



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc

Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 18, No. 5

January, 2002

PROGRAMS

All programs are held at 7:30 pm in Immanuel Lutheran Church, Amherst. The church is located at 867 North Pleasant Street. Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.

Monday, January 14: “Birds, Butterflies and Beyond” with Dave Small

There is a strange enchantment falling over our happy little birding community. You’ve seen others fall under the spell and maybe you have even felt insidious fingers dragging your binoculars to an angle no birder would ever allow.

You’re in the meadows under the expert tutelage of one of the wonderful birders for whom the club is known. As you turn to fumble in your daypack for one of those little cheese and cracker sandwiches, the silhouette of an accipiter flashes into the extreme limits of your peripheral vision. You fumble for the binoculars, and finally get them targeted on the retreating backside of the bird. Phrases like “head protrudes well beyond the leading edge of the wing”; “rounded or squared-off tail”; and “pale supercilium” wander aimlessly through your head, looking for some way to be useful. Finally, as the bird vanishes into the distance you rediscover the power of speech and ask, with feigned nonchalance,

“Hey Josephine, did you get a look at that one?”

Imagine your surprise when you find your companion, directing their glasses at the ground, four feet away.

“Well, I think it’s an Early Hairstreak, but those wing markings are a little odd.”

Dave Small will take a more serious look at the way birders diversify their interests into other areas of natural history, using the skills they develop while observing birds. Mr. Small is the Forest and Park Regional Coordinator for the Quabbin Section of the Metropolitan District Commission. He is also President of the Athol Bird and Nature Club and the Millers River Watershed Council. Dave directs the Millers River Environmental Center and sits on the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership Board. He co-founded the Dragonfly Institute (of Athol and Worcester) and teaches at the well-known Butterfly Institutes, run by the Massachusetts Butterfly Club.

Coming Up

February 11: Bill Danielson about bird rehabilitation.

March 11: Lori Sanders goes behind the radio show.

April 8: Andrew Farnsworth explores radar ornithology.

The *Washington Post* asked readers to take any word, alter it by adding, subtracting or changing one letter, and then supply a new definition. One of the entries:

sarchasm: the gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the recipient who doesn’t get it.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

The 2001 **Turkey Trot to Cape Ann/ Plum Island and Cherry Hill Reservoir** on **November 23** yielded 70 species, including 21 species of waterfowl. The group found all three scoters, guillemots, gannets, Harlequin Ducks and Purple Sandpipers. The redoubtable Mr. Bieda picked out a Pacific Loon, (seen only in flight by most), and a King Eider served to swell the life lists of some birders. Thanks Al, for this unsolicited trip report!

Harvey's mid-week group on **December 12** ventured to Windsor in search of the Gray Jay. As many found when they arrived at the site, the bird was immediately visible and very cooperative. For Sue Fletcher this was evidently enough to complete a wonderful day of birding. She let out a jubilant squeal, leapt straight back in the car, and returned to the valley!* The rest of the group found Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, briefly enjoyed the hospitality of Charlie Quinlan, and lunched at The Creamery under the giant cow before sauntering back to civilization.

*In fairness to Sue, some of us do have commitments.....

Coming Trips (see also the Winter-Late Summer Trip List)

Wednesday, January 16. Feast or Famine: Winter birding in January. Harvey Allen looks for winter finches, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, Horned Larks and other capricious winter fare. Meet Harvey at 8 AM across from Atkins Farms.

Saturday, January 19. Winter finches. Shirley Hillborn will spend up to three quarters of a day looking for Purple Finches, siskins, redpolls, crossbills and their ilk. Meet at the Hitchcock center at 8 AM.

Saturday, January 26. Coastal Rhode Island. Geoff LeBaron will explore areas like Ninigret Pond, Point Judith, and Napatree Point. The milder temperatures prevailing over this region accommodate a slightly different set of wintering species, possibly including Red-shouldered Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Redhead, Canvasback and Short-eared Owl. Meet at the Northampton Stop and Shop on King St. at 6:30 AM. Please call Geoff at (413) 268 9281 for details and to register.

Saturday, February 2. Maine's South Shore. Scott Sumner will go looking for winter specialties and almost anything is possible. Real northern species like Great Grey Owl and Ivory Gull are not impossible. Call Scott at (413) 253 7486 for details and to register.

Saturday, February 9. Plymouth/Falmouth. Al Richards and Shawn Smolen-Morton will explore this intriguing winter birding area, which includes Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary. Some previous highlights include Yellow-breasted Chat, Eurasian Wigeon, Redhead, Long-eared and Short-eared Owls. Meet at Al's house at 5:30 AM. Call Al (413 665 2761) or Shawn (413 863 4569) for further details or directions.

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.

CHRISTMAS COUNT

The **Northampton Count** took place on **Sunday, December 16**. There were 18 feeder watchers, 24 owlers, 94 daytime participants, and a lot of wonderful birds. The **Quabbin Count** occurred on **Saturday, December 29** in spite of recent concerns about security. More than forty participants located 67 species, including the highlights listed below.

Northampton (High Counts)			Quabbin (Highlights)	
Red-tailed Hawk	116		Common Loon	18
Merlin	3		Horned Grebe	16
Wild Turkey	127		Wood Duck	1
Ring-billed Gull	996		Ring-necked Duck	41
Belted Kingfisher	23		Greater Scaup	5
Red-bellied Woodpecker	63		Common Goldeneye	79
Tufted Titmouse	583		Hooded Merganser	108
White-breasted Nuthatch	391		Bald Eagle	10
Carolina Wren	25		Golden Eagle	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	332		Ruffed Grouse	26
Eastern Bluebird	298		Black-headed Gull	1
Hermit Thrush	7		Barred Owl	10
Nashville Warbler	1		Northern Saw-whet Owl	9
			Common Raven	16
			Boreal Chickadees	2
			Brown Creeper	32
			Golden-crowned Kinglet	242
			Purple Finch	8

(Note that Nashville Warbler is a new species for the Northampton Christmas Count).

Thanks are due to all who participated in both counts. **Special thanks** are due to **Jan Ortiz** and **Mary Alice Wilson** (Northampton) as well as **Scott Sumner** and **Bill Lafley** (Quabbin) who coordinated the respective counts. This involves enormous investments of time, effort, and patience. An **honorable mention** goes to **Joanne Parker** who set up and broke down the wonderful Northampton potluck. In addition, the Quabbin organizers acknowledge the cooperation of the MDC management and rangers, the State Police, and the National Guard, without whom the Quabbin Count could not have proceeded.

LIBRARY

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*? Items can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement.

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

FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Many of you have helped folks find care for injured birds by having them call **Barbara Skelly's Center for Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW)**. Now CROW has an opportunity to provide both a permanent rehabilitation and volunteer training center at the cabin they have been using in Hawley. The 73 acres will also be protected from development (by a permanent Conservation Restriction to the Franklin Land Trust) and will be a great birding/wildlife site. *If you can help in any way with the fund-raising (\$80,000 for 73 acres, deadline January 15), contact **Barbara (413-625-2595)** or send a tax-deductible contribution for the CROW project to the **Franklin Land Trust, PO Box 216, Ashfield, MA 01330 (413-628-4696)**.*

Massachusetts Birder's Meeting

Date: Saturday, February 2, 2002 at 8 am

Location: Ecotarium, 222 Harrington Way, Worcester, MA 01604.

This meeting is intended to create awareness of the Massachusetts Important Bird Areas (IBA) program and will also feature "Birds in Art" displays. Registration will take place from 8:00 to 8:45 am. **Wayne Petersen** will then provide a General Introduction and Welcome. **Bob Durand**, Secretary of Environmental Affairs in this state, will address the forum on the subject of "Biodiversity in Massachusetts." **Henry Woolsey** and **Robert Askins** will then follow with presentations concerning the Massachusetts Biomap Project, and "Restoring New England's Birds," respectively.

Perhaps the big hook for many will be the keynote address, given by **David Allen Sibley**, followed by workshops on birds in art and a book signing.

For more information, and a registration form, please call (781) 259 9506 ext. 7401, or go to www.massaudubon.org/iba. The cost is \$24 for Mass. Audubon members, and \$30 for non-members. Space is limited.

Arcadia Programs

Tracking: Relearning an Ancient Art

John McCarter, Naturalist, Paul Rezendez Nature Programs

Saturday, January 26: 9:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

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

Oh and By the Way.....

Don't forget **Backyard Birds** on Strong Avenue in Northampton (near the Eastside Grill). They really are in our backyard, and they offer HBC members a 10% discount on their extensive range of books, audio resources, gifts, feeders and other avian paraphernalia. This is LOCAL at its best. Your dollar stays here!

Hitchcock Programs

Moods of Nature and Painting - Rebecca Burrill, Ed.D., Artist
Saturday, January 19 from 1 - 4 p.m.

Moonless Magic - Ron Woodland, Astronomy for All
Thursday, January 17 at 7 p.m.

The Art of Aromatherapy - Carrie Desmarais, Affinity Herbal Practice
Saturdays, January 26, February 9 from 1 - 4 p.m.

Winter Festival - Hitchcock Center staff and local storytellers
Saturday, February 2 from noon-3 p.m.

An Icelandic Evening - Ted Watt (naturalist); Marybeth Bridegam (Cross Culture, Inc.)
February 12, 2002 at 7:00 p.m.

Spring Birding Class - Scott Sumner, Birder
Classroom Sessions: Wednesdays 7 - 9 p.m. March 27, April 3, 10, 17, 24, May 1, 8, 15, 29
Field Trips: Saturdays 7a.m - noon. March 30 - June 1, 2002
Members: \$145. Non-members: \$175

The ever-popular Spring Birding Class is back for the 24th year. Scott has been birding for over 25 years, served as the President of the Hampshire Bird Club, and the Voice of Audubon for Western Mass. During this 10-week course, Scott will emphasize identification, bird topography, distribution, and overall 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.

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.

Well, prior to this newsletter, I was lost in a deep and profound post-“*Lord of the Rings*” reverie. Now, if you don’t mind, I am going to return to it. Farewell for now!

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



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 18, No. 6

February, 2002

As you read this, an extraordinary search is underway in Louisiana. In April of 1999, an LSU forestry student named David Kulivan reported to colleagues that he had seen and heard a pair of very large woodpeckers in the swampy bottomlands of the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area. Mr. Kulivan is a capable birder, and his detailed descriptions of the birds matched the Ivory-billed Woodpecker to a feather. Since that time, scientific and media interest have swelled to international levels, culminating in an exhaustive search of the region by six crack ornithologists, with the backing of several institutions and a prominent manufacturer of optical equipment. Satellite imagery, aerial photography and permanent remote listening devices have all been enlisted to maximize the chance of finding the bird. The actual footslogging began on January 17, 2002. Needless to say, no ivorybills have yet been found.

The whole thing is touched by modern phenomena such as electronic communication and corporate sponsorship. Armed as the searchers are with digital video cameras, any records they claim will likely be definitive. This likelihood may well doom the venture to fail, since our mythical beasts prefer to show themselves to the unprepared, the touched, or the second-shift rural commuter whom no one will believe. And if they actually find these birds, what then? What if it is the last one, or they are the last two? How could we possibly know? Should we risk intervening as we have with the Condor, knowing that the very intervention might be the death knell?

Forget the questions for now, and let's just hope to be around for the most incredible reprieve of the century. For some of us, there is a tiny flame of hope that survives amidst the dark certainty that they are gone. Now is the time to cup our hands around that tiny flame, and let it flicker a while longer, to dream of ivorybills calling in those distant woods.

You can look further into the search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker by going to <http://www.museum.lsu.edu/LSUMNS/index.html> and you can follow the daily progress reports of the searchers at <http://www.zeiss.com/optical/sports>. The pick of the printed coverage is an article called "The Ghost Bird" by Jonathon Rosen in *The New Yorker*, 14 March, 2001; pp. 61-67.

LIBRARY

There has been a changing of the guard at our fine lending institution. **Anne Cann**, whose name is virtually synonymous with our collection, is hanging up the horn-rims after years of hard work. In recognition of Anne's service to the club, a copy of the Sibley Guide to Bird Behavior has been donated to the library in her name.. She says she is looking forward to freeing up the back room of her home, and coming to meetings unencumbered. Henry Lappen has kindly offered to take over as librarian.. **Thanks, Anne and welcome, Henry!**

There is a program this month. It would normally be described on this page, but owing to that romantic interlude about those pesky woodpeckers, the program note has been relegated to page two. If you are not in the habit of reading past page one, **please go at least to page two this month. It's important. Thank you**

PROGRAMS

All programs are held at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant St. in Amherst. Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.

On Monday, February 11, Bill Danielson will present “Stories of a Wildlife Rehabilitator: Getting to Know Animals Up Close and Personal.” I think Bill can introduce himself.

“I was raised in Amherst and went to Amherst Regional High School, where I was an average student. At that time my passions were nature and ice hockey. I made the varsity hockey team as a freshman and became the team captain as a junior.

After high school, I attended UMass and studied Wildlife Biology. I worked on many different projects, including the Maryland Colonial Waterbird Project, and pursued a career with the National Parks Service. I worked for two seasons as a Law Enforcement Ranger at the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area in New Jersey, before I came to my senses and headed back into the mountains. I worked for a summer in the White Mountains, as a researcher for the US Forest Service, studying predation on bird eggs. This led to my graduate research, which also focused on egg predation. This, incidentally, was also my first work with cameras.

After I received my Masters degree I faced the same constellation of problems faced by anyone with a degree in the field of Wildlife Biology – no jobs. I bounced around from place to place, looking for work that I enjoyed. It was during this time that I started writing a column for *The Recorder* in Greenfield. I currently work as a ranger at Savoy Mountain State Forest, but I still find my column to be the most fulfilling aspect of my “professional” life. My decision to write a book was based largely on the response of my readers, who have been outstandingly supportive over the past five years.”

Bill has drawn many of the columns he wrote for *The Recorder* into a book entitled, “**Speaking of Nature.**” He will have copies of the book for sale and signing at the meeting. If you want to be ahead of the game, the book is available at many local retailers, including our supporters at *Backyard Birds*. You can view the introduction, contents and excerpts at www.speakingofnature.com.

Coming Up

March 11: Lori Sanders goes behind the radio show.

April 8: Andrew Farnsworth explores radar ornithology.

May 13: Jeff Podos expounds on Galapagos finches.

Word Warp

If you remember the last edition, you may remember a reference to the Washington Post Invitational Word Warp. To recap, (for those who were not paying attention), the Post asked readers to take a word, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and then create a new definition. Here are a few more from their list of notable entries:

Reintarnation: coming back to life as a hillbilly.

Giraffiti: vandalism spray-painted really high up.

Innoculatte: an emergency method of administering caffeine when running late.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

January 5. North Shore.

This was one of those days when everything fell into place. It was a gorgeous day, and wonderful birds just kept appearing. At Joppa Flats we found Eurasian Widgeon, Common Snipe and a female Northern Shoveler. Black-legged Kittiwakes and Red Crossbills swooped daintily over the whitecaps and picked their way through the pines, (respectively) at Salisbury State Park. At Andrews Point, we found a King Eider and Harlequin Ducks. A Barrows Goldeneye and an Eared Grebe bobbed around amongst the sea-ducks at Niles Beach, and a Ring-necked Duck was eking out a living on the shrinking open water at Niles Pond. The only tern of the day was the sudden one made by Bob to get down to Andrews Point.

We found two Snowy Owls on this day. The later one by the lighthouse at Eastern Point was fairly conspicuous, and we were directed to it, but credit for the first goes to Mike Locher, who maintains that he caught a lucky glimpse of the bird as we sped out of Salisbury State Park. I want to know if there are such things as paternal hormones, and whether they have some effect on visual acuity.

Harvey's mid-week group on January 16 battled strong winds to get great looks at Horned Larks in the east Meadows. After adjourning to Arcadia, they found the sheltered woods full of Robins and Cedar Waxwings.

Shirley Hillborn joins the Leaders Hall of Fame with this unsolicited trip report concerning **January 19**. "Eight HBC birders trekked with me to **Royalston** and were immediately rewarded with a view of over 20 Wild Turkeys in a field across from the library. To the left of the field we saw approximately nine (9) Pine Grosbeaks (including one spectacular male), ten (10) or so Evening Grosbeaks and two Pine Siskins. As we walked to the feeders around the corner, we had two (2) House Finches, more Pine Siskins and lots of Blue Jays. At the feeders, (amongst other things), we had two (2) Tree Sparrows and two (2) Common Redpolls. At one point we had a goldfinch, a redpoll and a siskin using the feeder at the same time, allowing a good comparison. Our second stop was on Brooks Road in Hardwick, where the group had a pleasant hike, but no birds of note."

January 26. Coastal Rhode Island.

Twenty-one birders in a cumbersome convoy of six vehicles made its way from Westerly, R.I. to Sachuest Point, through Geoff LeBaron's old stomping ground. Despite mild temperatures, and quiet conditions in the valley, we found a stiff offshore breeze sweeping the inshore waters almost clean of birds by the time we reached Napatree Point. Highlights as we made our way eastward were Turkey Vulture, Northern Gannet, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, wonderfully close views of Bonaparte's Gulls and Red-throated Loons at Ninigret and Point Judith, and frustrating looks at wave-obscured Razorbills at the same locations. At Ninigret, an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull obligingly compared itself with the neighboring Greaters, but only those with quick reflexes got a look at a Great Horned Owl flying over the cedars. The Lady Luck bird of the day was the Common Black-headed Gull which appeared at a range of six feet in the parking lot of a McDonalds near Pt Judith. Hypothetically speaking, would it be ethical to bring birds in using french fries?

As the day ended at Sachuest, we gawked at the Harlequins, found five Ruddy Turnstones sheltering amongst about 120 Purple Sandpipers in the lee of the rocks, and heard very ambitious Woodcock displaying near the carpark.

Coming Up

February 2. Maine's southern shore. All day. Scott Sumner will again lead this ever-popular trip in search of winter specialties. Last year, the group observed Canvasback, Peregrine Falcon, Iceland Gull, Razorbill, and Black Guillemot. Previous trips have been lucky enough to see lovely birds like Great Grey Owl, Ivory Gull and Tundra Swan. Wear plenty of warm clothing, bring a lunch and snacks. Call Scott at (413) 253-7486 for the time and place of departure.

February 9. Plymouth / Falmouth. All day. Al Richards and Shawn Smolen-Morton explore southeastern Massachusetts, usually from Falmouth to Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary. Last year, the trip tallied 64 species. Highlights from previous years include Yellow-breasted Chat, Eurasian Wigeon, Redhead Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Glaucous Gull, Long-eared and Short-eared Owls. Meet at Al's house at 5:30AM. Call Al (413-665-2761) or Shawn (413-863-4569) for further details or directions.

February 13. Midweek half-day in the Connecticut Valley: Early Arrivals. Meet Harvey Allen at 8:00 AM across the street from the Atkins Farms, on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Will his group find the first Red-winged Blackbirds of the year? Heavy snow or rain will cancel this trip. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

March 2. Plum Island. Whole Day. Geoff LeBaron will lead this **NEW TRIP** to the island for late winter species. In addition to the usual wintering birds, Geoff will have an eye out for Rough-legged Hawk, Barrow's Goldeneye, Little Gull, Common Black-headed Gull, Glaucous Gull, and Snowy Owl. Dress warmly and pack a lunch. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for further details and registration.

Overnight Trips

It is time to start thinking about overnight trips. Scheduled for this year are Monhegan Island in May, Connecticut Lakes in June, and Cape May in the Fall. Registration begins now for the first two trips, which are introduced below. Sign up early to avoid disappointment.

Monhegan Island, Maine. May 24 to May 27 (Memorial Day weekend), 2002

After fifteen annual visits, this is still one of the flagship events run by the club and represents a unique kind of birding trip. The island lies at the end of a 12-mile ferry ride from Port Clyde, on the central Maine coast. This is a legendary birding location, and the club has witnessed both some spectacular fallouts and startling rarities, especially in conjunction with certain weather patterns.

A hardy group of lobster fishers and artists lives in the village of Monhegan, clustered around a small marsh which is the only source of fresh water on the island. We will join them in relying entirely on our own legs to bird through the village, and along the hiking trails which criss-cross the island. We will stay in rustic accommodations at the fabled Trailing Yew, which offers us two prepared meals a day as part of their bargain-priced service.

This trip forces us to slow down and be patient. There is no jumping in and out of cars here. We wrap ourselves in the quiet of the island, poke around along the trails for whatever may lurk amongst the apple and spruce trees, and anticipate the new arrivals each new morning may bring. There is time to learn new species, or just soak up known ones. When the birding is quiet, participants are free to explore the mysteries of the Enchanted Forest, the local art galleries, or the spectacular cliff-top trails independently.

For further information, and/or to register, please contact one of the leaders:

David Peake-Jones; (413) 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com; or **Andrew Magee;** (413) 369 9920

Connecticut Lakes, New Hampshire. June 14 – June 16, 2002.

These lakes lie in the extreme northeastern corner of New Hampshire, just south of the Canadian Border. They are the headwaters of the Connecticut River. This is not the first time HBC has visited the area, but the trip has not been offered for some years. This is your chance to get into a whole new region, with a whole new suite of birds. There are good opportunities to see breeding boreal species such as Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Black-headed Woodpecker, Three-toed Woodpecker and winnowing Common Snipe. I have a funny feeling that moose and butterflies may work their way into this equation somehow, too.

The group will depart the valley early on Friday, June 14 and return late on Sunday, June 16. The trip is limited to 12 people, and will undoubtedly fill up fast.

For more information, and/or to register, please call one of the leaders:

Harvey Allen: (413) 253 7963, or **Tom Gagnon:** (413) 584 6353; tombwhawk@aol.com

CONSERVATION

Massachusetts Birder's Meeting

This meeting is intended to create awareness of the Massachusetts Important Bird Areas (IBA) program and will also feature "Birds in Art" displays. Registration will take place from 8:00 to 8:45 am. **Wayne Petersen** will then provide a General Introduction and Welcome. **Bob Durand**, Secretary of Environmental Affairs in this state, will address the forum on the subject of "Biodiversity in Massachusetts." **Henry Woolsey** and **Robert Askins** will then follow with presentations concerning the Massachusetts Biomap Project, and "Restoring New England's Birds," respectively.

Perhaps the big hook for many will be the keynote address, given by **David Allen Sibley**, followed by workshops on birds in art and a book signing

Date: Saturday, February 2, 2002 at 8 am

Location: Ecotarium, 222 Harrington Way, Worcester, MA 01604.

For information/registration, please call (781) 259 9506 ext. 7401, or go to www.massaudubon.org/iba.

The cost is \$24 for Mass. Audubon members, and \$30 for non-members. Space is limited.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Have you always believed that, at least in winter, you and a steaming hot mug of soup should never be more than one arm's length apart? So far so good. But what if the birder in you insists that you contribute to the growing body of knowledge being collected and shared across the continent via the internet? What to do? Perhaps the Great Backyard Bird Count is for you.

The fifth annual count will take place from **February 15 – 18**, and is organized collaboratively by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon. To participate, birders use a specific protocol to record the birds visiting their feeders, and then submit the results online. The ultimate aim is to use the enormous amount of effort that goes into observing birds nationally to contribute to a deeper understanding of the distribution and movement of those birds. Amongst the patterns evident over the first five years is a correlation between the depth of the snow pack and the winter distribution of American Robins in some northern locations.

Last year, there were over 50,000 checklists completed, documenting over 4 ½ million individuals of 442 species. *If you are considering taking part this year, please go to www.birdsource.org for further information and/or to register.*

HITCHCOCK CENTER

Winter Festival - Hitchcock Center staff and local storytellers

Saturday, February 2 from noon-3 pm

An Icelandic Evening - Ted Watt (naturalist); Marybeth Bridegam (Cross Culture, Inc.)

February 12, 2002 at 7:00 pm

In Pursuit of the Vikings – Newfoundland and Labrador – Marion Gorham, Al Shane

Tuesday, February 26 at 7:30 pm

Salamander Tunnel Maintenance Day – Jennifer Wiest

Sunday, March 3 from noon – 3 pm

Spring Birding Class - Scott Sumner, Birder

Our ever-popular Spring Birding Class is back for the 24th year. Scott has been birding for over 25 years, served as the President of the Hampshire Bird Club, and the Voice of Audubon for Western Mass. During this 10-week course, Scott will emphasize identification, bird topography, distribution, and overall 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.

Indoor Classes: Wednesdays 7 - 9 pm. March 27, April 3, 10, 17, 24, May 1, 8, 15, 29.

Field Trips: Saturdays 7am - noon. March 30 - June 1, 2002.

Members: \$145. Non-members: \$175

Time is running out for you to get in on the ground floor for the **Icelandic Adventure**, from **June 26 to July 5, 2002**. This is a comprehensive tour of Iceland which includes birds, volcanic geology and much, much more. **There is an early registration discount which applies until February 28.**

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 <http://www.hitchcockcenter.org/>.

ARCADIA

Upcoming activities sponsored by Arcadia include:

(1) **Winter Tracking** with **David McLain** on the following dates:

Saturday, February 9 at Graves Farm, and

Saturday, February 23 at M.S. Lynes sanctuary

(2) **Winter Birding in the Connecticut River Valley** with **Geoff LeBaron**

Sunday, February 10 from 8 am-12 noon

(3) **Creating a Garden for Butterflies** with **Lisa Ferree and Clivia Pasek**

Saturday, February 16 from 1-2:30 pm

(4) **Winter Crows** with **Patti Steinman**

Saturday, March 2 from 3-6pm

Berkshire Sanctuaries are sponsoring “**Spring Migration on the Great Plains**”, a tour encompassing the prairie wetlands of Kansas and Nebraska, focusing on such enthralling migrants as Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese, and Greater White-fronted Geese. Tour leaders are Rene Laubach and Bob Prescott. The tour runs from **March 30 through April 7, 2002**. Call (413) 637 0320 for a more detailed itinerary.

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

MISCELLANEOUS

Hanging with the in-crowd at Fitzwilly's, luxuriating at the Eastside Grill, raging at Pearl St., trying to get away with parking next that funky diner across the street? As if you needed any other reason to visit Strong Ave. in Northampton, the valley's premier birding store is there. **Backyard Birds is locally owned and operated, and offers you, as a member of HBC, 10% discount on everything from Bill Danielson's book to birdsongs on tape.** Stop in next time before you pay that self-deluding visit to Runner's World (just around the corner).

Not that you would, but you could microscopically examine the folds and staples of newsletters since September of last year and find the occasional sloughed-off human epidermal cell. If you analyzed the DNA, you might find matches with the following individuals:

Sue Emerson, Betsy Higgins, Iris Higgins, Sally Hills, Andrew Magee, Joanne Parker, and Mary Alice Wilson. Collating the newsletter goes a lot faster with many hands. I thank all of these people (and those I may have forgotten).

HBC Directory

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 Jan Ortiz: (413) 549 1768; jtortiz@aol.com
 Scott Turner: (413) 253 5999 (work); ssurner@aol.com

A final word on **word warping**. I have more of this stuff from the original contest which I will be happy to share in future editions. However, I also have a few which have brought me bolt upright in bed at ungodly hours of the night. These I will also be forced to share with you, dear reader, but I promise to give first priority to the creations of our readership. **Please send me your own efforts.** Until next time then, in the immortal words of FDR, "Talk softly and carry a big scope!"

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



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 18, No. 7

March, 2002

The Red-winged Blackbirds, Turkey Vultures, and grackles have returned, probably wondering why they ever bothered to leave. For birders, it's time to brush up on the waterfowl, and start in on the warbler tapes again. As Shawn Smolen Morton puts together the Fall Field Trip schedule, he welcomes your suggestions for new trips, and the Nominating Committee would like to know about prospective Board members for the coming year.

If this odd winter is wearing a little thin, we can take wry inspiration from my compatriot, Stephen Bradbury, who won Australia's first gold medal in the Winter Olympics. Mr. Bradbury progressed to the final of the 1000m short-track skating, by virtue of the fact that most of the competitors in his semi-final fell down. In the final, all the other competitors fell over one another on the last lap, allowing Stephen to coast sheepishly from last place to win.

As a strategy, staying in last place is bound to succeed eventually, just as a monkey is bound to type *Hamlet*, given enough time. It has the advantage of being very energy-efficient, and the significant disadvantage of being almost never successful. In birding, also, our best efforts may yield nothing. It is worth remembering that simply being out there is sometimes enough.

PROGRAMS

All programs are held at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant St. in Amherst. Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.

Monday, March 11. Laurie Sanders with "Nature On Radio: Is There Really That Much to Talk About?"

Laurie is the host of Field Notes, a weekly natural history series heard on WFCR 88.5 FM and Connecticut Public Radio. This month, she will describe some of the special natural areas, organisms, and people she has profiled on the radio show over the last two and a half years. She will also replay several episodes of the show, with accompanying slides.

Laurie is an educator with UMass Extension's Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Program, where she works on a variety of watershed-related issues. In the past, she has worked in the wetlands program for the MA Department of Environmental Protection, and as a botanist for the US Forest Service in Vermont. From 1994 to 1998, she produced more than 35 short natural history videos with WGBY/Channel 57.

Working with her husband, Laurie has found dozens of new locations for rare species in Massachusetts and Connecticut - from plants and tiger beetles to dragonflies, damselflies, reptiles and amphibians. She grew up near a wonderful marsh and swamp in Cheshire, CT, where her passion for the natural world began. She now lives in Westhampton, MA with her husband and young daughter. Laurie will be happy to autograph your FM receiver.

Coming Programs

April 8: Andrew Farnsworth on Radar Ornithology

May 13: Jeff Podos elaborates on Galapagos Finches

June 10: Marta Hersek introduces Ovenbirds

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

On **February 2**, **Scott Sumner's** trip to **Maine** found two Snowy Owls, a Peregrine Falcon, a Northern Harrier, a Yellow-breasted Chat, Eastern Towhee, Gray Catbird, Carolina Wren, about 20 Harlequin Ducks, Razorbill, Black Guillemot and about 60 Purple Sandpipers.

Rumor has it that the **Plymouth-Falmouth** group on **February 9** saw Long-eared Owls roosting, as well as Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers hunting in shifts, amongst other things.

Harvey's mid-week group on **February 13** went first to Chicopee Falls. The Chicopee River was mostly frozen, but from the local boat launch, the group could see the Bald Eagle nest, with the bird in attendance. There were quite a few ducks on the Connecticut River. For the day, they had 22 species.

Coming Trips

March

2. Plum Island. Whole Day. Geoff LeBaron will lead this **NEW TRIP** to the island for late winter species. In addition to the usual wintering birds, Geoff will have an eye out for Rough-legged Hawk, Barrow's Goldeneye, Little Gull, Common Black-headed Gull, Glaucous Gull, and Snowy Owl. Dress warmly and pack a lunch. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for further details and registration.

13. Midweek half-day in the Connecticut River Valley. Meet Harvey Allen at 7:30 AM across the street from the Atkins Farms, on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Heavy snow or rain will cancel this trip. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

23. Waterfowl migration along the Connecticut River. Half day. Ducks and geese should be on the move and Al Richards will be right behind them. Call Al (413-665-2761) for the details of time and place.

April

6. David Spector will lead a **NEW TRIP** for the club, in search of **American Woodcock and owls**. Depending on his early reconnaissance, David will choose a location in the valley, probably east of the river. The trip is most likely to begin at 6:00 PM. Flashlights are a good idea. Very warm clothing and footwear are more important. Call David (413-323-4885) in advance for the exact time and place to meet. Call early, registration may be limited.

Top Ten Events To Look For At The Next Winter Olympics

- 1) Ice Yoga.
- 2) Nude Luge: Bobsled to Luge to Skeleton? What the heck, let's just go down that slide like nature intended.
- 3) Nascar on Ice.
- 4) Monster-truck ski-jumping.
- 5) Really extreme ice-fishing, dude.
- 6) Media mogul skiing.
- 7) Sander Truck Demolition Derby.
- 8) Really short-track skating
- 9) Most creatively meaningless physical act that can be performed in cargo pants.
- 10) William Tell Biathlon: kids, apples, crossbows and really tired skiers. WOW!!

OVERNIGHT TRIPS

Monhegan Island, Maine. May 24 to May 27 (Memorial Day weekend), 2002

After fifteen annual trips, this is still one of the flagship events run by the club and represents a unique kind of birding trip. The island lies at the end of a 12-mile ferry ride from Port Clyde, on the central Maine coast. Spectacular fallouts and startling rarities are possible, especially in conjunction with certain weather patterns. We, like the local lobster fishers and artists, will rely on our own legs to bird through the village of Monhegan and along the hiking trails which criss-cross the island. We will stay in rustic accommodations at the fabled Trailing Yew, which offers us two prepared meals a day as part of their bargain-priced service.

This trip forces us to slow down and be patient. There is no jumping in and out of cars here. We wrap ourselves in the quiet of the island, poke around along the trails for whatever may lurk amongst the apple and spruce trees, and anticipate what each new morning may bring in. There is time to learn new species, or just soak up known ones. When the birding is quiet, participants are free to explore the mysteries of the Enchanted Forest, or the spectacular cliffside trails.

For further information, and/or to register, please contact one of the leaders:

David Peake-Jones; (413) 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com, or Andrew Magee: (413) 369 9920

Connecticut Lakes, New Hampshire. June 14 – June 16, 2002.

These lakes lie in the extreme northeastern corner of New Hampshire, just south of the Canadian border. They are the headwaters of the Connecticut River. This is not the first time HBC has visited the area, but the trip has not gone for some years. This is your chance to get into a whole new region, with a whole new suite of birds. There are good opportunities to see breeding boreal species such as Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Black-backed Woodpecker, Three-toed Woodpecker and winnowing Common Snipe. I have a funny feeling that moose and butterflies may work their way into this equation somehow, too. The group will depart the valley early on Friday, June 14 and return late on Sunday, June 16.

At the time of writing, the potential exists for a small number of spots to open up on this trip. Please contact one of the leaders if you want to be on the waiting list:

Harvey Allen: (413) 253 7963, or Tom Gagnon: (413) 584 6353; tombwhawk@aol.com

Contributors Wanted!!

When a leader's not engaged in his employment (his employment)

When the small brown jobs have all been soundly taught (soundly taught)

He loves to lie a-basking in the sunshine (in the sunshine)

Far from his mind is any trip report (trip report)

(Gilbert & Sullivan, almost)

Field trip leaders have a ton of things to do in preparation for a trip, and the trips themselves can be arduous. The last thing they want to do when the trip is over is sit down and dash off a trip report for the newsletter. Fortunately, there is help available. I refer, of course, to YOU, the bright-eyed and enthusiastic participant. By writing a report, you give us a record for posterity, and help to promote interest in future trips. There is nothing to it. Just keep a record of the good birds you saw, any hilarious thrills and spills, and send it in.

The editor will send leaders a reminder prior to the next edition of the newsletter, which they can pass along to you. You can file your report with me (the editor) via email, hand-delivery at meetings, USPS or by phone (messages are OK). My contact details are at the end of the newsletter. I promise to acknowledge you, or keep your identity secret, as you prefer. I will edit all contributions as necessary. Make a trip leader happy when next you venture out!

dpj

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

*The Nominating Committee is now in session and has the job of developing a slate of prospective Board members for the upcoming club year. This officially begins after the Annual General Meeting on May 13. The committee consists of **Jim Marcum, Sally Venman, and Jan Ortiz**. If you have an interest in serving on the Board, or want to dob* somebody in, please contact one of them.*

** dob (Anglo-Australian colloq.): to volunteer another with or without his/her consent.*

CONSERVATION Environmental Bond Bill

The Conservation Committee draws your attention to the Environmental Bond Bill, currently before the state legislature. This Bill funds the conservation of bird habitats in the state, as well as things like the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program. Funding for these programs runs out in July. Given the current budgetary situation, conservation funding is particularly at risk. If you are concerned with the future of natural habitats in Massachusetts, consider writing your legislators, encouraging them to support the bill. Phone calls or emails are the next-best things.

Reaching Your Legislator.

A complete directory of State Representatives and Senators by district and town is available at www.state.ma.us/legis/citytown.htm. You can email these representatives direct from the site, by clicking on their names. Some local legislators are listed below. All postal addresses are room numbers at:

State House
Boston MA 02133

Representatives

Nancy Flavin: 2nd Hampshire (**Hadley, Easthampton**). Room 254, State House
Phone (617) 722 2380

Stephen Kulik: First Franklin (**Deerfield**). Room 279, State House
Phone (617) 722 2210

John F. Merrigan: 2nd Franklin (**Greenfield**). Room 36, State House
Phone (617) 722 2470

Thomas M. Petrolati: 7th Hampden (**Precincts A, C: Belchertown**). Rm 478, State House
Phone (617) 722 2180

Reed V. Hillman: 1st Hampden (**Precinct B: Belchertown**). Room 156, State House
Phone (617) 722 2356

Ellen Story: 3rd Hampshire (**Amherst**). Room 167, State House
Phone (617) 722 2692

Senators

Stephen Brewer (Belchertown). Room 216, State House: Phone (617) 722 1540

Michael Knapik (Easthampton). Room 421, State House: Phone (617) 1415

Stanley C. Rosenberg (Amherst, Northampton, Greenfield, Hadley, Deerfield).
Room 320, State House. Phone (617) 722 1532

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 breeding-bird surveys, and is usually involved in various cutting-edge conservation issues. Contact her at (413) 586 7509, or annelombard@mediaone.net

LIBRARY

Our new librarian, Henry Lappen, is organizing the HBC library at Hitchcock Center into categories including:

Field Guides	Bird Finding Guides (East and West)
Foreign Field and Bird Finding Guides	Natural and Life Histories
Miscellaneous (including humor)	Videos, Cassettes, LPs and CD ROMs
and <i>Birding</i> magazine.	

Library 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. Don't forget you can view the catalog on our website at <http://hampshirebirdclub.org>. Items can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. Henry is happy to bring items to meetings, given a few days notice! Call him at **(413) 549 3722**.

Hampshire Bird Club Evening at WFCR

Do you enjoy Laurie Sanders' *Field Notes* on WFCR? You can help the radio station by joining a group of 6-8 volunteers from HBC to answer phones during the upcoming pledge drive. We will be taking calls at the station (in the studio with the on-air hosts) on Saturday, March 9, from 6-10 PM. You'll be trained, and then take pledges from callers. It's easy. It's fun. Food and beverages are provided; all you need to do is bring yourself (and friend if you wish). If you'd like to join the fun, sign up by calling or emailing Dave Gross at 253-2897 or dgross@biochem.umass.edu.

Date: Saturday, March 9

Time: 6-10 p.m.

Location: WFCR studios, Hampshire House, UMass campus.

Word Warping

Hipatitis: terminal coolness

Dopeler effect: the tendency of even the stupidest idea to seem smarter when it comes at you really fast.

MORE GOOD STUFF

Hitchcock Center

Salamander Tunnel Maintenance Day – Jennifer Wiest

Sunday, March 3 from noon – 3 p.m.

Reading the Forested Landscape - Tom Wessels, Ecologist, Author and Professor

Saturday, March 30, 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

River Days - Exploring the Connecticut River from Source to Sea

Michael Tougias, Naturalist and Author

Tuesday, April 2, 7:00 p.m.

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.

Irony, Anyone?

Prosecutorial staff in Westfield may be excused for checking their seats with particular care in the near future. According to NBC on February 18, a new courthouse opened in town this month, after a long delay. Seems that, though the bricks and mortar have been in place for some time, the state's budget woes meant that the new building could not be furnished. Stepping into the breach to provide refurbished furniture from other sources were vocational students and, (you guessed it), *our local prison population!!* The irony was apparently lost on the announcer. She didn't even crack a smirk!

Arcadia

Winter Crows: Patti Steinman, Educational Coordinator

Saturday, March 2: 3:00 – 6:00 pm

Natural History of Vernal Pools: Patti Steinman, Educational Coordinator

Thursday, March 28: 7:00 pm

The Night for Salamanders: Dan Schell, Mt. Tom Citizens Advisory Committee

Date: To be determined by weather, meet at 6:00 pm. Please register, and become part of a telephone tree to be notified at short notice when the program will take place.

Ecological Management Conference: March 9: 12:00 noon – 4:00 pm

This annual gathering is a chance to learn about the latest ecological management and research projects at the sanctuary, including grassland restoration, non-invasive plant control, and studies of many plants and animals.

Berkshire Sanctuaries are sponsoring **Spring Migration on the Great Plains**, a tour encompassing the prairie wetlands of Kansas and Nebraska, focusing on such enthralling migrants as Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese, and Greater White-fronted Geese. Tour leaders are Rene Laubach and Bob Prescott. The tour runs from March 30 through April 7, 2002. Call (413) 637 0320 for a more detailed itinerary.

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

Local and Live

The **Rattlesnake Gutter Trust** invites you to attend a program entitled “**Birds of Prey**,” presented by local raptor expert **Julie Grow-Collier**, assisted by **Jim Parks**.

Time: Sunday, April 7, 2002, 2:00 PM

Place: Leverett Elementary School Gymnasium, 85 Montague Road, Leverett.

There will be a small admission charge.

Julie Collier grew up in Leverett, attending Leverett and Amherst schools. She is a licensed raptor rehabilitator who gives presentations at schools and functions in the New England area. Live hawks, falcons, an eagle and owls are brought out of their cages, described and displayed, accompanied by a lively, loving, humorous narrative, with a Native American flavor. This program is very popular with both children and adults.

The Rattlesnake Gutter Trust is a local land trust, working to preserve natural habitat in the Amherst-Leverett area. Their Annual Meeting will be held in the cafeteria, prior to the program. Refreshments will wind up the evening. Visitors are most welcome.

If you would like to know more about the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust, please call Annette Gibavic at (413) 548 9082, or write to them at P.O. Box 195, Leverett, MA 01054.

Field Notes

What are you usually doing at 7:30 on a Monday morning? Before you provide more information than anyone could possibly want, let me tell you that you could be listening to **Field Notes**. This decidedly local natural history digest is hosted by Laurie Sanders, who lives in Westhampton, and roams all over the region with notebook and tape-recorder in hand.

Laurie knows virtually every ecological researcher and natural historian in the area, and consults with them to explore a wide-range of topics, from katydid behavior to glacial geology. She has chronicled Tom Gagnon's role in the singular life history of “Ruffie”, interviewed Bob Bieda and Harvey Allen during their recent concurrent “Big Year,” and recently went owling with Dave Small.

*For those interested in past episodes, there are dozens of topics covered in the “Field Notes” section of WFCR's website: www.wfcr.org. **Field Notes** airs at 7:30 am on Monday mornings, on WFCR, 88.5 FM radio.*

Backyard Birds

Still there (Strong St., Northampton), still got the goods (books, feeders, audio guides, gifts, etc.) and **still 10% off for HBC members**.

Hawk Watching in the New Millennium.

Holyoke Community College, Holyoke MA

Saturday, March 9, 2002, from 8 am to 5 pm

Northeast Hawk Watch presents this, the seventh annual Hawk Migration Conference. The program includes ten presentations on local and international hawk watching, including raptor identification, hawk migrations in Malaysia and Nepal, forest management for raptors, and data sharing over the Internet.

For a registration form, please visit <http://battaly.com/nehw/conference>. Alternatively, contact David Peake-Jones (413) 529 9541, davidpj@the-spa.com, or write John Weeks, 41 Plymouth Lane, Westfield, MA 01085.

Pretty Feather Never Won Fair Lady

You have worn out your copy of Peterson's Birding By Ear, and a family member deliberately disabled the cassette player in the Camry during that last family road trip. On a good day, you can tell a Swamp Sparrow from a Chippy at 200 yards. Enough already!! It is now time to ponder the deeper meaning of birdsong. **"Why Do Some Birds Learn To Sing?"** is the title of a lecture by **Don Kroodsma** at **Amherst College (Merrill 4)** on **Monday, March 25 at 3:30 pm**. Don is a noted authority on this subject, and long-time club member.

Intoxication: euphoria at getting a refund from the IRS which lasts only until you realize it was your money on the first place.

Club Members in Print

In the February, 2002 edition of *Bird Observer* (published here in Mass.), there is a preview of the long-awaited bird finding guide to western Massachusetts. **Andrew Magee** drew the illustrations for Mark Taylor's article on "Birding in Northfield." In the same edition, **Geoff LeBaron** documents the first known nesting of White-winged Crossbills in Massachusetts.

Please notify the editor if you, or any member of the club, should be recognized in the newsletter. I will need some reasonable excuse, such as those described above.

Thanks, dpj

Welcome New Members

David and Katheryn Chevalier: Phone (413) 843 8171; chepar50@hotmail.com

Jim Lafley: Phone (413) 323 5892; tkdflies@aol.com

Catherine Youngen Phone (413) 843 8171

Nancy Steeper Phone: (413) 665 2884; steeper@rcn.com.

Changes

Sally Venman's new email address is sgvenman@attbi.com

Email Address Changing???

If your email address is changing, please notify Sue Emerson at wle33@aol.com a week or so ahead of time. It is important for the newsletter reminder. Thank you.

Does anyone actually read this thing?? In the February edition, we announced that the trip had a good chance of seeing **Black-headed Woodpecker**. Alert club members have deluged Tom and Harvey with reservations, no doubt realizing that this species, if found, would be new to science. With regret, I must announce that the more likely bird is the Black-backed Woodpecker, which is rather more common. I didn't get a single irate call!

Until next time, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones

Editor

(413) 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com

March, 2002. p 8 of 8



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 18, No. 8

April, 2002

In the February issue we described the early stages of a collaborative effort by Zeiss, Louisiana State University, Cornell and others to find living Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area of Louisiana. Six searchers have finished the foot-slogging stage of this search. The lack of international jubilation would seem to suggest they have been unsuccessful. There are no pictures of the bird, no sightings, and no observations of definitive Ivory-billed vocalizations.

However, reading the reports of the searchers (Zeiss Search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Summary Statement, www.zeiss.com) suggests otherwise. *"In the first ten days of searching we found some recently dead trees with tight bark scaled off. Bark scaling is the primary foraging method used by Ivory-bills. On January 27, the eleventh day of the search, at 3:30 pm, four team members were walking in an area with bark scaling, when they heard a series of loud signal taps of a woodpecker on a tree. They heard four double raps, separated by 20-30 seconds, followed by a single rap, followed by four consecutive raps."* Dr. Van Remsen of LSU Museum of Natural History commented that the recordings "sent chills up my spine. I have been around Pileated Woodpeckers nearly daily..., but I have never heard them make a sound that came close to this in terms of both power and rhythm."

The team heard similar intriguing raps two days later. They also documented numerous areas of bark scaling consistent with Ivory-billed behavior, and many large cavities, again consistent with those made by living Ivory-bills on the 1940s. Some 6000 hours of audio recorded by Cornell's Acoustic Recording Units are now being examined.

Nothing found by the team can be definitively ascribed to living Ivory-billed Woodpeckers, but the accounts of the searchers suggest they are grasping at something more substantial than straws. The team recommends further searches, and the most likely areas are now well known. So, if you have been cupping your hands around that tiny flame of hope, hang on a little longer.

PROGRAMS

On Monday, April 8, Andrew Farnsworth will speak about **"Radar Ornithology."**

Andrew developed a keen interest in birds, more specifically bird migration, at a young age, and by age five he was birding around his home in Rye, New York. Since that time, he has had the good fortune to travel extensively in Europe and the Americas in search of birds. He received a B.S. in Natural Resources from Cornell University and an M.S. in Zoology from Clemson University, using surveillance radar and acoustic sensors to study nocturnal bird migration for his thesis research. At present, Andrew lives in New York City and works for the National Audubon Society as the Audubon Science Fellow.

Andrew's talk will focus on radar ornithology, meteorology and nocturnal bird migration. He will discuss the utility of Doppler radar as a tool for studying nocturnal bird migration, how to interpret radar imagery, and how to forecast bird migration from synoptic weather maps and radar images. The talk will draw heavily from his work on the BIRDCAST (www.birdcast.com) project, his thesis work at Clemson University, and his experiences observing birds and bird migration over the last 20+ years.

There is a remote possibility that Andrew will be unable to join us owing to other commitments. In this event, Geoff LeBaron will step into the breach.

Coming Programs

May 13: Jeff Podos on Galapagos Finches. June 10: Marta Hersek discusses Ovenbirds.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

On **March 2**, Geoff LeBaron led a group of eleven others to **Plum Island**. You just can't have a bad day there (at least not outside of greenhead season). We stopped first at Joppa Flats, where a group of Lesser Yellowlegs and at least one Common Snipe have overwintered and were most obliging. On the island itself we found two Snowy Owls (a pure white male, and an adult female), a pair of Barrows Goldeneyes at Emerson Rocks, and a flock of Snow Geese bobbing incongruously on the ocean. One was holding a sign saying, "We stay here till you bring back the white stuff!" At the yacht club, someone coined a term (also applied to police informers) for the pigeons hanging around the sewage treatment works.

Vera Crane was accosted by a bunch of enthusiastic pre-teens on the boardwalk in Newburyport. They had the effrontery to ask if she could provide the signature of a seventy-year old they needed for their scavenger hunt. After smacking 'em up side of the head with a scope, Vera obliged with dignity. We also had a Rough-legged Hawk and a Merlin fly by here. In a "briskening" late afternoon at Salisbury Beach, we finished off with two adult Iceland Gulls on the breakwater (different sub-species), and two or three more Snowy Owls. Lots of other nice things too, including splendid looks at Pintail and Red-throated Loon. Fifty eight species in all!

Coming Up

April 6. David Spector will lead a **NEW TRIP** for the club, in search of **American Woodcock and owls**. Depending on his early reconnaissance, David will choose a location in the valley, probably east of the river. The trip is most likely to begin at 6:00 PM. Flashlights are a good idea. Very warm clothing and footwear are more important. Call David (413-323-4885) in advance for the exact time and place of meeting. Call early, registration may be limited.

April 10. Midweek, half-day in the Connecticut River Valley: Duck soup by Harvey Allen. Meet at 7:30 AM across the street from the Atkins Farms, on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Harvey plans to explore Ludlow Reservoir. Heavy rain will cancel this trip. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

April 13. Ashley Reservoir: early warblers. Half to three quarters of a day. Bob Bieda will continue the traditional search for the first warblers of the spring. Possibilities include Pine and Palm warblers, as well as Broad-winged Hawk, Osprey, Chipping Sparrow and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Meet at the Holiday Inn parking lot, exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall"), off I-91 at 7 AM. Be prepared for the fickle spring weather. Call Bob at 413-527-2623 for more details.

April 20. Leisurely and local Saturday mornings. Half day. Shawn Smolen-Morton plans to stick close to the water, from Barton's Cove to Great Pond in Hatfield. He'll be looking for waterfowl and early neotropical migrants. Meet him at the Family Dollar/Food City parking lot at 7AM. For details and directions call 413-863-4569.

April 27. Almost May. Half day. Betsy Higgins will lead a **NEW TRIP** for the club, in search of a diversity of migrants, from warblers to the first orioles and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. She plans to start at Look Park in Northampton and then to finish at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, time permitting. Meet Betsy at 6:30 AM in the parking lot of the JFK Middle School on Bridge Road, in Northampton. Call her at 413-586-7585 for details and directions.

Wildwood Walks

Not far (but just far enough) from the keg- and furniture-strewn wasteland of the frat district, lies a gentle, wooded rise, upon which lies the Wildwood Cemetery. Migrating songbirds are drawn to this little island, and each year the club hosts morning bird walks here during May, each led by a club member. This year walks are scheduled for the following:

Tuesdays: May 7, 14, 21

Thursdays: May 2, 9, 16, and 23

Each begins at **6:30 am** and runs until **8 am**, though of course you may freelance a little longer if you wish. Meet the leader at the main entrance. Make sure you park in the designated parking areas and not on the lawn. Remain on the roads and paths in the cemetery, and respect the solemnity of the site. Thank you.

May 4. Leisurely and local Saturday mornings. Half day. Shirley Hilborn and Ann Lombard will continue to lead members to their favorite local hot spot, Grave's Farm. Perhaps, the first Cliff Swallows will have arrived. Meet Shirley and Ann either at 6:30 AM at the Hitchcock Center or at 7:00 at Graves Farm.

May 11. The Quabbin Reservoir: spring migration. Full Day. Tom Gagnon plans to lead this traditional search of the Quabbin area for migrating neotropical birds. Due to access restrictions, the trip is limited to five vehicles. The Quabbin Reservoir has been closed to such trips in September and October 2001, and the trip is dependent on the lifting of these most recent restrictions. Call Tom (413-584-6353) in advance to make reservations and to get the details of time and place.

May 12. (Sunday). Bird-song. Half day. Don Kroodsma will revive his popular early morning exploration of bird-song as migration peaks and breeding begins. Before and during the dawn, birds make a wonderful array of songs, some of which are heard only at this time. Don will help us sort them out and identify the unique patterns. Of course, visual observation will not be discouraged. Meet at 5:00AM in the bike path parking lot on Station Road in South Amherst. You can call Don at 413-253-5519 for further details.

Nominating Committee

*The nominating committee is now in session and has the job of developing a slate of prospective Board members for the upcoming club year. The membership will elect the new Board at the Annual General Meeting on May 13. The committee consists of **Jim Marcum, Sally Venman, and Jan Ortiz**. If you have an interest on serving on the Board, or want to suggest a potential nominee, please contact one of them.*

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 breeding-bird surveys, and is usually involved in various cutting-edge conservation issues. Contact her at (413) 586 7509, or aslombard@attbi.com

Word Warping

You were warned! In the absence of any submissions, a selection from the editor's "Bolt Upright at Midnight" collection.

Eskimate: When an ice fisherman begins wearing furs and eating raw seal blubber.

Pillage idiot: Viking who could never bring himself to steal.

LIBRARY

Unbeknownst to many, the library has cassette tapes of some past programs, which may be borrowed like the written materials. These do not yet appear in the catalog on our website, but Henry Lappen can probably tell you which are available.

Henry tends our collection at the Hitchcock Center (525 South Pleasant St., Amherst). It contains:

Field Guides	Bird Finding Guides (East and West)
Foreign Field and Bird Finding Guides	Natural and Life Histories
Miscellaneous (including humor)	Videos, Cassettes, LPs and CD ROMs
and <i>Birding</i> magazine.	

Library 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. Don't forget you can view the catalog on our website at <http://hampshirebirdclub.org>. Items can be signed out and borrowed by HBC members for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. Henry is happy to bring items to meetings, given a few days notice! Call him at **(413) 549 3722**.

Local and Live

The **Rattlesnake Gutter Trust** invites you to attend a program entitled "**Birds of Prey**," presented by local raptor expert **Julie Grow-Collier**, assisted by **Jim Parks**.

Time: Sunday, April 7, 2002, 2:00 PM

Place: Leverett Elementary School Gymnasium, 85 Montague Road, Leverett.

There will be a small admission charge.

Julie Collier grew up in Leverett, attending Leverett and Amherst schools. She is a licensed raptor rehabilitator who gives presentations at schools and functions in the New England area. Live hawks, falcons, eagle and owls are brought out of their cages, described and displayed, accompanied by a lively, loving, humorous narrative, with a Native American flavor. This program is very popular with both children and adults.

The Rattlesnake Gutter Trust is a local land trust, working to preserve natural habitat in the Amherst-Leverett area. Their Annual Meeting will be held in the cafeteria, prior to the program. Refreshments will wind up the evening. Visitors are most welcome.

If you would like to know more about the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust, please call Annette Gibavic at (413) 548 9082, or write to them at Box 195 Leverett, MA 01054.

Welcome New Members!

Dr. Elizabeth Tulett: eltullett@the-spa.com

William Sweet: 413-582-7094; yaaziel@berkshire.net

Ethan Carr: 413-549-6624; ecarr@larf.umass.edu

Address Changes

Please note that all email addresses which ended in "@mediaone.net" now end in "@attbi.com"

Hawk Migration Conference

Several HBC members attended the Seventh Regional Northeast Hawk Migration Conference on Saturday, March 9 at Holyoke Community College. The precise location on campus turned out to be a closely guarded secret. Some of the highlights are described here.

Deborah Allen provided a photographic account of Cooper's Hawks nesting in the Bronx last season. 2000 and 2001 saw the first successful nesting by this species in the New York metropolitan area since the 1950s. Deborah believes the increased success may be due to the sudden reduction in the number of jays and crows caused by West Nile virus. The abundance of Rock Doves certainly does not hurt.

Mariko Yamasaki correlated the lack of active management of forests with the increasing abundance of late-succession forests in New England. Almost all raptors use a variety of habitats including open grasslands, and edges. She believes far more active management of the New England landscape is necessary to create more habitat diversity.

Jane Seymour and Joan Morrison discussed American Kestrels. Both breeding bird censuses and migration counts in this region show the species in decline locally. Interestingly, in areas of the mid-west such as Iowa, where large numbers of nesting boxes have been installed on interstate highway signs, kestrels are doing quite well. The predominance of grasslands in this region is probably also a major part of the explanation.

Iain MacLeod began by describing the epic, sometimes violent, and ultimately successful struggle to protect nesting Ospreys from egg collectors in his native Scotland. Iain now lives in New Hampshire, where he devotes himself to encouraging Ospreys to return to areas like the Merrimack Valley by creating man-made nests. With the help of a professional climber, Mr. MacLeod modifies existing trees, and builds stick nests. He has found that young male ospreys are far more likely to set up territories and court females in the presence of these "starter nests" than in the presence of platforms alone, or no existing nest structures. There are now ten nests established south of the White Mountains in New Hampshire, six of which are in beaver swamps. Apparently, once a certain habitat is selected by colonizing male Ospreys, this becomes the fashion for others.

BirdSource (a website established by Cornell and National Audubon) is pioneering the sharing of hawk migration data over the Internet. Records from dozens of fall migration watches throughout North and Central America are being entered into an electronic database, which replaces an inaccessible paper archive. Graphics depict the number of a given species (e.g. Broad-winged Hawk) at each site over one-, five-, or ten-day periods from August through November. As this system becomes established, it will be possible to view the entire North American migration almost as soon as the sites send in their data. If you are interested, go to www.birdsource.org, and select the "Autumn Hawk Watch" option from the "Birdsource Projects" listbox.

The final event of the day, a panel discussion on accipiter identification, reassured this attendee that the debate over Sharpie-Cooper-Gos will sustain us in the field for many years to come.

Grand Opening: Peregrine Nest Box

A second nesting box for Peregrine Falcons has been put up at UMass. It is on Thompson Hall facing east. If you are standing at the campus pond, Thompson Hall is the tallish brick building to the right. While the nest is actually at the top of the building, there is a multi-story parapet above it. Hence, the site should meet the birds' requirement for a nest 30 feet from the top. *Please report any activity you notice at the box to **David Ziomek: Great Falls Discovery Center, 413-863-3221.***

Hitchcock Center

Reading the Forested Landscape - Tom Wessels, Ecologist, Author and Professor

Saturday, March 30: 1:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Nature Photography - John Green, Guild Studio School

April 1, 15, 29 and May 20: 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.; April 6, 20 and May 11, 7:30 - 10:30 a.m.

River Days - Exploring the Connecticut River from Source to Sea - Michael Tougias

Tuesday, April 2: 7:00 p.m.

EcoTeams - Jennifer Wiest, Teacher/Naturalist

Monday, April 8: 7:00 p.m.

The Art of Sustainability - Terry Tempest Williams, Naturalist and Nature Writer

Wednesday, April 10: 7:00 p.m., Amherst College-Buckley Recital Hall

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

Natural History of Vernal Pools: Patti Steinman, Educational Coordinator

Thursday, March 28: 7:00 pm

The Night for Salamanders: Dan Schell, Mt. Tom Citizens Advisory Committee

Date: To be determined by weather, meet at 6:pm. Please register, and become part of a telephone tree to be notified at short notice when the program will take place.

Spring's Wild Edibles: Blanche Derby, Author/Illustrator

Sunday March 30: 1:00-2:30 pm

Berkshire Sanctuaries are sponsoring **Spring Migration on the Great Plains**, a tour encompassing the prairie wetlands of Kansas and Nebraska, focusing on such enthralling migrants as Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese, and Greater White-fronted Geese. Tour leaders are Rene Laubach and Bob Prescott. The tour runs from March 30 through April 7, 2002. Call (413) 637 0320 for a more detailed itinerary.

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

Wetlands Fest

Volunteers are needed for the HBC table at the 2002 Pioneer Valley Wetlands Fest, on June 1. This event is organized by a collection of local conservation organizations including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It includes displays by any and all local organizations and individuals involved with wetlands, and last year it included a bird walk through Lawrence Swamp. The people at our table will need to be able to field basic questions about the club, and should also be versed in the gentle art of identifying birds for the public. Please contact Mary Alice Wilson if you can give an hour or so. This is a great way to make ourselves known to potential new members.

Until next time, walk softly and carry a big scope. David Peake-Jones: (413) 529 9541. davidpj@the-spa.com



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 18, No. 9

May, 2002

On a recent trip to the land of my birth, referred to unassumingly by expatriates as “God’s Own Country,” I had cause to reflect on the relationship between environment and self. As a child, I awoke every morning to Australian Magpies caroling in the fields near home. I was accustomed to seeing Eastern Rosellas (parrots) feeding on the lawn, to the urgent, sometimes aggressive foraging of New Holland Honeyeaters amongst the flowering eucalyptus in the yard, and the furtive visits of tiny Eastern Spinebills to the same flowers when the New Hollands were not looking. I was familiar with the shocking white splash of Sulfur-crested Cockatoos against the dark foliage of the pine tree at the gate. I took for granted that the huge skeletons of dead *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gums) by the creek would be adorned at sunset by boisterous flocks of rose-breasted Galahs (cockatoos), gleaming almost supernaturally in the fading light.

I found that returning to these birds inspired a great deal more than nostalgia. I found in fact, a visceral connection with the birds of my childhood which had been neglected, but not broken, since I moved away. This connection shook me on more than one occasion with its depth and permanence.

Perhaps, for a New Englander, it might be the first kinglet of April, robins guarding the lawn, or broadwings kettling on a September morning that clutch at the heartstrings. I hope that, as we make our way through an increasingly impermanent world, we will find ourselves treasuring the birds of “our place.”

PROGRAMS

All programs are held at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant St. in Amherst.

On **Monday, May 13**, **Jeff Podos** will speak to us on **Galapagos Finches**. Dr. Podos is an Assistant Professor of Biology at UMass, Amherst. He has a B.A. from Franklin and Marshall College, and a Ph.D. from Duke University. Jeff did post-graduate work at the University of Arizona from 1998-2000, and is primarily interested in how the physiology, biomechanics, and development of organisms affect the evolution of their behavior. He works extensively on birdsong, in the eastern United States, Brazil, and the Galapagos Islands.

The Galapagos (or “Darwin’s”) Finches are a fabled group of birds. Darwin observed many species, each exquisitely adapted to a specific ecological niche on one or more of the many islands in the archipelago. Dr. Podos will help us understand how scientists since Darwin have elaborated on his great idea.

COMING UP

June 10: Marta Hersek on Ovenbirds

September 9: Wayne Petersen takes us to Iceland.

FIELD TRIPS

REPORTS

David Spector sends this report on his “**Woodcock and Owls**” jaunt of April 6.

At sunset we waited a bit
In an Amherst preserve, Podick;
A woodcock flew low
And peented "hello"
To provide for our lists a nice tick.

To bring in an owl we tried--
We hooted, whistled, and cried;
But no bird was fooled
Silence then ruled--
The owls in no way complied.

Many stars brightening the night,
With company fit to delight,
A nice evening's walk,
A well-viewed woodcock,
All made this club trip come out right.

Bob Bieda reports that, on **April 13**, six HBC members had a fairly quiet but beautiful morning walking around **Ashley Reservoir** in Holyoke. Highlights included: about 50 Ring-necked Ducks, first Osprey of the year, a duet of Brown Creeper song, a dozen Pine Warblers heard and two seen fairly well, and the first Rufous-sided Towhee of the year. Strange by their absence were Tree Swallows, Palm Warblers, Wood Ducks and water birds in general.

Thanks to Shawn Smolen-Morton for this report on his “Leisurely and Local” expedition.

On **Saturday, 20 April**, while a lucky few ogled the Eurasian Kestrel just off Morris Island, Cape Cod, I led a cheerful crew looking for early migrants in the **Turners Falls area and Great Pond in Hatfield**. Before the trip even began, the early morning earthquake in Plattsberg, New York, gave us cause to reflect on the power and wonder of the natural environment. Waterfowl were a bust, but land birds offered adequate compensation. We were all impressed with the apparent mating behavior of an enthusiastic Ruby-crowned Kinglet. This bird had the most extensive red feathering on the crown that most of us had ever seen- not so much a crest as a red mohawk. The female reciprocated with infant-like begging and wing fluttering. Of the 51 species noted, birds of interest were: Pine-, Palm-, Yellow rumped-, and Black and White- warblers; Tree- and Northern Rough-winged- Swallows; 1 Chimney Swift; a mysteriously large and dark falcon; Field Sparrow; Blue-headed Vireo; Brown Thrasher; and Vesper Sparrow. Curiously, we observed no Broad-winged Hawks.

On **Saturday, April 27**, Betsy Higgins spent another “Leisurely and Local” morning in the **Florence** area. Our group started out at Look Park, where Betsy audaciously predicted that we might find a favorite of hers from past years, in its usual haunt along the Mill River. Sure enough, cutting through the noise of the river and the innumerable Chipping Sparrows were some penetrating slurred notes that turned out to be from a very cooperative Louisiana Waterthrush. Walking back through the park, we also found several warblers, Solitary Vireo, and Pileated Woodpecker. Our next stop was Fitzgerald Lake, where Shirley Hillborn directed us to the nest of a mysterious raptor, right above the Lake Trail. We heard both accipeter-ish and Red-Shouldery calls in the vicinity, and could make out movement in the nest, but the exact identity of the bird remains a mystery. Further along, an Osprey circled lazily over the dam, a Swamp Sparrow held court at the blind, and an elusive Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher finally revealed itself to at least some of us.

UPCOMING TRIPS

More details on the **Wildwood Walks** in bucolic Wildwood Cemetery, off Strong St. in Amherst. The leaders of each walk have now been conscripted. We publish them here to discourage them from backing out.

Thursday, May 2: Chris Page

Tuesday, May 7: Harvey Allen

Thursday, May 9: Scott Turner

Tuesday, May 14: Al Richards

Thursday, May 16: Harvey Allen

Tuesday, May 21: Al Richards

Thursday, May 23: Jim Marcum

Each walk begins at **6:30 am** and runs until **8 am**, though of course you may freelance a little longer if you wish. Meet the leader at the main entrance. Make sure you park in the designated parking areas and not on the lawn. Remain on the roads and paths in the cemetery, and respect the solemnity of the site. Thank you.

May 4. Leisurely and Local Saturday Mornings. Half day. Shirley Hilborn and Ann Lombard will continue to lead members to their favorite local hot spot, Grave's Farm. Perhaps, the first Cliff Swallows will have arrived. Meet Shirley and Ann either at 6:30 AM at the Hitchcock Center or at 7:00 at Graves Farm.

May 11. The Quabbin Reservoir: spring migration. Full Day. Tom Gagnon plans to lead this traditional search of the Quabbin area for migrating neotropical birds. Due to access restrictions, the trip is limited to five vehicles. The Quabbin Reservoir has been closed to such trips in September and October 2001, and the trip is dependent on the lifting of these most recent restrictions. Call Tom (413-584-6353) in advance to make reservations and to get the details of time and place.

Sunday, May 12. Bird-song. Half day. Don Kroodsma will revive his popular early morning exploration of bird-song as migration peaks and breeding begins. Before and during the dawn, birds make a wonderful array of songs, some of which are heard only at this time. Don will help us sort them out and identify the unique patterns. Of course, visual observation will not be discouraged. Meet at 5:00AM in the bike path parking lot on Station Road in South Amherst. You can call Don at 413-253-5519 for further details.

Wednesday, May 15. Midweek, half-day in the Connecticut River Valley. A warbler walk with Harvey Allen. Meet at 6:00 AM across the street from the Atkins Farms, on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Harvey plans to walk along the Swift River in Belchertown. Heavy rain will cancel this trip. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

Sunday, May 19. Mt. Auburn Cemetery. Full day. David Peake-Jones will lead a **NEW TRIP** for the club to this historic birding locale in the greater Boston area between Watertown and Cambridge on the Charles River. Renowned for its neotropical migrants, this cemetery is also a botanic garden. David plans to continue the trip from Mt. Auburn to other hot spots, like Marblehead Neck, along the Massachusetts mid-coast, time and interest permitting. Bring snacks, lunch, and gear for inclement weather. Please call David at (413-529-9541) for meeting time and place.

Memorial Day Weekend: May 24-27. Monhegan Island. This overnight trip is full and has a waiting list.

Saturday, May 25. Poor Man's Monhegan: Plum Island and vicinity. All day. Al Richards and Bob Bieda lead the unfortunate souls to a lesser paradise. With a little effort, last year's group recorded 101 species, including Wilson's Phalarope, Piping Plover, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Seaside Sparrow, Orchard Oriole, and Evening Grosbeak (wow!). Pack a lunch. For further information or questions call Al (413-665-2761) or Bob (413-527-2623).

Saturday, June 1. Connecticut Marshes. Al Richards will lead a **NEW TRIP** for the club to the Station 43 area in Windsor, Connecticut. Fertile wetlands and fields in this spot often yield productive birding during breeding season. Possibilities include: American and Least Bitterns, Sora, Virginia Rail, and Sedge Wren

(present last year), as well as a variety of shorebirds. The trip will then progress to Bradley airport for grassland species, most notably Upland Sandpiper. Meet at the Hadley Stop and Shop at 5:30 AM. Call Al (413-665-2761) for further details or directions.

Saturday, June 8. Mount Greylock. All day. Stacy Adams will lead a group up the mountain for local specialties. Possibilities include: Winter Wren; breeding warblers like Blackpoll, Mourning, and Yellow-rumped; and Purple Finch. Contact Stacy (413-367-0177) for meeting time and location.

FIELD TRIP ANNOUNCEMENTS

The annual trip to the grasslands of **Westover Air Force Base** will take place on **Saturday, June 22**, as announced in the Winter-Late Summer Field Trip List. Our thanks to Bob Bieda who has managed to negotiate the new tighter security arrangements to get us on base.

Following the tremendous success of last year's trip, a second **Cape May** trip will take place over the **Columbus Day** weekend, leaving on Friday October 11, and returning on Monday, October 14. Leaders will be Scott Sumner and Dan Ziomek.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The **Annual General Meeting** will take place immediately before the program on **Monday, May 13**. The nominating committee (Jan Ortiz, Sally Venman, Jim Marcum) will present the following slate of officers for your consideration.

President: Mary Alice Wilson

Vice-President/Program Chair: Geoff LeBaron

Treasurer: David Gross

Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson

Communications Secretary: Jan Howard

Members-at-Large: Sally Hills, Michael Locher, Dennis McKenna, Jan Ortiz, Sally Venman, and Bob Zimmerman.

These prospective members will be nominated at the opening of the meeting. Further nominations will be accepted from the floor, provided they are seconded. Once all nominations have been made, a voice vote will be held to determine the composition of the Board.

CONSERVATION

Fitzgerald Lake Trail Days

Perhaps you are one of the many Hampshire birders who have frequented this beautiful and surprising conservation area on the outskirts of Florence, MA. Perhaps it is one of those places you have birded "in theory," without ever actually wandering in. Either way, it is a jewel of grassroots conservation, and the Broad Brook Coalition would like your help to keep it that way.

The coalition will be holding the **Fitzgerald Lake Trail Work Day** on **Saturday, May 4** from **9 AM to 1:30 PM**. The rain date is Sunday, May 5. Show up with whatever hand tools (loppers, saws, shovels) etc. and/or call Carmen Ahearn (586 3787) with questions.

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. Contact her at (413) 586 7509, or aslombard@attbi.com

LIBRARY

HBC is selling off some books that are never borrowed. With the money, the club plans to expand the most used sections including field guides and bird-finding guides to new regions. Before the club spends money to do this, I encourage you to look through all those field- and locality- guides gathering dust in your home and decide if they could be donated or loaned to the club. Please let me know. *If you are planning a trip and need a book, check out our library at the Hitchcock Center, look on the website (hampshirebirdclub.org), or call me at 413-549-3722.*

Your faithful librarian, Henry Lappen.

HITCHCOCK CENTER

Permaculture: Ecological Design for Our Lives - Jono Neiger, Biologist

Tuesday, April 30, 7 PM

Hug a Bug is Back- A Biodiversity Family Day Event

Saturday, May 4, 10 AM - 1 PM

Everything Grows: A Native Plant Sale & Children's Fair!

Saturday, May 11, 10:00 AM – 4 PM

Amherst Common

The Living Clock: The Orchestration of Biological Rhythms - John Palmer

Tuesday, May 14 at 7 PM

Biothon - Volunteers wishing to help the Hitchcock Center

Friday, May 17 at 6 PM to Saturday, May 18 at 6 PM

The Heat is Up! - Steve Roof (Biologist) and Stephanie Ciccarello (Energy Coordinator)

A Global Climate Change in Amherst Update

Tuesday, May 21, 7 PM

Birding by Ear: John Green

Saturday, June 1, 7 AM to 9 AM

Medicinal Herbs and Plants with Carrie Desmarais

Saturday, June 1, 1 PM to 4 PM

Across the Meadows and Forest with Carla Racine

Sunday, June 2, 10 AM to 4 PM

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

Spring Migration Bird Walks: *Guest Leaders.* Monday-Friday, May 6-10, from 6:30 AM to 8 AM

Wednesday Wildflower Walks: *Janet Bissell* Wednesdays, 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM

Arcadia on May 8, and June 5; Graves Farm on May 15, and June 12; Lynes Sanctuary on May 22, and June 19

The American Woodcock; *Nancy Childs and Patti Steinman.* Friday, May 10, from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Saturday Early Morning Bird Walks: *Invited Leaders.* Saturdays, 7 AM to 8:30 AM

Arcadia on May 18 and June 8; Graves Farm on May 4 and May 25; Lynes Sanctuary on May 11 and June 1

Great Blue Herons: *Patti Steinman.* Saturday, May 25 from 4 PM to 6 PM

Grassland Birds: *Andrea Jones.* Saturday, June 1 from 9 AM to 11 AM

Valley Native Americans and Landscape Ecology: *Dietrich Schlobohm.* Thursday, June 6 at 7PM

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

ODDS 'N' SODS

HBC Needs You!!

The **2002 Wetlands Festival** (organized by US Fish and Wildlife Service, along with a coalition of local conservation groups) will be held on the Amherst Town Common on **Saturday, June 1**. This is it, people! Hampshire Bird Club needs to be there, and we need several more volunteers to talk about the activities of the club and answer questions from the public. *If we don't get more help, we will not be represented at the event.* **Please contact Mary Alice Wilson (413-548-9078), as soon as possible if you can help.**

Immortalize your Wetland Photographs!

The US Fish and Wildlife Service would like to offer the public a free wetland screensaver as we did at the Wetlands Festival last year. This year's theme is wetland wildlife, so I am asking you to submit photos of wetland animals for consideration. We may also use these photographs for other publications in the future. Submissions can be slides or prints. If you want to send a digital image it should be at least 72 dpi (screen resolution) or higher. If scanning an image for submission, please size it at 6"x9", scan at 72 dpi or better and save it as a .jpg file.

Please send submissions via email (gabriel_dealessio@fws.gov) or by mail to:

R. Tiner, USFWS. ES-NWI
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035

If you have general questions, feel free to call me at 413-253-8620, or for questions on scanning specifications, contact Gabe DeAlessio at 413-253-8651. Closing date for submissions is May 7. This will give us enough time to prepare the screensaver in advance of the Wetlands Festival. Thanks for your cooperation.

Ralph Tiner

Welcome New Members!!

Diana Day Coccoluto: 30 Murphy Terrace, Northampton, MA 01060; 413-584-4603

Suzan Smith & Peter W. Shea: 23 Stagecoach Rd., Amherst, MA 01002; 413-256-1012

Nancy Young: 63 Vernon St., Northampton, MA 01060; 413-585-9380
nyoung@noho.com

Mikkel Thyorpe: 48 High St. Florence, MA 01062; 413-585-0986
mthorup@research.att.com

Deborah Reiter: PO Box 989, Amherst, MA 01004; 413-665-9515

Kevin Weir: 760 Pratt Corner Rd., Amherst, MA 01002; 413-322-1801
addison@aol.com

Jean Mann: 196 Gill Rd., Greenfield, MA 01301; 413-773-3490

Dana Carnegie & Steven Toutant: 14 Greenwich Road, Amherst, MA 01002; 253 3220
danasea@attbi.com; offline999@hotmail.com

Roger Conant: 153 N. Valley Rd., Pelham, MA 01002; 413-256-4827
conant@ecs.umass.edu

Mainus Sultan: 990 N. Pleasant St., Apt. E-2, Amherst, MA 01002-1398; 413-546-5876
sultan@educ.umass.edu

Do not forget that **Backyard Birds**, on Strong Ave. in Northampton should be your source for all your birding paraphernalia. Demonstrate your membership in the HBC and they will even give you a 10% discount

There will be a **bird walk** at the **East Leverett Meadow, Sunday, May 19, 7-9 AM**, led by Harvey Allen. Call Jean Bergstrom, (413 367-2842) for information. Sponsored by the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust. Free and open to the public.

That is all there is for this month. Until next time, "Talk softly and carry a big scope!"

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



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 18, No. 10

June, 2002

June is here. Birds have pretty much gotten to where they need to be for the earnest, wonderful, and unforgiving business of procreation. No doubt many of us are settling down for a summer season of vacation, home improvement, long days by the pool, birding trips to distant, exotic locations, and all manner of things that were neglected during the warbler-bright days of May. I suppose procreation cannot be ruled out for a small minority of we birders, also.

This publication will neither be procreating, catching up on neglected chores, or having the grandkids over. It is going to aestivate for a couple of merciful months. Who knows what strange literary form will emerge when the chrysalis splits in September?

The club, on the other hand, never truly stops. As I write, Al Richards and friends are running afoul of the State Police at Bradley Airport. There are great trips scheduled throughout June, July and August, including the rejuvenated Connecticut Lakes weekend, Mt Greylock, Westover, New South Beach and Harvey's mid-week exploration of breeding birds in Shutesbury. I want to draw your attention, in particular to the Bartholemew's Cobble trip, scheduled for June 15. This collaboration with the Trustees of Reservations is a new venture for the club, and a chance for us to become better acquainted with the business of actually saving habitat for the birds we love to watch. Don Reid will be our guide, and his knowledge of the broader ecology of the reservation promises to provide birding with a difference. Please note also that the contact details for this trip have changed from those published in the Winter-Late Summer Field Trip Schedule.

PROGRAMS

Programs are held at Immanuel Lutheran Church: 867 North Pleasant St., Amherst at 7:30 p.m.

Please join us on **June 10**, as **Dr. Marta Hersek** looks into the secret life of that most vocal but cryptic forest denizen, **the Ovenbird**.

Marta Hersek completed a Ph.D. in Animal Behavior at the University of California, Davis in 1990, focusing on the behavioral interactions between Ground Squirrels and Northern Pacific Rattlesnakes. Since that time, she has taught at U.C., Davis, Drexel University, and Rutgers before moving to Northeastern University. Her research has extended to the behavior of the Northern Mockingbird, and detailed studies of Ovenbirds in forest fragments.

Dr Hersek has been active in outreach and adult education programs at the National Zoological Park. She consulted for a *National Geographic* special on Ground Squirrels and rattlesnakes, and solicits/edits feature articles for *Bird Observer* magazine. She currently teaches at Northeastern University in Boston, where she is the Associate Director of the ELMO program. Far from being concerned with shrill, red muppets, this program brings quality science education to non-science majors, and, according to Marta, new perspectives to science educators.

Coming Programs

The program for next year is shaping up to be full of interest, and with the potential for a couple of “BLOCKBUSTER” events. Here is the latest from Geoff LeBaron, our program chair.

September 9, 2002: **Wayne Petersen** on *Iceland*
October 21, 2002: To be announced
November 18, 2002: **Bob Askins.** “*Ecology and Conservation of Birds of Open Habitats*”
December 9, 2002: Members Meeting
January 13, 2003: **Robert S. Ridgely** on the *Jocotoco Foundation*
February 10, 2003: **Paul Baisich.** “*A Shade-Grown Coffee Future: Optimism for Birds*”
March 10, 2003: To be announced
April 14, 2003: **Tom Litwin** about the *Harriman Expedition*
May 12, 2003: **Kenn Kaufmann.** “*Migration from the Bird’s Point of View*”
June 9, 2003: To be announced

Waiting on our mystery speaker before they are assigned dates are **Mara Silver** (Connecticut River Valley Swallows), and **Geoff LeBaron** (Galapagos Islands). Stay tuned!

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Shirley Hillborn and **Anne Lombard** met about seven others to continue the “**Leisurely and Local**” series at **Graves Farm on May 4**. The Cliff Swallows had not yet returned. However, lots of Tree Swallows and one Barn Swallow sufficed quite well. Birds of note included a Blackburnian Warbler and a great look at a Broad-winged Hawk. The group heard Black-throated Green Warbler, saw nesting Robins, a Black and White Warbler, Baltimore Orioles and Eastern Bluebirds. Later, four people went to Fitzgerald Lake to view the mystery nest (finally identified as that of a Cooper’s Hawk) and two Brown Creepers nesting in a precarious piece of bark hanging from a tree.

Thank you, Shirley, for this report.

Fourteen early risers met **Don Kroodsma** at the Station Road entrance to the bike path at five a.m. on **Sunday, May 12**, identifying each other in the dark by voice and general size and shape. As the group assembled, we listened to Titmice, and Great-horned Owls and Woodcock in the distance. Then we heard the dawn song of the Blue-winged Warbler—not the bee-buzz of later in the day—and it was the Western Massachusetts dialect, not the song noted in the Sibley book, which is the Upstate New York dialect! As we moved slowly down the path, listening carefully to the songs around us, Don discussed research and theories about what the males are doing, and how the females are reacting. “They all know each other. They know exactly who’s who.” He noted the songs of birds answering each other, subordinate birds changing their songs to match dominant birds, Song Sparrows singing one song for a while, then pausing before beginning a new song. (Actually, just pausing, but they were SUPPOSED to begin a new song.) Harvey Allen drew the group’s attention to a Cuckoo calling in the distance, Mary Alice Wilson and Merry Cushing showed us a Brown Creeper nest and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher nest. We spent some time watching and listening to a Wilson’s Warbler, and stepped out into a field to hear Bobolinks, a Meadow Lark, and a Savannah Sparrow. At around 8:15 conversation turned to favorite breakfast foods, and the group headed back to the parking lot, thanking Don for a truly fascinating morning walk.

I believe thanks are due to the Prez, Mary Alice Wilson (Herself) for this report.

On **Sunday, May 19**, a great group of birders went with **David Peake-Jones** to **Mt. Auburn Cemetery** in the Watertown-Cambridge area of greater Boston. This inaugural HBC trip was a great success, despite some problems with wind (meteorological, not alimentary). Amongst the highlights were 18 species of warblers (including Bay-breasted- and Mourning-). Swainson's Thrushes were abundant and obvious as they perched on the gravestones. Amongst them were at least two Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's types. After some trouble with the notoriously bad Boston street signage (we could not find Route 2), the group moved on to Great Meadows NWR in Concord. There we found Marsh Wrens singing at arm's-length, and a wonderful show of Tree-, Northern Rough-winged-, Barn-, Bank-, AND Cliff-Swallows, all flying together. A Virginia Rail sang once, but remained otherwise unavailable. In all we found 92 species for the day. Thanks to all the participants for a wonderful trip.

Monhegan Island. May 24-27, 2002

Some of the past few years have been seen slim pickin's on the island. I am pleased to report that this was not one of them. An eclectic group of eighteen HBC members led by **Andrew Magee** and **David Peake-Jones** enjoyed one of the birdiest trips in recent memory. We had great weather, and were blessed with 121 species, including Broad-winged Hawk, Merlin, Wood Duck, Short-billed Dowitcher, Least Sandpiper, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and 25 species of Warbler.

One often-noted irony of birding at Monhegan was well illustrated by a hapless Palm Warbler, eking out a living amongst the seaweed mulch of a Trailing Yew flowerbed. This (very late) bird was clearly not doing very well when we arrived. Bill Sweet later observed a young local lad prying it out of the jaws of one of the Monhegan feline contingent. When Bill enquired after it, the urchin replied thoughtfully, "It's going to die, but I'll take it home and keep it company."

The really special birds of the weekend were a **Hooded Warbler** in a yard along the Burnt Head Trail, and a **Golden-winged Warbler**, which materialized near the Lupine Gallery. There was a remarkable influx of **Black-billed Cuckoos** on Saturday night. Most of the group saw at least one on Sunday, and Betsy Higgins found no less than five (5) individuals in one day! Bill Schafer found the lone Wood Duck in a (probably rain-diluted) tide pool while rambling along the ocean-side shoreline near Burnt Head. Andrew Magee and Elaine Pourinski independently glimpsed a bird that just *might* have been a Bell's Vireo. This elusive critter was causing a general commotion amongst the hotshots on the island, but when we left, its actual identity remained unclear.

The trip to Eastern Egg Rock was very rough and cold, but offered the intrepid great views of Puffins, Roseate-, Common-, and Arctic-Terns, and Purple Sandpipers, plus a couple of Wilson's Storm-Petrels on the ride.

HELP WANTED

We need a **Publicity Chair**. We advertise our programs, in the local media as a way to involve the general public in our activities, and to help meet the educational component of our charter. If you believe you can maintain existing links with the local media, make new connections as necessary, write articles describing our programs for said media, and undertake to provide material to them in a timely fashion, HBC needs you. *If you believe you may have the skills for this important position, please contact Mary Alice Wilson (413 548 9078; mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu), or any member of the Board.*

Coming Trips

June 8. Mount Greylock. All day. Stacy Adams will lead a group up the mountain for local specialties. Possibilities include: Winter Wren; breeding warblers like Blackpoll, Mourning, and Yellow-rumped; and Purple Finch. Contact Stacy (413-367-0177) for meeting time and location.

June 12. Midweek, half-day in the Connecticut River Valley. Local Nesters. Half day. Harvey Allen looks for birds on territory in Shutesbury. Meet at 6:00 AM across the street from the Atkins Farms, on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Heavy rain will cancel this trip. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

June 15. Bartholomew's Cobble. All day. David Norton will lead members on a **kinda' new trip** to Bartholomew's Cobble. Once there, Don Reid, the regional ecologist for the Trustees of Reservations, will guide the club through the property and afford an unique opportunity to delve a little deeper into the site. As we explore the property, Don will be able to explain why it is so special and how the Trustees manage it. Breeding birds, especially Black Vulture, are the focus, and Don knows where they are.

Note: the contact person for this trip has changed, and the meeting time place are not as published in the Winter-Late Summer Field Trip Schedule

David Norton will be the HBC contact person for this trip. Please email him: dnort@attbi.com (or phone if you do not have internet access at **413 256 1767**) to register, and for details of meeting time/place.

June 22. Westover AFB: grassland birds. Half day. Bob Bieda will lead this ever-popular and successful trip to some of the largest contiguous grasslands remaining in the northeast. Past trips have usually seen Upland Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow and Eastern Meadowlark. Call Bob at 413-527-2623 to register and for meeting details.

July 27. New South Beach, part A. David Peake-Jones will lead this **NEW TRIP** to catch the early part of the Fall shorebird migration, during which a different mix of birds than on the later, traditional trip in August. As always, big-sky aesthetics are a certainty. Bring sun protection, plenty of water and food, and footwear for wet sand and mud. A surf landing from the beach taxi and a long walk are parts of this trip. Space will be limited; register by calling David Peake-Jones at 413-529-9541.

August 24. New South Beach:the original. Full Day. Bob and Al 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 other birds observed last year: Wilson's Storm-petrel (from shore!), Piping Plover, American Oystercatcher, Whimbrel, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Red Knot, Parasitic Jaeger, Forster's, Black and Roseate Terns. Tentatively, the group will depart from the South Hadley Stop and Shop parking lot at 5:00 AM and meet Bob in Palmer at approximately 5:30 AM. As the date approaches, Call Al Richards at 413-665-2761 or Bob Bieda (413-527-2623) for further details, directions and registration.

LIBRARY

Henry Lappen has just breathed a huge sigh of relief. A court recently ruled that libraries could not be expected to censor material viewed by the public via their public library Internet connection. The court ruled that due to filtering errors made by the filtering software during a test, important information was being withheld from the public. There is probably some pretty kinky stuff in our collection- birds being often polygamous, polygynous, promiscuous, and/or downright randy according to the dictates of natural selection. Rumor has it that, prior to the ruling, Henry had his thermos and pillow packed, ready to stand guard at the Hitchcock Center, in order that none of this explicit material should be seen by some unwitting browser.

All this means you still have unfettered access to 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. The library is open during Hitchcock Center hours (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, closed Saturdays in summer). Items can be borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. Henry is happy to bring items to meetings, given a few days notice. You can reach him at **(413) 549 3722**.

HITCHCOCK CENTER

Scott Sumner will be leading a **Fall Birding** class through Hitchcock Center. The class schedule has not yet been published, but for early registration or further information, contact the 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**.*

Mr. Russell Crow, of "The Roost" in Hartford is ripped. Ever since his human namesake, Russell Crowe, was nominated for an Oscar, Mr. Crow says his life has been ruined, in a case of mistaken identity. Hanging out with a disreputable bunch of conspecifics near a city landfill, Mr. Crow complained, "What a difference an 'e' makes. If I get asked to do one more endorsement for shady clothing or Marilyn Manson, I'm going to croak!"

Mr. Crow continued, "What really irks me is this whole "bad-boy" thing. You want bad boy? Spend a day in my world! The head-bobbing and cawing, the intimidating groups, harassing raptors, the sitting around on rotting carcasses all day- that stuff is hard work, not to mention gross. This guy trashes a couple of Hollywood hotel bathrooms and wears his cowlick a tad askew, and suddenly he's Mr. Nasty. I'll be glad when all this blows over and he heads back to whatever antipodean roost he sprang from!"

As we left, Mr. Crow was engaged in a heated discussion with the director of his current photo shoot. Apparently, rather than wheeling menacingly over the company's new-release muscle car, Mr. Crow insists on fluttering around the rear-view mirror like a kinglet, and messing on the hood.

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 breeding-bird surveys, and is usually involved in various cutting-edge conservation issues. Contact her at (413) 586 7509, or aslombard@attbi.com*

MISCELLANEOUS

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.

Welcome New Members

Lou A. Peugh: Flornce, MA: 413-584-3122: peugh@gcc.mass.edu

Ilna Singh & Dawn Josefski: Amherst, MA 413-548-4972: isingh@valinet.com

Susan Stanley: Amherst, MA: 413-549-0979: Susan.stanley3@verizon.net

Leslie Breger: Amherst, MA: 413-253-4099: lesliebreger@hotmail.com

Chris Gentes & Heather McQueen: Hadley, MA: 587-0992
nohobirdclub@hotmail.com; vireo99@hotmail.com

Sally Crawford: Pelham, MA: 413-256-6814

Marion Rhodes: Sunderland, MA: 413-665-3517: Mbr@chemistry.umass.edu

Email Address Changing???

If your email address is changing, please notify Sue Emerson at wle33@aol.com a week or so ahead of time. It is important for the newsletter reminder. Thank you.

THANK YOU!

As this membership year winds to a close, it is worth taking a minute to reflect on the efforts of those who keep this club running. In no particular order, and at risk of leaving someone out (THANK YOU TOO), here are some of them.

Leaving his post as the chair of the Field Trip Committee is **Shawn Smolen-Morton**. During his tenure, Shawn and the committee have planned the entire field trip schedule; dreamed up new and unconventional trips; cajoled, bribed, and encouraged new leaders; and sent me printer-ready versions of the schedule *on time!* Those who have birded with Shawn can no doubt trace his enthusiasm and commitment to the field in the vibrant field trip program we now have. Thank you Shawn, and we'll see you in the field.

(continues over)

Cycling off the Board are **Stacy Adams, David Peake-Jones, and Scott Sumner.**

Stacy has been on the Board for a number of years, during which time she has served as a Member-at-Large, member of the Field Trip Committee, and Program Chair. She has also led numerous trips including Monhegan, and her annual signature exploration of Mt. Greylock. Thank you Stacy!

Mr. Sumner has been just about everything in the club since its inception. He leads numerous trips and is one of those with HBC in his blood. His experience has been invaluable over recent years on the Board, and it is hard to imagine him escaping the call of duty for very long. Nonetheless, we wish him well during this short rest.

Peake-Jones claims he is cycling off to devote more energy to the newsletter. Hah! A likely story!

Marion Gorham is resigning this year as Publicity Chair. This is one of those behind-the-scenes jobs that would be really obvious if someone weren't doing it! Through Marion's efforts we have no doubt recruited many new members, and welcomed members of the public to our programs. Thank you, Marion!

Joining the Board for the first time are **Mike Locher** (who will also be the Field Trip Chair), **Sally Hills**, and **Bob Zimmermann**. Thank you!

Back in harness (as you knew she would be) is **Sally Venman** who, like Scott, has been in the thing from the start, and will probably never get away. We welcome her years of experience to the Board. Sally, incidentally, would like to thank **all those who have brought refreshments** to meetings (you know who you are). All those who have consumed them (we know who we are), are grateful, too!

Finally, we recognize many others who keep this whole thing going. They include field trip leaders: **Harvey Allen, Bob Bieda, Tom Gagnon, Betsy Higgins, Shirley Hillborn, Zeke Jakub, Don Kroodsmma, Geoff LeBaron, Anne Lombard, Andrew Magee, Al Richards, and David Spector.** There are also a multitude of club officers including **Jan Ortiz, Sue Fletcher, Merry Cushing, Henry Lappen, Denis McKenna, David Gross, Jan Howard, Sue Emerson, and Mary Alice Wilson.**

And if you pay dues, go on trips, come to meetings, put away chairs, help put the newsletter together etc. then you are included.

**SO, IS THAT EVERYONE?
THE LOVE-FEST IS NOW CONCLUDED.**

Now, as promised, I offer you a brief respite from this monthly journalistic onslaught. Until September, I bid you adieu. Till then, walk softly and carry a big scope!

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Volume 19, No.1

September, 2002

The news media seem full of things “we” (the mythical general public) can no longer do. If we were thinking of retirement, we have to go on working till the stock market deigns to “recover.” Those of us who have already taken the big plunge into life as it was meant to be lived, are practicing the phrase, “Would you like to supersize that, sir?” We can no longer rely on the doyens of business, the harmlessness of a “skeeter” bite, hormone replacement therapy, or even that nice lady who used to do the centerpieces on TV.

Well, we can still bird, even if we have to slip something less conspicuous on over the yellow smiley vest. So buck up and get ready for yet another Fall. The nighthawks are probably loping their way through the buggy bliss of a still evening as you read this, and the rest of the migration is about to unfold.

It is now time to legitimize your guilty pleasure by sending some of your hard-won bread to the club, along with the time-honored membership form attached. If you joined for the first time after April 30 of this year, you are paid up until September of 2003, and this packet should contain a friendly reminder to that effect. In this package you will also find information about the various options for finding out what is being seen in the area, and the revitalized Birding Information Exchange, which will allow members to benefit from the experience of others when planning trips to specific birding locations. Included with this edition are the fall Field Trip Schedule, the Rare Bird Alert sign-up, and as much else as USPS will allow for thirty-seven cents.

NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ON-LINE!!!

For the second year, the club will offer an on-line version of the newsletter for those who choose it.

“How does that work?”

Each newsletter will be posted on the HBC website. Participants will receive an email notification, whereupon they can view and/or download the newsletter from the website at their leisure.

“What’s the point?”

One venerable club officer recently commented, “I tend to put the paper copy in a pile (from whence it seems to migrate to points unknown), but I have not yet managed to lose my computer.” You also reduce the costs of printing and postage for the club, which keeps dues down for us all. After down-loading the on-line version, you may choose to remove all traces of dubious editorial humor without the use of unsightly marker!

“What if I encounter technical difficulties?”

Most users last year had no difficulty. In the event that you find the system does not work for you, a simple communication with the Membership Secretary will get you back on the “Hard Copy” mailing list.

“What are the computer/software requirements?”

The newsletter will be posted in PDF format. This means you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0 software. If you do not already have this on your system, it can be downloaded free via a link on the HBC website.

I signed up last year. Do I need to sign up again?

To reduce confusion, we are asking all members to decide each year on whether or not to get the on-line newsletter. Regardless of how you got the newsletter last year, please make your selection for this year on the membership form for this year.

“How do I sign up?”

Please indicate your wish to participate on the relevant section of the Membership Form.

Your Bird Club Thanks You!!

PROGRAMS

All programs are held at Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant St., Amherst at 7:30 pm

On **Monday, September 9**, **Wayne Petersen** will open the program calendar for this year when he speaks on **"Iceland."** It is often noted that the name of this extraordinary island misses the point. It is certainly chilly, but the presence of frozen water is greatly overshadowed by the fact that this tortured mass of young rock is a product of one of the most active volcanic regions in the world. If the bird life comes even close to the geology, we are in for a treat.

Wayne, a Massachusetts native, is Field Ornithologist with the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Throughout his career, Wayne has led trips and tours, lectured, and conducted birding workshops across North America. His tour leading experiences have taken him from arctic Canada to South America, Antarctica, Iceland, Africa, and Madagascar. Wayne is a past Vice President of the American Birding Association, past Chairman of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, and is a New England Regional Editor for *North American Birds*. His writing projects have included co-authoring *Birds of Massachusetts* (with Richard Veit), contributing to *The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding*, and *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*, along with editing the *Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas* (in press), and writing the *National Audubon Society's Pocket Guide to Songbirds and Familiar Backyard Birds (East)*.

Coming Programs

October 21: **Mara Silver** discusses *Connecticut River Valley Swallows*

November 18: **Bob Askins** looks at *"Ecology, Conservation of Birds of Open Habitats"*

December 9: Members Meeting

January 13: **Robert S. Ridgely** on the *Jocotoco Foundation*

February 10: **Dave Stemple** speaks on *Scottish Bird Song*

March 10: **Paul Baisich** hails *"A Shade-Grown Coffee Future: Optimism for Birds"*

April 7: **Tom Litwin** discusses the *Harriman Expedition*

May 12: **Kenn Kaufmann** muses about *"Migration from the Bird's Point of View"*

June 9: **Geoff LeBaron** sails to the *Galapagos*

Please note that the April program has been changed to April 7 since the program schedule was last published.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Bob Bieda and eleven others enjoyed beautiful weather, delicious fried clams, and a long day of birding **Plum Island** and the surrounding areas on **Saturday, May 25**. We started by hearing and briefly seeing a Clapper Rail as soon as we got on the refuge. We then had a nice assortment of fifteen species of warblers in the Hellcat and Pines areas. Many of these were females and various ages giving us a good education in warbler ID. We had at least three different plumages of Bay-breasted Warbler.

Other highlights were six Wilson's Phalaropes, two breeding-plumage Red Knots and a young Little Gull in excellent light and side by side with Bonaparte's Gulls for comparison.

Janice Doppler kindly sends this unique survivor's story of the ill-fated inaugural **Connecticut Marshes/Bradley trip on June 1**, with **Al Richards**. The group started in the Station 43 area in Windsor, Connecticut where they found a pair of Least Bitterns that stayed in one area of the marsh for over 45 minutes and a pair of snapping turtles locked in the conjugal act for over an hour. Rails were conspicuously less conspicuous, even in response to a tape. However, Both Willow and Alder Flycatchers were singing in the area, and were compared both live and on tape.

After we left the marsh we went to Bradley. We were still on the first leg of our slow trip around the airport looking for Upland Sandpiper when we were surrounded by state police (actually only two cruisers, but it felt scary). We still managed to locate a small flock of turkeys while we were being escorted from the airport under police guard.

Editors Note: Experience suggests it is unwise to gesticulate and yell "Turkey" in the presence of Connecticut's finest. Thanks, Janice!

Stacy Adams, reports that she and seven others toured **Mt Greylock** on **June 8**. They had 52 species of birds, including Mourning Warbler - "The Hard Way" (after beating through the blackberries for an hour) and Mourning Warbler - "The Soft Way" (teed up in a tree at Jones' Nose). There were in fact several Mourning Warblers at the Nose, along with Indigo Buntings and a Field Sparrow.

Stacy has done a nice job of reporting the mundane details of the trip, but has remained coy about the most tantalizing question of the account. Just who is, 'The very nice German guy whose name escapes me'? I bet he passed himself off as a ski instructor. Wir müssen diesen Mann finden. Wohin sind Sie und was möchten Sie mit der schönen Stacy?

On June 15, a dedicated group of five journeyed through the rain-shrouded Berkshires with **Dave Norton to Bartholomew's Cobble**. Trustees of Reservations personnel welcomed us and gave a great introduction to some of the uncommon ferns that flourish in the alkaline soils around the outcrop. Kate Ryan of the Hoffman Bird Club then guided us through the singular geology and botany of the cobble for several hours. We battled to find 52 species, given the dank conditions, but were blessed by the unfortunate demise of a large cow on an adjacent farm. As we began, there were only a few Turkey Vultures showing interest, but when we returned closer to mid-day, there were around thirty Turkey Vultures and at least 4 Black Vultures around the carcass. We had a smattering of warblers (much more easily seen than heard) and all three of the common local empids in full voice to round out the day.

There is something wonderfully incongruous about finding masses of birds migrating in July. Six of us roused ourselves from mid-summer indolence to venture onto **New South Beach** in Chatham, Massachusetts on **July 27**. We were blessed with a cool, overcast day, but cursed with a high tide that fell at 5 PM, by which time we were, of necessity, back on the mainland. Despite this, we found healthy numbers of Red Knot. Many showed gentle apricot rouging of the breast, reminiscent of their recent breeding splendor. A comparable number of Short-billed Dowitchers sewed their mysterious ways across the quilted mudflats, along with innumerable Least-, and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Sanderlings, and modest numbers of Black-bellied Plovers. From the beach we could see numerous Storm Petrels plying the breakers.

For most, the highlights of the day came from amongst the numerous American Oystercatchers, including two downy chicks lurching comically among the pebbles of a raised sandbar, the feeding Black Skimmer (possibly more than one), and some thirty (30) Piping Plovers (including twenty in one group – probably a novel experiment in day-care). At the extreme limit of our southward progress, we came upon at least fourteen Hudsonian Godwits lurking in amongst a group of dowitchers.

Coming Trips

The Fall Field Trip Schedule is enclosed in all its Technicolor glory!!!

WHERE ARE THE BIRDS?

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.

BIRDING INFORMATION EXCHANGE

If you have birded a particular location, either locally or far afield, and would be willing to share information with other club members, please sign up in the "Birding Information Exchange" section of the membership form. A file matching birding areas and those who know about them will be kept at the library.

LIBRARY

HBC has a substantial library at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. **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. **Henry Lappen** is happy to bring items to meetings, given a few days notice! Call him at **(413) 549 3722**.

HITCHCOCK CENTER

Coming Programs

Fall Birding, (Scott Sumner)

Wednesdays: September 11, 25; October 2, 16; November 6 from 7-9 PM

Field Trips: September 14, 28; October 5, 9; November 10 from 7 AM - noon

Monarch Tagging, (Jennifer Wiest): September 11, 18, 25 from 3:30 PM daily

Hawk Watch, (Guest Naturalist): September 14 from 8:30 AM - 1 PM

Wild Mushrooms, (Georgette Roberts): September 15 from 10 AM – 4 PM

Fly Fishing, (Jim Lafley): September 21 from 9 AM - noon

Full Moon Coffee House, (Lui Collins): September 21 from 8:30 AM

Keeping a Nature Journal, (Sarah Grant): September 28, November 2 (10 AM – noon)

Annual Meeting, (Keynote Address by Ellen Story): September 30 from 6:30 PM –9 PM

*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.*

IN MEMORIUM

We are saddened to report the passing of Margaret "Marnie" Price this past July. An active Hampshire Bird Club member from its inception, she served as a board member from 1986-1990, and when she was no longer able to attend meetings or to be active in the field, she continued to contribute by helping with the Rare Bird Alert. Her love of the outdoors and birds, her ready laugh, her good companionship, all this and much more will be missed.

(see next page for the forms enclosed with this edition)

Please see the other links on this Webpage for the:
Membership Form
Release Form
Rare Bird Alert Sign-Up

That is all we can afford for this month. See you on September 9 at the church!



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 19, No. 2

October, 2002

Membership and RBA Reminder

Membership forms for this year are due by **October 31**.

Registration for the **Rare Bird Alert** (telephone tree and email list) closes on **October 21** (the date of the October program).

PROGRAMS

This Month

On **Monday, October 21**, **Mara Silver** will provide a dash of local flavor when she describes her research on **“Bank and Cliff Swallows in Massachusetts: Bank Swallows on the Connecticut River and Cliff Swallows at Graves Farm Sanctuary.”**

Eroded river banks provide important nesting habitat for Bank Swallows. Mara checked banks along a section of the Connecticut River for three years, and tried to find out what physical characteristics attracted the birds to certain areas. Mara's work seems to show that one man's habitat destruction is another man's habitat creation. Important nesting sites (both present and potential) for Bank Swallows are being lost to bank stabilization. Cliff Swallows have been declining in Massachusetts for many years. The colony at Graves farm (a Massachusetts Audubon sanctuary) has been studied for the past decade to find out why the populations are struggling. Mara will describe some of what has been learned from this colony, and how careful management has helped increase the breeding success of the swallows at Graves Farm.

Mara Silver completed her Masters Degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation at the University of Massachusetts in 2000. For her thesis project, she researched habitat use by Bank Swallows on the Connecticut River. She has also studied the same Cliff Swallow colony in Williamsburg, Massachusetts for the past 12 years, including several seasons with funding from the Massachusetts Audubon Society, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, and Northeast Utilities. She currently works as an editor of scientific publications.

Coming Programs

November 18: Bob Askins looks at *“Ecology, Conservation of Birds of Open Habitats”*

December 9: Members Meeting

January 13: Robert S. Ridgely on the *Jocotoco Foundation*

Hampshire Bird Club Evening at WFCR

As we have done for the past couple of years, HBC will spend an evening answering phones at WFCR during their fund drive this fall. We will be taking calls at the station (in the studio with the on-air hosts) on Saturday, October 19, from 6-10 PM. It's easy (training is provided). It's fun (sometimes there is live music in the studio). Dinner is provided; all you need to do is bring yourself (and friend if you wish). *If you'd like to join the fun, sign up by calling or emailing Dave Gross at 253-2897 or dgross@biochem.umass.edu.*

Date: Saturday, October 19

Time: 6-10 p.m.

Location: WFCR studios, Hampshire House, UMass Campus.

World Premiere!!

In 1899, railroad tycoon Edward Henry Harriman, one of the most powerful men in America, decided to take a little vacation in the form of one of the most ambitious expeditions ever staged in America. Harriman invited twenty-five scientists, writers and artists to join him on a 9000-mile exploration of coastal Alaska.

In Summer 2001, a Smith College group, also accompanied by scientists, writers and artists, retraced Harriman's route. They explored some of the issues Harriman faced, and some he could not even imagine. Their mission was to examine 100 years of environmental and social change.

On **April 7, 2003**, **Tom Litwin** will provide a first hand account of this expedition at our monthly program, and cordially invites us to the World Premiere of:

***THE 1899 HARRIMAN ALASKA EXPEDITION RETRACED:
A CENTURY OF CHANGE***

7:00pm, Saturday, November 2, 2002
Wright Hall Auditorium, Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts

This is a two-hour film produced by Lawrence Hott, Tom Litwin, and Diane Garey.
It is a Florentine Films/Hott Production in association with the Clark Science Center and Alumnae Association of Smith College

You can also visit the expedition Website at www.pbs.org/Harriman.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

On **Saturday, August 24**, Bob Bieda and others visited **New South Beach** on Cape Cod. As always, this trip caught the shorebird migration in all its grandeur. Along the beach, we found eighteen species of shorebirds, including Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Dunlin, and White-rumped Sandpiper. The beach (in places) teemed with Red Knots, Short-billed Dowitchers, both yellowlegs, and innumerable "peeps". Wheeling overhead or dutifully pointing into the breeze on the sandbars were many Common- and Roseate Terns, with a few Least- and Forster's Terns thrown in. Alert observers realized that some of the brown gullish things cavorting overhead were actually way too "built" for that. They were, in fact, **jaegers** (most likely of the parasitic variety) harassing the terns. As if that weren't enough, **Cory's-** and **Greater Shearwaters** were clearly visible from the ocean side later in the day.

We might have been forgiven for simply soaking up the majesty of it all. However, pricking us to keep scanning the feathered multitudes, was the knowledge that a Curlew Sandpiper (a rare Eurasian visitor) had been reported in the previous few days. In mid-afternoon, Bob's restless gaze alighted on a medium-sized bird sitting amongst the knots. It was doing its best of course, to remain anonymous (head tucked, and constantly being obscured by other birds), but had traces of deep rufous plumage on the breast. This was our **Curlew Sandpiper**, and we had great satisfaction in sharing the discovery with the BBC who were also on the beach. Mike Locher took a second look at a peep, which seemed a little too ornate for our common fare. It just could have been one of the Red-necked Stints (another Eurasian visitor), which have become almost annual at South Beach in recent years. However, after spirited debate, our group decided that it would have to remain in the "coulda been" basket.



On **Wednesday, September 18**, Harvey and friends embarked on the **monthly, mid-week morning trip**. Near Atkins farms, the group found Cedar waxwings, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and Robins gorging themselves on cherries. A Swamp Sparrow and a Green Heron were at ground level, and anonymous warblers bounced about in the tree-tops. The group arrived on top of Mt. Holyoke at about 9:45, just in time to catch at least **250**

Broadwinged Hawks rising majestically on the first thermals of the day over Northampton, UMass, South Hadley, and right around the mountain. These birds and the smattering of other raptors migrating by, plus post-breeding Dark-eyed Juncos, kept everyone happy until early afternoon, when union regulations required that they clock off for the day.

Editor's Note: This was one of the better days for hawks in the valley this fall. Observers on Mt. Tom also had good numbers of Broadwings (mostly to the east).



Saturday, September 14, should have been a good day for migrating songbirds. Bob Bieda and a large group entered **the west meadows of Northampton** on a crisp, foggy morning, with just that expectation. There were early fireworks in the Ibis Pool area, as a Merlin and one of the resident kestrels disagreed violently over some aspect of falconid territorial etiquette. After that though, the group walked disconsolately through the disquieting quiet which has been so characteristic of the early Fall this year. The only relief came when we encountered a small knot of Black-throated Green-, Magnolia-, and Chestnut-sided Warblers. The odd Redstart and Rose-breasted Grosbeak popped up as well. Conn warbler was conspicuous by its absence. It is well to remember that birding, like war, consists of long periods of boredom with occasional moments of extreme excitement.

Coming trips

Saturday, October 5. Geoff LeBaron will lead a leader's choice trip in the valley, as part of the continuing **"Leisurely and Local"** series. This weekend is a great time for late migrants and vagrants. Remember last year's Connecticut Warbler? Call Geoff at 413-268-9281 for details.

Wednesday, October 9. Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. Half day. On his monthly, mid-week trip Harvey Allen plans to visit a location in the valley for migrating sparrows, late warblers, blackbirds and hawks. Meet Harvey at 7AM across the street from the Atkins Farms, on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

11-14. Cape May, New Jersey. Scott Sumner, Danny Ziomek and others are returning to this Mecca of fall birding, which thrilled last year's participants. This trip is full!

Sunday, October 13. Poor Man's Cape May. Bob Bieda leads a new trip from **Race Point to Chatham**. Among the always-attractive common migrants, he will be searching for the snazzy interlopers which sometimes grace the thickets and beaches of the outer cape, like Parasitic Jaeger, Western Sandpiper, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Blue Grosbeak. This trip is planned as a fair weather event only. In case of inclement weather, Bob will cancel the trip. So, it will be blue skies and bonny shores! Meet at the Hadley Stop and Shop (Rte 9) at 5AM. Contact Bob (413-527-2623) or Shawn Smolen-Morton (413-863-4569) to register and for further details.

Saturday, October 19. Dead Creek. All Day. Al Richards plans to return to the Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area on gorgeous Lake Champlain in western Vermont, where groups from previous years enjoyed the spectacle of over twelve thousand migrating Snow Geese. In addition to the Snow Geese, Ross's Goose is regularly seen, and rarities (jaegers, uncommon gulls) are known to stop at Lake Champlain. Call Al at (413) 665-2761 to register.

Sunday, November 3. Berkshire Lakes Waterfowl. All Day. Tom Gagnon leads his annual and popular sweep of the lakes and ponds of the Berkshire Mountains. Last year, the group observed 20 species of waterfowl, including Black Scoters, a Northern Shoveler, and an Egyptian Goose (escape). Along the way, there are usually attractive sightings made at Bartlett's Apple Stand: fresh cider and donuts. Bring snacks, warm clothing and a lunch. Meet Tom in the Super Stop and Shop in Northampton on King Street (Route 5) at 6:15 AM. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to register and for further information.

CHRISTMAS COUNT

It's never too early to begin thinking about the Christmas Count. This, for those new to us, is an opportunity to contribute to the longest-running database in ornithology. Birders all over the U.S., Canada, the Caribbean, Latin America and Pacific Islands count all the birds within circular geographical areas over a 24-hour period. The results are collated and presented in a massive volume called "American Birds", which also includes results of research projects using the data.

The 102nd count last year saw the first ever Nashville Warbler in the Northampton area, and high counts for thirteen species including Wild Turkey, Eastern Bluebird and Hermit Thrush. The Quabbin diehards found great numbers of Ring-necked Ducks, Horned Grebes, and Northern Saw-whet Owls. They had a Black-headed Gull and two Boreal Chickadees.

For many birders, this is the most collaborative activity in which they participate. The sense of camaraderie and shared purpose during these events is palpable. The Northampton and Quabbin circles are divided up into smaller areas, each counted by an experienced leader or leaders, with assistants. Groups plan who will participate, for how long, and how to divide up the count area. To take part, all you really need is a willingness to cope with the vagaries of December birding, and a willingness to count everything in a scientific manner. Both local counts culminate in a compilation session during which those still standing come together to pool results.

Mark These Dates!!

Northampton Count: Sunday, December 15.

Quabbin Count: Saturday, December 28

For further information, watch coming newsletters, or contact Jan Ortiz (413 549 1768; jortiz@aol.com, Northampton Count) and Scott Surner (413 253 5999; ssurner@aol.com, Quabbin Count)

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. **Henry Lappen** 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. Henry is happy to bring items to meetings, given a few days notice! Call him at **(413) 549 3722**.

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 breeding-bird surveys, and is involved in various cutting-edge conservation issues. Contact her at **(413) 586 7509**, or aslombard@attbi.com.*

Help Document De Nile!

Massachusetts Department of Public Health is testing dead birds for the **West Nile Virus**. They are particularly interested in **crows, jays, ravens and Red-tailed Hawks**. The birds must have died within the past 24 hours and must not be frozen. They have a network of volunteers who will collect the specimens and transfer them to labs for testing. Please bag and keep cool (not frozen) until collection.

Call Massachusetts Dept of Public Health: (866) 627-7968, or visit www.state.ma.us/dph/wnv/wnv1.htm

HITCHCOCK CENTER PROGRAMS

Cape Ann Birding (Scott Turner)

Saturday, December 7, 5:30 a.m. – dusk. (Rain Date: December 8)
Registration required. Fee.

Fall Foliage By Canoe or Kayak (James McNaughton of *Adventure In/Adventure Out*)

Saturday, October 19, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Registration required. Fee.

Pumpkin Carving

Thursday, October 24, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

The Enchanted Forest: A Non-Scary Halloween Event (Hitchcock staff and volunteers)

Friday, October 25, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Saturday, October 26, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Fee.

Living With Black Bears (Lynn Rogers of the Wildlife Research Institute)

Tuesday, October 29, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley
Registration highly recommended. Fee.

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Cellar Holes and Stone Walls: The Abandoned Farm Experience (Dietrich Schlobohm)

Slide Show: Tuesday, Oct. 1 at Arcadia; 7-9 p.m. Field Trip: Saturday, Oct. 5; 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Registration required. Fee.

Beginning Birding (Anne Lombard and Patti Steinman)

Thursday, Oct. 17, 7:00 -9:00 p.m. and Saturday Oct. 19; 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Registration required. Fee.

Teacher Workshop: Project WET (Staff from MAS, Northfield Mountain, and MDC)

Saturday, Nov. 2, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Registration required. Fee.

Reading the Forested Landscape (Tom Wessels)

Sunday, Nov 3, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Arcadia. Registration required. Fee.

Big Trees at Arcadia (Bob Leverett)

Saturday, Nov. 9, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Arcadia.
Registration required. Fee.

OTHER IMPORTANT STUFF

Mt Holyoke Art Exhibit

The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum has just reopened its facility with an exhibit on Mount Holyoke itself. Since many of us spend time on the mountain, standing at the exhibit looking at how much others have enjoyed drawing, photographing, and visiting this marvelous place is a treat. Don't miss this (free) exhibit.

"To hunt for birds in the field is to hear the distant, muffled ticking of the great clock of the universe."
Brooks Atkinson, late theater critic, nature lover. Quoted in "Arizona Highways," September, 1992.

BACKYARD BIRDS

17 Strong St., Northampton (near Eastside Grill). Phone 586 3155

Your local source for birding and bird-feeding supplies, including feeders, optics, gifts, written and audio-materials. Remember, with local merchants, your dollar stays here!

Giant Hogweed

Some of you anglophilic television connoisseurs may remember when “Dr. Who” did battle with the “Crinoid.” This botanical overachiever went from an innocuous pod in an archaeological dig to a house-sized monstrosity, which rampaged homicidally through the English countryside. “What,” you ask testily, “is the point of this digression?” It seems we have our very own candidate for nasty plant of the decade right here in Massachusetts.

The **Giant Hogweed** (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), native to Asia, is now popping up frequently in this state, and has been documented in Turners Falls, amongst other locations. It grows 8-15 feet tall, with deeply incised leaves to five feet across, and umbrella-shaped flower heads (a mere 2 ½ feet across). The stems can be 2-4” thick, with deep reddish-purple blotches and coarse, white hairs. The plant is classified as a public health risk, because the clear sap contains photo-activated toxins, which can cause painful contact dermatitis (with associated scarring), and temporary/permanent blindness if contact is made with the eyes.

*If you want more information, or want to report a possible occurrence, please visit the **Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture** website at www.state.ma.us/dfa. (The above description notwithstanding, do not call the Department of Defense).*

Welcome New Members!

Hany Aziz: 413 737 2925, barnswallow@attbi.com
 Lisa Marie Bertoldi: 413 268 7485, sayre@crocker.com
 Debra Donaldson & Brian Kelley: 781 391 5307, bkelly@wyeth.com
 Kate Elmer: 413 585 6066, womder_weasel_15@hotmail.com
 V.K. Greenble: 413 256 6144, greenbie@larp.umass.edu
 Bruce Hart & Ilene Goldstein: 413 584 4176, bvnghart@aol.com
 Marilyn Hart: 413 367 0054, mhart@crocker.com
 Sterling Lamet: 413 259 1551, slamet@ipo.umass.edu
 Mary Beth Manning: 413 584 5859, lizbett@gtcinternet.com
 Bernice Rosenthal: 413 256 0844
 Elissa and Bernie Rubinstein: 413 549 5078, elissar01002@yahoo.com
 Helen Anne Sephton: 413 367 2253
 Mary Lou Simpson: 413 549 6022, marylsimpson@attbi.com
 Marjorie Tauer: 413 527 1838, mtauer@crocker.com
 Elizabeth Tullett: eltullett@the-spa.com
 Matthew J. Williams: 413 665 3981, mjw22@cornell.edu
 Ben Yost: blyjamin@hotmail.com

That’s it for now. Till next time, walk softly and carry a big scope!

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



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 19, No. 3

November, 2002

On the back is the latest version of the HBC Directory, listing all Officers of our bird club.

Electronic newsletter recipients: Please take this opportunity to download the ABA Code of Birding Ethics from the homepage. Thank you!

Finally, at the risk of underselling our numerous field trip reporters, I ask you to make a point of reading Leslie Breger's account of the Cape May trip. You will see why!

PROGRAMS

This Month

On Monday, November 18, Bob Askins speaks about **"Conservation of Birds of Open Habitats in New England."**

Robert Askins is Professor of Zoology at Connecticut College, where he teaches courses in ecology, animal behavior and ornithology. His research focuses on the ecology and conservation of migratory birds in both their northern breeding areas and tropical wintering areas. Dr Atkins has analyzed the habitat requirements of forest birds that nest in deciduous forests in New England and Japan, and of songbirds that spend the winter in the U.S. Virgin Islands. He has also studied Blue-winged Warblers and other species that are restricted to early successional habitats.

Bob has published scientific papers in numerous journals including *Science*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *Wetlands*, *Ecology*, *Current Ornithology*, *Studies in Avian Biology*, and *Journal of the Yamashina Institute of Ornithology*. In 2000 he published "Restoring North America's Birds; Lessons from Landscape Ecology", a book on the ecology and conservation of North American birds. A second edition of this book was published this year and he is currently working on a Japanese edition.

Forests have been the focus of most conservation efforts in the northeastern United States. Less attention has been directed at open habitats, but these habitats have a disproportionate number of declining and endangered species. In New England many of the bird species that have shown persistent, long-term decreases in abundance are associated with grasslands and shrublands. These include Upland Sandpiper, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Blue-winged Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat. These species primarily nest in farmland and old fields, so they have declined as most of the farmland in New England has been abandoned and replaced with forest. Is this a conservation problem or a "return to normal" in a historically forested landscape? Where did these species live before people cleared the forest for farming? How can we sustain their populations as open habitats continue to disappear? All of these issues will be addressed in his presentation.

Bob will have copies of his recent publication: *"Restoring North America's Birds; Lessons from Landscape Ecology"* (Yale University Press, 2000) for sale (\$18 paperback) and signing at the meeting. Please feel free to bring any copies you already have for his signature.

Coming Up

December 9: Members Meeting

January 13: Robert S. Ridgely on the *Jocotoco Foundation*

February 10: Dave Stemple speaks on *Scottish Bird Song*

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

On **October 5**, Geoff LeBaron led twelve folks on a **leisurely and local** exploration of the **Connecticut Valley**. Tantalized by at least one report of a Connecticut Warbler from the sandpit in Hadley, we started there. The depths of the excavation were “dearthy”, but as we made our way along the perimeter of the sand pit, we ran into a couple of flocks of late migrants, including Blue-headed- and Red-eyed Vireo, and some nice warblers. The highlight of these was a Cape May Warbler, which almost warrants a rare bird alert in these troubled times.

Six species of woodpeckers lurked in the turning foliage, including a **Red-headed Woodpecker** spotted by Anne Lombard, and confirmed by a few lucky others. It showed itself briefly, and then vanished. Later in the day, in the east meadows, a Peregrine Falcon dashed by, without disturbing numerous American Pipits, and a Lapland Longspur. Still later, in the west meadows, the die-hards spotted a probable “Traills” empidonax flycatcher, and a late Eastern Wood Peewee.

Geoff LeBaron



Harvey Allen focused his **Mid-week Sweep of the Connecticut Valley (October 9)** on the sparrows in the west meadows. The group found the usual suspects including cooperative Swamp and Savannah Sparrows. In the east meadows, Horned Larks and American Pipits offered themselves up for study, as well.

Mary Alice Wilson



On **Sunday, October 13**, Bob Bieda and Shawn Smolen-Morton led a group of 8 participants to the outer **Cape of Cod** (“poor man’s Cape May”). Just as the leaders had planned eight months earlier, the first Nor’easter of the season hussled up the coast the night before the trip and delivered a smorgasbord of pelagic birds for the group. Off First Encounter Beach, a steady stream of Northern Gannets, in various plumages, pressed their way back to the ocean, often diving along the way. As the tide receded, gulls and terns (Common and Forster’s) assembled to roost on the exposed flats with a variety of shorebirds: Black-bellied Plover, Semi-palmated Plover, Sanderling, Long-billed Dowitcher, both Yellowlegs, and Dunlin. A few distant **Atlantic Puffins** tantalized the group, but only a couple of lucky souls observed one individual well. Much more compliant were a pair of **Pomarine Jaegers** and a lone **Parasitic Jaeger**.

By contrast, with the deep-water denizens plying the wave tops, we might have found more land-birds in our back yards. Corn Hill, often a magnet for uncommon and rare migrants, failed to produce even modest results. So, with heavy hearts, the group turned back to the ocean off Race Point, where the pelagic birding continued to reward diligent searching. After some discussion and lengthy observation, the group was able to identify several **Leach’s Storm-Petrels** among the dozen or so storm-petrels, trickling by the point in singles and occasionally even triples. A light morph **Northern Fulmar** treated the group to good, medium range views and **Greater Shearwaters** were observed with regularity, as they worked the waves southward. Although the group had hoped for more than 70 species, all were in agreement that the pelagic birding made up for the lack of ticks on the trip list.

Shawn Smolen Morton



Cape May. October 11-14. 2002. (Lead by Scott Sumner and Dan Ziomek).

Birds, Dinners, Architecture by **Leslie Breger!**

This was the first trip I went on sponsored by the Bird Club, so I don’t have any point of comparison, but I will say that it was absolutely FANTASTIC!

Over→

Our trip began early on a rainy Friday morning. By 11:00 a.m. most of the group had arrived at Forsyth National Wildlife Refuge (“Brigantine”). The sheer number of shore birds and water birds was absolutely

overwhelming! Highlights for me personally were my first close-up and extended looks at a Caspian Tern and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows. Another bird I particularly enjoyed seeing that day was a (regretably distant) Common Moorhen. Within a half-hour of our arrival, Snow Geese started flying in and landing. They were spectacular! We arrived at the West Cape Motel late that afternoon, and met for dinner at a pub-type place, which accommodated our large group very nicely!

Day Two started at a beach called Avalon. We were able to watch Sanderlings, Royal-, and Caspian Terns up close, along with a magnificent flotilla of Brown Pelicans. Later, at Stone Harbor, we saw a large flock of American Oystercatchers in flight and on the ground. Ruddy Turnstones foraged amongst the rocks and two Marbled Godwits stood further out on a sandbar. The big debate concerned whether there were a couple of Western Sandpipers mixed in with a flock of Semi-palmated Sandpipers. They were sleeping much of the time, so looking at their bills required some patience. The consensus was that there were 3 or 4 amongst the flock. At the nearby Wetlands Institute, we were treated to a larger variety of marsh birds, ducks, and shorebirds, including a Little Blue Heron, Black-bellied Plovers, and a Short-billed Dowitcher. Two odd birds were in the marsh, and let me tell you that for quite a while we could not figure out what those two birds were! (Scott enjoyed our confusion immensely. They were actually Starlings!).

After our beginners luck of the previous night, we encountered the real Cape May Columbus Day eating scene on his evening. Finding a two-hour wait at the Lobster Pot, we opted for the take-out window and the covered deck, only to find ourselves liberally moistened by sideways rain. I have to say that we were all still VERY happy to be there.

On Day Three we went to some of the more famous Cape May spots. At Higbee Beach, despite rain, we found a few Warblers, including Wilson's, Black and White, Palm, Pine, BTB, and Northern Parula. At the hawk-watching platform in Cape May Point State Park, we encountered Pete Dunne, leading a group right in front of us. I was impressed! Parasitic Jaegers pestered the Laughing Gulls, and a Peregrine Falcon perched and hunted all day, right near the platform. At nearby Hidden Valley we got a fantastic close-up and extended look at a Clay-colored Sparrow. This was a major treat for many of us. We ended the day by looking at a group of Black Skimmers right on the public beach in downtown Cape May. What beautiful birds! After a pre-dinner planning session, and Italian cuisine, Dan Ziomek gave us a walking tour of the downtown of Cape May. He talked about the history, and showed us some of the spectacular architecture. We all appreciated this immensely.

Day Four involved birding in the morning, lunch, and then departure at noon. We began at Higbee Beach right at daybreak. Scott and Dan had a feeling that there would be many birds moving because the rain had stopped. Boy, were they correct! I have never seen so many Yellow-rumps, Palms, and Northern Flickers in my life! There were thousands! You didn't have to move to the birds at all. You could simply stake out a spot and just watch as the birds poured out of the sky, landed for a few seconds in the trees in front of you, and then continued on their way. What an experience! Scott and Dan did a great job organizing and taking care of everyone on the trip. They thought everything through, and respected and listened to our needs. They deserve a big thank you!

Butterflies by *Tom Gagnon*

We had 16 species of butterflies that I tried to point out to the birders on the trip. Most were gracious enough to at least look at them! Believe it or not, I think most of those on the trip can now identify a Common Buckeye when they see one! Of course, I know I was really pushing it to the limit when I found a Red-banded Hairstreak on the FAR side of a parking lot and asked the group to join me in looking at it. This butterfly (the size of my thumb nail) was a LIFER for me and for the rest of the group, I assume. I hope I managed to convey some of the reasons why I get so excited about the beauty of butterflies.

Coming Trips

Wednesday, November 13. Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. Half day. On his monthly, mid-week trip Harvey Allen plans to search for waterfowl and whatever else migration has deposited in the valley. Meet Harvey at 8 AM across the street from the Atkins Farms, on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

Sunday, November 24. Tom Gagnon will lead birders on an annual all-day trip to the **East Quabbin** area. Bring a lunch, snacks and warm clothing. The trip will be limited to 15 participants. You need to call Tom at (413) 584-6353 to reserve a place and to make arrangements for meeting.

Friday, November 29. Turkey Trot: Cape Ann. All Day. Al Richards will lead this annual trip to the north shore in search of wintering sea ducks, including Harlequin Duck, Purple Sandpipers, alcids like Thick-billed Murre and Razorbills, and perhaps a Snowy Owl. This is an all-day trip, so bring snacks, lunch and plenty of warm clothing. Call Al at (413) 665-2761 to register.

Wednesday, December 11. Morning Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. Half day. This month's sweep usually serves as a warm-up for the Christmas Bird Count. Meet Harvey at 8:30AM across the street from the Atkins Farms, on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Rain or shine, snow or sleet, ready or not, it's time for the 102nd National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count! Take this opportunity to contribute to the longest-running database in ornithology! Join 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 69th year) will be held on **Sunday, December 15**. 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 28**. Contact Scott Sumner (413) 253-5999 ssurner@aol.com.

The **Springfield Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 14**. Contact George Kingston (413) 525 6742

The **Athol Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 14**. Contact David Small (978) 249 2094 dhsml@gis.net.

For the **Greenfield Count**, contact Mark Fairbrother at (413) 367-2695

RARE BIRD ALERT

The Rare Bird Alert (email and phone) is up and running!

Email folk: if you have not received a "testing the 2002-2003" message, contact Mary Alice Wilson (mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu).

Phone folk: if you have not received a copy of the phone tree, contact Mary Alice (413 548-9078).

Editors Note: If you heard about the Cassin's Kingbird and the Lark Sparrow, everything is probably as it should be!

LIBRARY

HBC has a substantial library at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. **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. **Henry Lappen** is happy to bring items to meetings, given a few days notice! Call him at **(413) 549 3722**.

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. S Contact her at (413) 586 7509, or aslombard@attbi.com

The common cricket chirrups loudly, for long periods, to attract a mate. How is it that the animal can tolerate such protracted loud noise at such close range without damaging it's own auditory organs? It turns out that the neurological impulses which generate the sound originate in an area of the cricket brain called the *central pattern generator*. When the cricket "decides" to sing, two impulses are generated simultaneously. One goes to the stridulating muscles, which generate the sound. The other impulse goes to the auditory organs, and makes them less sensitive to incoming sound. The damping ceases as soon as the cricket stops calling. Thus, the cricket protects itself from the consequences of its own racket but remains receptive to other sounds. ("Living on Earth," NPR, 10/5/2002)

Finally, the resilience of talk show hosts is explained!

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Cape Ann Birding: *Scott Surner, Bird Class Instructor*

Saturday, Dec. 7; 5:30 a.m. – dusk. Rain date: Sunday, Dec. 8. Fee, reg. required.

Winter Tree I.D.: *Brayton Wilson, Emeritus Professor of Forestry, UMASS*

Saturdays, November 16, 23; 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Quabbin: A History and Explorer's Guide: *Mike Tougias, Naturalist and Author*

Wednesday, Dec. 18; 7:00-8:30 p.m.

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.

MASS AUDUBON

Arcadia

Big Trees at Arcadia: Bob Leverett, old growth forest expert.

Saturday, November 9, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Fee and registration required.

Shade Grown Coffee and Birds: Wayne Peterson, MAS ornithologist.

Thursday, November 14, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Fee and registration required.

Arcadia Solstice Celebration

Saturday, December 21 at 6:00 p.m.

*For more details of these and other programs go to www.massaudubon.org (select "Sanctuaries", then "Choose a Sanctuary: Arcadia") or call the sanctuary. To register for programs contact **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary**, 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton MA 01027. Telephone (413) 584-3009.*



Berkshire Sanctuaries Natural History Tours

Natural History of Belize and Tikal, Guatemala.

Rene Laubach and Bob Prescott: January 18-26, 2003

Birding Big Bend and the Davis Mountains of West Texas.

Rene Laubach and Simon Geary: April 19-27, 2003

Birding Southeastern Arizona.

Rene Laubach and Simon Geary: May 3-11, 2003

*For details of the Berkshire Sanctuaries Natural History Tours, contact **Berkshire Sanctuaries**: 472 West Mountain Road, Lenox, MA 01240-2037. Telephone (413) 637 0320, or berkshires@massaudubon.org.*

In Memorium

Bart Hendricks, dean of Berkshire birding, died in September. Many HBC members knew him and used his books on birds of the Berkshires. The Hoffman Bird Club is planning to establish a scholarship fund in his name. For more information contact Noreen Mole (smole@berkshire.rr.com).

MISCELLANEOUS

Welcome, New Members!

Janet Gallenstein: 413 527 0368, janetgallenstein@hotmail.com

Malcolm Meltzer: 413 549 6447

Chris Yerling: 413 259 1605, cyhoopoe@aol.com

Publicity Chair

I believe we have failed to acknowledge, in this forum, a change in the small band of selfless individuals who keep the club running. Marion Gorham has trumpeted HBC events in the local media for several years. She has made sure that HBC events are accessible to the general public. In so doing, she has helped us bring birds and birding to a wide audience in Western Massachusetts. This noble task will now be performed by **Jan Ortiz**. Jan is a quiet, very unassuming member of the club. Alert readers will note the similarity between her name, and that of a past-president, board member, bird class instructor, current Rare Bird Alert committee member, and current custodian of the Audubon Voice of Western Massachusetts. Any such resemblance is, of course, purely coincidental. Thank you Marion, and welcome, Jan!

Backyard Birds

17 Strong St., Northampton (near Eastside Grill). Phone 586 3155

Your local source for birding and bird-feeding supplies, including feeders, optics, gifts, written and audio-materials. Backyard Birds offers a ten percent discount for Hampshire Bird Club Members. Remember, with local merchants, your dollar stays here!

Book Signing

Calvin Simonds will read and sign copies of his new publication: *Private Lives of Garden Birds*, at *Atticus Amherst Bookshop*, (Main Street, near the Town Hall), on **Saturday, November 9 at 2:00 p.m.**

Simonds is the pen name of a writer, naturalist, and professor of ethology (the science of studying nature from the point of view of the creatures who live in it). He is the author of *The Weather Wise Gardener* (with Phebe Leighton) and the *New American Landscape Gardener*. His articles have appeared in *Horticulture*, *Country Journal*, and *Harvard Magazine*, among other publications. Simonds lives and observes birds on his farm in Massachusetts.

If nothing else, don't you just have to know who this bloke really is?

True Value

A new (dare I say "fledgling"?) science attempts to assign monetary value to aspects of the natural environment. By making intangible values into tangible ones, say its practitioners, conservationists will be able to compete on a more equal footing with industry and private developers, for land. As an example, a mid-western think tank recently valued Lake Michigan at 3-5 billion dollars, based on the amounts of money abutting land owners would pay to preserve it.

The same organization calculated that each landowner along the lake-shore valued Bald Eagles at \$17.70 each. (Source: *The Environment Show*, NPR, 7/10/01)

"I don't know what else to add." (ed.)

On the reverse is the latest HBC Directory.

That's it for this month. Till next time, walk softly and carry a big scope!

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

HBC Directory November, 2002

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Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 19, No. 4

December, 2002

The field trip program involves at least a dozen different leaders, and a bewildering variety of destinations. Mike Locher has somehow managed to draw these threads together into the Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule, which is enclosed. Thanks to Mike and all those who lead trips!

A complete membership list has been mailed to members, thanks to the efforts of Mary Alice Wilson and Sue Emerson. The list is intended for the private use of HBC members. It should not be used for any commercial purpose, nor shared with any individual or organization outside the club. We appreciate your cooperation in this regard.

PROGRAMS

All programs are held at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant St. in Amherst. Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.

This Month

On **Monday, December 9**, we hold the annual **Members Meeting**. Perhaps the most important item on the agenda is the Christmas count. Time is allocated for team leaders to meet with their respective teams and plan the count. If you haven't yet found a group for the count, please see "Christmas Count" later in this edition.

There is also a program, of sorts. The featured speaker is you! This is a chance for us to kick back and share natural history experiences from the entire season through slides and (brief) narratives. Birding tales are, of course, most relevant, but any adventures in the natural world are probably of interest to others in the club. We ask that you plan to present no more than twenty slides per person, since there may be many others who wish to present! Hope to see you there!

Coming Programs

January 13: Robert S. Ridgely on the *Jocotoco Foundation*

February 10: Dave Stemple speaks on *Scottish Bird Song*

March 10: Paul Baisich savors *Shade Grown Coffee*

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Tom Gagnon and others searched the **Berkshire Lakes** for waterfowl and donuts on **November 3**. They found a healthy swag of waterfowl species and a number of migrating Red-tailed Hawks. The group found one species of donut - the Sugar-coated Cinnamon (at Bartletts). Despite heavy predation and restricted habitat, the species reproduces rapidly, and its future seems secure.



Harvey Allen ended up on his own for this month's **Sweep of the Connecticut Valley**. At the last meeting, Harvey said (cryptically) that he had "a few nice birds".



The East Quabbin trip report will have to wait until the January issue due to a space shortage.

Coming Trips

Wednesday, December 11. Morning Sweep of the Connecticut R. Valley. Half day. Warm up for the CBC. Meet Harvey at 8:30AM across the street from the Atkins Farms, cnr. Rte 116 and Bay Road in SouthAmherst. Call him (413-253-7963) for further information. I think he would appreciate some company this month!

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

If you have not yet made arrangements to take part this year, it is not too late! Simply contact one of the two coordinators listed below, and they will try to find a spot for you!

The **Northampton Christmas Count** (in its 69th year) will be held on **Sunday, December 15**. Contact Jan Ortiz (413) 549-1768 jtortiz@aol.com or Mary Alice Wilson (413) 548-9078 mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu.

The **Quabbin Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 28**. Contact Scott Sumner (413) 253-5999 ssurner@aol.com.

The **Springfield Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 14**. Contact Bruce Kindseth (860) 745-9593 kindsebr@aol.com

The **Athol Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 14**. Contact David Small (978) 249 2094 dhsml@gis.net.

For the **Greenfield Count**, contact Mark Fairbrother at (413) 367-2695

Most Important of All

Any time one finds a large number of people engaged in esoteric pursuits in foul weather, one suspects an ulterior motive. Though Geoff LeBaron might not subscribe to it, there is a persuasive school of thought which holds that this whole Xmas Count thing is actually a thin excuse for something else! The appeal below may enlighten you further.

Food Donations Needed for Christmas Bird Count "Pot Luck" Meal !!

We are in need of food contributions (hot or cold dishes) for the Post-Christmas Bird Count's "Pot Luck" meal. After a rigorous day (and in some cases night) in the field, there is no better way to cap-off a successful bird count than by partaking in a good pot luck meal. Your help is needed in order to make this an evening to be remembered!

*Please call either **Helga Beatty (413/253-2410)** or **Sue Emerson (413/584-6736)** before December 11 and tell us what you will be bringing.* We are seeking hot or cold main dishes, salads, deserts and snack foods (This is an ideal way to test that new recipe you have always been wanting to try-out). We will need you to bring your contribution to the Hitchcock Center that afternoon.

Thank you for your support of this important project.

Until next time, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones

Editor

(413) 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com