusive birds. The talk will be illustrated with slides and voices

of owls reproduced on tapes and by this talented speaker who was at one time leading basso with the Italian Center Opera Repertory Group. Julio is the author of the highly acclaimed definitive work *Owls: Their Life and Behavior*. He has led many ornithological field trips in addition to his writing, teaching, editing, translating and singing.

To come:

April 12: Sylvia Halkin – *The Remarkable Lives and Songs of Cardinals*.

May 10: Mark & Marcia Wilson – *Arctic Summer: So Much Light, So Little Time*

June 14: Jackie Sones – *Dragonflies and Birds: Life History Similarities and Differences*

## FIELD TRIPS

As we begin to look forward to spring and a time when we expand our birding beyond the backyard feeder it occurs to me that new members and those new to birding may have no idea what to expect should they want to 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. 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 minus ten degree weather, high above a wind-swept coast, looking down on Harlequin Ducks.) All are expected to share trip expenses equally (gas figured at twenty cents a mile, 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.

### Trip Reports:

On February 6 Shawn Smolen-Morton led birders to the Massachusetts South Shore where seventy species were tallied. Weather was mostly cloudy with snow late in the day and temperatures in the mid-thirties. Highlights included a Yellow-breasted Chat, one Glaucous Gull, six Long-eared Owls, two Short-eared Owls, one Northern Shrike, a Fox Sparrow, a Killdeer, one Eurasian Widgeon and seventeen Eastern Meadowlarks.

On February 13 Scott Sumner led an all-day trip to the southeast coast of Maine. Four birders saw forty-two species of birds. Highlights included a Tundra Swan, a Barrow's Goldeneye, a Bald Eagle, four Black Guillemots, one Razorbill, a Rough-legged Hawk, thirty to forty Harlequin Ducks and two Pacific Loons.

And on Harvey Allen's monthly *Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* on February 17 eight people saw thirty-six species including the two Carolina Wrens at the Hitchcock Center, the two adult Bald Eagles, Hooded and

Common Mergansers, Canvas Back, Greater Scaup and Iceland Gull in the Turners Falls area plus Red-bellied Woodpecker, Bluebirds, a strangely marked Cooper's Hawk, Red-winged Blackbirds and the first Turkey Vulture of the year.

### March Trips:

March's *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* on Wednesday March 10 will find Harvey Allen (253-7963) searching for early returning blackbirds and ducks. And as usual there is always the hope for a rarity that someone has noticed at the feeder. Join Harvey as the valley starts to wake up.

On Saturday, March 20 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 footwear. Call Al (665-2761) for more information and meeting place.

NEW: Scott Sumner will lead an all-day trip on Saturday, March 27 to the Westport area. The group will be looking for a mix of wintering waterfowl and early spring migrants. Call Scott (253-7486) for more information.

### Monhegan Island:

We have a problem. At this writing, not enough people have signed up for the Annual Memorial Day weekend

trip. If we don't hear from you soon **IT WILL BE CANCELLED!**

Do you remember Tom Martin's slide presentation April on the Birds of Monhegan Island? Birds are just one part of the experience. Take an island beyond sight of the mainland. Take wildflowers and ocean and blue skies and night skies filled with star light not city light. Take hiking and sitting on rocks looking east over the ocean searching for whales. If the weather does not cooperate there is the comfort of warm fireplaces and lots of books. Add good food, good company, lots of laughs and a skilled leader to show you around and help you identify the many birds you will see and you have a better idea of what's in store.

We leave from Port Clyde, Maine, on Friday May 28 and spend all day Saturday and Sunday on the Island, returning to the mainland on Monday, May 31. The cost is approximately \$220.00 per person (a bit higher if you stay at the Monhegan House) plus shared mileage cost if you carpool to Port Clyde, tips, lunches, snacks and an optional lobster dinner on the Island. The trip will be led by Dianne Quilty and is limited to twenty people. Scott Sumner is organizing the trip and has to know how many are going **NO LATER THAN MARCH 12** so call **NOW** (253-7486) to sign on or if you have any questions. As you may have gathered, Monhegan is one of my absolute favorite spots and if you don't get moving, I won't be able to go. I would also be happy to talk to you or direct you to those who could answer your questions. Give me a call at 549-1098.

## The VOICE

As birds return in more abundance it seems a good time to remind members that Scott Sumner, the *Voice of Audubon for Western Massachusetts* keeps us informed as to what birds are being seen and where. To get this information call (413) 253-2218. To report birds you have seen call (413) 256-1836. Report the date of the sighting, what birds, how many and where. This is used for the

routine sightings. The Voice is updated weekly but is not necessarily monitored daily, so if you want to report a rare or potentially rare bird (one that will possibly result in the Rare Bird Alert telephone tree being activated) you should call Scott directly at 253-7486, Jan Ortiz at 549-1768 or Jim Marcum at 549-1613.

## CONSERVATION

We will be continuing the Birds in Forested Landscapes (BLF) project linking volunteer birders and professional biologists nation-wide 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 de-

clining. 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.

This is the third year of the accipiter/thrush study that is based on protocol originally developed for the Cornell

Laboratory of Ornithology's Project Tanager which we also participated in. We will be surveying our three nesting thrush species and the hawks in ten forest sites in the Amherst and Northampton areas. Small groups of two to four make three visits to each site in April, May and June. If you are interested in finding out more about the project and/or participating, please contact Anne Lombard (586-7509) ([lombarda@javanet.com](mailto:lombarda@javanet.com)) for the

Northampton area or Mary Alice Wilson (548-9078) ([mwilson@k12.oit.umass.edu](mailto:mwilson@k12.oit.umass.edu)) for the Amherst area.

One date you may wish to save is May 8 when the North American Migration Count takes place. This is the nationwide count similar to the Christmas Count when all birds seen or heard are counted. There will be more details in the April Newsletter.

## LIBRARY

The HBC Library is located in the main room of the Hitchcock Center and is available to HBC members for browsing and borrowing Tuesday through Friday, 11:00 – 5:00 and on Saturday 9:00 – 1:00. If you are unable to get to the Center for your book, Anne is happy to bring your choice to the meeting if you call her (253-7753) no later than the Friday before.

New items in the collection:

1. The audio tape of Wayne Peterson's Trinidad and Tobago program – February 2, 1999
2. The video tape from the same meeting describing the Birder's Exchange of Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences.
3. Current ABA publications (*Winging It*, *Birding*, *Volunteer Opportunities for Birders*, and *The 1999 Directory*.)

## BIRDING WITH HITCHCOCK

HBC member David Spector will be hosting an "Owl rowl" on Sunday, March 14, 3:00 a.m. to dawn. If you have not experienced one of these searches this might be fun for you. David is a wonderful teacher who has a special feeling for owls. Might be a good follow-up after seeing Julio's program. This offering is free, but pre-registration is required.

The Center is presenting four programs titled the *Birds in Literature Series*. On Wednesday, March 31 the first presenter, Theodore Sargent will give a program titled "A Dwelling Place for Owls." His talk will explore the use of local birds in the literary works of Connecticut River Valley writers and poets, from colonial days to the present. The other programs will take place on April 14, May 19 and June 9. Call to register. There is a fee.

The Center is happy to welcome back naturalist Andrew Magee who is teaching the birding courses again 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 enthusiasm to his teaching. The SPRING CLASS celebrates migration, and is filled with new song and new colors as new arrivals greet birders each week. Andrew will help class members learn and hone skills of identification on eight successive Saturday morning field classes beginning on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. (An all-day trip to Plum Island is scheduled for May 22<sup>nd</sup>.) There will be three Tuesday night classes on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and on May 17<sup>th</sup>. For more information call Andrew at 369-9920. For fee schedule and to register, call the Hitchcock Center at 256-6006.

That's it folks! Hope to see you at Julio's presentation. It should be fun.



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

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**April, 1999**

It is pretty clear that something is different this month. I began to feel it when I started working on this letter. There are more field trips to choose from. It's time to talk about the Wildwood Walks. There's talk about Counts and Breeding Birds and trips where at least 100 species are expected.

Then came the memories of past Aprils – way, way, way past Aprils when I felt much the same. Remember having to write those “themes” (are they still called that?) for English class in high school when right outside the window a neighborhood baseball game is in progress or just beyond third base the woods promise all those sights and sounds and smells that speak adventure? Remember *Senioritis* in May when you **knew** that you had to “up” that Stat grade if you planned to graduate in June? And ..... you've just discovered the love of your life who waits for you just beyond the closed study door.

Right now I sit here in front of the word processor. I have procrastinated in every way I can possibly think of including writing a list of things to do: polish the silverware, buy a dog so that I can have a dog to walk, learn Greek so that I can read the *Odyssey* as Homer wrote it, set up a program to count and diagram the interactions of the carpenter ants that have again found a way into the house, and search the fashion magazines to find just the right outfits to wear on Monhegan Island.

Ahhhhh .....Spring.....Enough.....No more.....To work

### **PROGRAMS**

(All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst.)

On **Monday, April 12** Sylvia Halkin will be the featured speaker. In her program, *The Remarkable Lives and Songs of Cardinals* Sylvia will talk about some surprising discoveries and unsolved mysteries in the lives of this familiar species. She'll tell us how cardinal reproductive patterns may have evolved to adapt to high rates of nest predation; why female cardinals sing the same songs as males and sing while sitting on their nest; how eating wild grapes may be important in giving males their bright red color. She'll talk about reports of multiple mates, bare heads, and relationships with goldfish. She'll also be happy to answer questions about the bird's natural history and behavior observed in your own backyard.

Halkin is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Central Connecticut State University

where she teaches courses in ornithology, animal behavior and introductory biology and ecology. She is co-author of the *Birds of North America* species account on Northern Cardinals and much of her research focuses on how male and female cardinals use song to communicate with one another. Her undergraduate degree is from Harvard University. She did her graduate work (M.S. and Ph.D.) at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

#### **To come:**

**May 10:** Mark & Marcia Wilson – *Arctic Summer: So Much Light, So Little Time*

**June 14:** Jackie Sones – *Dragonflies and Birds: Life History Similarities and Differences*



## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

On March 10 eight participants braved cold, snowy, wintry weather to follow Harvey Allen to Belchertown where they had wonderful looks at the Rough-legged Hawk. The overlook at Chicopee Falls gave the group Wood Ducks, Ring Necks, Hooded and Common Mergansers, American Widgeon, Mute Swan and about one hundred fifty gulls who really rose to attention when a Bald Eagle came in for a closer look. The ducks seemed unperturbed. The group enjoyed the interaction.

On March 20 Al Richards and six participants searched the Connecticut River Valley for migrating ducks and geese. Forty-one species were counted, twelve of which were waterfowl. The group began the day at the Hitchcock Center where the Carolina Wrens were in fine voice and a flock of two hundred Robins in the trees surrounding the group were making a one-note sound new to Al. Other highlights included Snow Geese, American Widgeon, Green-winged Teal, Pintails, Ring-necked Ducks and Hooded Mergansers. The nesting Ravens on Mount Sugarloaf gave the group great looks.

And, on March 27 Scott Sumner led a group of five members on an all-day trip exploring the Westport area. The group tallied fifty species, the highlights being Great Egret, lots of Ospreys, Piping Plover, Greater and Lesser Scaup and a female Tufted Duck.

### Trips

On Sunday, April 11 Bob Bieda will be searching for early warblers and other spring migrants at the *Ashley Reservoir*. He hopes to see the first Pine and Palm Warblers of the season. Fox Sparrow, Hermit Thrush and Ruby-crowned Kinglet are also possibilities. Remember to dress warmly. Bring snacks if you wish. Meet at the Holyoke Holiday Inn at the Ingleside Exit at 7:00 a.m. Please call Bob (413-527-2623) if you want to go.

On Wednesday, April 21 Harvey Allen's *Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* will search for whatever is being spotted. These monthly half-day trips are leisurely-paced and focus on seasonal birds in the Valley as well as rarities discovered in the past week. Meeting places might vary so call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

On Saturday, April 24 Harvey travels to Plum Island for a full day of birding. He hopes to spot waterfowl, herons, migrating hawks and always the possibility, however unlikely, of the Ruff. Last year the people on this trip spotted Northern Harriers, Ospreys, Merlins (at eye level), eight Glossy Ibis in

flight and two Piping Plovers. Wear warm clothing, bring lunch, drinks and snacks and be prepared for a great trip. Call Harvey (413-253-7963).

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.

Starting on Tuesday, May 4 and continuing every Tuesday and Thursday Morning during the month of May, the Club sponsors an *Early Morning Bird Walk through Wildwood Cemetery*. Some mornings the warblers are dripping from the trees and other mornings it's just a nice walk in good company. No need to register. Meet the leader in the parking area inside the entrance at 6:30 a.m. These walks usually last until 8:00 a.m. The leaders will be Chris Page (5/4), Scott Sumner (5/6), Harvey Allen (5/11), Stacey Adams (5/13), Jim Marcum, (5/18), and Harvey Allen (5/25). At this time 5/20 and 5/27 are without leaders. If you would be interested in leading one of these walks or in being put on a substitute list please contact Scott Sumner (413-253-7486).

On Saturday, May 8 join Tom Gagnon on his annual trip around the east side of *Quabbin Reservoir*. Tom hopes for one hundred bird species, and knowing Tom that will be just one of the items on the list. This trip is for the day so lunches, snacks and water are in order. The trip is limited to ten people. You must call Tom (413-584-6353) to register.

Other trips which will be described in more detail in the future letters include:

May 12 – Harvey Allen's mid-week *Sweep of the Valley*.

May 16 – *Birding the Bike Trail*. Scott Sumner.

May 28 – Start of the *Monhegan Island* weekend. Scott Sumner. Trip is FULL.

May 29 – Poor Man's Monhegan. *Plum Island trip*. Al Richards & Bob Bieda.

June 5 – *Windsor & Cummington* areas. Charlie Quinlan.

June 19 – *Whip-poor-will Blow Out*. Al Richards.

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

## BIRDING WITH HITCHCOCK

(For more information and to register call the Center at 256-006)

Andrew Magee will again be teaching the **Spring Birding Course** (see the write-up in the March Newsletter). Eight Saturday morning field classes will begin on April 3. There will be three Tuesday evening indoor classes beginning on April 6. The **Breeding Bird Class** also taught by Andrew will take place on four successive Saturdays beginning on June 5. There is a fee for both courses.

**Butterflies** – Now, before you give me a hard time about a butterfly not being a bird except that they both start with the letter 'b', you should know that the study and search for and identification of butterflies has become a favorite pass time of many, many birders. You may know HBC member Mark Fairbrother as an accomplished birdwatcher. He is also the President of the Massachusetts Butterfly Club, a chapter of the North American Butterfly Association. He will be giving a slide presentation of the butterflies found right here in Western Massachusetts at the Center on Wednesday, April 7, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. This program is free but please pre-register.

**Birding by Ear** – on the Holyoke Range, two great hikes led by naturalist John Green will tune in to the flood of spring migrants while getting in shape at the same time. The first hike on April 24, 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. happens earlier than most migrants arrive so you can refresh your memory or come as a beginner. The second hike on May 15, 7:00 – 8:30 a.m. happens more in the thick of activity. The hikes are moderately steep but will progress at a pace that is comfortable for

the group. Pre-registration is necessary as group size is limited.

**Birds in Literature** is the title of a new series this spring looking at the works of different writers and their use of birds as metaphors or as inspiration. Literature from local writers in the Connecticut Valley, the influential stories of John Burroughs and the portrayal of birds by Emily and Charlotte Brontë will be explored. There will be three lectures. The first, *A Dwelling Place for Owls* given by Theodore D. Sargent was described in the March Newsletter. The second, *Bird "Browsings" and the Writings of John Burroughs* will be presented by Tom Alworth, Director of Hitchcock Center on April 14. The third, *Naturalists and Novelists* presented by David Spector, Ornithologist will be on May 19. On June 9 it is our turn to create some of our own literature using birds as our theme and motivation. Writer Christian McEwen will guide us, suggesting different writing exercises to bring out the best of our creative talents. The first two lectures take place at the Center. The third lecture and the writing workshop will be at the Emily Dickinson Homestead. Call the Center for fee schedule and to pre-register.

Don't forget **The Green Scene: FUNdraising Auction** on Friday, May 7, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Red Barn at Hampshire College (Rt. 116). Great food!! Great music!! Great bargains!! Great people!! You can't miss and you'll also help support this important environmental organization.

## BIRDING WITH ARCADIA

(For more information and to register call the Sanctuary at 584-3009)

**Early Morning Bird Walks** are held weekly beginning Saturday, April 10, 8:00 a.m. at Arcadia, Graves Farm and Marion Sherman Lynes Wildlife Sanctuaries. Free to MAS members.

**Birding by Canoe**, led by Cyndee Frere, will explore Lake Warner on Saturday, May 1. Canoes are provided. There is a fee.

Also on Saturday, May 1, 2:00 – 3:00 a lecture and slide presentation given by Pernell Gerver will help us to create **Gardens to Attract Hummingbirds and Butterflies**. There is a fee.

The **North American Migration Count** will be observed by a walk on Saturday, May 8, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 at the three sanctuaries. Free to MAS members.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Elections:** May is the month we elect board officers and members for the coming year. The nominating committee Jan Ortiz (Chair), Anne Cann, and Mark Mount are 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.

**Rudd Stone:** "I am now eighty with a life left in me. I wish to be among friends with common interests." So wrote Rudd Stone, former Curator of Wistariahurst in Holyoke and local birding legend. Several years ago the HBC honored Rudd by

making him an Honorary Lifetime Member. Since January 1991, Rudd has been a resident of the rest home portion of an Agawam nursing home. He feels that he still has a lot to contribute and seeks someone to help him to continue to follow his many interests.

There is a mechanism to help him realize his simple desire. It is called the Adult Foster Care Program and it is administered through WestMass Elder Care in Holyoke. In this program the client is matched with a host family willing to be his

## CONSERVATION

The fifth **North American Migration Count** will be held nationwide on Saturday, May 8. 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 the spring migration.

Increased participation last year resulted in more towns being covered by more observers. Unfortunately, an all day rain that was light to medium (editor's note: hard to torrential) cut down on the number of species and individual birds seen. The total count for the county was 107 species and 3,170 individual birds. Anne Lombard is coordinating the count again this year. She would like to increase and improve the coverage of the county. She is looking for one or more participants from each town. Simply put, you go to your favorite spots, keep count and record what you see/hear. You will likely be out there anyway – it is the height of the migration, after all.

Anne asks that you contact her to let her know what location you will be covering on May 9. She will send you the form to be used when you report. You can also talk to her and pick up the form at the April meeting.

Please refer to last month's mailing about our continuing the **Birds in Forested Landscapes (BFL)** project linking volunteer birders and professional biologists in a study of the habitat requirements of forest thrushes as well as the Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks. Anne Lombard will be coordinating the Northampton area. She can be reached by phone (586-7578) or e-mail ([lombarda@javanet.com](mailto:lombarda@javanet.com)). The response from people in the Amherst area has been so great that coordinator Mary Alice Wilson tells me she has no more sites to fill.

The **Amherst Breeding Bird Census** will go into its tenth year of gathering data in June. Because people go on vacation and move away there may be a few circuits not covered this year. Pete Westover and David Ziomek are looking for

people who are qualified and interested. Almost 95% of the data are gathered by ear so it is necessary that the person have a good knowledge of local bird song. If you are interested in learning more, please call Pete (256-4045) or Dave (413-863-3221).

The **Birders' Exchange** is another way you might want to contribute to the conservation effort. This is the joint project of Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences and the American Birding Association described to us at the February meeting by Betty Petersen. Used but usable birding equipment is collected and sent to those in Latin America and the Caribbean who are engaged in conservation efforts. If you have equipment you would like to contribute, Jan Ortiz has agreed to act as the local collector. Call her at (413) 549-1768 or e-mail her at [jtortiz@aol.com](mailto:jtortiz@aol.com).

The **Kestrel Trust/Slobody Project** is a land protection opportunity that might interest you. A 101-acre property on the north side of Station Road in Amherst stretching from the South Amherst Common east to the Norwottuck Rail Trail will be sold for probable development unless sufficient funds can be raised to ensure its protection. Besides being one of the key birding areas in Amherst, it has abundant animal life in its many acres of open pasture, abandoned fields, wetlands and wooded flood plain along Hop Brook. It has direct connections to the Rail Trail, the Robert Frost Trail, and the Lawrence Swamp Conservation Area. \$100,000 in private donations are needed to take the next step. As of 3/29 almost half of that had been raised. If you would be interested in making a contribution, checks made out the "The Kestrel Trust/Slobody Project" should be mailed to The Kestrel Trust, P.O. Box 1016, Amherst, MA 01004. Contributions will be held in escrow by the Kestrel Trust until it determines that the purchase can move forward. If not, the contribution will be returned.

For more information, call Pete Westover (Town Hall) 256-4045, or Jim Scott (Kestrel Trust) 256-6233. Or, call me (549-1098) for names of additional people to contact.

## LIBRARY

Anne Cann reminds you that the HBC library, located at the Hitchcock Center, is full of great resources for planning birding trips. The Center is open Tuesday through Thursday 11:00 – 4:00 and Saturday 9:00 – 1:00. Library offerings are

listed on the HBC web site and there is always a copy available at the meetings. As always, Anne is happy to bring your choice to the meeting if you call her (253-7753) no later than the Friday before.

caregiver. It realistically involves a twenty-four hour commitment but the client is entitled to eight hours weekly of home health care and two days of adult day care, which is available at the Center for Extended Care in Amherst. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts will reimburse host families

\$1,300.00 per month for their efforts.

Further details can be obtained from Dennis McKenna, HBC board member (532-3246) or from George Lusignan, Program Director of the Adult foster Care Program (538-9020).

**And, finally** – I would like to close by getting back to a subject touched upon earlier in this letter (page 1, paragraph 2) which is a subject close to the heart of all red-blooded Massachusetts residents. I have a story to tell –

*It seems that a farmer dies and goes to hell. While down there the Devil notices that the farmer is not suffering like the rest. He checks the gauges and sees that it's 90° and about 80% humidity. He goes over to the farmer and asks why he's so happy. The farmer answers "I like it here. The temperature is just like plowing my fields in June." The Devil is not happy with the answer so he goes over and turns up the temperature to 100° and the humidity to 90%. Soon a check on the farmer finds him standing around just as happy as can be. "This is even better," says the farmer. "It's like pulling weeds in the fields during July." The Devil, now definitely upset, decides to really make the farmer suffer and turns the heat up to 120° and the humidity to 100%. This reminds the farmer of working in the silo with his friends in August. "Whoa," thought the Devil, "this is really too much!" He goes to the controls and angrily turns the temperature down to a freezing 25° and 0% humidity. "We'll see what the farmer has to say about this!" he shouted.*

*The Devil looks around and finds the farmer jumping up and down for joy, yelling, "THE RED SOX HAVE FINALLY WON THE WORLD SERIES!!!!!"*

"Whoa" about says it from this end of the street as well. This has been a long one!

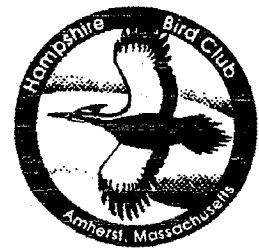
**Happy Spring!**



Sally Venman, Newsletter Editor  
413-549-1098  
svenman@external.umass.edu

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

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



**May, 1999**

**PROGRAMS**

*All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst.*

**Monday, May 10:** In October, 1997 the husband and wife team of Naturalist Marcia Wilson and Photographer Mark Wilson shared their passion for the natural world in a wonderful program on the owls of New England. Now it is our privilege to welcome them back to talk to us about the arctic wildlife they have come to love. They have entitled this two-projector slide program *Arctic Summer: So Much Light, So Little Time.*

Marcia brings over thirty years of experience in natural history and field ornithology to her environmental education programs. As a young adult naturalist and the "Voice of Audubon" for Massachusetts Audubon Society she focused on public education, field work and bird research. She was a seabird observer for Manomet Observatory and joined the prestigious ranks of Harvard's Nuttall Ornithological Club as seventh female member in 1980. She spent twelve years in Nantucket where she did conservation and research work on Piping Plovers and Least Terns. She also designed and implemented a natural history tour program on an 1100-acre barrier beach refuge.

Mark is a wildlife photographer, bird columnist, photojournalist and avid birder. In addition to being a full-time staff photographer at *The Boston Globe*, Mark's column, "The Backyard Birder", appears biweekly in the *Boston Sunday Globe*. His photos have appeared in *Natural Geographic*, *Canadian Wildlife*, *Equinox*, *National Wildlife*, *Boston Globe Magazine*, *Defenders*, *Orion*, *Sanctuary*, *Wild Bird*, *Living Bird*, *Nantucket Magazine*, *Yankee* and numerous other magazines and books. Mark's ability to interpret animal behavior and his understanding of light brings a special dimension

to his photographs, narrative and educational programs.

The Wilsons are a charismatic team, photographing, studying and teaching about the natural world. We know! We have seen and heard their work!

**AND** – following the formal presentation they will introduce us to a live Snowy Owl.

**AND, AND** – This generous pair is giving us an 18" x 24" fine art print of a Snowy Owl in flight photographed by Mark for a drawing that will take place at our June meeting. Tickets can be purchased for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Proceeds from the drawing will go toward future quality programming.

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, Anne Cann, and Mark Mount) will present the following slate for your approval: Jim Marcum (President), Mary Alice Wilson (Vice President/Program Director), Mark Mount (Treasurer), Sue Fletcher (Communications Secretary), Dorothy Barnes (Membership Secretary) and Board members Sue Emerson, Shirley Hilborn, Dennis McKenna, Jan Ortiz, David Peake-Jones, and Scott Surner. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor, if seconded.

**To come:**

**June 14:** Jackie Sones – *Dragonflies and Birds: Life History Similarities and Differences*

**FIELD TRIPS**

**Reports**

On April 10, a cool but sunny day, Bob Bieda and four other birders searched Ashley Reservoir for early warblers and other spring migrants. Highlights of the morning included three Double-crested Cormorants, two Ruffed Grouse drumming (loud, clear and persistent), two Pileated Woodpeckers, one Rough-winged Swallow, four Brown Creepers, four

Ruby-crowned Kinglets, six Hermit Thrush, six Pine Warblers, twelve Palm Warblers and two Chipping Sparrows. All birds were seen well – a good morning!

On Wednesday, April 21 twelve people led by Harvey Allen enjoyed a perfectly beautiful day in the valley observing birds

and butterflies and wildflowers. Thirty-one species of birds were seen. The group concentrated on what they were seeing rather than going for numbers, enjoying fully the songs of the Winter Wren and the Northern Waterthrush, watching the Audley Bald Eagles interacting around their nest, the Red-tailed hawks on their nest in the willow trees, and migrating hawks from the top of the Mountain. What a spring morning!

On Saturday, April 24 Harvey took a group of six for a day at

Plum Island. It was sunny but quite breezy. Fifty species of birds were counted. Highlights included the most Brants Harvey has ever seen, many Oldsquaws being taken out by the tide and flying back – lots of action and mixed plumages – and Purple Martins in large numbers. Many new nesting boxes have been built going down the Island. The traditional search for the Piping Plover was successful – one bird was spotted. There were very few shorebirds (still early?) and no Ruff. On the way out the group watched hundreds of harbor seals.

## Trips

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.

Starting on Tuesday, May 4 and continuing every Tuesday and Thursday morning during the month of May, the Club sponsors an *Early Morning Bird Walk through Wildwood Cemetery*. Some mornings the warblers are dripping from the trees and other mornings it's just a nice walk in good company. No need to register. Meet the leader in the parking area inside the entrance at 6:30 a.m. These walks usually last until 8:00 a.m. The leaders will be Chris Page (5/4), Scott Sumner (5/6), Harvey Allen (5/11), Stacey Adams (5/13), Jim Marcum, (5/18), and Harvey Allen (5/25). At this time 5/20 and 5/27 are without leaders. If you would be interested in leading one of these walks or in being put on a substitute list please contact Scott Sumner (413)253-7486.

On Saturday, May 8 join Tom Gagnon on his annual trip around the east side of *Quabbin Reservoir*. Tom hopes for one hundred bird species, and knowing Tom that will be just one of the items on the list. This trip is for the day so lunches, snacks and water are in order. The trip is limited to ten people. You must call Tom (413)584-6353 to register.

Saturday, May 8 is the *North American Migration Count*. (See CONSERVATION)

On Wednesday, May 12 Harvey Allen's mid-week morning *Sweep of the Connecticut Valley* will focus on rails. It could also be the height of this year's warbler migration. Call Harvey at (413)253-7963 for more information about this monthly trip.

On Sunday, May 16 Scott Sumner will lead a trip entitled *Birding the Bike Trail*. Call Scott at (413)253-7486 for more information and when and where to meet.

Friday, May 28 is the start of the *Monhegan Island* weekend. Scott Sumner (413)253-7486. The trip is FULL.

On May 29 Al Richards (413)665-2761 and Bob Bieda (413)527-2623 will lead a full-day trip to *Plum Island* looking for shorebirds and warblers. Call one of the leaders for more information and to register.

On Saturday, June 5, under the leadership of Charlie Quinlan, a group will be searching *The Hillsides and Marshes of Cummington and Windsor* for the Mourning Warbler and American Bittern. Other nesting birds are sure to be discovered. Please call Charlie (413)634-0334 for more information.

Save the evening of Saturday, June 19 for the *Whip-poor-will Blow Out* with Al Richards. If you want more information now call Al at (413)-665-2761.

I remind you to call the HBC VOICE (413)253-2218 to learn what birds are being seen in the area especially now that the spring migration is under way.

## CONSERVATION

There is a new project being mounted that might interest you – the **Marsh Bird Monitoring Project** in the Deerfield River Watershed. The Green River watershed Preservation Alliance (GRWPA), with the support of the Deerfield River Watershed Association, is initiating a volunteer wetland monitoring project in the Green River and several tributaries of the Deerfield River. The goals of the project are to increase our

knowledge of the wetland wildlife communities within the watershed, and to encourage public participation in natural resource management. Surveys will involve determining the number of breeding waterbirds (including bitterns, rails, and other marsh-dependent birds) within each marsh by broadcasting a tape of their calls. Each wetland will be surveyed two or three times between May and July. Training sessions

will be held to teach volunteers how to conduct the surveys. Contact person Pat Serrentino will be at our meeting on May 10 to tell us about the project or you can reach her at (413)772-0520 or by e-mail (pserr@crocker.com).

The fifth **North American Migration Count** will be held nationwide on Saturday, May 8. 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. Simply put, you go to your favorite spots, keep count and record what you see/hear. You will likely be out there anyway – it is the height of the migration, after all. Please refer to the April *Newsletter* for a full account. If you want more information and/or the Count Recording Sheet please call me, Sally Venman (413)549-1098.

Please refer to the March *Newsletter* to learn about the **Birds in Forested Landscapes (BFL)** project linking volunteer birders and professional biologists in a study of the habitat

requirements of forest thrushes as well as the Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks. Anne Lombard is coordinating the Northampton area. She can be reached by phone (413)586-7578 or e-mail (lombarda@javanet.com). The response from people in the Amherst area has been so great that coordinator Mary Alice Wilson tells me she has no more sites to fill.

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## LIBRARY

Anne Cann reminds us that the HBC library is located at the Hitchcock Center and is open Tuesday through Thursday 11:00 – 4:00 and Saturday 9:00 – 1:00. If these hours are not convenient for you, call her (413)253-7753 a few days prior to the regular meeting for special requests which she is happy to pick up for you. For a listing of the books and tapes please see our web site and there is always a copy available at the meetings.

Enjoy the donated CD *North American Birds* with Roger Tory

Peterson. Anne tried it on her computer and loved seeing the bird and hearing it's call as many times as she wanted. Or catch up on the audio tapes of past meeting speakers you may have missed (or wish to hear again). Learn more about Lyme Disease from an informative notebook on the subject. The library is full of great resources for planning birding trips. And – if you are looking for a different way of expressing your interest in birds and birding there is a 1999 *Directory on Volunteer Opportunities for Birders* published by the American Birding Association for you to look through.

## BIRDING WITH HITCHCOCK

*For more information and to register call the Center at (413)256-6006*

Don't forget **The Green Scene: FUNdraising Auction** on Friday, May 7, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Red Barn at Hampshire College (Rt. 116). Great food!! Great music!! Great bargains!! Great people!! You can't miss and you'll also help support this important environmental organization.

**Birding by Ear – on the Mt. Holyoke Range**, a great hike led by John Green, Naturalist will take place on May 15, 7:00 – 8:30 a.m. The hike is moderately steep but will progress at a pace that is comfortable for the group. Pre-registration is necessary as group size is limited. There is a fee.

*Naturalists and Novelists*, the third in a series titled **Birds in Literature** will be held on May 19, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. at the Emily Dickinson Homestead. Ornithologist and long-time IBC member David Spector will address the use of natural history in literature focusing on the influence of Thomas Be-

wick's *History of British Birds* and on the novels of Emily and Charlotte Brontë. The fourth and last of the series, *Create Your Own Bird Literature Workshop*, will meet on June 9, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Homestead. Now it's our turn to create some of our own literature using birds as the theme and motivation. Writer Christian McEwen will guide us, suggesting different writing exercises to bring out the best of our creative talents. Call the Center for fee schedule and to register for either event.

The **Breeding Bird Class** taught by Naturalist and long-time HBC member Andrew Magee will take place on four successive Saturdays beginning June 5. Think the excitement stops with the end of migration? As one who has conducted breeding bird censuses and surveys of various kinds from climax forests to coastal salt marshes, Andrew says, "It just ain't so!" In this class, participants will gain proficiency in song



recognition and appreciation of the domestic life cycles and territorial habits of various species and will fine-tune their understanding of a bird's habitat needs. The search often

leads to wilder areas of great beauty and may include such places as Hawley Bog, Mt. Greylock and the Moran Refuge in Windsor. There is a fee.

## BIRDING WITH ARCADIA

*For more information and to register call the Sanctuary at (413)584-3009*

**Early Morning Bird Walks** will be held on Saturdays, 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. at Arcadia (May 8 and June 12), at Graves Farm (May 8, 15 & June 12) and at the Marion Sherman Lynes Wildlife Sanctuary (May 8, 22 and & June 12). Free to MAS members.

**Grassland Birds: Arcadia's Meadows and Westover Air Force Base.** On June 5, 8:00 a.m. to noon, Andrea Jones will lead a program linking grassland birds with necessary habitat. The program will begin at the meadows to view Arcadia's grassland birds and then carpool to Westover. There is a fee.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Lyme Disease Vaccine:** Have you had your Lyme disease shot yet? I have been doing a bit of research on the subject and although I ('sort of') understand the scientific aspects it would be impossible for me to explain in a way that anyone else would. So – here are some simple facts and ways to get more.

We live in a designated "Lyme-plagued area" (New England). A new vaccine (LYMERix) which gives protection against the disease was approved by the Food and Drug Administration December '98. Doctors are advising anyone age 15 to 70 who spends time outdoors in wooded and grassy areas to consider being vaccinated. In order to build up to full immunity, three shots are given – one now, one about a month from now and one a year from now.

At present, the best advice health experts can give us as we venture out into tick areas is to wear long sleeves and pants tucked into socks or boots, use an insecticide containing the chemical DEET, and check ourselves regularly for ticks.

The first symptom of Lyme Disease in humans is usually an expanding red bull's-eye-shaped rash at the site of the tick bite which may occur within a few days or several weeks later. The rash may be preceded or accompanied by flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, chills, nausea, facial paralysis or pain in the muscles and joints. If Lyme disease is suspected call the doctor immediately. Early antibiotic treatment can prevent later, more serious complications. Not all patients develop the rash, recall the bite or exhibit the usual symptoms (ask Mark Mount).

For more information you might want to check the Lyme Disease folder in the HBC Library and I got tons of material from the Maine Medical Center web-site (<http://zappa.mmc.mmc.org/research/lyme/lymemain.htm>). You will need to go through your health provided for the vaccine and can get more information about it in that way.

The **HBC Store** has a new product. We have just received the new Checklist of the Birds of Massachusetts. The five-page list contains all the species that have ever been identified in Massachusetts, abundance bar graphs for three hundred twenty-three regularly occurring species and a list of rarities. It will be available at the meetings for \$1.20. There is still a handful of the old Daily Field Cards at \$.25. Also for purchase are the logo decals (\$1.25), patches (\$3.00), T-shirts (\$10.00), sweatshirts (\$10.00) and the guide book *Birding Western Massachusetts: The Central Connecticut River Valley* (\$12.00).

We are very grateful to **Birds Eye View** in the Village Commons in South Hadley and **Backyard Birds** at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton for offering a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases. You can find all sorts of birding goodies from feeders and seed to binoculars and scopes plus books and tapes and videos and many, many gift items. Check them out!

**The Falcon:** In the winter of 1998 on the UMass campus many people observed a Peregrine Falcon hanging around, making dinner out of Rock Doves and perching on top of the Campus Center and the Library Tower. David Ziomek (Hitchcock Center), Pete Westover and Nick Anzuoni (Town of Amherst Conservation Department), Dick Nathhorst (UMass Physical Plant), and Curt Griffin (UMass Department of Fisheries and Wildlife) placed a nesting box on the Library Tower to see what might happen. The bird visited the box and was observed exhibiting territorial behavior. According to Tom French there was about a 30% chance for successful nesting in the first year. According to Dave, the box was in for the long haul but it was hard not to be cautiously optimistic for success that year. That was as far as it went in '98.

Now it is April of '99 and again the excitement is mounting. Two birds have been confirmed at the site. A male and a very large female have been checking the area since April 9. They

have been seen in and around the box, perching and flying over and around the library. Dave reports that the roof of the tower will be secured to make sure that the birds are not disturbed. He is looking for information about the birds' activities. Are they sitting on or near the box? Is the male bringing food to the female? Are there courtship flights or other courting behavior? Are the birds banded? Has anyone seen them on other buildings? Is there an alternate nest site? The female should be on eggs before mid-May or she will not lay this year. If you have something you care to pass on to Dave, you can reach him through e-mail at (dziomek@javanet.com.) If you do not have access to e-mail his phone number is (413)863-3221.

**Dianne Quilty** has lived in Amherst since 1991. In the early '90s she saw a "Big White Bird!" while vacationing in Florida. Back in Amherst she saw a notice about an HBC meeting which she attended. In the fall of '93 she enrolled in a Hitchcock Birding Course then taught by Jan Ortiz. That was the beginning of a serious hobby! She was hooked! Big

time! She went from "look at that Big White Bird!" to becoming a serious birder, more and more active and involved in the birding community. In 1996 she joined the HBC Board and took on the challenging job of Membership Secretary. In the fall of 1997 she led her first trip (Monhegan Island – a courageous undertaking for a first trip).

This June Dianne is off to set down roots in Denver, North Carolina. She'll be in good birding country where she can roll out of bed into a kayak onto Lake Norman for an early morning search for her "Big White Bird."

We are really going to miss Dianne's humor, dedication and friendship. Thank you, Dianne, for all you've done for the Club.

We wish you Godspeed in all your new ventures.

And that about does it for the May Newsletter. Now it's your turn – get out there and find your own "Big White Bird"!

Vally Venman, Newsletter Editor  
(413)549-1098  
svenman@external.umass.edu

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

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



**June, 1999**

**PROGRAMS**

*All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst.*

I'm just back from the Memorial Day Weekend trip to Monhegan Island. We left during cool nights and rainy days and returned to hot hot hot dry dry dry! How does it do that? I have just filled the bird feeders, put out more sliced oranges just in case the Orioles still have need of them and have started another load of laundry. Now I drag myself to the word processor thing with the sole purpose of getting the last letter of the season off before the last program of the season is but a memory. So - please bear with me, friends. My fingers are on the keyboard but my thoughts are stuck in the Monhegan ad.

On Monday, June 14 naturalist Jackie Sones hopes to give us a different perspective on birds by opening our eyes to the world of dragonflies comparing these two seemingly different, but amazingly similar groups of animals. For example, did you know that dragonflies migrate thousands of miles over the ocean every year? In her slide presentation, appropriately titled *The Amazing Similarities of Dragonflies and Birds*, she'll be discussing the colorful appearance, fascinating life histories and energetic behavior of the dragonflies. By the end of the talk she hopes you will be inspired to take a closer look at them in the field!

Jackie has been a naturalist at Massachusetts Audubon Society's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary since 1991. Most of her work focuses on interpretation of the birds and the coastal habitats of Cape Cod and New England. She has co-lead natural history tours along the East Coast to Grand Manan, various islands in Maine, the Everglades and the Okefenokee

Swamp. Jackie is an avid birder who has recently developed a strong interest in dragonflies and damselflies. She is co-editor of *Ode News, An Occasional Newsletter about Dragonflies and Damselflies on Cape Cod*, and maintains a Web site about dragonflies at <http://www.capecod.net/~bnikula/odenews.htm>.

Many of you were present at last month's meeting featuring Marcia and Mark Wilson and viewed the art print of a Snowy Owl in flight photographed by Mark which they donated to the Club to be raffled off at the June meeting. Tickets can be purchased for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00 and will be available before the meeting. Or, you can call me at (413)549-1098. Proceeds from the drawing will go toward future quality programming.

**Coming Next Year**

It may be of interest to you to have a preview of some of the programs we can look forward to in the year 1999 - 2000. Thanks to Program Chair Mary Alice Wilson some of the people we will welcome are Hitchcock Director Tom Alworth (9/13), artist Barry Van Dusen (10/18), ornithologists-among-us Don Kroodsma (11/8), and Susan Smith (3/13), James Baird on Belize (1/10), hawk man Clay Sutton (2/14) and condor man John McNeely (6/12). WOW -- What a line-up! Where do I sign up? I want to continue being a member of this illustrious Hampshire Bird Club so that I can witness this outstanding line-up of programs without guilt! (*Watch for the August mailing.*)

## FIELD TRIPS

### Trip Reports

7 birders joined with Tom Gagnon on Saturday, May 8 to search for migrants on the east side of *Quabbin Reservoir*. The weather was cloudy, finally ending in afternoon rain making Tom's hoped-for 100 bird species just a dream. The group did count 83 species, however, including the Cerulean Warbler – always a highlight. A total of 138 warblers were counted. Knowing Tom it is not a surprise that 10 mammals (including otter, beaver and porcupine) were seen. The wildflowers were spectacular and 8 Spring Azure butterflies helped to brighten the cloudy day.

Harvey Allen's mid-week morning *Sweep of the Connecticut Valley* on May 12 had spectacular weather giving 12 observers wonderful looks at Northern Waterthrush and Tennessee, Northern Parula, and Magnolia Warblers in Amherst. The Winter Wren nesting up the mountain along the trolley line across from Atkins was heard. A Virginia Rail, a Solitary Sandpiper and 2 Lincoln Sparrows (in great spring color) were found in Northampton. Of special interest was watching an Eagle being harassed by a Broad-winged Hawk, which was soon joined by a Sharp-shinned Hawk. In all the group tallied 50 species on a beautiful day. Not a bad way to spend a May morning.

Friday, May 28 was the start of the annual *Monhegan Island* weekend trip. A group of 24 participants led by Stacy Adams and Andrew Magee tallied 110 species in the best weather this participant can

remember having on the Island. Memorial Day being so late this year meant that the migration was pretty well over when we arrived. An e-mail from Fred Thurber talked about a major fallout on Saturday, May 22 where there were "warblers all day long, up and down the island....Rarely do you see the WHOLE island covered with birds, but it happened." Another of the "you should have been here 5 minutes ago" stories? (At least we know it still happens.) There were many highlights: a Glaucous Gull, a Blue Grosbeak, a very visible flock of White-winged Crossbills, a couple of Mourning Warblers, Gannets, Loons, Puffins, etc., etc., etc. – everybody had his or her own high moments. We also had Harbor and Gray seals, Harbor Porpoise, a Finback Whale, several Minkes, a Green Snake, wildflowers, butterflies and fireflies. It was a great weekend!

On May 29 Al Richards and Bob Bieda led a full-day trip to *Plum Island* that had a good start and good end but which was fairly quiet in between though 94 species were seen. A total of nine people enjoyed excellent weather – sunny, breezy and mild – and as soon as they arrived on the island they had 2 Wilson's Phalaropes. Shorebirds and warbler numbers were down. Some people saw a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Everyone saw an excellent ice cream shop mid-afternoon. Returning to Western Massachusetts they made the traditional stop in Montague for Whip-poor-wills and to their great amazement they clearly heard a Chuck-will's-widow.

### Upcoming Trips

The evening – dusk to dark – of **Saturday, June 19** is for the *Whip-poor-will Search*, an annual try for these elusive nighttime flyers. Calm weather is necessary. Ordinarily this favorite trip is led by Al Richards, but Al is going away to attend a wedding this year so Harvey Allen will take over the honors. If you wish to go on the trip call Harvey at (413)253-7963.

**Wednesday, July 14 and Wednesday, August 4**

are the days set aside for Harvey Allen's mid-week, morning *Sweep of the Connecticut Valley* series. Call Harvey at (413)253-7963 for more information.

Should any more trips be planned before the August letter goes out, you will be informed by postcard.

I remind you to call the HBC VOICE (413)253-2218 to learn what birds are being seen in the area.

## CONSERVATION

The fifth **North American Migration Count** was held on Saturday, May 8. If you did the count and have not already returned the recording sheet to Anne Lombard, please do so by June 10. Her address is 26 Washington Ave., Northampton, MA 01060. If you have misplaced the sheet, I have some extras. Call me at (413)549-1098.

The **Amherst Breeding Bird Census** is now into its tenth year of gathering data. Because people go on vacation and move away there may still be a few circuits not covered. Pete Westover and David Ziomek are looking for people who are qualified and interested. Almost 95% of the data are gathered by ear so it is necessary that the person have a good

knowledge of local bird song. Call Pete (413)256-4045 or Dave (413)863-3221 if you are interested in helping.

John Bowe has asked me to let you know that Andrea Jones from Massachusetts Audubon Center for Biological Conservation is looking for volunteers to do **Bird Point Counts in the West Meadows of Northampton**. It requires looking and listening for five minutes at each point and recording all birds seen or heard in that vicinity. It will take about one hour per week during the month of June and July. For more information, please contact Andrea at Massachusetts Audubon Society in Lincoln. Her voice mail number is 1-800-688-3553 x 7406.

## MISCELLANEOUS

Enclosed with this Newsletter you will find a list of the newly elected Board members and a list of members who joined the Club after January, 1999 when the first list went out. I hope that the information is at least close to being accurate. We have had problems with computer crashes, lost notes, clerical errors, number reversal and other disasters just too awful to mention. Don't even think of letting your confidence in us waiver, however. If you do find an error just call Dorothy Barnes at (413)549-5476 or Sally at (413)549-1098. (Or is it 549-8901? or 549-9810?)

**The Library:** Anne Cann reminds us that the HBC library, located at the Hitchcock Center is there for your enjoyment over the summer. It would be a good idea to call the Center (413)256-6006 to learn the summer hours before making the trip. For a listing of the books and tapes please see our web site or get in touch with Anne (413)253-7753.

**Refreshments Head** Sue Emerson and her chief assistant Marty Ortiz want to send a special thanks to all those kind providers out there for helping to make the food table an outstanding part of the evening festivities. Birders require more than slides to

keep them quiet and happy and this year's collection of brownies and cookies and other goodies was especially good! Thank you very much!

**The Falcon:** Last month I reported that of a pair of Peregrine Falcons had been seen repeatedly, apparently interested in using the nesting box on the UMass Library Tower. We were all very optimistic and excited by the prospect. But that's as far as it went. They haven't been seen recently. The female should have been on eggs before mid-May. Has anyone seen them elsewhere? Is there an alternate nest site? If you have any information David Ziomek would like to hear from you. You can reach him through e-mail at [dziomek@javanet.com](mailto:dziomek@javanet.com). If you do not have access to e-mail his phone number is (413)863-3221.

We are grateful to **Birds Eye View** in the Village Commons in South Hadley and **Backyard Birds** at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton for offering a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases.

## AND

Out of things to celebrate? Is your life just one boring day after another? Then for heavens sake put *Pizzazz* in place of ordinary this summer. Invite the neighbors in, clink glasses of Kool-Aid, light candles on Oreo cookies and give three cheers for –

**JUNE:** This month is National Turkey Lover's Month and two birthdays will be celebrated. Donald Duck will be 57 on the 9<sup>th</sup> and Garfield the Cat's special day is the 19<sup>th</sup>. (May I suggest a catnip cake, cat-shaped of course, with sparklers serving as candles and whiskers?) On the 21<sup>st</sup> we celebrate the official adoption of the Eagle as our national symbol. Ben Franklin wanted to see the Turkey in that spot. Speaking of which does anyone out there remember what president said "Sure we make mistakes, but point them out and we will correct them. Let's not throw the baby out, though, with the dishes." Clue – the year was 1987 and the same president once said that "trees pollute air."

**JULY:** Take your mind off the heat of the month on the 12<sup>th</sup> when Buckminster Fuller (inventor and architect) would be blowing out 104 candles if he still had breath. Celebrate by using toothpicks and pea-sized balls of clay and build yourself a geodesic dome. Then on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, if you can't be in Freemont, Michigan to celebrate National Baby Food Festival Day, at least spread a cracker with your favorite baby meat (substitute baby vegetable if you are vegetarian.)

**AUGUST:** Time to insulate the body in preparation for the long cold winter ahead. Find inspiration and motivation in the following August anniversaries and eat your way through the month. 8/1 – Shredded Wheat was invented in 1893. 8/5 – National Mustard Day celebrated nationwide. 8/11 – Wonder Bread was introduced 1930. May I suggest a luncheon of Campbell's Tomato Soup and toasted cheese sandwiches (Velveeta, course) made with Wonder Bread. Don't forget to light the candles. 8/13 – The Annual Peanut Party will be held in Pelion, South Carolina. 8/14 – Julia Child celebrates her 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. 8/23 – Fannie farmer opened her Boston School of Cookery in 1902. And, on 8/28 in 1798 John J. Dufour established the first successful vineyard in Lexington, Kentucky.

That should just about do it for another HBC year. You'll next hear from me in August when I come after your money. (The membership year runs from September 1 – August 31.) I mention it now so that you'll have the summer to think about what is *really* important in your life. It may be time to list your priorities. Maybe you should start putting aside large amounts of money to support the HBC in a VERY BIG BIRDER way. (Hey, we'll still send notices and still say "hi" for the basic \$12.00, but at the supporting level we stand up and shout "HI!!!")

Just one final thought as you go into the summer, possibly visiting new and exciting birding spots, searching for new and exciting species of birds: "Birds don't read the books." (That's why they are seen doing things they are not supposed to do.)

Have a wonderful summer.  
Bring back lots of Big Bird Stories!

(413)549-1098  
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Sally Venman, Newsletter Editor

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

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



**September, 1999**

Greetings to all of you out there basking in perfect late-summer weather, sipping icy drinks by babbling brooks, reading books of no consequence, thinking happy thoughts and sighing contented sighs. No worries, no concerns, just idle moments of bliss and rapture.

*Ahh! ---- No? ---- Not So? ---- Really? ---- Hmm-----*

Let it be known that your all-purpose-HBC-Newsletter person is certainly not sipping cool drinks by singing streams reading non-consequential books. She is in fact sorting through years of HBCisms doing serious thinking, asking important questions. How best can she convince you to hand over the big bucks for the privilege of another year of coveted membership in the Club? How can she convince you that because the HBC programs are simply outstanding, because the Field Trips are great fun and good learning opportunities, because the people you meet are very special, *and* because the food at the meetings is the *best* that you should support the Club with membership?

Take a look at last year's line-up of programs introducing us to birding hot spots and increasing our knowledge and appreciation of specific bird species: David Holmes (Appledore and Southeast Farallon Islands), Jon Dunn (Sparrows of New England), Dan Albano (Belted Kingfisher), Jan Ortiz (birding Southeastern Arizona), Wayne Peterson (birding Trinidad and Tobago), Julio de la Torres (North American Owls), Sylvia Halkin (the lives and songs of Cardinals), Marcia and Mark Wilson (an Arctic Summer), and Jackie Sones (Dragonflies and Birds – the life history similarities and differences).

Take a look at last year's line-up of field trips. Half-day local trips took us on monthly Wednesday morning sweeps of the Connecticut River Valley and Saturday and Sunday searches for migrants in the Northampton Meadows, on local mountaintops, at the Ashley Reservoir, Quabbin, and the Connecticut River. During May there were warbler walks through the Wildwood Cemetery every Tuesday and Thursday morning and June held the annual Whip-poor-will evening search. We enjoyed full-day trips to Cape Anne, Plum Island, the Massachusetts North Shore, the Massachusetts South Shore, the Connecticut Shoreline, Quabbin, the Berkshire Lakes, Maine and Westport. And, many birders' favorite annual event – the Memorial Day Weekend trip the Monhegan Island – was again offered.

Take a look at other membership advantages: a place on the Rare Bird Alert Telephone Tree if desired, an opportunity to learn and to participate in conservation projects, access to the large HBC library and monthly Newsletters describing what's happening bird-wise in the area plus unpredictable fountains of knowledge and suggestions of ways to pass the time between migrations. It is also an easy way to be in contact with a wonderful group of people representing all levels of birding from beginners to experts. And if that is not enough members receive a discount at the two local birding stores.

*Hey – is this a motivational letter or not? Are you not touched beyond words?*



One of the goals of the HBC is to keep cost of membership as reasonable as possible. As with any community organization there is a whole lot of volunteer time that goes into making things happen, but the Club still has two main expenses – the cost of bringing quality programs to the community and the cost of mailings to keep members informed. Our **ONLY** income is from membership dues, which is the same as last year.

*Oh! Oh! Here it comes ----*

You will find all you need to know to join the Club or to renew your membership on the enclosed Membership/Release form. **If there is any way that you can join at the supporting level (Birder, Big Birder or Rare Birder) it would be very helpful.**

Also enclosed is the Rare Bird Alert form which needs to be returned **no later than October 1**. In past years people have been given a second opportunity to join the Alert in January. This has simply not worked efficiently. So – **if you want a place on the new tree, now is the time to do so.** Simply fill out the form and send it along with your membership/Release form.

## PROGRAMS

*(All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst.)*

On Monday, September 13, Tom Alworth, Executive Director of the Hitchcock Center, will get the Club off to a good start with his slide/lecture presentation titled *Nestbuilding in House Wrens: A Reexamination of Male and Female Roles* (or) *It's the Female, Stupid!* The House Wren is a familiar bird with its jazzy song, renegade reputation and aggressive behavior. Tom has been observing the House Wren since he was a child, marveling at the number of sticks it would stuff into a nest-box, and how other birds chased it every chance they could. Early observations led to Tom's ongoing study of wrens that focuses on nest building and reproductive behavior. He began his professional study of wrens in Upstate New York in 1992. He is sure you will leave this talk with a newfound respect for this resourceful and sometimes misunderstood bird.

Tom joined the staff of the Hitchcock Center as Executive Director last fall coming from the Edmund Nites Huyck Preserve in Rensselaerville, New York. Before that he taught at the Bronx Zoo. He received his Masters Degree in Zoology from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He has had birding articles published in professional and popular journals and has published on the natural history writing of John Burroughs, a particular passion of Tom's. I had the pleasure of hearing Tom's excellent presentation on Burroughs' work last spring at the Center. I am really looking forward to experiencing another of Tom's programs and to seeing my

backyard House Wrens through his naturalist's eyes. I hope to see many of you there as well.

### To Come:

I am delighted to be able to give you the programming for the entire year, thanks to Mary Alice Wilson. Take some time to "ooh" and "aah" over what's in store, then mark your calendars!

**October 18:** Barry Van Dusen – *Travels of a Bird Artist: West Texas, India, and Monhegan.*

**November 8:** Don Kroodsma – *Bellbirds, Wrens, Robins, and More: Songs and Stories from the Neotropics.*

**December 13:** Members Meeting – *Holiday Meeting. Members' Slides and Christmas Count Planning.*

**January 10:** James Baird – *Birding Belize.*

**February 14:** Clay Sutton – *How to Spot Hawks.*

**March 13:** Susan Smith – *Birding Papua New Guinea.*

**April 10:** Bill Barber – *Birding the Adirondacks: A Boreal Bonanza.*

**May 8:** Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll – *Worcester: Birding an Urban Environment.*

**June 12:** Pete Westover – *Special Habitats and Open Space in Amherst and Surrounding Towns.*

## 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 that 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 driving expenses. Transportation costs are calculated on the basis of 20 cents 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 home at (413)253-7486.

Take a look at the following fall and winter trip list and plan your birding with the offerings in mind. I'll be giving descriptive information about trips in the monthly letters.

**Wednesday, September 1:** The first *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley*, a leisurely-paced, once-a-month, mid-week morning trip focusing on the seasonal birds in the valley and any rarities recently discovered. It is led by Harvey Allen who always knows where to find the birds and how to enjoy them. Birders have been known to call in sick at work in order to take advantage of his Wednesday offerings. Call Harvey at (413)253-7963 for more information.

**Saturday, September 4:** Bob Bieda will lead a half-day trip around the *East and West Meadows of Northampton*. These two birding areas are perhaps the best spots in Western Massachusetts for consistently turning up rarities. Anything is possible. Meet Bob at the Bowling Alley on Rt. 5 in Northampton at 7:00 a.m. Call Bob at (413)527-2623 if you have any questions.

**Wednesday, September 15:** It's Harvey Allen again, making September a two-sweep month on the *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley*. The search is on. It's *Hawks, Hawks and Maybe More Hawks*. This time of year the Broad-winged Hawk migration is approaching its peak here in New England. Will our scheduled field trip coincide with the BIG DAY? Who knows? Maybe not, but we keep trying. When you finally experience BIG DAY it more than makes up for the misses. Call Harvey at (413)253-7963 for time and meeting place.

On **September 25**, The Hitchcock Center is offering a full-day *Plum Island* birding trip with Scott Sumner as leader. Fall migrants will be abundant and Scott is an expert birder

who will make the trip lots of fun as well as a learning experience. For more information and to register call the Center at (413)256-6006. There is a fee.

**Sunday, October 3:** Stacy Adams will take a group to the *Deerfield Meadows* for a morning of birding. She will be looking for Warblers, Sparrows and whatever else the area's hedgerows will give up. Call Stacy at (413)367-0177 for time and meeting place.

**Sunday, October 10:** It's time for the first of the Club's all-day trips. The annual fall trip to *Quabbin Reservoir* led by Tom Gagnon is a very popular one coming at the height of the New England colors. The group will travel to the remote areas of the Reservoir on roads which are all that remain of the lost towns. They'll look for late migrating warblers on land and early migrating waterfowl on the water. Plan to bring lunch, snacks, water and appropriate clothing. The trip is **limited to 15 people and you need to commit to the whole day**. Knowing Tom, birds are only one aspect of the natural world to be experienced on the trip. Call him at (413)584-6353 for more information and to reserve a spot.

**Wednesday, October 13:** Harvey Allen heads for the *Quabbin Area* for another in his popular *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* series. (He'll probably be checking with Tom to learn what his trip turned up). Call Harvey at (413)253-7963 for more information.

### To Come:

**Saturday, October 23:** *Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area*. Leaders: Al Richards (413)665-2761 and Bob Bieda.

**Sunday, November 7:** *Berkshire Lakes*, Leader: Tom Gagnon (413)584-6353.

**Saturday, November 20 or Sunday, November 21:** *East Quabbin*. Leader: Tom Gagnon (413)584-6353.

**Friday, November 25:** *Turkey Trot to Cape Ann*. Leaders: Al Richards (413)665-2761 & Bob Bieda

And finally, I remind you to call the HBC VOICE to learn what birds are being seen in the area. To get this information call (413)253-2218. To report birds you have seen call (413)256-1836. Give your name and phone number, the date of the sighting, what birds, how many and where. This is used for the routine sightings. The Voice is updated weekly but is not necessarily monitored daily, so if you want to report a rare or potentially rare bird (one that will possibly result in the Rare Bird Alert telephone tree being activated) you should call Jim Marcum (413)549-1613, Jan Ortiz (413)549-1768, or Scott Sumner (413)253-7486.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**The HBC Library**, created and maintained by Anne Cann, is located in the main room on the first floor of the Hitchcock Center and is very easy to use. 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 Center to browse during business hours. The Center is located on South Pleasant Street in Amherst. Hours are generally 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Saturday but it's best to call first if you are making a special trip as the schedule sometimes changes. 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 or e-mail at [cann@uhs.umass.edu](mailto:cann@uhs.umass.edu) by the Friday prior to the Monday meeting. You can also return books at meetings.

**Conservation** concerns and participation in related programs are important functions of the Club. Anne Lombard is Chair of the Conservation Committee. If conservation is a special interest of yours there is a place on the Membership Form where you can indicate this. This past year members of the Club were volunteers collecting data for the Christmas Bird Count, the Birds in Forested Landscapes project, the North American Migration Count, the Marsh Bird Monitoring Project in Deerfield and the Amherst Breeding Bird Census. Other projects are in the works and will be announced in Newsletters. If you have questions you can contact Anne at (413) 586-7578 or by e-mail at [lombarda@javanet.com](mailto:lombarda@javanet.com).

**The HBC Web Page** has grown considerably under the magical touch of Merry Cushing, our skilled webmaster -- or is it webmistress? -- I'm still very much a webnovice. There is a whole lot of good stuff to be found on the site. If you have access, be sure to check it out, especially the related links. The address is part of the Newsletter letterhead.

We now have an **HBC Brochure** describing the Club and telling people how to go about becoming members or getting more information. Would members who work or visit good places to contact potential members please pick up some of the brochures for distribution at the meeting? Or, you can contact Jim Marcum at (413)549-1613. And -- a special thanks to Nancy Buchanan and her committee for the creative ideas that have gone into the product.

**Dragonflies** took center stage for many of you who attended the June meeting when Jackie Sonnes gave her terrific Dragonfly slide presentation noting the amazing similarities of dragonflies and birds. After the talk many birders decided to add to their "things to be passionate about" list and have been driving their friends and family double nuts this summer attempting to make all those cool identifications. This is to tell you that Jackie has a website for you computer-wise passionate people. Now you can expand your interest well past the warm weather. It is [www.capecod.net/~bnikula/on2.htm](http://www.capecod.net/~bnikula/on2.htm)

**Birds Eye View** in the Village Commons in South Hadley and **Backyard Birds** at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton, two local shops specializing in all sorts of goodies to interest birders, are offering a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases. You can find equipment from feeders and seed to binoculars and scopes plus books and tapes and videos and many, many gift items. Check them out

So -- that about does it for this month. I hope to see you at Tom's presentation. It's time to swap Big Bird stories. If you have any questions about the Club and its activities feel free to give me a call. Jan Ortiz (413)549-1098 is also happy to answer your questions.

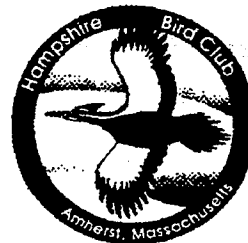
Sincerely,

*Sally*

Sally Venman, Newsletter Editor  
(413)549-1098  
[svenman@external.umass.edu](mailto:svenman@external.umass.edu)

**Hampshire Bird Club  
Amherst, Massachusetts**

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



**October, 1999**

Monday is the day to get all the papers on the desk straightened, all pencils sharpened, my life in order. A dozen cleansing breaths, a half dozen mental push-ups and three thoughts of a sprightly jog around the block clear the brain cobwebs and

*Well . . . my, oh my, oh my . . . . .*

Every time the phone rings I have thoughts of a friend's voice saying "the hawks are moving" (or) "I've discovered a Monarch Butterfly resting tree" (or) "There's a fox in my backyard" (or) "I've discovered a new species of flea on my dog . . . you have just GOT to see this one!" But . . . it *is* Monday morning, Monday the Twentieth day of September and there *is* a Newsletter that needs writing!

Let's see . . . where do I start? Who is our October speaker? Barry Van Dusen? **THE** Barry Van Dusen? The internationally recognized wildlife artist I have admired for so long **Barry Van Dusen**? **YES!!!!** I go to my back issues of *Bird Observer* and find his work as the cover illustration on 25 magazines. This does not include issues that have disappeared into the infamous black hole of my study. My thoughts shift from a new species of flea to the illustrations in front of me and . . . the *Newsletter* begins.

### **PROGRAMS**

*(All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst.)*

On **Monday, October 18, 1999** you are invited to a one hour illustrated presentation given by internationally recognized wildlife artist Barry Van Dusen. His program is titled *Travels of a Bird Artist: West Texas, India, and Monhegan Island*. We will accompany Barry as he travels to three different locations, sketching and painting all along the way. First we'll take a trip to western Texas, exploring the landscapes and unique natural history of the Edwards Plateau and Big Bend National Park. Next we'll follow him and a group of international artists from the Artists for Nature Foundation as they record the exotic wildlife of Bandhavgarh National Park in central India. Finally we'll take an excursion to one of the HBC's favorite places, Monhegan Island off the coast of Maine, where we'll share with Barry the spectacle of the spring songbird migration.

Barry, who lives in central Massachusetts, has illustrated a variety of natural history books and pocket guides, many in association with the Massachusetts Audubon Society. His articles and paintings have been featured in *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Birder's World* and *Bird Observer* magazines.

In 1992 he was named Audubon Alliance Artist of the year,

and he was elected a full member of London's Society of Wildlife Artists in 1994. His work has been exhibited regularly in the prestigious Birds in Art show (Wausau, Wisconsin) as well as in many galleries in the United States and in Europe. He is active in raising money for the conservation of threatened habitats.

#### **To Come:**

**November 8:** Don Kroodsma – *Bellbirds, Wrens, Robins, and More: Songs and Stories from the Neotropics*.

**December 13:** Members Meeting – *Holiday Meeting*, Members' Slides and Christmas Count Planning.

**January 10:** James Baird – *Birding Belize*.

**February 14:** Clay Sutton – *How to Spot Hawks*.

**March 13:** Susan Smith – *Birding Papua New Guinea*.

**April 10:** Bill Barber – *Birding the Adirondacks: A Boreal Bonanza*.

**May 8:** Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll – *Worcester: Birding an Urban Environment*.

**June 12:** Pete Westover – *Special Habitats and Open Space in Amherst and Surrounding Towns*.

## 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 that 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 driving expenses. Transportation costs are calculated on the basis of 20 cents per mile per car plus tolls and parking fees. It is expected that all persons in the car, including the driver, share costs equally.

### Trip Reports:

On Saturday, September 4 Bob Bieda led a half-day trip around the Northampton East Meadows. The group of six enjoyed this annual fall warbler walk in warm, calm weather. They had one nice mixed flock of migrants containing Red-eyed Vireo, Blackpoll and American Redstart, a very good look at Northern Waterthrush, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. They also had a singing Yellow-throated Vireo, a Warbling Vireo and a very actively singing Carolina Wren. Other birds included Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck, Harrier, Hummingbird and Solitary Sandpiper.

The first *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley*, (leisurely-paced, once-a-month, mid-week morning trip focusing on the seasonal birds in the valley) took place on September 15. Harvey Allen and eight participants searched around the foot of Mount Skinner for whatever wished to make its presence known on a very cloudy day. A flock of Purple Finches, Blue-gray Gnat-catchers and lots of Red-breasted Nuthatches led the list on this mid-September day. There was nothing unusual but the group enjoyed a nice walk.

### Coming Up:

**Sunday, October 3:** Stacy Adams will take a group to the *Deerfield Meadows* for a morning of birding. She will be looking for Warblers, Sparrows and whatever else the area's hedgerows will give up. Call Stacy at (413)367-0177 for time and meeting place.

**Sunday, October 10:** It's time for the first of the Club's all-day trips. The annual fall trip to *Quabbin Reservoir* led by Tom Gagnon is a very popular one, coming at the height of the New England colors. The group will travel to the remote areas of the Reservoir on roads which are all that remain of the lost towns. Last year the group recorded 54 species of birds including a Peregrine Falcon, 5 Loons, great close looks at Ruffed Grouse, plus many Ruby-crowned Kinglets, White-crowned Sparrows and Black-throated Blue Warblers. (Weather was lousy so the count was down and butterflies were at home by the fire.) Plan to bring lunch, snacks, water and appropriate clothing. The trip is limited to 15 people and you need to commit to the whole day. Knowing Tom, birds are only one aspect of the natural world to be experienced on this trip. Call him at (413)584-6353 for more information and to reserve a spot.

**Wednesday, October 13:** Harvey Allen heads for the *Quabbin Area* for another in his popular *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* series. (He'll probably be checking with Tom to learn what his trip turned up). Call Harvey at (413)253-7963 for more information.

**Saturday, October 23:** *Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area* with leaders Al Richards and Bob Bieda. This **NEW trip offering** will take us to western Vermont near the town of Vergennes, a region famous for its waterfowl, especially the thousands of Snow Geese that stage here in the fall. Dead Creek is the only area that consistently get Ross' Geese in New England. The only hard part is picking out the one or two that might be there among the 20,000 Snow Geese. That however should not be a problem for our seasoned leaders. This is an all-day trip so plan to bring lunch, water, snacks and appropriate clothing. Call Alan (413)665-2761 for departure time and meeting place.

**Sunday, November 7:** *Berkshire Lakes* with leader Tom Gagnon. This all-day trip is another of the popular annual trips offered by the HBC. Join Tom in discovering what the many lakes in and around the Pittsfield area have to offer this fall. A stop at the Moran Wildlife area and at Bartlett's Apple Stand for cider and donuts can't be ruled out. Meet Tom at the Super Stop & Shop in Northampton (Rt. 5, King Street) at 6:15 a.m. For more information on the trip call him at (413)584-6353.

### And Later On:

**Sunday, November 20:** Tom Gagnon will lead an all-day trip to the East Side of Quabbin. This trip will be limited to 15 participants. Call Tom at (413)584-6353.

**Friday, November 25:** *Turkey Trot to Cape Ann*. Leaders: Al Richards (413)665-2761 & Bob Bieda.

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 home at (413)253-7486.

## CONSERVATION

Not all conservation projects involve counting the birds. If you are available on **Tuesday, October 5** and would be interested in lending a hand on a local conservation project, Ann Lombard (Conservation Chair) has a suggestion. The HBC has adopted a portion of the Lake Trail at the Fitzgerald Conservation Area in Northampton and it is in need of clearing and cleanup. She suggests it might be fun to meet at 8:00 a.m. for some birding before starting the trail work at 9:00. Please call Anne at (413)586-7509 for information about the project and for directions.

## BIRDING WITH HITCHCOCK

There is one very special program you should know about this month. No one finds owls like owl prowler David Spector! Great Horned, Barred, Saw-whet and Screech owls are all in the area. Although there is no guarantee that even David can find these inhabitants of the night for us, the adventure of the search is guaranteed. **Sunday, November 7** at 3:00 a.m. is the time. Meet at the Hitchcock Center. Dress warmly since we stand in one place for a long time while we listen and wait. Children 10 years and older are invited. Be sure to call to register – this is a popular program in spite of the early hour. Members of the Center are free. There is a small fee for non-members. For more information and to register call the Center at (413)256-6006

## MISCELLANEOUS

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** If you wish to be on the HBC Rare Bird Alert telephone tree, Jim Marcum (413)549-1613 needs to have your name no later than **Wednesday, October 6**. This will be your only chance to join this year. And if you haven't sent in your membership form and dues please do so now. Call Dottie Barnes (413)549-5476 or Sally Venman (413)549-1098 if you need information or a form.

There are some of us who consider good food almost equal to good programs. Although a great cook in her own right, our Commissary Chief, Sue Emerson needs help! Some checked their willingness to donate edibles on the Membership form for which Sue is most grateful. But she needs more. So, with chef's hat on head and spatula in hand she will be passing around a sign-up sheet at the next meeting. If you won't be at the meeting, didn't sign up on the form and would be willing to be a brownie or cheese and crackers provider, please call her at (413)584-6736.

I thought you might have use for an updated (and corrected – I hope) list of Board Members and people who can answer your questions. Know that the Board meetings are open to the membership and you would be welcomed with your questions and suggestions. Call one of us.

### Officers:

**Jim Marcum, President,** (413)549-1613,  
marcums@fnr.umass.edu

**Mary Alice Wilson, VP & Program Chair,** (413)548-9078,  
mwilson@k12.oit.umass.edu

**Mark Mount, Treasurer,** (413)253-5169,  
msmount@pltpath.umass.edu

**Dorothy Barnes, Membership Secretary,** (413)549-5476,  
dbarnes@chem.umass.edu

**Sue Fletcher, Communications Secretary** (413)253-2102,  
Scfletch@aol.com

### Members at large:

**Sue Emerson,** (413)584-6736, wemerson@javanet.com

**Shirley Hilborn,** (413)253-6462

**Dennis McKenna,** (413)256-8439

**David Peake-Jones,** (413)529-9541

**Jan Ortiz,** (413)549-1768, jtortiz@aol.com

**Scott Surner,** (413)253-7486, ssurner@aol.com

### Others to contact:

**Anne Lombard, Conservation Comm. Chair,** (413)586-7509,  
Lombarda@javanet.com

**Scott Surner, Field Trip Chair,** (413)253-7486,  
ssurner@aol.com

**Anne Cann, Library,** (413)253-7753, cann@uhs.umass.edu

**Sally Venman, Newsletter Editor,** (413)549-1098,  
svenman@external.umass.edu

**Jim Marcum, Rare Bird Alert,** (413)549-1613,  
marcums@fnr.umass.edu

**Sue Emerson, Refreshments,** (413)584-6736,  
wemerson@javanet.com

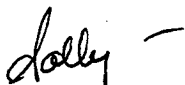
Those of you who were at the September meeting heard Tom Army announce that the night sky has something pretty special in store for us. It seems that the sun's eleven-year magnetic cycle is moving along toward its peak once again. As the cycle revs up, the sun's magnetic forces eject gas atoms from the sun into space. The solar atoms are trapped by the earth's magnetic field and rain into the upper atmosphere. There they hit nitrogen and oxygen atoms in our atmosphere and trigger the emission of light which we see as the aurora borealis or Northern Lights. So – get out there, folks! There are more than owls awaiting your discovery. Thank you, Tom, for the alert. I hope this explanation comes close to the one you kindly gave me over the phone.

**Birds Eye View** in the Village Commons in South Hadley and **Backyard Birds** at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton, two local shops specializing in all sorts of goodies to interest birders, are offering a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases. You can find equipment from feeders and seed to binoculars and scopes plus books and tapes and videos and many, many gift items. Check them out!

And – finally - enclosed with this letter is a list of Rare Bird Alert numbers you can call across the country. Whether you are planning a trip or just need to get away for a bit, it's fun to find out what is being seen in far-away places.

That should do it for this month. Hope your autumn goes well and is full of fall migrants. See you soon.

Sincerely,



Sally Venman, Newsletter Editor  
(413)549-1098  
sveman@external.umass.edu

Oops – you're not done yet – you need some imagination nudging before you are excused.

Why do people with closed minds always open their mouths?

If a book about failures doesn't sell, is it a success?

If a parsley farmer is sued, can they garnish his wages?

And – Once upon a time, long long ago, in a land far far away, there lived a woman who was just too busy (anyone you know?). She decided to make a clone of herself so that she could get twice as much work done. Well, the clone helped her a lot, but it also gave her a bad reputation because the clone constantly swore. One day, the woman couldn't take her clone's foul mouth anymore, so she took it to the top of a building and pushed it off. Soon after, the woman was arrested for making an obscene clone fall.

That's all folks . . . Really



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

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



**November, 1999**

**PROGRAMS**

(All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst.)

"The Neotropics is a big candy store for bird lovers," says Don Kroodsma, long-time member of the HBC, noted authority on bird songs and our next guest speaker on **November 8**. According to Don, tiny Costa Rica has more bird species than we can see in all of North America, a fact he has taken advantage of in his research on why birds sing the way they do. He has recently returned from in Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Brazil where he studied Neotropical species. The focus of his talk will be on selected stories and songs that especially intrigued him. Come listen to the songs of the Three-wattled Bellbird and the Cotinga. Come hear what the Sedge Wrens can teach us about why songbirds might imitate or improvise their songs. Celebrate the thrush family and savor the songs of the Nightingale-Thrush, the Solitaires and her fine Costa Rican singers. He titles his presentation *Bellbirds, Wrens, Robins, and More: Songs and Stories from the Neotropics*.

We are so fortunate to have Don living in our midst. His work with birdsong is internationally recognized, and you don't have to thumb through many birding magazines before finding an article he has written on the subject. He is a Professor in the Biology Department at UMass where he teaches Ornithology, Animal Behavior and writing classes. His main

research focus is on bird song and has co-edited a book on the subject. He is the editor for the Sounds section of the Birds of North America Project and is an associate editor of the *Auk*.

I am sure that you will come away from the evening with knowledge and an appreciation of Don's work plus the satisfaction of having enjoyed yourself. Please note that we have not asked him back repeatedly (this will be his *sixth* visit) just because he pays his yearly dues. Be there!

**To Come:**

**December 13:** Members Meeting – *Holiday Meeting*. Members' Slides and Christmas Count Planning.

**January 10:** James Baird – *Birding Belize*.

**February 14:** Clay Sutton – *How to Spot Hawks*.

**March 13:** Susan Smith – *Birding Papua New Guinea*.

**April 10:** Bill Barber – *Birding the Adirondacks: A Boreal Bonanza*.

**May 8:** Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll – *Worcester: Birding an Urban Environment*.

**June 12:** Pete Westover – *Special Habitats and Open Space in Amherst and Surrounding Towns*.

**FIELD TRIPS**

*The IIBC 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 that 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 driving expenses. Transportation costs are calculated on the basis of 20 cents per mile per car plus tolls and parking fees. It is expected that all persons in the car, including the driver, share costs equally.*

**Trip Reports:**

On Sunday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, Tom Gagnon showed ten participants the sights and sounds of *Quabbin Reservoir* in the rain. In spite of all-day wetness, the group tallied fifty-two species of birds highlighted by a flock of Pine Siskins and yodeling Common Loons, close to shore. As many of you know, bird-

ing with Tom is more than birding and the mammal list included four otters, two beavers and best of all, according to Tom, a huge bull moose!

On a beautiful Wednesday morning, October 13<sup>th</sup> Harvey Allen and six participants searched the West Meadows of Northampton, finding 32 bird species. Highlights included wonderful looks at Rusty Blackbirds on the road right in front of the group and many sparrows including White-throated, Swamp, Song, Savannah and one Field Sparrow. Right up there with good sightings was Bob Bieda, newly retired school teacher and long-time HBC member with a huge grin on his face and a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow sighting that he shared with the group. Coopers Hawks, Palm and Yellow-rumped Warblers were also on the list.

On Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> three intrepid souls, Al Richards, Bob Bieda and Shawn Smolen-Morton visited the Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area on Lake Champlain. In spite of rain which didn't stop until after 2:00 p.m. this new trip offering was pretty special. Twelve to sixteen thousand Snow Geese were viewed on their staging area. The sight of thirty-five hundred in the air at one time made the heart beat faster and left the viewers a bit breathless. There was one potential Ross' Goose that sparked much discussion but no final decision. Thirteen species of waterfowl included Ruddy Ducks, Pintails, Green-winged Teals, Common Loons, one Red-throated Loon, many Horned Grebes and two species of Mergansers. Also seen were a Goshawk, a Peregrine Falcon and Wild Turkeys. It is worthy to note that six Jaegers, two which were Parasitic, were seen on the following day. This is an area worth returning to.

#### Coming Up:

**Sunday, November 7:** Travel to the *Berkshire Lakes* with leader Tom Gagnon. This all-day trip is a popular annual trip offered by the HBC. Join Tom in discovering what the many lakes in and around the Pittsfield area have to offer this fall. A stop at the Moran Wildlife area and at Bartlett's Apple Stand for cider and donuts can't be ruled out. Bring

lunch and snacks and wear warm clothing. Meet Tom at Super Stop & Shop in Northampton (Rt. 5, King Street) at 6:15 a.m. For more information on the trip call him at (413)584-6353.

**Wednesday, November 10:** Harvey Allen's mid-week monthly *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* series will focus on early winter migrants and water fowl. Call him at 253-7963.

**Sunday, November 21:** Tom Gagnon will take birders on an annual all-day trip to the *East Side of Quabbin*. Remember to bring lunch and snacks and be sure to wear warm clothing. The trip will be limited to 15 participants. You need to call Tom at (413)584-6353 to reserve a place.

**Friday, November 26:** Al Richards (413)665-2761 and Bob Bieda (413)527-2623 will lead the annual *Turkey Trot to Cape Ann* to explore the many coves of Cape Ann in search of Loons, Sea Ducks (perhaps Harlequins?), Purple Sandpipers, Alcids and maybe, if luck is with the group, a Snowy Owl. This is an all-day trip so bring lunch, snacks, and plenty of warm clothing. Be sure to call Al or Bob to register.

**On Wednesday, December 15,** Harvey Allen's midweek monthly *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* will focus on what's being seen with perhaps a rare winter visitor thrown in for good measure. This is a good "warm-up" for the Christmas Bird counts.

**Christmas Bird Counts:** **Saturday, December 18** (Springfield - Bruce Kindseth (860)745-9593), **Sunday, December 19** (Northampton - Jan Ortiz (413)549-1768), **Sunday, December 26** (Cobble Mountain - Seth Kellogg (413)569-3335), **Sunday, January 2** (Quabbin - Scott Sumner (413)253-7486).

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Library:** There are great guide books for birding in New England, the East Coast and other areas of the country in the Hampshire Bird Club Library, located at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. And guidebooks are only one of many offerings of interest to birders. The HBC has a membership in the American Birding Association and receives all regular publications, which are available at the library. Our library holdings are available on the HBC web site and a copy will be at the meetings. You are welcome to visit the library during the Center's open hours (Tuesday - Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.). If these hours are not convenient for you, HBC librarian Anne Cann (413)253-7753 is ordinarily happy to bring your requested item to the

meeting if you call her a few days prior to the bird club meeting. However, not this month as she is going to be out of town. You can call her to make other arrangements if you wish.

**Yes!!!!** Years ago the HBC Board of Directors started thinking about taking the steps necessary to be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a non-profit educational (501(c)(3)) organization. More recently, a committee of three, Mark Mount and Elaine Pourinski, chaired by Jan Ortiz, has been working in earnest on this project. I am very happy to announce that the Hampshire Bird Club has now been recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization. There are major benefits

as well as new responsibilities that go along with this status. They are being reviewed by the committee and you will be kept informed in future newsletters. If you have had any experience working with non-profit educational organizations and would be willing to help the committee on the next steps, please contact Jan at (413)549-1768. Thank you, thank you, thank you Jan, Elaine and Mark This has not been an easily reached goal!

Many of you know HBC member **Zeke Jakub** from Greenfield. Always on the lookout for a new birding venture, Zeke has created a list server on e-mail to keep people up-to-date on birds being seen in the greater Greenfield area and to give subscribers an opportunity to add to the data. If you are interested in knowing more about what birds are being seen in this area and have access to the internet simply e-mail Zeke at [greenfieldbirding@juno.com](mailto:greenfieldbirding@juno.com) and write "Subscribe" in the Subject Heading. You will receive a Welcome Letter from Zeke explaining the listing format and will be kept posted on Greenfield sightings.

**Bluebird** enthusiast **Haley Priest**, HBC member in Amherst, is looking for other members interested in establishing Bluebird trails. She has been very involved on the Internet with other Bluebird folks but can't find local people who share her enthusiasm. If you are interested Haley can be reached at (413)549-3937 or [phandtl@crocker.com](mailto:phandtl@crocker.com).

Those of you who were at the October meeting will remember **Gordon Van Tassel**, a graduate student of Don Kroodsma

Sincerely,

Sally Venman, Newsletter Editor  
(413)549-1098  
[sveman@external.umass.edu](mailto:sveman@external.umass.edu)

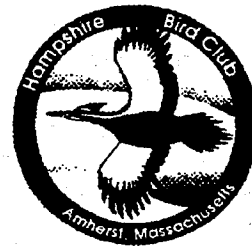
who is looking for help in gathering the data necessary for his MS thesis. He is interested in learning what features the experts pay attention to when identifying a bird. He hopes to determine this by tracking the eye movements of the birder who sits in front of the computer screen identifying birds. If you would be interested in learning more about this project Gordon can be reached at (413)545-5962 or at [glv@psych.umass.edu](mailto:glv@psych.umass.edu).

**Birds Eye View** in the Village Commons in South Hadley and **Backyard Birds** at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton, two local shops specializing in all sorts of goodies to interest birders, are offering a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases. You can find equipment from feeders and seed to binoculars and scopes plus books and tapes and videos and many, many gift items. Check them out!

This Newsletter will be the **last letter you will receive if you have not renewed your membership!** I have taped the colorful dreaded dunning letter to the first page if, according to our records, this applies to you. If this is our "oops" rather than yours please contact Membership Chair Dottie Barnes (413)549-5476, [dbarnes@chem.umass.edu](mailto:dbarnes@chem.umass.edu) or me (413)549-1098, [svenman@external.umass.edu](mailto:svenman@external.umass.edu).

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

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**December, 1999**

Dear Friends,

December, 1999 is not only the last month of the first century as we reckon it (just in case you haven't heard) but also marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first **CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT** (a birder's milestone that is well worth celebrating!)

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 greatest number of birds. In protest to this tradition, ornithologist Frank Chapman, editor of *BirdLore* magazine, suggested an alternative: a census of birds held on Christmas day. The first group of counters numbered 27. Today there are over 50,000. 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 contributing to what has become one of the largest science databases in existence. Data fed into the computer show densities of wintering bird populations and help to point out cyclical movements and evidence of changes in populations.

*BUT* – important as the data gathering is – most of us repeat this frosty tradition year after year because it is just plain fun and a perfect excuse for escaping the holiday madness. The most important questions in my head as I gather with warmly wrapped friends at the local eatery for a pre-dawn breakfast will be Will the Pileated Woodpecker be pounding on the same tree as yesterday? Will the snow be too deep or the fog too thick to reach the running water in the woods that featured such feathered treasures last year? Will the flock of Waxwings gift us with the Bohemian of several years back?

### PROGRAMS

*All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst.*

**December 13 is Members Night**, the date for the annual holiday meeting when members show their own natural history slides (but no more than ten slides per person, please.) It is also our chance to get an early start on holiday eating. We are asked to bring a snack or dessert 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.*) The Club will provide

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 **Northampton Christmas Count** is being organized by Jan Ortiz and will take place on **Sunday, December 19**. 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 at (413)549-1768 for information and assignment. Jan notes that she is especially eager to attract feeder watchers. There will be a compilation potluck dinner party for all participants after the Count at the Hitchcock Center. Joanne Parker is organizing the potluck and would appreciate a call so that she can plan on numbers and food. She is looking for casseroles, crock-pot goodies and the like. Picking up a pizza, an Atkins pie or a bag of Oreos works just fine as well. But *please do not stay away if you cannot bring food*. There is always enough to go around. The Club will provide beverages, plates, etc. Please call Joanne at (413)549-7446.

Other counts: **Springfield, Saturday, December 18** (call Bruce Kindseth at (860)745-9593; **Cobble Mountain, Saturday, December 26** (call Seth Kellogg at (413)569-3335); and **Quabbin, Sunday, January 2** (call Scott Surner at (413)253-7486).

beverages. Non-members are welcome as always to enjoy the festivities but we ask that the show-and-tell extravaganza part of the program be members only. Following the program plans will be made for the Christmas Bird Counts. Come join your birding friends for this early holiday party. It's a nice way to start the season.

## Coming Programs:

**January 10:** James Baird – *Belize: the Ecotourists' Paradise.*

**February 14:** Clay Sutton – *How to Spot Hawks.*

**March 13:** Susan Smith – *Traveling and Birding Papua New Guinea.*

**April 10:** Bill Barber – *Birding the Adirondacks: A Boreal Bonanza.*

**May 8:** Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll – *Worcester: Birding an Urban Environment.*

**June 12:** Pete Westover – *Special Habitats and Open Space in Amherst and Surrounding Towns.*

## FIELD TRIPS

Scott Sumner has been filling the role of Field Trip Chair for some time now. His increasingly busy schedule and growing family have made it hard for him to spend the kind of time he would like organizing trips for the Club. Fortunately, there is a very able and eager volunteer, Shawn Smolen-Morton, who is happy to take over Scott's job. Thank you very much, Scott, for your work in the past. I'm glad to know that you will continue to lead your own trips! And welcome, Shawn. We all look forward to working with you in the future. Shawn can be reached at (413)665-5196 or by email at

[bachman@complit.umass.edu](mailto:bachman@complit.umass.edu) should you have questions or suggestions.

Shawn's first order of business has been to draw up a list of trips planned for January through June that I have enclosed with this letter. Take a moment and look it over. You'll find the old favorites plus some new offerings. I'll also be sending you monthly reminders in the Newsletter.

## Trip Reports:

On Sunday, November 7, Tom Gagnon led 13 well-bundled birders to the *Berkshire Lakes* in weather that was very, very cold. This popular all-day trip netted twenty species of waterfowl, two Northern Shrike, fifty plus Ruddy Duck, a Northern Shoveler, three Black Scoter, Mute Swans, an Egyptian Goose (?) and two Bald Eagles. No report on Bartlett's Apple Stand for cider and donuts.

On Wednesday, November 10, Harvey Allen led a group of seven to the *Northampton West Meadows*. Weather was warm (50° - 60°) under sun and mixed clouds. Thirty-seven bird species were seen including five Fox Sparrows, better than forty Cedar Waxwings, more than two hundred fifty Snow Buntings, Double-crested Cormorants, a Pileated and a Red-bellied Woodpecker.

On Sunday, November 21, Tom Gagnon took birders on the annual all-day trip to the *East Side of Quabbin*. In contrast to the Berkshires trip, the weather was quite mild. A total of

twelve participants saw forty-seven species of birds including

one Red-throated Loon, eighteen Common Loons, nine Horned Grebes, two Bald Eagles calling to each other, Greater Yellowlegs, a White-rumped Sandpiper, two Northern Shrike, nine Evening Grosbeaks and fifty-four Snow Buntings. The mammal list included one Beaver, two Otters, two Porcupine and tracks of a Moose. Also seen were three species of Butterflies: one Cabbage White, three Orange Sulphurs, and YES!! One Variegated Fritillary (a new state record for this late date!)

On Friday, November 26, leaders Al Richards and Bob Bieda and six participants went on the annual *Turkey Trot to Cape Ann* to explore the many coves of Cape Ann. The weather mixed fog, rain, mist and wind (but not cold!), and fortunately the "tough" and "eager" group came well prepared with rain gear. A total of fifty-one bird species were seen with over one hundred twenty Red-throated Loons and over seventy Harlequin ducks! Other highlights included one Black Guillemot, six Razorbills and fifteen Red Crossbills.

**Coming in January:** (Please refer to the enclosed Trip List for description and details)

**Wednesday, December 15,** *Morning sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* (Harvey Allen).

**Christmas Bird Counts:** See above for dates and people to contact.

**Saturday, January 8:** *North Shore – Cape Ann to Plum Island.* (Bob Bieda)

**Wednesday, January 12:** *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* (Harvey Allen)

**Saturday, January 22:** *Winter Finches in Western Massachusetts* (Shirley Hilborn)

**Saturday, the 29<sup>th</sup>:** *Leisurely and Local Saturday Morning* (Mary Alice Wilson)

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Library:

The Hampshire Bird Club Library is waiting for your use at the Hitchcock Center. The regular hours are Tuesday through Friday 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (During vacations it is advisable to check the hours before making a special trip to the Center.)

The catalog is on the HBC web-site. You may call Anne Cann (413)253-7753 if you have questions. She'll also be glad to bring your request to the next HBC meeting if you call

### Conservation:

*Project FeederWatch*, a project sponsored by Cornell Lab of Ornithology is for anyone with a bird feeder. Whether you are an amateur or a professional birder, you will enjoy monitoring the birds that visit your backyard bird feeder. And the data you collect are put to good use for bird conservation. You'll receive a Project Kit with instructions, tips for bird feeding, a full-color poster of Common Feeder Birds in your region and a colorful wall poster to help you keep track of bird counts. Call Anne Lombard (413)586-7509 to get a copy of the registration form, or call 1-800-843-BIRD(2475), or email to [cornellbirds@cornell.edu](mailto:cornellbirds@cornell.edu).

*Encourage waterfowl awareness among educators and young birders!* K-12 students and teachers are invited to learn more about waterfowl and wetlands conservation by being part of the Junior Duck Stamp student art project. Participating educators will receive a list of Massachusetts waterfowl, *The Duck Stamp Story*, notes on waterfowl management from

a few days in advance. There is a great variety of reading material about birds and birding. There are guides to New England localities and to the most commonly visited birding areas of the country such as Texas, Arizona, California, Oregon and Florida, to name a few, and many books to help you plan that dream birding trip. If there are materials you think we should have, please let Anne or a Board Member know.

Massachusetts Wildlife, an activities packet, a 2000 rules booklet and a beautiful Massachusetts Junior Duck Stamp poster.

Art will be reviewed in four categories: grades K-3, grades 4-6, grades 7-9 and grades 10-12. Prizes go to the top 25 entrants in each category, and the overall winner will represent Massachusetts at the national competition in Washington, DC.

For more information contact Walt Tynan, (413)534-4770 or Pam Landry (508)792-7270 x 110. To participate fill out the information requested below and send it by Feb. 1, 2000 to: Junior Duck Stamp Program, Massachusetts Wildlife Federation, c/o Walt Tynan, 64 Richview Ave., South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075.

My students and I would like to participate in the Junior Duck Stamp Program:

Teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address (street, city, state, zip) \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Number of students \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level/Subject \_\_\_\_\_

### Rare Bird Alert:

Jim Marcum reports that the RBA is off and running and has been distributed to the members who requested to be listed. For the first time, an electronic list (HBCRBA) is being utilized with twenty-seven recipients on the email list vs. twenty-five on the telephone tree. We anticipate that the email list will operate very well and that the smaller number of people will result in the telephone tree operating more efficiently as

### Holiday Gifting:

Sue Fletcher has a solution for people searching for the perfect holiday gift. How about a Hampshire Bird Club sweatshirt? They are a soft gray with the black and red HBC logo on the front. They come in sizes L to XXL. Anyone who owns one knows that they are wonderfully soft and easy to care for and, of course, just plain toasty warm gorgeous!

If a sweatshirt isn't your thing, how about a Hampshire Bird Club T-shirt available in a variety of colors and sizes. These

The **Field Trip List** describing trips from January through June is enclosed with this letter. Take a moment and your brand new clear empty calendar and fill in some boxes with what's really important before the meetings and the papers and the dates with the dentist take over your life. Thank you, Shawn, for your fine work!

well. The email list is much more flexible in that we can add or remove names at any time. If you wish to be added to (removed from) the email list notify Jim [marcums@fnr.umass.edu](mailto:marcums@fnr.umass.edu). The telephone tree will not be revised until next fall. Jim can also be reached by phone at (413)549-1613.

two items plus other bird club paraphernalia will be available at our December meeting or by calling Sue at (413)253-2102.

**Birds Eye View** in the Village Commons in South Hadley and **Backyard Birds** at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton, two local shops specializing in all sorts of goodies to interest birders, are offering a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases. You can find equipment from feeders and seed to binoculars and scopes plus books and tapes and videos and many, many gift items. Check them out!

The **Membership List** as of 12/02/99 is also enclosed. Dottie Barnes has spent hours upon hours checking and rechecking names and numbers and email addresses. She asks that you please look at your own information to make sure it is accurate. If there is an error please let her know and it will be corrected and I will pass it on to you. I will also keep you up to date on additional new members. Many thanks, Dottie, for the many hours!

If you are reading this, it means you have reached the end of a very long Newsletter! Congratulations!!!!

This leaves me only to wish you all the very happiest of holidays!!!  
'Til 2000 then

Sincerely,



Sally Venman, Newsletter Editor  
(413)549-1098  
[svenman@external.umass.edu](mailto:svenman@external.umass.edu)