



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 19, No. 5

**January, 2003**

## PROGRAMS

*All programs begin at 7:30 PM 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, January 13**

We are most privileged to welcome **Dr Robert Ridgely**. Since he invites us to nominate a title, I suggest **“On Tiny Shoulders: The Jocotoco Antpitta and Conservation in Ecuador”**.

After postgraduate work at both Duke University and Yale, Dr Robert Ridgely has made major contributions to the global conservation of birds. He joined the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia in 1982, and worked until 1989 as a research associate. Dr Ridgely became the Senior Research Ornithologist at ANSP in 1989, and the Chairman of the Department of Ornithology in 1996. Dr Ridgely has been closely associated with the RARE Center for Tropical Conservation, and the ICBP-IUCN Parrot Working Group, both since 1978. He was also on the Board of Directors of the Pan-American Section of the International Council for Bird Conservation from 1980 to 1984. More locally, Dr Ridgely has served on the Boards of Trustees at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Chapter of the Nature Conservancy since 1997.

Dr Ridgely has published extensively on the avifauna of southern- and central America. The titles of most interest to birders are, perhaps, *A Guide to the Birds of Panama* (1976), *A Guide to the Birds of Panama, with Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras* (revised edition 1989), *The Birds of South America* (coauthored with Guy Tudor; Vols 1 and 2; 1989 and 1994 respectively), and *The Birds of Ecuador, Vols. 1 and 2* (with Paul J. Greenfield; 2001). Not surprisingly, Dr Ridgely has received numerous major grants and endowments, mostly to study the ornithology of southern- and central America. He is currently the Director of International Bird Conservation, at the National Audubon Society. Not to be confined entirely to the rarified air of the research community, Bob has been a core leader for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours from 1980 to the present.

Dr Ridgely's work has been instrumental in the description of seven new species, including the Oro Parakeet, and the Chestnut-bellied Cotinga. In 1997, Dr Ridgely heard a call he did not recognize in the Ecuadoran rainforest. Investigating, he located the first-recorded Jocotoco Antpitta, which now gives its name to the Jocotoco Foundation. Dr Ridgely founded this organization to preserve the flora and fauna of Ecuador, through the establishment and maintenance of a system of private reserves. Bob will describe for us the circumstances of this discovery, and the journey from so simple a beginning to Fundacion Jocotoco.

### **Coming Up**

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

**March 10:** Paul Baisich savors *Shade Grown Coffee*

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

**May 12:** Kenn Kaufmann muses on *“Migration from the Bird's Point of View”*

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

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

Amidst great anticipation, the annual November **East Quabbin** trip (led by Tom Gagnon), occurred on **November 24**. A major highlight of this trip was being able to drive on the normally-gated roads leading to some well-known Quabbin locations. In addition to local HBC members, we had some nice folks from Cape Cod and Springfield joining our group.

Things seemed to get off to a somewhat slow start and we were getting concerned that our list of mammals might outdo our list of birds! We persevered, and in the end found 40 different species of birds. There were some predictable ducks and water birds - Common Loons, a Horned Grebe, Canada Geese, Black Ducks, Mallards, a Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, Common Goldeneyes, and Common Mergansers. It took us a while to notice the Greater Yellowlegs almost right in front of us while visiting Shaft 11. In the raptor department, we saw two Bald Eagles: one immature flying quickly over some trees and one adult perched in a distant tree. We had a nice look at an adult male Northern Harrier above Dana Flats, and saw two Red-tailed Hawks. The explosive flights of three Ruffed Grouse and a flock of 15 Wild Turkeys at the Baffle Dams were a nice treat for some of us. Our land-birds included Northern Flicker, R.B. Nuthatch, W.B. Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Tree Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, and American Goldfinch.

The mammal highlights included a beautiful mink perched on the edge of a beaver lodge, one slow-moving porcupine that proceeded to climb a hemlock tree, one beaver, and one White-footed Mouse that was abruptly awakened from its nest in a bluebird box! At Dana Flats, the spongy ground at the water's edge made us feel like we were on the arctic tundra.

Leslie Breger



The Turkey Trot to Cape Ann was cancelled due to a lack of leaders, but four of us went, leaderless, to the **Quabbin** on **November 29** instead. We didn't see much, very little in the way of waterfowl, but did get great looks at an adult Bald Eagle which flew up close and landed in a tree. Other highlights included a Brown Creeper and a lone Horned Lark.

Henry Lappen

### Coming Trips

*The club requests that all participants share costs with those who travel in the same car. Please discuss this when you start out and make sure everyone understands the system and is OK with it. The recommended system is as follows:*

- 1) Estimate the total travel cost (in \$) of the trip using a rate of \$0.30 per mile. (Calculate number of miles traveled multiplied by three, then divide the result by ten).
- 2) Divide the total travel cost (calculated in step one) by the number of participants in the car, INCLUDING the car owner. This will be the amount owed by each passenger to the car owner for MILAGE.
- 3) Add a share of any tolls and parking fees paid, to arrive at the total contribution of each passenger.

*We also request that someone volunteer or be co-opted to write a trip report for the newsletter, and forward it to the editor.*

Thank you!

**Saturday, January 18. Winter finches.** Three quarters of a day. Shirley Hilborn will lead birders looking for winter finches in Western Massachusetts. Meet at the Hitchcock Center at 8:00 a.m.

*continued→→→*

**Saturday, February 8. Plymouth and Falmouth.** All day. Join Shawn Smolen-Morton and Al Richards in this trip to southeastern Massachusetts. Past highlights have included Yellow-breasted Chat, Redhead, Rough-legged Hawk, and both Long- and Short-eared Owls. Dress warmly. Call Shawn (413-863-4569) or Al (413-665-2761) for the time and place to meet.

**Wednesday, February 12. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley.** Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will seek out early migrants and other seasonal specialties. Meet on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin's Farms, at 8:00 a.m.

**Saturday, March 1. Plum Island.** All day. Geoff LeBaron (413-268-9281) will seek out late winter specialties like Rough-legged Hawks, Barrow's Goldeneyes, Glaucous Gulls, and Snowy Owls. Dress warmly. Call Geoff for information as the date approaches.

**Wednesday, March 12. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley.** Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will see what he can turn up. Meet at 7:30 a.m. on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin's Farms. Call Harvey for more information.

## CHRISTMAS COUNT

The Northampton Count was blessed this year with what might be called miraculous weather. Both the preceding and following days were inclement, to say the least. December 19, however, proved to be quite mild, with moderate winds.

Perhaps understandably, given the prevalence of cold weather in December this year, we did not see so many dallying warblers and waterfowl as last year, but at least where I was, we had a good, solid day.

Included are the total numbers of the 84 species which appeared on this year's Northampton count, along with some species which were not recorded this year (count values equal zero). **Numbers equaling previous high counts** are printed in **BOLD** (e.g. "22").

**Numbers exceeding previous high counts** are in **BOLD**, with an asterisk (e.g. "22\*")

Species	Number	Species	Number
Common Loon	1	NHarrier adult	1
Great Blue Heron	0	NHarrier immature	0
Snow Goose	1	Sharp-shinned Hawk	17
Canada Goose	2885	<b>Cooper's Hawk</b>	<b>19*</b>
<b>Mute Swan</b>	<b>29*</b>	N. Goshawk	0
Wood Duck	10	Red-shouldered Hawk	1
American Wigeon	2	Red-tailed Hawk	102
Am. Black Duck	185	Rough-legged Hawk	1
Mallard	981	Amer. Kestrel	7
Northern Pintail	2	Merlin	1
C. Goldeneye	79	<b>Peregrine Falcon</b>	<b>3</b>
Hooded Merganser	14	Ring-necked Pheasant	1
C. Merganser	157	Ruffed Grouse	6
Bald Eagle adult	6	Wild Turkey	40
Bald Eagle immat	2	Ring-billed Gull	388
		Herring Gull	334

<b>Species</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Number</b>
Iceland Gull	2	American Robin	710
Great Black-backed Gull	155	Gray Catbird	1
Rock Dove	1362	N. Mockingbird	138
Mourning Dove	1743	European Starling	4471
E. Screech-Owl	58	Cedar Waxwing	607
Great Horned Owl	20	Nashville Warbler	0
Barred Owl	3	Yellow-rumped Warbler	1
Long-eared Owl	1	Amer. Tree Sparrow	1175
N. Saw-whet Owl	3	Chipping Sparrow	1
Belted Kingfisher	20	Field Sparrow	4
Red-bellied Woodpecker	64	Savannah Sparrow	33
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	Fox Sparrow	1
Downy Woodpecker	238	Song Sparrow	267
Hairy Woodpecker	60	Swamp Sparrow	16
N. Flicker	38	White-throated Sparrow	222
Pileated Woodpecker	9	Dark-eyed Junco	1516
N. Shrike	1	Lapland Longspur	0
Blue Jay	954	Snow Bunting	0
Amer. Crow	4372	N. Cardinal	346
Fish Crow	5	Red-winged Blackbird	76
C. Raven	10	Eastern Meadowlark	2
Horned Lark	861	Rusty Blackbird	3
Black-capped Chickadee	1186	C. Grackle	0
Tufted Titmouse	381	Brown-headed Cowbird	2
Red-breasted Nuthatch	11	Baltimore Oriole	0
White-breasted Nuthatch	274	Purple Finch	7
Brown Creeper	15	House Finch	499
Carolina Wren	36	White-winged Crossbill	0
Winter Wren	2	C. Redpoll	0
Golden-crowned Kinglet	91	Pine Siskin	0
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	Amer. Goldfinch	723
Eastern Bluebird	193	Evening Grosbeak	0
Hermit Thrush	6	House Sparrow	1027

Each of these records represents a lasting contribution to the understanding and conservation of birds. It also represents the efforts of those who participated on December 19. In particular, we should thank Jan Ortiz and Mary Alice Wilson, without whose tireless organizational abilities, there would be no Northampton count!

### **An Important Thankyou!**

Thank you all for the generous donations of delectable main dishes, salads, breads and deserts. The really amazing thing was that birders managed to prepare foods while spending the day and sometimes the night also in searching for and counting birds and critters. A few, unable to come to the potluck, nonetheless, brought special dishes. An enormous thank you must go to the clean up team who magically returned the room to its original condition. Thanks for very successful party.

Helga Beatty

## FREE BIRD FINDING SERVICE!

The HBC now has an information exchange of people who will advise you on birding in various locales. If you know about the avian life in some near or far off place and want to share it, please call me to get listed.

If you are travelling to:

**Northeastern Vermont**  
**Monhegan Island**  
**Connecticut Lakes**  
**Cape May**  
**South Texas**

**Southeast Arizona**  
**Southern California**  
**Baffin Island**  
**Veracruz, Mexico**  
**or Java,**

just call me and I'll hook you up with the friendly club member who has birded there!

Henry (your trusty librarian): 549-3722

## 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**. 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](mailto:aslombard@attbi.com)

## ARCADIA PROGRAMS

**Field Walk Leader Training:** Mandy Bliss, Education Coordinator

Training Dates: January 9, 10, 16 and 17 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon. Pre-registration required, fee.

**Winter Crows:** Patti Steinman, Education Coordinator

Saturday, January 18 from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Pre-registration required, fee.

**Plum Island Raptors and Other Birds:** Wayne Peterson, Mass Audubon Ornithologist

Saturday, February 1 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Pre-registration required, fee.

**Eagles at Quabbin:** Dale Monette, Daniel Schell, and Patti Steinman

Saturday, February 8 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Pre-registration required, fee.

**Tracking: Relearning an Ancient Art:** John McCarter, Paul Rezendes Nature Program

Saturday February 15 from 9:45 AM to 3:00 PM

For more details of these, and other Arcadia programs go to [www.massaudubon.org](http://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 NATURAL HISTORY TOURS

**Birding Southeastern Arizona:** Rene Laubach and Simon Geary  
May 3-11, 2003. Pre-registration required, space limited.

**Puffins and Peatlands: Exploring the Upper Coast of Maine.** Gail Howe and Laura Tate Beltran  
June 20-23, 2003. Pre-registration required, space limited.

*For further details and/or to register for **Berkshire Natural History Tours**, and other Mass Audubon programs to the west of us, contact the **Berkshire Sanctuaries** at 472 West Mountain Rd., Lenox MA 01240. Phone (413) 637 0499; [berkshires@massaudubon.org](mailto:berkshires@massaudubon.org)*

## MISCELLANEOUS

Thank you to **Atticus Books** (Main St., Amherst) for donating a copy of Bob Askins book ("Restoring America's Birds: Lessons from Landscape Ecology") to the HBC library.

Thank you also to **Sally Venman** and **Sue Emerson** for dual-handedly getting the November newsletter in the mail while I was temporarily unavailable.

***Backyard Birds*** (on Strong St. in Northampton) offers a wide range of birding books, audio resources, gifts, feeders, and other paraphernalia. They also offer a 10% discount to Hampshire Bird Club Members. Remember, when you shop locally, your money stays here!

**PLEASE NOTE THAT A REVISED VERSION OF THE WINTER-LATE SUMMER 2003 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE IS INCLUDED WITH THIS EDITION. THE UPDATE FEATURES TWO TRIPS WHICH WERE NOT INCLUDED IN THE PREVIOUS VERSION, AND EXPANDED TRIP DESCRIPTIONS TO WHET YOUR APPETITE FOR SOME TIME IN THE FIELD.**

That is all for now.  
Until next time, talk softly and carry a big scope!

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



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 19, No. 6

**February, 2003**

## 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, February 10**, Dave Stemple will speak on **“The Sounds of Some Scottish Birds.”** The program will feature about thirty species of birds, along with a number of photographs, including some by Jason Stemple. Dave will discuss the structure of some song-delivery systems, along with regional dialects.

Growing up in West Virginia, Dave became interested in birds over fifty years ago. After achieving a Masters in mathematics, he went to work for IBM in 1960 on something he had not heard of at the time: computers. During forty years in software development, research, and teaching, Dave became Chair of Computer Science at UMass, Amherst. After retiring from this position, he now spends a lot of time recording birds in Latin America and Scotland. He and his wife Jane Yolen have a house in St Andrews, Scotland. He has written a children's book on the Wild Turkey, entitled *High Ridge Gobbler*, available in paperback from Boyds Mills.

In conjunction with his presentation to the club, we will have ten (10) copies of a book by Dave Stemple for sale and signing at the meeting. It is entitled, **“High Ridge Gobbler: A Story of the American Wild Turkey”** (Boyd's Mills Press, \$10.95, paperback). This is suitable for readers aged 8-10, but no doubt has appeal for any who remain young at heart. The story, as might be imagined, is about the life cycle of the turkey, with an emphasis on biological accuracy and a minimum of anthropomorphism.

Our friends at **Atticus Books** in Amherst are helping us to bring this book to you.

### Coming Programs

**March 10: Paul Baisich** savors *Shade Grown Coffee*

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

**May 12: Kenn Kaufmann** muses on *“Migration from the Bird's Point of View”*

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

### The Jocotoco Foundation

If you were intrigued by the Jocotoco Foundation, as described by Robert Ridgely in January, the address to write for further information or to contribute is:

Jocotoco Foundation

1407 Finntown Road, Waldoboro, ME 04572

Phone (207) 832-7852.

Information about Fundacion Jocotoco is also on the web at [www.fjocotoco.org](http://www.fjocotoco.org)

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

On what can only be described as a 'good old fashioned' winter's day, Shirley Hillborn, Marcia Merithew, Sue Emerson, and new member Enid Welch set out for **Turners Falls** on **Saturday, January 18** to see if they could get a view of the Red-headed Woodpecker that had been reported around the local Rod and Gun Club. Despite our valiant (some would say foolhardy) efforts to locate this bird when the temperature was one degree, and the wind chill at minus ten degrees, the woodpecker had more sense than we did and stayed out of both the wind and our sight. Our efforts were not in vain and we were able to still our shaking hands and chattering teeth long enough to focus our frosted binoculars on one Golden-crowned Kinglet at the R & G club, five Common Goldeneyes, seven Canada Geese, and a Northern Mockingbird that we found in and around the open waters of the canal. We had no sightings of winter finches.

Sue Emerson



Geoff LeBaron and nine others traveled to coastal **Rhode Island** on **Saturday, January 26**. Despite this being the warmest day for several weeks, we found conditions in Westerly to be decidedly brisk, with the bay near Napatree Point completely frozen over. We decided to push on rather than risk life and limb. In a more sheltered part of Westerly we came upon a beautiful adult Coopers Hawk surveying the frigid seaside, as well as a single Ruddy Duck jammed into a small area of open water with several swans and a bunch of Canada Geese. Nearby junipers provided starvation fare for numerous Robins, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and several Cedar Waxwings. In a deserted seaside carpark we found two Ipswich Sparrows, and several stunning Snow Buntings in amongst a large group of Horned Larks. We spent some time amidst the thickets of Ninigret Park in pursuit of a Western Tanager but, aside from two Hermit Thrushes, the thickets were quiet. There were, however, not one but two Red-headed Woodpeckers in an oak thicket by a pond.

A Tufted Duck had been reported in Wakefield, but we found most of the long pool wherein it had been sighted to be frozen. However, after a creative detour through the local school and cemetery, we finally got a nice view of open water, with a beautiful group of Ring-necked Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, and some Lesser Scaup. For the day as a whole, we noted unusually large numbers of Common Loons close inshore, and a rare total of three male Northern Harriers. Highlights of the late afternoon at Sachuest Point included two male Northern Harriers along with one female, good numbers of Harlequin Ducks, and simultaneous views of all three Scoters. There are few birds more beautiful than a male Surf Scoter at close range, in the glow of the dying sun.

### Coming Trips

**Saturday, February 8. Plymouth and Falmouth.** All day. Join Shawn Smolen-Morton and Al Richards in this trip to southeastern Massachusetts. Past highlights have included Yellow-breasted Chat, Redhead, Rough-legged Hawk, and both Long- and Short-eared Owls. Dress warmly. Call Shawn (413-863-4569) or Al (413-665-2761) for the time and place to meet.

**Sunday, February 9. Maine's southern shore.** All day. Scott Sumner (413-253-5983) sweeps the frigid northland for wintering seabirds and other fowl. Dress for cold weather and pack a lunch. Call Scott for departure information.

**Wednesday, February 12. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley.** Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will seek out early migrants and other seasonal specialties. Meet on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin's Farms, at 8:00 a.m.

**Saturday, March 1. Plum Island.** All day. Geoff LeBaron (413-268-9281) will seek out late winter specialties like Rough-legged Hawks, Barrow's Goldeneyes, Glaucous Gulls, and Snowy Owls. Dress warmly. Call Geoff for information as the date approaches.

## Monhegan Island

Don't forget to sign up for the annual Monhegan Island Memorial Day Weekend trip, the hallmark of HBC field trips since the club's beginnings.

The annual club trip to this fabled migrant trap (and generally remarkable place), led by **Andrew Magee** and **David Peake-Jones** is scheduled for **Friday, May 23 to Monday, May 26**. We will meet at Port Clyde, Maine (carpools generally available from the valley), boat to the island, and stay in rustic accommodations at the Trailing Yew. The island in May usually hosts a wide variety of migrant songbirds. An optional trip to Eastern Egg Rock allows for looks at puffins, various terns and even the odd alcid or pelagic species.

If you have never been on this trip (our first was in 1984) you should know that birds (and they are plentiful) are just one part of the Monhegan experience. Take an island eleven miles off the mainland. Take wildflowers and ocean and blue skies and night skies filled with starlight, not city light. Take hiking and sitting on rocks looking east over the ocean looking for whales. If the weather does not cooperate there is the comfort of warm fireplaces and lots of books. Add good food, good company, lots of laughs and skilled leaders to show you around and help you identify the many birds you will see and you have a better idea of what's in store.

The cost will be in the vicinity of \$280, which includes transportation from Port Clyde, lodging, breakfasts and dinners on the island. Add to this the optional trip to Eastern Egg Rock (\$12.50), tips for the island staff, lunches, snacks, an optional lobster dinner on the island plus shared mileage costs if you carpool, and you have a rough idea of the total cost. A \$50.00 deposit is needed to save a spot.

Contact **David** at (413) 529 9541, [davidpj@the-spa.com](mailto:davidpj@the-spa.com) or **Andrew** at (413) 586 1509 as soon as possible for more information. Register with David.

## Too Much of A Good Thing

National news media this month described a bout of decidedly atypical behavior on the part of some birds at the San Francisco Zoo. The zoo has long had an exhibit of Magellanic Penguins, native to the southernmost coasts of South America. The captive penguins are described by their keeper as typically rather sedentary, spending most of their time standing about out of the water.

However, upon the recent introduction of six new penguins from another zoo, the entire group, apparently at the instigation of the newcomers, have begun swimming almost constantly around and around the enclosure. Many do not even leave the water to eat, prompting the keeper to quip that she has to dangle fish in the water as they go past, "kinda like a drive thru". Zoo officials and others have speculated that this is simply a form of peer-induced mass hysteria. In the wild, they migrate several thousand miles along the coastline each season.

### *Top Ten Alternative Explanations for the Crazy Swimming:*

1. Penguin triathlon. Just wait for the bike and running legs.
2. Penguin cardiologist recommended eating more fish and aquasize.
3. Pheromone mix-up.
4. Pool about to be used as a photo shoot for "The Bachelorette"
5. Getting a run-up for a flying leap over the fence.
6. Finally noticed the high incidence of "fish breath".
7. Avoiding being accused of peeing in the pool.
8. Charity swim-a-thon to benefit the victims of the Spanish oil spill.
9. Really sick of kids with rubber fish.
10. "Got... to.... get... out... of...this.. stupid.. tux!!"

## CHAIRING CROSSROAD

(title is a pun on the famous London street, for those few of you who are not anglophiles).

Our post-meeting chair replacement program is, indeed, at a crossroads. In order to fully explain this to you, I first need to delve a little into the life of one of HBC's most unsung heroes. I refer, of course, to Bill Wilson, spouse of our most peripatetic president, Mary Alice Wilson. Prior to each HBC program that I can remember, Bill has been seen quietly setting up those frustrating metal folding chairs for the posterior comfort of the soon-to-arrive HBC faithful. So far so good. There are usually a few other souls to help out, and the process generally proceeds smoothly.

Bill is a marvelous cook, makes the most wonderful wooden furniture, is relatively low-maintenance and is generally quite useful in the Wilson household. Mary Alice assures me she would like to keep him around, in reasonable working order, and in good spirits....

.....which is why the events which follow each HBC program are of concern. Bill has two very able hands, but also two not-so-able knees, and is "not the cheerleading sort", so it is not quite fair that the lions-share of putting the chairs back should fall to him as often as it does. In the interests of harmony at the Wilson place, and fair play in general, please read the appeal below, and respond if you can. Thank you.

### HELP WANTED: Chair Replacement Coordinators

Hampshire Bird Club needs two or three solid citizens to take charge of returning the chairs to their appointed places following programs at the Immanuel Lutheran Church. This entails the evening-by-evening recruitment of volunteers to help put the chairs away, and coordination of their efforts. The successful applicants will be reasonably regular attendees at the programs, though with several incumbents, attendance at every program is not required.

#### Qualifications

- A basic understanding of chair allocation patterns in the ILC environment is required. This involves rudimentary mathematical ability (counting up to about fifty usually suffices), and the ability to distinguish between the sanctuary, choir-loft and church hall (present newsletter editor need not apply). Coordinators will also need to determine the geographical origins of the chairs used at each meeting from one of those who set them up (usually Mary Alice Wilson). Some experience in this field is helpful, but for the right applicant, extensive on-the-job training in the communication patterns of the president is available.
- Given the importance of leading by example, and the variable morale of volunteers, the ability to lift and move at least one folding chair at a time is important. Interpersonal skills such as, negotiating, pleading, ingratiating, bribery, and storming out in a huff (in that order) will be needed in the recruitment of volunteers.
- Ability to drive the infamous chair rack is helpful. Previous experience with tractor-trailers or stretch limousines will be considered.

Remuneration varies between zero and nothing at all, but you will have the have a good feeling, and yet more leverage when you front up at the Pearly Gates. Applications to Mary Alice Wilson: (413) 548 9078; [mwilson@k12.phast.umass.edu](mailto:mwilson@k12.phast.umass.edu) as soon as possible.

### HELP WANTED (Part 2): Boutique Proprietor

HBC is looking for an individual or team of folks willing to serve as proprietor of the HBC Boutique. It's fun and it really helps out the club. For more information contact Sue Fletcher (352-2102).

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

## HITCHCOCK CENTER PROGRAMS

**Foot Loose in Britain.** (Rebecca Reid and Michael Dover, Travelers Off the Beaten Path)  
Wednesday, February 5, 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

**Winter Vacation Camp.** (Hitchcock Center Staff)  
Budding Young Naturalists (Ages 6-8); Nature Designed It First (Ages 9-11)  
February 17-21; 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Fee.

**Cleaner, Greener Transportation,** (Paul Lipke of Sustainable Step New England, Mark Skinner of Pioneer Valley Biodiesel Cooperative).  
Sunday, February 9, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Fee.

**Pets, Pets, Photo Ops and Pot Roasts: Managing for the Contested Meanings of Wildlife in Contemporary American Society.** (Robert Muth, Associate Professor at UMass)  
Wednesday, February 12, 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Building, Hadley. Free.

**Deer and Moose in Massachusetts: Bambi and Bullwinkle Meet Suburbia.** (Bill Woytek, MassWildlife Deer and Moose Project Leader)  
Wednesday, February 26, 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Northfield Mountain Rec. and Environment 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**.*

## MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON

### **Losing Ground/Saving Ground: Mass Audubon's New Land Protection Strategy**

Across the Commonwealth, unprecedented rates of land conversion are resulting in accelerated habitat fragmentation and loss. In much of the state, the "window of opportunity" to make a meaningful difference in the conserved landscape is closing rapidly. In order to best meet this challenge and most effectively advance its mission of protecting the nature of Massachusetts, Mass Audubon has recently adopted an updated, science-based framework to guide its future land protection efforts. The foundation of this plan is the creation of a Geographic Information System data layer that will serve as a guide to enable the organization to be more focused, selective and proactive in its land protection work. This presentation will include a review of the strategy adopted, outline key steps in its implementation, and highlight new directions designed to increase the effectiveness of our statewide land protection efforts. Come learn more about how Mass Audubon is working to Protect the Nature of Massachusetts.

#### **Dates:**

Arcadia Sanctuary, Easthampton, Feb. 25th, 7:30 PM  
Pleasant Valley Sanctuary, Lenox March 25, 7:30 PM  
Wachusett Meadow Sanctuary, May 22, 7:30 PM

For more information or directions contact [land@massaudubon.org](mailto:land@massaudubon.org)

## ARCADIA PROGRAMS

**Eagles at Quabbin:** Dale Monette, (Daniel Schell, and Patti Steinman)  
Saturday, February 8 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Pre-registration required, fee.

**Tracking: Relearning an Ancient Art:** (John McCarter, Paul Rezendes Nature Program)  
Saturday February 15 from 9:45 AM to 3:00 PM.

**Land Protection Workshop.** (Bob Wilber, Mass. Audubon Director of Land Protection)  
Tuesday, February 25, 7:00 PM (Snow Date Thursday, Feb. 27). Free.

**Arcadia Ecological Management Conference**  
Saturday, March 8, 9:00 AM to noon. Free.

*For more details of these, and other programs go to [www.massaudubon.org](http://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 NATURAL HISTORY TOURS

**Birding Southeastern Arizona:** Rene Laubach and Simon Geary  
May 3-11, 2003. Pre-registration required, space limited.

**Puffins and Peatlands: Exploring the Upper Coast of Maine.** Gail Howe and Laura Tate Beltran  
June 20-23, 2003. Pre-registration required, fee, space limited.

*For further details and/or to register for **Berkshire Natural History Tours**, and other Mass Audubon programs to the west of us, contact the **Berkshire Sanctuaries** at 472 West Mountain Rd., Lenox MA 01240. Phone (413) 637 0499; [berkshires@massaudubon.org](mailto:berkshires@massaudubon.org)*

## MISCELLANEOUS

### **Bird Records Needed: Bull Hill Road, Sunderland.**

Owners of the gravel pit between Bull Hill Road and Route 116 in Sunderland plan to expand their operation. Dottie case will be making a submission to the State Natural Heritage Division concerning this matter. She would be grateful for any species records you may have for the area, particularly of **Grasshopper Sparrow** and **Vesper Sparrow**. Any records of Black Rat Snake would also be helpful. Dottie will need to know the date, precise location, nesting data (if applicable), and is particularly interested in records predating 1995.

Contact **Dottie Case**

Phone (413 665 2941) or write to her at **100 Bull Hill Road, Sunderland 01375.**

### **Connecticut River Eagle Festival: February 15-16.**

Connecticut Audubon Society presents this festival for the fourth time. The program is centered in Essex, Connecticut. There are eagle-viewing boat tours, live birds of prey, Native American dancers, lectures and exhibits, children's nature programs, musical entertainment, and an environmental marketplace. You can get on the event mailing list by calling 1-800-714-7201, or visit [ctaudubon.org](http://ctaudubon.org)

### **Photographic Contest**

Robert Floyd Photo Gallery of Southamptn, Ma. is conducting it's Second Annual Photo Contest. "Nature in the Pioneer Valley" is this year's theme. Twelve hundred dollars in cash prizes will be awarded to the top three entrants in the advanced and novice categories. Honorable mentions will be awarded to two entrants in each category consisting of merchant awards. Photo equipment will be awarded to the winning entrant in the 18 and under category. Contestants must reside in the pioneer valley.

Deadline for entries is the first week in February, 2003. To submit work, entry guidelines must be followed. They are available by calling the gallery at 413-529-2635 or e-mailing your street/post address to [rfphoto@mailstation.com](mailto:rfphoto@mailstation.com) or by sending a SASE to the gallery.

Robert Floyd Photo Gallery  
2 East Street, Box 662  
Southampton, Massachusetts 01073  
413-529-2635

### **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. Ten percent discount for members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Remember, with local merchants, your dollar stays here!

That is all for now.

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

David Peake-Jones

Editor

(413) 529 9541; [davidpj@the-spa.com](mailto:davidpj@the-spa.com)



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 19, No. 7

**March, 2003**

## 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: Monday, March 10.**

Our humble publication is made possible only with the judicious use of a (legal) stimulant. This remarkable substance is produced by infusing the dried and ground berries of a tropical plant in hot water. For many of us, crystallized sugar and a certain dairy product complete an utterly indispensable beverage. Like most things of great value to people in the industrialized world, mass-production of this commodity now both sustains people of the regions able to produce it, and threatens their ecological and cultural integrity. On **Monday, March 10**, **Paul Baicich** will examine the implications of shade-grown coffee. His talk is entitled ***"A Shade-Grown Coffee Future: Birds, Agriculture and People."***

Our guest, Paul J. Baicich, [b. 1948; pronounced "Base-Itch"] has been a birder since his early 'teens in NYC. He was won over to the beauty and wonder of birds through his backyard experiences and his outdoor interests. It is a passion that has never left him. He graduated from the City College of New York (B.A. Political Science) in 1971 and got a Masters from Georgetown University (Latin American Studies) in 1978. Mr. Baicich then spent 13 years doing manual labor for a now-defunct international airline.

Paul has worked for the American Birding Association since the early 1990s. He organized their conferences and conventions from 1991 through 1995, edited 14 of their "ABA Birdfinding Guides," and edited *Birding* magazine for almost 5 years. Paul is now the ABA's Director of Conservation and Public Policy. With Colin J. O. Harrison, he wrote *A Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds* (Academic, 1997) and has also served as a leader and co-leader for multiple birding trips to Alaska (Attu, the Pribilofs, Nome, and Gambell).

Americans drink over a third of the world's coffee, two-thirds of which is grown by our neighbors in Latin America and the Caribbean. When we realize how birds and coffee are interrelated, we can actually intervene to make things better for resident birds and neotropical migrants that survive (or even thrive) on coffee plantations. Paul will cover some fascinating background research in the field, current sun-versus shade issues in coffee, the state of the coffee industry, and the unique positive role that birders can play in the grand mix of sustainable agriculture, consumer concerns, and inter-American bird conservation.

### **Previous Programs**

Those who would like to follow up on **Dave Stemple's** presentation on **Scottish Birds** may like to visit his website at [www.cs.umass.edu/~stemple](http://www.cs.umass.edu/~stemple). He has a report on Ouzel dialects complete with sonograms, and also sonograms of Black Grouse, Red Grouse and Capercaillie. Dave also confesses to being a fan of "Boiled Lead." Details at the site!

### **Coming Programs**

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

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

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

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

There can be little in birding to rival a mild winter day at a place like Plum Island. Something about the dearth of other birds, the clean light, and the bleak landscape seems to add an air of magic and majesty to the solitary birds of prey who find winter refuge from the arctic in our gentle clime. With this in mind, Geoff LeBaron and ten others sampled the late winter fare of **Newburyport and environs** on a balmy **Saturday, March 1**.

We began at Birdwatchers Supply and Gift, in pursuit of a reported **Clay-colored Sparrow**. Just as our patience neared its end, a pale, furtive little bird quietly materialized apologetically in the center of a Burning Bush (in name only – it was not actually alight, and there were no commandments to be seen anywhere). We were quickly able to confirm a buffy supercilium, dark mustache, and a flecked lateral throat stripe. This was indeed our sparrow, and before returning to some shrubby obscurity, it provided us with a good show. The tide marsh next to Plum Island was strewn with the wreckage of the winter icepack in various stages of disintegration. Locating any Snowy Owls was going to require painstaking scoping. With this in mind, we were idling slowly along the road, eyes fixed fruitlessly on the vast, glaring expanse of the marsh, when the lead car flushed a bird from a pole right at the roadside. In an instant, we beheld a lanky, warm-colored bird of prey with a huge facial disc, which loped off across the dunes. We watched it for a minute or so on this occasion, then had it circle breathtakingly close to the group over one of the boardwalks to the beach. For some, this was their first **Short-eared Owl**. I suspect that, for most, it was by far the best-ever encounter. Further down the island, Geoff spotted a dark shape sitting in suspiciously spindly tree branches near the dike. Our first **Rough-legged Hawk** eventually took off, revealing striking dark wrist patches, and a pale throat. Its place was immediately taken on the same branches, by another Rough-legged Hawk. What a bonus! With assistance from other birders, we found both an immature and an adult male **Snowy Owl**.

Up the Merrimack at the (currently closed) “Chain Bridge” near Salisbury Point, we watched at least six Bald Eagles hanging around the swollen and ice-strewn river, which also provided a refuge for many Great Cormorants (one sporting striking white-tipped feathers encircling the neck, exceedingly rare in North American birds). These cormorants were coming up with many absurdly large catfish, which suffered a protracted, laborious, but ultimately final descent into their innards. Amidst numerous Common Goldeneyes, Curtis alertly found (at great range) a female **Barrow’s Goldeneye** with a pale orange bill and abruptly sloping forehead.

Across the river mouth at Salisbury Beach State Park, a rising cold breeze finally reminded us of the true season. Lots of Common Eider, Red-breasted Mergansers and Common Loons flirted with the breakers, and one **Red-necked Grebe** trolled along the sheltered shoreline of the river channel. After this reporter left, the rest of the group witnessed four Short-eared Owls at dusk on the island. An embarrassment of riches!!

David Peake-Jones

### Coming Trips

**Wednesday, March 12. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley.** Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will see what he can turn up. Meet at 7:30 a.m. on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin’s Farms. Call Harvey for more information.

**Saturday, March 22. Connecticut River Waterfowl.** Half day. Al (413-665-2761) will look for migrating ducks and geese. Call for information.

**Wednesday, April 9. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley.** Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will look for ducks and anything else worth seeing. Meet at 7:30 a.m. on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin’s Farms. Call Harvey for more information.

## ***There is still room on the Monhegan trip! Don't Miss Out!!***

### **Monhegan Island, Maine. May 23 to May 26 (Memorial Day weekend), 2003.**

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 the locals 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 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, we can are free to explore the mysteries of the Enchanted Forest, or the spectacular cliffside 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](mailto:davidpj@the-spa.com), or  
Andrew Magee: (413) 369 9920

### **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)*

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

**Q:** Who is larger: Mrs Bigger or Mrs. Bigger's baby?

**A:** The baby's a little Bigger.

## POSITIONS FILLED

**Mike Locher** has courageously volunteered to take charge of the monthly chair repatriation program. Rumor has it that an anguished member of the Board browbeat him into it to avoid having to read another overblown newsletter item. Perhaps he just wanted to be known as the “Chair Chair.” Regardless of the reasons, Mike will be looking for volunteers after each meeting to replace the chairs. The theory is that he will do the brain work while the rest of employ our biceps, triceps, quadriceps and any other ‘ceps over which we still have conscious control in the restoration of harmonious chair distribution. Thanks in advance.

## POSITIONS VACANT

**Sally Venman** needs an assistant to coordinate the provision of **refreshments** at meetings. The successful applicant will bear the official title of Assistant Refreshment Chair. An interest in Scotch Shortbread and Date Slice (my favs) are strongly recommended, but the main duty is to motivate and coordinate our members to contribute munchies for meetings. Please call Sally Venman (413 549 1098; [sgvenman@attbi.com](mailto:sgvenman@attbi.com)) if you are interested.

**Sue Fletcher** will be stepping down as the proprietor of the **HBC Boutique** after years of service. The boutique offers a range of HBC paraphernalia, including sweat- and T- shirts, patches, local checklists, and field guide supplements. These items provide a nice way to declare our affiliation, and to advertise ourselves throughout the world. Sue has tirelessly promoted the collection at meetings, and seen to the ordering of items from our suppliers. For those who have been eyeing this glamorous post with envy, now is the time to step forward. The position could be filled by a team rather than one person. Word is we are looking at a line of “Ripped” field clothing, and perhaps even the HBC “Check!” logo to counter Nike’s “Swish.” Contact Sue (413 253 2102; [scfletch@aol.com](mailto:scfletch@aol.com)) if interested.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is charged with the weighty task of recruiting members to replace those on the Board who will depart at the end of the current term. The committee needs to present a slate of nominations to the membership at the April meeting, in preparation for a vote at the Annual General Meeting in May. If you, or someone you know has/have an interest in serving on the Board, please contact one of the committee:

Scott Turner (413 253 5983; [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com))

Jan Ortiz (413 549 1768; [jtortiz@aol.com](mailto:jtortiz@aol.com))

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

### Aircraft Maintenance Problems and Solutions

Never let it be said that ground crews and engineers lack a sense of humor. Here are some actual logged maintenance complaints and problems, known as “squawks,” submitted by QANTAS pilots and the solution recorded by maintenance engineers. Quantas, incidentally is the only international airline never to have had a fatal crash. “P” is the problem logged by the pilot. “S” is the solution as recorded by the engineers

**P:** “Dead bugs on windshield.”

**S:** “Live bugs on backorder.”

**P:** “Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200-fpm descent.”

**S:** “Cannot reproduce problem on ground.”

## CONSERVATION

### Environmental Alert Network

The Environmental Alert Network is comprised of Massachusetts Audubon members and citizens who participate in the Society's advocacy efforts. Members of the network write and call legislators to encourage them to support policies that protect the state's natural resources. In this time of limited resources, birds and birding habitats need protection more than ever. To join the network contact:

Massachusetts Audubon Society  
Legislative Affairs  
6 Beacon Street, Suite 1025  
Boston MA 02108  
Phone: 617-523-8448; email: [beaconhill@massaudubon.org](mailto:beaconhill@massaudubon.org)

*If you are interested in conservation, 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](mailto:aslombard@attbi.com)*

## 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.

## ARCADIA PROGRAMS

### **Arcadia Ecological Management Conference**

Saturday, March 8; 9:00 AM< to noon. Free.

### **Touring Hidden Habitats: Rutland Brook Wildlife Sanctuary (Petersham, MA)**

Saturday, March 15; 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

### **Natural History of Vernal Pools:** Joan Milam, Conservation Educator

Friday, March 21; 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

### **Touring Hidden Habitats: Ponemah Bog Wildlife Sanctuary, Amherst, MA**

Saturday, March 22; 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

*For more details of these, and other programs go to [www.massaudubon.org](http://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 NATURAL HISTORY TOURS

### **Birding Southeastern Arizona:** Rene Laubach and Simon Geary

May 3-11, 2003. Pre-registration required, space limited.

### **Puffins and Peatlands: Exploring the Upper Coast of Maine.** Gail Howe and Laura Tate Beltran

June 20-23, 2003. Pre-registration required, fee, space limited.

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## HITCHCOCK CENTER

**ENERGY AND USING THE SUN:** *Deb Habib, Chris Mason.*

Sunday, March 9, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

**WALTZING WITH BEARS: The Black Bear in Massachusetts**

*Jim Cardoza & Bill Byrne, MassWildlife (Held at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary)*

Wednesday, March 12, 7:00 p.m. Fee

**SPRING BIRDING CLASS:** *Scott Surner, Hampshire Bird Club*

**Classroom Sessions(8): Wednesdays, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.**

March 26, April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, May 7, 14

**Field Trips(10): Saturdays, 7:00 - Noon**

March 29 - June 7 (except May 24)

**ADOPT A VERNAL POOL:** *Jennifer Wiest, Teacher/Naturalist*

**Wednesdays, March 12, 19, 26, 10:00 a.m. – Noon**

**THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE GRANITE LANDSCAPE:** *Tom Wessels*

Tuesday, April 1, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

**SLIDES OF SWITZERLAND:** *Marion Gorham and Al Shane, Senior World Travelers*

Wednesday, March 19, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

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

### Rambling.....

(relegated to the rear of the newsletter because it really doesn't relate to anything at all)

As we celebrate the discovery of the structure of DNA fifty years ago, a chunk of technology called the Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe has provided for a similar quantum leap in the field of astronomy. By recording the pattern of microwaves left over from events at the very beginning of the known universe, the probe has revealed that the universe is 13.7 billion years old. It is composed of 4% "ordinary" matter (stuff you can see, hear, smell, touch or taste), 23% "cold, dark matter", and 73% "dark energy". We cannot directly observe either of the last two things. Most shockingly, we now know for certain that the gravity exerted by all the matter in the universe is not enough to halt the rapid expansion it is currently experiencing. The WMAP data tell us that there will be no "big crunch." Instead, the universe will keep on expanding indefinitely, dispersing its matter and energy over an increasingly vast volume. Ultimately the result will be a cold, dark void, with essentially infinite distances between tiny specks of matter.

I mention this rather depressing discovery mostly because it so totally violates my intuition about things. Everything else in the universe I am familiar with, from weather to geology, to biology, is in some way cyclical. Things come into being, exist, then are destroyed, creating the raw materials for the process to repeat. It seems profoundly unfair that we only get one universe to play around in. I also mention it because trying to visualize "dark matter" and "dark energy" is roughly akin to what some of we birders have been going through every migration season since we started. Such birds as the Connecticut Warbler, Henslow's Sparrow, Black-billed Cuckoo, and Yellow Rail are alleged to exist, but remain purely theoretical for most. It is as if they exist only in some alternate universe, into which only a few of us get a chance glimpse. I hope, one day, to understand "dark matter" and "dark energy," and for at least one glimpse into that marvelous universe of mythical birds in the coming season.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Butterflies Anyone?

The **Massachusetts Butterfly Club** will be holding one of their **Butterfly Institutes** at the **Hitchcock Center** in Amherst this Spring. It will consist of 5 classes (3 Thursday and 2 Tuesday evenings) and 5 field trips (3 Sunday and 2 Saturday). This five-week course is designed for both the beginner and advanced butterflyer and will feature presentations by some of the areas knowledgeable experts.

Cost of the Institute is: \$60.00 or \$55.00 if you are a member of the Hitchcock Center. *For more information please contact Tom Gagnon at 413-584-6353; tombwhawk@aol.com or see Tom at any HBC program.*

### 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. Ten percent discount for members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Remember, with local merchants, your dollar stays here!

### More Aircraft Maintenance Conversations (see p. 4)

**P:** *"Evidence of leak on right main landing gear."*

**S:** "Evidence removed."

**P:** *"DME volume unbelievably loud."*

**S:** "DME volume set to more believable level."

**P:** *"IFF inoperative."*

**S:** "IFF always inoperative in OFF mode."

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

David Peake-Jones

Editor

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



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 19, No. 8

**April, 2003**

## 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**

#### **Monday, April 7. Tom Litwin retraces the Harriman Expedition of 1899.**

One day in March 1899, Edward H. Harriman strode briskly into the office of C. Hart Merriam, chief of the U.S. Biological Survey. Without appointment or introduction, Harriman outlined a grand plan for an expedition along the coast of Alaska. Remarkably, within less than three months, the two men were ready to embark on an ambitious voyage of scientific discovery from Alaska's panhandle to the Bering Strait. A crowd of onlookers cheered the departure of the vessel *George W. Elder* from Seattle on May 31, 1899. Newspapers all over the world featured the story on their front pages.

One hundred twenty-six passengers and crew traveled with Harriman and Merriam. The expedition boasted John Burroughs (the best selling nature writer of the day), and John Muir, the much-admired father of the American conservation movement. With them traveled an eminent assembly of nature artists, geologists, botanists, foresters and zoologists.

The expedition returned with over one hundred trunks of specimens, more than 5000 photographs and colored illustrations, and thirteen volumes of data that took twelve years to compile. The voyage produced a few, major new scientific discoveries - a previously unknown fiord and glacier, for example - but its value as an assessment and survey of an Alaskan environment in flux is unparalleled. The collections included thousands of shellfish, birds and small mammals, and even a small number of large mammal specimens.

The expedition took place when Alaska's patina of pure coastal wilderness was beginning to tarnish from heavy use of its natural resources. In many instances, the expeditioners observed and catalogued the flora and fauna of a pristine, idealized wonderland. Yet the signs of civilization and progress were difficult to ignore. The Harriman Expedition chronicled an Alaska on the cusp of inevitable - and, in some instances, devastating - change to the environment. It provided a benchmark by which we can assess one hundred years of change along the Alaskan Coast.

#### **The Harriman Alaska Expedition Retraced.**

On July 22, 2001 over two dozen scientists, artists, and writers left Prince Rupert, British Columbia on the Harriman Expedition Retraced. The *Clipper Odyssey* followed Harriman's original route, sailing through the Inside Passage, the Gulf of Alaska, the Aleutian Archipelago, and northward through the Bering Sea. Four weeks later, on August 20, the travelers made their final stop in Nome.

**Tom Litwin** directed the "Harriman Retraced" expedition in 2001. He is the director of the Clark Science Center at Smith College in Northampton, MA and the founding director of the Smith College Science and Policy Program. His research interests include the relationships between bird populations and ecosystem health.

## PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

### Coming Up

**May 12: Kenn Kaufmann** speaks on “*Migration from the Bird’s Point of View.*”

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

## FIELD TRIPS

The harbingers of Spring are here! Male Red-winged Blackbirds are perched on every available vantage point in our turgid wetlands, their little bodies thrumming with hormonal urgency. Waterfowl in full breeding plumage glint like jewels in the drab coves and ox-bows of the Connecticut, en route to the vast breeding grounds north of the border. Now is the time to dust off the gear and get out there. They are all coming! Good luck! **WILDWOOD WALKS**, see page 6

### Reports

For **Harvey’s mid week sweep of the valley** on **Wednesday, March 12**, the river was still frozen but the group did find early Red-winged Blackbirds. There were two Bald Eagles on the nest next to the Mass Turnpike in West Springfield, along with Hooded Mergansers and Ringed-necked Ducks. Two **Red-necked Grebes** and a Wood Duck also found space amongst the ice floes of the Connecticut.



Dense fog blanketing the landscape during **Al Richard’s March 22 tour** of likely waterfowl spots attested to the rapid demise of our thick snow pack. At the Rod and Gun Club there were over **60 Ring-necked Ducks**, more than 30 Common Mergansers, two pairs of Hooded Mergansers and a Common Goldeneye. At the Migratory Way Canal there were more Common Goldeneye, and a **Pied-billed Grebe**. At Great Pond in Hatfield, there were numerous Wood Ducks, lots of Black Ducks and a Carolina Wren, as well as several species of Sparrows. On the way to the Sugarloaf, the group encountered Bluebirds (always welcome). Near the Sugarloaf bridge there was an early **Phoebe**, and a **Peregrine Falcon** hung around the cliffs below the summit.

### Coming Trips

**Wednesday, April 9. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley.** Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will look for ducks and anything else worth seeing. Meet at 7:30 a.m. on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin’s Farms. Call Harvey for more information.

**Saturday, April 12. Ashley Reservoir: early warblers.** Half day. Bob Bieda (413-527-2623) will beat the bushes for Pine- and Palm Warblers, Broad-winged Hawk, Osprey, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Meet at the Holiday Inn parking lot, Exit 15 (“Holyoke Mall”) off Route 91 at 7 a.m. Call to register.

**Saturday, April 19. Leisurely and Local.** Half day. Shawn Smolen-Morton (413-863-4569) will see what’s on or near the water between Barton’s Cove and Great Pond in Hatfield. Meet at Family Dollar/Food City parking lot at 7 a.m. Call him to ask where that is.

**Saturday, April 26. More migrants.** Half day. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) looks for her signature waterthrushes, in addition to other warblers and neotropical migrants. She’ll start at Look Park in Northampton. Meet at 6:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the JFK Middle School on Bridge Road in Northampton. Call for further details.

**Saturday, May 10. The Quabbin Reservoir: Spring migration.** All day. Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) will go in search of neotropical migrants at this regional hot spot. You must be a member of the Hampshire Bird Club to go on this trip. Register by calling Tom. Quabbin may not be open when the trip is scheduled.

## HELP WANTED/HELP FOUND

At HBC there have always been folks willing to step forward to keep the diverse activities of the club running. In this vein, please welcome the new proprietors of the **HBC Boutique: Janice Doppler and Peg Arny**. Peg and Janice will be charged with making sure we are suitably attired in t- and sweat-shirts, and that we are never short of field guide labels and checklists when we most need them. **Sue Fletcher** still has a short time with us before leaving the area for points south, so don't miss any opportunity to thank her for her years of sterling service to the club.

### HELP KEEP BIRDERS' TUMMIES HAPPY

*Fact: Birders LOVE to eat*

*Fact: Birders expect to find food on the table at HBC meetings.*

*Fact: Someone needs to be sure that the expected food IS on the expected table.*

Sally Venman has been that someone for the past two years and she is lonely. She wants company.

Many, many people express their willingness to provide goodies for meetings on the membership form, so that is not a problem. Sally would like help in contacting these willing people. She would also welcome help in set up and clean up.

*If this sounds like just the HBC job you have been waiting for, call Sally at (413) 549-1098 or email her at [sgvenman@attbi.com](mailto:sgvenman@attbi.com).*

## CONSERVATION

The club has, for some years, contributed to bird surveys conducted region-or nation-wide by several research organizations, including Cornell. We are now looking at the possibility of establishing one or two **monitoring programs** under our own auspices.

The **East Leverett Meadow** is a local area of considerable conservation value. A group of local birders have been monitoring the bird populations and vegetation of this area for several years, and have already published the results in a form accessible to land owners and management authorities. To build from this basis could result in a really valuable long-term study. Protocols for monitoring the bird fauna include stopping at set locations for set lengths of time, recording species seen and heard, and sending data to a compiler. You might choose to be involved at any time of the year. The more people are involved, the better the coverage is likely to be. The results will likely be shared with the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust.

**Bull Hill** is also an area of critical habitat for birds. Many of us have birded there over the years, but there is no lasting record of bird populations. Given interested participants, the club would like to look into establishing a long-term monitoring protocol similar to that in place at East Leverett Meadow.

For further information, please contact Mary Alice Wilson (413-548-9078, [mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu](mailto:mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu)).

*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 is looking for ideas on how we can contribute to the conservation of species in our area. Contact her at (413) 586 7509, or [aslombard@attbi.com](mailto:aslombard@attbi.com)*

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee will present a slate of nominations to the membership at the April meeting, in preparation for a vote at the Annual General Meeting in May. If you, or someone you know has/have an interest in serving on the Board, please contact one of the committee:

Scott Sumner (413 253 5983; [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com))

Sue Emerson (413 584 6736; [wle33@aol.com](mailto:wle33@aol.com))

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

## HITCHCOCK CENTER PROGRAMS

### BIOTHON

The Hitchcock Center's fundraising Biothon will be held Friday, May 16 and Saturday, May 17. Anyone wanting either to participate or to pledge a per-species donation should contact David Spector (413-323-4885; [spectord@ccsu.edu](mailto:spectord@ccsu.edu)).

**SPRING BIRDING CLASS:** Scott Sumner, Birder

Wednesdays, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. on March 26, April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, May 7, 14

Field Trips(10): Saturdays, 7:00 – Noon on March 29 - June 7 (except May 24)

**FOOD AND LOCALLY GROWN PRODUCTS:** Annie Cheatham, and Ann Carter(CISA)

Sunday, April 13, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

**SWIMMING WITH SALMON AND FLYING WITH EAGLES:** Mickey Novak, Ralph Taylor

Tuesday, April 15, 7:00 p.m. at the Hitchcock Center, Amherst.

**ART AND SCIENCE IN ANTARCTICA:** Bob Marstall

Monday, April 28, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

**2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE**

Saturday, May 3, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Held on the Amherst Common (rain location: Hitchcock Center)

**THE SPELL OF THE SENSUOUS:** David Abram,

Wednesday, May 7, 7:30 p.m. Stirn Auditorium in Mead Art Museum, Amherst College

Reception at Hitchcock Center 3:30-5:30 p.m.

**FOXES AND COYOTES:** Alan Edmond

Saturday, May 10, 1:00-5:00 p.m.

**COMPOSTING TOILETS:** Tad Montgomery, Engineer

Sunday, May 11, 1:00-3:00 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](http://www.hitchcockcenter.org).*

## ARCADIA PROGRAMS

### Bird-A-Thon

Massachusetts Audubon Bird-A-Thon will take place between 6 PM on **Friday, May 16** and 6 PM on **Saturday, May 17**. This year the Connecticut River Valley Sanctuaries will have a team. If you are interested in participating, please contact Arcadia.

**The Dance of the American Woodcock:** Patti Steinman  
Friday, April 11, 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. Fee.

**Big Trees and Old Growth:** Bob Everett, Old Growth Expert  
Saturday, May 3, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Fee

**Spring Hike on the Appalachian Trail to Finerty Pond:** Aimee Galinas, Naturalist  
Sunday, April 27, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Fee

**Floodplain Ecology Canoe Trip:** Aimee Galinas, Naturalist  
Sunday, May 4, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Fee

**Beavers:** Mike Callahan (Beaver Solutions)  
Wednesday, May 7, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. at Laughing Brook Sanctuary

**Early Morning Bird Walks:** Guest Leaders: Saturdays, 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.  
April 26 (Arcadia); May 3 (Graves Farm); May 10 (M.S. Lynes ); May 17 (Arcadia); May 24 (Graves Farm);  
May 31 (M.S. Lynes).  
May 12, 13, 14, 15, 16: 6:30 – 8:30 a.m. Meet at Arcadia.

*For more details of these, and other programs go to [www.massaudubon.org](http://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 NATURAL HISTORY TOURS

**Birding Southeastern Arizona:** Rene Laubach and Simon Geary  
May 3-11, 2003. Pre-registration required, space limited.

**Puffins and Peatlands: Exploring the Upper Coast of Maine.** Gail Howe and Laura Tate Beltran  
June 20-23, 2003. Pre-registration required, fee, space limited.

For further details and/or to register for **Berkshire Natural History Tours**, and other Mass Audubon programs to the west of us, contact the **Berkshire Sanctuaries** at 472 West Mountain Rd., Lenox MA 01240. Phone **(413) 637 0499**; [berkshires@massaudubon.org](mailto:berkshires@massaudubon.org)

### 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**.

## 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 6, 13, and 20**

**Thursdays: May 9, 16, and 22**

Each begins at **6:30 a.m.** and runs until **8:30 a.m.**, 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.

**Please note:** there are no walks in the last week of the month. Thank you.

## HBC DIRECTORY

**April, 2002**

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

**VP/Program Chair:** Geoff LeBaron; (413) 268 9281; [glebaron@attbi.com](mailto:glebaron@attbi.com)

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

**Communications Secretary:** Jan Howard; (413) 542 2721; [jlhoward@amherst.edu](mailto:jlhoward@amherst.edu)

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

### Board Members

Sally Hills: (413) 549 5550; [shills44@aol.com](mailto:shills44@aol.com)

Mike Locher: (413) 585 5864; [mlocher@yahoo.com](mailto:mlocher@yahoo.com)

Dennis McKenna: (413) 256 8439; [dennismckenna@aol.com](mailto:dennismckenna@aol.com)

Jan Ortiz: (413) 549 1768; [jtortiz@aol.com](mailto:jtortiz@aol.com)

Sally Venman: (413) 549 1098; [sgvenman@attbi.com](mailto:sgvenman@attbi.com)

Bob Zimmermann: (413) 585 0405; [zimmermann@biochem.umass.edu](mailto:zimmermann@biochem.umass.edu)

**Field Trip Chair:** Mike Locher: (413) 585 5864; [mlocher@yahoo.com](mailto:mlocher@yahoo.com)

**Conservation Chair:** Anne Lombard: (413) 586 7589; [annelombard@attbi.com](mailto:annelombard@attbi.com)

**Boutique Proprietor:** Sue Fletcher: (413) 253 2102; [scfletch@aol.com](mailto:scfletch@aol.com)

**Librarian:** Henry Lappen: (413) 549 3722

**Publicity Chair:** Jan Ortiz: (413) 549 1768; [jtortiz@aol.com](mailto:jtortiz@aol.com)

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

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

**Refreshments:** Sally Venman: (413) 549 1098; [sgvenman@attbi.com](mailto:sgvenman@attbi.com)

**Rare Bird Alert:** Bob Bieda: (413) 527 2623; [lbieda@massed.net](mailto:lbieda@massed.net)

Geoff LeBaron: (413) 268 9281; [glebaron@attbi.com](mailto:glebaron@attbi.com)

Jan Ortiz: (413) 549 1768; [jtortiz@aol.com](mailto:jtortiz@aol.com)

Scott Turner: (413) 253 5999 (work); [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com)

## BIRDS IN THE NEWS

### Not From Around Here, Then?

Most of us are familiar with the havoc wreaked by species introduced outside their natural ranges. In the United States for example, there are now species such as the Green Tree Snake, which arrived in Hawaii by military aircraft, and now threatens much of the Hawaiian bird fauna through egg and nestling predation. Closer to home, cavity-nesting birds are severely threatened by enormous populations of adaptable and aggressive European Starlings, which in many regions monopolize available nesting cavities. More subtly, the genetic integrity of American Black Ducks is threatened by interbreeding with the introduced Mallard.

Unfortunately, it goes both ways. North American Ruddy Ducks were introduced into reserves in Great Britain (ironically by waterfowl enthusiasts), from whence they promptly escaped. By the late 1980s they had saturated available habitat in Britain, and males were regularly showing up in Western Europe. Being American, and therefore indecently brash, the interlopers are more attractive to females of the rare and endangered White-headed Duck, than White-headed males. The White-headed Duck is consequently severely imperiled.

Such is the concern in Spain, that the military are instructed to shoot any and all Ruddy Ducks on sight. Recently, under pressure from Spain, English wildlife authorities have proposed a program to eliminate the entire English population, estimated at some 6,000 individuals. Needless to say, this prospect has outraged many concerned with the humane treatment of animals. When it comes to wildlife, the balance of trade should be set at zero.

### Oldest Known Bird

If I remember my college zoology classes at all, the mortality curves for most species of birds are rather different from those of other animals. For most animal species, large numbers of very young animals die, and there is another period of increased mortality when individuals reach "old age." By contrast, the mortality rate for most birds, after getting through the perils of youth, is remarkably constant. There is no increase that might be attributed to "old age". From this, ornithologists conclude that predation, weather, starvation and accident claim almost all birds before they can approach their physiological life span.

The limits of longevity, such as they may be, have just been pushed back a little for at least one species. In 2002, U.S. Geological Survey scientist Chandler Robbins banded a nesting albatross (no mention of the species) on Midway Island in the Pacific, and discovered that he had banded the same bird there in 1956. Since, in 1956, the bird had just laid an egg, it must have been at least five years old then. Hence the minimum age of this bird in 2002 was 51 years. It is the oldest known wild bird. Incidentally, the albatross was brooding a healthy chick at the time of the most recent encounter.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Internet Birding

For those interested in migration, a site called [www.badbirdz.com](http://www.badbirdz.com) shows the National Weather Service NEXRAD radar readings from Key West, Florida, for each night during the Spring when a noticeable signature from migrating birds is detected. Birds leaving Cuba show up as a pronounced shadow on the radar image. The most recent heavy flight, at the time I write this, occurred on March 19.

For eagle fans, the Barton's Cove nest is shown at <http://www.nu.com/eagles/>. Links to both sites are also available from the Hampshire Bird Club website: [www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)



That's it for this month.

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

David Peake-Jones

Editor

(413) 529 9541; [davidpj@the-spa.com](mailto:davidpj@the-spa.com)



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 19, No. 8

**May, 2003**

## PROGRAMS

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

### **This Month**

**Monday, May 12**

#### **Kenn Kaufman on Migration from the Birds' Point of View.**

Many studies have been done (and are continuing) on bird migration, often focusing on the route, distance, timing, or physiology of this miraculous event that takes place twice each year. These studies have tended to shed light on how and why birds migrate, and conservation implications for bird species and populations.

Kenn Kaufman will present a new take on migration—the “birds’ eye view” if you will. Few people have equaled Kenn’s time in the field, and if any person can understand the mind-set of the creatures undertaking these near-miraculous voyages it is he. Most people tend to focus on field identification of birds, but Kenn leads the way in taking the leap to understanding their behavior (and perhaps thoughts) as well. Please join the Hampshire Bird Club as we seek to experience bird migration in the first person.

**Kenn Kaufman** is one of America’s best-known naturalists and a legend among birders. A longtime friend and disciple of the late eminent birder and naturalist Roger Tory Peterson, Kaufman embodies the traditions Peterson embraced throughout his life. He is, without a doubt, the heir to Peterson’s talent for making the natural world accessible to all people

Kaufman is the author of *Kingbird Highway*, *Lives of North American Birds*, and *The Peterson Field Guide to Advanced Birding*, the first “expert” guide to North American birds. He has written numerous articles in the most prestigious birding and nature magazines, including *Audubon*, and is the youngest person ever to receive the highest honor of the American Birding Association. In 2000, Kenn launched the Kaufman Focus Guide series with the best-selling “*Birds of North America*.” “*Butterflies of North America*” (the second book in the series) has recently been published, and will be followed by *Mammals of North America* in Spring 2004.

Copies of “*The Wild Canary*” (a compendium of bird records from Western Massachusetts during 1999 and 2000) will be on sale at the meeting. In addition, copies of Kenn Kaufman’s various books will be available for sale and signing. Rumor has it that the fabled “*Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts*” is close to making its appearance.

### **Last Month?**

Owing to “The Storm that Came Late,” and the subsequent cancellation of the April program, **Tom Litwin’s** talk on “**The Harriman Expedition Retraced**” has been rescheduled to **October 20, 2003**.

### **Coming Up**

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

## RUD STONE

Rud Stone, an Honorary Life Member of the Hampshire Bird Club, died recently. He came to the valley after growing up in upstate New York and is remembered as one of the finest naturalists of his time. Most remember that he could identify any sound made by any bird, under almost any conditions. Most also remember his unique way of doing things. After rolling his car off River Road in South Hadley, Rud carefully passed a Wood Turtle he had in the vehicle out to rescuers before extricating himself.

As he got on in years, Rud enlisted local birders and friends to help him get out birding, and when he could no longer walk, he birded from a car. Andrew Magee has been kind enough to share the following tribute.

### Rud Stone: A Memorial

“There once was a birder named Stone,  
Who got lost in the woods all alone,  
Not a problem existed,  
For he nicely subsisted,  
On pea juice and extract of bone.”

The above limerick, unremembered till I set to work on this tribute, was thought up by one John Briotta around 1960, when he and I were on the cusp of our adolescences. It epitomizes well our wit and affection concerning our magnificent, irreducible birding mentor and driver, Rud Stone, who brought us to exotic towns and feeders all over the Commonwealth in search of fabulous birds.

Rud Stone was a hoot, a kook, a fabulous birder-naturalist, and a joyful mentor. He was also a truly erudite and liberally enthusiastic man who, way back when, drove his interminable old clunkers with fabled imprecision. By the time I was ten, in 1957, Rud was already picking me up in the dark to go all-day birding, often with one or two other boys in tow, such as my friend Jim Cavanaugh of Springfield. We were often accompanied by a venerable doyen of Valley birding: the famous, and by then quite elderly, Professor Eliot, co-author of the idiosyncratic and anecdotal *“Birds of the Connecticut Valley.”* Sam Eliot never did learn to drive, so we boys got the continuous benefit of his enthusiasm, knowledge, and eccentricity on top of Rud’s. Further, we all benefited from Sam’s absolute need to get his bird, and Rud’s (terrible) driving to get to it.

Forty or fifty years ago, there were a mere handful of “hot” local birders who were consistently out and avid. Our relationships, and the birding growth they engendered, seemed especially intimate, and each sighting attained a context within these relationships. Rud, with all his oddness and generosity, was right in the middle of this love and gamesmanship. I think Rud was able to channel early adversity into remarkably benign choices of interest and mentorship, of which I was only one beneficiary. He was, for me at least, making it happen.

I could relate countless Rud Stone stories, involving Purple Sandpipers wheeling in over the waves at Halibut Point, Long-eared Owls roosting on a suburban Boston lawn, infamous concoctions of tuna fish and black bananas (completely inedible to the rest of the world), or the first utterance of “Woody? Hoody? Goody!” but the hour is late. Knowing that these are only my own experiences with Rudd and that we have days and years to share them, I find it time to say,  
“Rud, fare thee well and goodnight. You were so attentive to life’s burlings, and your ear was so good, I think that perhaps right now, even now, you are out there in the night, listening to the music of the stars.”

Andrew Magee

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

For **Harvey Allen's** mid-week sweep of the valley on **Wednesday, April 9**, new HBC field trip participants joined some old hands for Wilson's Snipe (East Hadley Road), over 200 Ring-necked Ducks (Hadley Cove), a flock of American Pipits and at least 40 Double-crested Cormorants seen from the bridge at Arcadia. They also watched gulls stealing food from not-terribly competent immature Bald Eagles. Every pond in the farm fields at the East Meadows had American Black Ducks and Mallards.

Mary Alice Wilson



**Betsy Higgins'** "More Migrants" trip took place on **Saturday, April 26**. A select group of birders walked through Look Park, Northampton, in steady rain. Our chief targets were early migrants, specifically waterthrushes. Despite the abundance of their signature resource, waterthrushes were conspicuously absent, or perhaps simply putting their feet up someplace dry. So were virtually all the other birds we might have expected. Our highlights were an indomitable Ruby-crowned Kinglet zipping about with crest raised in defiance of the dreary day, and a vocal Carolina Wren. We also strained through the patter of falling water to identify each of many trills emanating from the sodden heights of the White Pines. It's always tough to distinguish Pine Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco and a common sparrow in this type of habitat. Well, after comparing tone, frequency, speed and volume, we have come up with a surprisingly simple conclusion: **DON'T WORRY FOLKS, THEY'RE ALL CHIPPIES!!**

David Peake-Jones

### Coming Trips

*Please register with the trip leader(s) and check this schedule's information when a phone number is given. The Field Trip Chair (Michael Locher-413-585-5864, mlocher@yahoo.com) is always looking for new trip ideas and leaders.*

### Cost Sharing

*The club requests that all participants share costs with those who travel in the same car. Please discuss this when you start out and make sure everyone understands the system and is OK with it. The recommended system is as follows:*

- 1) *Estimate the total travel cost (in \$) of the trip using a rate of \$0.30 per mile. (Calculate number of miles traveled multiplied by three, then divide the result by ten).*
- 2) *Divide the total travel cost (calculated in step one) by the number of participants in the car, INCLUDING the car owner. This will be the amount owed by each passenger to the car owner for MILAGE.*
- 3) *Add a share of any tolls and parking fees paid, to arrive at the total contribution of each passenger.*

*We also request that someone volunteer or be co-opted to write a trip report for the newsletter, and forward it to the editor.*

### Wildwood Walks

Boston has Mt. Auburn, New York has Central Park, and we have our very own urban bird oasis at Wildwood Cemetery in Amherst. Migrating songbirds are drawn to this little island, and each May the club hosts morning bird walks, each led by a club member. This year walks are scheduled for the following:

**Tuesdays: May 6, 13, and 20**

**Thursdays: May 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 cemetery entrance off Strong St., Amherst. 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.

### Coming Trips (continued)

**Saturday, May 10. The Quabbin Reservoir: Spring migration.** All day. Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) will go in search of neotropical migrants at this regional hot spot. You must be a member of the Hampshire Bird Club to go on this trip. Register by calling Tom. Quabbin may not be open when the trip is scheduled.

**Wednesday, May 14. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley.** Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will look for warblers and other migrants. Meet at 7:00 a.m. on the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin's Farms. Call for details.

**Saturday, May 17. Mt. Auburn Cemetery.** All day. David Peake-Jones (413-529-9541) will lead birders into this historic cemetery near the Charles River. Anything can show up here, so be prepared for some unusual species. Call ahead for details.

**Saturday, May 24. Poor Man's Monhegan: Plum Island and vicinity.** All day. Bob Bieda (413-527-2623) and Al Richards (413-665-2761) take the rest of us to Massachusetts' own little gem. Past trips found Wilson's Phalarope, Piping Plover, Seaside Sparrow, Orchard Oriole, and Evening Grosbeak. Call to register.

#### **Announcing Cape May, 2003.**

**Danny Ziomek and Scott Sumner** will be leading the fall Cape May trip this year on **Columbus Day weekend (October 10-13)**. This trip fills up fast. This is an overnight trip and you must be a Hampshire Bird Club member to go. If you are interested in going this year, please contact Scott at 413 253 5983; or [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com)

#### **Field Trip Schedule Changes**

*Dates have been changed for two of the trips listed in the Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule published earlier this year. These are:*

**Bartholemew's Cobble** (previously scheduled Saturday, June 14) with Harvey Allen. The trip is rescheduled for the following day: **Sunday June 15**. The revised information will be published again in next month's newsletter.

**New South Beach, I** (previously scheduled for Saturday, July 26) with David Peake-Jones will be rescheduled for one week later: **Saturday, August 2**. The revised information will be included in coming reminders.

#### **HELP FITZGERALD LAKE!**

The **Broad Brook Coalition** needs **volunteers** to help eliminate invasive plants from the Fitzgerald Lake area in Northampton. Meet at the **North Farms Road** entrance at **9:00 a.m. on May 3**. Please bring shears, mattocks or any other equipment suitable for the digging of both woody and herbaceous weeds, especially multiflora roses. Gloves are a must. For more information, please contact Bob Zimmerman at 585 0405 or ([zimmermann@biochem.umass.edu](mailto:zimmermann@biochem.umass.edu))

#### **PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGES**

The club runs according to a series of By-Laws, first adopted in 1988, and variously amended since then. The Board is proposing several By-Law changes. Members have the opportunity to vote to approve or reject the proposed changes at the June program meeting (Monday, June 9 at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst).

There is a link from the HBC Homepage to the document, "Proposed By-Law Changes: June 2003," where the changes are described.

## ***ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS***

The **Annual General Meeting** of the Hampshire Bird Club, Incorporated, will take place on **Monday, May 12**, at the **Immanuel Lutheran Church: 867 North Pleasant St., Amherst, commencing at 7:30 p.m.** At this meeting, the Board of the HBC for 2003-2004 will be elected by the members present.

Leaving the Board at the end of the present year are Sally Hills, Jan Ortiz, Sally Venman, and Mary Alice Wilson. The Nominating Committee (Sue Emerson, Scott Sumner, Mary Alice Wilson) presents the following proposed slate of officers for 2003-2004. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

**President: Dennis McKenna**

**Program Chair and Vice President: Geoff LeBaron**

**Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson**

**Corresponding Secretary: Jan Howard**

**Treasurer: David Gross**

**Members-at-Large:**

**Lisa Bertoldi**

**Betsy Higgins**

**Mike Locher**

**Marcia Merithew**

**Leslie Scott**

**Bob Zimmerman**

## **LIBRARY**

HBC has a substantial library, 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. Why *buy* for that once-in-a-lifetime trip to the Rio Grande valley, when you could *borrow*? 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, if you give him a few days in advance. You can reach him at **(413) 549 3722**.

That is all for this month.

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

David Peake-Jones

Editor

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



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 19, No. 9

**June, 2003**

## PROGRAMS

**Monday, June 9** at Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant St., Amherst: 7:30 pm

### **Geoff LeBaron travels to the Galapagos Islands.**

Geoff LeBaron is our current program director. This month, we convinced Geoff to add himself to the distinguished group who have addressed us this year.

Geoff graduated from the University of Miami, Florida, and completed a Masters degree in Zoology at the University of Rhode Island. He spent five years on the staff at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, and currently works as the Christmas Bird Count Director for the National Audubon Society. In addition, he has conducted ornithological field work for the state Audubon societies of both New Hampshire and Rhode Island. He led whale- and seabird-watching trips on Stellwagen Bank for three seasons, and has logged thousands of hours surveying marine mammals from the air along the eastern coast of the United States. Geoff has led birding trips and natural history tours all over the world. Anyone who has enjoyed his company will attest to his remarkable teaching and leadership skills, restless intellect, and deep understanding of natural history. What finer speaker to delve into one of the world's biological treasures: the Galapagos Islands.

Bathed in cold water, but on the Equator 600 miles west of South America, the Galapagos Islands rightfully deserve their earlier name of the "Enchanted Isles." Both geology and biology in the raw, the Galapagos are one of Nature's best classrooms for the study of wildlife. Many species found nowhere else on Earth are readily accessible to both snorkelers and hikers, and the government of Ecuador has had the foresight to include both the islands and their surrounding marine ecosystems in a protected National Park. With no natural land-based mammalian predators, birds and other wildlife have no fear of humans, and seabirds often nest right in trails. Wildlife has the right of way there; humans are the controlled visitors. Join us for a brief taste of the wonders these fascinating islands have to offer.

## Coming Programs

This is the provisional schedule for next year, still in the formative stages.

**September 8, 2003.** Deb DeRosier: Three-Wattled Bellbirds in Costa Rica.

**October 20, 2003.** Tom Litwin: "The Harriman Expedition Revisited."

**November 10, 2003.** Kathleen "Betty" Anderson: "Ten Thousand Years in Sixty Minutes: New England's Changing Avifauna."

**December 8, 2003.** Members' Meeting.

**January 12, 2004.** Sam Fried on birding in Kansas

**February 9, 2004.** Jan Ortiz: "Baffin Island."

**March 8, 2004.** Dave King on a topic to be announced.

**April 19, 2004.** Peter Alden: "Invasive Alien Plants of New England and their Impacts on Birds."

**May 10, 2004.** To Be Announced.

**June 14, 2004.** To Be Announced.

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

**Saturday, May 10** proved to be one of the most delightful days of the Spring, befitting **Tom Gagnon's** annual trip to the east side of the **Quabbin** reservoir. As we assembled at headquarters, a variety of warblers crept through the trees along the water's edge. At the spillway, we had an early Blackpoll Warbler, great looks at Gnatcatchers, Black-and White, and several other species of warblers. Proceeding up the hill toward the orchard, we had wonderful morning-sun looks at Blackburnian, Black-throated Green, and yet more warblers, including a Cerulean, which sang coyly from a distance before appearing miraculously before our group, and a couple of English twitchers who had traveled half a world to see it. As the day progressed, we found twenty-one species of warblers, White-crowned Sparrows, Rough-winged Swallows, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch, and lots of Least Flycatchers. Quabbin also lived up to its reputation as one of the best places in Western Massachusetts to find Yellow-throated Vireo. In the final analysis, 92 species passed before our glasses before we set sail for home.



Despite a pessimistic forecast several days before the trip, **Saturday, May 17** dawned overcast and breezy but dry for the trip to **Mt Auburn** cemetery in Watertown. Our group of eleven began shortly after 7 AM and within moments of starting out on the Indian Ridge trail; we were enveloped in the peace and beauty of the cemetery. Song rang or whispered amidst the freshness of new foliage, and the timeless monuments to people who no longer have to commute to hear it. During the morning we had precious looks at a great selection of birds. Amongst the best were intimate encounters with Blackburnian, Wilson's, late Palm, and fourteen other species of warblers. Nashville Warblers were abundant. Northern Rough-winged Swallows flitted over Halcyon Lake, a Hermit Thrush finally bared its boldly speckled breast and red tail near the cemetery tower, and several Swainson's thrushes peered wide-eyed at us from amidst the gravestones. At Willow Pond, a Northern Waterthrush flirted coyly with the group as it crept along the edge of the pond. Towards the end of the morning, we finally tracked a perplexing, high-pitched song to its origin in the thrumming body of a Bay-breasted Warbler. We found another sporting in a birch tree, only feet away, which ended up being about the last bird of the visit.

We adjourned to the Concord Section of the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, anticipating close encounters with the signature Marsh Wrens of the sanctuary. Extraordinarily, there was not a Marsh Wren to be heard, owing perhaps to the extremely high water levels. After schooling ourselves to the subtle variations between flying Barn-, Bank-, Tree-, and Cliff Swallows, the last of our seventy-five species was a Sora tiptoeing through its territory in the cattails, apparently oblivious to us, several feet away.

David Peake-Jones



As I write this, a soft, steady rain is falling. Were it not that the trees outside are big and deciduous, rather than small and sprucey, and that my tapwater is clear rather than amber, I might easily think I was still on a small, mossy island off the coast of Maine. Well prepared for the predicted wet, 22 of us arrived in light rain on **Friday, May 23**, for the annual **Monhegan Island** trip. The rain did not lift (in fact, it was often heavier), till late Sunday morning. When the low had arrived days earlier, few species and individuals were trapped by the conditions. Those who remained were down and hidden, songless, frantically looking for food, and unresponsive both to pishing and tapes. Repressed and suppressed!

Despite this, we remained relentlessly cheerful, and found an amazing amount, considering the conditions, though the numbers through Sunday night were well below my previous lows for the past five years. Some of

us found relief in an evening of bird i.d. charades. Can you imagine what a pair of black leotards combined with an awakening cat would be? Or a stereotypical rough-rural character combined with a bird hauling itself ashore on legs situated way too far back on its body? Answers at reports's end.

By Sunday night, partial clearing augured possible change, if only more birds were pent up south of us, ready to come in overnight. Lo and behold, at daybreak, only hours before the ferry back to Reality, the obvious arrival area near Lobster Cove was hot! At least 16 new species had arrived. One apple tree had ten warblers in it, plus, at various times, A Philadelphia Vireo (rare in Spring migration), and an Arcadian Flycatcher. Some other pleasures of the weekend included two Black and White Warblers in a flower bed (one banded), a male Bay-breasted Warbler, a couple of Cape May Warblers, a few Swainson's Thrushes, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, an Iceland Gull, and Razorbills passing close inshore after the nor'-easter. Sadly, an apparently sick Gray Seal spent the better part of a day at Swim beach before vanishing. Some of us braved the rain to go to Eastern Egg Rock. En route we had a great look at a Sooty Shearwater plus the puffins. The total trip count eventually reached 109 species. (Editor's note: this surpasses, for the first time in recent memory, the tally of Poor Man's Monhegan, mainly 'cos they didn't go this year).

On top of all this birding, we had most gracious wait staff at the Trailing Yew and great food. Most of all, it was the truly cheerful and convivial spirit of our entire group that made one helluva difference. We worked hard, it paid off, we were rewarded! Bird charade answers: Black-legged Kittiwake and Red-necked Grebe. 'Nuff said.

Andrew Magee

### Coming Trips

**Saturday, August 2. New South Beach, I.** All day. David Peake-Jones (413-529-9541) will look for early shorebird migrants. Be prepared for a surf landing and a long walk over wet sand. Bring a lunch and plenty of water. Call **before July 20** to register.

**Saturday, August 23. New South Beach, II (The Original).** All day. Bob Bieda (413-527-2623) and Al Richards (413-665-2761) will hike the beach looking for late shorebird migrants. Last year we saw a Curlew Sandpiper and both Marbled- and Hudsonian Godwits. Dress for cool wet weather, and bring food. Be prepared to walk long distances in wet sand. Call to register.

### THE BOARD

At the Annual General Meeting on May 12, the following Board was elected to guide the club through the next year:

**President: Dennis McKenna**  
**Program Chair and Vice President: Geoff LeBaron**  
**Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson**  
**Corresponding Secretary: Jan Howard**  
**Treasurer: David Gross**

At-Large members:

**Lisa Bertoldi**  
**Betsy Higgins**  
**Mike Locher**  
**Marcia Merithew**  
**Leslie Scott**  
**Bob Zimmermann**

## **No, I'm The Oldest!!**

In the April issue, we reported that an albatross on Midway Island had become the oldest known wild bird, achieving a documented age of (at least) 51 years. Herman Staengle has graciously pointed out that: *"As far as the longevity of wild birds is concerned, there is one account of a female Royal Albatross, affectionately called Grandma, from the Taiaroa Head colony (Dunedin, NZ) who raised her last chick at age 62."*

Readers who are interested in exploring this further may go to <http://www.albatross.org.nz/colony.htm>

Thank you, Herman!

## **Yard Work**

My yard is a place of quiet contemplation. This is not because I have successfully cultivated a harmonious landscape with beds of sand raked daily in concentric patterns, between tinkling fountains and meticulously clipped bonsai trees. Nor is it because I have pursued, zombie-like, the various levels of lawn care enlightenment extolled on TV.

The contemplative state I so often find in the back lot occurs, quite simply, because I am woefully out of shape. To re-do a bed, or fix the edging around the peonies necessitates several shifts of rather pitiful scrabbling at the ground, interspersed with periods when I must pause to allow the hammering in my chest to subside, and for the rasping of my breath to stop scaring the neighbor children.

One of these peaceful interludes in late April was rudely interrupted by a commotion amongst a row of young trees I have along the northern edge of the yard. There was a frantic exodus of the resident Robins and several Starlings, amid furious and apparently distressed cries of what I think was one of the House Sparrows. As I turned ponderously to investigate, a large Sharp-shinned Hawk burst into view, talons outstretched, grasping for the sparrow, which desperately flew in a tight circle around one of the spruces to keep the tree between it and the pursuer. The two were backlit by the setting sun in one of those tableau's we create in our minds to make crises more comprehensible. The hawk, having missed, landed awkwardly on the ground, and peered with what seemed an imperious sense of entitlement at the tree between it and the sparrow. The tiny bird, incongruously, remained entirely motionless on the other side of the tree, its life depending entirely on three feet of Blue Spruce foliage. Time, as they say, stood still.

Driven perhaps by the terrifying proximity of the predator, the sparrow then made a dash across the yard to an arbor vitae in a hedgerow. The Sharpie, closing fast, simply crashed into the shrub by the same route. The hawk spilled out of the greenery and stooped to strike at something beneath her feet. In a moment, she vanished, clutching her meal, leaving me with my absurdly impractical new flower bed, the dying light in the yard, and with silence. No doubt most of the birds previously in the yard had vacated it, and no doubt birds fall instinctively mute at such a time, but for us all to be quiet for a bit seemed more an act of reverence than of good sense.

I walked to the hedgerow, expecting some kind of carnage. Feathers at the very least, and perhaps more. Initially, I was shocked to see nothing at all, and it was only after getting down on hands and knees amid last years fragrant needles, that I found what seemed to be the only sign of the events: a single drop of blood, still and perfect on a blade of grass. I don't even know whose it was.

It seems to me Nature holds her most terrifying and intimate moments away from us, as though we have abrogated the right to witness them. I think we earn a brief glimpse when we submit to the indignity of muddy knees, when we drift off to wonder about worm castings, when we forget what we were supposed to be doing, when we forget who we are supposed to be.

David Peake-Jones

### **Quabbin for the Joy of It**

Noted local photographer **Les Campbell** will be presenting “**Quabbin for the Joy of It**” on **July 26 at 7:30 P.M.** at the **1794 Meeting House in New Salem, MA**. Les presented a similar program for the HBC some years ago, and many members commented that they would like to see it again. To get to the Meeting House from Amherst, take Route 202 to New Salem, turn east at the flashing light by the New Salem General Store, and go 0.4 miles. The price of admission is \$8/\$6.

### **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. Ten percent discount for members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Remember, with local merchants, your dollar stays here!

### **Thank You From the Food Chair**

**Sally Venman** raises a rousing cheer of thanks to all of you who have baked, bought and brought the cookies, dips, fruit, cheese, candy – all the wonderful edibles that have added so much to the pleasure of attending bird club meetings.

Next year, in order to make birder's tummies even happier, Sally will be joined by **Helga Beattie** and **Joanne Parker**. Together, this trio will strive to make the HBC the best-fed bird club in the State, if not the nation.

### **Thank You to Everyone Else**

At the conclusion of the club year, it seems appropriate to attempt the Herculean task of appreciating those who have made the whole thing run for the last nine months. In no particular order, these folks include the Board, so ably led by Mary Alice Wilson, and also including Geoff LeBaron, David Gross, Sue Emerson, Jan Howard, Sally Hills, Mike Locher, Dennis McKenna, Jan Ortiz, Sally Venman, and Bob Zimmerman.

In addition, there are the various chairs, including Mike Locher, Anne Lombard, our retiring boutique proprietor Sue Fletcher, Henry Lappen, Jan Ortiz, Merry Cushing, and Sally Venman.

Finally, we must recognize the efforts of our sterling group of field trip leaders including Bob Bieda, Al Richards, Harvey Allen, Geoff LeBaron, Geoff LeBaron, Scott Surner, Danny Ziomek, Tom Gagnon, Shirley Hillorn, Shawn Smolen-Morton, Betsy Higgins, Andrew Magee, and David Peake-Jones.

People folded newsletters, moved chairs, wrote trip reports, and generally contributed in a myriad of ways both large and small. Here's to another successful year next year. Around late August, assuming I can rouse myself from the muggies of late summer, you may find another edition of this publication in the mailbox, or lurking on the Website. By that time, we will be ready to say goodbye to the birds of summer and begin again. Until then, I wish you all happy birding.

### **Reminder: By-Laws Changes**

Proposed changes to the By-Laws were distributed with the May edition. These will be presented to the membership for a vote prior to the program (June 9; 7:30 PM at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amherst).

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

David Peake-Jones

Editor

(413) 529 9541; [davidpj@the-spa.com](mailto:davidpj@the-spa.com)

**There is also a STOP PRESS section with some last minute stuff on the next page!! →→**

## STOP PRESS

(literally)

### The Guide is Here!!

The often –promised new **Bird-Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts** will be on sale at the June meeting for \$30. There will be a book signing at the **Hitchcock Center** on **Thursday, June 19 from 7:00 – 8:30 PM**, where it will also be on sale.

### Arcadia Birdathon

Many of us participated in the Arcadia birdathon this year. The Arcadia Team finished fourth in terms of numbers of species (109) out of twenty or so teams from throughout the state. Arcadia alone raised over **\$1300** for the **Grasslands Restoration Project** in the west meadows.

### Connecticut River Birding Trail

A series of maps showing birding locations along the river valley (source to sea) is being published. New Hampshire/Vermont is already done. Connecticut is in preparation. A contingent of birders in Massachusetts is organizing and will begin work on the Mass section this summer. If you would like to be part of the early discussion, please contact Harvey Allen (253 7963), Anne Lombard (586 7589; [aslombard@attbi.com](mailto:aslombard@attbi.com)), or Mary Alice Wilson ( 548 9078; [mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu](mailto:mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu))

### Winged Migration

A ground-breaking film called “**Winged Migration**” by Jacques Perrin is attracting international attention. It is fair to say that, if you are reading this, it is a MUST-SEE. The film-makers used cutting edge cinematographic techniques to capture birds in migration. The film will *definitely* be showing in **Pittsfield (The Little Cinema)** from **July 11 through July 17**. Screenings nightly at 8:00 PM; Monday matinee at 2 PM. Phone (413) 443 7171, or [www.berkshireremuseum.org](http://www.berkshireremuseum.org)

I have an unconfirmed report that it may show at Pleasant Street Theater, Northampton. sometime late in June.

You can find out more about the film, and preview it at [sonyclassics.com/wingedmigration/index\\_flash.html](http://sonyclassics.com/wingedmigration/index_flash.html), or from a multitude of related sites, available from your friendly neighborhood search engine.

### Harriman Expedition Revisited

The film of the Harriman Expedition Revisited (subject of our program in October), will show on **WGBY** television on **June 11, at 8PM**.



# **Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**

## **Amherst, Massachusetts**

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 20, No. 1

### **September, 2003**

#### **Enclosures with the September Newsletter:**

**Please see links from the Home Page for the following:**

- 1) Membership Form (2003-2004) pdf form, downloadable**
- 2) Release Form (2003-2004) (pdf version, downloadable)**
- 3) Fall Field Trip Schedule (2003): pdf version, downloadable)**
- 4) Rare Bird Alert (2003-2004) pdf version, downloadable)**
- 5) Directory of Hampshire Bird Club**
- 6)**

**In order to renew your membership we need to receive your Membership form and dues.  
To participate in field trips, we need to receive your Release Form.**

#### ***Note to the On-Line Newsletter Faithful!***

If you are reading this, the September edition of the newsletter on-line, it probably means you received the on-line version last year. You should receive a paper copy of this (September) newsletter. We do this to make sure everybody gets a hard copy of the membership form, and to allow everyone to select the version of the newsletter which best suits them. If you want to receive all the subsequent newsletters on-line, the first thing we would like to say to you is,

**Thanks!**

In choosing the on-line version of the newsletter you help us to keep costs down, not-to-mention making the job of newsletter distribution far less time-consuming. If you were happy with this version last year, please choose it again. It really helps!

To choose the electronic version of the newsletter, please choose "I would like to receive the electronic version of the newsletter only" in the top right-hand corner of the membership form.

**Again, Thanks!**

(Main body of the newsletter follows, pages 2-5)

A welcome change has brought dry, breezy conditions to both the valley, and the extreme southern tip of New South Beach on this late-August Saturday. A small but by no means inconsequential group of Hampshire Bird Club members alights from a motor launch onto the harsh glare of the beach and begins donning the tools of the trade. Before anyone is settled, Bieda flings up an arm as a burly, cinnamon shorebird lumbers across in front of us. It disappears over the enormous crowd of Brookline/ New Hampshire birders who preceded us by a few minutes. This Marbled Godwit is the first bird of the day. Another, alertly identified by Al Richards at the beach landing a couple of miles down the shore, will be the last bird of the day. In between, we wander through a landscape populated by shorebirds of every size and description. Periodically, something shakes the birds into the air like feathers from a quilt. Reassured by the familiar vastness of mud and water, they settle into new configurations on the sand, any one of which may reveal the rare gems that keep us coming back time after time.

After a long boat journey, you feel a residual swaying in your system. After a day on South Beach, you hear the crying of the terns.

So begins another migration season, and HBC swings into action once more. **Membership renewals are due by the end of September. Please send yours to us via the membership form, which may also be turned in at the September meeting.** Don't forget the release form to participate in field trips. For those who want to keep up with the latest sightings, the rare Bird Alert Signup is also enclosed. All these forms are available via the links from the HBC homepage. **See you on September 8, for the first program of the year** (see page 2).

## HBC NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ON-LINE

The club offers on-line versions of the newsletters (after this one), as an alternative to the "hard copy."

### **"How does that work?"**

The newsletter is posted on the HBC website. Participants receive an email notification, whereupon they can view and/or download the newsletter from the website at their leisure. You need to give us an email address on the membership form in order to get the on-line newsletter reminder.

### **"What's the point?"**

You can archive our publication electronically, without accumulating paper files. You reduce postage costs for HBC, which keeps dues down for all of us.

### **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 on the Website in PDF format. This means you will need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader software (version 5.0 or later) on your system. If you do not have it already, this software is available FREE via a link at the club Website.

### **How do I sign up?**

Please sign up in the upper right hand corner of the **Membership Form**.

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

We ask all members to decide each year how they want to receive the newsletter. Regardless of how you got the newsletter last year, please make your choice of how to receive the newsletter this year on this year's membership form

*Your bird club thanks you!*

## PROGRAMS

### This Month

**Monday, September 8** at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant St., Amherst: **7:30 pm**  
**Deb DeRosier and Victorino Molina Rojas** speak about **the Three-Wattled Bellbird**.

The Three-wattled Bellbird is endemic to Central America. Males have rich rusty-chestnut bodies, and a brilliant white cowl with three string-like wattles surrounding the bill. When breeding, they issue a resonating “bonk” up to 2000 times each day. These calls carry up to one kilometer, even in the dense cloud forest in which they breed. Bellbirds are important vectors for the seeds of a number of cloud forest species, and it hardly seems necessary or possible to describe their intrinsic value.

Arguably the most significant breeding population of about 500 Three-wattled Bellbirds exists in over 60, 000 acres of protected cloud forest in the Monteverde region of Costa Rica. However, the birds must leave this haven after breeding to congregate in the Pacific-slope forests closer to the coast, prior to their migration to coastal Nicaragua. On the Pacific slope, the birds find themselves in unprotected habitats, which are endangered by rapid human development driven, in large part, by growing ecotourism. *Fundacion Conservacionista Costaricensa* is working with the *Monteverde Institute* to actively acquire the forest patches required by bellbirds.

Deborah Hamilton DeRosier has an M.S from Duke University. She first came to the Monteverde region in the early 1990's to study the effect of vegetative windbreaks established by pastoralists on the local bird fauna. After completing this research, she joined a group studying the reproductive biology and migration of the Three-wattled Bellbird. She became sufficiently concerned for its future to co-found the *Costa Rica Conservation Foundation*, dedicated to bellbirds and their future.

Victorino Molina Rojas spent many years as a natural history guide in Costa Rica. He is a co-owner of the *Ranario* (or Frog Pond) in the Monteverde region, which is dedicated to the conservation of amphibians and the education of locals and visitors alike about them. He is a co-founder of *Fundacion Conservacionista Costaricensa*.

### Coming Up 2003

**October 20.** Tom Litwin: The Harriman Expedition Revisited.

**November 10.** Kathleen "Betty" Anderson: New England's Changing Avifauna.

**December 8.** Members' Meeting.

### 2004

**January 12.** Sam Fried: Kansas: Shorebirds and Prairie Chickens.

**February 9.** Jan Ortiz: Baffin Island.

**March 8.** Dave King: Golden-cheeked Warblers.

**April 19.** Peter Alden: Invasive Alien Plants of New England and their Impacts on Birds.

**May 10.** Don Kroodsmas (provisional)

**June 14.** Harvey Allen et al (provisional)

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

**Harvey Allen's** group on **June 11** walked the bike path in Amherst from the Station Road car-park to the Bridge over Hop Brook, including a diversion along the KC trail. They had a handy 47 species for the morning. Amongst the highlights were a wonderful look at a Bittern in flight, a Cooper's Hawk attacking a Mourning Dove, several sightings of Green Herons, Cedar Waxwings building a nest, and a Northern Flicker peering out of a nesting cavity in a tree.

Jan Howard



**Harvey Allen** shouldered the leadership saddle for the second time in a week to lead eleven birders to **Bartholomew's Cobble** in the extreme Southwestern part of the state on **June 15**. After stopping briefly at Russell, (and being rewarded with Yellow-throated Vireo and a family of Common Ravens), the group went on to the Cobble. The highlights here were two Black Vultures and 56 other species, including a nice selection of warblers.

Sally Hills



Amazingly, both weather and security cooperated to allow **Bob Bieda** and HBC birders to visit **Westover Air Force Base on June 21**. In fine, sunny weather, the group found four or five Upland Sandpipers, some doing flight displays, about one dozen Grasshopper Sparrows, several Eastern Meadowlarks, and some Bobolinks.

Bob Bieda



A compact group of five people went with **David Peake-Jones** to **New South Beach** on **Saturday, August 2** in search of early shorebird migrants. Despite heavy rain on the preceding days, steady drizzle during the ride down, and torrential rains elsewhere, we had hazy sunshine for the entire day, after a refreshing early shower. We found thirty species of birds, including good numbers of Red Knot, still with apricot breasts suggestive of their recent breeding plumage. There were also tons of Short-billed Dowitchers, a dozen or so Hudsonian Godwits, and the usual peeps. Common Terns were abundant, along with a few Least Terns. Strange and troubling was the complete absence of any adult Roseate Terns, though a better birder than any of us assured us that amongst the frustrating sub-adult terns there were at least a few Roseates. Perhaps our bird of the day was a beautiful adult Parasitic Jaeger, which cruised nonchalantly by at close range, fooling all but the alert Betsy Higgins into not giving it a second look.

David Peake-Jones



**Bob Bieda** and seven others ventured onto **New South Beach** again on **Saturday, August 23**. Two sightings of **Marbled Godwit** in flight bracketed the trip. In our journey up from the southern end of the beach, we found that, though the large groups of Knot and Dowitchers had vanished, they had been replaced by a diversity of other species, and hordes of terns. Quite early we encountered an adult **Forster's Tern**, shortly followed by a pale, tall shorebird dashing energetically about on the sand. This proved to be a **Wilson's Phalarope**. We found both a **Whimbrel** and another Marbled Godwit resting on the beach. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** made a brief and tantalizing appearance. There were several **Dunlin** trying to blend in with the medium-sized sandpipers. They were nevertheless given away by the striking belly patches remaining from the romantic days of Spring. A **Curlew Sandpiper** barely qualified for the trip list (most of us were not content with brief and inconclusive views of the bird in a crowd), but **White-rumped Sandpipers** were in good numbers, and quite amenable to comparison with the smaller peeps. At least two **Lesser Golden Plovers** rewarded those willing to pick through the numerous Black-bellies. Amongst the terns, we found a **Black Tern** still showing almost complete breeding plumage, and numerous Roseate Terns as well. By the time we boarded the boat again, we had tallied 21 shorebirds and felt quite fulfilled.

David Peake-Jones

## VOICE OF AUDUBON

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. **Seth Kellogg** maintains the report for Western Massachusetts. He tries to create a comprehensive picture of what is being seen in the region, meaning all reports are welcome. Seth asks that you include the numbers of birds seen in your reports, not just the species list. He can be reached by email at [skhawk@comcast.net](mailto:skhawk@comcast.net) or phone at **(413) 569 3335**. Alternatively, you may 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.

## LIBRARY

### We've got new books!

Are you going to NYC? NY State? the NH seacoast? Or sticking around here looking for a few good birds?

Well, your trusty library has the new bird finding guides you need. Check the following out from the Hitchcock Center, or at the upcoming meeting, or call Henry Lappen, your faithful librarian at 549-3722.

- *Birding the New Hampshire Seacoast*
- *Birding New York's Hudson- Mohawk Region*
- *Birding in Central and Western New York*
- *The NYC Audubon Guide to Finding Birds in the Metropolitan Area*
- *Birdwatching in Vermont*
- and our own *Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts*
- also: - *Animal Tracks of New England*
- *Butterflies of New England.*

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Don Kroodsma Honored!

**Don Kroodsma** has won the **Elliot Coues Award**, one of the most prestigious honors bestowed by the AOU.

### Volunteer Needed!

**The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** has a number of isolated national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries, and other offices that are far from good research libraries. The work that we conduct to conserve our nation's resources requires that our field biologists stay current on the literature within their respective fields, particularly journals. Our biologists have a difficult time traveling to libraries to maintain this scientific expertise. We are looking for a volunteer to help with this.

The process will probably occur something like this. A coordinator at the Fish and Wildlife Office will collect requests for articles from field biologists. Once per week, the coordinator would either email these requests to the volunteer, or the volunteer could pick them up directly from the office. The coordinator will provide the volunteer with a copy card and the list of article requests. The volunteer will then travel to a nearby library (probably UMASS), find the articles, and copy them. The volunteer will then return the copied articles to the coordinator, who will forward them to the field biologists. This process is open to negotiation, and can be tailored to fit the individual volunteer.

*If you are interested, please contact* **Scott Johnson, US Fish and Wildlife Service. Phone (413) 253 8557; email: [scott\\_Johnson@fws.gov](mailto:scott_Johnson@fws.gov)**

That's all for now!



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 20, No. 2

## October, 2003

October is growing thin, and November's coming home. We have entered the magical, bittersweet twilight of the growing season. The countryside is ablaze with the emblems of failing photosynthesis, and the migratory birds of the Americas are flooding into the funnel of Central America to escape the lean months in North America. If you haven't been out much yet, you may already have missed most of the warblers, but the weedy fields are now filled with sparrows of every hue, and the snow geese are making their way overhead to the mid-Atlantic coast. The swirling kettles of fair-weather broadwings have gone, but in their place, the patient watcher might catch a glimpse of some solitary Golden Eagle, Goshawk, or Peregrine bulling its way through the bleak air of approaching winter.

It is also not too late to establish your place as a contributing member in the Hampshire Bird Club. Please help us continue to offer the fine selection of programs and field trips, which have always been our trademark. Included in this edition are the Hampshire Bird Club *Field Trip Policy*, and the American Birding Association's *Guide to Birding Ethics*. **Please proceed beyond this page to the second one, if for no reason other than to read about this month's program.**

### A NOTE TO ON-LINE NEWSLETTER RECIPIENTS

There are all kinds of goodies enclosed with this edition. They are the following:

- 1) **The HBC Field Trip Policy**
- 2) **The ABA "Principles of Birding Ethics"**

You may link Field Trips section of the HBC Homepage. On the other hand, as a proficient user of information technology, you may wish to leave them dormant on the Website, knowing that, with the touch of a button, you may bring them up whenever you need them!

*And now, dear reader, comes the first tangible benefit of your decision to get the on-line version of this newsletter.* The editor neglected to include the **HBC Field Trip Guidelines** with the paper edition. Our hard copy readership will have to scrape by for another month without this document but, by the wonder of the Web, it is available to you!! You guessed it! It's in the Field Trip section of the Homepage.

### Email Address Changing?

I will be sending each on-line newsletter recipient a monthly email to notify you when the newsletter is up on the Website. Please notify the Membership Secretary (Sue Emerson; [wle33@aol.com](mailto:wle33@aol.com), 584 6736) if your email address is changing! Thank you!

## PROGRAMS

### This Month

**Monday, October 20 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant St., Amherst: 7:30 PM**  
**Tom Litwin recounts The Harriman Expedition Revisited**

One day in March 1899, Edward H. Harriman strode briskly into the office of C. Hart Merriam, chief of the U.S. Biological Survey. Without appointment or introduction, Harriman outlined a grand plan for an expedition along the coast of Alaska. Remarkably, within less than three months, the two men were ready to embark on an ambitious voyage of scientific discovery from Alaska's panhandle to the Bering Strait. The expedition became famous even before it departed. A crowd of onlookers cheered the departure of the vessel *George W. Elder* from Seattle on May 31, 1899. Newspapers all over the world featured the story on their front pages.

One hundred twenty-six passengers and crew traveled with Harriman and Merriam. The expedition boasted John Burroughs (the best selling nature writer of the day), and John Muir, the much-admired father of the American conservation movement. With them traveled an eminent assembly of nature artists, geologists, botanists, foresters and zoologists.

The expedition returned with over one hundred trunks of specimens, more than 5000 photographs and colored illustrations, and thirteen volumes of data that took twelve years to compile. The voyage produced a few, major new scientific discoveries - a previously unknown fiord and glacier, for example - but its value as an assessment and survey of an Alaskan environment in flux is unparalleled. Among the biological specimens collected were 8000 insects, 344 of which had been previously unknown to scientists. The collections included thousands of shellfish, birds and small mammals, and even a small number of large mammal specimens. This natural history treasure trove, much of it now at the Smithsonian Institution, retains great research value.

The expedition took place when Alaska's patina of pure coastal wilderness was beginning to tarnish from heavy use of its natural resources. In many instances, the expeditioners observed and catalogued the flora and fauna of a pristine, idealized wonderland. Yet the signs of civilization and progress were difficult to ignore. The Harriman Expedition chronicled an Alaska on the cusp of inevitable - and, in some instances, devastating - change to the environment. It provided a benchmark by which we can assess 100-years of change along the Alaskan Coast.

### **The Harriman Alaska Expedition Retraced.**

On July 22, 2001 over two dozen scientists, artists, and writers left Prince Rupert, British Columbia on the Harriman Expedition Retraced. The *Clipper Odyssey* followed the itinerary of E. H. Harriman's lavishly-outfitted *George W. Elder*, sailing through the Inside Passage, the Gulf of Alaska, the Aleutian Archipelago, and northward through the Bering Sea. Four weeks later, on August 20, the travelers made their final stop in Nome.

**Tom Litwin** directed the "Harriman Retraced Expedition" in 2001. He is the director of the Clark Science Center at Smith College in Northampton, MA and the founding director of the Smith College Science and Policy Program. His research interests include the relationships between bird populations and ecosystem health.

### Coming Up

**November 10, 2003. Kathleen Betty Anderson.** New England's Changing Avifauna.

**December 8, 2003. Members Meeting.**

**January 12, 2004. Sam Fried.** Kansas: Shorebirds and Prairie Chickens.

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

On an overcast, dank **Saturday, September 13**, Hampshire Bird Club walked beyond the end of Hockanum Road into the **East Meadows** in search of Fall Warblers. Despite tantalizing glimpses of the odd uncooperative warbler, we had a generally disappointing day. As we returned, somewhat dispirited, to the cars, some of the group caught varying glimpses of a graceful bird silhouetted against a gloomy, backlit understorey. A composite identification compiled by three different observers indicated that this was a **Connecticut Warbler**. Our exploration of the weedy edges of the pumpkin field of Hockanum failed to turn up anything other than a pair of enormous and terrifying dogs unleashed thoughtfully by a local canine owner. This trip epitomized Fall birding: character building, but soul-destroying!



**Harvey's mid-week group** on **September 17** began at Mitch's Marina, hoping for some good warblers. In keeping with the general tenor of this year, they had very little. However, with sun and northerly winds in the offing, the group headed for the Mountain House on Mt. Holyoke in search of hawks. The birds were slow in getting-going, but an immature Red-tailed Hawk harassed an adult, (apparently for food) at close range for over half an hour. It was not until 10:30 that the first Broad-winged Hawk hove into view on an early thermal. In the one and a half hours till noon, over three hundred broad-wings passed exhilaratingly overhead. (From nearby Mt Tom, with a broader view, over 1000 birds were tallied for the day).



**Harvey's mid-week group** on **October 8** stayed in Hadley searching for sparrows. A **Lincoln's** obliged. Other highlights included a **Woodcock** flushed at close range, an **Indigo Bunting**, and a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, which responded to a Barred Owl call in the uplands.



On **Sunday, October 5**, Hampshire Bird Club ventured once more into the mysterious and forbidden realm of **Prescott Peninsula**, on the western shore of the Quabbin, under the tutelage of **Tom Gagnon**. Next to a misty beaver pond, only yards inside the gate, we encountered a knot of warblers and vireos making their way through the backlit pines. While watching them, we noticed an otter making its sinuous way through a shallow reach of the marsh just upstream. A little further in we found two more otters, (much closer this time), hunting fish in a pristine pond. At an abandoned orchard we found a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** playing tag with a group of sassy Blue Jays, and **Purple Finches** feasting on heavily-coned White Pines. A **Scarlet Tanager**, **Blackpoll Warbler** and **Pileated Woodpecker** made their appearance as we serenaded the resident **Red-breasted Nuthatches** by an overgrown field.

A **Swamp Sparrow** peered at us from reddening blueberry foliage next to the sunlit expanse of Allen's Pond. At Egypt Cove we saw a distant **Bald Eagle**, migrating monarchs and accipiters, and a superb **Peregrine Falcon**, along with an **American Lady** (butterfly) sunning itself by the shore. Tom was interrupted before his graphic description of the rare **Dog Stinkhorn** fungus could offend any tender ears. Further into the patchwork of fields and old logging tracts, we came across a phalanx of **Eastern Towhees** shwinking away in a field of re-growing White Birch, punctuated by the flashes of late **Nashville and Magnolia Warblers**. Later, we stood amidst the trampled grass of a veritable moose highway, watching startled **Green-winged Teal** leaving (yet another) pristine pond.

Over lunch, those who did not succumb to the soporific sun and breeze took a look at a **Big Brown Bat** roosting under the eaves of the university research station.

In mid afternoon, as we approached the tip of the peninsula, the Gagnon Pontiac Vibe suddenly ceased to function with no warning. In the ensuing huddle of would-be mechanics, the (very) quiet voice of Andrea Wolf suggested we might want to check the fuses. This advice went unheard, and eventually we faced the prospect of leaving the Vibe to a night or two in Prescott and the nightmare of finding a tow. Fortunately, the idea of checking the fuses arose again (independently of it's first incarnation) and, lo and behold, a simple replacement

brought the car back to life. One of our last forays away from the roads was to an area of old borrow pits and poor sandy soils. Here Tom counted over four hundred **Nodding Ladies Tresses** (orchids).

### **Coming Trips**

**Saturday, October 18. Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area, Vermont.** All day. Al Richards leads a group to southern Lake Champlain, looking for one or two Ross's Geese among thousands of Snow Geese, and searching out other seasonal specialties. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register.

**Sunday, November 2. Berkshire Lakes. All day.** Tom Gagnon leads his annual trip to the lakes and ponds of the Berkshires looking for migrating waterfowl. Bring snacks, warm clothing, and a lunch. Meet Tom at the Super Stop and Shop on King St. (Routes 5 and 10) in Northampton at 6:15 a.m. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to register or for further information.

**Wednesday, November 12. Connecticut River Valley.** Half day. Harvey Allen will seek out migrants on his monthly sweep. Meet at 8 a.m. across the street from Atkins Farm, at the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

**Sunday, November 23. East Quabbin.** All day. Tom Gagnon ventures to the far side of the reservoir on this annual late fall trip. Bring snacks, warm clothes, and a lunch. The trip will be limited to 15 participants. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to reserve a place and make arrangements for meeting.

### **Great Things Take Time!**

The club commissioned **Andrew Magee** (long-time birder and wildlife artist) to throw together two **caricatures** of retiring Board members **Jan Ortiz and Scott Sumner**. However, those who have seen Andrew's art are aware that he simply cannot throw-together anything. In place of the intended sketches, Andrew is seeing to the birth of two new master works in the field of caricature. In spite of several all-nighters on Andrew's part, the two works were incomplete at the time of the September meeting. Jan and Scott were allowed brief glimpses of them, as reassurance of good faith, before they were whisked off for completion and framing. Good people of HBC, please rest assured that the completed works will well-and-truly blend with the best of the art in the Ortiz and Sumner households, and will be worth the wait! The framed articles will be on-show at the October meeting.

### **The Christmas Count Needs You!**

Now that you know the difference between a Fox Sparrow and one of those maddeningly-reddish Song Sparrows (or not!), here is an opportunity to contribute to one of the longest-running databases in ornithology. Birders all over the U.S., Canada, the Caribbean, Latin America and Pacific Islands contribute to an annual census of birds in their local areas, the results of which are collated internationally.

Last year's Northampton count recorded historical high numbers of Mute Swan, Cooper's Hawk, and Peregrine Falcon. In 2001 we recorded the first ever Nashville Warbler on a Northampton Christmas count.

This is perhaps the most communal birding activity. 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 the resolve to count everything in a scientific manner. The coordinators can hook you up with a team that needs members in your area. Both local counts culminate in a compilation session during which those still standing come together to pool results. The sense of camaraderie and shared purpose is palpable and rarely equaled in birding!

### **Mark These Dates!**

**Northampton Count:** Sunday, December 14.

**Quabbin Count:** To Be Announced.

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

### **Christmas Count 2: The Potluck!**

Those who truly understand life understand that the whole Christmas Count thing is merely a flimsy excuse for the Potluck! Why else send a bunch of normally-sedentary folks out stomping all over the landscape in the dead of winter, if not to develop an appetite for the best comestibles the bird club can dish up!

We need volunteers to prepare the traditional repast! Regardless of whether you plan to count, those who do will be eternally grateful for whatever you can offer. Please watch the newsletters if you want to contribute food or drink!

### **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. Contact her at **(413) 586 7509**, or [aslombard@comcast.com](mailto:aslombard@comcast.com)*

### **Breeding Terns in Massachusetts**

Following a serious oil spill in Buzzards Bay on April 27 this year, you may well have been concerned about the impact on the ecology of the region. From MassWildlife comes welcome news that, at least with respect to the terns breeding in coastal Massachusetts, the short-term effects appear to have been slight.

For the state, a total of 16, 087 pairs of Common Terns nested this year, which represents a modern high and up 17% from last year. Roseate Terns, whose breeding numbers decreased sharply last year, returned to around 2001 breeding levels with 1, 715 pairs. Least Terns remain the species of most concern in the state, with breeding pairs declining 8% to 2, 562 pairs this year, down from 3, 420 pairs in 2001.

Five pairs of Arctic Terns nested in the state this year (unchanged from 2002), and Black Skimmers returned to the state's breeding list after a year of absence (seven breeding pairs were documented).

### **Broad Brook Coalition Annual Meeting**

Date: **Sunday, November 2, 2003**

Place: **Browsing Room, Neilson Library, Smith College**

Time: **6:00 PM:** Conversation and Refreshments

**6:30 PM:** Business Meeting

**7:00 PM:** Special Presentation:

This year's featured speaker is **Tom Ricardi**, retired Environmental Police Major for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and founder of the Raptor Rehabilitation Center in Conway, Massachusetts. Tom has been instrumental in efforts to rehabilitate and release back into the wild injured eagles, hawks, owls, falcons, vultures and other raptors. He has also been a driving force in the captive breeding and population restoration of Bald Eagles, Barn Owls and other Birds of Prey. Tom will talk about these remarkable conservation successes, as well as bring in live raptors that are unable to be released to the wild, in what is sure to be an outstanding program. Don't miss this!!!! We're making it early in the evening so you can bring the kids.

A linguistics professor, addressing his class said, "There are numerous cultures in which a double negative is used to denote the positive. It is also common for a negative and a positive to be used in tandem to emphasize the negative. However, in no culture does a double positive connote a negative!"  
After an exquisite pause, a sarcastic response came from the back, "Yeah, right!"

### **Habitat Conservation in Massachusetts**

An important program titled "**Our Land: Going, Going, Gone**" will be presented by the **Springfield Naturalist Club** at 7:30pm on Wednesday, October 15th in the Fine Arts Museum Auditorium at the Quadrangle in Springfield. **Bob Wilber**, Director of Land Protection for Mass Audubon will show how crucial wildlife habitat in the Commonwealth can be conserved.

### **Preserving Open Space In Northampton**

Northampton residents may want to attend a public forum on **Wednesday, October 22, 2003** entitled "**Northampton 2020: Paradise Lost?**" The forum takes place at **JFK Middle School**, Bridge Road, Florence, **7:00-8:30 PM**, and is free and open to all. Sponsors include the Conservation Alliance of Northampton, the Northampton Conservation Commission, Broad Brook Coalition, Friends of Sawmill Hills, the Wildlife Subcommittee of the Conservation Commission, the Paradise City Forum and the Leeds Civic Association.

Denis Superczynski, Senior Planner for the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, is the featured speaker. Mr. Superczynski will outline some of the history of open space preservation in Northampton. He will also detail how the city will be affected if future residential development is allowed to reach its maximum capacity under current zoning regulations.

This is the first in a series of forums that will provide venues for citizens to get involved in shaping the future of Northampton. The second forum, on Wednesday, November 19, will highlight the Community Preservation Act.

## **HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS**

**Growing Sustainable Forests:** Scott Maslansky, Director of North Quabbin Woods Project  
**Sunday, Nov. 9, 1:00 -3:00 PM**

**Fall Birding Trips:** Scott Sumner, Bird Class Instructor

Though the class is underway, you may register for, and participate in, the individual trips listed below.

Members: \$25 per trip. Non-members: \$35 per trip. [Register](#)

**Saturday, Sept. 13:** 7 AM – noon. Birds of Prey & Other Migrants

**Saturday, Oct. 4:** 7 AM – noon. Sparrows and Late Warblers

**Saturday, Oct. 18:** 7 AM – noon. Quabbin Waterfowl

**Saturday, Nov. 8:** 6 AM. – 3PM. Berkshire Lakes Waterfowl.

**Wildlife Tracking Reflections:** Mark Elbroch, Naturalist & Author of "*Bird Track and Sign and Mammal Tracks and Sign: A Guide to North American Species.*"

**Tuesday, Oct. 28, 7:00-9:00 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](http://www.hitchcockcenter.org).*

### **Where Are They Now?**

Periodically, members drift to parts unknown without leaving a forwarding address. We'd like to at least make sure we do not lose them by accident. If you can provide an address for any of the following, please contact Sue Emerson (Membership Secretary: [wle33@aol.com](mailto:wle33@aol.com); (413) 584 6736). Thanks!

**Deandra Gordon**, formerly of McIntosh Drive, Amherst.

**Jonathon Gottsche and Shelley Parker**, formerly of Jacksonville, Florida

## ARCADIA PROGRAMS

**October 18:** 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

**Parker River/Plum Island Birding.** Fee.

**October 18:** 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**Fungi of Fall Forests.** Fee.

**October 26:** 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**Autumn at High Ledges** (held at High Ledges Wildlife Sanctuary). Fee

**November 2:** 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**Understanding and Mapping Natural Communities.** Fee

**November 8:** 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**West Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary** (held at West Mountain). Fee

**November 9:** 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

**Reading the Forested Landscape.** Fee

*For more details of these, and other programs go to [www.massaudubon.org](http://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**.*

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Bird Prints For Sale

Erstwhile club member Deborah Reiter has donated a series of beautifully framed bird prints by Arthur Singer to the club. These are approximately 8" x 11" and depict Northern Mockingbird, Cardinal, Bluebirds (Mountain and Eastern), American Robin, Eastern Meadowlark, Baltimore Oriole, and several game species including Ring-necked Pheasant. The club is offering these for sale at \$25 each. Proceeds will go to the purchase of books for the library. They will be at the October meeting for those who think they may be interested.

### New Members This Year: *WELCOME!*

**Barbara Alfange**, Hadley

**Jonathon Brooks**, Greenfield

**Barbara Drollette**, Whately

**Linda Harris**, Hadley

**Julie Johnson**, Amherst

**Peg Malia**, Belchertown

**Elizabeth Rock**, Hadley

**John Van de Graff and Marylee Bomboy**, Northampton

**Susan Benoit**, Indian Orchard

**Sylvia Cuomo**, Amherst

**Janice Gifford**, Pelham

**Margaret Holbrook**, Amherst

**David Mako**, South Deerfield

**Caitlin Robinson**, Amherst

**Larry Therrien**, Florence

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

David Peake-Jones

Editor

(413) 529 9541; [davidpj@the-spa.com](mailto:davidpj@the-spa.com)



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 20, No. 3

**November, 2003**

This month, as the piranha might have said to the buffalo, "All I can offer you is bare bones." October seems to have fled by, as have the birds (without my glasses on them). I remember seeing a million Swamp Sparrows at the Ibis Pool on some surreal morning in early October, and the same weather pattern that wowed the Cape May participants brought about 2000 accipiters and falcons to Lighthouse Point on the day I happened to be there. Other than that, all I can really say to you this month is "Hope you got out more than I did!"

Alert readers will have noticed the omission in the October edition. To my eternal shame, I forgot to include the HBC "Guidelines for (field trip) Participants" along with the Field Trip Policy. The waves of reproving mail washing over my desk have shown me the error of my ways. Mercy! Enough already! I have included both the Guidelines, and another copy of their sister document, the Field Trip Policy, with this edition. They are juxtaposed on either side of the same bit of paper, as nature intended. *Mea culpa!*

## PROGRAMS

### This Month

**Monday, November 10**

**Kathleen Anderson** describes **New England's Changing Avifauna**.

*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.*

Fifty thousand years ago the Massachusetts landscape was covered by ice a mile thick. About twelve thousand years ago the ice retreated, allowing plants, wildlife and humans to resume their activities. The land and its cover of vegetation and animals have been changing constantly ever since. Condensing this time period into sixty minutes is a challenge but, aided by slides, Kathleen Anderson will attempt to put what we see about us into a new perspective. We are all aware that our towns and our state have changed in the past few decades, but we tend to think in terms of a few human generations. Taking the long view has always intrigued Kathleen and she will help us skim across the centuries, learning as we go, to better understand what we see about us at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

**Kathleen Anderson's** lifelong interests, apart from her family, have involved birds and conservation. Her research activities have included 11 years of work on the equine encephalitis virus in birds and several banding expeditions to Belize in Central America and James Bay in Arctic Canada. She served for 15 years as the Founding Director of the Manomet Bird Observatory and currently chairs the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Kathleen is a Board member of the American Birding Association and has been actively involved with the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts, and a variety of other organizations and projects. All are concerned in one way or another with preserving birds and open space for all wildlife.

## Coming Up

**December 8, 2003.** Members Meeting.

**January 12, 2004.** Sam Fried. Kansas: Shorebirds and Prairie Chickens.

**February 9, 2004.** Don Kroodsmas. Bird by Bike.

## Past Programs

A link to the “*Harriman Expedition Revisited*” Website has been added to the HBC Website. You can find it by clicking on the “*Related Links*” section of the homepage at [www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org).

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

**Geoff LeBaron** and fourteen others picked their way along the balmy coast of **Rhode Island** on **September 20**. I cannot improve on Geoff’s highlight section, so here it is as he sent it!

1) *Napatree Point, Watch Hill, RI*. (34 American Oystercatchers, fantastic views of many different species of shorebirds, flyby Merlin and Peregrine, and JUST GETTING OUT THERE!)

2) *Richmond Turf Farms, Richmond, RI*. OK, it was hot, and they weren’t as cooperative as the shorebirds at Napatree, but we DID have a flock of 8 Baird’s Sandpipers.)

3) *Trustom Pond N.W.R. & Moonstone Beach, Matunuck, RI*. In addition to perhaps discovering why it’s called MOONstone beach, once we left the over-full beach parking lot we had a lovely walk through the thickets at Trustom Pond. Gray Catbirds were everywhere. White-eyed Vireo, Connecticut Warbler, and other migrants skulked about the shrubbery, and Pied-billed Grebes were everywhere around the shoreline of Trustom Pond.)

4) *Point Judith, Narragansett, RI*. We didn’t add any species of birds to the trip list, but the sunset was gorgeous—and the surfers crazy!

Other species of note amongst the total of 89 included American Wigeon and Green-winged Teal, Bonaparte’s Gull, Common- and Forster’s Terns, and a nice selection of warblers.



**Al Richards** took six people to the **Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area** on the eastern shores of Lake Champlain on **October 18**. This trip is one of the few we run that takes in a migratory spectacle rather than simply unusual species. The expected Snow Geese did not disappoint. Al estimates 6-7, 000 nestled amongst the rolling farmland of Western Vermont.

In addition to the Snow Geese, the group had Red-necked- and Pied-billed Grebes, ten species of ducks (including Long-tailed Duck), Wilson’s Snipe, Great Egrets (2) and Greater Yellowlegs. The group heard an Eastern Screech Owl at the pre-trip rendezvous.

### Coming Trips

**Wednesday, November 12. Connecticut River Valley**. Half day. Harvey Allen will seek out migrants on his monthly sweep. Meet at 8 a.m. across the street from Atkins Farm, at the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

**Sunday, November 23. East Quabbin**. All day. Tom Gagnon ventures to the far side of the reservoir on this annual late fall trip. Bring snacks, warm clothes, and a lunch. The trip will be limited to 15 participants. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to reserve a place and make arrangements for meeting.

**Friday, November 28. Turkey Trot: Cape Ann**. All day. Al Richards and Bob Bieda lead this annual trip to the north shore searching for wintering sea ducks, Purple Sandpipers, seabirds, and perhaps a Snowy Owl. Bring snacks and warm clothing. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register.

**Wednesday, December 10. Connecticut River Valley**. Half day. Harvey Allen prepares participants for the Christmas Bird Count by seeking out our seasonal residents. Meet at 8:30 a.m. across the street from Atkins Farm, at 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 103rd 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 70th year) will be held on **Sunday, December 14**. For information contact Jan Ortiz (413) 549-1768; [jtortiz@aol.com](mailto:jtortiz@aol.com) or Mary Alice Wilson (413) 548-9078; [mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu](mailto:mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu). A potluck supper will be held at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst the evening of the count.

The **Quabbin Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 27**. Contact Scott Sumner (413) 253-5999; [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com).

### Potluck!!

Now, at the risk of belaboring the point, the potluck is the real reason for doing this! We really need people to prepare dishes for the famished participants and to help with set-up. Please either call or email **Sue Emerson** -- 413-584-6736 or [wle33@aol.com](mailto:wle33@aol.com).

## MORE CHRISTMAS COUNTS

For some strange reason, (perhaps the paucity of other things for me to do) we have decided to publish the most comprehensive guide to the Christmas Counts of Massachusetts in the history of this publication. Please enjoy it!

### Date to be Determined

**Buzzards Bay:** Richard Harlow (508) 748-1297

**Cape Cod:** Blair Nikula (508) 432-6348; [odenews@odenews.net](mailto:odenews@odenews.net)

**Cobble Mountain:** Seth Kellogg (413) 569-3335; [skhawk@comcast.net](mailto:skhawk@comcast.net)

**Greenfield:** Mark Fairbrother (413) 367 2695; [bogelfin@crocker.com](mailto:bogelfin@crocker.com)

**Marshfield:** Warren Harrington [hwharrington@att.net](mailto:hwharrington@att.net) and David Clapp

**Mid-Cape Cod:** Peter Trimble (508) 477-3847; [merlin@capecod.net](mailto:merlin@capecod.net)

**Plymouth:** Trevor Lloyd-Evans (508) 224-6521; [tlloyd-evans@manomet.org](mailto:tlloyd-evans@manomet.org)

**Truro:** Tom Lipsky (978) 897-5429; [tlip@massed.net](mailto:tlip@massed.net)

### Sunday, December 14

**Central Berkshire:** Thomas Collins (413) 499-2799; [tcbirder@berkshire.rr.com](mailto:tcbirder@berkshire.rr.com)

**Greater Boston:** Robert Stymeist (617) 926-3603; [rstymeist@juno.com](mailto:rstymeist@juno.com)

**Groton - Oxbow N.W.R.:** Julie Lisk (978) 448-0147; [jalisk@earthlink.net](mailto:jalisk@earthlink.net) and Peter Alden (978) 369-5768

**Northampton:** Jan Ortiz (413) 549-1768; [jtortiz@aol.com](mailto:jtortiz@aol.com) and Mary Alice Wilson (413) 548-9078; [mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu](mailto:mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu)

**Westminster:** John Williams (978) 249-7831; [cwstudio@yahoo.com](mailto:cwstudio@yahoo.com)

### Tuesday, December 16

**Sturbridge:** Mark Lynch; [moa.lynch@verizon.net](mailto:moa.lynch@verizon.net)

## **Saturday, December 20**

**Andover:** Lou Wagner (978) 927-1122 x2705; [lwagner@massaudubon.org](mailto:lwagner@massaudubon.org)

**Athol:** David Small (978) 249-2094; [dhsmall@gis.net](mailto:dhsmall@gis.net)

**Millis:** Elissa Landre (508) 655-2296, x7301; [elandre@massaudubon.org](mailto:elandre@massaudubon.org)

**Newport County, RI - Westport, MA:** David Emerson (508) 822-7430; [emdav12345@aol.com](mailto:emdav12345@aol.com) and Robert Emerson (508) 541-8364; [remerson@duffysweeney.com](mailto:remerson@duffysweeney.com)

**Northern Berkshire:** Pamela Weatherbee (413) 458-3538; [pambweath@aol.com](mailto:pambweath@aol.com)

**Quincy:** Glenn d'Entremont (781) 344-5857; [gdentremont@juno.com](mailto:gdentremont@juno.com) and Patricia O'Neill (617) 696-0831

**Springfield:** George Kingston (413) 525-6742; [gcking@yahoo.com](mailto:gcking@yahoo.com)

**Stellwagen Bank:** Simon Perkins (781) 259-2148

**Worcester:** John Liller (508) 757-6377; [jliller@worcesteracademy.org](mailto:jliller@worcesteracademy.org)

## **Sunday, December 21**

**Cape Ann:** Barbara Volkle (508) 393-9251; [barb620@world.std.com](mailto:barb620@world.std.com)

## **Saturday, December 27**

**New Bedford:** Michael Boucher (508) 990-3910; [britmm@juno.com](mailto:britmm@juno.com)

**Quabbin:** Scott Turner [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com)

**Uxbridge:** Strickland Wheelock (508) 278-5885; [skwheelock@yahoo.com](mailto:skwheelock@yahoo.com)

## **Sunday, December 28**

**Martha's Vineyard:** Robert Culbert (508) 693-4908; [rculbert@dukescounty.org](mailto:rculbert@dukescounty.org)

**Newburyport:** Tom Young (603) 424-4512; [redscreechowl@earthlink.net](mailto:redscreechowl@earthlink.net)

**Taunton-Middleboro:** Russ Titus (781) 344-3516; [rct6@cornell.edu](mailto:rct6@cornell.edu)

## **Thursday, January 1**

**Southern Berkshire:** René Laubach (413) 637-0320; [rlaubach@massaudubon.org](mailto:rlaubach@massaudubon.org)

## **Friday, January 2**

**Tuckernuck:** Simon Perkins and Richard Veit (781) 259-2148 (tentative date)

## **Saturday, January 3**

**Nantucket:** Ken Blackshaw (508) 228-0709; [kenandcindy@copper.net](mailto:kenandcindy@copper.net) and Edie Ray (508) 228-1693; [ackbird@aol.com](mailto:ackbird@aol.com)

## **Sunday, January 4**

**Concord:** Hank Norwood (508) 358-7524 [hankn583@aol.com](mailto:hankn583@aol.com)

### **And now some well-earned levity!**

A linguistics professor, addressing his class said, "There are numerous cultures in which a double negative is used to denote the positive. It is also common for a negative and a positive to be used in tandem to emphasize the negative. However, in no culture does a double positive connote a negative!" After an exquisite pause, a sarcastic response came from the back, "Yeah, right!"

## 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 is looking for ideas on how we can contribute to the conservation of species in our area. Contact her at (413) 586 7509, or [aslombard@attbi.com](mailto:aslombard@attbi.com)*

## 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.

## HITCHCOCK CENTER PROGRAMS

### GROWING SUSTAINABLE FORESTS

Scott Maslansky, Director of North Quabbin Woods Project

Sunday, Nov. 9, 1:00 -3:00 p.m.

### FALL BIRDING TRIPS

Berkshire Lakes Waterfowl

Scott Sumner, Bird Class Instructor

Saturday, Nov. 8, 6 a.m. - 3 p.m. Fee.

### THE NON-TOURIST TOUR OF GREAT BRITAIN

Thelma Isaacs, Geologist, Writer and Photographer

Tuesday, Nov. 18, 7:00 p.m.

### BLIZZARDS and BRIE! A BENEFIT for the HITCHCOCK CENTER for the ENVIRONMENT

Friday, November 14, 2003, 6:30-9:30pm

The Garden House at Look Park, Northampton, MA

\$20 per person (includes hearty appetizers, light fare, desserts, & cash bar)

**NOR'EASTER!** For some, the word conjures up thoughts of shoveling heavy snow, travel problems, coastal erosion, flooding and fishing boats stuck in the harbor. For others, it means fun, days off from school, and skiing. Regardless of the impact on one's personal life, these very powerful and complex storms are an integral part of New England's climate and they have helped shape the lives of all New Englanders since the region was first inhabited. Come eat, drink and be merry while becoming an expert on New England weather. This Hitchcock Center event will be serving up sumptuous food, desserts, and drinks at the fabulous Garden House at Look Park, Northampton and will bring to you one of New England's leading experts on our ever-changing weather. Gregory Zielinski, State of Maine's Climatologist and author of the recently released New England Weather, New England Climate, will offer in-depth explanations and insights into New England's famous Nor'easters and other historical storms along with a flurry of stories, slides and lore about the vagaries of our climate.

*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](http://www.hitchcockcenter.org).*

## ARCADIA PROGRAMS

**West Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary:** Ron Wolanin

At West Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary

*Saturday, November 8: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM*

**Reading the Forested Landscape:** Tom Wessels

*Sunday, November 9: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM*

**Trees Without Leaves:** Pat Steinman

At Laughing Brook Sanctuary

*Saturday, November 15: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM*

**Winter Ecology:** John Green

*Saturday, December 6: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM*

## MISCELLANEOUS

### 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. Ten percent discount for members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Remember, with local merchants, your dollar stays here!

### Preliminary Piping Plover Breeding Success Data for 2003

From Mass Wildlife

MassWildlife has compiled preliminary figures for piping plovers with data gathered through the cooperation of nearly seventy biologists and beach managers from state and federal agencies, private conservation groups and local municipalities. A total of 510 pairs of Piping Plovers nested at over one hundred Massachusetts coastal beaches. This represents a 5% decline from the 538 breeding pairs tallied in 2002. "The population decline is likely due to the relatively poor reproductive success recorded in 2002, when statewide productivity averaged only 1.14 chicks fledged per pair," said Dr Scott Melvin, Senior Zoologist for MassWildlife. "This figure is considered too low to sustain the population. Productivity increased slightly in 2003 to about 1.2 chicks fledged per pair, but is still considered slightly below the minimum reproductive success needed to sustain Massachusetts's breeding population of Piping Plovers." Melvin reports that loss of eggs and unfledged chicks to a variety of avian and mammalian predators continues to be the primary factor limiting productivity. Sites with the largest number of breeding pairs in 2003 were Crane Beach in Ipswich (34 pairs), Sandy Neck in Barnstable (31 pairs), South Monomoy Island, Chatham (31 pairs) and South Beach, Chatham (30 pairs).

For more information, contact Dr. Scott Melvin at 508/792-7270x 150

### Welcome New Members!

Hope to see you on Monday night, or in the field soon!

**Caitlin Robinson**, Amherst, MA

**Larry Therrien**, Florence MA

Mercifully for you lot, that is it for this month!!

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

David Peake-Jones

Editor

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



## Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 20, No. 4

### December, 2003

This month, all members of the HBC are receiving a 'hard copy' of the current **Membership Directory** via the USPS. For obvious reasons, the club does not post the directory on the Web. When you receive your directory, please remember it contains confidential information, and must not be shared with anyone outside the club for any purpose!! Our advertising space is short this month, but please remember **Backyard Birds** for your holiday gift list. Thank you, and compliments of the season!

### 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 8**, 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 the "Christmas Counts" section below.

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 Up

**January 12, 2004. Sam Fried.** Kansas: Shorebirds and Prairie Chickens.

**February 9, 2004. Don Kroodsmma.** Bird by Bike.

**March 8, 2004. Dave King.** Golden-cheeked Warblers Wintering in Mexico.

### CHRISTMAS 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 70th year) will be held on **Sunday, December 14**. Contact Jan Ortiz (413) 549-1768 [jtortiz@aol.com](mailto:jtortiz@aol.com) or Mary Alice Wilson (413) 548-9078 [mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu](mailto:mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu).

The **Quabbin Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 27**. Contact Scott Sumner (413) 253-5999 [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com).

*For complete details of Christmas counts in Massachusetts, please refer to the November edition.*

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

On the weekend of **October 10-13**, HBC braved the New Jersey Turnpike to visit **Cape May with Scott Sumner and Danny Ziomek**. Brigantine (the Forsyth National Wildlife Refuge) was fuller than usual with water, but slightly disappointing with respect to the birds on offer. However, with over 500 **Northern Pintail** and several hundred **Snow Geese**, most of the complaining was muted. At Cape May itself, there was no shortage of excitement. Two cold fronts moved through in the course of the weekend, creating the conditions known to strand large numbers of migrants at the tip of the peninsula. On both occasions there were spectacular numbers of songbirds and hawks at Higbee Beach. The group estimated over 4000 Yellow-rumped Warblers, with a smattering of other warblers, including **Connecticut-**, **Tennessee-**, and **Prairie-**. Also trying to retreat back up the Cape after a night of migrational excess were at least 100 **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** and 600 **Northern Flickers**. Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks patrolled the fields and hedgerows looking for the unwary and exhausted. At the hawkwatch, the group found over 50 **Osprey**, several **Bald Eagles**, 20 **Northern Harriers**, 20 **Merlins** and 9 **Peregrine Falcons** amongst the signature myriads of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks. Stone Harbor has experienced both rampant development and sanding-in over recent years, and as a result is often described as a site of declining significance for both migratory shorebirds and birders. Nevertheless, the group found 20 species of shorebirds, including a **Long-billed Curlew**, 10 **Marbled Godwits**, and a **Lesser Black-backed Gull**. Some miscellaneous fun things indicative of the southerly clime included **Brown Pelican**, **Caspian Tern**, **Black Skimmer**, **Clay-colored Sparrow** and **Dickcissel**. The group found a total of **145 species** for the trip.

Scott Sumner, as told to DPJ



On Wednesday, **November 12**, **Harvey Allen** led folks on the monthly sweep of the **Connecticut River Valley**. It was a cool, cloudy day blessed with the usual, but no less welcome, winter residents on the trails. On East Hadley Road, **Horned Larks** played their high jinks over the dying fields, and **Wilson's Snipe** swirled magically overhead, seeming to disappear completely as soon as they alighted on *terra firma*. Mary Alice Wilson insists that this report not be attributed to her, but have you noticed how quickly she has abandoned the "Common" in "Snipe", and switched to the new name? Huh?

Unattributed



**Tom Gagnon** and companions birded the eastern side of the **Quabbin** on **November 23**. A Bald eagle overhead during the dawn rendezvous boded well. The reservoir was as smooth as a mill pond, allowing unparalleled views of the birds encountered, including 30 **Common Loons**, 18 **Horned Grebes**, 131 **Green-winged Teal**, 55 **Hooded Mergansers**, 7 **Fox Sparrows** (not on the water), and 2 **Evening Grosbeaks** (also decidedly dry-ish). As the sun set on a weary set of birders, 2 harriers, assorted loons, grebes and ducks combined with the landscape to bring a fitting close to **ONE OF THE BEST BIRDING DAYS EVER!**

That Wilson woman again, with help from Massbird



On **November 28**, with the worst of the tryptophan fully metabolized, and those late evening Thanksgiving drinks only a dull throbbing memory, a rag-tag group of five sallied eastward on the annual **Turkey Trot** to **Cape Ann**, under the expert tutelage of **Al Richards and Bob Bieda**. Undeterred by the morning drizzle, unpromising forecast, and preponderance of tails amongst the loose change in the Newburyport McDonalds, we proceeded to the shore at Rye, New Hampshire, in pursuit of four Cave Swallows reported the previous day. The wrack-line, which had sustained them only twenty-four hours earlier, was devoid of all but a few Purple Sandpipers, and the eaves of the ticky-tacky coastal cottages yielded nothing but the promise of those recent nomads. The fog rolling inexorably in from the ocean allowed us some fleeting glimpses of a Bonaparte's Gull and a Black-legged Kittiwake, and a good look at a Red-throated Loon. Chris from California was able to add the Long-tailed Ducks bobbing about in the waves at Hampton Beach to his life list. (continued over →)

### Turkey Trot (continued)

By the time we reached the pines of Salisbury Beach, they were completely shrouded in mist, and utterly devoid of birds. Just to make us realize everything is relative, when we got to Plum Island, it was misty and raining steadily. This didn't bother a large group of Dunlin near the bridge. Panning across a huge group of Black Ducks and Mallards at the Salt Pannes, we were rewarded by.....Black Ducks and Mallards! A pair of Gadwall just managed to increase the diversity of the pannes to three species. Further down the island, though frustrated by the absence of Snowy Owls, we found two Snow Buntings perched improbably on the peak of a maintenance shed. Under the eaves of the shed opposite, but decidedly exposed to the elements, and presumably neither happy nor well, was a rather torpid looking bat. From the tower at Hellcat we could see Snow Geese, several dozen Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, a pair of Lesser Scaup, and a Great Blue Heron. Facing a short afternoon, we adjourned to Rockport, stopping alongside the Joppa Airport to watch a very beautiful, pale **Rough-legged Hawk**. At Cathedral Rocks we were able to show Chris Harlequin Ducks cavorting in the froth, and got a fleeting glimpse of Red-necked Grebe. Several Gannets were amongst the roiling cloud of gulls accosting a local fishing boat. Down the street at Andrew's Point, we were able to get nice looks at both Surf-, and White-winged Scoters, and Harlequins. The daily species total is hereby suppressed in the interests of our pride. Still better than College football!!!

DPJ

### Coming Trips

*Please register with the trip leader(s) as early as possible. The Field Trip Chair (Michael Locher-413-585-5864, [mlocher@yahoo.com](mailto:mlocher@yahoo.com)) is always looking for new trip ideas and leaders. The Hampshire Bird Club recommends carpooling whenever possible, and suggests that all riders share equally the per-car cost of \$0.30 per mile, as well as tolls and parking. See also the "Field Trip Guidelines for Participants" (in the September newsletter or on the Website).*

**Wednesday, December 10. Connecticut River Valley.** Half day. Harvey Allen prepares participants for the Christmas Bird Count by seeking out our seasonal residents. Meet at 8:30 a.m. across the street from Atkins Farm, at the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

**Sunday, December 14. Northampton Christmas Count.**

**Saturday, December 27. Quabbin Christmas Count.**

*Please see the January edition for the Winter-Summer Field Trip schedule.*

### CHRISTMAS COUNT POTLUCK

The bird club would welcome volunteers to bring a dish, hot or cold, salad or dessert to the "pot luck" dinner. Also needed are several willing folks who would help set up the room at 3:30 pm and someone else to help take the room apart about six pm. Please contact Sue Emerson 584-6736, [wle33@aol.com](mailto:wle33@aol.com) or Helga Batty 253-2410 [hibeatty@aol.com](mailto:hibeatty@aol.com)

Editors Note: I don't know how many times this has to be said, but without the potluck it is going to be a long, cold day with no prospect of relief. How we gonna fall asleep through the compilation with no food in our bellies? It just doesn't bear thinking about. Please help Sue and Helga out. **PLEASE!, PLEASE!!**

**PLEASE!!!**

## 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**. She is looking for ideas on how we can contribute to the conservation of species in our area. Contact her at **(413) 586 7509**, or **aslombard@attbi.com***

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

### FALL BIRDING TRIPS

Scott Sumner, Bird Class Instructor

Saturday, Dec. 6, 5:30 a.m. - dusk; Cape Ann winter residents. Fee.

### SIMPLE GIFTMAKING SAMPLER

A Hitchcock Center and Fiber Arts Center Collaboration

Sunday, Dec. 7, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Fee.

### PUTTING VALUES INTO ACTION

Rowan Sherwood and Jim Merkel, Global Living Project

Sunday, Dec. 14, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Fee.

### FISHER AND PORCUPINE

Alan Emond, Naturalist, Farmer, Tracker

Sunday, Dec. 21, 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Includes field walk to look for porcupine and fisher sign. Fee.

*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**.*

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Not Just For Eatin'

In November, the National Wild Turkey Federation celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of wild turkey restoration efforts in Massachusetts. Lest we forget, the species was essentially extirpated in New England as a result of land clearance, and did not significantly recover even when the landscape became reforested. In 1973, 37 wild birds trapped in upstate New York were released in the Berkshires through the efforts of Jim Cardoza, who is still active in MassWildlife. Releases continued throughout the state till 1996. Needless to say, with the annual fall population estimated at 18-20, 000 birds, and with these stately birds seen regularly in our backyards, the species appears to be doing well.

### Welcome New Members

Hope to see you on Monday night, or in the field sometime soon!

**Barbara Alfange:** Leverett, MA

**David Hastings and Kim Iwamoto:** Belchertown, MA

**Linda Lloyd:** Gilbertville, MA

That's it for this month! DPJ