

Hampshire Bird Club -

Monday, January 8, 2001 at 7:30 p.m.

Who could be more timely to have for our **January speaker** than the national coordinator of Audubon's Christmas Bird Count—**Geoff LeBaron**! Many of us have just come off one—or two or three—counts, and Geoff is the one on whose desk our work ends up. Geoff's title is Christmas Bird Count Director, National Audubon Society. He has worked for NAS for 13 years. Prior to his present gig he was Curator of VIREO, Visual Resources for Ornithology, the largest collection of photographs of birds in the world, at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia for 5 years. He has also worked as an Interpretive Naturalist for the state of Rhode Island and as a field biologist (a "Loon Ranger") for the Loon Preservation Committee of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire. On top of all this, he put in 3000 hours of aerial observation censusing marine mammals and sea turtles off the entire East Coast! He has also found time to lead natural history tours to Alaska, Australia and New Zealand, Argentina, Antarctica, Costa Rica and Panama, the Galapagos, Ecuador, Baja California and Big Bend National Park in Texas.

Field Trip Reminders (check the Field Trip list mailed last month for details)

January 6—an all day trip to the North Shore with leader Bob Bieda (527-2623)

January 10—half-day local trip with Harvey Allen (253-7963)

January 20—three-quarter-day trip to Royalston area with Shirley Hilborn (253-6462)

January 27 — full day to coastal Rhode Island with Geoff LeBaron (268-9281)

February 3—full day to Maine's south shore with Scott Turner (253-7486)

Sally Venman, Newsletter Editor

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~hampbird/>
February, 2001



PROGRAMS

*All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst
Should bad weather force cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP-AM 1400*

On Monday, February 12, Patricia and Clay Sutton, a husband-and-wife team with over forty years of experience between them as professional naturalists and authors, will share with us their love of owls and the "how-tos" for finding and studying them. They live near Cape May, the world-renowned migratory crossroads that is famous for its hawk and owl migration. "HOW TO SPOT AN OWL" is a slide program based on their book and covers owling basics, owling on your own, various clues to follow-up, helpful equipment, and backyard owling. Owling etiquette is covered, and how to spot owls without disturbing them is emphasized. The Suttons will remove some of the mystery of owl finding while simultaneously conveying the excitement of searching for and studying these illusive nocturnal predators. Pat and Clay co-authored *How to Spot an Owl* (1994), *How to Spot Hawks and Eagles* (1996), and *How to Spot Butterflies* (1999). Their articles have appeared in many, many local and national natural history magazines.

Pat is the Program Director for the Cape May Bird Observatory and coordinates nearly one thousand environmental education programs for adults each year. She has been Interpretive Naturalist at the Cape May Point State Park (for which she received the Nature Conservancy President's Stewardship Award), has served on the board of directors of the North American Butterfly Association, and on New Jersey's Natural Areas Council. Trained as a writer and environmental educator, Pat's field interests include botany and birds. Her favorite areas of study are butterflies, moths, dragonflies and owls. With David Wright she co-authored CMBO's *Checklist of Butterflies of Cape May County, NJ* and a New Jersey butterfly watching site guide in *Butterflies through Binoculars*.

Clay's avocation has always been bird study, and it has been his vocation for many years as well. Trained as a biologist and environmental educator he is now a freelance writer, lecturer, photographer, biologist and bird tour leader. His positions have included Vice-president and Regional Manager of the Herpetological Associates specializing in wildlife

surveys and endangered species, Environmental Program Administrator for Cape May County, chair of the conservation committee on the Board of Directors for the NJ Audubon Society Committee, research associate of the Cape May Bird Observatory, chair of the conservation committee for the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, and Mid-Atlantic regional editor for the Hawk Migration Association of North America. He was adjunct professor of bird studies at Stockton State College and currently teaches workshops for the Institute for Field Ornithology of the University of Maine at Machias and for the Cape May Bird Observatory. In 1993 Clay was awarded NJ Audubon society's Conservationist of the Year Award. Clay's first book, in 1988, *Hawks in Flight, The Flight Identification of North American Migrant Raptors*, was co-authored with Pete Dunne and illustrated by Dave Sibley. In 1993 he authored *A Birding guide to Cumberland County, New Jersey*. And in 1994 he co-authored the National Audubon society Pocket Guide, *North American Birds of Prey*, with Richard Walton.

Many of you will remember last February when Clay was with us and presented a terrific program on "How to Spot Hawks and Eagles." Unfortunately, Pat was unable to join him as originally planned. February 12 should be a red-letter day on your calendar! These people are special! The Suttons have published extensively and will be happy to do a book signing before (starting 7:00 p.m.) and after their presentation. Bring your own copies, or you can purchase *How to Spot an Owl*, *How to Spot Hawks and Eagles*, and *How to Spot Butterflies* at the meeting. So – come early, bring your Sutton books, purchase new ones, have them signed and enjoy this special event!

Programs To Come: March 12 – David Spector ("How to Spot an Ornithologist"), April 9 – Irene Pepperberg ("The Search of King Solomon's Ring: Studies on the Cognitive and Communicative Abilities of Grey Parrots"), May 14 – Al and Lois Richardson ("Ruffs, Reeves, and Reindeer – Birding in Finland and Lapland"), and June 11 – Peter Yaukey ("Birding Louisiana").

You know you're a birder when you talk about your BIG DAY and you don't mean your wedding

You know you're a birder if you don't blush when you say bustit.

FIELD TRIPS

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 recommend that participants carpool whenever possible and that all persons in the car (driver included) share costs equally on the basis of 30 cents per mile plus tolls and parking fees.

Trip Reports: On 1/6 Bob Bieda led a trip of nine to the North Shore – Cape Ann to Plum Island which he called “winter coastal birding at its best!” which translates to “wind, scattered rain, freezing rain, snow, rolling seas and good birds.” The group had good looks at all the sea ducks including Barrow's Goldeneye, King Eider and Harlequin. The best sighting was a group of Razorbills working in coordination with a few Black-legged Kittiwakes. As the Razorbills dove to catch fish the kittiwakes would try to catch the fish that scattered out of the way. (Unfortunately, the group missed Snowy Owl and Eared Grebe.)

On 1/10 Harvey Allen's half-day *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* was fun but not overwhelming bird-wise. Eight participants saw thirty species in good weather. Highlights included a male and a female Wood Duck at Mount Holyoke College, Common Goldeneyes on the Connecticut and Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Geese at the Northampton airport.

On 1/27: Geoff Le Baron led a group of thirteen on a new trip for the Club to *Coastal Rhode Island*. What started with heavy snowsqualls through Connecticut turned into cloudy, but not too cold or windy conditions. It was a terrific trip! Geoff reports that it was a great day for raptor views – wonderful, leisurely scope and/or binoc-filling looks at Red-shouldered Hawk, Merlin, Rough-legged Hawk and Short-eared Owl. At one point they had a Short-eared bombing two perched Rough-leggeds at Trustom Pond. A Merlin was at Ninigret NWR. All four cars were parked right in front of the bird which was in the top of a bush about fifty feet away. They watched for about ten minutes while it finished consuming some small avian food item. According to Geoff it may have been the best look he had ever had at a Merlin! There was a wonderful assortment of ducks at Trustom, including Gadwall, American Wigeon, Greater Scaup, Ruddy Ducks, Common Goldeneye, and eight Redheads! All this plus the “usual” incredible looks at more than one hundred

Harlequins at Sachusset. Other highlights included fantastic looks at Sanderling, lots of Great Blue Herons, all three species of mergansers, a Black-headed Gull, Red-necked Grebe and Black-crowned Night Herons flying around their heads as darkness settled in. Altogether the group tallied seventy-two species.

Coming up: (Please refer to the blue Field Trip List for descriptions and more information.):

On 2/3 – Scott Sumner (413-253-7496) leads a full day trip to *Maine's Southern Shore*. Wear plenty of warm clothing, bring lunch and snacks.

On 2/10 – Al Richards (413-665-1761) and Shawn Smolen-Moron (413-863-4569) head for the *Plymouth and Falmouth area of Massachusetts South Shore* on another full day trip. Wear warm clothing, bring lunch and snacks.

On 2/14 – Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) leads his monthly half-day *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley*.

On 2/24: Zeke Jakub (603-355-4829) leads the monthly *half-day Leisurely and local Saturday Morning* trip around northern Franklin County.

Shawn Smolen-Morton, Field Trip Chair, 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. He can be reached at (413) 863-4569 or by email at bachman@complit.umass.edu.

Remember to use the *Voice of Audubon* to learn what birds are being seen locally and across the state or to make a report. A toll-free number will put you in touch with the state-wide system at Lincoln that covers four separate Rare Bird Alert areas in Massachusetts. Call 1-888-224-6444 and follow directions.

You know you're a birder if you've add semipalmated and pileated to your spell checker.

CONSERVATION

Anne Lombard, Conservation Chair, will be hosting a potluck supper meeting at her house for those interested in learning more about the Cellular Tower issue. The date is Monday, February 26. Please call Anne if you are interested.

She also reminds us that Cornell Lab of Ornithology is appreciative of all those in our club who have participated in Project Feeder Watch and reminds us that this year's 4th Annual

Great Backyard Bird Count is scheduled for February 16 – 19. The Lab and the National Audubon society, along with their major sponsors, Ford and Wild Birds Unlimited, once again plan to take a snapshot of North American Bird populations. Last year over 62,000 checklists submitted reported 419 species and over 4.7 million individual birds. For more information contact www.birdsource.org.

Arcadia: The Hampshire Sanctuaries are moving in exciting new directions in ecological management research. Learn about this exciting new approach at a free program on Saturday, March 3, 9:00 a.m. to noon. The program will begin with Dr. Thomas Litwin, Director, Clark Science Center, Smith College, presenting *The Conte Wildlife Refuge Migratory Bird Survey, The Final Report*. Following Dr. Litwin will be presentations on Arcadia's Grassland Restoration Project in the Meadows by Thomas Rawinski, Massachusetts Audubon Society's Director of Ecological Management; Andrea Jones, Grassland Bird Specialist; and information on the

challenges in the development and management of this native grassland habitat. David McLain will end the morning by presenting past-season ecological management projects. Participants in this program will have the opportunity to learn about and to volunteer for the new research projects for the upcoming ecological management season at Hampshire Sanctuaries.

If you have special interest in conservation as it relates to birding, Anne is always happy to talk to you. Contact her at 413-586-7509 or email annelombard@mediaone.net

You know you're a birder if your binoculars cost more than your car.

LIBRARY

The HBC Library, maintained by Anne Cann, is located in the main room on the first floor of the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 525 South Pleasant Street in Amherst (413) 526-6006. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday

Spring is really not far ahead. Sharpen your warbler identification skills by borrowing the library's *new* video titled *Watching Warblers* by Michael Male and Judy Fieth. It has wonderful close-up shots of warblers in their habitats.

Anne brings a small selection of books to the monthly meetings for your perusal. For those who may be unable to get to the Center she would be happy to bring your selections to the meeting if you contact her at her home by the preceding Fri-

day. She always welcomes questions or suggestions for books that you feel might be good additions to the collection.

And – is there someone out there who might be interested in occasionally writing a short book review on a birding book for the newsletter? If this is something that appeals to you please contact Anne. She can be reached at (413) 253-7753 or by email at cann@uhs.umass.edu.

You know you're a birder if dream vacation sites include garbage dumps, sewage ponds, and Attu.

MISCELLANEOUS

For those of you who have been following Bob Bieda, Harvey Allen and Al Richard in their year's search for Massachusetts birds and who were not at the January meeting when our esteemed president, Mary Alice Wilson, presented each of the trio a prized bottle of mixed nuts (I'll let you draw your own conclusions as to the aptness of the gift), I give you this:

"QMBOY" (*Quest for the Most Birds in one Year*): **THE FINAL CHAPTER!** The quest started as Bob's retirement gift to himself. Just how many bird species *could* he see in Massachusetts in one year? Soon, Harvey and then Al joined him in friendly rivalry. I'll let Bob tell you about the adventure in his own words:

"My big year ended by staying up 'til midnight on Dec. 31 for the first time in years. (It's way overrated!) My final number was 318 species and 3 or 4 subspecies that might "become" species in the next few years. The last new species and best bird of the year was the Gyrfalcon on Plum Island. I went to see this bird two days in a row, first with Harvey and the next day with Al. This was the last new bird for all of us and was Al's 300th species. (It was #309 for Harvey.) Seeing birds is always a combination of the birds themselves, the environment they are in and the human social circumstances associ-

ated with the sighting. The Gyr was tops in all three. Second place belonged to the Tropical Kingbird in Hingham and third was the Northern Wheatear in Longmeadow.

"I must admit to withdrawal feelings now that it is over. The singularity of focus provided a backbone for the year and was always a great conversation piece. This year it's back to diversity. I'll focus my birding on the Connecticut River Valley. Last year we took more than forty trips to the coast. I have trips to Texas and Alaska planned and then the list goes on – lots of reading, household projects, get in shape . . .

"I don't have a single cute answer to the question: 'Did you learn anything?' Most of what I learned was about the human community of birders in Massachusetts but that would be a topic beyond the scope of this note.

"Massachusetts is really an excellent place for birding. It has a great variety of habitats in a fairly small space with lots of human and technological resources. I highly recommend it." Harvey adds that "there was at least one new bird add each month. The new ones just kept coming. Each bird got better. We kept getting birds we did not expect. Having the Tropical Kingbird as #308 and the Gyr as #309 topped it all off."

Thank you so much, all three of you. I have loved hearing your stories and passing them on. I constantly marvel at all of the nooks and crannies this wonderful hobby takes us to.

The **HITCHCOCK CENTER** announces that the ever-popular **Spring Birding Course** is back for the twenty-third year and will be taught, this time by Scott Sumner. Scott, who has been birding for over twenty-five years, was one of the founders of the HBC, for which he served as president, and was the Voice of Audubon for Western Mass. During this ten-week course, Scott will emphasize identification, bird topography, distribution and over-all migration patterns. The majority of the field trips will be half days with an all day trip to Plum Island at the end of May. There will be nine Wednesday evening classes (7:00 – 9:00) beginning on March 28 and ten morning field trips beginning March 31. The course is for *beginners* as well as for those who wish to hone their skills. There is a fee. Call the Center 413-256-6006 for more information and to register for programs.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS: Neither fog nor rain nor thunder and lightning, not near gale winds nor blizzard conditions, not dead car batteries nor empty stomachs will daunt or taunt the HBC Birder's determination when it comes to counting, counting, counting! And, the story can now be told – all of it – nothing left out or rearranged! The Northampton and Quabbin Christmas Bird Counts have been tallied and checked and checked again and are ready for your rapt attention and deliberation. They have been placed in the protective custody of Anne Cann at the HBC Library located at the Hitchcock Center. The information is also available on line at the National Audubon/Cornell CBC website: www.BirdSource.com/cbcddata. The Northampton code is MANO. The Quabbin code is MAQB. If you are looking up the data on the web, this is Count Year 101. (A college freshman course?)

Rare Bird ALERT – ALERT – ALERT – ALERT – ALERT! Be it known that Mary Alice Wilson, our president and keeper of the RBA does not always check MassBird or other electronic postings on the Internet. She does, however, always check her email. So – if you learn about a rare bird through a MassBird posting or other electronic source please let her know by phone (413-548-9078) or email mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu. If she is not available please contact another Board Member. (Their names can be found at the end of the enclosed Membership List.) If you are not now on the RBA (email only) and would like to be, she'll be

happy to add your name.

CLUB WISH LIST: One of the projects this year has been to assemble a complete set of Club documents. At this point we have all major legal documents, all field trip lists, most of board minutes, and most of the newsletters and membership lists. We are still missing a few documents. **Newsletters:** 10/84, 11/84, 4/85, 5/85, 9/85, 11/85, 12/85, 1/86, 3/86, 10/86, 12/86, 1/87, 3/87, 10/87, 2/88, 3/88, 3/89, and 6/89. **Membership lists:** 1996-97 and 1997-98. If you have any of these, please contact Mary Alice Wilson. The missing pieces will be borrowed, Xeroxed and the original will be returned to you.

FIRST AID/CPR TRAINING: A number of members of the club, including some of the field trip leaders, have expressed an interest in participating in First Aid and CPR Training. We know that sometimes an organization or business offers such training to staff and sometimes have an extra slot (free or inexpensive) to fill. If you hear of such an opportunity, or can help us in any way, please pass it on to a Board Member who will pass it on to the interested member.

On Saturday, March 3, from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., a group of six to eight volunteers from the HBC will be answering phones at **WFCR**, the local NPR radio station, located on the UMass campus. The task is simple – answer the phone and write down pledge information. If you haven't seen the workings of a radio station, this is your chance! Besides the gratification of a job well done and the companionship of your fellow birders, the HBC will get some free publicity from your efforts. For more information or to put your name on the volunteer list call Dave Gross at 413-253-2897.

The **2000 – 2001 MEMBERSHIP LIST** as of 1/29/01 is enclosed with this Newsletter. Anyone who has ever compiled a similar list knows the checking and the rechecking it entails. I know that Mary Alice Wilson has spent hours upon hours on the task. She asks you to look at your own information to make sure it is accurate. If by chance there is an error please let me, Sally, know so it can be corrected on the master list and in the next Newsletter. My phone and email address can be found below.

We thank **Backyard Birds** at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton for continuing to offer a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases.

And – you REALLY know you're a birder if you go to a nude beach with your spotting scope and spend the entire time trying to identify alcids!!!!

Happy February –

Sally

Sally Venman, Newsletter Editor

(413) 549-1098

svenman@external.umass.edu

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~hampbird/>
March, 2001



PROGRAMS

*All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst
Should bad weather force cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP-AM 1400*

In February we were treated to *How to Spot an Owl*, a program presented by Pat Sutton. This month we will be treated to *How to Spot an Ornithologist*, a program presented by our own ornithologist, (or, as he has been known to describe himself, *ornerythologist*) David Spector.

"Ornithologists, birdwatchers, birders, oh my!" Dorothy might say, while Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid might ask, "Who are those guys?"

In this talk David will consider the meanings of "birdwatcher," "birder," and, especially, "ornithologist." He will discuss the history of the use of these terms, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. David will cite examples of literary ornithologists from the works of Mary Shelley, Sarah Orne Jewett, Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Burroughs, and will use selected New England ornithologists as illustrations of the species.

David Spector is an associate professor of biology at Central Connecticut State University and former president of the Hitchcock Center for the Environment. His research has focused on the singing behavior of birds, especially of the Yellow Warbler. David has been a member of the Hampshire Bird Club since its first meeting and has presented six previous programs to the club. His subjects ranged from talks on his research to programs with unusual titles like *How to Misidentify Birds*, *Naturalists and Novelists* and *What Hath Peterson Wrought: the Evolution of Field Guides*. He was also moderator of an HBC panel discussion on *Birding Ethics*. He has published articles in a variety of publications, including those geared toward each of the subjects of this presentation: *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Birder's World*, and *Current Ornithology*.

David is one of our favorite speakers.
Come!

Programs To Come: April 9 – Irene Pepperberg ("In Search of King Solomon's Ring: Studies on the Cognitive and Communicative Abilities of Grey Parrots"), May 14 – Al and Lois Richardson ("Ruffs, Reeves, and Reindeer – Birding in Finland and Lapland"), and June 11 – Peter Yaukey ("Birding Louisiana").

"HOW to SPOT an OWL"

At last month's meeting, we did not have Pat & Clay Sutton's book, *How to Spot an Owl* available for sale and signing as planned. The Suttons have sent us book order forms from the Cape May Observatory Book Store and will be happy to "personalize" each book to whomever. These forms will be available at the March meeting or contact Sally if you would like one mailed to you.

FIELD TRIPS

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 recommend that participants carpool whenever possible and that all persons in the car (driver included) share costs equally on the basis of 30 cents per mile plus tolls and parking fees.

February Trip Reports:

On 2/3 Scott Sumner led an excellent full-day trip to *Maine's Southern Shore*. Five members tallied 37 bird

species on a day that was sunny with a light wind. Highlights included Great Cormorant, Canvasback, 35 Peregrine Falcons, Iceland Gull, 20 Black

Guillemots, 20 Razorbills and 20 Yellow-rumped Warblers.

On 2/10 Al Richards and Shawn Smolen-Morton headed for the *Ply-*

mouth and Falmouth area of the Massachusetts South Shore. Four hardy participants braved strong sustained winds and cold temperatures. Despite the weather, a good time and good birding were had by all. 64 species were recorded. Highlights included 12 Canvasbacks, all three species of scoter, a Red-shouldered Hawk, a Rough-legged Hawk, a Common Black-headed Gull, a Razorbill, a Short-eared Owl, a Northern Shrike, and a very late (or very early) Red Knot, a remarkable bird at this time of year in Massachusetts.

On 2/14 Harvey Allen reports that the monthly *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* took a group of six to the Windsor area where White-winged Crossbills had been sighted on Flintstone Road. It was a cloudy winters day (color was not good) but it

didn't snow or rain and there was no wind. The group had good looks at 10 to 12 crossbills, nine Pine Siskins, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, an adult Northern Shrike and a smattering of Blue Jays, Crows, and chickadees. Mammals included red squirrel and chipmunk.

On 2/24 Zeke Jakub led a group of seven to view the White-winged Crossbills on Flintstone Road and to Barton's Cove and the Canal for waterfowl. 15 plus species were counted in nice but nippy weather. White-winged Crossbills, Pine Siskins, Purple Finch, Common Goldeneye, and Cedar Waxwings were a few of the highlights, but the best of all were three Golden-crowned Kinglets feeding on the ground, not five feet from the viewers. Zeke said it was the best view of this species he has ever had!

Coming up: (Please refer to the blue Field Trip List for descriptions and more information.):

On 3/14 – Harvey Allen (413-257-7963) leads his monthly **half-day Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley** hoping for "Duck Soup" (Waterfowl in the Valley).

On 3/17 – This month's **full-day Leisurely and Local Saturday Morning** trip will be led by Stacy Adams (413-367-0177) and will hope to view many signs of early migration. Warm clothes, lunch, snacks a must!

On 3/24 – Al Richards (413-665-2761) will lead a **full-day Waterfowl migration trip along the Connecticut River**. Warm clothes, lunch, snacks a must!

MONHEGAN ISLAND: Listen-up!!!

This is almost your last chance to sign up for the annual *Monhegan Island Memorial Day Weekend* trip, the hallmark of HB Field Trips since the Club's beginnings.

The annual club trip to this fabled migrant trap (and generally remarkable place) led by Andrew Magee and David Peake-Jones is scheduled for *Friday, May 25 – Monday, May 28*. We will meet at Port Clyde, Maine (carpools generally available from the Valley), boat to the island, and stay in rustic accommodations at the Trailing Yew. The island in May usually hosts a wide variety of migrant songbirds. An optional trip to Eastern Egg Rock allows for looks at puffins, various terns and perhaps even the odd alcid or pelagic species.

If you have never been on this trip (our first was in 1984) you should know that birds (and they are plentiful) are just one part of the Monhegan experience. Take an island eleven miles off the mainland. Take wildflowers and ocean and blue skies and night skies filled with starlight, 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 skilled leaders 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.

The cost of the trip will be in the vicinity of \$250.00, including ferry transportation from Port Clyde, lodging, breakfasts and dinners on the island. Add to this the cost of the potential trip to Eastern Egg Rock (\$12.50), tips for the island staff, lunches, snacks, an optional lobster dinner on the island, plus shared mileage costs if you carpool, and you have a rough idea what the cost will be. A \$50.00 deposit (due March 31) is required to save a spot.

Contact David at 413-529-9541 or davidpj@the-spa.com for more information and to register. He needs to make reservations soon.

And, while we are on the subject of weekend trips, the Club is thinking about offering a Columbus Day weekend trip to Cape May led by Scott Sumner. There will be more details in subsequent Newsletters, but you might want to start thinking about it now.

Shawn Smolen-Morton, Field Trip Chair, 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. He can be reached at 413-863-4569 or by email at bachman@complit.umass.edu.

Remember to use the *Voice of Audubon* to learn what birds are being seen locally and across the state or to make a report. A toll-free number will put you in touch with the statewide system at Lincoln that covers four separate Rare Bird Alert areas in Massachusetts. Call 1-888-224-6444 and follow directions

MISCELLANEOUS

BIOTHON/BIRDATHON

BIOTHON 2001: support environmental education and have fun! The Hitchcock Center will hold its second annual 24-hour Biothon fundraiser from Friday afternoon May 18 to Saturday afternoon May 19. During the Biothon, teams go out and count bird species and/or whatever other species (wildflowers, amphibians, mammals, mushrooms, etc.) they choose. Each volunteer team collects pledges per species in support of environmental education at Hitchcock. The Biothon coincides with the HBC big day Birdathon, so people can choose to do both (or either or neither) at the same time. Anyone interested in participating in the Biothon should contact David Spector at 413-323-4885. The rest of you be forewarned – participants will be descending with pledge sheets in coming months!

BIRDATHON 2001: support environmental education and have fun! The Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. will hold its first annual 24-hour Birdathon and Potluck Extravaganza from Friday afternoon May 18 to Saturday afternoon May 19. The purpose

of the Birdathon is to observe the most species of birds in Western Massachusetts in a 24-hour period and help the Hitchcock Center raise funds.

Teams consisting of 2-4 persons, organized on their own, with special consideration for team members' dispositions (casual, relaxed, competitive) will bird as many hours during the period as they choose. The area for birding is limited to Western Massachusetts, from the east side of the Quabbin west (west of State Road 32). Shawn Smolen-Morton will facilitate matching those birders who cannot find a team.

(The Birdathon is in voluntary partnership with the Hitchcock Center's Biothon, a pledge-based fundraiser. HBC Birdathon participants or teams are encouraged to seek pledges per species. **EXAMPLE:** Your co-worker pledges 5 cents per species, to a maximum of 100 species. Your team identifies 80 species. Your co-worker donates four dollars to the Hitchcock Center Pledges. *Donations are not*

required for participation in the Birdathon.)

Register your team with Shawn Smolen-Morton. He needs the number of team members, a team name (if desired), and a team leader. All species must be either heard or seen by at least two members of the team. Species and team totals will be compiled prior to the Potluck Extravaganza at the Hitchcock Center. Contact Shawn for more information and to register at 413-863-4569 or by email at bachmann@complit.umass.edu.

IMPORTANT: In order to make the Potluck Extravaganza happen, we need some volunteers! A team of three or four people plus help and encouragement from the Hitchcock people (which we already have) can accomplish this with ease. If you would be interested in helping please call me (Sally.)

THE HITCHCOCK CENTER

The ever-popular Spring Birding Course is back for the twenty-third year, this year taught by Scott Surner. Scott who has been birding for over twenty-five years, was one of the founders of the HBC (for which he served as president) and was the Voice of Audubon for Western Mass.

During this ten-week course, Scott will emphasize identification, bird topography, distribution and over-all migration patterns. The majority of the field trips will be half days with an all day trip to Plum Island at the end of May. There will be nine Wednesday evening classes (7:00 –

9:00) beginning on March 28 and ten morning field trips beginning March 31. The course is for beginners as well as for those who wish to hone their skills. There is a fee. Call the Center at 413-256-6006 for more information and to register.

THE BUTTERFLY INSTITUTE

"Butterflies are very interesting. Here these things are little grubs for a while. Then they go into a little coffin. There they are in a sarcophagus, and then they come out and dance with the angels." Roger Tory Peterson once made this statement. Would you be interested in learning more about butterflies? Would you like to be able to identify them, learn their habits and habitats? For the second year,

The Massachusetts Butterfly Club is sponsoring the Butterfly Institute, seven classroom sessions and seven field trips to help us learn to "dance with the angels." Classes will be held at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 - 9:00 starting May 1. Field trips begin on May 5. There is a fee.

Think about it. Tom Gagnon reminds us that butterflies are out there when the sun is up, you don't have to set the alarm for the middle of the night and you can turn over in bed if it is pouring rain. Maybe it's time to take up a second (or third or fourth) hobby?

Call Tom Gagnon at 413-584-6353 for more information and to register.

HBC MOVIE REVIEW

by David Peake-Jones

I recently went to see the uplifting comedy-drama "Finding Forrester." The quiet of the theater was shattered when I emitted an embarrassing shriek at one of the most hilarious pieces of bird misidentification I have ever heard. Without revealing too much, the director must have thought Sean Connery (playing Forrester, a reclusive literary curmudgeon hiding in a high rise New York apartment) needed to make some gesture which would highlight his chief eccentricity - a tendency to spy on other inhabi-

tants of his neighborhood with binoculars. Importantly, the chosen gesture is also supposed to point to Forrester's relentless scholarship and eclectic intellect. At a suitably dramatic moment, Forrester catches a glimpse of some movement outside the window. With an impressive flourish, he sweeps out the aged bino's, focuses on the object of interest and says, "I'm looking at a male, highly attractive. Probably wandered up here from the park."

While the co-star jumps to several anthropocentric and mistaken conclusions (as Forrester intended), the film cuts to the male in question: a well-known warbler. Forrester, in his rich Scottish brogue, proceeds to offer a sage but hideously incorrect ID. Not only is the appearance wildly off, the notion of Forrester's bird appearing in that particular context is wildly amusing. Please see this film, (which has many re-deeming features) and try not to shriek!

BIRD WORDS

by Henry Lappen

Those of you who attended the December Bird Club meeting or read my piece in the Newsletter about naming birds, know that I hate it when the ABA or AOU mess around with the common names of birds. Common names should be just that - the names commonly used. However, I also think some names don't fit and should be changed.

Names that do fit are *Ring-billed Gull* and *Blue-footed Booby*. These are perfect. They explain what they represent. You know you've got it right. But what about a name like *Tricolored Blackbird*? There are at least three birds in the book that match this

description. So, on my new checklist you will notice a change to *Tied-for-colored Blackbird*. And that's just the beginning. Some others I've renamed for accuracy's sake include *Grey-blue Heron*, *Red-bellied Woodpecker*, *Sharp-chinned Hawk*, (I mean, what part of a hawk is sharp?), *Rose-he-ain't Tern*, *Summer-spotted Sandpiper*, *Okay-colored Sparrow*, and *Shorter-billed Dowitcher*. How about yellowthroats? *Common Yellowthroat* is fine but I think the *Yellow-breasted Chat* should be renamed *Uncommon Yellowthroat*. I've also corrected the names of others. We now have the *Blue-and-green-winged Teal*, the *Just-green-winged Teal* the

White-crowned-and-throated Sparrow, and a new name for the *Pigeon Guillemot*, the *Also-black Guillemot*.

Now, I don't want to split feathers or grouse about it, but I was wondering what to call the female of this species. Let me know if you favor *Reeve Grouse* or *Smoothed Grouse*.

Okay, just one more change, the *Henslow's Sparrow*. Who ever heard of Henslow (besides David Spector)? There are a lot of birds named after obscure people and I thought Henslow can have one, why can't I? I know I'm not a hot-shot birder. I can't hear a thing and can hardly fo-

cus binoculars. But, so what? Doesn't intelligence, good looks and a big ego count for something? I'm not too needy. If you don't approve of Henry's Sparrow then how about ... Lappen's Rock Dove? I'll be proposing these changes at the next AOU

congress and hope you'll support me. If I lose, the HOU will be printing up the new checklist soon.

P.S. - I don't believe in taking bribes or anything, but there are a few names I haven't chosen yet ...

Thanks, Henry for bringing us this new way of considering bird nomenclature. Anybody out there in readerland who would like a bird with their name attached? You could achieve fame and a place of honor on the HOU list! Think about it.

PIONEER VALLEY WETLAND FEST 2001

The U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service is organizing a wetland festival to be held on the Amherst Town Common on May 19 and 20, 2001 to celebrate

National Wetlands Month. Roger Tiner, Regional Wetland Coordinator, is looking for artists, photographers and craftspeople who work with wet-

land-related themes to exhibit and sell their work. If you are interested in participating, contact Roger at 413-253-8620 or at ralph_tiner@fws.org.

We thank **BACKYARD BIRDS** at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton for continuing to offer a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases.

The 2000 - 2001 *MEMBERSHIP LIST* as of 1/29/01 was enclosed with February Newsletter. Following are additions and corrections to that list. Please check your own information to make sure that it is accurate. If by chance there is an error not reported below, please let me (Sally) know so it can be corrected on the master list and in the next Newsletter. If you need a membership list, please call me or pick one up at the meetings.

MEMBERSHIP LIST 2000-2001 Additions/Corrections

Additions:

Bell, Jeanne: add *email* - hollyb@mtdata.com

Corrections:

Page 5 under Committee Chair/Contact: Library *head* is Anne Cann (not Anne Lombard.)

Krumhansl, Marilyn: change last name to **Dahl**

Lombard, Anne: change address to 55 Washington Ave.

New members:

Goodman, Nancy and Mike Kotarba, 429 River Drive, Hadley, MA 01035; **HPh**: 413-549-4521; **email**: wildeyes@javanet.com.

Kriebel, Sylvia B., 120 Pulpit Hill Rd., Amherst MA 01002; **HPh**: 413-549-7964; **email**: sbkriebel@yahoo.com

McCarthy, Mary S. & Bob Hawley, 11 Harkness Road, Pelham, MA 01002-9704; **HPh**: 413-253-3592.

Scrimo, Brandyn & Jeff, 127 North Main Street, Apt. A, South Deerfield, MA 01373; **HPh**: 413-665-9733.

Windsor, Michael: 219 New Salem Rd., Wendell MA 01379; **HPh**: 978-544-7533; **email**: murreblind@hotmail.com.

Wolfson, Karen: 16 Tracy Circle, Amherst MA 01002. **HPh**: 413-253-5391.

Sally

Sally Venman, Newsletter Editor

(413) 549-1098

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Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~hampbird/>
April, 2001



PROGRAMS

*All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst
Should bad weather force cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP-AM 1400*

April 9 – Among all the programs I have announced and described in the club newsletter, I believe this month's is unique. Our speaker, Irene Pepperberg, titles her presentation "*In Search of King Solomon's Ring: Studies on the Cognitive and Communicative Abilities of Grey Parrots.*"

Parrots and other talking birds have fascinated mankind since Aristotle. Once thought to be mere mimics, these affable, entertaining and often quite lovable creatures are now known to possess remarkable intellectual abilities. Since 1977, Dr. Irene Pepperberg's studies in animal behavior, and animal-human communication have provided insight into the capabilities of these animals to talk and to understand. Dr. Pepperberg currently works with 3 Congo African Grey Parrots. Alex, the oldest, can count, identify objects, shapes, colors and materials, knows the concepts of same and different, and bosses around lab assistants in order to modify his environment! They have begun work with phonics and there is evidence to suggest that someday Alex may be able to read.

The results of this work have wide-ranging implications for at least three areas. First, given that the avian brain, although considerably different from that of mammals, can process information in similar ways, might Dr. Pepperberg's procedures assist clinicians who are devising programs for brain-damaged humans? Second, Dr. Pepperberg's training tech-

niques are being used, with some success, for developmentally delayed children. Might the procedures also work for children with other types of deficits? And third, if parrots are as intelligent as chimpanzees and dolphins, shouldn't we make the same attempts to save them and their habitat as we are making for these other species?

Pepperberg received her SB from MIT (Course V) and her graduate degrees from Harvard. She is an associate professor in the Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology and the Department of Psychology at the University of Arizona, and is an Affiliate in their Program on Neuroscience. She is currently a Visiting Professor at the MIT Media Lab. She won a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship for her 1997 sabbatical and was an alternate for the Cattell Award for Psychology. She has also received fellowships from the National Science Foundation and from the Harry Frank Guggenheim and Whitehall Foundations. She is a Fellow of the Animal Behavior Society, the American Psychological Association, the American Psychological Society, and the American Ornithologists' Union, and presently serves as consulting editor for three journals.

Programs To Come: May 14 – Al and Lois Richardson – a "*Ruffs, Reeves, and Reindeer – Birding in Finland and Lapland*", and **June 11** – Peter Yaukey – "*Birding Louisiana*".

FIELD TRIPS

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 recommend that participants carpool whenever possible and that all persons in the car (driver included) share costs equally on the basis of 30 cents per mile plus tolls and parking fees

March Trip Reports:

On 3/14 – Harvey Allen led his monthly *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* hoping for waterfowl. The weather was March – cloudy, icy, windy, sunny and snowy. Three intrepid birders were able to come up with 36 species. One of the three was a new member from the west. It was fun introducing her to some of what Massachusetts has to offer. Highlights included Red-bellied Woodpecker, Bald Eagles, Eastern Bluebirds and Wood Ducks.

On 3/17 – March's *Leisurely and Local Saturday Morning* trip was led by Stacy Adams. Although the morning started out chilly, weather warmed and the group of eight enjoyed a beautiful March day. 36 species were tallied as they explored Sunderland and Turners Falls for early migrants. Highlights were two adult Bald Eagles (one of which was flying with a huge half-eaten fish in its talons,) two immature Bald Eagles, three Pintail Ducks, Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, Common Goldeneye, and Ring-necked Ducks. Nice views of bluebirds were had by all.

On 3/24 – Shawn Smolen-Morton led a full day Waterfowl migration trip along the Connecticut River.

Coming up: (Check Field Trip List for more information.)

On Sunday, April 1, Field Trip Chair, Shawn Smolen-Morton will be leading a half day trip to Turners Falls in search of the Labrador Duck, recently spotted on a well-protected strip of land within sight of the eagle's nest. Rumor has it that the group may be joined by local birding legends Jan Ortiz and Scott Sumner, who have claimed to have seen an Ivory-billed Woodpecker in a remote area of South Quabbin. "It has been a very strange and unusual spring migration thus far," Jan remarked. "There is no end to what might show up and I want to be there to describe it," said Scott emphatically. Ornithologist Susan Smith claims to have spotted a Black-capped Vireo last year when tending to her mist nests and is hoping for more this spring. "How nice it would be to have a nesting pair in my back yard," she said enthusiastically. Although it is still a bit early for most warblers, local birders are hoping for Kirtland's, Bachman's, and Elfin Woods warblers. This trip is limited to three participants. Bring snacks, lunch and chocolate for the leaders.

On Saturday, 4/4, a *Leisurely and Local Saturday Morning* at the *Ashley Reservoir* with Shawn Smolen-Morton (413-863-4569) and Al Richards (413-665-2761) for the first warblers of spring. Call to sign up or have questions answered.

On Wednesday, 4/18, Harvey Allen's mid-week *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* will be focusing on the spring hawk migration. Call Harvey at 413-253-7963.

On Saturday, 4/21 Stacy Adams will be leading an all-day trip to *Bartholomew's Cobble* in western Massachusetts to search for the Black Vulture and other migrating raptors. Call her at 413-367-0177.

On Saturday, 4/28, Geoff LeBaron leads the club's traditional spring trip to *Plum Island* for shorebirds (the Ruff is hoped for). Call Geoff (413-268-9281) to sign up.

Starting on **Tuesday, May 1** and continuing every **Tuesday** and **Thursday** morning during the month of May, the Club sponsors an *Early Morning Bird Walk through Wildwood Cemetery*, off Strong Street in Amherst. Some mornings the warblers are dripping from the trees and other mornings it's just a nice walk in good company. Meet the leader in the parking area inside the entrance at 6:30 a.m. These walks usually last until 8:30 a.m. I 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.

MONHEGAN ISLAND

This is your last opportunity to sign up for the annual *Monhegan Island Memorial Day Weekend* trip, the hallmark HBC Field Trips since the Club's beginnings.

This annual trip to this fabled migrant trap (and generally remarkable place) will be led by Andrew Magee and David Peake-Jones and is scheduled for *Friday, May 25 – Monday, May 28*. We will meet at Port Clyde, Maine (carpools generally available from the valley), boat to the island, stay in rustic accommodations at the Trailing Yew, and bird on foot throughout the village and its immediate environs. The island in May usually hosts a wide variety of migrant songbirds. If we hit it right, the birding can be spectacular! The only cars we will see after we leave the mainland will be the few historic workhorses that move stuff about on the island, and they will be moving more slowly than we will! When we are not birding, we can explore the trails of Monhegan, taking in the Seal Rocks, the "Enchanted Forest", the spectacular seaward cliffs of the island, Lobster Cove and the panoramic views from the lighthouse. An optional trip to Eastern Egg Rock allows for looks at puffins, various terns and perhaps even the odd alcid or pelagic species.

The cost of the trip will be in the vicinity of \$250.00, including ferry transportation from Port Clyde, lodging, breakfasts and dinners on the island. Add to this the cost of the trip to Eastern Egg Rock (\$12.50), tips for the island staff, lunches, snacks, an optional lobster dinner on the island, plus some mileage costs if you carpool, and you have a rough idea what the cost will be. A \$50.00 deposit due NOW is required to save a spot. Contact David at 413-529-9541 or davidpj@the-spa.com for more information and to register. He needs to make reservations NOW.

COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND TRIP TO CAPE MAY

While we are on the subject of weekend trips, the club is offering a Columbus Day weekend trip to Cape May with leader Scott Sumner. If this interests you, please contact Scott now so that he can get a sense of how many people to plan for. You can reach him at 413-253-7486 or email ssumner@aol.com.

Shawn Smolen-Morton, Field Trip Chair, 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. He can be reached at 413-863-4569 or by email at bachman@complit.umass.edu.

Remember to use the *Voice of Audubon* to learn what birds are being seen locally and across the state or to make a report. A toll-free number will put you in touch with the state-wide system at Lincoln that covers four separate Rare Bird Alert areas in Massachusetts. Call 1-888-224-6444 and follow directions.

BIOTHON/BIRDATHON

BIOTHON 2001: *The Hitchcock Center* will hold its second annual 24-hour **Biothon** fundraiser from Friday afternoon May 18 to Saturday afternoon May 19. During the Biothon, teams go out and count bird species and/or whatever other species (wildflowers, amphibians, mammals, mushrooms, etc.) they choose. Each volunteer team collects pledges per species in support of environmental education at Hitchcock. The **Biothon** coincides with the HBC big day **Birdathon** and people can choose to do either or both. Anyone interested in participating in the **Biothon** should contact David Spector at 413-323-4885.

BIRDATHON 2001: *The Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.* will hold its first annual 24-hour **Birdathon** and **Potluck Extravaganza** from Friday afternoon May 18 to Saturday afternoon May 19. The goals of the **Birdathon** are to observe the most species of birds in Western Massachusetts in a 24-hour period and help the Hitchcock Center raise funds. Teams consisting of 2-4 persons, organized on their own, with special consideration for team members' dispositions (casual, relaxed, competitive) will bird as many hours during the period as they choose. All species must be either heard or seen by at least two members of the team. The area for birding is limited to Western Massachusetts, from the east side of the Quabbin west (west of State Road 32). Shawn Smolen-Morton will

facilitate matching those birders who cannot find a team. Register your team with Shawn. He needs the number of team members, a team name (if desired), and a team leader. Species and team totals will be compiled prior to the **Potluck Extravaganza** at the Hitchcock Center. Contact Shawn for more information and to register at 413-863-4569 or by email at bachmann@complit.umass.edu.

The **Birdathon** is in voluntary partnership with the Hitchcock Center's **Biothon**, a pledge-based fundraiser. HBC **Birdathon** participants or teams are encouraged to seek pledges per species. **EXAMPLE:** Your co-worker pledges 5 cents per species, to a maximum of 100 species. Your team identifies 80 species. Your co-worker donates four dollars to the Hitchcock Center Pledges.

*Donations are not required for participation in the **Birdathon**.*

IMPORTANT: In order to make the **Potluck Extravaganza** happen, we need some volunteers! A team of three or four people plus help and encouragement from the Hitchcock people (which we already have) can accomplish this with ease. If you would be interested in helping please call me (Sally.)

CONSERVATION

If you have special interest in conservation as it relates to birding, Anne Lombard, Conservation Chair, is always happy to talk to you. Contact her at 413-586-7509 or email at anne-lombard@mediaone.net.

A communication tower committee, headed by Rick McNeil and Anne Lombard, has been looking into the effects that cellular towers have on birdlife. The committee requests that you become aware of the towers in areas where you bird and monitor those areas for dead birds whenever possible during this spring migration season. Please report any dead or injured birds you find to Rick McNeil (529-9197) or Marcia Merithew (584-8874).

Looking ahead you might wish to make note of Saturday, May 19 which will be *trail work day* at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area in Northampton. HBC members are invited to spend part of the day cleaning up our adopted trail, the Lake Trail. There will be more details in the next newsletter.

The Trustees of Reservations will be conducting a study of land protection in the Connecticut River Valley during April and May of this year. Many concerned HBC members have

thought about this issue. What criteria should be used in conserving land in our 3-county area? What individual spots (not presently protected) should be included on a conservation wish list? Please give this some thought and write out your priorities. Then contact Mary Alice Wilson (20 Juggler Meadow Rd., Amherst MA 01002 or mwilson@k12sphast.umass.edu) or Anne Lombard (phone and email above) with your suggestions. Alternatively you could bring them to the May 14 meeting and they will be passed on to the Trustees of Reservations.

The U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service and other organizations will be sponsoring the Pioneer Valley Wetland Fest 2001, a wetland festival to be held on the Amherst Town Common on May 19 and 20. Celebrating National Wetlands Month, this will be a great event to attend and to participate in. If you are willing to lead a bird walk in association with this event (you can still participate in the HBC Birdathon on the 19th) contact Ralph Tiner, Regional Wetland Coordinator, at 413-253-8620 or at ralph_tiner@fws.gov. He is also looking for artists, photographers and craftspeople who work with wetland-related themes to exhibit and sell their work.

LIBRARY

The HBC Library, maintained by Anne Cann, is located in the main room on the first floor of the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 525 South Pleasant Street in Amherst (413) 526-6006. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Spring is really coming – I kid you not! Sharpen your warbler identification skills by borrowing the library's video *Watching Warblers* by Michael Male and Judy Fieth. It has wonderful close-up shots of warblers in their habitats. Also in the video line you'll find *Warblers of North America*, *Owls up Close*, and five of the videos from the Attenborough *World of Birds* series. If audio identification is your thing this spring, borrow Richard Walton's wonderful *Birding by Ear* tapes.

Anne brings a small selection of books to the monthly meet-

ings for your perusal. For those who may be unable to get to the Center she would be happy to bring your selections to the meeting if you contact her at her home by the preceding Friday. If you have access to the Internet, you will find a listing of book titles on the HBC Website and there is also a list you can examine at the meetings.

Anne always welcomes questions or suggestions for books that might be good additions to the collection. She can be reached at (413) 253-7753 or by email at cann@uhs.umass.edu.

The fastest moving bird in bird in the world is the Peregrine Falcon that clocks in at one hundred seventeen mph in a dive. On the other hand, the slowest (so who's in a hurry?) bird is the American Woodcock who enjoys the scenery at five mph.

HITCHCOCK CENTER

Call the Center (413) 256-6006 for more information and to register for programs

On Tuesday, April 24, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. HBC members and world travelers Marion Gorham and Al Shane will be presenting a slide program they title *Iceland Revisited*. Last summer they returned to Iceland to the Snaefelsnes and the Western fjords. Their means of travel was their tandem bike. Their slides are beautiful. This should be an interesting program.

The Green Scene: Fundraising Auction and Party on Friday, May 11, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Red Barn at Hampshire College (Rt. 116). This annual fundraiser for the Hitchcock Center for the Environment features the opportunity to bid on many goods and services including natural history books, gift

certificates to local businesses and weekends at wonderful vacation homes. Great food!! Great bargains!! Great people!! You can't miss and you'll helping to support this important environmental organization.

Biothon 2001: The Hitchcock Center will hold its second annual 24-hour **Biothon** fundraiser from Friday afternoon, May 18 to Saturday afternoon, May 19. This will be in concert with the HBC **Birdathon** and **Potluck Extravaganza** described elsewhere in this newsletter. Please refer to it for more information.

THE BUTTERFLY INSTITUTE

As announced in the last newsletter, the Massachusetts Butterfly Club (MBC) chapter of North American Butterfly Association (NABA) is again sponsoring the Butterfly Institute, seven classroom sessions and seven field trips on butterfly identification and natural history. Anyone with an interest in butterflies who wants to learn more would enjoy this course which is designed for both novices and experienced enthusiasts. The lectures and field trips are conducted by MBC experts. Field trips expand on the topics covered in the lectures. Classes will be held at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst on

Tuesday evenings from 7:00 – 9:00 starting May 1. Field trips begin on May 5. There is a fee.

Think about it. Tom Gagnon reminds us that butterflies are out there when the sun is up, you don't have to set the alarm for the middle of the night and you can turn over in bed if it is pouring rain. Maybe it's time to take up a second (or third or fourth) hobby?

Call Tom Gagnon at 413-584-6353 for more information and to register.

Tell me – is there another word for synonym?

RUFFIE

"A tiny glittering garment of the rainbow" (John James Audubon)

For a long time now I have been wanting to write a piece about Ruffie and his five winter vacations in Tom Gagnon's greenhouse. I did my homework before my visit. I read all I could find about Rufous Hummingbirds in my field guides. I read Nancy Haver's delightful children's book *She's Back! One Hummingbird's True Story*. And, I tried to imagine how it would feel to play host to such a tiny houseguest.

None of this prepared me for the Ruffie experience!

Tom's greenhouse is attached to his house, so moving from kitchen to greenhouse was done in comfort. It was a lovely afternoon with sun reflecting off the snow drifts that have defined our winter. Walking into the greenhouse proper, I was struck by the tropical warmth and humidity surrounding the many-colored tropical plants. Tom had to point to the branch where Ruffie was hanging out. She is tiny, and as she moved through the air to her feeder I was amazed that for one so small she made a very big sound. Tom said that although he had not found it yet, she had probably dropped a feather because there had been a sudden change in the sound of her flight. She moved from the feeder to sip from the many blossoms around the room and to pluck off flies and aphids (Tom's pest control?), then perched on another of her favorite resting spots. There I saw her miniature tongue, testing the atmosphere perhaps? Tom took a bottle and sprayed her with water, something she seemed to love. He tried to lure her to her birdbath by spraying water on it but Ruffie had other plans. At one point she seemed to freeze, bill tipped toward the glass ceiling. Tom said that there must be a predator in the neighborhood and sure enough we soon saw a circling Red-tailed Hawk high above.

Ruffie's life story, at least the part of it that Tom can document, is an incredible one. She entered his life in November, 1996, when a woman in Agawam contacted him to let him know that a hummingbird was still coming to feed at the brightly colored plastic flowers of her hummingbird feeder. With cold weather moving in she feared for the bird's life and wondered if there was anything that could be done to save it. Tom investigated and found it to be a female Rufous Hummingbird whose birthplace is in the Pacific Northwest and who migrates in the fall to Mexico and South America. What do you do with a bird when it thinks it has migrated to South-

ern Mexico but is really in Agawam? If you are Tom, you find a way to catch it. This involves State and Federal permits to begin with, not a simple matter. Then what's the best way to capture it? Tom tried a mist net, but she went over it and under it and around it. Next was to move the feeder into the garage. This lured her inside and the garage door was shut. She was finally captured with a big butterfly net. Tom put her into a large pillowcase where she couldn't see and couldn't injure herself and carefully transported her to her new home. She quickly adapted to the greenhouse and spent the winter. Tom said goodbye to her the following May, thinking that was the end of a great adventure.

But – the next May Tom received a call from his Agawam friend saying "Guess what, Tom! She's back." Was it just another hummingbird or could it possibly be Ruffie? That Ruffie had indeed returned home for the winter was clear when Tom released her in his greenhouse and she went directly to where the feeder had been hung the year before. Needless to say, the feeder, filled with pureed insect parts and sugar water, was returned to that spot immediately. As further proof, Tom checked on her that evening when it was beginning to get dark and there she was sleeping on the exact same perch she had slept on the winter before. The bird, now banded for positive identification, returned to Tom by way of Agawam the next two falls. The assumption is that after release Ruffie headed west to her birthplace, and after finding a mate and raising a family took off to find her way back to Agawam and Tom. When Tom said goodbye to Ruffie last May, it must have been an especially poignant parting. This bird was at least 4 years old, very old for a hummingbird in the wild.

Last fall the days passed without incident and no word from Agawam, not really a surprise to Ruffie watchers. I can't imagine how Tom must have felt when he answered the phone and heard "Tom – she's back!" The fifth winter vacation for Ruffie had started.

Which brings us to now, with May and release time just around the corner. I cannot help but wonder again how Tom will feel when the day comes. But, what pleasure this little migrant has brought to so many people. Thank you Tom! And thank you, Ruffie!

Tell me – What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?

Something to ponder when you are planning your summer vacation - A father was at the beach with his children when his four-year-old ran up to him, grabbed his hand and led him to the shore where a gull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to the gull?" "He died and went to heaven," replied the dad. The child thought for a moment and said, "Did God throw him back?"

MISCELLANEOUS

For those who do not always phone *The Voice* for bird sightings in Western Massachusetts you can now check the newspaper, thanks to Jan Ortiz who is the *Voice* and Trudy Tynan who transcribes it for BIRDEAST (online) and for the newspapers. Three newspapers have weekly bird sighting columns. The *Springfield Union News* publishes on Thursday, the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* publishes in the "Living" section of the weekend edition and it can be found in the *Greenfield Recorder* on Saturday.

May is the month we elect board officers and members for the coming year. A nominating committee of Jan Ortiz (Chair), Sue Emerson, and Merry Cushing 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.

HELP! One of the nice features of our monthly meetings is the goody table with its cookies and brownies and cheese and cider and homemade wonders graciously donated by willing members. We are right now in need of an individual and/or team of people to keep this custom flourishing next year. There are people willing to donate food so that is not a problem. A small committee can split up the tasks of calling people who have offered to donate, setting up the table and cleaning up afterwards. It is a simple way of doing a little extra for the Club that is so much appreciated. This is not gender-specific job! Anyone can apply. Call Sally (549-1098) if you care to help out in this manner.

We thank **BACKYARD BIRDS** at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton for continuing to offer a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases.

The 2000 - 2001 *MEMBERSHIP LIST* as of 1/29/01 was enclosed with February Newsletter. Following are additions and corrections to that list. Please check your own information to make sure that it is accurate. If by chance there is an error not reported below, please let me (Sally) know so it can be corrected on the master list and in the next Newsletter. If you need a membership list, please call me or pick one up at the meetings.

MEMBERSHIP LIST 2000-2001

Changes or Additions to List:

Adams, Stacy: Change email to stacybadams@netzero.net

Zaslow, Ken & Barbara - new address: 2420 McCullough Ave., Apt # 202, San Antonio, TX 78212-3564

New members:

Garrow, Suzanne, 409 Rocky Hill Rd., Florence, MA 01062-9793

Mockler, Patrick, 487 Pond Rd., Vernon, VT 05354, **HPh:** 802-257-7357; **email:** pgmnam69@souer.net

Whitcomb, Dan: 284 Hillside Ave., Holyoke MA 01040; **HPh:** 413-533-6504; **email:** djwhitcomb@yahoo.com

Sally

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

Happy Spring!

So, that should about do it for this month. I hear that we are going to be treated to a nice gentle rain tonight sometime around midnight. I think I might meander up to Henry Street and see what's happening at the salamander tunnel. I need to make sure that the spotted salamander get safely across the street, especially the wild and crazy ones that opt not to use the tunnels. I call this sallymeandering.

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~hampbird/>
May, 2001



PROGRAMS

*All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst.
Should bad weather force cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP-AM 1400.*

On Monday, May 14, Al and Lois Richardson will be presenting a slide program they have titled "*Ruffs, Reeves, and Reindeer – Birding in Finland and Lapland.*"

Al and Lois have been members of the Hampshire Bird Club for several years as well as members of the Allen Bird Club in their home city of Springfield, MA. Since retiring, they have been able to spend more time involved with two of their favorite pastimes – birding and travel. This combination has taken them from backpacking and birding above the Arctic Circle to the frozen shores of Antarctica, from the Far East to Europe and also to Central and South America. A recent highlight was to be among the last birding tourists to bird on the island of Attu in the Aleutians.

Since attending David Spector's program on "*How to Spot an Ornithologist,*" they feel well qualified to call themselves birders, but they are still a bit (actually, a whole lot) intimidated by the backgrounds and credentials of the speakers preceding them this year.

To quote, "Our plan is to take you on a vicarious ABA birding trip to northern Europe, specifically the area known to many as Lapland. Along the way you will bird in the various birding hotspots of Finland and northern Norway. Our goal is to have you say at the end of the evening, not necessarily how much you have learned (though we hope you do pick up a fact or two) but 'Now, there is a place I'd like to go birding!'"

Last Program of the year on June 11 – Peter Yaukey – "*Birding Louisiana.*"

Point to ponder: If you try to fail, and succeed, which have you done?

A Business Moment

A short business meeting will precede the program in order to elect Board officers and members for the coming year. The nominating committee of Jan Ortiz (Chair), Sue Emerson and Merry Cushing will present the following slate for your approval. The officers: **Mary Alice Wilson** (President), **Geoff Le Baron** (Vice President/Program Director), **David Gross**

(Treasurer), **Jan Howard** (Communications Secretary), **Sue Emerson** (Membership Secretary), and Board Members at Large: **Stacy Adams, Dennis McKenna, Jan Ortiz, David Peake-Jones, Scott Sumner and Sally Venman.** Nominations will also be accepted from the floor, if seconded.

Have you ever asked yourself why "abbreviation" is such a long word or what's another word for thesaurus?

FIELD TRIPS

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 recommend that participants carpool whenever possible and that all persons in the car (driver included) share costs equally on the basis of 30 cents per mile plus tolls and parking fees. **Shawn Smolen-Morton, Field Trip Chair,** 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. He can be reached at 413-863-4569 or by email at bachman@complit.umass.edu.

Trip Reports

On **Saturday, 3/24**, Shawn Smolen-Morton led a full day trip along the *Connecticut River* searching for migrating waterfowl. It was a cold, damp, windy day. Although the day was

not terribly "birdy" the six participants had good looks at a Rusty Blackbird, Green-winged Teals, Wood Ducks and Northern Pintail. The group enjoyed seeing five Bald Eagles of various ages on the ice at the Rod and Gun Club and observing the aerial acrobatics and interactions of the Common Ravens at Sugarloaf.

On **Saturday, 4/14** Shawn Smolen-Morton and Al Richards traveled to the *Ashley Reservoir* for the traditional search for the first warblers of spring. Five birders totaled 56 species of birds on a cool, sunny, pleasant day. They saw lots of Ospreys, Broad-winged Hawks and a very early Spotted Sandpiper. A special treat was two Common Loons calling and displaying in the early morning. For warblers they found Yellow-rumps, ten Pines and seven Palms. Eight Ruby-crowned Kinglets were also observed. On the way home, a stop at Arcadia brought the group a Fox Sparrow and a Chipping Sparrow.

On **Saturday, 4/21** a group of six led by Stacy Adams enjoyed a nice day at *Bartholomew's Cobble* that started cool then became warm and mostly overcast. The group tallied 62 bird species. Alas, no Black Vultures this year, though there were plenty of TVs. Highlights included nice views of a male Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teals, lots of male American Kestrels, Palm Warblers, a singing Pine Warbler, a singing Field Sparrow and high-up looks at a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Also seen was a Wood Turtle newly out of the mud. A Wild Turkey narrowly missed becoming dinner as it flew within five feet of Stacy's windshield. Flowers at the

Cobble were also nice. Seen were Round-lobed Hepatica, Bloodroot, Dutchman's Breeches, and Coltsfoot.

On **Saturday, 4/28**, Geoff LeBaron led 16 participants to *Plum Island* for shorebirds and other early spring migrants. 85 species of birds were seen on a beautiful, sunny, spring day. Stops and highlights: (1) *Salisbury* (McDonald's Pit Stop) a Broad-winged Hawk overhead, the only one for the day. (2) *Jappa Flats, Newburyport* (low tide in the morning) tons of Greater Yellowlegs and one Dunlin in the great distance and (high tide in the evening) Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs in our faces and a flock of seven Pectoral Sandpipers. (3) *Parker River NWR/Plum Island* (most of the day spent here) an interesting mix of migrants, including a Rusty Blackbird at the *Salt Pannes* and wonderful looks at more than 250 Long-tailed Ducks (formerly Oldsquaw), most of them in breeding plumage, and a pair of Piping Plovers at the State Beach on the south tip of the island. (4) *Yacht Club/Sewage Treatment Plant, Newburyport* (late afternoon/early evening) a gorgeous flock of Bonaparte's Gulls in breeding plumage, wheeling and settling in front of us and our only Spotted Sandpiper and Bufflehead of the day. (5) *Salisbury Beach State Park, Salisbury* (sunset, a lovely calm ocean,) a big flock of Purple Sandpipers on the end of the breakwater, gannets at the "limit of conjecture", a fly-by Iceland Gull and swimming Harbor Seals.)

Other highlights included two Merlins, seven Pectoral Sandpipers, more than 21 Bonaparte's Gulls, one Iceland Gull, one Black-throated Green Warbler, one Rusty Blackbird, and one Purple Finch. Other sightings included Harbor Seal, Gray Squirrel, Eastern Chipmunk Otter and a probable Blanding's Turtle.

Did you know that Cyrus McCormick teamed up with a couple of German folklorist brothers to produce the Grimm Reapers?

Coming up

(Please refer to the blue Field Trip List for more information.)

There has been a change of date for one of the June trips. Because it is the only date that Bob Bieda could secure, the Westover Air Force Base trip searching for grassland birds needs to be changed from June 23 to Saturday, June 9.

Monhegan Island Memorial Day Weekend trip: Listen-up!!! There is still room for a couple more participants on this trip. So - if you have ever considered joining in the fun, here is your chance.

This trip to the fabled migrant trap (and generally remarkable place) will be led by Andrew Magee and David Peake-Jones and is scheduled for **Friday, May 25 - Monday, May 28**. We will meet at Port Clyde, Maine (carpools generally available from the valley), boat to the island, stay in rustic accommodations at the Trailing Yew, and bird on foot throughout the village and its immediate environs. The island in May usually hosts a wide variety of migrant songbirds. If we hit it right, the birding can be spectacular! The only cars we will

see after we leave the mainland will be the few historic workhorses that move stuff about on the island, and they will be moving more slowly than we will! When we are not birding, we can explore the trails of Monhegan, taking in the Seal Rocks, the "Enchanted Forest", the spectacular seaward cliffs of the island, Lobster Cove and the panoramic views from the lighthouse. An optional trip to Eastern Egg Rock allows for looks at puffins, various terns and perhaps even the odd alcid or pelagic species.

The cost of the trip will be in the vicinity of \$250.00, including ferry transportation from Port Clyde, lodging, breakfasts and dinners on the island. Add to this the cost of the trip to Eastern Egg Rock (\$12.50), tips for the island staff, lunches,

snacks, an optional lobster dinner on the island, plus shared mileage costs if you carpool, and you have a rough idea what the cost will be.

Contact David at 413-529-9541 or davidpj@the-spa.com for more information and to register. He needs to know **NOW!!!!**

On Tuesday and Thursday Mornings throughout May the Club sponsors *Early Morning Bird Walks through Wildwood Cemetery* off Strong Street in Amherst. 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 8:30 a.m. Walks will cover various parts of the cemetery and conservation area. I 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.

On Saturday, May 5 Shirley Hilborn (413-253-6462) and Ann Lombard (413-586-7509) join forces to lead people to one of the local hot spots on the monthly half-day *Leisurely and local Saturday Mornings* trip, this month perhaps to a not less well trodden – like Grave's Farm maybe? Meet them at 7:00 a.m. at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst.

On Saturday, May 12 Tom Gagnon leads his traditional full day search of the *Quabbin Reservoir* area for migrating neotropical birds. Due to access restrictions, this trip is limited to five vehicles. Call Tom (413-584-6353) in advance to make

reservations and to get the details for time and place. Pack a lunch, snacks and water.

On Wednesday, May 16 Harvey Allen's half-day *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley* goes out during the height of the warbler migration. Meet at 7:00 a.m. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for details.

Friday, May 25 to Monday, May 28: The annual *Monhegan Island Memorial Day Weekend* trip. Details above.

On Saturday, May 26 Al Richards and Bob Bieda will lead the poor souls who are not on Monhegan to a lesser paradise they call "*Poor Man's Monhegan: Plum Island and vicinity.*" Highlights from the previous two years include Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Chuck-will's Widow, Black-billed Cuckoo, Clapper Rail, and Tricolored Heron. For further information or questions call Al (413-665-2761) or Bob (413-527-2623.) Pack a lunch and bring snacks and water for this all-day trip.

Point to ponder: If the #2 pencil is the most popular, why is it still #2?

Columbus Day Trip to Cape May – The club is offering a Columbus Day weekend trip to Cape May with leader Scott Sumner. If this interests you, please contact Scott now so that he can get a sense of how many people to plan for. You can reach him at 413-253-7486 or email ssurner@aol.com.

Remember to use the *Voice of Audubon* to learn what birds are being seen locally and across the state or to make a report. A toll-free number will put you in touch with the state-wide system at Lincoln that covers four separate Rare Bird Alert areas in Massachusetts. Call 1-888-224-6444 and follow directions.

You know you're a birder if you know the early arrival date of every spring migrant in you area but you can't remember your anniversary

CONSERVATION

If you have special interest in conservation as it relates to birding, Anne Lombard, Conservation Chair, is always happy to talk to you. Contact her at 413-586-7509 or email at annelombard@mediaone.net.

The Amherst Breeding Bird Census will go into its twelfth 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 is 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 at 413-256-4045.

A communication tower committee, headed by Rick McNeil and Anne Lombard, has been looking into the effects that cellular towers have on birdlife. The committee requests that you become aware of the towers in areas where you bird and

monitor those areas for dead birds whenever possible during this spring migration season. Please report any dead or injured birds you find to Rick McNeil (529-9197) or Marcia Merithew (584-8874).

A similar problem was brought to my attention by the Cranberry Research Foundation, an organization supporting the Raptor Retrofit Program. I was asked to pass the information on to the membership. Working cranberry bogs provide important habitat for American Kestrels along with Ospreys and other birds of prey. Joanne Mason of the Cranberry Country Bird Banding Project has been working with growers since 1989 to provide safe nesting habitats around the bogs and to

identify and implement "raptor friendly" devices on the utility poles that have caused fatal injuries to birds due to collisions or electrocutions. This has been a successful but expensive course of action for the growers who have been paying for the devices. With the downturn of the cranberry market, many growers can no longer afford to retrofit the utility poles on their property. Help is needed. The CRF's role in this program is to be a conduit for information and funding. If you care to contribute, please send a check (made out to the *Cranberry Research Foundation* and marked for the *Raptor Retrofit Program*) to the Cranberry Research Foundation, 266 Main Street, Wareham, MA 02571. If you want more information or have questions please contact Joanne Mason at 508-947-5101 or Megan Kuhn (CRF secretary) at 508-295-4895 x 12.

Saturday, May 19 is *trail cleanup day* at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area in Northampton and HBC members are invited to spend part of the day cleaning up our adopted trail, the Lake Trail. If you are able to help out during part of the morning, please call Anne Lombard for details and directions.

I remind you that the Trustees of Reservations is conducting a study of land protection in the Connecticut River Valley dur-

ing April and May of this year. What criteria should be used in conserving land in our 3-county area? What individual spots should be included on a conservation wish list? Please give this some thought, write out your priorities and then contact Mary Alice Wilson (548-9078 or mvson@k12s.phast.umass.edu) or Anne Lombard (phone and email above) with your suggestions. Or bring them to the May 14 meeting and they will be passed on to the Trustees of Reservations.

The U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service and other organizations will be sponsoring the *Pioneer Valley Wetland Fest 2001* celebrating National Wetlands Month on the Amherst Town Common on May 19 and 20. The HBC will have a table set up and Mary Alice is looking for people to help on Sunday. Please call or email her if you can lend a hand. If you are willing to lead a Sunday morning bird walk in Lawrence Swamp in association with this event (you can still participate in the HBC Birdathon on the 19th) contact Ralph Tiner, Regional Wetland Coordinator, at 413-253-8620 or at ralph_tiner@fws.gov. He is also looking for artists, photographers and craftspeople who work with wetland-related themes to exhibit and sell their work.

Ever wonder why the word "phonetic" isn't spelled the way it sounds?

LIBRARY

The HBC Library, maintained by Anne Cann, is located in the main room on the first floor of the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 525 South Pleasant Street in Amherst (413) 526-6006. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. Anne always welcomes questions or suggestions for books that might be good additions to the collection. She can be reached at (413) 253-7753 or by email at cann@uhs.umass.edu.

It's finally here – the spring migration in all its glory and confusion. I distinctly remember *permanently learning* the warblers' identifying features last spring! I *know* that I finally *knew* the warblers' songs. Why does it all seem so foreign to me *all over again*? Time to take out the tapes and hit the books for this spring's final exams. Let the HBC library help to unravel your quandaries with its many, many volumes and tapes and videos just waiting for the chance to give you a leg up on your identification skills (once again.) And – if you are going to do some traveling, be sure to check it out. There

are ABA and other birding guides for the Eastern and Western U.S. There are guides to New Hampshire, the Birds of Berkshire County, to Virginia, Maine, Cape Cod, to Amherst and Florida just for starters. For the West pick up guides to Oregon, Colorado, the San Francisco Peninsula, etc., etc., etc. As those of you who have used the library know, these general suggestions are just the tip of the iceberg. There is a lot of good stuff residing at the Hitchcock Center where the HBC library is housed. Anne will be bringing a selection of the guides to the May meeting.

HITCHCOCK CENTER

Call the Center (413) 256-6006 for more information and to register for programs

The Green Scene: Fundraising Auction and Party will take place this year on **Friday, May 11, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.** at the Red Barn at Hampshire College (Rt. 116). This annual fundraiser for the Hitchcock Center for the Environment features the opportunity to bid on many goods and services including natural history books, gift certificates to local businesses and weekends at wonderful vacation homes. Great food!!! Great bargains!! Great people!! You can't miss and you'll helping

to support this important environmental organization.

Biothon 2001: The Hitchcock Center will hold its second annual 24-hour **Biothon** fundraiser from Friday afternoon, May 18 to Saturday afternoon, May 19. This will be in concert with the HBC **Birdathon** described elsewhere in this newsletter. Please refer to it for more information.

Now a couple for our mycologist friends: *Why did the mushroom go to the party? Cuz he was a fungi, of course.*
And – *Why did the fungi leave the party? Cuz there wasn't mushroom!*

ARCADIA

For more information and fee structure (if any) and to register call the Sanctuary at (413) 584-3009.

EARLY MORNING BIRD WALKS: HBC member Anne Lombard along with other guest leaders will be leading bird walks in the various sanctuaries on Saturdays from 7:00 – 8:30 a.m. starting April 28 and continuing through June 23. (Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary on 5/19 and 6/9; Graves Farm Sanctuary on 5/5, 5/26, & 6/16; and Marion Sherman Lynes Sanctuary on 6/2 & 6/23). May 12 will be at all three sanctuaries.

SPRING MIGRATION BIRD WALKS: Anne Lombard and guest leaders will conduct bird walks daily, Monday

through Friday during the height of the spring migration, May 7 – May 11, from 6:30 – 8:00 a.m. Meet at the parking lot.

BIRD-BIRD-BIRD: Dan Russell, avid birder, will take six participants throughout the valley to various habitats looking for and learning about the important birds in each of them. Part of the funds raised from this program will go toward MAS Bird-a-thon. Call for more information.

*Here's one for you gastropodologists:
Did you hear about the snail that got beat up by two turtles?
He went to the police and they asked him, "Did you get a good look at the turtles who did this?"
He said, "No, it all happened so fast."*

MISCELLANEOUS

IOTHON 2001: *The Hitchcock Center* will hold its second annual 24-hour **Biothon** fundraiser from Friday afternoon May 18 to Saturday afternoon May 19. During the Biothon, teams go out and count bird species and/or whatever other species (wildflowers, amphibians, mammals, mushrooms, etc.) they choose. Each volunteer team collects pledges per species in support of environmental education at Hitchcock. The **Biothon** coincides with the HBC big day **Birdathon** and people can choose to do either or both. Anyone interested in participating in the **Biothon** should contact David Spector at 413-323-4885.

BIRDATHON 2001: *The Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.* will hold its first annual 24-hour **Birdathon** from Friday afternoon May 18 to Saturday afternoon May 19. The goal of the **Birdathon** is to observe the most species of birds in Western Massachusetts in a 24-hour period. Teams consisting of 2-4 persons, organized on their own, with special consideration for team members' dispositions (casual, relaxed, competitive) will bird as many hours during the period as they choose. All species must be either heard or seen by at least two members of the team. The area for birding is limited to Western Massachusetts, from the east side of the Quabbin west (west of State Highway 32). Shawn Smolen-Morton will facilitate matching those birders who cannot find a team. Register your team with Shawn. He needs the number of team members, a team name (if desired), and a team leader. Contact Shawn for more information and to register at 413-863-4569 or by email at bachmann@complit.umass.edu.

The **Birdathon** is in voluntary partnership with the Hitchcock Center's **Biothon**, a pledge-based fundraiser. HBC **Birdathon** participants or teams are encouraged to seek pledges per species. **EXAMPLE:** Your co-worker pledges 5 cents per species, to a maximum of 100 species. Your team identifies 80 species. Your co-worker donates four dollars to the Hitchcock Center.

*Donations are not required for participation in the **Birdathon**.*

HELP! HELP!! HELP!!! One of the nice monthly meeting customs is the goody table with its coffee and tea and cookies and brownies and cheese and cider and homemade wonders graciously donated by willing members. We are right now in need of an individual or a team of individuals to keep this custom flourishing next year. There are people willing to donate food so that is not a problem. A small committee can split up the tasks of calling people who have offered to donate, setting up the table and cleaning up afterwards. It is a simple way of doing a little extra for the Club and is so much appreciated. This is not a gender-specific job! Anyone can apply. Contact Sally (phone and email below) if you care to help out in this manner.

We thank Tim and Pat Maginnis, owners of **BACKYARD BIRDS** at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton for continuing to offer a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases.

All you have to do is present a Newsletter with your address attached at the time of purchase. They have field guides, bin-

oculars, scopes, CDs, cassettes, books, etc. etc. etc. Browsing is encouraged!

And finally, one for the procyonidologists:

A panda walks into a bar, sits down and orders a sandwich. He eats the sandwich, pulls out a gun and shoots the waiter dead. As the panda stands up to go, the bartender shouts, "Hey! Where are you going? You just shot my waiter and you didn't pay for your sandwich." The panda yells back at the bartender, "Hey man, I'm a PANDA.. Look it up!" The bartender opens his dictionary to "panda" and reads: "A tree-dwelling marsupial of Asian origin, characterized by distinct black and white coloring. Eats shoots and leaves."

The 2000 – 2001 MEMBERSHIP LIST as of 1/29/01 was enclosed with February Newsletter. Following are additions and corrections to that list gathered since the April Newsletter. Please check your own information to make sure that it is accurate. If by chance there is an error not reported below, please let me (Sally) know so it can be corrected on the master list and in the next Newsletter. If you need a membership list, please call me or pick one up at the meetings.

MEMBERSHIP LIST 2000-2001

Change to the List:

Kellogg, Charles: new email – cgkellogg@mediaone.net

New members:

Christian, Bonnie: A6 Highland Village, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; HPh:413-625-9203

Christian, Marilyn: 16 Ashfield Road, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370-6632; HPh: 413-625-6632.

Foster, Anna & Miller, Bob: 73 Pine Street, Amherst, MA 01002; HPh: 413-549-5050;

WPh: 413-625-6021; email: drmiller@crocker.com.

Halbeisen, Margaret & Hoogendyk, Chris: 59 Memorial Drive, Amherst MA 01002;

HPh: 413-256-3153; WPh: 413-549-9777 (Margaret) & 413-577-2603 (Chris);

e-mail: mhalbeisen@aol.com (Margaret) & choogendyk@aol.com (Chris)

Krugman, Arn: 60 Bears Den Dr., Sunderland MA 01375; HPh: 413-397-9727

McAnulty, Elizabeth R: 25 Clark St., Easthampton, MA 01027; HPh: 413-529-9541;

email: blackbess@the-spa.com.

Merriam, Joyce & Cornell, Janet Merriam: 42 Webster Court, Amherst MA 01002;

HPh: 413-256-4587 & 413-256-1878.

Norton, Susan: 39 Winslow Ave., Florence, MA 01062; HPh: 413-586-1641.

Yagodzinski, Sheila & Nimeskern, Analise: 55 Roosevelt St., Hadley, MA 06035;

HPh: 413-549-5710; WPh: 413-586-4381 (Analise), 413-586-1366 (Sheila); email: s.yagodzinski@worldnet.att.net

Hope to see you on the 14th

Sally Venman, Newsletter Editor

(413) 549-1098

svenman@external.umass.edu

Another Point to Ponder: If you are born again, do you have two bellybuttons?

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

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

June, 2001



PROGRAMS

*All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst.
Should bad weather force cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP-AM 1400.*

On Monday, June 14, Peter Yaukey returns to his hometown to present a program titled "*Birding Louisiana*." Louisiana has proved intriguing to birders since John James Audubon resided there in the 1800s. It is teeming with avifauna, hosting some of the largest concentrations of birds on the continent. Even urban New Orleans is alive with showy and dramatic species. Gull-billed Terns and Black Skimmers nest atop shopping malls, Yellow-crowned Night-Herons nest in residential back yards, and a multitude of large waders stalk canals in the medians of busy thoroughfares. The southern reaches of the state, from the Mississippi River delta west through the coastal prairies, now largely converted to rice and awfish aquaculture, comprise the largest expanse of wetlands in the lower 48 states. Today it is alive with birds, hosting massive wintering and migratory concentrations of water and marsh birds. Extensive bottomland forests remain

along rivers and bayous, populated by high densities of southern specialty species. In the southwest corner of the state, ribbons of stunted coastal forest cling to stranded beach ridges called cheniers and play host to astonishing concentrations of migratory landbirds during "fallouts" in the spring and fall.

Peter H. Yaukey grew up in Amherst and was a charter member of the Hampshire Bird Club. He lived and birded in Virginia, Colorado, and Georgia on the way to getting his Ph.D. in Physical Geography in 1991. He has worked as a professor of geography at the University of New Orleans ever since, where he lives with his wife and two sons. Peter conducts research on the effects of urban habitat disturbance on migratory landbird populations in New Orleans.

It will be great to welcome Peter back to Amherst.

COMING NEXT YEAR

It may be of interest to you to have a preview of some of the programs we can look forward to next year. Program Chair Stacy Adams has arranged to bring Jerry Bertrand, past president of Massachusetts Audubon, to Amherst on *September 10*. He'll be taking us to Peru on an Amazon Adventure. On *October 15* perennial favorites Mark and Marcia Wilson will return to present a program on Nantucket. Sam Friede, well-known tour leader from Connecticut, will be with us on *November 12* to speak on the Bolivian Amazon. *December 3* is the date for the annual holiday party when members show

their own natural history slides and plans are made for the Christmas Bird Count. Local legend Dave Small will start the new year with a program discussing natural history interests on *January 14*; Bill Danielson joins us on *February 11* to speak on bird rehabilitation; Jeff Podos will speak to us on Galapagos Finches on *May 13* and Marta Hersek will present a program on Ovenbirds on *June 10*. Other programs are being planned for *March 11* and *April 8* for those who might wish to make note on the calendar.

A summer mystery: Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of Chateau Lafitte they lay down in their tent for the night and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend awake. "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see." Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars." "What does that tell you?" Holmes questioned. Watson pondered for a minute. "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Homologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you?" Holmes was silent for a minute, then spoke. "Watson, you idiot, someone has stolen our tent!"

Two vultures board an airplane, each carrying two dead raccoons. The stewardess looks at them and says, "I'm sorry, gentlemen, only one carrion allowed per passenger."

WHAT A BOARD!

Before moving on, a few words and a huge tribute need to go to the former board, and what a board it was! In June, 2000 the HBC Board took on the task of reviewing and updating every component on our field trip policies. With the help of lawyer Bill Hart they identified policies and practices which needed to be updated and then they went to work.

Changes were made everywhere, from adding the "Inc." to the logo, to changing the way minutes of meetings were maintained, to revising every form they could find. (Membership Release Form, Field Trip Policy, Field Trip Guidelines for New Participants, Overnight Field Trip Evaluation Form, Overnight Medical Information Form, Emergency Guardianship Proxy for Minors).

On May 15, the last piece was put in place when the club moved from buying short-term liability policies for each overnight trip (\$350 each time) to buying a year-long liability policy covering all field trips and club activities (\$1400). Cost will be split between overnight participants (who have traditionally paid for the insurance) and the membership dues. Rarely has a Board met so often and rarely has a Board accomplished so much.

To officers Mary Alice Wilson, Stacy Adams, David Peake-Jones, Joanne Parker, and Mark Mount and Members-at-Large Sue Emerson, David Gross, Jim Marcum, Dennis McKenna, Jan Ortiz and Scott Surner go CONGRATULATIONS!! – WELL DONE!! – and a huge THANK YOU!!!!

At our May meeting the nominating committee of Jan Ortiz (chair), Sue Emerson and Merry Cushing presented a slate of officers and members at large for the membership's approval. The following slate was elected: **Mary Alice Wilson** (President), **Geoff Le Baron** (Vice President/Program Director), **David Gross** (Treasurer), **Jan Howard** (Communications Secretary), **Sue Emerson** (Membership Secretary), and Members-at-Large: **Stacy Adams**, **Dennis McKenna**, **Jan Ortiz**, **David Peake-Jones**, **Scott Surner** and **Sally Venman**. We welcome the new members and wish them well in the year ahead. If you should have concerns or wish input in Club operations feel free to contact one of them. You are welcome to attend Board meetings and can get information by calling Mary Alice Wilson 413-548-9078 or by email at mwilson@12s.phast.umass.edu.

Two boll weevils grew up in South Carolina. One went to Hollywood and became a famous actor. The other stayed behind in the cotton fields and never amounted to much. The second one, naturally, became known as the lesser of two weevils.

FIELD TRIPS

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 recommend that participants carpool whenever possible and that all persons in the car (driver included) share costs equally on the basis of 30 cents per mile plus tolls and parking fees. Shawn Smolen-Morton, Field Trip Chair, 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. He can be reached at 413-863-4569 or by email at bachman@complit.umass.edu.

Trip Reports

The monthly half-day *Leisurely and local Saturday Morning* trip on May 5 was led by Shirley Hilborn and Anne Lombard. 10 people saw Cliff Swallow, Louisiana Waterthrush, Bobolinks, Northern Orioles and heard Winter Wren before rain sent participants home.

On Saturday, May 12 Tom Gagnon led his traditional full day trip to *East Quabbin*. The group of 12 tallied 96 species of birds in sunny weather. Highlights included an immature Great Cormorant, a Black-billed Cuckoo, a young Great Horned Owl in a Great Blue Heron's nest (no nesting Great Blues this year), 22 Scarlet Tanagers and three Cerulean Warblers (one of 18 warbler species). A spectacular display

of wild Columbine and great butterflies rounded out the beautiful day.

On Wednesday, May 16 Harvey Allen led 10 people on a pleasant half-day *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley*. A total of 30 bird species were seen or heard, only eight of which were warblers. Highlights of the day were at Skinner where the group was provided with good eye-level looks at the Worm-eating Warbler and good listens to two calling male Cerulean Warblers. Also extremely vocal was a Winter Wren and a Hermit Thrush. Another highlight was watching a cooperative Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at eye level in a bush so close that there was no need for binoculars.

The annual *Monhegan Island Memorial Day Weekend* trip, **May 25 – 28**, was led by David Peake-Jones and Andrew Magee. 20 enthusiastic birders arrived on a parched Monhegan welcomed by a Bald Eagle who terrorized the gulls of High Duck for several days. 93 species including 20 species of warblers were recorded. An HBC member, not with the official trip, saw six additional species, two of which were warblers. The weather fluctuated – hot and dry to cold and damp – something for everyone. Highlights included families of White-winged Crossbills including fledged young wandering through the spruces from one end of the village to the other and Atlantic Puffins buzzing the boat at Eastern Egg rock. Four Storm-petrels were spotted (Leaches or Wilsons? – couldn't tell.) Some of the group had great looks at a Purple Martin, two Summer Tanagers and one Cape May Warbler (maybe two.) Others viewed Minke Whales patrolling the beach among the Harbor Seals. Some heard soft calls made by pairs of Raven and Common Eider. It is interesting to note that with the exception of one unidentified bird there were no empidonax flycatchers. On Sunday night the group was invited to the home of photographer Tom Martin and his wife Josephine to view an amazing slide show featuring

Tom's latest work. Among other bird studies, we were treated to incredible shots of bird feathers, Tom's latest focus. A soaking rain on Sunday afternoon and an overnight fog rewarded us with a wonderful little *fallout* in the Ice Pond region on Monday morning. One tree was fairly shimmering it had so many birds in it. Good birds, good walks, good fun with good friends and a *fallout* – what more could you ask for? We hated to leave!

The annual "*Poor Man's Monhegan: Plum Island and vicinity*" trip, on **Saturday, May 26**, was led by Al Richards and Bob Bieda. A group of seven gathered in Sunderland at 5:00 a.m. They set 100 species as a goal and hoped the predicted rain would hold off until the afternoon. Bob thought the former more likely than the latter, but to their surprise it was sunny to partly cloudy all day while back home it rained steadily. The group "worked" until 8:00 p.m. to finally come up with 101 species. Highlights were Glossy Ibis, Virginia Rail (nice looks for #100), Piping Plovers, Wilson's Phalarope, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Orchard Oriole (three birds, each in different plumage) and Evening Grosbeak (spotted by Shawn in a parking lot in the middle of Erving!)

Coming up

(Please refer to the blue *Field Trip List* for more information.)

On **Saturday, June 9** there will be a full day trip to *Mount Greylock* led by Stacy Adams. Possibilities include Winter Wren, the elusive Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, breeding Black-throated Green, Mourning and Yellow-rumped Warblers and breeding Purple Finch. Call Stacy at 413-367-0177 for more information and to register. Bring lunch, snacks and water.

Because it was the only date that Bob Bieda could secure the *Westover Air Force Base* trip searching for grassland birds will also take place on **Saturday, June 9**. Past trips have seen Upland Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow and Eastern Meadowlark. This trip goes for about half the morning. Call Bob at 413-527-2623 for more information.

On **Wednesday, June 13** Harvey Allen will be searching out local nesters and other birds on territory on this half-day *Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley*. Call him at 413-253-7963.

On **Friday, June 15** Harvey Allen will be leading a *Beginners' Bird Walk* at *Skinner State Park* sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management. Meet at the Halfway House at 10:00 a.m. For more information contact Paul Barnett at 586-0350.

A *NEW* kind of trip offering from the HBC – *New South Beach and Stellwagen Bank – a weekend on Cape Cod*. The club has scheduled two wonderful trips back to back over the **Weekend of August 25**. These are two independent trips and participants may join either or both. Although not an official overnight trip, this arrangement will give participants the

option to get the most out of birding Cape Cod and avoid that long trip home in between. For those birders who do both trips, we will suggest one or two motels where other participants and trip leaders plan to stay. Each participant will make his/her own arrangements for sleeping accommodations, food (dinner and breakfast), and registration on Captain John's whale watch boat out of Plymouth. The Plymouth whale watch has two advantages. It lies along the route home for the participants of the New South Beach Trip, and it is close to the southern end of Stellwagen Bank, where the best birding usually occurs at this time of year.

August the 25th (Full Day): *New South Beach*. Bob Bieda and Al Richards will again lead this always popular all day trip to the National Seashore in Chatham on Cape Cod. Registration is required, since the trip is limited to 12 people. Since there are no facilities on this isolated beach, bring a hat, sunscreen, water, and snacks. Be prepared to get wet as part of the adventure. The shorebird migration brought an impressive number of individuals and species to this outer beach in August 2000. Among birds observed last year were Piping Plover, American Oystercatcher, Whimbrel, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit (not by our group, unfortunately), Red Knot, Lesser Black-backed Gull (unusually high numbers in fall 2000), Common Black-headed Gull, Forster's Tern, and Roseate Tern. Plans now are for the group to depart from the Hadley Stop and Shop parking lot at 5:00 a.m. and meet Bob in Palmer at approximately 5:30 a.m. As the date approaches, call Al Richards at (413) 665-2761 or Bob Bieda at (413) 527-2623 for further details, directions and registration.

August the 26th (Half Day): *Stellwagen Bank, Pelagic Birds.* Susan Carver has tentatively agreed to lead a **NEW TRIP** for the club in search of pelagic birds. Tentatively, the group will join Captain John's whale watch out of Plymouth for the morning trip. As the boat searches for whales, Susan will help the group locate and identify the ocean-going birds, which tend to follow the whales. Possible birds include Shearwaters (Cory's, Greater, Sooty and Manx), Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Northern Gannet (immature) and early Jaegers. Cetaceans could include Humpback, Finback, and Minke Whales and the Atlantic White-sided Dolphin. Make your own reservations for the whale watch and for transportation

arrangements to Plymouth. The group will meet Susan at the boat. For further details including departure times, cost and phone numbers contact Shawn Smolen-Morton at 413-665-5196 or email at bachman@complit.umass.edu.

Remember to use the Voice of Audubon to learn what birds are being seen locally and across the state or to make a report. A toll-free number will put you in touch with the state-wide system at Lincoln that covers four separate Rare Bird Alert areas in Massachusetts. Call 1-888-224-6444 and follow directions.

For the literary minded: These friars were behind on their belfry payments, so they opened up a small florist shop to raise funds. Since everyone like to buy flowers from the men of God, a rival florist across town thought the competition was unfair. He asked the good fathers to close down, but they would not. He went back and begged the friars to close. They ignored him. So, the rival florist hired Hugh MacTaggart, the roughest and most vicious thug in town to "persuade" them to close. Hugh beat up the friars and trashed their store, saying he'd be back if they didn't close up shop. Terrified, they did so, thereby proving that - Hugh, and only Hugh, can prevent florist friars.

CONSERVATION

If you have special interest in conservation as it relates to birding, Anne Lombard, Conservation Chair, is always happy to talk to you. Contact her at 413-586-7509 or email at annelombard@mediaone.net.

The Wetland Fest on Sunday, May 20 was a big success. Many thanks to the crew who took charge of the HBC table: Dottie Barnes, Karen Gould, Ann Kearns, Henry Lappen, and Mary Alice Wilson.

The Amherst Breeding Bird Census will go into its twelfth 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 is looking for people who are quali-

fied 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 at 413-256-4045.

The next meeting of the Communication Towers Committee will be at the home of Marcia Merithew, 1238 Burts Pit Rd., Northampton on Wednesday, June 6 at 6:00 p.m. for a pot luck. Call Marcia (584-8874) for directions.

What do you call an authorized biography by someone who idolizes a talk show host? (drum roll) The Fan Tome of the Oprah!

LIBRARY

The HBC Library, maintained by Anne Cann, is located in the main room on the first floor of the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 525 South Pleasant Street in Amherst 413- 256-6006. Summer hours 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Anne always welcomes questions or suggestions for books that might be good additions to the collection. She can be reached at 413- 253-7753 or by email at cann@uhs.umass.edu.

During the summer hours (above) you can borrow from our collection of field guides to birds in the U.S., Canada and selected locations in other parts of the globe, books on general birding topics, and books dealing with literary or scientific aspects of birds. You may also borrow videos, audiotapes, periodicals and birding journals. This is a varied and unusually rich collection. If you have not checked it recently, you'll be pleasantly surprised. For those who have access to the Internet, there is a listing of titles on the HBC Web Pages.

There is also a list you can examine at meetings. If you wish to purchase birding equipment or a bird guide that the library does not have, borrow the ABA sales catalog.

Anne is happy to answer any questions or take suggestions of books you feel might be good additions to the collections. You can reach her at 413- 253-7753 or by email at cann@uhs.umass.edu.

Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root canal? He wanted to transcend dental medication.

A group of chess enthusiasts checked into the hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about an hour the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse. "But why?" they asked, as that moved off. "Because," he said, "I can't stand chess nuts boasting in an openoyer."

HITCHCOCK CENTER

Call the Center (413) 256-6006 for more information and to register for programs

Something new from the Hitchcock Center:

The Center is off to fascinating places and would like to invite you along. On January 11 - 19, 2002, the Hitchcock Center Travel Study, co-sponsored by The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, is offering a chance to *Discover Nature's Magic in CUBA!* The itinerary will explore Cuba's natural beauty and sites known among environmentalists and naturalists for their variety of habitats and landscapes plus visits to sites of historical interest. The preliminary itinerary mentions touring Old Havana, visits to the Cienaga marsh lands,

birdwatching at la Salina, nature walk at Topes, visits to museums, tours of historical cities and sites and much more.

Also being planned for June, 2002 is *Discover the Wilds of ICELAND!* Spend a delightful week exploring Iceland during the endless days of summer on this trip especially designed for the Center. Explore volcanic features, geothermal features, seabird colonies and outlying islands less than thirty years old.

If you think that you might be interested in either of these trips, give the Center a call for more information.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens went to the bakery to buy bread. He found that the baker had mistaken shredded lemon peel for leavening and had produced an uneatably sour and dense bread. Clemens then told the baker, "Remember that yeast is yeast and zest is zest or never Mark Twain shall eat."

MISCELLANEOUS

Refreshment Head Sue Emerson sends a very special thank you to all the kind commissary providers out there for helping to make the food table an outstanding part of the evening festivities. Birders require more than slides and bird talk to keep them quiet and happy and this year's collection of homemade brownies and cookies and other goodies was especially good! Thank you very much!

While on the subject of food, Sue Emerson who has been in charge of making sure that birders' tummies are kept happy is taking on the job of Membership Secretary for next year. Sally Venman has agreed to take over the commissary duties. The custom of the goody table with its coffee and tea and cookies and brownies and cheese and cider and homemade wonders graciously donated by willing members will go on. There are lots of people willing to donate food so that is not a

problem. But Sally needs **HELP** and is looking for a few volunteers who can take turns splitting up the tasks of calling people who have offered to donate, setting up the table and cleaning up afterwards. It is a simple way of doing a little extra for the Club and is so much appreciated. *This is not a gender-specific job!* Anyone can apply. Contact Sally 413-549-1098 or by email svenman@external.umass.edu if you care to help out in this manner.

We thank Tim and Pat Maginnis, owners of **BACKYARD BIRDS** at 17 Strong Avenue in Northampton for continuing to offer a 10% discount to all HBC members for all purchases. All you have to do is present a Newsletter with your address attached at the time of purchase. They have field guides, binoculars, scopes, CDs, cassettes, books, etc. etc. etc. Browsing is encouraged!

MEMBERSHIP LIST 2000-2001

New members:

Ortiz, Marty & Frombolett, Carl, 34 Dragon Hill Dr., Shelburne MA 01370; email: madmarty@hotmail.com.
Hale, Molly, 96 Oak St., Florence MA 01062; HPh: 413-585-0791; email: mhale@javanet.com

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, but when they lit a fire in the craft, it sank, proving one again that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.

WORD BOTCHER turns BIRD WATCHER

A bus station is where a bus stops.
A train station is where a train stops.
On my desk I have a work station

and

the time has come for *me* to stop, hang my HBC word files out to dry, and move on to the next challenge. I have been doing this for a long, long time. My first letter was prior to the first HBC meeting on April 26, 1984. This, my last, makes a total of somewhere in the vicinity of 165 communications (or 153 short of Bob Bieda's 318 bird species seen in one year for those who count).

For the most part, it has been a wonderful experience, one that has enriched my life beyond imagination. I have learned so much about the beauty and mystery of birds and the natural world. I have been

to amazing places. I have had the privilege of meeting with and learning from *really* special people who have given me support, insight and lots of laughs. I have made lifelong friends. And I have learned what great fun putting words together can be. Not bad for having started out not knowing the difference between a word processor and a food processor!

I am more than happy to let you know that I'll be passing this job on to a wonderfully enthusiastic birder, fine writer and very funny man, David Peake-Jones, who will be behind the keyboard come September.

and so . . .

The birds and the words are calling me. Thanks all for years of encouragement and support and terrible puns! Thanks to all those *really* special people who have been my teachers and have held my hand along the way!

But . . . I have to admit to having mixed feelings right now.

As I believe I have said before, "A pun is its own reword." But have you ever noticed that PUN spelled backwards is NUP?

Well . . .

a nup is a nup is a nup I'm out of here! See you in the field.

Sally

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts

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

Volume 18, No. 1: September, 2001



September draws nigh. Immature humans return to the classroom, asking questions such as, “Mom, why do I have to wear this lame outfit?”, “But why does my navel have to be covered?” and “Well, what if all my friends have it pierced?” Meanwhile, immature birds wander about the landscape asking questions like, “Why do I have to wear this lame outfit?”, “Why isn’t my navel showing?” and “Do I even have one?”. Pretty soon, all the rest of this cicada-thrumming summer indolence will be replaced by the insistent whisperings of migratory hormones. The shorebirds are already well on their way and songbirds will soon begin to sift silently through our overgrown valley. Hawks will begin their wondrous dance with the rising air.

This newsletter is to welcome you to the new club year. Please remember to send us your membership dues, using the enclosed form. (Stimulate the HBC economy by using part of that pesky tax refund which is burning a hole in your wallet!). We also need the release form on the back, if you plan to go on field trips. If you joined for the first time after April 30, 2001, the dues you paid are good through August 31, 2002. Check the enclosed field trip schedule ASAP- they will fill up fast. Sign up also for the rare bird alert, if you are serious about chasing rarities in the valley or beyond. *Oh, and don’t forget to keep the evening of Monday, September 10 free for our first program (see below)!!*

After all that, you are free to strap on the binocs. and enjoy the bounty of fall birding with a clear conscience!!

HBC Newsletter Goes on Line!

This is the inaugural on-line edition of the newsletter. For those of you with access to the Internet, each newsletter will now be available at the club’s website. We urge all who can to avail themselves of this option.

“What’s the point?”

Well, of course, you will also hear first word of the illuminating programs, tantalizing field trips, and, of course, salacious gossip for which the club is known. The real point is that, if the club can save on the costs of printing and mailing, we can keep membership fees down, and provide other things to our membership. Rest assured, the traditional hard copy, delivered via USPS, will continue to be available for those who choose it.

“But how will I remember to download the newsletter??”

An email will arrive reassuringly in your in-box, advising you that the newsletter is up on the website.

“How do I sign up?”

Please sign up on the membership form. Thank you.

An Editors (apologetic) Moment.....

Some of you probably like columns. In fact, some of you are probably wishing “Why can’t there be columns in this newsletter?” Well, rest assured that no one likes columns more than I do. I really like columns. However, just at this moment, columns do not seem to like me. So, until the columns learn who is boss, there are not going to be any columns. Maybe next time. Sorry.

PROGRAMS

All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant St., Amherst. Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 radio.

On **Monday, September 10**, Dr. Gerard Bertrand will present a program entitled, “**Amazon Adventure: The Peruvian Amazon**”.

Dr. Bertrand was the president of Massachusetts Audubon Society from 1980 to 1999 and is currently president emeritus of that organization. He received a B.A. in zoology from the University of New Hampshire, an M.S. in biological sciences from Florida State University, a Ph.D. in biological oceanography from Oregon State University, and a J.D. in environmental law from the University of Wisconsin.

From 1977 to 1980, Dr. Bertrand served as Chief of International Affairs for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Prior to that, he served as senior scientist for the President's Council on Environmental Quality under Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter. Still earlier, Dr. Bertrand was an ecological adviser to the chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and was influential in forming the Corp's environmental policies and guidelines. In 1994, Dr. Bertrand became Chairman of Birdlife International. He is a trustee and co-founder of World Land Trust, and a trustee of the American Bird Conservancy. He is also Vice-President of Fauna and Flora International, based in London.

Dr. Bertrand lives in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, and is most welcome amongst us at HBC.

Coming Up.....

October 15: Mark and Marcia Wilson on birding Nantucket

November 12: Sam Friede on the Bolivian Amazon

December 3: Members meeting

TRIP REPORTS

Stacy Adams and two others toured **Mt. Greylock** on **June 9**. Amongst forty-six species observed were Chestnut-sided Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Indigo Bunting and Scarlet Tanager. A Louisiana Waterthrush plied the air with song, but eluded all three pairs of eyes. Three Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers made a lot of noise. A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak coquettishly fanned her tail for two amorous males. The birding highlight was a beautiful male Mourning Warbler, which serenaded the group *in the open* for some four minutes. Stacy surmises that this bird finally took pity on its pursuers, after avoiding them for at least half an hour. This trip has found Mourning Warblers for several consecutive years now.

Butterflies seen included two Early Hairstreaks, Spring Azure, White and Red Admirals, and Red-spotted Purple. An Eight-spotted Forrester (moth) completed the lepidopterans on show.

Bob Bieda led about 20 birders to **Westover Air Force Base** on **June 9**. This is one of the most significant grassland habitats left in the northeast. We spotted our first Upland Sandpiper within yards of the road, and estimate that we had at least 12 individuals in all. At least one bird made its beautiful burbling flight-call. Meadowlarks in good voice were conspicuous, and the group found at least eight Grasshopper Sparrows. In the cranberry bog we speculated over a five-six foot snake skin (unoccupied) sampled last years cranberry crop (still remarkably good), and teased sundews (with no apparent loss of life or limb). Despite some trepidation over managerial changes at the base, it seems that, for now, at least, this unique habitat remains open for birds, and birders.

Shawn Smolen-Morton and the field trip leaders have put together a scintillating set of field trips for the Fall. Please see the enclosed list, and sign up!!!

LIBRARY

Your mom always said "Neither a borrower or a lender be." Right?

WRONG!! HBC has a substantial library, located at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst. **Anne Cann** maintains a collection of birding resources including field guides, bird-finding guides to almost every major birding destination in the U.S., and some overseas locations, natural histories, periodicals and videos. Why *buy* for that once-in-a-lifetime trip to the Rio Grande valley, when you could *borrow*?

Hours are those of the Hitchcock Center (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays). Items can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, either from the library, or from the selection of items Anne brings to meetings. Anne welcomes questions about the library contents, or suggestions for future additions. Call her at **(413) 253 7753**, or send email to cann@uhs.umass.edu

CONSERVATION

*If you are interested in conservation of birds and birding habitat, you may like to share information and effort with others in the club. **Anne Lombard** is our conservation chair. She often coordinates volunteers in breeding-bird surveys, and is usually involved in various cutting-edge conservation issues. Contact her at **(413) 586 7509**, or annelombard@mediaone.net*

The next meeting of the Cellular Towers group will be a potluck at 6 p.m. on Monday, August 27 at the home of Lola Reid; telephone 584 9463. These are active folks who have already presented a great deal of information at club meetings.

Hitchcock Center

Our very own **Scott Sumner** is teaching the **Fall Birding** course at the center this year. Classes will consist of Saturday field trips and Wednesday evening classroom sessions, from Wednesday August 22 through November 28 (with some days and evenings off). Venues will include Plum Island, Berkshire Lakes, Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge in Concord, as well as assorted locations in Hampshire and Hampden counties. Scott is a wonderful birder and teacher. Both Fall and Spring courses at Hitchcock have given many club members a solid start to birding, or a mid-career boost, for a bargain price.

*For details and registration for all Hitchcock programs, please contact the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 525 South Pleasant St., Amherst MA 01002. Telephone **(413) 256 6006**, or on the web at www.hitchcockcenter.org.*

To preserve confidentiality, we have excluded contact information for new members from this e-edition of the newsletter.

Please remember to go to the other links on the newsletter web page to get the Membership Form/Release Form, and the Rare Bird Alert Sign-up

Thank you!

HBC Directory

President: Mary Alice Wilson: (413) 548 9078; mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu

VP/Program Chair: Geoff LeBaron; (413) 268 9281; glebaron@mediaone.net

Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson; (413) 584 6736; wle33@aol.com

Communications Secretary: Jan Howard; (413) 542 2721; jhoward@amherst.edu

Treasurer: David Gross; (413) 253 2897; dgross@chemserv.chem.umass.edu

Board Members

Stacy Adams; (413) 367 0177; stacybadams@netzero.net

Dennis McKenna; (413) 256 8439

Jan Ortiz; (413) 549 1768; jtortiz@aol.com

Scott Turner; (413) 253 7486; ssurner@aol.com

Sally Venman; (413) 549 1098; svenman@external.umass.edu

David Peake-Jones (see below)

Field Trips: Shawn Smolen Morton; 413 863 4569; bachmann@complit.umass.edu

Conservation Chair: Anne Lombard; (413) 586 7589; annelombard@mediaone.net

Library: Anne Cann; (413) 253 7753; cann@uhs.umass.edu

Publicity: Marion Gorham; (413) 548 9435; alnmarion@juno.com

Webmaster: Merry Cushing; (413) 253 5266; cushing@oit.umass.edu

Refreshments: Sally Venman (see above)

Newsletter Editor: David Peake-Jones; (413) 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com

Stream Of Consciousness....

For those who want the latest on birds being seen in the valley and beyond, there are two options. The **Voice of Audubon** maintains a report on birds being seen statewide. Call **1-888-224-6444** for a synopsis of interesting birds being seen, organized by region. Jan Ortiz maintains the report for Western Massachusetts. She tries to create a comprehensive picture of what is being seen in the region, meaning all reports are welcome. Jan asks that you include the numbers of birds seen in your reports, not just the species list. Jan prefers to be reached by email at jtortiz@aol.com. Alternatively, you may call her at (413) 549 1768, or leave a message in the Western Mass. section of The Voice.

For hard-core chasers, the **Rare Bird Alert** is an email/phone tree run by HBC. Please see the cautions on the RBA form (enclosed) if you are considering being part of it.

Backyard Birds, at 17 Strong Ave., Northampton offers members a 10% discount on all purchases from their stock of birding books, feeders, birdhouses, and numerous other items.

Arcadia Sanctuary is hosting several bird-walks and hawkwatches in September. Saturday walks will be from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at the following times and places:

September 8 at Arcadia Sanctuary; **15** at M.S Lynes Wildlife Sanctuary; **22** at Graves Farm; **29** at Arcadia Sanctuary.

Hawkwatches at Mt Tom will occur from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, **September 15** and Tuesday, **October 2**. For further information, please call Arcadia at (413) 584 3009.

For **crane enthusiasts**, Dr. George Archibald of the International Crane Foundation will speak about the **Black-necked Crane** of high altitude Tibet and China on Thursday, September 6 at 6pm. The event is hosted by the Harvard Museum of Natural History, and will take place in the Geological Lecture Hall, Harvard University, 24 Oxford St., Cambridge. For further information, please call Kyle Roberts at (617) 496 8204.

David Peake-Jones, (413) 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~hampbird/>
Volume 18, No. 2: October 2001



The shortening days of September bring something for any birder. Indeed, some of us find ourselves torn between staying with that group of confusing warblers in the meadows, or being a few minutes earlier up the mountain for what the first thermals of the morning may bring. Whether it is the promise of a white eye-ring deep in a dark thicket, or the breath-taking, sickle-winged flash of a merlin, we all find magic in the season.

On September 10, Gerry Bertrand delighted us with his account of birding the Peruvian Amazon. I can find little to say here about what happened the next day, and since. I hope that birding has given you, as it has me, some moments of gentleness and joy to hold onto.

PROGRAMS

On **Monday, October 15**, we will once again host Mark and Marcia Wilson, who will present “**Nantucket Through the Seasons**”.

Early in her career, **Marcia Litchfield Wilson** was the “Voice of Audubon” for MAS in Lincoln, Massachusetts, where she was extensively involved in public education, field work and bird research. After earning a B.S. in Biology, she moved to Nantucket, where she studied Piping Plovers and Least Terns for the Trustees of Reservations. During twelve years on the island, she designed and implemented a natural history tour program on a large barrier beach refuge, and wrote the newspaper column “Island Bird Sightings” for nine years. After leaving Nantucket, Marcia has become a widely known and respected environmental educator. Through her program “Owls of New England,” she has brought the ecology of the region to both adults and children, largely via live birds and husband Mark’s exquisite photographs.

Mark Wilson is a wildlife photographer, bird columnist, photojournalist, and avid birder. He has been a full time staff photographer at the *Boston Globe* newspaper and wrote the *Globe’s* weekly photography column for nine years. Mark’s photographs have appeared in *National Wildlife*, *Sanctuary*, *Canadian Wildlife*, *Equinox*, and a host of other publications. Mark’s photographs are imbued with his understanding of animal behavior and light. He has ranged widely through North America and the Arctic, often with his wife Marcia.

Mark and Marcia Wilson operate their lecturing and stock photography agency, WILDSHOT, as well as the “Eyes On Owls” education programs, from their home in Massachusetts. They are accomplished and inspiring presenters, who will no doubt share much of their personal insight into the remarkable island of Nantucket. Live birds will be part of this presentation and, as an added bonus, they will donate a Snowy Owl print to the club. This will somehow find its way to one lucky member.

Coming Up.....

November 12: Sam Friede on the Bolivian Amazon.

December 3: Members meeting.

January 14, 2002: Dave Small on Birds, Butterflies and Beyond.

FIELD TRIPS

The following trips are coming up. Please see the Fall Field Trip Guide (September edition) for details.

October 5-8. Cape May, New Jersey. Currently full. Scott Surner: 253-7486.

October 10. Morning Sweep of the Valley. Harvey Allen: 253-7963.

October 14. Quabbin. This trip is currently full, and is subject to cancellation due to security measures around the reservoir. Check with Tom Gagnon: 584-6353.

October 20. Dead Creek, VT. Al Richards: 665-2761.

November 4. Berkshire Lakes. Tom Gagnon: 584-6353.

The enclosures with this edition: the Field Trip Policy, Principles of Birding Ethics, and the Guidelines for Field Trips and Drivers are all designed to make field trips better. Please read them!

Trip Reports

Bob Bieda and Al Richards led a group of eight birders to **New South Beach** (off Cape Cod) on **August 25**. The tide was not cooperative, and perhaps contributed to modest numbers of shorebirds. However, there were a number of Hudsonian Godwits, one Marbled Godwit, at least one Whimbrel, and quite a few Red Knots. Several Parasitic Jaegers were observed at close range, harassing the terns off the ocean beach.

We spent a large part of the day picking through large flocks of Common Terns for Roseate and Forster's Terns, which were both quite numerous. The gentle breeze and sun led to an epidemic of napping, mostly afflicting the rank-and-file, while Bob and Al diligently hunted for a Black Tern. Toward the end of the day all seemed lost. Bob finally succumbed to the call of a soft sand bank, while lesser mortals picked forlornly through the piscivorous hordes. Imagine our chagrin when Bieda, still rubbing the sleep from his eyes, staggered to his feet a few minutes later and promptly found the elusive tern.

For his part, Al had bet that the group would not find a Curlew Sandpiper. Shawn Smolen-Morton agreed to carry Al up the stairs from the boat launch if the bird did show up. Those familiar with the story of Robin Hood may note Shawn's striking resemblance to Friar Tuck, who was compelled to transport the good Robin across a stream in just such a fashion. History did not repeat on this occasion, but did anyone else hear that strangled cry emitted by Shawn just after lunch?

On Wednesday, **September 19**, Harvey Allen and six others swept the **Connecticut River Valley**. Harvey reports that the amount of sweeping actually required was minimal. The group found a very cooperative Gray-cheeked Thrush almost immediately after setting out from Atkins. Thirty-six species were seen in about an hour and a half, in basically the same area, including Blackpoll Warbler, Northern Parula, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, and a family of Red-bellied Woodpeckers. Harvey's thinking of renaming his series the mid-week "vacuum" of the Connecticut River.

On **September 29**, Geoff LeBaron went somewhere mysterious with some other birders. You'll have to wait till the next newsletter.....

LIBRARY

Bill Clinton has one. George Bush Snr. has one. Ummm...the President before that has one. Some day, even G.W. will have one. More to the point, we have one!

A substantial library, that is. It is located at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst. **Anne Cann** maintains a collection of birding resources including field guides, bird-finding guides to almost every major birding destination in the U.S. and some overseas locations, natural histories, periodicals, and videos. **Hours** are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Items can be signed

out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. Anne welcomes questions about the library contents, or suggestions for future additions. She even brings a selection of items to meetings! Call her at (413) 253 7753, or send email to cann@uhs.umass.edu

CONSERVATION

*If you are interested in conservation of birds and birding habitat, you may like to share information and effort with others in the club. **Anne Lombard** is our conservation chair. She often organizes a stalwart band of volunteers conducting breeding-bird surveys, and is usually involved in various cutting-edge conservation issues. Contact her at (413) 586-7509, or annelombard@mediaone.net*

HITCHCOCK CENTER

Amongst the numerous public programs at the center this fall, "Wings in the Night" looks at the ecology of north-eastern bats and, in particular, a project to renovate a 1900 foot tunnel into the largest bat hibernation site in this region.

*With **John Foster**, New England Naturalist Training Center*

Tuesday, November 13, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Free, with a suggested donation.

Hitchcock Center Travel is collaborating with other local travel organizations to offer some truly groundbreaking experiences in foreign natural history and culture.

January 11-19, 2002. CUBA (with the Center for Cross-Cultural Study).

June 26-July 5, 2002. ICELAND: Land of Fire and Ice (with Cross Culture).

For details and registration for all Hitchcock programs, please contact the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 525 South Pleasant St., Amherst MA 01002. Telephone (413) 256 6006, or on the web at www.hitchcockcenter.org.

Arcadia

Hawk Watch at Mt. Tom

with **Dan Russell**

Tuesday, October 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (fee)

"Important Bird Areas"

Andrea Jones, (bird conservation biologist) and **Wayne Petersen**, (MAS ornithologist)

Saturday, October 13, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Raindate: Sunday October 14.

This session introduces the "Important Bird Areas" program in Massachusetts, which is part of an international effort to encourage protection of major breeding and migrational areas for birds. There will be a slide show, followed by a tour of IBAs in the Connecticut River Valley. Fee.

*For more details, and to register for programs at Arcadia, contact **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary**, 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton MA 01027. Telephone (413) 584-3009.*

Universal Resource Locator!!!

The club now has its own URL: <http://hampshirebirdclub.org>. Our address (listed at the head of this letter) has not changed but from now on, even if the address should change, the URL will always find us. We have the multi-talented David Gross to thank for thinking of this and following it up.

If You Cannot Make It to Meetings.....

A number of members are unable to attend meetings because of long-term health concerns which make driving difficult or impossible. We hope there are other members who can offer a ride to someone from the same geographic area who needs one.

If you need a ride to meetings, or can offer one, please contact **Sally Venman (549 1098)**. She will attempt to match people from each group. We want to emphasize that this is intended for those with long-term medical and/or age-related needs, and not to solve short-term difficulties such as car trouble.

Christmas Counts.

It's never too early to start ingratiating yourself with the top birders from your patch, or suggesting that an area leader from your department might like to take a sabbatical. Remember that last year's Northampton count took place on one of the wettest days of the year, and the Quabbin folk were almost blown away. This year has to be better!

Northampton Christmas Count: Sunday, December 16. Raindate; Sunday, December 16

For more information, contact Jan Ortiz (549-1768 or jtoriz@aol.com)/ Mary Alice Wilson (548-9078 or mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu)

Quabbin Christmas Count: Saturday December 29, 2001

"It never rains on the Quabbin Count"

For more information, contact Scott Surner (253-7486 or ssurner@aol.com)

Thank you for receiving the newsletter on-line. It helps our bottom line, and reduces the mailing madness considerably.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.....

Hampshire Bird Club Evening at WFCR

A group of 6-8 volunteers from HBC will be answering phones during the upcoming pledge drive at the local NPR station, WFCR. Join fellow birders for a few hours during "Prairie Home Companion," "The Thistle and Shamrock," and "Valley Folk." You'll be trained, and then take pledges from callers. Food and beverages are provided; all you need do is bring yourself (and friend if you wish). If you'd like to join the fun, call or email Dave Gross at 253-2897 or dgross@biochem.umass.edu to sign up.

Date: Saturday, October 20

Time: 6-10 p.m.

Location: WFCR studios, Hampshire House, UMass campus.

Club member **Chris Page** (who designed our beautiful logo, amongst other things), is exhibiting some of his latest paintings. The exhibition features **"new paintings from the stream works series,"** and is taking place at *The Grubbs Gallery in the Reed Center*

Williston Northampton School

19 Payson Avenue, Easthampton MA 01027

This, incidentally, puts the exhibition right smack at the cultural center of the valley, and on the fashionable side of the river (ed.) Come take a look!

That's all for this month!

David Peake-Jones; 529-9541 or davidpj@the-spa.com

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>
Volume 18, No. 3: November, 2001



WOW! What a bird club! This edition contains the field trip schedule through next summer, which boasts no less than *thirty* trips, five of which are new. What with that, the monthly program introduction, a couple of trip reports, and the general business of the club, this editorial has to end on the next line. How lucky for you, gentle reader! Maybe I have just enough room to tell you about what happened to me on the way home from

.....

PROGRAMS

On **Monday, November 12**, *Sam Fried* will talk about one of the most exciting birding destinations on Earth when he presents **Bolivia: The Lost World of Noel Kempff Mercado National Park**.

Sam is a Past-President of the Hartford Audubon Society. Hundreds of his photographs and dozens of his articles have appeared in birding media worldwide, including *National Audubon*, *Birder's World*, *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Birding*, and *Living Bird Quarterly*. Sam wrote several chapters of the new *Insight Guides* book on birding in North America, (published by the *Discovery Channel*), and writes a weekly column as the wildlife expert for *Gorp.com* on AOL.

Mr. Fried co-founded Flights of Fancy Adventures, Inc., a birding and natural history travel company offering small-group, low-cost, high-quality trips to North-, Central-, and South American destinations. Sam reckons he has seen 730 species in North America, and photographed 702.

We will travel with Sam by plane to the forests, savannas, floodplains, plateaus and awe-inspiring waterfalls of one of the most remote and pristine national parks in South America. This area has changed little since Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote about it some ninety years ago in "The Lost World." In these vast, uninhabited forests, dissected by dark rivers, birds and animals thrive in one of the world's largest contiguous wildernesses. The park, about the size of Massachusetts, has a bird list of almost 700, and 130 known mammals, with new species being discovered constantly. It is tempting to imagine, as Conan Doyle did, that a dinosaur may be among them!

Coming Up.....

December 3: Members meeting.

January 14, 2002: Dave Small on Birds, Butterflies and Beyond.

February 11, 2002: Bill Danielson on bird rehabilitation.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Geoff LeBaron and two others took a swing through the **Connecticut River Valley** on **September 29**. Highlights were one Northern Goshawk, one Peregrine Falcon, and one female Connecticut Warbler. In finding this bird for the first time, Betsy Higgins breaks a long-standing pact with the editor. The group also had a few late broadwings, more than 50 American Pipits, a significant number of migrating Northern Flickers and tons of Red-winged Blackbirds, amongst a total of 55 species.

Cape May, New Jersey. October 5-8.

Some places in North America have taken on almost mythological significance for birders. Think of the Rio Grande Valley, south-eastern Arizona, Point Pelee, and Hawk Mountain. Perhaps the most hyped of all is Cape May. Reading Pete Dunne, Clay Sutton and others, or perhaps listening to the awed recollections of some lucky mortal, one gets the impression that warblers drip from every tree, and migrating hawks swirl like gnats in the skies. If, however, you have been there while the cape languished in a soup of still, hot, humid air, with nary a migrant to be seen, you might be forgiven for wondering what all the fuss is about. Well, there are now nineteen Hampshire birders out there promulgating the myth as well!

The tone was set on Friday as we birded Brigantine (the Forsyth National Wildlife Refuge), just north of Atlantic City. There were several peregrines, a nice group of Pectoral Sandpipers, an American Bittern (yards away), two American Avocets, and a large flock of mixed waterfowl, including hundreds of Snow Geese, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Gadwall, and teal, being harassed at intervals by a Bald Eagle. Saturday was rainy, but highlighted by a nice show of Royal and Forster's terns obligingly close to the (dry) pavilion at Cape May Point State Park, and thousands of tree swallows boiling in the air north of the deserted hawk-watch platform. The weather report promised passage of a cold front overnight, bringing with it stiff north-westerlies, and lots of birds!

On Sunday morning we arrived, clutching coffee, (or whatever other stimulants were needed) at Higbee Beach, an area of managed fields, hedgerows and woods, very close to the tip of the cape itself. The brisk northerlies were indeed in evidence, and prevented us from hearing more than a few chips from above. However, as dawn broke over the hedgerows, it revealed birds by the hundreds streaming through the undergrowth and overhead. During a couple of hours at our location, we estimated several thousand Palm Warblers, hundreds of Yellow-rumped Warblers, and numerous other migrants. Dozens of flickers flashed yellow in the low morning sun as they wheeled and darted over the fields. Sharp-shinned Hawks and kestrels beat their way northward, having been driven unwittingly to the tip of the cape on the wind, diving mercilessly in pursuit of unseen targets amongst the brush. We simply stood in front of a sunny patch and waited as the sparrows, buntings, and warblers emerged to warm up. When eventually we made our way to the hawk-watch platform, the parade of accipiters, kestrels, merlins, harriers, eagles and peregrines, (plus a surprising number of Broad-winged Hawks), was fully revealed.

There is much else that could be said about the hundreds of skimmers on the beach, the Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Higbee, the encore performance on Monday morning, and the 141 species totalled on the trip. However, perhaps the best thing that can be said is that the club hopes to go again next year!

Coming Trips (see also the Fall Field Trip Schedule, sent previously)

November 4. Berkshire Lakes. All day. Migrating waterfowl and non-migratory donuts. Call Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) for information and to register.

November 14. Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. Half day. Meet Harvey Allen across the road from Atkins Farms in Amherst at 8 am. Call Harvey at 413-253-7963 for more information.

November 18. East Quabbin. This trip has not yet been cancelled, but the prognosis is not good at the time of writing, due to access restrictions. Please call Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) to register your interest, and he will keep you informed.

November 23. Turkey Trot to Cape Ann. Sea ducks, alcids, maybe a Snowy Owl. No access restrictions here, save the ones you impose on yourself through over-consumption of poultry at Thanksgiving. Call Al Richards (413-665-2761) to register.

December 12. Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. With Harvey (413 253 7963). You know the drill.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Rain or shine, snow or sleet, ready or not, it's time for the 101st National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count! Take this opportunity to contribute to the longest running database in ornithology! Join the more than 50,000 volunteers in the US, Canada, the Caribbean, Latin America and Pacific Islands as they take to the field to count birds! You don't have to be an expert and you don't have to devote the entire day to this effort. You can also contribute from the warmth and comfort of your own home by being a feeder watcher. Everyone is welcome!

Some of the HBC December meeting is devoted to allowing area leaders and volunteers to get together and begin planning their efforts for the Northampton count. For most, the day starts at dawn, but for the die-hards, the owling can start at midnight. There is typically a compilation of results which commences in the late afternoon.

The **Northampton Christmas Count** (in its 68th year) will be held on **Sunday, December 16**. For information contact Jan Ortiz (413) 549-1768 jtortiz@aol.com or Mary Alice Wilson (413) 548-9078 mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu. A potluck supper will be held at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst the evening of the count. If you cannot participate in the field but would like to help by preparing food that would also be appreciated.

The **Quabbin Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 29**. For information contact Scott Surner (413) 253-7486 ssurner@aol.com. Please note that as of this writing, parts of the Quabbin Reservoir remain closed.

The **Springfield Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 15**. For information contact Bruce Kindseth (860) 745-9593 kindsebr@aol.com

The **Athol Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 15**. For information contact David Small (413) 249-2094 dhsml@gis.net.

The **Greenfield Count** occurs on **Sunday, December 30**. Contact Mark Fairbrother at (413) 367-2695

RARE BIRD ALERT

The **Rare Bird Alert** is now in place for the 2001-2002 year. The telephone tree is fixed until September 2002, but new members may be added to the email list by contacting Merry Cushing (413-253-5266; cushing@oit.umass.edu). Don't forget the **Voice of Audubon at 1-888-224-6444**, which is a frequently-updated account of interesting birds being seen in our region. Jan Ortiz welcomes your reports (include numbers seen, please). You can reach her at jtortiz@aol.com or 413-549-1768.

BOUTIQUE LAUNCHES NEW PRODUCT LINE!!

Before you call that overly-red Song Sparrow a Fox Sparrow, wouldn't it be good to know when they are supposed to be here? There is an HBC home-grown **field guide supplement** which will help you know just that. Through the efforts of HBC alumnus Dianne Quilty, and more recently, resurrective work by the stalwart Bill Venman, there is now a series of labels, covering all birds on the Mass. Daily Field Card. These identify birds as permanent residents, or give their dates of arrival and departure in this state. They also indicate whether the bird breeds locally, and abundance information. The labels are adhesive-backed, and can be affixed next to species descriptions in your favorite field guide.

All the above for \$4 at meetings (from the Boutique, of course) or \$5 by mail from Sue Fletcher (413-253-2102; scfletch@aol.com). What are you waiting for?

LOTS MORE GOOD STUFF

The following folks helped with the recent **WFCR fund drive**: John and Merry Cushing, Sue Fletcher, David Gross, Mary Alice Wilson, Bob and Hannah Zimmerman. **Thanks** for getting our name out there, and helping a good cause.

Anne Cann wants you to know that the **library** is still at Hitchcock, but that it is not currently open on Saturdays. It is open on Tuesday to Friday, 9 am – 3 pm. Don't forget that Ann can bring materials to meetings, given a few days notice. She asks that you return outstanding library materials, if you have them, at the December meeting.

The **Holyoke Range Ecological Working Group** would like you to know about an exciting opportunity to learn about and participate in local wildlife conservation. Susan Morse, the Founder of Keeping Track, will present a program on **New England wildlife at 7 pm on Tuesday, December 4, at the Chapin Auditorium, Mt. Holyoke College** in South Hadley. The program is intended to introduce the animals of the region and techniques used in recording and monitoring their populations. Keeping Track is a conservation organization, based in Vermont and active nationally. They aim to establish a long-term wildlife-monitoring program on the Mt. Holyoke Range, employing trained local volunteers. The December 4 program will also introduce this effort. If you would like to know more, please contact Kristin DeBoer of the HREWG at 413-253-6720, or kdeboer@restore.org.

If You Cannot Make It to Meetings.....

A number of members are unable to attend meetings because of long-term health concerns which make driving difficult or impossible. We hope there are other members who can offer a ride to someone from the same geographic area who needs one.

If you need a ride to meetings, or can offer one, please contact **Sally Venman (549 1098)**. She will attempt to match people from each group. We want to emphasize that this is intended for those with long-term medical concerns, and not to solve short-term difficulties such as car trouble.

PROCRASTINATORS READ THIS NOW!!!

If you have been a member in recent years, but have **not** paid a membership fee this year (since September, 2001), you will find the dreaded Dunning Letter enclosed with this newsletter. We'd hate to lose you. Please rejoin today!

That's all for now!

David Peake-Jones, Phone (413) 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>
Volume 18, No. 4: December, 2001.



"The mole decided he rather liked the country undecorated – hard and stripped of its summer finery. He had got down to the bare bones of it, and they were fine, strong and simple."

So wrote Kenneth Graham in "The Wind in the Willows" as the small, enterprising hero of his story embarked on an early-winter journey to the Wild Wood. I'm often reminded of those words when birding the meadows at this time of year. The steely skies and dun-colored meadows seem a bit melancholy at times, but in the cutting edge of the air and the suddenly-big sky, there is always the promise of some wandering oddity among our hardy residents and late migrants. If waterfowl, geese, and lingering sparrows were not enough, we were blessed with a Western Kingbird in the West Meadows, an Allen's/Rufous hummingbird in Granby, Boreal Chickadees fleeing starvation in the North and, no doubt, other treasures of the season. Hopefully the Leonids portend great birding this winter!

Where's My Email Reminder?

Since we are distributing a paper copy of the membership list to all members this month, everyone gets the paper newsletter. Call it a touch of nostalgia, which also safeguards the privacy of your personal information from the rapacious hordes on the internet. If you really need the electronic newsletter, you may view it on the website as usual. These sheets of compressed, bleached and formed wood pulp with the quaint ink marks are your reminder.

PROGRAMS

December 3 is the annual **Members Meeting**. This is a chance to kick back, discuss the great birds of the year and, of course, the one that got away. Please bring your natural history slides (keep it to within twenty slides, please) and a snack or dessert to share.

If there are non-perishable leftovers, and if donors are willing, these will contribute to the bounty at the Christmas Count potluck. The meeting is also a chance to organize groups for the Christmas count.

And For Those With Calendars for Next Year.....

January 14: Dave Small on "Birds, Butterflies and Beyond".

February 11: Bill Danielson about bird rehabilitation.

March 11: Lori Sanders goes behind the radio show.

April 8: Andrew Farnsworth explores radar ornithology.

May 13: Jeff Podos discusses Galapagos finches.

June 10: Marta Hersek illuminates Ovenbirds.

Even Further On.....

The remaining dates for calendar 2002 are:

September 9; October 21; November 18; and December 9.

Possible speakers on these dates include Bob Askins; Mara Silver; Wayne Petersen; Tom Litwin; Tom Martin and our own Geoff LeBaron.

Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day. <u>Teach</u> a man to fish and he'll sit in a boat drinking beer all weekend.
--

Membership List

We enclose a copy of the membership list for all individual and family members of the club. Please note that the list is for the private use of HBC members and is not to be used for any commercial purpose. In a club as large as we have become, some errors are inevitable in the printed list. If your information is incorrect, please advise Sue Emerson (413-584-6736; wle33@aol.com) as soon as possible.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

We are becoming used to worrying about the declining abundance of many groups of birds. Some of those wishing to escape this anxiety for a day went to **Dead Creek on October 20**. Apparently, there were a few Snow Geese (more than ten thousand), at least one Ross's Goose, gorgeous Rusty Blackbirds, and good looks at Snipe. Some folks also got close enough to an immature White-winged Crossbill to see the overbite.

On **November 4**, Tom Gagnon and fifteen others toured the **Berkshire Lakes**. At Moran Wildlife Management Area they saw 2 Ravens, a Northern Shrike and a superb adult Northern Goshawk. On the lakes there were 5 Ruddy Ducks, 3 Lesser Scaup and 700-800 Ring-necked Ducks amongst modest numbers of 18 species of waterfowl. Numerous Torus-bodied Cider Donuts were observed briefly from Bartletts, before their timely demise.

The four birders in Harvey's **mid-week group on November 14** voted to go look at the hummingbird in Granby. They got 21 other species into the bargain!

Last-minute negotiating by Tom Gagnon allowed HBC to gain access to the **eastern Quabbin** reservoir on **November 18**. The group heard Red Crossbills and Redpolls, which eluded all the assembled eyes. They did see 6 Bald Eagles, 3 Pine Grosbeaks, 7 American Pipits, 11 Common Loons, 7 Common Goldeneyes, 15 Snow Buntings, 4 Horned Grebes, 12 Ruffed Grouse, and 52 Hooded Mergansers. However the bird to envy was an adult **Golden Eagle**.

As usual, Tom managed to rustle up 7 otters and a couple of porcupines, and was happy to find one (presumably complacent) Orange Sulfur butterfly.

Coming Trips

See also the Fall and Winter Field Trip schedules, sent previously, and on the web.

December 12. Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. Do you really need an excuse to go to Atkins this time of year? Half a day with Harvey Allen (253 7963), starting at 8 am across the road from Atkins.

January 5. North Shore: Cape Anne to Plum Island. Bob Bieda will be looking for sea ducks, including harlequins, both eiders, grebes and maybe even a Short-eared or Snowy owl.

January 16. Winter birding in January. With Harvey, from opposite Atkins at 8 am, for winter finches, Horned Larks, longspurs, Snow Buntings and all the fickle irruptives of the season.

January 19. Winter Finches. Shirley Hillborn will tailor this trip to likely sites for Purple Finch, siskins, redpolls and crossbills. Meet at Hitchcock Center at 8 am.

CONSERVATION

If you are interested in conservation of birds and birding habitat, you may like to share information and effort with others in the club. Anne Lombard is our conservation chair. She often coordinates volunteers in breeding-bird surveys, and is usually involved in various cutting-edge conservation issues. Contact her at (413) 586 7509, or annelombard@mediaone.net

CHRISTMAS COUNTS

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The regions listed below have been divided up into areas which can be thoroughly counted by a small group in one day. Each area has a count-leader, who needs help to count all birds in the area. **THIS MEANS YOU!** In consultation with the leader, you can figure out how best to contribute. Some of the HBC December meeting is devoted to allowing area leaders and volunteers to get together and begin planning their efforts. For most, the day starts at dawn, but for the die-hards, the owling can start at midnight. There is typically a compilation of results which commences in the late afternoon.

Note: No two Christmas counts are ever the same, unlike this article which is exactly the same as last month's. Hey, some of us got day jobs.

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Other Local Counts

The **Quabbin Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 29**. For information contact Scott Surner (413) 253-7486 ssurner@aol.com. Please note that as of this writing, parts of the Quabbin Reservoir remain closed.

The **Springfield Count** occurs on **Saturday, December 15**. For information contact Bruce Kindseth (860) 745-9593) kindsebr@aol.com

The **Athol Count** happens on **Saturday, December 15**. For information contact David Small (413) 249-2094 dhsmall@gis.net.

The **Greenfield Count** takes place on **Sunday, December 30**. Contact Mark Fairbrother at (413) 367-2695

The **Sturbridge Count** is on **Tuesday, December 18**. There is a foul weather day (really!) on Wednesday, December 19. Contact Bill Cormier at Wild Bird Crossing: (508) 347 BIRD.

The **Westfield Count** transpires on **Saturday, December 22**. Contact Seth Kellogg at (413) 569 6029, or skhawk@mediaone.net

RARE BIRD ALERT

The **Rare Bird Alert** is working well, thanks to **Bob Bieda, Geoff LeBaron, Jan Ortiz and Scott Surner**, any of whom may start the alert. **Merry Cushing** spends a lot of time maintaining the computer rba contact list and **Blanche Orrell** has the tough job of overseeing the telephone tree. The telephone tree is fixed until September 2002, but you may join the email list by contacting Merry (413-253-5266; cushing@oit.umass.edu). Don't forget the **Voice of Audubon at 1-888-224-6444**, which is a frequently-updated account of interesting birds being seen in our region. Jan Ortiz welcomes your reports (include numbers seen, please). You can reach her at jtortiz@aol.com or 413-549-1768.

LIBRARY

Anne Cann would like you to know that there has been some reorganization of the collection, which resides at the Hitchcock Center. Field guides have been grouped at the top of the bookshelf. Our collection of "Winging It" (the ABA newsletter) is undergoing a process of economic rationalization. The rationalized copies will be given away at the next bird club meeting. There are lots of field guides for local destinations, and those sunnier, warmer winter locales.

The collection is cataloged on our website. You can reach it in person during Hitchcock hours (9-3 Tuesday-Friday; 9-1 on Saturday). Please contact Anne (413-253-7753; cann@uhs.umass.edu) if you would like her to bring something to the December meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS

Don't forget that **Backyard Birds**, on Strong Avenue in Northampton, offers all members a **10% discount** on their extensive range of feeders, decorative items, books and other birdy paraphernalia. We appreciate their support. Please direct your business in their direction.

The **Holyoke Range Ecological Working Group** would like you to know about an exciting opportunity to learn about and participate in local wildlife conservation. Susan Morse, the Founder of Keeping Track, will present a program on **New England wildlife at 7 pm on Tuesday, December 4, 2001 at the Chapin Auditorium, Mt. Holyoke College** in South Hadley. The program is intended to introduce the animals of the region and techniques used in recording and monitoring their populations. Keeping Track, a conservation organization, based in Vermont, and active nationally, aims to establish a long-term wildlife-monitoring program on the Mt. Holyoke Range, employing trained local volunteers. The December 4 program will also introduce this effort.

If you would like to know more, please contact Kristin DeBoer of the HREWG at 413-253-6720, or kdeboer@restore.org.

Just four lousy bucks (or five, if you order by mail), buys you the all-singing, all-dancing **HBC field guide supplement**. This series of labels gives you crucial information on the local status of all species on the Mass. Daily Field Card, and is compatible with all popular field guides. Zese labels, zey are available from ze HBC Boutique at the back of every club meeting. After hours, ze Boutique, she is managed by Sue Fletcher (413-253-2102; scfletch@aol.com). Get zem while zey are 'ot.

Hitchcock Center has cancelled a proposed trip to Cuba, due to lack of interest, but still has openings for the trip to **Iceland**, from June 26-July 5, 2002. This tour covers much of the natural history of the country, including birds, arctic heath flora and volcanic geology, and will be run in collaboration with Cross Culture. Further information is available from Cross Culture at (800) 491 1148, or from Amy at the Hitchcock Center. *For details and registration for all Hitchcock programs, please contact the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 525 South Pleasant St., Amherst MA 01002. Telephone (413) 256 6006, or on the web at www.hitchcockcenter.org.*

Arcadia Sanctuary, (on the civilized side of the river) is holding a **Solstice Celebration** on December 21 at 6 pm. The celebration involves multi-cultural readings, natural history, and community unity. There will be a bonfire if the weather conditions permit. Arcadia needs volunteers to help plan and facilitate this event, and asks participants to bring a food donation for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. *For more details, and to register for programs at Arcadia, contact **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary**, 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton MA 01027. Telephone (413) 584-3009.*

Final editor's note: I want to apologize for the embarrassing pidgin French in the previous section. As you know, the basis of successful marketing is to annoy the customer, so grind your teeth and buy those labels!