



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 20, No. 5

January, 2004

Looking back on the Northampton CBC, I am reminded of an experience which cast a (much needed) warm glow over my whole day this year. On the way to my area, I was discomforted by the realization that I had forgotten to speak with a home-owner through whose farmyard I had to walk to reach my first owling site. Despite the fact that the household have been absolutely supportive for several years, I was therefore somewhat torn as I tiptoed past the sleeping animals to the top of the hill.

No sooner had my amateurish Saw-whet whistles rung out tinnily over the bleak landscape, than a snarl came from the adjacent woods. I continued to play the tape, and heard another frustratingly iffy response. While rewinding the tape, I moved a few feet to the right. As I did so, a tiny, pale shape fluttered away from the intended touchdown site for my large and heavily-booted right foot. Resorting to a flashlight, I found a Saw-whet Owl blinking shyly at me from a low sapling. Feeling intrusive, I turned everything off, and sat to wait for any other responses. I couldn't resist tooting few more times toward the owl, and was astounded when it flew right back and took up its post on the ground, this time about six feet away. He or she probably did not share my absolute delight and sense of privilege. However, I like to think my owlish companion might at least have felt mildly amused by his oversized, lone impersonator, with its garish bright eye, and atrocious dialect.

PROGRAMS

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

Monday, January 12.

Sam Fried demystifies "Birding in Kansas."

Half of the shorebirds passing through North America on the way to their breeding grounds make a "refueling" stop at the vast marshes of central Kansas, making this improbable interior state the premier shorebirding spot in the USA for a week or two in early May each year. About 30 shorebird species are recorded, along with countless waterfowl, wading birds, passerines, and the raptors that follow them north, through Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, each of which has been recognized as a Wetland of International Importance. We'll also pay a visit to the southwest corner of Kansas, to witness the courtship displays of the Lesser Prairie-chicken on its lek as well as other prairie birds and migrants that can be found along the old Santa Fe Trail.

Sam Fried has published hundreds of photographs and many articles in field guides, books and magazines worldwide, including *National Audubon*, *Wildbird*, *Birder's World*, *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Birding*, and *Living Bird Quarterly*. He wrote several chapters in the new Insight Guides book on birding, published by *The Discovery Channel*. Sam's most recent articles were "Hawkwatches in Connecticut" (in *Birder's World*), and "Golf Courses and Conservation" (in *WildBird*).

Sam is the co-founder of "Flights of Fancy Adventures, Inc.," offering small-group, low-cost birding and natural history trips to North-, Central-, and South American destinations. The company offers the only combined birding/golfing tours in the world. He is also a Past-President of Hartford Audubon.

Coming Programs

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

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

April 19, 2004. Peter Alden. Invasive Plants of New England and their Impacts on Bird Populations.

FIELD TRIPS

Coming Trips

(See also the Winter-Late Summer trip list enclosed with this newsletter)

Saturday, January 10. North Shore. All Day. **Bob Bieda** will look for wintering sea ducks, alcids, stray pelagics, and other seasonal specialties along the balmy shoreline north of Boston. Call Bob (527 2633) for details and to register.

Connecticut Lakes, 2003

The headwaters of our beloved Connecticut River lie in the extreme northern tip of New Hampshire. This is a mysterious boreal wilderness replete with northern bird specialties, wildflowers, butterflies, and, of course, moose. Tom Gagnon and Scott Sumner will be co-leading a trip to the region over the weekend of Friday, June 18 to Sunday, June 20. Participants will stay in cabins on Back Lake, NH. The trip is limited to "about 15 people", and fills fast. Talk to Tom (tombwhawk@aol.com; 584 6353) or Scott (ssurner@aol.com; 253 5983) for further information. Please contact Tom to register.

CHRISTMAS COUNT RESULTS, 2003.

December 14 began dank and threatening, and made good on its word. Here are the official results of the somewhat-curtailed Northampton count. New record numbers are accompanied by a (*). The old record number and year are also shown.

Given the (brief, but unforgiving) periods of harsh weather earlier this winter, the species representation is rather spare. Note, for example, that Nashville Warbler returned to it's historic average occurrence of zero!* I suppose the highlights would be the record numbers of Bald Eagles, Great Horned Owls and Saw-whet Owls. Sue's Baltimore Oriole is a rarity at this time of year. The count week Long-eared Owl, though not technically countable, is also a great bird. The number of observers, especially owlers, was exceptional.

* Readers may note that, since we had a Nashville Warbler in 2001, the average occurrence is actually greater than zero, and that the bird was actually under-represented this year. To this I would reply that there are lies, damned lies, and then there are statistics.

Species	No.	Record	Year	Species	No.	Record	Year
Common Loon	1			Northern Pintail	2		
Great Blue Heron	5			Common Goldeneye	11		
Snow Goose	0			Hooded Merganser	5		
Canada Goose	2120			Common Merganser	82		
Mute Swan	5			Bald Eagle (adult)	6*	8 all age	2002
Wood Duck	2			Bald Eagle (imm.)	5		
American Wigeon	1			Northern Harrier (adult)	2		
American Black Duck	155			Northern Harrier (imm.)	0		
Mallard	897			Sharp-shinned Hawk	8		

Species	No.	Record	Year	Species	No.	Record	Year
Cooper's Hawk	7			Carolina Wren	17		
Northern Goshawk	1			Winter Wren	0		
Red-shouldered Hawk	2*	1	(var.)	Golden-crowned Kinglet	127		
Red-tailed Hawk	104			Ruby-crowned Kinglet	0		
Rough-legged Hawk	3			Eastern Bluebird	129		
American Kestrel	1			Hermit Thrush	4		
Merlin	0			American Robin	711		
Peregrine Falcon	2			Gray Catbird	1		
Ring-necked Pheasant	4			Northern Mockingbird	100		
Ruffed Grouse	5			European Starling	4549		
Wild Turkey	103			Cedar Waxwing	918		
Wilson's Snipe	0			Nashville Warbler	0		
Ring-billed Gull	266			Yellow-rumped Warbler	1		
Herring Gull	244			Eastern Towhee	1		
Iceland Gull	0			American Tree Sparrow	1776		
Great Black-backed Gull	171			Chipping Sparrow	1		
Rock Dove	1551			Field Sparrow	2		
Mourning Dove	1457			Savannah Sparrow	13		
Eastern Screech Owl	53			Fox Sparrow	1		
Great Horned Owl	48*	38	1998	Song Sparrow	330		
Barred Owl	5			Swamp Sparrow	4		
Long-eared Owl	CW			White-throated Sparrow	506		
Northern Saw-whet Owl	5*	4	1998	White-crowned Sparrow	6		
Belted Kingfisher	15			Dark-eyed Junco	1948		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	84	67	2002	Oregon Junco	1		
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1			Lapland Longspur	0		
Downy Woodpecker	326			Snow Bunting	34		
Hairy Woodpecker	81			Northern Cardinal	528		
Northern Flicker	35			Red-winged Blackbird	94		
Pileated Woodpecker	17			Eastern Meadowlark	0		
Northern Shrike	3			Rusty Blackbird	2		
Blue Jay	1288			Common Grackle	0		
American Crow	3606			Brown-headed Cowbird	0		
Fish Crow	0			Baltimore Oriole	1		
Common Raven	11*	11	1991	Purple Finch	7		
Horned Lark	391			House Finch	471		
Black-capped Chickadee	1308			White-winged Crossbill	0		
Tufted Titmouse	397			Common Redpoll	266		
Red-breasted Nuthatch	67			Pine Siskin	3		
White-breasted Nuthatch	304			American Goldfinch	1470		
Brown Creeper	22			Evening Grosbeak	11		
				House Sparrow	1054		

Northampton CBC Potluck Thanks!!

Grateful thanks to all of you who willingly cooked a "pot of food" for the Northampton Bird count "pot luck" dinner and even though all we hungry souls never had a chance to taste it. It sure was appreciated by us. Sue and Helga

LIBRARY

FREE BIRD FINDING SERVICE

The HBC has an information exchange of person-to-person advice 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 traveling to:

Northeastern Vermont
Monhegan Island
Connecticut Lakes
Cape May
South Texas

Southern California
Baffin Island
Veracruz, Mexico
Queensland, Australia
Java

Or Southeastern Arizona,
just call me and I will hook you up with the friendly club member who has birded there!

Henry (your trusted librarian): 549 3722

NEW BOOKS

The bird club has some money for new library books. Any ideas on how to spend it? No, we won't buy you a new Swarovski scope. Call Henry with book ideas.

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*

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Winter Raptors at Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary, Marshfield. Dan Furbish
January 10: 2:00 – 6:00 PM

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

GLEANINGS FROM THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

Gullible Parents

French researchers have found that Black-headed Gull chicks cooperated with one another to increase the effectiveness of their begging. Nicolas Mathevon and Isabelle Charrier noted that the frequency of begging decreased as the number of chicks in Black-headed Gull nests rose from one to a maximum of three. The birds instead, coordinated their efforts in intense bursts to increase the pressure on the parents to regurgitate food. Key to this strategy, is the fact that most gulls deposit regurgitated food on the floor of the nest, allowing each nestling an opportunity to take advantage of it. In birds like warblers, by contrast, nestlings are fed individually, meaning there is no individual advantage in ganging up on mum and dad. It would be interesting to see what would happen in families where fast food is purchased for each individual child, as opposed to those where a bag of chips is simply slung into the back seat.

Coevolution

“Coevolution” is the theoretical concept that, when two species exist in close relationships such as parasitism, or when one relies exclusively on the other as a source of food, they should evolve in what amounts to an arms race. Evolutionary theory notwithstanding, actual cases of coevolution have been difficult to substantiate.

From southern Australia and the journal *Nature* in September of last year comes some striking evidence of animal behavior changing as coevolutionary theory predicts. Several species of Australian cuckoos are nest parasites, much like the Brown-headed Cowbird. The Horsefield’s Bronze Cuckoo’s favored victim is the Superb Fairy Wren, a jewel-like bird which nests in Australian forests. The cuckoo observes a potential victim carefully, and inserts a single egg into the nest just after the wren lays her clutch. As is typical with nest parasites, the cuckoo egg hatches before the wren eggs do, and the cuckoo nestling pushes all other eggs and nestlings out of the nest. Like most victims of nest parasitism, the wrens are notoriously unable to identify alien nestlings, and typically feed them as they would their own chicks.

Rebecca Kilner of Cambridge University has been monitoring these insidious proceedings for a number of years, and has found exciting changes in behavior. Firstly, the wrens appear to be increasingly able to identify the foreign chicks, and now abandon 40% of parasitized nests, before trying again. She has found that the cuckoo chicks, perhaps in response to this heightened security, are becoming better audio-mimics of wren chicks, and appear to be able to override parental reluctance to feed them, with persistent and strident calls. In natural arms races, as with human ones, there is no guarantee that things will remain in balance.

Source: Nature News Service: MacMillan Magazines, 2003. www.nature.com

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS !!

Mark Allaire: Cambridge, MA

Cassidy and family Ruge: Belchertown, MA

Blanche Orrell

Blanche Orrell, a founding member of HBC and one of the authors of the 1984 book, *Birds and Their Habitats in Amherst, Massachusetts*, has been unwell since early December. For a number of years Blanche coordinated HBC's Rare Bird Alert telephone tree. Cards can be sent to her at her home address, available in the club membership directory.

Please remember to get the Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule, which can be reached via the “Field Trips” link on the Home Page.

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

David Peake-Jones

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Volume 20, No. 6

February, 2004

When I heard about the Varied Thrush at Quabbin Tower, and had a day off, I just had to take a look. I got to the tower about 9:45 a.m. to find Harvey and a few others already on station. For the next hour or so, we scanned the edges of the parking lot and the bleak forest for the faintest trace of orange, and watched a growing crowd of birders pull in. I wandered off to the tower itself, surmising that the bird is always where you ain't. This turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. It showed up in the parking lot while I was gone, and promptly left again!

Finally, around noon, while contemplating imminent frostbite, I heard a soft "Chup" that I knew I didn't know. Suddenly there was a flash of orange on the edge of the lot. It was that magical moment when the thing went from an idea to a real bird, impossibly here from the west coast, and somehow staying alive against daunting odds. The bird had gorgeous pastel gray shades on the back and lower flanks, as well as gray scalloping on the upper flanks. Its belly and throat were a delicate orange, divided by a slightly faded dark breast band. The subdued upper parts were highlighted by multiple orange wing bars and primary edges, as well as a striking orange supercilium, trailing away down to the shoulder. It was just a male Varied Thrush, like thousands of others doing what they should, where they should, but I am glad it came to visit us, and I wish it well through the months ahead.

PROGRAMS

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

Monday, February 9 at 7:30 p.m.: Don Kroodsma on Birding by Bike

Someday I'd like to..... For me, "someday" arrived during the summer of 2003, when my son and I biked the TransAm trail from coast to coast. We covered ten states: (Virginia, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and Oregon) between early May and mid-July. We were on the road for 70 days and covered 4500 miles (nearly 4,000,000 turns of the wheel). And why? To hear this continent sing, to listen to the birds tell their stories every inch of the way (except when it was raining, or hailing, or blowing big time). From the Atlantic to the Pacific, we listened to stories by grebes and geese and owls and goatsuckers and flycatchers and wrens and sparrows and vireos and thrushes and blackbirds and so many more. Come listen to some of their stories, and renew your commitment to make your someday happen sooner rather than later.

Don Kroodsma

Don Kroodsma was a chemistry major at Hope College, and discovered birds during his last semester there. Don attended the University of Michigan field station the following summer, taking "baby birds" and "big birds" courses simultaneously from the famed Sewall Pettingill. Thirty-five years ago, while in graduate school at Oregon State University, a singing wren in his backyard got Don started on what would be a life-long passion: listening to birds. Until recently, he was a professor in the biology department at UMass, but he's now out to pasture, listening full time.

Coming Up

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

April 19, 2004. Peter Alden. Invasive Plants of New England and their Impacts on Bird Populations.

May 10, 2004. Jan Ortiz. Baffin Island.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

An unusual embarrassment of riches for the **winter finches** trip organized by **Shirley Hillborn** on **January 17**. We have two trip reports! They agree on some things....The weather was a balmy 10 degrees at the start and at least 20 by mid-day. This qualifies as “sunny and windless” (according to Mary Alice), or it was “cold and windy” (according to Sue). You, dear reader, decide which interpretation you prefer!!

Anyway, we were invited to a wonderful feeder in Northfield where we had excellent looks at a mixed flock of Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins, and American Goldfinch, and enjoyed the usual winter suspects. In Royalston saw more of these hardy types, this time with lots of Tree Sparrows and 4 (I think no more) **Evening Grosbeaks**, (one male and three females). And we got **HOT CHOCOLATE** in the middle of all this. What else could you want?

Sue Emerson and Mary Alice Wilson. Editorial mischief by dpj



Seven hardy souls, including **Harvey Allen**, swept the **Valley** on **Wednesday, January 21**. We braved the East Meadows first in “almost-balmy” weather. There were no field birds or hawks, but a great look at shrub birds at the southwest corner of the meadows, including one male Northern Cardinal that was just getting around to getting its adult/red feathers. The Oxbow was frozen and desolate, but Geoff LeBaron’s feeder in Williamsburg had the usual winter mix plus **Common Redpolls** and a **Pine Siskin**.

Mary Alice Wilson



On **Saturday, January 24**, three of us made our way with **Geoff LeBaron** to Westerly to begin a “boys own” trip along the coast of **Rhode Island**. Passing through Norwich, a third-year Bald Eagle promised well for the day. The weather was brutally cold, with wind-chills close to zero, especially on some of the more exposed beach settings. The birds seemed to understand the insanity of being active in such circumstances better than we did: amongst the more incredible absentees from the trip list was the Blue Jay!

During brief forays on the beaches we did find some of the expected winter ducks in good numbers, especially Common Loons. We found Hooded-, Common-, and Red-breasted Mergansers, and all three species of Scoters. Brant picked their way along some of the ice-sheathed rocky beaches, and there were one or two interesting species such as **Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Ring-necked Duck** in the few areas of open water still available. In thickets such as Ninigret, we found Yellow-rumped Warblers and Hermit Thrushes eking out an existence, and one hardy Carolina Wren responded to pishing in a brambly thicket. Toward late afternoon we came across several superb male **Northern Harriers** coursing over the corn fields, and these birds put on another impressive show at Sachuest Point as sundown approached. The anticipated Purple Sandpipers and Harlequin Ducks on the rocks at the point did not disappoint. Despite the severe loss of prime hunting habitat on the margins of the Sachuest Point reservation, as darkness fell, we were treated to two **Short-eared Owls** hunting over the grasslands right around the visitors center.

Footnote. There is a physiological phenomenon observed in gulls and probably other birds who spend long periods of time dangling their legs in cold water, or standing on ice. Circulation is drastically reduced to the extremities in order to preserve core temperature. Perhaps our bodies were similarly depriving our brains of much needed circulation, or perhaps the pressure of multiple layers around the neck was in play - who knows? But for whatever reasons, this trip featured some of the most tasteless jokes seen since Al Richards in his hey-day. Regretably, owing to my shameless use of the editorial prerogative, none of the conversation from the car during the course of the day shall be revealed in these pages.

Coming Trips

Saturday, February 7. Plymouth and Falmouth. All day. Al Richards leads this annual trip to Southeastern Massachusetts. Past highlights have included Yellow-breasted Chat, Redhead Duck, Rough-legged Duck, and both Long- and Short-eared Owls. Dress warmly. Call Al (413-665-2761) for the time and place to meet. (E)

Wednesday, February 18. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will go where the birds are. Meet at 8:00 a.m. on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin's Farm. Call for more information as the date approaches. (E)

Saturday, February 28. 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. (E)

Monhegan Island

The annual club trip to Monhegan Island, is scheduled for **Friday, May 28 to Monday, May 31** (Memorial Day weekend). 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.

The cost will be in the vicinity of \$300, including lodging, breakfasts and dinners on the island, plus shared mileage costs if you carpool. A \$50.00 deposit is needed to save a spot. Contact David Peake-Jones at (413) 529 9541 (phone) or davidpj@the-spa.com as soon as possible to register or for more information.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Northampton Christmas Count Corrections (January 25, 2004)

Birds:

Red-shouldered Hawks = 0 (not 2)
Red-tailed Hawks = 106 (not 104)
Total number of species = 83 (not 84)

Participants

Number of participants daytime = 98 (not 96)
Number of owlers = 33 (not 34)
Number of feeder watchers = 14 (not 15)
Total participant count = 117 (not 116)

An Owler's Tale

Whilst Dan Z. and I were whistling for Screech we got one to reply. Initially it was closer to Dan, but he then saw it fly towards me, about 50' from him, and he said, "Coming your way."

I continued to whistle and the owl did likewise. I was facing where I suspected it was and guessed it was in a thicket 30-40 feet away. All of a sudden I was under feathered assault as the bird was gliding quickly towards me at head height! I dropped like a sack of potatoes and narrowly escaped a certain death!! OK, the death bit might be a bit dramatic, but it makes for a better recounting of the event!! Danny was on the ground, too...laughing.

Tom Clark

QUABBIN COUNT (Scott Sumner)

The **Quabbin Christmas Bird Count** tallied 70 species under absolutely great weather conditions. The count added two new species: **American Wigeon & Hoary Redpoll**. The Hoary Redpoll was seen in a small flock of Common Redpolls around the Gold Street area of Belchertown. The birds were not going to a feeding station and departed soon after the observers confirmed the I.D.

An adult Golden Eagle was seen by four different parties along the east side of the reservoir, between roughly 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. The number of Common Ravens reached a new high of 56. Thirty-seven (37) of the 56 were reported from Graves Landing (Gate 40). Below are the rest of the totals.

Common Loon 7	Horned Lark 16
Horned Grebe 35	Black-capped Chickadee 731
Great Blue Heron 1	Tufted Titmouse 96
Canada Goose 13	Red-breasted Nuthatch 285
American Wigeon 1	White-breasted Nuthatch 190
Black Duck 242	Brown Creeper 36
Mallard 301	Carolina Wren 3
Ring-necked Duck 9	Winter Wren 1
Bufflehead 2	Golden-crowned Kinglet 111
Common Goldeneye 62	Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2
Hooded Merganser 43	Eastern Bluebird 13
Common Merganser 324	American Robin 190
Bald Eagle 27 (13 Ad/14 Imm.)	Gray Catbird 1
Northern Harrier 1 (Male)	Northern Mockingbird 8
Sharp-shinned Hawk 1	European Starling 377
Cooper's Hawk 2	Cedar Waxwing 136
Northern Goshawk 1	Tree Sparrow 88
Red-tailed Hawk 13	Song Sparrow 11
Golden Eagle 1	White-throated Sparrow 51
Ruffed Grouse 26	Dark-eyed Junco 582
Wild Turkey 20	Snow Bunting 1
Ring-billed Gull 2,500-coming into roost (gate 5)	Northern Cardinal 39
Herring Gull 500 (as above)	Purple Finch 10
Great Black-backed Gull 20	House Finch 121
Rock Dove 142	Common Redpoll 39
Mourning Dove 135	Hoary Redpoll 1
Great Horned Owl 9	Pine Siskin 1
Barred Owl 8	American Goldfinch 283
Long-eared Owl 1	Evening Grosbeak 6
Northern Saw-whet Owl 10	House Sparrow 561
Belted Kingfisher 1	
Red-bellied Woodpecker 8	
Downy Woodpecker 74	
Hairy Woodpecker 20	
Northern Flicker 3	
Pileated Woodpecker 19	
Northern Shrike 1	
Blue Jay 718	
American Crow 125	
Common Raven 56	

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

Sustainable Agriculture in Cuba, Annie Cheatham & Margaret Christie, Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)

Sunday, Feb. 8, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Industry and the Environment in Holyoke, Jeffrey Hayden, Holyoke Office of Economic & Industrial Development

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 7:00 p.m.

Held at Holyoke Heritage State Park, call 534-1723

Recreational Land Users Unite! Panel: Bill Labich, Leigh Youngblood, Chris Ryan, and others TBA

Tuesday, Feb. 24, 7:00 p.m.

Held at Northfield Mountain Recreation Area, call 800-859-2960

Farmland Preservation in the Vally: Who Benefits?, Bob Rakoff, Hampshire College

Tuesday, March 9, 7:00 p.m.

Held at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, call 256-6006

SPRING BIRDING CLASS, Scott Surner, Birder

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

March 3, 31, April 7, 14, 28, May 5, 12, 19

Field Trips (10): Saturdays, 7:00 a.m. - Noon

March 6, March 28 - June 5 (except May 29)

Scott Surner will offer the Hitchcock Center's 28th year of birding classes. He skillfully continues the tradition by bringing his expertise and enthusiasm for birding. His knowledge will aid the experienced birder as much as the beginner as he emphasizes identification and distribution. The evening slides will highlight the differences between families of birds and their characteristics. The majority of the field trips will be half day trips with four all day trips to Plum Island (March 6 & May 22), Mt Greylock (June 5), and Mt. Auburn Cemetery (May 8).

This class is limited to 20 participants so registration is required.

Members: \$150; Non-members: \$180 [Register](#)

Salamander Tunnel Maintenance Day

Sunday, March 7, 1:00 p.m. - until we're done

Big Trees, Bob Leverett, Co-founder and Executive Director of Eastern Native Tree Society (ENTS) and of Friends of Mohawk Trail State Forest
Saturday, Feb. 7, 10:00 a.m. – Noon

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

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Eagles at Quabbin Reservoir, Dale Monette and Patti Steinman

Saturday, February 7: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Winter Tracking and Life Under the Snow at Graves Farm, David McLain.

Sunday, February 8: 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Bark and Buds: Winter Tree Identification, Joe Strauch

Saturday, February 21: 10:00 a.m. – Noon.

Winter Ecology Snowshoe, Aimee Gelinas

Saturday, February 28: 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Winter Tracking and Life Under the Snow at M.S. Lynes Sanctuary, David McLain.

Saturday, February 28: 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Winter Tracking and Life Under the Snow at Laughing Brook, Ron Wolanin.

Sunday, February 29: 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Sap Moon Snowshoe Trek, Aimee Galinas

Saturday, March 6: 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Ecological Management Conference, Staff and Volunteers

(Regarding management practices at Arcadia)

Saturday, March 6: 9:00 a.m. - Noon

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

And now, an unsolicited and, some would say, inexcusable, flashback to the more humorous tenure of our founding editor, Sally Venman. “Car Talk” listeners will recognize this one.

A hit-man named Arty was hired to rub out his client’s husband. The fee was to be \$10,000, but since these funds were only to be realized from the proceeds of the unfortunate victim’s life insurance, Arty had to make do with a down payment of \$1 as a token of good faith. Arty surprised his victim at the local Safeway grocery, and strangled him in the Produce section. The unfortunate Produce Manager stumbled upon the scene and was dispatched in the same way. The headline in next day’s paper:

“Arty Chokes Two for a Dollar at Safeway”

MISCELLANEOUS

Massachusetts Birders Meeting

Mass Audubon and Essex County Ornithological Club announce the 12th Massachusetts Birders' Meeting

When: March 6 and 7, 2004

Where: Peabody Marriott

What: This meeting is entitled: "**Birding with a Purpose**" (helping to support bird conservation)

Please join us on the North Shore next March for a day of presentations and exhibits on Saturday and field trips on Sunday to Cape Ann and Plum Island led by the Joppa Flats Educational Center and Essex County Ornithological Club.

Our **Keynote Speaker** will be **Chandler Robbins**, creator of the national Breeding Bird Survey and author of the *Golden Guide to Birds of North America*. Robbins was also the senior editor of the Atlas of Breeding Birds of Maryland and D.C. and has published in many other books and journals on changes in breeding bird populations. Other presentations include "Losing Ground", Christmas Bird Counts, "eBirding", and the Important Bird Areas program.

Information on registration and program is available at:

www.massaudubon.org/news <<http://www.massaudubon.org/news>>

Rooms will be available at the Peabody Marriott.

For more information, contact:

Andrea Jones, Bird Conservation Biologist
Massachusetts Audubon Society
2000 Main Street
Marshfield, MA 02050
781-837-9400 x 7907

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'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



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 20, No. 7

March, 2004

The news of this month was probably the large group of gulls at a composting facility on Burt's Pit Road in Northampton. These birds attracted statewide attention in February when our own Andrew Magee spotted an immature **Thayer's Gull** amongst them. Notwithstanding the dubious status of this species, there is no doubt that the gaggle of birders lined up along the fence for much of the third week in February were doing what birders enjoy most: enjoying the thrill of the question. Irrespective of this one bird, it is worth remembering that such a congregation of Iceland Gulls has not been seen together in the valley in recent memory. This, along with the occasional appearance of a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** and a **Glaucous Gull** made the group a treat to be sure.

PROGRAMS

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

Monday, March 8 at 7:30 p.m.: Dave King on Research into Wintering Golden-cheeked Warblers in Mexico and Central America.

Dave received his bachelors in Wildlife Management from Humboldt State University, and a Masters and Ph.D. in Natural Resources Conservation and Organismic and Evolutionary Biology from UMASS. Dave's research has been focused on the relationship between birds and their habitats, particularly in relation to management activities such as silviculture, road building and powerline rights of way. He was a research associate with the Smithsonian in a "former life", investigating the winter ecology and conservation of neotropical and Australasian birds. This work included a study of wintering Golden-cheeked Warblers during 1996-1999. David's talk will include a discussion of the winter ecology of migrants in general, a description of his experiences working in Mexico and Central America, and the results of his research on the Golden-cheeked Warbler.

Currently Dave is studying shrubland bird communities in Massachusetts pitch pine-scrub oak communities, and the effects of agroforestry on biodiversity in Nicaragua.

Coming Up

April 19, 2004. Peter Alden. Invasive Plants of New England, Impacts on Bird Populations.

May 10, 2004. Jan Ortiz. Baffin Island.

June 14, 2004. Harvey Allen et al. The Gambia Experience

Please note that Don Kroodsma's talk on "Birding By Bike" has been postponed until next program year.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Harvey's mid-week trip on **Wednesday, February 18** proved to be clear and very windy. (The weather, that is, not the birders). At the airport we watched Horned Larks, and checked the river for white-winged gulls without success. At the now-infamous gull site on Burt's Pit Road in Northampton we had excellent views of numerous **Iceland Gulls** of all ages, along with a lifetime supply of Herring- and Greater Black-backed Gulls and Starlings. The hardy folk went back to the river (just beyond the airport) and saw a **Glaucous Gull**.



February 28 dawned surprising balmy for **Geoff LeBaron's** trip to **Plum Island** and environs. When our large group finally got to Newburyport, we spent some time examining a rather lack-luster group of ducks and gulls from the Joppa Flats. We then scoped scattered Red-necked- and Horned Grebes (interspersed with a Red-throated Loon, and assorted sea ducks) from the beach at the base of the island. With the exception of these, a nice female Northern Harrier, and a few Goldeneye in the saltmarsh, the northern end of the island proved to be, in Geoff's words, "spectacularly birdless." Not to be disappointed, we traveled to Emerson's rocks, where Chris Yerlig's alert eyes picked up an adult **Northern Shrike** near the State Park parking lot. Around the rocks there were Common Eider, a very coy female Barrow's Goldeneye, and all three Scoters in various plumages (ranging from ambiguous to downright inscrutable).

We stopped in Joppa Park along the harbor-front to chase down a group of waxwings (all Cedar, as it turned out), and to scope the long line of Common Goldeneye and Bufflehead feeding along the edge of the tidal rip in the harbor. While doing this, we got a great view of a **Rough-legged Hawk** hunting on the far side of the Merrimack. His bird showed up again when we pulled in to Cashman Park, where we had unparalleled views of superb **Long-tailed Ducks**, Greater Scaup, and a male **Barrow's Goldeneye**, all at close range. Our last stop on the Newburyport side was the swing bridge, recently rebuilt and now passable, where there were some immature Bald Eagles, as well as Great Cormorants with grizzled throats and spectacular white flank patches, heralding the onset of their breeding season.

Toward late afternoon, we crossed the river to Salisbury. The State Park and jetty were (again) devoid of interesting birds, but that all changed as we devoured the last of Geoff's Garlic and Herb Corn Chips near the boat launch. Right on cue, a **Short-eared Owl** loped out of the pines and began hunting across the saltmarsh and dunes on all sides of us. A second bird did the same thing, and the two of them performed their stiff-armed dance with the dusk until it was too dark to see. Our last bird of the day was one of these owls circumscribing a huge, brave loop out over the river against the lights of Salisbury, before returning to some part of the dark, anonymous saltmarsh.

One of the highlights of the day was the inaugural journey of the "Golden Age Corolla." Appropriately golden in color, and piloted by one unnamed past-president, the four occupants of this vehicle possessed an average of one (1.0) Golden Age NWR pass each ("for reasons that we won't go into"), and single-handedly got the entire group onto the island. The aforesaid past president would like it known, by way of a retort, that the newsletter editor broke one of the roadside paling fences with the gargantuan weight of his posterior, but this is mere rumor and character assassination.

Coming Trips

Wednesday, March 17. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will go where the birds are. Meet at 7:30 a.m. on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin's Farm. Call for more information as the date approaches. (E)

Saturday, March 20. Connecticut River Waterfowl. Half day. David Peake-Jones (529 9541) will follow the river looking for migrating waterfowl. Call David to register. (E)

***Sunday, March 28. Woodcocks.** Early evening. Mike Locher (413-585-5864) will look for American Woodcocks, and then maybe some Screech Owls on the way home. Meet at 5:30 p.m. at Mitch's Marina on Route 47 in Hadley. (E)

Monhegan Island: May 28 – 31

There has been considerable interest in the trip but spaces remain, awaiting the payment of deposits. You can still get in on the action if you are willing to pony up soon! Please contact David Peake-Jones (davidpj@the-spa.com; 529 9541) if you are interested.

ARE YOU A PROSPECTIVE BOARD MEMBER?

A Nominating Committee is appointed each year at this time to arrange nominations for any required replacements to the HBC Board, which will be elected at the May meeting. **Mary Alice Wilson** has agreed to serve on the committee this year. She will be joined by two Board members in due course. If you are interested in serving on the Board, or know of someone who has expressed an interest, please contact Mary Alice. (mwilson@kl2phast.umass.edu; (413) 548 9078)

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.net

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB EVENING AT WFCR

Once again HBC members can spend an evening answering phones at WFCR during their fund drive in March. We will be taking calls at the station (in the studio with the on-air hosts) on Saturday, March 6, from 6-9 PM. It's easy (training is provided). It's fun (sometimes there is live music in the studio and you get to see radio behind-the-scenes). Dinner is provided; all you need to do is bring yourself (and friend if you wish) and answer pledge calls as they come in. If you'd like to join the fun, sign up by calling or emailing Dave Gross at 253-2897 or dgross@biochem.umass.edu.

Date: Saturday, March 6

Time: 6-9 p.m.

Location: WFCR studios, Hampshire House, UMass campus

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY MOVES IN CYBERSPACE!

While our long-suffering Membership Secretary, Sue Emerson, still resides on West Street in Hadley, her email address has changed. She now has the following, somewhat racy address of: spe33@hotmail.com. Please do not get any ideas, (unless those include remembering to send her your own email or postal address changes, and any other changes to the membership information you sent us at the beginning of the year. This includes your preference for how to receive the newsletter).

Birding for Everybody!

An Invitation

Birds can be found almost everywhere. Birders are simply people who get to know birds by sight, sound and knowledge of behavior. Have you ever thought about trying birding but were discouraged because of a disability, age or lack of experience? Be assured that NOTHING need prevent you from participating in America's most popular outdoor recreational activity!

Have you wondered about birds you have seen in our area's many and varied natural habitats? Perhaps you want to attract them closer to your home. Either way, this is the meeting for you!

We will explore tools and techniques that can make birding accessible to anyone who is willing to learn. Please bring along like-minded friends. Share your experiences with beginners and experts alike. We will be setting up times in the field to practice our skills. This meeting is free and open to the public.

Our inaugural meeting will be held on:

Sunday, March 21, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

The venue is:

**Millers River Environmental Center
100 Main Street
Athol, MA 01331
(978)-248-9491**

Hope to see you there.!

HITCHCOCK CENTER

SWEATSHOPS NO MORE: Lydia Long Verité, Robert Pollin, PERI Center at UMass
Sunday, March 14, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m

THE HEAT IS ON!: Ross Gelbspan, Scientist and Author
Sunday, April 4, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION IN THE VALLEY: Who Benefits?

Bob Rakoff, Hampshire College

Tuesday, March 9, 7:00 p.m.

Held at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, call 256-6006.

(continued→)

Hitchcock Programs (continued)

LAND PROTECTION IN THE VALLEY -Now or Never... Forever?

Bob Wilber, Mass Audubon

Wednesday, March 24, 7:00 p.m.

Held at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton, call 584-3009.

BIRDS OF PREY: Tom Ricardi, MA Birds of Prey Rehabilitation Center

Saturday, March 20, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

SPRING BIRDING CLASS

Scott Sumner, Birder

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

March 3, 31, April 7, 14, 28, May 5, 12, 19

Field Trips (10): Saturdays, 7:00 a.m. - Noon

March 6, March 28 - June 5 (except May 29)

ADOPT A VERNAL POOL

Jennifer Wiest, Teacher/Naturalist

Wednesdays, March 17 & 24, 10:00 a.m. - Noon; Saturday, March 27, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

SALAMANDER TUNNEL MAINTENANCE DAY

Sunday, March 7, 1:00 p.m. - until we're done

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

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Sap Moon Snowshoe Trek: Aimee Galinas

Saturday, March 6: 7:00 – 10:00 PM

Ecological Management Conference

Saturday, March 6: 9:00 AM – NOON

Snowshoe into Spring at Windsor Jams (At Windsor State Forest)

Saturday, March 20: 9:00 AM - NOON

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

MISCELLANEOUS

Midwinter Eagle Survey Results

from Mass Wildlife

Mass Wildlife staff and volunteer eagle spotters braved high winds and frigid temperatures during the annual Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey, recording an early tally of 61 Bald Eagles wintering in Massachusetts on January 9, 2004. From the Berkshires to Cape Cod, eagle watchers were out in force looking for the national bird along the coast and at larger inland water bodies.

Quabbin Reservoir and the Connecticut River have been two of the focal points of the survey in this state. Thanks to helicopter flight time donated by long-standing eagle project sponsor National Grid, Wildlife Biologist Dave Fuller and Western District Supervisor Tom Keefe were able to get eye-to-eye with the regal birds.

“You simply can’t conduct a thorough survey at Quabbin and along the Connecticut River without the chopper,” observes French.

“National Grid has been an outstanding partner in bald eagle restoration since 1982. We appreciate their interest and commitment to the program in Massachusetts.”

Thirty nine Bald Eagles (14 adults and 26 juveniles) were counted at Quabbin. Six eagles (5 adults and 1 juvenile) were observed along the Connecticut River. Elsewhere, ground crews counted one juvenile bird on the Westfield River in Russell, eight birds along the Merrimack River (5 adults and 3 juveniles), four adults and two juveniles at Assawompsett Pond in Lakeville, and one (adult) at Great Herring Pond in Plymouth. Four Black Vultures were also reported by spotters in Sheffield. Additional reports continue to come in and a final survey figure will be available in February. Last year a total of 50 Bald Eagles were reported statewide.

Woman Sees Birds

Northampton, Friday the 13th

Montague woman, Micky McKinley, while doing errands in Northampton, witnessed several noteworthy events. First, at the intersection of Flynn and King Streets, she saw 2 Red-tailed Hawks circling over the Honda dealer, the very place she bought the Honda that she was driving at the time. Next she turned onto King Street and proceeded north to the intersection with Bridge Street. While waiting at the red light she caught sight of a mature Bald Eagle with a fish in its talons flying directly overhead. A second mature eagle followed it. Finally, she turned left onto Bridge Street and after about 2 blocks she witnessed a Turkey Vulture soaring nearby.

Unnamed birding officials were at a loss to explain the events.

Micky McKinley (Lycopod@crocker.com), published without addition or alteration
(An unnamed editor is at a loss to explain the existential appeal of this article)

Welcome, New Members

Owen Cook & Beth Bone: New Salem, MA

Janet & Robert Bissell: Northampton, MA

Shirley Smigel: New Britain, Ct.

Ann Hazzard: Pelham, Ma.

Bruce & Anne MacLachlan: Williamsburg, Ma.

That’s it for this month.

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



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 20, No. 8

April, 2004

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 19 at 7:30 PM

Peter Alden on the Invasive Alien Plant Crisis in New England

Peter Alden has worn a number of hats in his career. As a public servant in the office of the Massachusetts Secretary for Environmental Affairs, Bob Durand, Peter organized the first three state-wide Massachusetts Biodiversity days. Peter has also designed and implemented innovative programs in ecotourism for various groups including Overseas Adventure Travel, Lindblad Travel, Mass. Audubon, and the Harvard Museum of Natural History. Peter is the author of fourteen books on North American and international wildlife.

Most relevant to his presentation for us, is Peter's work for the Public Works and Natural Resources departments in his home town of Concord, MA. He has advised the town on the impact of invasive plants on public safety. Under his guidance, Concord mapped the occurrence of all major species of invasive plants on roadsides throughout the town. Peter initiated intensive efforts to control invasives at Walden Pond and Old North Bridge. He also finds time to preside over the Nuttall Bird Club.

Peter's presentation will focus on the most intrusive amongst a growing "rogues gallery" of invasive plants. Few terrestrial habitats in the northeast are free of botanical villains such as introduced honeysuckles, buckthorns, Multiflora Rose, Porcelainberry, Oriental Bittersweet, and one of the latest and most spectacular invaders: Black Swallow-wort. In many regional woodlands, Norway Maple crowds out native Sugar Maple, honeysuckles and buckthorns replace the native understorey, and Black Swallow-wort carpets the ground. These species together create much deeper shade than their native precursors, preventing the regeneration of the natives altogether, and creating inhospitable habitats for native birds and other animals.

In place of the cat-tails that provided bird habitat, many local wetlands are becoming dominated by Purple Loosestrife and Phragmites, with devastating impact on bird populations.

Some of Peter's presentation will document the concerted effort made by the citizenry of Concord to control invasive plants in that community.

Coming Up

May 10, 2004. Jan Ortiz. Baffin Island.

June 14, 2004. Harvey Allen et al. The Gambia Experience.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

On a gorgeous **Saturday, March 2004**, Hampshire Bird Club toured the **Connecticut River Valley** in search of migrating waterfowl. Despite the absence of signature leader Al Richards and persistent ice over some of the prime floodplain habitats, we did rather well. Between the Rod and Gun club in Turner's Falls, Barton's Cove, and the Power Canal, we found a nice selection of ducks, including 65 **Hooded Mergansers** (it proved to be almost the default merganser of the day), about 45 Ring-necked Ducks, and a few **American Widgeon**. A couple of flat-pated Scaup eventually convinced us they were Greater. We perused Great Pond in Hatfield from the high vantage point of the local Highway Department lot and found it still largely iced over. It seemed, to the casual glance, somewhat unburdened with birds. However, as we scanned the tawny clumps of still-dormant marsh vegetation at the southern end, birds navigating the shallow leads between clumps betrayed themselves with the slightest movements. In this way, we conservatively estimated that 25 **Green-winged Teal**, 6 **Northern Pintail**, 35 Wood Duck, 8 **Gadwall**, and a couple of Hooded Mergansers were interspersed with the more mundane Mallards and Black Ducks.

We trekked in to Arcadia Marsh on the strength of reports of two **Greater White-fronted Geese**, which we eventually found. These would have been easier to spot, were it not for the fact that they were gatecrashing a convention of at least 1500 Canada Geese! The marsh was also host that day to impressive numbers of Green winged Teal, Northern Pintail, and yet more Wood Ducks. At our final stop alongside Hadley Cove, we had a chance to pick out yet more gorgeous Pintail, Green-winged Teal, and at least 20 more American Widgeon.



On **Sunday March 28**, in the slanted light of dusk, a surprisingly large group of the faithful assembled at Mitch's Marina to look for **woodcocks** with **Mike Locher**. The exceptional response serves to prove the old adage that the main problem with birding is the ridiculously early hours. We strolled in along the old River Road, and crossed a loop of the Fort River. A short walk brought us to several open fields, where Mike had heard woodcock the previous night. As darkness approached, and groups of Wood Ducks, Black Ducks, and Mallards settled themselves into the meandering bed of the Fort River for the night, we heard our first "peent". Shortly afterward, not one, but two woodcock careered low over our heads through gaps in the cottonwood foliage, circumscribing a wide ascending arc, before dropping again into the field where they had started. Our guess is that these were two males in competition for territory, but I suppose one of them could have been a female playing hard-to-get. More conventional male display flights went on for some time.

On the way back to the marina, we played a Screech Owl tape, and finally got a rather tentative reply from the middle distance. The responding owl did not whinny, but rather nervously repeated the monotonal tremolo part of the Screech Owl call. Apparently, this late in the season, owls generally confine themselves to this one part of the call. Still closer to the parking lot, the gathering darkness had emboldened Wood Frogs and Spring Peepers in the vernal pools, who set up a deafening chorus. Thanks to Mike for organizing this new type of trip, and doing the research necessary to ensure our success.

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.

Pilot: "*Suspected crack in windscreen.*"

Engineer: "*Suspect you're right.*"

Coming Trips

Saturday, April 10. 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. (E)

Wednesday, April 21. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will go where the birds are. Meet at 7:30 a.m. on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin's Farm. Call for more information as the date approaches. (E)

***Saturday, April 24. More migrants.** Half day beginner's trip. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) looks for 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. (E)

New Field Trip! (not in the published field trip list)

Sunday, April 25. Early migrants in Springfield and Longmeadow.

Join Nancy Eaton (860-745-2915) in a new field trip for our club. Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot in front of St. Andrews Episcopal Church on Longmeadow St. (Route 5).

Wildwood Walks

On a gentle rise in the heart of Amherst 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 as follows:

Tuesdays: May 4, 11, and 18

Thursdays: May 6, 13, and 20

Each begins at **6:30 am** and runs until **8 am**, though of course you may freelance a little longer if you wish. Meet the leader at the main entrance, off Strong Street. 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.

Saturday, May 1. Graves Farm. Half day. Anne Lombard (413-586-7509) and Shirley Hilborn (413-253-6462) will guide birders through Graves Farm, looking for migrants and local specialties. Meet at the Hitchcock center at 6:30 a.m., or Graves Farm at 7:00 a.m. (E)

Saturday, May 8. Quabbin Reservoir migration. All day. Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) leads a trip into the Quabbin to track down its varied avifauna. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call to register. (M)

More Aircraft Maintenance Reports

Pilot: *"Number 3 engine missing."*

Engineer: *"Engine found on right wing after brief search."*

Pilot: *"Aircraft handles funny."*

Engineer: *"Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious."*

LIBRARY

On a somewhat distressing note, Henry Lappen reports that ***not just some but most of the club's audio and video tapes are missing from the shelves at Hitchcock!*** Whether this represents a conspiracy or merely cumulative oversights, Henry asks that you contact him urgently (549 3722) if you have any knowledge of their whereabouts. Amnesty is guaranteed!

On a (hopefully) unrelated note, Henry asks that, if you need library materials brought to this month's meeting during his (temporary) absence, you contact Anne Cann (253 7753; cann@uhs.umass.edu).

Please note that the club maintains a collection of birding resources including field- and bird-finding-guides to almost every major birding destination in the U.S., and some overseas locations, natural histories, periodicals and, (until their untimely recent attrition), video and audio resources. **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.

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.net

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The nominating committee is charged with making sure we recruit candidates for any openings which occur on the HBC Board. The nominating committee for this year consists of **Sue Emerson** (584 6736; spe33@hotmail.com), **Marcia Merithew** (584 8874; mmerithew@comcast.net), and **Mary Alice Wilson** (548 9078; mwilson@k12.phast.umass.edu). They are combing the club directory in search of those willing to devote some time and effort to keeping this august institution running. If you have an interest in serving on the Board, please contact one of them.

HITCHCOCK CENTER

Programs unavailable at press time.

ARCADIA

Dance of the American Woodcock. David McLain and Patti Steinman
Friday, April 16: 6:00 – 8:30 PM

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

The Last Aircraft Maintenance Reports for this Edition

Pilot: "Target radar hums."

Engineer: "Reprogrammed target radar with words."

Pilot: "Mouse in cockpit."

Engineer: "Cat installed."

MISCELLANEOUS

Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas

Hot on the heels of “A Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts” comes yet another seminal publication for birders in the Bay State.

The “Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas” is the culmination of efforts by nearly 600 volunteers (including many members of HBC) between 1974 and 1979 to document the confirmed, probable, and possible breeding distribution of all 198 species known to reproduce in this state. Each species account also documents the history of breeding activity, song, habitat, and seasonal occurrence. There are also descriptions of nests, eggs, and songs. Watercolor illustrations of each species by Barry van Dusen and John Sill complement the text. For those interested in getting out ahead of the retail stores, bibliographic information is below.

Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas

Wayne Petersen and W. Roger Meservey (Editors)

University of Massachusetts Press, 2004.

Price (cloth bound, direct from the publisher): \$60

Available direct from University of Massachusetts Press: (800) 537 5487

More Information: (413) 545 4990; www.umpress.edu/umpress

Rip Ryder Expands Service

The club has two trips scheduled to New South Beach in Chatham, MA during the fall shorebird migration. For club members who might be considering going it alone, the “Rip Ryder” ferry service has asked that we mention its newly expanded service for 2004.

The company will now transport birders to the extreme southern tip of the beach, whence they can undertake a one-way walk back to the standard pickup point, eliminating the old “out and back” route. The fee is \$15 per person (return), or \$10 for groups of four (4) or more. In the interests of fairness, we should point out that a comparable service is also offered by the competition at Outermost Harbor Marine. Contacts for both companies are listed below.

Monomoy Island Ferry (“Rip Ryder”)

(508) 945 5450; www.monomoyislandferry.com

Outermost Harbor Marine

(508) 945 2030; www.outermostharbor.com

Club members interested in an informed and more definitive comparison of these services may contact David Peake-Jones (529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com)

Where are the Birds?

For those who want the latest on birds being seen in the valley and beyond, 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. Alternatively, you may call him at (413) 569 3335, or leave a message in the Western Mass. section of The Voice.

Red Knot In Peril

Some stories are too important to ignore.

As we witness the return of Red Knots and other shorebirds to their breeding grounds this Spring, we should temper our delight with awareness of news from the Delaware Bay last season.

*Ninety five percent of the world's Red Knots use the **Delaware Bay** as a refueling point in their Spring migration to the Arctic.* They do so because of the extraordinary seasonal abundance of horseshoe crab eggs, which are laid in countless millions on sandy beaches in May. Despite recent widespread and growing concern over depletion of horseshoe crabs in the bay, regulations on the crab harvest, which went into effect on both the New Jersey and Delaware shores in April, 2003, were struck down via a procedural legal challenge in Delaware. This allowed unrestricted harvesting on the Delaware side of the bay, and anecdotal reports indicated that the harvesting intensity in that part of the bay increased as fishermen moved in from elsewhere.

According to counts during the migration season, the number of Red Knots visiting the bay declined by over fifty percent between 2002 and 2003. Less than 17, 000 knots passed through the Bay last Spring. Given that horseshoe crabs do not mature for nine years, even regulations imposed immediately will take years to halt the decline in available food resources in the Spring. There is the distinct possibility that the decline observed already will continue and result in the extinction of the Red Knot.

Rarely is the fate of a species so clearly and simply linked to a single resource in a single part of the world. The fate of the Red Knot rests directly with regulatory authorities in both Delaware and New Jersey, but also indirectly with concerned birders throughout North America.

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!

Welcome New Members

John McDermott: Amherst, MA

Suzanne Schuster: Florence, MA

Dan Whitcomb: Holyoke, MA

Henry Ritzer

Those who remember long-time club member Henry Ritzer may want to get in touch with him. Mr. Ritzer's daughter informs us that he still lives in the area, and would love to hear from birding colleagues. If this applies to you, please contact Susan Heinricher (susanheinricher@starband.net; phone 978 5444 6372)

That's 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 20, No. 9

May, 2004

Birders are into milestones. Many of us list species seen by time periods and geographic areas. The great advantage of this is that you can compare your list/s with that/those of anyone from the hotshots at Cape May to the neighbor who still hasn't returned your leaf rake. In addition, there is nearly always the possibility for adding one more bird, even if it is "Snail Kite in Hampshire County".

But what of we sad souls who eschew the statistical aspects of birding? How are we to measure the progress of a birding career? For me, it is through the acquisition of greater skill in the process, not the outcome, of birding.

Most years, as April gets into its stride, I take the first walk of the spring through Arcadia, often along the old trolley line. There is a time before the flood of transitory birds begins when the woods are filled with the songs of early Pine Warblers, the occasional Palm Warbler, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and a generally inconspicuous resident which seems to take this part of the spring as a time to advertise itself as at no other time. In the first year I heard it, I don't think I ever found the origin of this ethereal, tinkling song. For the next two years, I stomped around amongst the skunk cabbage muttering something like "I know I've heard that before!" before catching a lucky glimpse of the singer.

But this year, as I heard the first glissade of notes, the name, and likely location sprang immediately to mind. I refer, of course, to the Brown Creeper. It's finally in the memory bank, hopefully to stay. Each time I hear it now, brings to mind all the effort to reach this point, and adds another comforting dimension of understanding to each dawn chorus. A small step forward, but mine own! I hope your spring is replete with whatever milestones make the road interesting for you! Good luck!

PROGRAMS

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

This Month

Monday, May 10 at 7:30 PM

Jan Ortiz narrates "Life on the Edge - An Arctic Adventure"

Jan describes a trip by six members of the Hampshire Bird Club from the small Inuit village of Pond Inlet on Baffin Island to the edge of the arctic ice pack. The group traveled on sleds pulled by snowmobiles across the frozen surface of the Arctic Ocean to the tundra of Bylot Island, and then beyond it to the edge of the ice. The edges of polar ice packs generally attract a diverse assemblage of marine and bird life. Camping on the ice, the adventurers fell asleep to the dulcet tones of snoring Narwhals close by, and found Thayer's Gulls, Ivory Gulls, and Pomerine Jaegers fighting over seal blubber near the camp in the morning!

In exchange for a unique scenic, cultural, zoological, and botanical experience, the group endured grueling travel over the ice, and extreme weather, each of which added genuine danger to the journey.

Jan Ortiz taught birding classes at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst, MA for ten years and has led numerous birding trips. She is one of the founding members of Hampshire Bird Club and a past president. She has taken part in many local migrant and breeding bird censuses and is a co-compiler for the Northampton Christmas Bird Count. She is a former member of the Massachusetts's Avian Records Committee and was an editor and contributor to a *Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts*.

Coming Programs

June 14, 2004. Harvey Allen et al. The Gambia Experience

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

In search of "More Migrants", **Betsy Higgins** and four others explored **Look Park and Arcadia** on **Saturday, May 24**. They found thirty (30) species, including Double-crested Cormorant, Pine Warbler, Black-and-White Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, several Red-bellied Woodpeckers, (including a nesting pair) and (one) Black Bear.

Michele and Betsy continued on to Arcadia for a short while. There, they had 14 species, including Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-throated Sparrow, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Eastern Comma Butterfly, Milbert's Tortoiseshell Butterfly, and a Garter Snake.

Betsy Higgins

Contributors Wanted!!

*When a leader's not engaged in his employment (his employment)
When the small brown jobs have all been soundly taught (soundly taught)
He loves to lie a-basking in the sunshine (in the sunshine)
Far from his mind is any trip report (trip report)*

(Gilbert & Sullivan, almost)

Field trip leaders have a ton of things to do in preparation for a trip, and the trips themselves can be arduous. The last thing they want to do when the trip is over is sit down and dash off a trip report for the newsletter. Fortunately, YOU can help. 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.

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

While taxiing at New York's LaGuardia, the crew of a US Air flight departing for Ft. Lauderdale made a wrong turn and came nose to nose with a United 727. An irate female ground controller lashed out at the US Air crew, screaming,

"US Air 2771, where the h*** are you going? I told you to turn right onto Charlie taxiway! You turned right on Delta! Stop right there. I know it's difficult for you to tell the difference between Cs and Ds, but get it right!"

Continuing her tirade to the embarrassed crew, she was now shouting hysterically.

"You've screwed everything up! It'll take forever to sort this out! You stay right there and don't move till I tell you to! You can expect progressive taxi instructions in about half an hour and I want you to go exactly where I tell you, when I tell you, and how I tell you! You got that, US Air 2771?"

"Yes ma'am," the humbled crew responded.

Naturally the ground control frequency went terribly silent after the verbal bashing of US Air 2771. Nobody wanted to engage the irate ground controller in her current state. Tension in every cockpit at LGA was running high.

Then an unknown pilot broke the silence and asked; "Wasn't I married to you once?"

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. 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).

Wildwood Walks

On a gentle rise in the heart of Amherst 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 4, 11, and 18

Thursdays: May 6, 13, and 20

Each begins at **6:30 am** and runs until **8 am**, though of course you may freelance a little longer if you wish. Meet the leader at the main entrance, off Strong Street. 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.

Saturday, May 1. Graves Farm. Half day. Anne Lombard (413-586-7509) and Shirley Hilborn (413-253-6462) will guide birders through Graves Farm, looking for migrants and local specialties. Meet at the Hitchcock center at 6:30 a.m., or Graves Farm at 7:00 a.m. (E)

Saturday, May 8. Quabbin Reservoir migration. All day. Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) leads a trip into the Quabbin to track down its varied avifauna. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call to register. (M)

Saturday, May 15. 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. (E)

Sunday, May 16. Bird song. Don Kroodsma (413-253-5519) will again offer this popular trip focusing on vocal, instead of visual, clues to identification. Call Don for details.

Wednesday, May 19. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will go where the birds are. Meet at 7:00 a.m. on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin's Farm. Call for more information as the date approaches. (E)

Friday, May 21 - Monday, May 24. Monhegan Island. Overnight trip. David Peake-Jones (413-529-9541) and Andrew Magee (413-586-1509) will lead birders for a long weekend of birding off the coast of Maine. The trip is full. (E/M)

Saturday, May 29. 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. (E)

Rescheduling

The club trip to Westover Air Force Base, originally scheduled for June 19, has been moved up to June 12.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The **Annual General Meeting** of the **Hampshire Bird Club, Incorporated**, will take place on **Monday, May 10**, 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 2004-2005 will be elected by the members present.

Leaving the Board this year are Lisa Bertoldi and Leslie Scott. The club thanks them for their service. The Nominating Committee (Mary Alice Wilson, Marcia Merithew, and Sue Emerson) respectfully proposes the following slate of officers for the coming year.

President: Dennis McKenna

Vice President (Program Chair): Geoff LeBaron

Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson

Communications Secretary: Jan Howard

Treasurer: David Gross

Members-at-Large: Betsy Higgins

Marcia Merithew

Mike Locher

Bob Zimmermann

Elissa Rubenstein

Jaap van Heerden

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

CONSERVATION

Western Massachusetts Electric Company Customers!

If you would like the company to offer power from wind generation sources, please call Nancy Creed, Director Of Public Relations for WMECO, at 1-800-286-2000, and tell her about your interest. The company would like to gauge customer support on this issue, with a view to offering such sources. MassElectric already offers power from wind generation to its customers. To see how this works, go to masslectric.com and click on "GreenUp". They offer several suppliers for a little more on your bill. For more information, call Ann Kearns at 549-8773.

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.net

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

ALL ABOARD! TO THE CHASE HILL FARM

Sunday, May 16, 11:30 - 4pm

THE SPECIAL ECOLOGY OF MT. TOM AND LITTLE TOM: *Jose Garcia, Naturalist*

Tuesday, May 4, 7-9pm

Held at Holyoke Heritage State Park, call 534-1723

DRAGONFLIES: *Fred Morrison, Naturalist*

Thursday, May 20, 7-9pm

Held at Northfield Mountain Recreation Area, call 800-859-2960.

BIRDING BY EAR: *John Green, Naturalist*

Saturday, June 5, 7-8:30am

.....**Hitchcock Programs (continued).....**

SPECIAL PLACES IN THE VALLEY: A TOUR OF THE SENSES: *Rema Boscov, Writer & Artist*
Saturdays, June 5-July 3, 9-12:30pm - 4 weeks

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

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Early Morning Bird Walks: Various leaders
 May 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 from 6:30 AM – 8:00 AM
 May 15 from 7:00 – 8:30 AM

Introduction To Birding: Patti Steinman and Anne Lombard
 May 6: 7:00 – 9:00 PM
 May 8: 7:00-10:00 AM

Introduction To Wildflowers: Janet Bissell
 May 12: 7:00 - 9:00 PM, May 15: 9:30 AM – Noon, June 5: 9:30 AM –Noon

Bird-a-thon
 May 14 (6:00 PM) – May 15 (6:00 PM)

Land Protection Along the Connecticut River: Terry Blunt
 May 23: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Barton Cove Eagles and Canoe Trip: Aimee Galinas
 June 4: 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Introduction to Butterflies: Tom Lautzenheiser
 June 5: 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

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

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- and 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**.

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. 10

June, 2004

“What makes the desert beautiful is that somewhere it hides a well.” So spoke the Little Prince in Antoine de Saint-Exupery’s classic of the same name. My friend Betsy Higgins and I recently dragged our leaden legs up Mt Holyoke before the gate opened in search of both Worm-eating- and Cerulean Warblers. It was a dank, foggy, and buggy morning. There were few birds evident, except a host of Redstarts nagging us with their myriad of “Could that be.....?” variations on whatever they are supposed to sing. We got to the hairpins close to the top, and were trying to locate a possible Cerulean singing in deep foliage, when a carload of birders (Swiss, it turned out), drove by. Within minutes they were excitedly pointing and gesticulating at what we assume was a Cerulean warbler in the upper parking lot. Our bird never showed, but Betsy did see a warbler building a nest among the anonymous limbs of an oak some distance from the road. We caught the barest glimpse of the male from the parking lot, before we returned to the hairpin section to look some more at the nest. In the mist and poor light, we could make out only the most basic field marks of the warbler busily flying to and from the nest and some distant source of building material, which seemed to be lichen. Still uncertain, we walked back to the bottom of the hill with vague plans to research the nest and/or come back in better conditions. Betsy did the former, and I did the latter. It turns out that the Cerulean Warbler does indeed build a cup nest including lichens along the limb of a tree, and when viewed in better light later the same day, our bird was conclusively a female Cerulean Warbler. *What makes the woods beautiful is that somewhere they hide a nest.*

While we are still in the exciting throes of May this publication comes to you for the last time in the current birding year. After the craziness of Spring we (and our long-suffering families) need time and space to pursue other activities for a while, or to take our birding interests to far-flung locations. You are therefore encouraged to enjoy the lazy days of summer in whatever birding or non-birding pursuit suits your fancy, with reading material which should absolutely NOT include the HBC newsletter. However, don’t forget that some great trips take place through the summer.

Please note that the trip to Westover Air Force Base, originally scheduled for June 19 has been rescheduled to June 12. See “Coming Trips” for details.

PROGRAMS

This Month

Monday, June 14

Harvey Allen et al. with “The Gambia Experience”

Harvey has been characteristically self-effacing when encouraged to provide either biographical information, or the slightest idea of what he is going to talk about. So we must revel in the anticipation of a mystery. Rest assured that Gambia is one of the lesser-known birding locations in the world, and we are guaranteed a unique view of its avian wonders through Harvey’s eyes.

Coming Programs

Program Schedule (Provisional): Fall 2004-Summer 2005.

September 13, 2004. Shawn Carey: "Birding - A Multi-media Visual Experience"
October 18, 2004. David Sibley: "Birders and Conservation: A Broader View"
November 8, 2004. Don Kroodsma: "Bird By Bird By Bike"
December 13, 2004. Member's Meeting: (Members Slide Show)
January 10, 2005. To Be Announced
February 14, 2005. Daniel J. Klem: "Glass: A Bird Conservation Issue"
March 14, 2005. To Be Announced
April 11, 2005. To Be Announced
May 9, 2005. Susan Roney Drennan. "Pacific Albatross Biology and Conservation"
June 13, 2005. Frank Gill. Topic To Be Decided

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

On **Saturday, April 10**, **Bob Bieda** and a group visited **Ashley Reservoir** hoping to find the first avian harbingers of spring. Bob reports that the birding was fairly quiet, but they did get excellent looks at Pine Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and managed to find two of the first Tree Swallows to return.



On **Saturday, May 1**, **Shirley Hillborn and Marcia Merithew** led a most successful joint HBC-Mass Audubon trip to **Graves Farm** in Williamsburg. From the new parking lot in the upper reaches of the farm we wandered down the road through woods ringing with newly arrived Ovenbirds on territory, Wood Thrush, and a very vocal **Winter Wren** deep in the hemlocks. In the beaver swamp we eventually located an emphatic **Louisiana Waterthrush** singing from the top of a dead tree ("SWEEP, SWEEP, SWEEP, jumble"). A second waterthrush began singing from trees overhead. After much umming, aahing and poring over Sibley we concluded that the three-tiered song of this bird ("SWEEP, SWEEP, SWEEP, Sweep, Sweep, Sweep, sweep sweep sweep") identified it as a **Northern Waterthrush**.

We stopped briefly to admire the **Cliff Swallows** nesting under the eaves of the barn, and move further on up the road. Shirley and Elaine had a brief encounter with a **Dickcissel**, but it vanished without allowing anyone else a look. Wandering through the orchard we listened to a distant **Field Sparrow**, watched a gorgeous Common Yellowthroat, at least one Baltimore Oriole, and a Northern Rough-winged Swallow.

As the briskness of morning graded toward the heat of noon, the group filtered back toward the cars. A lone Bobolink was seen and heard singing atop a pine tree in the meadow. Several of us wandered into the woods on the new Graves trail system, where we found Blue-headed Vireo, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and more waterthrushes.



Trip Reports (continued).....

Highlights of the HBC trip to **Quabbin Reservoir** with **Tom Gagnon** on **Saturday, May 8** included 17 species of warblers. A **Cerulean Warbler** was heard but not seen in its customary habitat. There were **8 Common Loons, 22 Baltimore Orioles, 6 Yellow-throated Vireos, 6 Least Flycatchers, 3 Scarlet Tanagers, 5 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, 1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and 1 Swainson's Thrush**. Betsy Higgins also reports 7 species of butterflies and 4 species of mammals. Presumably these include a **Bobcat** seen on the way to Quabbin in the morning!

Betsy Higgins

Betsy also says:

"Please correct me if I spelled anything wwrong. You would not believe how bad I spell and you would not believe how many times I have to delete things when I am typing! Don't put this part in the newsletter!!!!!"

Sorry Betsy. It would have been better not to have said anything. I include this loving jibe only because I have to hit the "Backspace" button about a thousand times in the course of hunting and pecking my way through each newsletter.

Editor



On **Saturday, May 15**, **David Peake-Jones** led a group to **Mt Auburn Cemetery** in Watertown, MA. The day began on the cool side, but rapidly became warm and breezy. The cemetery, as always was a beautiful place to be. There is nothing quite like approaching Longfellow's grave with a **Blackburnian Warbler** singing above it! There were, inevitably, warblers around, but the day was rather quiet by Mount Auburn standards. We tallied fifteen species. The undoubted highlights were **Bay-breasted Warblers**, whose abbreviated "Tee-ee, Tee-see, Tee-sees greeted us almost as soon as we left the cars.

Near Halcyon Pond, we paused in a heavily wooded area, to investigate a bright little song tailing rather abruptly off at the end. This proved to be a gorgeous **Wilson's Warbler**, sporting in an ornamental maple. Amidst various other birds in this very densely-foliated tree were a Blackburnian, Black-throated Green, and one monotonous high-pitcher which just did not quite fit. One or two of us caught lucky glimpses of this bird, which turned out to be a male **Cape May Warbler**. This species is distressingly hard to find in any season these days.

As usual for the cemetery at this date, the default thrush was **Swainson's**, which gave us good opportunities to see its blank-faced looks among the gravestones. Some alert birders had found an **Orchard Oriole** energetically building a nest in the trailing boughs of a weeping willow at Willow Pond.

We headed home via the Concord unit of Great Meadows NWR. This year, the **Marsh Wrens** were back nesting cheek-by-jowl along the dike after an inexplicable absence last year. Their energetic displays were a great highlight, as was the knot of Water Snakes we found alongside the trail. Sixty six species represents a very mediocre day for mid-May, but a slow day at Mt Auburn is better than a good day almost anywhere else.



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. 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).

Saturday, June 12. Westover AFB: Grassland birds. Half day. Bob Bieda (413-527-2623) will lead this annual trip into one of New England's premier grasslands looking for Upland Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark. Call to check on the status of the trip, and to register. (E)

Note that this trip has been rescheduled from June 19

Wednesday, June 16. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) will go where the birds are. Meet at 6:00 a.m. on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst, across from Atkin's Farm. Call for more information as the date approaches. (E)

Saturday, July 24. New South Beach, I. All day. David Peake-Jones (413-529-9541) will look for early shorebird migrants. Be prepared for wet conditions and a long walk, and bring a lunch. Call to register. (M)

Saturday, August 21. 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. (M)

Announcing Cape May, 2004

Friday, October 8 – Monday, October 11

The club will again travel to Cape May, New Jersey over the Columbus Day weekend. In the fall, countless migrating raptors and song birds are funneled to the tip of the Cape, earning it the justified reputation of one of the east coast's premier birding hotspots. This trip usually fills fast, so contact Scott Sumner (253 5983; ssurner@aol.com) for further details and/or to reserve a space.

CONSERVATION

Connecticut River: Source To Sea

Birding Trail Maps. Other places have them. We all use them when we travel. Now it is our turn. A four-state group is working to develop a series of maps along the Connecticut River, Source to Sea. Work is already finished on one of the Vermont-New Hampshire Sections and is beginning of other pieces. And now, finally, Massachusetts is getting organized. Please help by nominating an appropriate site. Nomination forms are available on the Hampshire Bird Club website (www.hampshirebirdclub.org). They will also be available at the next HBC meeting. You can request a nomination form from the Berkshire Pioneer Resource Conservation and Development Council: 433 West Street, Suite 5, Amherst, MA 01002-2917.

SET-UP CZAR NEEDED

Qualifications? Available at 4:30 on the Mondays of most HBC meetings; a car that can hold a 6-foot projection screen (if you can put skis in your car the screen will fit); and a small amount of space to store the screen, projector and two small bags of related paraphernalia between meetings. Rewards? Get to work with a great crew; meet the speaker; and be really, really useful to the club.

Please contact Mary Alice Wilson: (548 9078; mwilson@kl2s.phast.umass.edu) or any member of the Board.

THE COMMISSARY

Club stalwart Sally Venman, fresh from her self-deprecating introduction for Jan Ortiz at the May meeting, recently sent me the following missive regarding refreshments at meetings: "After 30 years of being there with HBC responsibility of one kind or another, I need a break." (The nerve of the woman). She continues:

"As far as I know, Helga and Joanne will continue on the committee calling for volunteers and helping to set up when I am in need of help but we may need more volunteers and someone willing to keep the goodies and make sure the supplies are in readiness. Could you please make a strong plea for help in the next newsletter, David?"

Well there you have it. When a rugged individual like Sally is reduced to pleading like this, the rest of us should respond. Not sure I would come to meetings at all if there were not delicious inducements to do so. *If you can help in this area, please contact Sally (549 1098; sgvenman@comcast.net), Helga Beatty (253 2410; HiBeatty@aol.com), or Joanne Parker (549 7446; parkrjm@yahoo.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. There are no Saturday hours in the summer. 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 the meeting on June 14, given a few days notice! Call him at (413) 549 3722.

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS: 2004-2005

At the **Annual General Meeting** of the **Hampshire Bird Club, Incorporated**, on **Monday, May 10, 2004**, the following were elected by the membership.

President: Dennis McKenna
Vice President (Program Chair): Geoff LeBaron
Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson
Communications Secretary: Jan Howard
Treasurer: David Gross
Members-at-Large: Betsy Higgins
 Marcia Merithew
 Mike Locher
 Bob Zimmermann
 Elissa Rubenstein
 Jaap van Heerden

MISCELLANEOUS

Red Knot in Peril

As mentioned in the April edition, the Red Knot (*Callidris canutus rufa*) is in extreme danger due to declining availability of horseshoe crab eggs in its Atlantic flyway refueling site: the Delaware Bay. For an update on some promising recent developments, and the push for federal listing of this species, you may go to www.njaudubon.org/Conservation/HScrabalert.html.

Appropriate to the current situation comes an extraordinary discovery about Knot longevity this past week. A Red Knot banded in Lagoa do Peixe (southern Brazil) in 1984 was photographed by Patrick and Doris Leahy while conducting shorebird surveys in coastal Florida. Brian Harrington of the Manomet Bird Observatory was able to assign a minimum age of 21 years to the bird. This represents the oldest Red Knot on record. One can reasonably assume that this bird has travelled over 400,000 miles in migration during its lifetime. For further details, visit www.manomet.org/naturereport/

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!

Welcome New Members

Valerie Miller: Hopkinton, MA

That's it till next year!

Until September, talk softly and carry a big scope! David Peake-Jones

Editor

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



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 21, No. 1

September, 2004

I am sure that, as a good newsletter editor, I should be editorializing the Red-footed Falcon, or some such magnificent vagrant. However, I choose instead to welcome you to the 2004 club year with a far simpler tale of summer birding. Club stalwart Betsy Higgins and I went, for no particularly good reason, (except that it was a favorite childhood haunt of hers), to Hammonasset Beach State Park on the Connecticut shore in early July. A hot, still, beachcomber-laden day was looming as we arrived, and despite the lateness of the hour, decided to try for rails in one of the anonymous saltmarsh tidal channels. Imagine our delight, when we spotted a Clapper Rail, then another, foraging at the waterline. The birds were surprisingly tolerant of our presence, and almost frantically hunting Fiddler Crabs from the plentiful supply in the muddy channel. Eventually, as we forced our normally list-driven minds to focus on the unfolding natural history in front of us, we began to discern a pattern in the activity, which seemed to center on a large clump of reeds. With a little more patience, we eventually saw the first of a pair of tiny, jet-black chicks taking some of its first exploratory steps out of the reedy haven. The parents fed the chicks for at least half an hour as we watched, carefully holding the crabs, while the chicks dismembered and consumed them. We left the family to its activity, and moved on to more mundane things. What a treat! I hope your summer has been good, too. I have relegated this rambling to 10 font to frustrate our older members, and because there are, amazingly, more important things that need to be covered!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE BY SEPTEMBER 30!

Send yours in via the enclosed membership form, which may also be turned in at the September meeting.

Also in this edition:

The HBC Rare Bird Alert form

The Fall Field Trip Schedule

Coming Programs

AND MORE!

So please read on. It makes me feel better.

PROGRAMS

Programs are held at Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant St., Amherst.

Monday, September 13 at 7:30 PM

Shawn Carey and Migration Productions present **"Birding: A Multi-Media Visual Experience,"** featuring photographs and video of some of North America's most beautiful birds from many locations including Massachusetts, Florida, Pennsylvania, Maine and Arizona.

Shawn Carey moved for his home in Erie, Pennsylvania to Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1986 and started watching birds in 1988. Shawn began to combine his interests in birding and photography in 1991. In 1994 he and his partner Jim Grady started Migration Productions as a way to present their multi-image slide presentations to a live audience. Migration Productions has been presenting programs to birding organizations ever since. In 1997, Shawn started teaching bird photography workshops (Fundamentals of Bird Photography) for Massachusetts Audubon.

Shawn is on the Advisory Board of the Mass Audubon Visual Arts Center and is the President of Eastern Mass Hawk Watch. He serves on the Board of Brookline Bird Club.

Shawn is also a co-owner of UltraSonics Recording Studio in Somerville Massachusetts, and a bass player for a band of the same name. He is the operations manager at AVFX in Boston.

(see page 2 for the coming schedule) →

Coming Programs

2004

September 13. Shawn Carey: "Birding: A Multi-media Visual Experience"

October 18. David Sibley. "Birders and Conservation: A Broader View"

November 8. Don Kroodsmas. "Bird By Bird By Bike"

December 13. Member's Meeting. (Members Slide Show)

2005

January 10. Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll. "Birds of the Blackstone National Corridor"

February 14. Daniel J. Klem. "Glass: A Bird Conservation Issue"

March 14. Margaret Rubega. "Eating at the Interface of Water and Land"

April 11. Geoff LeBaron. "From Kamchatka to Katmai: An Incredible Journey"

May 9. Susan Roney Drennan. "Pacific Albatross Biology and Conservation"

June 13. Frank Gill. Topic To Be Decided

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 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 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** and make sure you include your email address.

"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.

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.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Monhegan. Island

Sixteen birders including **Andrew Magee** and **David Peake-Jones** braved the new exit numbers on I-95 in Maine, and embarked for Monhegan under clear skies. Recent bad weather had brought large numbers of migrants to the island, but we had great birding weather all weekend, including good winds overnight which brought fresh birds onto the island. As usual, the intimate trails of the village provided unequalled opportunities to work on birding skills, and to get wonderful looks at most species. Highlights, in no particular order, included a secretive Sora calling each morning in the marsh, whose inscrutable depths also disgorged a bevy of **Blue-winged Teal** one morning. Several Common Nighthawks skittered over the same marsh in the evenings, and a Belted Kingfisher made a brief appearance. This year was a warbler bonanza. We tallied 22 species, including **Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Mourning Warbler**, in addition to **Louisiana Waterthrush**. There were huge numbers of flycatchers around, many of which sat exhausted on the

swim beach or the roads in town. Amongst these were (for me) unprecedented numbers of **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers**. While walking near the base of cemetery hill, Shirley Smigel happened to glance into a roadside tree, and found her gaze being returned by the unique red-rimmed eye of a **Black-billed Cuckoo**, which cooperated very nicely for the rest of the group as well. Our trip to Eastern Egg Rock on Sunday morning, though rough, yielded wonderful looks at a **Razorbill** (which buzzed the boat several times) and a very few Puffins, as well as Purple, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers, lots of Common, Roseate and Arctic Terns, and a Bonaparte's Gull. This was one of the best weekends on Monhegan in recent memory. We hope there will be many more to come.

dpj

Connecticut Lakes

The trip, led by **Scott Sumner** and **Tom Gagnon**, took place over the weekend of **June 18-20**. The group found approximately 72 species in the north woods. These included Common Loons, Wilson, Snipe, Osprey, and Bald Eagle. Local intelligence resulted in the group waiting expectantly for almost half an hour for the return of a nesting **Black-backed Woodpecker**. She eventually obliged, giving the group great looks at her and a nestling. There were four **Olive-sided Flycatchers**, and three **Gray Jays**. Common Ravens and Cliff Swallows were nesting conveniently next to the ice-cream stand. Both Golden- and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were evident, along with 15 species of warblers, and one Lincoln's Sparrow. Evening Grosbeaks and Purple Finches frequented local feeders.

Moose were not as visible as in some past years, but two bulls made an appearance, to the delight of the group.

Scott Sumner

New South Beach. Mk 1

We postponed the first of two annual trips to New South Beach to avoid an abysmal tidal situation on the originally scheduled date. Thus a small band set out on **July 31** across the Chatham Strait, in the capable hands of Outermost Harbor Marine, and under the dubious leadership of **David Peake-Jones**. We alighted at the extreme southern end of New South Beach several hours before high tide, hoping to find birds concentrating near the high water mark by the incoming waters. Perhaps due to the generally disastrous shorebird breeding season, we found surprisingly few birds on the beach, and certainly not the swirling shoals one hopes for in this season. We were well into the day before coming across a few **Red Knot** sleeping at the waters edge. It is hard not to draw dire inferences from their scarcity, given recent events in Delaware Bay. However, all the expected players turned out to be present somewhere, along with some unusual species. Shortly after coming ashore we found two **Common Eiders**, decidedly out of season. A couple of **Forster's Terns** flew by, along with several **Roseates** (distinguished in flight by call and obvious pallor), but incredibly found only one or two immature Roseate Terns sitting amongst the hordes of Common Terns on the beach. Late in the day, we got very close to several **Least Terns** resting pettily on the sand.

There were about 15 **Hudsonian Godwit** present, some of which deigned to wake up long enough to display their beautiful two-toned, upswept bills briefly before returning to slumbering anonymity.

The undoubted highlight of the trip (for most) was a (probably second Summer) **Sabine's Gull** consorting with a flock of Laughing Gulls. The bird had a slightly incomplete gray hood, and deep gray mantle. Even at rest, translucent windows were visible at the tips of the primaries. The bill lacked a conspicuous yellow tip, but the imaginative observer could make out slight paleness there. When the bird lifted off briefly, the full glory of its three-toned upper wing pattern was clear, and striking alongside the mundane Laughing Gulls. The primaries form a dark wedge at the outer edge of the wing, the secondaries form a second, pure-white wedge in the center of the wing, and the covert feathers establish a gray triangle across the wing bases and back. This was definitely new in the north-east for all of us, and entirely new to most. What a treat.

dpj

Coming Trips
(Please see the attached Fall Field Trip Schedule)

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

The HBC web gremlins have been working over the summer to add some features to our HBC web site. First up, the old web address is defunct. Please change your bookmarks to **www.hampshirebirdclub.org** if you want to find the web site easily.

Second, all **club officers and activities** chairs can be reached via email that ends in @hampshirebirdclub.org. For example, to ask a question of the president, mail goes to president@hampshirebirdclub.org. All of these new addresses are listed on the “about” link at the HBC web site. A **directory of commonly-contacted club members** is attached, at the end of the Fall Field Trip Schedule.

Third, a new, interactive feature has been added: a **club bulletin board**. There are sections about the Rare Bird Alert, local birds seen that don't quite merit the full-blown RBA, and information about upcoming (and past) field trips. Anyone is welcome to post sightings, links or other items on the bulletin board. As always, the HBC web site has information about upcoming programs, postings of current and past newsletters, and useful links to other birding sites. If you have comments or suggestions about the web site, please send them to **webmaster@hampshirebirdclub.org** (who else?).

WHERE ARE THE BIRDS?

For those who want the latest on birds being seen in the valley and beyond, there are two options. The **Voice of Audubon** maintains a report on birds being seen statewide. Call **1-888-224-6444** for a synopsis of interesting birds being seen, organized by region. **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. Alternatively, you may call him at **(413) 569 3335**, or leave a message in the Western Mass. section of The Voice.

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

Longmeadow Sandbar: Access Restrictions

The board of the Stebbins Refuge in Longmeadow, Mass., would like to inform the birding community that the Longmeadow Police Department has determined that Willy's Island - the island and sandbar in the Connecticut River just upstream of the refuge – is private property belonging to the homes on the riverfront. The purpose of this is to enable them to police parties that are being held on the island, but the effect is to make it illegal for anyone to be on the island without the permission of the adjacent landowner. We do not anticipate major problems for the occasional, lone birder but any group planning a trip that might involve wading out to the island should contact the Longmeadow Police Department at 413-567-3311, or one of the riverfront landowners, in advance.

Note that the dirt parking lot and river observation point on West Road are conservation land and remain publicly accessible, however, parking is no longer permitted on this parcel. Please park on West Road and walk in.

Thank you for your cooperation.

George Kingston

Board, Fannie Stebbins Refuge, Longmeadow

That's all we have room for this month.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

(413) 529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

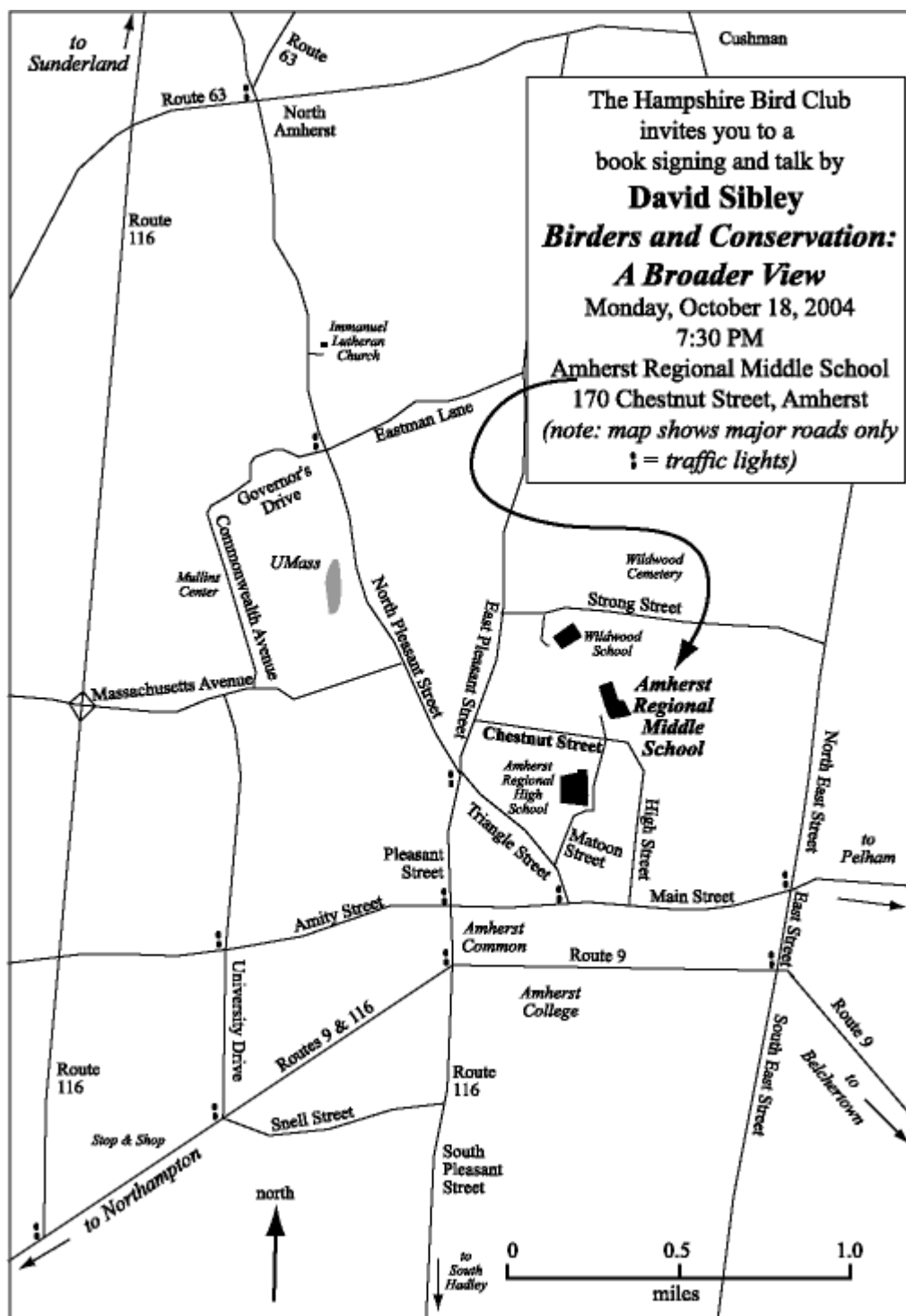


Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 21, No. 2

October, 2004



PROGRAMS

This Month

Monday, October 18: 7:30 PM at Amherst Regional Middle School
David Sibley speaks about Birders and Conservation: A Broader View

Birds are our most watched and most beloved wildlife, and they provide an entry to the natural world for millions of people. However, while birding increases in popularity, concerns about bird populations are also increasing. Understanding the current conservation problems requires an understanding of long-term ecological changes in North America, and real solutions will depend on recognizing our own place in the natural world, and the role of humans in shaping the environment of the 21st century. David will talk about insights gleaned from more than two decades of traveling around North America, studying birds in their wild (and not so wild) surroundings.

David Sibley is the son of the well-known ornithologist Fred Sibley. He began seriously watching and drawing birds in 1969, at age seven, and has since lived in California, Arizona, Texas, Florida, Georgia, New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey. Since 1980 David has traveled throughout the North American continent in search of birds, both on his own and as a leader of birding tours. This intensive travel and bird study culminated in the publication of his comprehensive guide to bird identification: "*The Sibley Guide to Birds*," in the fall of 2000, and a companion volume: "*The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*," in the fall of 2001. "*Sibley's Birding Basics*" appeared in the fall of 2002, closely followed by the release of "*The Sibley Guide to Eastern Birds*" and its western counterpart.

Mr. Sibley now lives in Concord, Massachusetts, where he continues to study and draw birds. You can learn more about his work at www.sibleyguides.com.

Coming Programs

October 18. David Sibley. "Birders and Conservation: A Broader View"

November 8. Don Kroodsmma. "Bird By Bird By Bike"

December 13. Member's Meeting. (Members Slide Show)

And now, exclusively for readers of the Online Newsletter (with nothing better to do), an intellectual teaser from the ornithological literature.

We all know why many male birds are brightly colored, right? The females key in on color, amongst other things, to choose a mate, and the males with the brightest colors are often selected for (they more often attract a mate than duller birds). There is a puzzling contradiction to this established understanding for at least one species in recent work by **Barbara Ballantine and Geoffrey Hill**. Their work is published originally in *Condor* 105: 593-598), and secondarily referred to in an article in *Birding* 36 (1): pp 24-25, which is the February 2004 edition of the ABA magazine.

Ballantine and Hill found that the brightness of male Blue Grosbeaks (which they manipulated in the study) exerted no effect on mate choice by the females. They postulate, based on anecdotal evidence, that females choose males with larger, more food-rich territories, which seem to be the brighter ones.

But if the color of the males means nothing to the females, why are male Grosbeaks still being selected for color at all? If, indeed, the brightest males get the superior territories, how can this relate to color? Surely territorial dominance is related to physical condition (perhaps correlated with the strength and frequency of singing). Are we supposed to believe that males look at brightness and make (perhaps involuntary) conclusions about how entirely rugged the other male is? So why then are Blue Grosbeaks still blue? Please send me any hypotheses....

Regional Directions for the October Program: David Sibley

From the North-west and North

Take I-91 South to Exit 26 for South Deerfield.

At end of the ramp, LEFT onto Rt. 10 for about 0.3 miles.

RIGHT onto Rt. 116 East toward Sunderland/Amherst for about 8 miles, passing through Sunderland.

Take the exit ramp for University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

At the end of the ramp, LEFT onto North Hadley St. (which becomes Massachusetts Avenue).

Now see the western part of the map on page 1.

From the North-east and East

Take Rt. 2 West (if necessary) to get to Exit 15 for Rt. 202.

Follow Rt. 202 SOUTH for approximately 16 miles.

RIGHT onto Amherst Road (large green highway sign for Amherst) for about 5 miles.

You will come to a traffic light at the corner of Amherst Rd (becomes Main St.) and North East St.

Now see the eastern part of the map on page 1.

From the South-east

Approach Amherst via Rt. 9 through Amherst.

Now see the southeastern section of the map on page 1.

From the South

I-91 North to exit 19 for Amherst, MA.

At the bottom of the ramp, RIGHT onto Rt. 9 East towards Amherst.

Proceed on Rt. 9 through the town of Hadley, for about 6 miles.

At the top of a long hill, you will come to a traffic light at the corner of Rt. 9 and South Pleasant St., with the Amherst Town Common ahead on the left.

Now proceed from the "Town Common" intersection on the map on page 1.

EDITORIAL

What with the excitement attending the impending arrival of Mr. Sibley, and since I watched the first debate last night, you will have to excuse some slight lapses in erudition this month. Hopefully there will not be too great a proliferation of literary inaptitude. With any luck, the nuchus of the newsletter will remain intact.

Oh, and by the way, there are great birds around. Gasp at the rich autumnal hues of migrating female Red-winged Blackbirds and Bobolinks! Look for the telltale flash of white wing bars in the swirling clouds of assembling blackbirds! Strain to determine the precise timbre of those geese bugling far overhead, seeking the faintest hint of a higher pitch which would suggest Snow Geese! Stretch that slight yellowness on the breast and the slightly dusky lores of a vireo to make it a Philly! This is the season of nuance and aesthetics. Luxuriate!

RENEWAL

If you have not yet renewed your membership, you will receive the tactful, yet pointed, dunning letter attached to this letter. We really need your subscription in order to fund speakers like David Sibley, and all the other activities of the club, so **PLEASE RENEW NOW**. Don't forget to sign up for the rare Bird Alert (on-line or phone tree) if that is your wont. Forms were sent in September. They are also available at the Website (www.hampshirebirdclub.org), and at the October meeting.

JUST JOINING OR RENEWING? HBC Newsletter Available On-line!

As you complete a membership form this year, please note that the club offers on-line versions of the newsletter as an alternative to the "hard copy."

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Your Bird Club Thanks You!

HBC WEBSITE BULLETIN BOARD

In the September newsletter we mentioned some changes and additions to the HBC website. One addition that may be of interest is the bulletin board. At present there are three sections to the bulletin board: the HBC rare bird alert archive, a less formal "what's being seen where" listing, and a give-and-take section about HBC field trips. These boards can be accessed by anyone with web access. The rare bird archive includes space for comments on the alerts (like "I saw this bird today at 7:30 in the big tree by the barn"). The more of us who use the bulletin boards, the more useful they will become, so please do. You can link to the boards from the front page of the web site, which is at www.hampshirebirdclub.org. If you have comments or suggestions about the web site, including new bulletin board topics, please send them to:

webmaster@hampshirebirdclub.org.

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- and 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**.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

The **New South Beach**, trip, scheduled for August 21 was rescheduled to the 28th because of threats of thunderstorms. On Saturday, **August 28**, five of us took the boat from Outermost Harbor to the southern tip of the beach, passing a huge herd of Gray Seals on the way. As in the past, the highlight of the trip was the variety of gulls, terns, and shorebirds, unequalled elsewhere in Massachusetts. We saw nineteen species of shorebirds, including our first-ever **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** (two) at New South Beach. We saw both species of **Godwit** (**Marbled** at 30 feet), and three **Whimbrel**. We also had three species of gulls, including **Parasitic Jaeger** right overhead, and a nice Lesser Black-backed Gull. There were six species of terns, including the first **Black Skimmers** (three) in years, and three **Black Terns** in various plumages. We celebrated with a hearty seafood dinner on the way home.

Bob Bieda



The sharp eyes of **Bob Bieda** and a number of others revealed a nice diversity of migrants (and, no doubt) some residents) in the **East and West Meadows** of Northampton on **September 12**. The trip began auspiciously with absurdly close looks at an immature Bald eagle on a power pole near the Ibis Pool. Assorted (and confusing) Fall Warblers included Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided-, Magnolia-, Prairie-, and Blackpoll Warblers, as well as American Redstart and lots of post-breeding Common Yellowthroats. There were several groups of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (unusually communal) and a nice Scarlet Tanager. Swamp Sparrows and Indigo Buntings were already showing up in migration.

Mike Locher

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. 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 October newsletter or on the Website).

Friday-Monday, October 8-11. Cape May, New Jersey. Overnight. Scott Sumner travels to Cape May to intercept southbound migrants. Space is limited, so contact Scott (413-253-5983) to reserve your spot. This trip is limited to members of the Hampshire Bird Club. (M)

Wednesday, October 20. Mid-week Sweep of the Connecticut Valley. Meet opposite Atkins Farm, corner Rt. 116 and Bay Rd. in Amherst. Call Harvey Allen: 253 7963, for meeting time

Saturday, October 16. Coastal Rhode Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron goes to the coast of Rhode Island to find migrants and lingering shorebirds. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for details and meeting information. (M)

Saturday, October 23. Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area, Vermont. All day. Either Al Richards or Mike Locher will lead this trip to southern Lake Champlain to see hundreds of Snow Geese, and maybe a few Ross's Geese and other seasonal specialties. Look for information in the October newsletter or call Mike (413-585-5864) for information. (M)

Sunday, November 7. Berkshire Lakes. All day. Tom Gagnon leads his annual trip to the lakes and ponds of the Berkshires in search of migrating waterfowl. Bring snacks, warm clothing, and a lunch. Meet at the Super Stop and Shop on King St. (Routes 5 and 10) in Northampton at 6:30 a.m. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to register or for further information. (M)

CHRISTMAS COUNT, 2004

Now that you can tell a Downy from a Hairy in driving rain (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 counts for Bald Eagle, Great Horned Owl, and Saw-whet Owl. In addition, there were a Baltimore Oriole and a count-week Long-eared Owl.

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 a willingness 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 19

Quabbin Count: To Be Announced.

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

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@comcast.net*

Project INSPIRE

Hampshire Bird Club is happy to announce its participation in Project INSPIRE: an initiative to promote outdoor recreational activities that are accessible to everyone. This program funded by the US Dept. of Ed. and a partnership between the MA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation and the Universal Access Program and All Out Adventures, Inc. is initiating its three-year grant with a focus on birding.

As we all know, birding is a multi-dimensional experience, and it can be enjoyed at many levels. Our participation in this program gives us the opportunity to introduce a pastime that we are passionate about to another segment of the community and to share our enthusiasm and knowledge with them. HBC's involvement can range from noting the accessibility of existing walks and trips to people with disabilities to designing specific activities for people with physical or cognitive disabilities.

If you would like more information about Project INSPIRE or are interested in attending training sessions to lead or co-lead inclusive walks contact Jan Ortiz at (413)-549-1768 or jtortiz@aol.com.

BOUTIQUE

If you have any financial instruments which are not completely maxed out, you might want to bring them to the October meeting. The boutique will be stocked with **new t-shirts in new colors** - stonewashed blue, khaki, and cactus green - at the October meeting. Sizes available range from Small to Extra, Extra Large. T-shirts cost \$10. Grey sweatshirts will also be available for \$20. Don't miss out!

HITCHCOCK CENTER

DEHYDRATING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: Sharon Gensler, Homesteader Extraordinaire
Sunday, October 17, 1 - 3 p.m.

ART, WRITING AND THE NATURAL WORLD; Rema Boscov, Artist, Poet, Writer
Saturdays, October 2, 9, 16, 23, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

STORIES FROM WHERE WE LIVE: A READING OF NATURE POETRY WITH WALLY SWIST:
Wally Swist, Poet
Sunday, October 10, 3 - 4:30 p.m.

LIVING WITH WILDLIFE: BATS! John Foster, New England Naturalist Training Center
Monday, October 25, 7 p.m.

MOOSE MEANDER: Alan Emond, Little Cree Spy Excursions, Tracker
Sunday, November 7, 1 - 5 p.m.

SENIOR HIKES: Jennifer Wiest and Guest Leaders
Tuesday, October 26, 10 a.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.

MISCELLANEOUS

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!

Broad Brook Coalition

Bird walk at Fitzgerald Lake with Bob Packard: October 9 at 7 AM. Use the Moose Lodge entrance off Cooke Avenue above the Northampton Walmart.

That's all for this month!
Until next time, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor
(413) 529 9541
newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Following are the ***Field Trip Policy***, ***Guidelines for Participants in Field Trips***, and the ***ABA Guide to Birding Ethics***

FIELD TRIP POLICY: 2004-2005
HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC. 9/12/03

1. Field trips are an essential activity of the Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. (HBC). They are an important way to increase members' interest in and knowledge of birds, birding, and bird habitat. Field trips are announced in the HBC newsletter, on the website and at monthly meetings.
2. Each year, all HBC members are asked to sign the HBC Release Form. Minor children (under 18) must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or another adult who has written authorization to be responsible for the child's care and conduct. Please request a form from HBC if you want to authorize another adult to accompany your child.
- 3 The HBC conducts two different types of field trips: Day Trips and Overnight Trips.

Day Trips are planned by the Field Trip Committee, who prepare the schedule and select leaders. Day Trips generally do not require extensive planning by the trip leader. No costs other than travel (see #4 below), meals, and incidental fees will be involved. If requested to do so in the newsletter, participants must call the trip leader in advance to express interest in the trip. This allows the leader more flexibility and the opportunity to change the trip itinerary should that seem desirable. Day trips are open to both HBC members and non-members unless restricted to members by the host site.

Overnight Trips (2 or more days, reasonable driving distance) are planned by the Field Trip Committee and approved by the HBC Board at least 3 months in advance (see #5 below). Such trips generally require more planning by the trip leader, including, for example, arranging for lodging and travel. Participants will be charged an amount equal to actual predetermined costs (including liability insurance) plus a prorated amount to cover reimbursement of the leader's expenses (see #5 below). All fees, including the trip deposit, shall be paid to the HBC Treasurer. If a participant needs to cancel, fees (less a 10% processing fee) will be refunded subject to the conditions outlined in the trip description. Any excess fees remaining after costs have been met will be refunded, unless they are less than ten dollars per person, in which case they will revert to the HBC treasury. Overnight trips are open to only HBC members who have signed a release form and who have completed a medical information form.

4. The HBC Board recommends that passengers reimburse owners of vehicles used on HBC trips for costs associated with vehicle operation. Recommended reimbursement is currently set at \$.30/mile plus tolls and parking to be shared equally by all persons in the car including the driver. The participants (not the leader) are responsible for making carpool arrangements.
5. Leaders of Overnight Trips shall:
 - a. Submit a trip plan to the Field Trip Committee, which must be approved by the Board at least 3 months in advance of the trip. The plan should describe in writing the nature of the trip as completely as possible. Include an itinerary, estimated cost, conditions of lodging and lead time needed for reservations, roughness of terrain, pace of the trip, extra costs not covered by the fee, date of deposit and final payment, date after which fee is not refundable, and provide a list of any specialized items that participants should take on the trip. Repeat trips lead by the same leader need only submit necessary changes to the previous plan. The Board can waive the 3-month planning time if there is a special birding opportunity.
 - b. Consult with the membership secretary before the trip to make sure that all participants have signed the HBC Release Form.
 - c. Be reimbursed for all costs associated with planning (i.e. long-distance calls, postage), lodging, and transportation during the trip.
 - d. Upon return, provide the HBC Board with an itemized account of all income and expenses related to the trip including receipts for major expenses.
6. The Field Trip Chair will send all participants in overnight trips the Field Trip Evaluation Form. The completed forms, to be returned to the Field Trip Chair, will help the Field Trip Committee plan future trips and provide feedback for leaders.
7. Leaders of both Day and Overnight Trips are asked to submit a Trip Highlights Report to the newsletter editor for publication in the next HBC newsletter.
8. HBC may ask professional bird touring organization to organize trips further away than the Overnight Trips. All responsibilities for planning the trip and all liability will be assumed by the touring organization. Such trips must be approved by the Board at least 6 months in advance.
 9. Trips not sponsored by the Club: As a courtesy to its members, HBC will announce birding trips organized by members or other organizations, but not sponsored by the club. Such announcements will be made in the newsletter (on a space available basis) and at meetings and HBC will assume no other responsibility for such trips.

Field Trip Guidelines for New Field Trip Participants and Drivers: 2004-2005 Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Field trips are one of the best ways to help the Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. (HBC) achieve its purpose: "to help its members and the general public enjoy birding and to educate them about birds, bird watching and bird habitats."

While these Guidelines are written primarily for new HBC Participants and Drivers, we hope that everyone will review this document, the ABA's Principles of Birding Ethics, the HBC Field Trip Policy, and the HBC Release Form.

All Participants:

1. Most trips described in the newsletter ask you to call the trip leader in advance. Please do so. It helps the leader plan the trip and you learn about any special arrangements or any change of plans.
2. Check with the leader before bringing children on a trip. Many of the trips are not appropriate for children. (All minor children (under 18) must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or an adult who has written authorization to be responsible for the child's care and conduct. See the Field Trip Policy for more information.)
3. All HBC members are asked to sign the HBC Release Form each year. If you did not receive a copy, please contact the Membership Secretary.
4. Be on time at the meeting place. If you plan to leave the trip early, you must inform the leader in advance.
5. Be prepared with binoculars, appropriate clothing (including protection from ticks), food and water. Assume the weather will be more extreme on the trip than at home and prepare accordingly.
6. Do not bring pets.
7. HBC encourages participants to carpool, both to reduce the environmental impact of the trip and to make the trip as safe as possible for all participants. We ask that the cost (presently \$.30/mile plus tolls and parking) be shared equally among the driver and all passengers. You should estimate the probable cost of the trip so that you will be able to reimburse the driver at the end of the trip. The participants (not the leader) are responsible for making carpool arrangements.
8. HBC always encourages new birders to participate in trips. It is the responsibility of all trip members, leader and participants, to help new birders learn both identification techniques and bird observing skills.
9. All participants are responsible for their own safety. Use common sense if you feel that any part of the trip is too arduous for you. Always check with the trip leader if you have any questions or medical concerns about the trip.

Drivers:

1. It is the responsibility of the car owner to meet all registration, insurance, and inspection regulations.
2. Please fill up your tank before the trip and set your odometer at the beginning of the trip.
3. If the trip is going to caravan, follow common sense rules to make sure no one is put in danger or lost.

Stay in the same order so that you know which car is in front of you and which car is behind you.

If the car behind you is stopped by a light, pull safely to the side of the road so that you can wait until that car catches up.

If you are driving the car or cars catching up with the group, slow down so that the lead/stopped cars can pull in front of you.

It is a good idea for all caravan drivers to have their lights on.

4. Always have a description of the next major stop from the trip leader so that, should the caravan become separated, you can join the group at the next major stop.

American Birding Association's
PRINCIPLES OF BIRDING ETHICS

Everyone who enjoys birds and birding must always respect wildlife, its environment, and the rights of others. In any conflict of interest between birds and birders, the welfare of the birds and their environment comes first.

CODE OF BIRDING ETHICS

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.

1(a) Support the protection of important bird habitat.

1(b) To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming.

Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas, or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area;

Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming, or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover.

Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.

1(c) Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings, and other people in the area, and proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance minimized, and permission has been obtained from private land-owners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.

1(d) Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist; otherwise keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

2. Respect the law, and the rights of others.

2(a) Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.

2(b) Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.

2(c) Practise common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.

3(a) Keep dispensers, water, and food clean, and free of decay or disease. It is important to feed birds continually during harsh weather.

3(b) Maintain and clean nest structures regularly.

3(c) If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure the birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals, or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.

Each individual in the group, in addition to the obligations spelled out in Items #1 and #2, has responsibilities as a **Group Member**.

4(a) Respect the interests, rights, and skills of fellow birders, as well as people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience, except where code 1(c) applies. Be especially helpful to beginning birders.

4(b) If you witness unethical birding behavior, assess the situation, and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action, and attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behavior continues, document it, and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.

Group Leader Responsibilities [amateur and professional trips and tours].

4(c) Be an exemplary ethical role model for the group. Teach through word and example.

4(d) Keep groups to a size that limits impact on the environment, and does not interfere with others using the same area.

4(e) Ensure everyone in the group knows of and practises this code.

4(f) Learn and inform the group of any special circumstances applicable to the areas being visited (e.g. no tape recorders allowed).

4(g) Acknowledge that professional tour companies bear a special responsibility to place the welfare of birds and the benefits of public knowledge ahead of the company's commercial interests. Ideally, leaders should keep track of tour sightings, document unusual occurrences, and submit records to appropriate organizations.

PLEASE FOLLOW THIS CODE AND DISTRIBUTE AND TEACH IT TO OTHERS



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 21, No. 3

November, 2004

Sorry about the late timing of the newsletter. This month's program is this coming Monday!

PROGRAMS

This Month

Monday, November 8 at 7:30 PM

Don Kroodsma recounts a birding adventure in **"Bird by Bird by Bike"**

(The program was originally scheduled for February, 2004)

This program will be 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.

Someday I'd like to..... For me, "someday" arrived during the summer of 2003, when my son and I biked the TransAm trail from coast to coast. We covered ten states: (Virginia, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and Oregon) between early May and mid-July. We were on the road for 70 days and covered 4500 miles (nearly 4,000,000 turns of the wheel). And why? To hear this continent sing, to listen to the birds tell their stories every inch of the way (except when it was raining, or hailing, or blowing big time). From the Atlantic to the Pacific, we listened to stories by grebes and geese and owls and goatsuckers and flycatchers and wrens and sparrows and vireos and thrushes and blackbirds and so many more. Come listen to some of their stories, and renew your commitment to make your someday happen sooner rather than later.

Don Kroodsma

Don Kroodsma was a chemistry major at Hope College, and discovered birds during his last semester there. Don attended the University of Michigan field station the following summer, taking "baby birds" and "big birds" courses simultaneously from the famed Sewall Pettingill. Thirty-five years ago, while in graduate school at Oregon State University, a singing wren in his backyard got Don started on what would be a life-long passion: listening to birds. Until recently, he was a professor in the biology department at UMass, but he's now out to pasture, listening full time.

Coming Up

December 13. Member's Meeting. (Members Slide Show)

January 10. Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll. "Birds of the Blackstone National Corridor"

February 14. Daniel J. Klem. "Glass: A Bird Conservation Issue"

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Sunday, October 3 proved to be fall birding at its best on **Prescott Peninsula** in the Quabbin. Those of us who passed through the gates onto this hallowed spit of land under the tutelage of **Tom Gagnon** found ourselves in a wonderland of clear ponds, stupendous old-field views, and breathtaking sunlit beaches. The turning trees, some just beginning to kindle with the coming of the long dark days, and some just plain disheveled after the excesses of summer, were hosts to sporadic waves of birds. Amongst the hordes of Yellow-rumped Warblers were the numerous Blackpoll, Palm-, and Black-throated Green warblers, with a few gems thrown in. A **Tennessee Warbler** flashed its pastel beauty at us for a few moments. We also found a few Pine Warblers and a Redstart. Andrew found a **Cape May Warbler** which would allow only one witness. Amongst many other birds were both Kinglets, Solitary- and Spotted Sandpipers, a Winter Wren, and plenty of Eastern Towhees. Under the eaves of the Five College Observatory, we found nineteen Keen-, and Small-footed Myotis bats. Butterfly highlights were the Ocala Skipper, Variegated Fritillary, and seven other common species. So, as twilight approached, we drove toward the entrance. It would have been a good day, and it wanted only a glimpse of the true wilderness quality of the place to make it special. Sure enough, striding down the road toward our cavalcade came a male **moose** with two enormous antlers. It quickly shied away into the trees, and vanished before we could get more than a glimpse, leaving naught but its impressive spoor in the sand of the road.

dpj



Geoff LeBaron, Chris Ellison, and Jim Marcum (where on earth were the rest of us?) toured coastal **Rhode Island** on **October 16**. Napatree Point and Watch Hill were windswept and scenic but that was it. For the first time, the trip visited Avondale farm in Westerly, Rhode Island. They found fabulous thickets, and recently ploughed fields replete with American Pipits. Misquamicut beaches yielded Greater Yellowlegs and Horned Larks. At Ninigret N.W.R. in Charlestown, Field- and White-crowned-Sparrows sheltered amongst more common fare in the thickets. Charlestown Breachway, Richmond Turf Farms, and the Carolina management area were pregnant with possibilities but nothing surprising came to light. At Trustom Pond in Charlestown, a raft of Ruddy Ducks graced the pond along with a Red-necked Grebe in surprisingly full plumage. Finally, Point Judith provided a great sunset.

The group found a total of 79 species including **Brant, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Bonaparte's Gull, and Rusty Blackbird.**

Geoff LeBaron



On **October 20**, **Harvey Allen** toured the **Connecticut River Valley** with a band of the faithful. They had good looks at an adult Bald Eagle, a first year Northern Goshawk, and a tremendous stream of migrating Common Grackles. Common Loons and Common Mergansers dominated the waterfowl.

Mary Alice Wilson

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Donna L. Rickerby: Granby, MA	Dan & Linda Marchant: Ware, MA
Paul & Ellen Mintzer: Southampton, MA	Carla Palmer: Amherst, MA
David C. McLain: Easthampton, MA	Peggy Macleod: Florence, MA
Paul Sievert: Greenfield, MA	Sally & Andy Fairfield: Shutesbury, MA
Jacob Morris-Siege: Amherst, MA	Alice Wilder: Amherst, MA

Coming Field 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, fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) 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).

Sunday, November 7. Berkshire Lakes. All day. Tom Gagnon leads his annual trip to the lakes and ponds of the Berkshires in search of migrating waterfowl. Bring snacks, warm clothing, and a lunch. Meet at the Super Stop and Shop on King St. (Routes 5 and 10) in Northampton at 6:30 a.m. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to register or for further information. (M)

Wednesday, November 17. Mid-week Sweep of the Connecticut Valley. Meet opposite Atkins Farm, corner Rt. 116 and Bay Rd. in Amherst. Call Harvey Allen: 253 7963, for meeting time.

Sunday, November 21. East Quabbin. All day. Tom Gagnon ventures to the far side of the reservoir for birds and perhaps a few porcupines. Due to Quabbin policy, this trip is open only to members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Bring snacks, warm clothes, and a lunch. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to reserve a place and make arrangements for meeting. (M)

Friday, November 26. Turkey Trot to Cape Ann. All day. Bob Bieda heads to the north shore looking for wintering sea ducks, Purple Sandpipers, seabirds, and perhaps a Snowy Owl. Bring snacks and warm clothing. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and get meeting information. (M)

Hampshire Bird Club Evening at WFCR

The HBC will shamelessly promote itself as we spend an evening answering phones at WFCR during their November fund drive. We will be taking calls, chatting and eating at the station (in the studio with the on-air hosts) on Saturday, November 20, from 6-10 PM. It's easy (training is provided – you just answer the phone). It's fun (sometimes there is live music in the studio and you get to see radio behind-the-scenes). Dinner is provided; all you need to do is bring yourself (and friend if you wish) and answer pledge calls as they come in. If you'd like to join the fun, sign up by calling or emailing **Dave Gross at 253-2897 or dgross@biochem.umass.edu**.

Date: Saturday, November 20

Time: 6-10 p.m.

Location: WFCR studios, Hampshire House, UMass campus

Not Too Late for the Rare Bird Alert!

Members can still sign up for the on-line Rare Bird Alert, but the telephone tree is now fixed for the balance of the membership year. To sign up for the Rare Bird Alert, either:

1) download and send in the Rare Bird Alert sign-up sheet from www.hampshirebirdclub.org or

2) contact Membership Secretary, Sue Emerson: 584 6736; membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS!

Rain or shine, snow or sleet, ready or not, it's time for the 104th 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. The Quabbin Count happens in the first week of January, and is always blessed with clear, balmy weather! 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 71st year) will be held on **Sunday, December 19**. For information contact Jan Ortiz (413) 549-1768; jtortiz@aol.com or Mary Alice Wilson (413) 548-9078; mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu. A potluck supper will be held at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst the evening of the count.

The **Quabbin Count** will be held on **Saturday, January 1**. Contact Scott Sumner (413) 253 5983; 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. At press time the potluck coordinator has yet to be determined. If you can help, please contact Mary Alice or Jan at the numbers above.

PROJECT INSPIRE!

There will be an **Accessible Birdwatching Open House at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton on Thursday, November 11, 9:30-11:30am**. This is a free indoor open house introducing birdwatching as a multidimensional activity, with accessibility options for people with disabilities. Everyone is welcome! There will be special emphasis on winter bird feeding and crow behavior. Weather permitting, short excursions on sanctuary trails will take place. **Advance registration required, please call All Out Adventures at 413- 527-8980**

Birding Plum Island, Saturday, November 13, 8am – 5pm.

Join an expedition from the Amherst area to one of the best birding places in New England with Ted Watt, Hitchcock Center naturalist, in search of bay ducks, sea ducks, and winter raptors. Enthusiastic birders of all levels are welcome. Bring binoculars, a bag lunch, and be prepared for any weather. **Hitchcock members \$25, non-members \$35**. For information and to register, call 413-256-6006.



That, with the exception of the following information on behalf of our good friends at Arcadia and Hitchcock, is it for this month.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

(413) 529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

THE BOILING POINT (Global Warming): Ross Gelbspan, Journalist and Author

Sunday, November 14, 1 - 3 p.m.

MOOSE MEANDER: Alan Emond, Little Cree Spy Excursions, Tracker

Sunday, November 7, 1 - 5 p.m.

BIRDING ON PLUM ISLAND: Ted Watt, Hitchcock Center Naturalist

Saturday, November 13, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

A NIGHT OF STARS ON MT. POLLUX: Tom Whitney, President, Amherst Astronomy Association and
The Astronomy Association

Wednesday, December 1, 7 - 8 p.m.

GEOLOGY TOUR: Joseph Kopera, local geologist

Saturday, December 4, 1 - 4 p.m.

SENIOR HIKES: Jennifer Wiest and Guest Leaders

Last Tuesday of each month (except Dec.), 10 a.m.

September 28, October 26, November 30, December 21

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

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Big Trees and Old Growth: Bob Leverett

November 6: 10 AM – 3 PM

Road's End Wildlife Sanctuary (Worthington, MA): Ron Wolanin

November 7: 10 AM – 12 NOON

West Nile Virus: What You Should Know: Claudia Sarati

November 9: 7 PM – 9 PM

Introduction To Digital Nature Photography (co-sponsored by Robert Floyd Photo Gallery) Robert Floyd

November 12, 19: December 10, 17, January 14, 21

All sessions 7 PM – 9 PM

Trees Without Leaves: Patti Steinman

November 13: 1 PM – 4 PM

Understanding and Mapping Natural Communities: Tom Lautzenheiser

November 14: 1 PM – 4 PM

Introduction To Nature Photography (co-sponsored by Robert Floyd Photo Gallery):

Robert Floyd

November 16, 23, 30. All sessions 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 21, No. 4

December, 2004

Hot on the heels of a major report in Britain documenting widespread catastrophic decline in the numbers of birds across a wide range of habitats, comes a smaller, far less heralded piece of news from British grasslands. Birds such as the Grey Partridge (I am using the English spelling, because I can, and because I miss it), Yellow Wagtail, Reed Bunting, and Corn Bunting use open grasslands and cereal cropping areas, and were found widely across Eurasia. These species have virtually disappeared from Britain due to the intensification of farming practices involving grasslands. Where once farmers harvested hay, (often only once per year, toward the end of the growing season), most now fertilize their fields intensively, often for silage, which may be harvested up to four times in a single year. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is working with the British Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to create a series of demonstration farms, modeling methods farmers can use to maintain their productivity and income with reduced impacts on grassland birds. In addition, the RSPB is helping dairy farmers, in particular, apply for DEFRA grants in order to implement such practices.

It is probably worth remembering, in a nation like this one, where we tend to think of conservation largely in terms of land set-asides, that this part of the country, at least, becomes more like Britain every day. We probably won't have the luxury of being able to afford many more large tracts of protected land in the north-east. Instead, the local survival of the Eastern Meadowlark, Bobolink, and others probably depends more on establishing collaborations with the stewards of multiple use grasslands. Dare I say it, with the boreal forest on the brink of greater exploitation for timber, the idea of paying resource harvesters to tread more gently is vital to many other groups of birds as well.

PROGRAMS

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 December 13 at 7:30 PM

Members Meeting

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

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

Coming Up

January 10. Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll. "Birds of the Blackstone National Corridor"

February 14. Daniel J. Klem. "Glass: A Bird Conservation Issue"

March 14. Margaret Rubega. "Eating at the Interface of Water and Land"

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

I have only one abiding recollection of the trip to **Dead Creek** on **Saturday, October 23**, under the tutelage of **Mike Locher**. Well, actually, make that two abiding recollections. The first is of our bemused carload of would-be goose watchers wondering why Mike was adding half an hour to the trip. When we got to Dead Creek....make that three abiding memories of the trip. I now recall that the porta-potty at the Addison General Store smelled worse than on any previous trip. At the traditional viewing area we were disappointed to find that, owing to this years crop rotation, the geese this year were far from the road in a ploughed field to which there was no access. With the exception of a few small groups of geese in aerial transit, we did not get close looks at them.

Now we come to what was originally my only abiding memory of the trip. Scanning across the landscape, we saw a powerful, dark raptor quartering over one of the shallow gullies which are common at Dead Creek, to the consternation of all birds present. Immediately the cry of "falcon" went up. This was followed by a number of exuberant taxonomic hypotheses, engendered by size and darkness of the bird. "(Expletive deleted) HUGE" numbered amongst these extravagant outbursts. The hallowed word "Gyrffalcon" was muttered conspiratorially by at least one who knew better than to dream. As we watched, the falcon put up a shorebird which, having eluded the initial attack, flew off at great pace. To our great surprise, the falcon pursued it for almost a mile across country, in almost straight flight, painstakingly gaining on the smaller bird until contact was imminent, only to have its quarry barrel roll away from immediate harm. Again and again this desperate pursuit was repeated: the falcon slowly overhauling the shorebird in a straight line, only to lose its hard-won momentum in maneuvers at close quarters. Finally, with at least this observer puncturing his palms with his fingernails, the shorebird dived into some unseen but, apparently, safe refuge, leaving the exhausted falcon to rest in a tree for at least half an hour. In spite of this hitherto unheard-of hunting technique, we eventually concluded that our bird was an unusually large, immature female **Peregrine Falcon**.

Oh, and now make that four abiding memories of the Dead Creek trip. Perched daintily, and unmistakably in the tippy-tops of a small tree in front of us was a gorgeous **Rough-legged Hawk**, of which we saw two for the day. Oh, and abiding memory number five would have to be our umpteenth **Northern Harrier** at extremely close range on a post, looking for all the world like an owl with its beautiful cinnamon facial disc turned to peruse us. Hmm, now that I think of it there were a great many more things to remember than I remembered..... Funny, that!

David Peake-Jones



Sunday, November 7 dawned just as you would want it to if going on a donut eating expedition to the **Berkshire Lakes** under the guise of a fall waterfowl trip. **Tom Gagnon** led thirteen birders on this annual outing. The weather was balmy and still. The donuts would be basking unsuspectingly with their sugar and cinnamon sunscreen liberally applied.

We did, of course, go through the required pretense, but the weather was just too nice for many ducks. Cleveland Reservoir showed a distant Surf Scoter and a Common Loon. The newly manicured northern end of Cheshire Lake concealed two **American Coot** and a tricky female **Northern Pintail** amongst the Mallards, and a **Brant** wandering incongruously on an impeccably manicured lawn on the far shore. Thirty one **Ring-necked Ducks** lurked at the southern end of Lake Cheshire with another five Pintail, nine **Green-winged Teal** and a **Pied-billed Grebe**. From Reilly's Pub on Rt 7, we scanned Onota Lake and found, amongst other things, four **American Wigeon**, another Pied-billed Grebe, and another Coot. Against the glare of the falling sun at the far end of Mudd Pond were at least 450 Ring-necked Ducks, with a few **Ruddy Ducks** thrown in for sport. There were seven **Common Goldeneye** on Richmond Pond.

The donuts at Bartletts, as predicted, put up no resistance whatsoever. A fine day was had by all.

David Peake-Jones (Reports continue→)

Tom Gagnon led a group to the eastern shores of the **Quabbin** on **November 21**. He reports 27 Common Loons, 19 Horned Grebes, one (1) Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and one (1) Northern Goshawk. The trip count was 40 species of birds and five (5) mammals.

On **Friday, November 26**, eight stuffed turkeys turkey-stuffed HBC members under the guidance of **Bob Bieda** left Sunderland at 5:30 am for the annual **Turkey Trot** to the **north shore** of Massachusetts. Our main goal was Snowy Owl since it was reported and would be a life bird and a state bird for people in our group. With this in mind we started at Salisbury State Park and worked south. It was bright and brisk. No Snowy at Salisbury but lots of **Red-throated Loons** in the harbor and **Gannets** right overhead. At Plum Island we had a nice assortment of ducks. We were talking birds with a couple who casually mentioned they had just had a Snowy Owl at the wardens (a place we had just left). Back we went and there we all got nice scope looks at a **Snowy Owl** perched on a log on the other side of the channel. Further down the island we saw a **Northern Shrike**.

At Andrew's Point on Cape Anne we were surprised by the amount of seabird activity considering the clear skies and west wind. We saw several **Black Guillemots** and groups of **Razorbills** working together with Kittiwakes at their fishing. We even had an adult **Black-legged Kittiwake** perched on the rocks right in front of us. A sight none of us can remember seeing in Massachusetts before. **Harlequin Ducks** and all three scoters were close and in great light.

As usual we balanced yesterday's turkey with seafood today. (That would be "Surf and Turk" (ed.))

Bob Bieda

Coming Trips

Wednesday, December 8. Mid-week Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. Local birding at its best with Harvey Allen. The group generally meets across the road from the Atkins Farms on Rt. 116 in South Amherst. Call Harvey (253 7963) for the meeting time.

Sunday, December 19. Northampton Christmas Count. I wanna say this is mandatory if you call yourself a birder.

Saturday, January 1. Quabbin Christmas Count. I wanna say this is mandatory if you call yourself a serious birder.

Saturday, January 8. Plum Island and Cape Anne. Bay ducks, sea ducks, Snowy Owls, winter raptors. Almost anything is possible. Call Bob Bieda (527 2623: blbieda@charter.net) to register and for meeting details.

New Field Trip Ideas?

The Winter-Late Summer Field Trip Schedule will be published in the January edition. Wouldn't it be great to have some new offerings? In order for this to happen, dear birder, you must cast off your long-treasured misconception that leadership has anything to do with encyclopedic bird knowledge, or breathtaking organizational skills. If you know a neat place to see birds, and you can get a bunch of more-or-less competent people there and back safely, then you can be a field trip leader. **Just cast off the fear and do it!**

The Field Trip Chair, Michael Locher-413-585-5864, mlocher@yahoo.com) is always looking for new trip ideas and leaders. Help him to help you. Make contact!

With the giving season upon us, it is pertinent to note that **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!

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

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

The **Northampton Christmas Count** (in its 71st year) will be held on **Sunday, December 19**. Contact Jan Ortiz (413) 549-1768 jtortiz@aol.com or Mary Alice Wilson (413) 548-9078 mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu.

The **Quabbin Count** will be held on **Saturday, January 1**. Contact Scott Sumner (413) 253-5999 ssurner@aol.com.

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

We are in need of food (hot or cold dishes) for the Christmas Count Potluck. The potluck starts at 4:30 PM before the 6:00 PM compilation. After a rigorous day (and in some cases night) in the field, there is no better way to cap-off a successful bird count than by partaking in a good, hot meal. Your help is needed in order to make this an evening to be remembered!

Please contact Sue Emerson (413/584-6736; spe33@hotmail.com) before December 7 and tell us what you will be bringing. We are seeking hot or cold main dishes, salads, deserts and snack foods (This is an ideal way to test that new recipe you have always been wanting to try-out). Sue will give you drop-off details.

Thank you, on behalf of all the Christmas Count faithful!

CONSERVATION

Meadows Alert

As active birders in both of the Northampton meadows, we need to keep aware of current events there:

East Meadows. A building has appeared near the airport and other potential builders are waiting in the wings to see what permits are given by the city. Even though the meadows are on the floodplain, land use regulations are vague. A "Save the Meadows" group has begun meeting with a goal of tightening up the regulations governing development. The next meeting is at the A2Z store on King Street at 7 pm on December 6. Birders, butterflyers, and other environmentalists who want to see open space conserved in the meadows may want to attend meetings and hearings, which will be coming up in the new year. If you would like to be on the email list to hear about these meetings, call or email Anne Lombard (586-7509) aslombard@comcast.net

West (Arcadia) Meadows. The Watras parcel of 65 acres has become available for purchase by Mass Audubon and Arcadia is responsible for raising the remaining \$90,000 for the purchase. After this acquisition there will be only a 19-acre in-holding within the grassland restoration area yet to acquire. It would be wonderful if we, who spend time in these meadows, observing both rare and not-so-rare species, could make a significant contribution to this effort. Please send your checks to The Grassland Campaign for Arcadia, 127 Combs Road, Easthampton, MA 01027.

*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@comcast.net*

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor
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