



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 23, No. 5

January, 2007

PROGRAMS

Monday, January 8 at 7:30 PM

Geoff LeBaron presents

“The Christmas Count: From Historical Conservation to 21st Century Citizen Science.”

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.

Most birders have probably participated in a Christmas Bird Count (or perhaps many). However, some of us may not realize that, just by counting birds and contributing data in a program like the CBC, we are helping further our understanding of how bird populations are doing on a hemispheric level!

Since its inception on Christmas Day of 1900, Christmas Bird Census (now “Count”) volunteers have been counting birds in specific areas in the Holiday season—and also keeping track of how much time and effort they expend to tally those birds. The CBC is the great granddaddy of what has come to be called Citizen Science—where volunteer citizens partake in an activity and contribute data to a larger program. Scoffed at by many scientists for decades, in recent times the CBC and other large volunteer-generated data sets have become the wave of future investigation for conservation biologists. Population declines and increases, wintering ranges creeping northward with time, and the patterns of irruptive species over the years can all be studied by investigations using Christmas Bird Count data.

This program will look at the CBC in past, present, and future tenses, including stories—as investigated using the online CBC tool set—about how some species of birds are doing on local, regional, and continental scales.



Geoff LeBaron has been the Christmas Bird Count Director for the National Audubon Society since 1987. He is also involved in various other Audubon Science programs including Great Backyard Bird Count, eBird, and the Important Bird Areas program (on the Massachusetts IBA Technical Committee).

After graduating with a B.Sc. in Biology from the University of Miami in Florida (1976), and completing a Master's Degree in Zoology from the University of Rhode Island in 1981, Geoff has moved on to a variety of professional ornithological experiences. He spent five years on staff at the Ornithology Department at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia (including Collection Manager at VIREO) and conducted ornithological field work for the Audubon Society of New Hampshire. Geoff worked both as an environmental educator for the State of Rhode Island, and for the Audubon Society of that state. This tenacious field biologist has also logged over 3000 hours of aerial observation time while counting marine mammals, turtles, and birds along the entire east coast of the United States. He led whale and seabird watching trips off Cape Cod for three seasons.

Geoff has led natural history tours to: Alaska, the Aleutian Islands, and the Kamchatka Peninsula; Big Bend and the Texas Hill Country; Baja California; Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands; Panama and Costa Rica; the Galapagos Islands and Ecuador; Argentina, the Falkland Islands, and Antarctica; and Australia and New Zealand. Oh, and by the way, Geoff is also the beloved program chair and a universally acclaimed trip leader for Hampshire Bird Club.

Coming Programs

February 12, 2007. Elijah Goodwin.

March 12, 2007. Wayne Petersen.

April 9, 2007. Sam Fried.

Song Learning In Icterids.

Massachusetts “Important Bird Areas” Program.

Birding the Dempster Highway (North-West Territories).

FIELD TRIPS

Please see the included Winter-Spring- Summer Field Trip Schedule.

CHRISTMAS COUNT INFORMATION and THANKS!

Thank you to the following: ALL team leaders and team members (both nocturnal and diurnal), feeder watchers, the Hitchcock Center, Sue Emerson, John Green, David Gross, cooks and clean-up crew.

Final data summaries will be distributed at the January meeting (mailed to participants unable to attend) and are available at hampshirebirdclub.org. **Provisional** and abbreviated results are included with this newsletter. Results of the Northampton Count, and counts for all the places you know are at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc. The Northampton count is MANO (MAssachusetts, NOrthampton) and will be posted by the time of the HBC January meeting.

Mary Alice Wilson

Pot Luck Thank You!!

The HBC "pot luck" coordinators - Sue Emerson, Helga Beatty, Sally Hills, the Wilsons and the Gross's - would like to thank you all for the delicious donations to the Compilation supper. There were 13 main courses, 8 salads, 10 desserts, 2 gallons of cold cider and 2 1/2 gallons of hot mulled cider. It was fine fare that was enjoyed by more than 60 birders! Looking forward to another successful year in 2007.

Sue Emerson, ad hoc "coordinator".

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Sustainable Investing: *Eric Bright from Pennyfarthing Investment Management.*
Tuesday, January 23, 7 p.m.

The Geobacter Project: Microbial Fuel Cells: *Derek Lovley, UMass Microbiology.*
Wednesday, January 24, 7 p.m.

Through the Seasons with Wildflowers: *Ted Watt, Hitchcock Center Naturalist.*
Wednesday, January 31, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Tracking Otter and Mink: *Alan Amond, Little Cree Spy Excursions.*
Saturday, February 10, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Residential Landscape Design Course: *Thomas Benjamin, Landscape Architect.*
Thursdays, February 1, 8, 15, 22, March 15, 22, 6:30 - 9 p.m.

Land Protection in the Pioneer Valley: Who, What and Why? *Terry Blunt, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation.* Held at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley.
Tuesday, January 30, 7 p.m.

National and Scenic Westfield River: *Carrie Banks, Department of Fish and Game.*
Held at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton.
Wednesday, February 7, 7 p.m.

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

That's it for this month! Left out this month was Mike Locher's Moran trip report (which will come your way in February). Results of the Northampton Christmas Count are presented on the following page. Held as it was amidst a disturbingly mild winter, the count featured a startling number of record high species counts. Also included is the Winter-Spring-Summer field trip schedule. Until next month, walk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones. Editor. newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org; 413-529-9541.

NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS COUNT HIGHLIGHTS

Sunday, December 17, 2006
(All 2006 numbers are provisional)

Species

79 on count day.

Individual Birds

47, 336.

Species High Counts in 2006	Number
Great Blue Heron	27
Peregrine Falcon	4
Eastern Screech Owl	82
Northern Saw Whet Owl	5
Red-bellied Woodpecker	152
Pileated Woodpecker	26
Common Raven	13
Tufted Titmouse	894
Carolina Wren	96
House Wren	1
Eastern Bluebird	474
American Robin	to be determined
American Pipit	61
Cedar Waxwing	1647
Dark-eyed Junco	3585
Red-winged Blackbird	128
Common Grackle	501
Brown-headed Cowbird	876
American Goldfinch	2094

Unusual Species	Number
<i>Red-shouldered Hawk</i>	1
<i>Merlin</i>	1
<i>Iceland Gull</i>	1 (count week)
<i>Long-eared Owl</i>	1
<i>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</i>	1
<i>Eastern Phoebe</i>	1
<i>Northern Shrike</i>	2
<i>House Wren</i>	1
<i>Gray Catbird</i>	1
<i>American Pipit</i>	61
<i>Chipping Sparrow</i>	2

The Summary Report with a great deal more detail (including historical data) will soon be online at www.hampshirebirdclub.org. Click on "Christmas Count." You may also review records for the Northampton Count since 1934 at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc. The name of the count is MANO.

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule, 2007

Please register with the field trip leader(s) and check this schedule's information when a phone number is given. The Field Trip Chair (Michael Locher – 413-585-5864) 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 \$0.40 per mile, as well as tolls and parking. See also the "Field Trip Guidelines for Participants" (September newsletter or on the Website).

Some trips have been marked with an asterisk (), which indicates that they are good trips for beginning birders. All trips have been coded as Easy (E) or Moderate (M) to give a rough indication of the pace and/or terrain, while a new coding (A) indicates that the trip is accessible. However, check all information with the trip leaders.*

JANUARY

Saturday, January 6. North Shore: Cape Ann to Plum Island. All day. Bob Bieda will head to the coast in search of wintering specialties like Eared Grebes, Barrow's Goldeneyes, Harlequin Ducks, Purple Sandpipers, and much more. Dress for cold weather. For meeting information call Bob at 413-527-2623. (E)

Saturday, January 13. Winter Finches. Three quarters of a day. Shirley Hammerschmith (413-586-6237) leads her annual trip looking, hoping, praying for winter finches, Bohemian Waxwings, and whatever else might be around. Meet at the Stop & Shop on King St. in Northampton at 8 a.m. (E)

Saturday, January 27. Coastal Rhode Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron looks for the birds of winter along the warm southern coast of New England. (Tip: dress like it won't be warm.) Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for meeting information and further details. (E)

FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 10. South Shore: Plymouth and Falmouth. All day. Al Richards heads to the coast south of Boston to find ducks, gulls, owls, and whatever happens to be around. Dress warmly. Call Al (413-665-2761) for meeting information. (E)

Wednesday, February 21. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) scours the local area in search of birds, and shows off his favorite birding sites along the way. Meet at 8:00 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

MARCH

Saturday, March 3. Plum Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron will seek out late-winter specialties like Rough-legged Hawks, Barrow's Goldeneyes, Glaucous Gulls, and Snowy Owls. Dress warmly. For meeting information, call Geoff (413-268-9281) as the date approaches. (E)

Wednesday, March 21. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) leads a local trip to find seasonal specialties, probably migrating waterfowl. Meet at 7:30 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Saturday, March 24. Connecticut River Waterfowl. Half day. Al Richards shows you to the waterfowl migrating along the Connecticut River. Call Al (413-665-2761) for meeting information as the date approaches. (E)

APRIL

***Saturday, April 14. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher tries to fill Bob Bieda's shoes in searching out early migrants. We're hoping to find Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and migrating Broad-winged Hawks and Ospreys. Meet at the Holiday Inn parking lot, Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7:00 a.m. (If anybody is interested, we may listen for American Woodcock nearby in the predawn hours. Call Mike (413-585-5864) to express interest and get meeting details.) (E)

Wednesday, April 18. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) looks for the early migrants Bob missed. Meet at 7:30 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

***Saturday, April 21. More Migrants.** Half day. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) looks for migrants, starting around Look Park in Northampton. Meet at 6:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the JFK Middle School on Bridge Street in Northampton. (E)

MAY

On the first three **Tuesdays** in May, we will offer guided walks at Wildwood Cemetery (E) in Amherst from 6:30 - 8:30 a.m. Meet in the small parking area just outside the entrance on Strong Street. On the first three **Thursdays** in May, we will offer guided walks along the rail trail (E/A) from 6:30-8:30 a.m. Look to the newsletter for leaders and more details as the time approaches.

Sunday, May 6. Spring Migration in the Quabbin. All day. Tom Gagnon guides birders through the Quabbin in search of its varied avifauna. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well ahead of time for meeting information and to register. (M)

Saturday, May 12. Mt. Auburn Cemetery. All day. David Peake-Jones goes to Boston's most historic cemetery, which is also one of the Eastern Massachusetts' birding hotspots, to see what happens to fly in. The numbers and variety can be astonishing. Call David (413-529-9541) for meeting information. (E)

Wednesday, May 16. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) shows off his favorite birding spots. Meet at 7:00 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Saturday, May 19. Coastal Rhode Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron heads to our petite southern neighbor for the warm (really, this time) season to track down migrants and other seasonal specialties. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for meeting information and further details. (E)

Friday, May 25 – Monday, May 28. Monhegan Island. Overnight trip. Betsy Higgins and Andrew Magee guide birders on the Hampshire Bird Club's annual pilgrimage to this charming Atlantic isle. Not only is the island charming, but the migrating birds can be astonishing. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) to register. (E/M)

Saturday, May 26. Poor Man's Monhegan. All day. Bob Bieda guides the rest of us to Massachusetts' less artsy, but no less birdy, isle. Past trips have found Wilson's Phalaropes, Piping Plovers, Seaside Sparrows, Orchard Orioles, and Evening Grosbeaks. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and get meeting information. (E)

JUNE

Saturday, June 2. Westover Air Force Base. Half day. Pending permission, Bob Bieda will lead his annual trip into New England's premier grassland habitat, looming for Upland Sandpipers, Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only, and is cosponsored by Project Inspire. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E/A)

***Saturday, June 9. West Quabbin ramble.** Half day. Dave Gross offers a trip "through his backyard" and will be listening for nesting migrants, permanent residents, and hiking through blooming Mountain Laurel. If this sounds appealing, email or call David (413-253-2897) for further details. (M)

Sunday, June 10. Mt. Greylock. Full Day. David Peake-Jones will revive this never-predictable trip to our states' highest point. We can expect some high altitude breeders, great views, and maybe even the elusive Mourning Warbler. Please expect to hike up to a mile or two on the AT and other rough hiking trails. Please call David (413-529-9541) for meeting details. (M)

Saturday, June 16. Hammonasset Beach State Park, CT. All day. In a new trip for the Hampshire Bird Club, Betsy Higgins goes to the coast of Connecticut to find unusual sparrows, rails, and other seaside denizens. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for details as the date approaches. (E)

Wednesday, June 20. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) leads birders through the local landscape, seeking out late migrants. Meet at 6:00 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Friday-Sunday, June 22-24. Connecticut Lakes, NH. Overnight trip. David Peake-Jones and Mike Locher fill in for Tom Gagnon this year. They will be leading this trip to northern New Hampshire. Migrants, boreal specialties, and moose abound. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Contact David (413-529-9541) or Mike (413-585-5864) to register. (M)

JULY

Saturday, July 28. New South Beach, I. All day. David Peake-Jones goes looking for early migrating shorebirds, especially Red Knots. Bring a lunch, a jacket, water and \$20 for the boat ride. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (M)

AUGUST

Saturday, August 25. New South Beach, II. All day. Bob Bieda leads birders in their quest for late shorebird migrants, including Curlew Sandpipers and Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits. Bring a lunch, a jacket, and \$20 for the boat ride. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register. (M)



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 23, No. 6

February, 2007

In this edition: programs for this month and the near future, field trip reports and February trips, the MONHEGAN ISLAND trip announcement, an offer from Bird Observer (Massachusetts's own birding magazine), programs coming up at other local organizations, a musing on Saw Whet Owls, and some dubious humor. I hope you find some of it useful!

PROGRAMS

Monday, February 12 at 7:30 PM

Elijah Goodwin delves into Song in Blackbirds: More Than Meets the Ear!

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.

Elijah provides the following introduction to his program.

Are the songs of blackbirds beautiful? I think so, but I'll let you decide for yourself. In this presentation I'll make the argument that they are surprisingly complex and interesting. We will explore the song patterns seen in local wild blackbirds and their resident relatives from the south. I'll discuss what I've learned about blackbird song learning from aviary experiments and why these experiments might explain some of the patterns we see in the wild. The presentation will feature lots of songs and opportunities to judge with your own ear and eye. With the spring return of Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles fast approaching, I hope this presentation will help you to listen to blackbirds this spring with a newly critical and open ear.



Elijah Goodwin is currently in his final year as a Ph.D. Candidate in the Organismic and Evolutionary Biology Program at UMass-Amherst. His dissertation explores the evolution and ecology of improvisation and invention as song learning strategies in birds, particularly in the blackbirds. He has researched song learning in Red-winged Blackbirds and grackles both in artificial aviary settings and at field locations in South Carolina, Florida, and western Massachusetts.

Elijah also has a M.Ed. in secondary science education from Boston College and a B.S. in wildlife biology from the University of Massachusetts. He has a wide variety of field experience including: radio tracking raptors out west, studying song and reproductive success in Chestnut-sided Warblers in the Berkshires, studying the song of Sedge Wrens and Sierra Madre Sparrows in the central volcanic highlands of Mexico, censusing breeding birds in beaver-impacted areas in the Adirondacks, and mist-netting migrants up in the tree canopy at Hampshire College.

Elijah also interned with the Cape May Raptor Banding Project in NJ, where he personally banded over a thousand hawks and owls during migration monitoring efforts. He currently lives in Greenfield, MA with his wife and 4 year old daughter (who already knows more bird songs than her mother).

Coming Programs

March 12, 2007. **Wayne Petersen.**
April 9, 2007. **Sam Fried.**
May 14, 2007. **Paul Sievert.**

Massachusetts "Important Bird Areas" Program.
Birding the Dempster Highway (North-West Territories).
The Short-tailed Albatross.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Moran WMA, December 10, 2006

Mike Locher led Hampshire birders to **Moran Wildlife Management Area** in Windsor to look for winter specialties. The group had a good look at an adult **Northern Shrike**, and an immature Bald Eagle. The spruce groves supported numerous Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Black-capped Chickadees. In the fields and transitional habitats there were scattered Cedar Waxwings and Dark-eyed Juncos. Winter finches were notable by their absence, as has been the case throughout this area this season.

Mike Locher



North Shore/Cape Anne. January 7, 2007

A hardy group of HBC members led by **Bob Bieda** donned long underwear and several more layers ... ooops, I guess I can't use my standard report form for the January trip to the **North Shore and Cape Anne** this year. Decked out in Hawaiian shirts, five of us spent the day in the warm sun looking at **King Eiders**, **Barrow's Goldeneyes**, **Iceland Gulls**, **Razorbills**, a **Dovekie** and many other beautiful but more typical winter species on Cape Anne. When is the last time you saw "Dovekie" and "warm sun" in the same sentence? We saw 59 species including all the winter specialties and never saw our breaths. Temperatures reached into the upper 60s as Harlequin Ducks and Gannets just beamed in the sunlight. Some other species of note: Red-necked Grebe, Eared Grebe (appears to be chained to the bottom at Niles Beach), Ring-necked Duck, Peregrine Falcon, Glaucous Gull, Nelson's Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Bonaparte's Gull. Enough of this gloating, next year it will be back to snow plows and bitter, biting wind.

Bob Bieda

Editors note: We have not had to wait for next year, as it turns out! dpj



Coastal Rhode Island. January 27, 2007

With Geoff LeBaron this year (in approximate order of height) were Betsy Higgins, Marcia Merithew, Shirley Hammerschmith, Dan Marchant, Dave Mako, Scott Surner, Bob Bieda, David Peake-Jones, Chris Ellison and Dennis McKenna. The weather offered a brief reprieve from single digit temperatures (the thermometer soared to the high twenties), with almost no wind. The promise of snow showers and glowering skies were not enough to dampen our enthusiasm much. The focus of the day was to find as many as we could of the interesting assortment of rare geese being reported from both ends of the state.

We began at the Avondale Nature Preserve in Westerly. Despite the initial impression of birdlessness, the weedy fields eventually offered up a horde of American Tree Sparrows and Song Sparrows, interspersed with which were a Savannah Sparrow, two **Swamp Sparrows** and a **White-crowned Sparrow**. On our way to the first pit stop of the day, we peered over an overgrown stone wall at a mass of Canada Geese on a golf course, and found a **Greater White-fronted Goose** amongst them. These birds normally breed in Alaska and the far north and conduct their migratory lives far to our west. They have a rather homely look about them, being portly and very erect, for all the world like one of the domestic geese we so often dismiss with a flick of the binoculars. The bird we saw had a coral-pink bill with a striking white band around its base, a brownish front with black wheals across it (natural markings, not injuries) and bright orange legs.

Refreshed and (in some cases) lightened by our pit stop, we made our way across the Weekapaug breachway, where there were several Common Loons, Red-breasted Mergansers, and a peripatetic Belted Kingfisher.

Along the recreational wastelands of the Misquamicut beach area we found Horned Larks bustling about on a grassy verge.

continues over→

Coastal Rhode Island. January 27, 2007. (continued)

Wandering through the overgrown thickets of Ninigret NWR, we found a beautiful group of Hooded Mergansers and Common Goldeneyes eking it out in the receding open water of the bay. Amongst them (taking a brief swim break from its customary rock) was the resident winter **Lesser Black-backed Gull** which, at close range, allowed us to see its characteristic long-winged appearance and doleful gray face. Staying behind to take photographs, Scott was able to add two Barrows Goldeneyes to the tally.

Moving on to the White Brook Fish Hatchery, we found a number of beautiful **Northern Pintail**, several **American Wigeon**, and a **Green-winged Teal** taking advantage of the fast-moving open water.

Beside a non-descript assortment of boats and lobster pots at the URI in Kingston, we found the **Clay-colored Sparrow** which had recently been reported at the location. It obliged us by feeding in the open long enough for me to convince myself that I would not have written it off as a Chipping Sparrow had I encountered it without warning. This certainty has already evaporated.

The remainder of our day was spent further to the east, searching for two Pink-footed Geese which have been reported in recent days from a relatively well-defined region, centered on the Hammersmith Farm just out of Newport. Despite the good odds and a lot of searching, these exciting birds eluded us, as did a Barnacle Goose and several Cackling Geese that have been in the region. We did, however, find a group of energetic Brant on a playing field in Fort Adams. Geoff noted that since the severe pollution-related declines of eelgrass beds in the northeast, he and others have made intriguing observations of Brant apparently diversifying into terrestrial feeding niches. Hope springs eternal. Snow Buntings along a nearby roadside were nice, but again, not to be confused with the rare geese we sought. Detouring briefly northward in search of these same geese, we found them once again NOT amongst the impressive aggregation of Canada Geese and Ruddy Ducks on Saint Mary's Reservoir in Portsmouth.

Ending the day at twilight at Sachuest Point, we found beautiful Harlequin Ducks and a flock of mixed Scaup, all richly lit by the fading embers of the day. Two birders from Pennsylvania told us they had found the Barnacle Goose just across the river from one of our search locations in the late afternoon. In birding, as in life, you may not find what you seek, but you will always find good things along the way.

David Peake-Jones

Coming Trips

Please see also the (green) "Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule, 2007," published previously, but note that, due to extensive changes, a revised version of schedule will be issued in March. February trips are as published.

Saturday, February 10. South Shore: Plymouth and Falmouth. All day. Al Richards heads to the coast south of Boston to find ducks, gulls, owls, and whatever happens to be around. Dress warmly. Call Al (413-665-2761) for meeting information. (E)

Wednesday, February 21. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) scours the local area in search of birds, and shows off his favorite birding sites along the way. Meet at 8:00 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

See also the next page for the announcement of the MONHEGAN ISLAND trip this year!!

MONHEGAN ISLAND: A Birding Pilgrimage

Memorial Day Weekend (May 26-29), 2006

Ask any of the best birders in the northeast where to go for the ultimate spring birding experience, and most will mention one place: Monhegan Island. Ask most Hampshire Bird Club veterans to name the five most memorable moments in their times with the club, and most will mention the Monhegan Island trip. Here's why.

During the Spring, migrant songbirds moving northward up the Atlantic seaboard are sometimes pushed out over the ocean by storms, and have to fight their way back toward the safety of land. Monhegan Island lies about twelve miles off the coast of Maine and is often a haven for exhausted birds to recuperate before resuming the perilous journey northward. We will arrive on the island on the Friday of Memorial Day weekend, without vehicles, and immerse ourselves in the gentle rhythms of island life. We'll find migrant songbirds throughout the tiny village of Monhegan, sheltering in the numerous apple trees, sometimes picking through the sea-wrack on the town beach for sand-fleas, or even hiding in the lobster pots piled almost everywhere. Each day will bring fresh migrants to the island, and a storm could even produce one of the fallouts of birding legend. Rarities can and do crop up at any time. When the birding slows down, we can venture off on any of the island's numerous walking trails to Lobster Cove, the stupendous seaward cliffs, the Seal Rocks (aptly named), or the Enchanted Forest.

Most of us will leave the valley early on Friday, May 26, and arrive on the island late that afternoon. We will stay at the rustic Trailing Yew, which will lay on breakfast and dinner each day, including a local lobster dinner. This is the perfect opportunity to slow down, REALLY learn the birds, and remember what life *should* be about. We depart the island at mid-day on Memorial Day, and most will be home by early evening, traffic permitting. This trip is open only to members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Registration is by deposit.

For further details call Betsy Higgins (586 7585) or Andrew Magee (586 1509).

LIBRARY

HBC has a substantial library, located at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst.

Hours are those of the Hitchcock Center:

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. from Tuesday through Friday, and

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday.

The collection is catalogued on-line at www.hampshirebirdclub.org.

The library contains birding resources in various media, including field guides, bird-finding guides to almost every major birding destination in the U.S., and overseas, natural histories, periodicals and videos. Items can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. Henry is happy to bring items to meetings, if you give him a few days in advance. You can reach him at (413) 549 3722.

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 and Bob Zimmerman make up our **Conservation Committee**. The club is looking for ideas on how we can contribute to habitat conservation in our area. Contact Anne at (413) 586 7509, or Bob at (413) 585 0405. The committee email is conservation@hampshirebirdclub.org.*

Some winning entries from the 2006 Washington Post neologism contest.

“**Coffee**” (n.): the person upon whom one coughs.

“**Flabbergasted**” (adj.): appalled over how much weight you have gained.

“**Abdicate**” (v.): give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.

Bird Observer: Focus on Western Mass

The upcoming February issue of *Bird Observer* magazine will be devoted to birding in western Massachusetts. The issue will include the following articles:

- Western MA Rarities by Seth Kellogg and Jim Smith
- South Hadley White-tailed Hawk by Scott Surner
- Where-to-Go feature on the Sod Farm in Northfield by Mark Taylor and Hector Galbraith
- Important Bird Area (IBA) series installment on the Berkshires by Brooke Stevens and Wayne Peterson
- Review by Mark Lynch of Berkshires author Andrew Blechman's new book "Pigeons: The Fascinating Saga of the World's most Revered and Reviled Bird".

In conjunction with this issue, *Bird Observer* is offering all residents of western Massachusetts (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties) the February magazine as a free bonus issue when they take out a new subscription. More information about this journal, including a subscription form, can be found on the journal's web site, <http://www.massbird.org/birdobserver>.

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

TRACKING OTTER AND MINK

Alan Amond, Little Cree Spy Excursions
Saturday, February 10, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

LIVING WITH WILDLIFE: BEAVER SOLUTIONS

Mike Callahan, Beaver Solutions
Tuesday, February 13, 7 p.m.

WINTER TREE & SHRUB ID

Brayton Wilson, UMass Professor Emeritus
Saturdays, February 17 & 24, 9 a.m. – noon

NATURAL HISTORY OF TEA

Bob Heiss, Author and Co-Owner of Cooks Shop Here
Tuesday, February 20, 7 p.m.

SPRING BIRDING COURSE

Scott Surner, Instructor
Evening Classes: February 28, March 21, 28, April 11, 25, May 2, 9, 16, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Field Trips: March 3 (5 a.m.), March 24 (5 a.m.), April 7, 14, 21, 28, May 5, 12, 19 (5 a.m.), June 2 (5:30 a.m.), generally 7 a.m. – noon

QUABBIN EXPLORATION

Ted Watt, Hitchcock Center Naturalist
Saturday, March 3, 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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

Another Reason for the Christmas Count

Our Encounter with A Saw Whet Owl

"It's the Christmas Count. We should look!"

There are many ways to conduct the Christmas Count. Most of us cast a cursory glance at the empty parts of our areas, and concentrate on the bird-rich habitats close to roads, thus reducing the wear and tear on our all-too-well-worn bodies and spirits. However there are some of us for whom no vacant thicket can go unpished, no tiny copse unsearched, and no empty field untrodden.

It was with this hopelessly inefficient strategy in mind that we found ourselves slogging across a waterlogged brushy field in the shadow of Mt Warner in Hadley, Massachusetts on December 17, adding scattered Chickadees, Dark-eyed Juncos and Tufted Titmice to the time-honored database of the Northampton Christmas Count. These records, of course, gave us twinges of virtuousness, but our secret hopes were fast being dimmed by our waterlogged feet and aching backs.

Toward the edge of the field, we came to an area of young white birch and aspen with scattered white pines.

"It's the Christmas count. We should look!" we thought.

So we did, fighting our way through heavy undergrowth to peer hopefully into each white pine. It was, so far as the first fourteen trees were concerned, a fruitless exercise. After examining hundreds of promising evergreens in my time as a birder, I had yet to find an owl in any of them, and I had concluded that, so far as we mortals are concerned, there would never be one. It was with this gloomy reflection already reinforced in my mind that we blundered through the brambles surrounding tree number fifteen. Unthinkably, we almost walked into the most perfect Saw Whet Owl you can imagine. Suddenly, the brambles, the Christmas Count, and all other trappings of the real world were forgotten. The world contracted to a tiny bower framed with green needles. We were three souls, held in a web of wonder and, presumably, fear.

It suddenly became desperately important that the bird not fly. The image of this tiny creature blundering through the alien brightness of day to escape our intrusion kept us both frozen to the spot. Fortunately, the owl sat entirely motionless as we retreated to a more respectful distance, and nervously took several pictures. Only its wide eyes and breathing betrayed what it might be feeling. We spoke softly to it, as a gesture of reassurance. This was both an obviously pointless and absolutely unavoidable reaction to how we felt about being in its world. After a few minutes, it began being distracted by nearby chickadees, and we were delighted to see its eyes narrowing, almost as if it were contemplating going back to sleep. With a gentle goodbye, we carefully replaced the foliage and departed through the brambles to resume our count.

Our owl is a thing of hope. Hope brought us to it through the fields on a December morning. Hope has us at the shore in the desolation of January. Hope makes our hearts leap with the first flush of gold in the April woods. Hope slows our steps through the singing woods of June, and hope brings us to the mountain-tops in September. Hope is what birding really is.

We began our search of the pines with a simple thought:

"It's the Christmas Count. We should look!"

It turns out we were only half way to the truth.

It's winter. It's a pine tree. You should always look!

David Peake-Jones and Betsy Higgins

Northampton Christmas Count

December 17, 2006

More winners from the *Washington Post* contest

"Negligent" (adj.): describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown.

"Lymph" (v.): to walk with a lisp.

"Gargoyle" (n.): olive-flavored mouthwash.

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Eagles at Quabbin: *Patti Steinman, DCR Staff, Saturday, Feb. 3, 10:00 am-2:00 p.m.*

Natural Wild and Scenic Connecticut River: *Carrie Banks, Feb. 7, 7-9 pm*

Tracking large Mammals: *David McLain, Feb. 10, 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**.*

GREAT FALLS DISCOVERY CENTER PROGRAMS (abridged)

Hidden Landscape: A Film Preview Event.

Thursday, Feb. 1 from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm:

Opening for Stephen Gingold's Nature Photography.

Saturday, Feb. 3 from 2 pm - 4 pm

"Special Places in the Valley" Series: National and Scenic Westfield River: *Carrie Banks.*

Wednesday, Feb. 7 at 7:00 pm. Held at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton.

Tracking the Wily Coyote & other Canids: *David Brown*

Thursday, February 8 from 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Tracking Wild Canids: *David Brown*

Saturday, Feb. 10 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 NOON. Pre-registration required. Fees.

Accessible Birding: *Co-hosted by Hampshire Bird Club.*

Saturday, Feb. 10 10am – Noon

Sense of Wonder (A one-woman play on the life and work of Rachel Carson): *Kaiulani Lee.*

Thursday, Feb 22 from 7pm – 9pm at Mount Holyoke College, Blanchard Campus Center.

Massachusetts Turtle Symposium: *Various presenters including Tom Tynning*

Friday and Saturday, February 23-24, 2007.

***Great Falls Discovery Center** is located at 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA
Open Fridays and Saturdays from 10 AM to 4 PM Phone (413) 683 3221*

Welcome New Members!

Deborah Levy: Northampton

Barbara Snook: Westhampton

New members joining the club between January 1 2007 and September 1, 2007 will not need to renew until September, 2008. This means up to seven months of free membership! What better reason do you need to join now?

That's it for this time.

Until next month, 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 23, No. 7

March, 2007

PROGRAMS

Monday, March 12 at 7:30 PM

Wayne Petersen speaks about The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.

The greatest single global threat to bird populations is the destruction and degradation of habitat. In response to this situation *BirdLife International*, an international bird conservation organization based in the U.K., established the Important Bird Area (IBA) Program. *BirdLife*, using globally appropriate avian habitat and abundance criteria and working with a network of international bird conservation partners, set an agenda to identify IBAs around the world. *BirdLife's* U.S. partner, the *National Audubon Society*, assumed the lead for coordinating state-based IBA programs in the United States.

In 2001, *Mass Audubon*, in cooperation with *National Audubon*, initiated an IBA Program in Massachusetts. By working with knowledgeable birders, representatives from state and federal agencies, NGO organizations, and avian scientists, 79 IBAs throughout the Commonwealth were identified, nominated, and officially recognized.

Wayne will illustrate how IBAs are rapidly becoming the “*currency for international bird conservation.*” The program will also include a description of some of the more important Massachusetts IBAs, their habitats and special bird life, and the particular conservation problems existing at different sites. In addition, Wayne will discuss how local bird clubs can help advance the success of the IBA Program throughout the Commonwealth.



Wayne R. Petersen is Director of the Massachusetts Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program at the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Wayne was the senior Field Ornithologist at Mass Audubon for 15 years before assuming the position of IBA Director in 2005. As co-author of *Birds of Massachusetts* (1993) and co-editor of the *Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas* (2003), his knowledge of the habitats, distribution, and status of the Commonwealth's bird life is both extensive and wide-ranging.

As New England Regional Editor for *North American Birds* magazine and editor of the *New England Christmas Bird Count*, Wayne's knowledge of the seasonal distribution of New England bird life gives him a wide perspective when thinking about Important Bird Areas in Massachusetts and beyond. He is the recent past Chair of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC) and is an associate member of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee.

Coming Up

April 9, 2007.

Sam Fried.

Birding the Dempster Highway (North-West Territories).

May 14, 2007.

Paul Sievert.

The Short-tailed Albatross.

June 11, 2007.

To Be Announced

June Program Up In the Air!

Our June speaker, Paul Green, has had to cancel his proposed program. He is moving to Arizona. Geoff LeBaron is working on a replacement.

FIELD TRIPS

Please see the **Revised** *Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule*. This replaces the previous schedule issued in January (on green paper).

Connecticut Lakes, New Hampshire. Friday, June 22 – Sunday June 24, 2007.

Mike Locher and David Peake-Jones will be doing their best to deputize for Tom Gagnon this year on our trip to the “Great North Woods.”

Less than a mile south of the Canadian border in extreme northern New Hampshire, our beloved Connecticut River begins as a stream one can almost literally step over at Fourth Connecticut Lake. From here, the river flows through the progressively larger Third, Second, and First Connecticut Lakes, and Lake Francis, before hurrying through Pittsburg, New Hampshire, and on to points south. The streams, lakes, swamps and spruce woods of the Connecticut Lakes are superbly scenic, and provide the closest large tract of boreal forest for us in New England. We will stay in comfortable cabins at Powderhorn Lodge, and make our way daily along Rt 3 (part of which is aptly nicknamed Moose Alley) and adjacent logging roads to visit the various habitats which make up the lakes experience.

There should be great opportunities to observe nesting warblers, including Bay-breasted and Blackpoll, perhaps even the rare Cape May Warbler. Northern finches like Evening Grosbeak and Pine Siskin should be around, along with boreal specialties such as Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Olive-sided Flycatcher and White-winged Crossbill. If we are really lucky, we might come across jewels like the Spruce Grouse or Black-backed Woodpecker.

Please contact David Peake-Jones (413 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com), or Mike Locher (413 585 5864, mlocher@yahoo.com) for further information or to sign up.

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 2

Breeding Bird Atlas projects enlist the skills and enthusiasm of hundreds of volunteers to record changes in breeding bird populations for the purpose of conserving our native bird life. In 1974 Mass Audubon organized Breeding Bird Atlas 1, the first attempt in North America to systematically map the status of breeding birds on a statewide scale. You can read about this project at www.massaudubon.org/birdatlas/bbportal

More importantly, Mass Audubon has decided to repeat the survey to examine the current status of breeding birds in Massachusetts, beginning this year. This will be known as the Breeding Bird Atlas 2 Project. If you are interested in being part of this effort, this is how we recommend you proceed.

1. Research

Go to www.massaudubon.org/birdatlas/bbportal, click on “Atlas 2” and read about the project. You will also want to read the “Atlas Methodology” link at the bottom of the “Atlas 2” page.

2. Sign Up

If you are interested, sign up using the “How You Can Help” link on either of the previous two Web pages. Shortly after you have signed up, one of the following regional coordinators will receive your name and contact details:

Hampshire/ Franklin counties: Mary Alice Wilson
 Hampden County: Seth Kellogg
 Quabbin region: Mark Lynch

3. Confirmation Information to Regional Coordinator

(For Hampshire County) If you send Mary Alice your confirmation information by March 17, you will receive a block assignment by March 20. After that, the assignments will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

4. Training

Come to a workshop to learn more about techniques and strategies:

Monday, March 26, 2007, 7 PM, Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 325 South Pleasant Street, Amherst. Led by Joan Walsh, Atlas 2 Coordinator, and Simon Perkins, Field Ornithologist. Sponsored by Mass Audubon and the Hampshire Bird Club (more information at hampshirebirdclub.org).

Wednesday, April 11, 2007, 7 PM, Millers Falls Environmental Center, 110 Main Street, Athol. Led by Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll. Sponsored by Mass Audubon and the Athol Bird and Nature Club (more information at www.millersriver.net)

Breeding Bird Atlas 2: Background

A block is a rectangle approximately 3 miles on a side. To see what the blocks look like, visit the Mass Audubon Website referred to earlier.

One person (the “**Primary Atlaser**”) agrees to spend a minimum of 20 hours in a block (alone or with a team). Mass Audubon suggests that no one sign up as Primary Atlaser for more than 4 blocks. Each of the 133 blocks in Hampshire-Franklin Counties needs a Primary Atlaser.)

Regional Coordinators will assign a Primary Atlaser for each block ONLY from the group of people who sign up at the Mass Audubon Website. Priority (until March 17) will be given to those birders who participated in Atlas I (1974-1979), including (for Hampshire/Franklin counties): Harvey Allen, Bob Bieda, Al Richards, and Scott Turner. If you are not on the list and should be, let Mary Alice know.

The “**Secondary Atlasers**” are folks who are willing/able to report breeding birds in a given block (as a member of a team with the Primary Atlaser, or just as someone who regularly birds that area (home, work, commuting route, favorite spot). There is no limit to the number of Secondary Atlasers in any block. Observations made by primary and secondary atlasers will overlap, and this is perfectly OK.

Atlas 2 is entirely web-based. You will be entering your own data AND you will be able to see results for this first year of the 5-year project by the end of the summer. Those birders in our community who are not computer users will need a computer buddy. If you need help offering (or getting) computer assistance, call Mary Alice and she will help find a match for you.

Feel free to contact Mary Alice Wilson with questions
mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu; 413-548-9078

On Guard

On February 27, 2007 - a beautiful clear day - I drove from Sunderland across the bridge, turned onto River Road, parked, and got out to see if the peregrines were around. Nothing stirred.

Then I heard a scream behind me and the male (I think it was the male) came right over my head and began flying over the Sugarloaf cliff. All of a sudden the female came over, headed to the cliff, turned and flew very fast parallel with the cliff right into a Red-tailed Hawk.

The red-tail tried to fend off the attack, but the second peregrine arrived and together they drove the red-tail to the ground. They then headed back to Sugarloaf and continued patrolling the cliff. I could not get to where the red-tail was (back in the trees along the edge of the cliff), but I stayed for a while and it didn't come up.

Harvey Allen

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Spring Birding Course: *Scott Sumner, Instructor*

Evening Classes: February 28, March 21, 28, April 11, 25, May 2, 9, 16, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Field Trips: March 3 (5 a.m.), March 24 (5 a.m.), April 7, 14, 21, 28, May 5, 12, 19 (5 a.m.), June 2 (5:30 a.m.), generally 7 a.m. – noon

Virtual Visit to Mt. Tom: *Speaker to be announced.*

Tuesday, March 13, 6:30 p.m. Held at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls

Quabbin Reservoir: The Place of Many Waters: *Clif Read, Department of Conservation and Recreation*

Tuesday, March 27, 7 p.m. Held at the Quabbin Visitor Center, Belchertown

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

Introduction to Birding: *Arcadia staff and Volunteers*

Thursdays, March 15, 29, April 5, 26, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Saturdays March 17, April 7, 28 mornings.

Dance of the American Woodcock: *Nan Childs and Patti Steinman*

Saturday, March 31, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Big Night Family Enchanted Forest: *Arcadia Staff and Volunteers*

Saturday, March 24, 5:30-9:00 p.m.

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

LIBRARY: A New Volume

Henry Lappen reports that we have acquired the following title for the library:

Birds of Southern South America and Antarctica, by DelaPena and Rumboll, 1998.

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 Saturday. 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.

The Birdhouse Network: A Decade of Dedication

Citizen scientists keep tabs on the lives of nesting birds

For 10 years, a network of dedicated birders has made it their mission to help birds by providing nest boxes where birds can raise their families, and by recording information for scientists. Together, they've kept a decade of meticulous records about when the birds build their nests, how many eggs they lay, and when the gawky fledglings take their first flights. Combined, they have sent nearly 70,000 nest records to *The Birdhouse Network*, a citizen-science project of the *Cornell Lab of Ornithology*. These efforts have helped expand scientific knowledge about bluebirds, Tree Swallows, House Wrens, and other cavity-nesting birds for whom the motto may be rephrased, "Hole Sweet Home."

Getting Oriented: Using records from participants, scientists have examined factors that affect the success of nesting birds across time and space. They have found, for example, that in northern latitudes, nest boxes facing east or northeast produce more fledglings. The hypothesis is that cavity entrances facing toward the sunrise remain warmer on cold spring mornings, increasing survival rates. In contrast, the orientation of the nest box has no effect in southern latitudes.

Some Don't Like it Hot: A significantly higher number of eggs fail to hatch in the South than in the North. Researchers are investigating whether prolonged warm temperatures cause some of the eggs to start developing before the female begins incubating, leading to abnormal development. Birds in warmer climates tend to produce more broods, perhaps to balance the loss. Scientists will be keeping close tabs on rates of hatching in the face of global climate change.

The Birdhouse Network also invites participants to help in a special study called Personality Profiles. Participants follow an experimental protocol and observe how birds react to harmless novel objects placed near nest boxes. Scientists use the information to learn more about birds, such as why some species fare better in cities or around people. They invite anyone interested in animal behavior to help by joining the study.

People of all ages and skill levels can be part of The Birdhouse Network. "Without the data sent in by participants, we would not be able to track large-scale trends in the reproductive cycles of these birds," says project leader Tina Phillips. "Whether they monitor one box or 100, our participants are so dedicated to the birds, and the data they provide us year after year are incredibly powerful."

To sign up or find out more about The Birdhouse Network, visit www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse, or call (800) 843-2473. The project fee is \$15 (\$12 for Lab members). Join in this spring to help scientists develop a clearer picture of the intricate and fascinating lives of cavity-nesting birds.

Don Kroodsma presents "The Singing Life of Birds"

The presentation occurs on **March 25** from **2:00 to 4:00 PM** at the JBR Conference Room at the **Eagle Hill School**, on Rte. 32A in Hardwick.

This program is co-sponsored by the Enrichment Outreach Program at Eagle Hill School, the East Quabbin Land Trust and the East Quabbin Bird Club. Partial funding is provided by the Hardwick/New Braintree Cultural Council. To RSVP call 413-477-8229.

Cynthia Henshaw, Executive Director, East Quabbin Land Trust
P.O. Box 5, 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick, MA 01037

A Note On the RBA

HBC operates a Rare Bird Alert to help birders locate rare birds, especially in the local region, but not every rare bird that appears is the subject of an RBA. A couple of cases in recent months have occasioned some discontent amongst members, and these cases bear some further examination.

In the fall, a Painted Bunting was coming to a feeder in the hilltowns. The owner of the property specifically asked that the location not be publicized, but did let individuals or small groups go by appointment. In this case, the rare Bird Alert Committee did not activate the alert in order to protect the privacy of the property owner.

More recently, a Long-eared Owl was found in Hampshire County. In this case the committee's decision took into account the fact that this species is notoriously susceptible to disturbance, especially when observers intrude too close to day-time roosting sites. Moreover, the committee had direct evidence that this bird had already been disturbed in this manner. Disturbance can and does lead to injury, exhaustion, and mortality for these birds.

In both cases, informal word-of-mouth amongst birders allowed a number of local birders to see these birds. Given that birders are finding out about the bird anyhow, many argue that the RBA should have been activated in the interests of fairness, and used as a tool to encourage responsible behavior by visiting observers. Unfortunately, huge numbers of birders can find out about rare birds via the internet, and this can greatly increase the volume of visitors and the chances of disturbance.

The Rare Bird Alert Committee has to weigh a great number of complex factors in determining whether a given bird should be the subject of an RBA. Sometimes, the interests of property owners or the bird itself take precedence over the obvious desire to share these wonderful creatures with others in our region. We hope you will understand.

Editor

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

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

REVISED Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule, 2007

(Replaces the original field trip schedule (Green) issued in January.)

Please register with the field trip leader(s) and check this schedule's information when a phone number is given. The Field Trip Chair (Michael Locher – 413-585-5864) 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 \$0.40 per mile, as well as tolls and parking. See also the "Field Trip Guidelines for Participants" (September newsletter or on the Website).

Some trips have been marked with an asterisk (), which indicates that they are good trips for beginning birders. All trips have been coded as Easy (E) or Moderate (M) to give a rough indication of the pace and/or terrain, while a new coding (A) indicates that the trip is accessible. However, check all information with the trip leaders.*

MARCH

***Saturday, March 10. Great Falls Discovery Center/Turners Falls.** 10 AM to Noon. Jan Ortiz investigates bird life at this wheelchair-accessible and lively location. Binoculars and scopes are available for use as well as other assistive technology such as portable folding chairs, large print field guides, monopods, and listening devices. Meet at the Discovery Center. Please contact Jan Ortiz (549 1768) or the DCR (545 5758) for further information. (E/A)

Wednesday, March 21. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) leads a local trip to find seasonal specialties, probably migrating waterfowl. Meet at 7:30 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Saturday, March 24. Connecticut River Waterfowl. Half day. Al Richards shows you to the waterfowl migrating along the Connecticut River. Call Al (413-665-2761) for meeting information as the date approaches. (E)

APRIL

***Saturday, April 14. Norwottuck Rail Trail/Station Road, Amherst.** 10 AM to Noon. Jan Ortiz investigates bird life at this wheelchair accessible and lively location. Binoculars and scopes are available for use as well as other assistive technology such as portable folding chairs, large print field guides, monopods, and listening devices. Meet at the Station Road rail trail parking lot. Please contact Jan Ortiz (549 1768) or the DCR (545 5758) for further information. (E/A).

***Saturday, April 14. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher tries to fill Bob Bieda's shoes in searching out early migrants. We're hoping to find Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and migrating Broad-winged Hawks and Ospreys. Meet at the Holiday Inn parking lot, Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7:00 a.m. (If anybody is interested, we may listen for American Woodcock nearby in the predawn hours. Call Mike (413-585-5864) to express interest and get meeting details.) (E)

Wednesday, April 18. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) looks for the early migrants Bob missed. Meet at 7:30 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

***Saturday, April 21. More Migrants.** Half day. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) looks for migrants, starting around Look Park in Northampton. Meet at 6:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the JFK Middle School on Bridge Street in Northampton. (E)

MAY

On the first three **Tuesdays** in May, we will offer guided walks at Wildwood Cemetery (E) in Amherst from 6:30 - 8:30 a.m. Meet in the small parking area just outside the entrance on Strong Street. On the first three **Thursdays** in May, we will offer guided walks along the rail trail (E/A) from 6:30-8:30 a.m. Look to the newsletter for leaders and more details as the time approaches.

Saturday, May 12. Spring Migration in the Quabbin. All day. Tom Gagnon guides birders through the Quabbin in search of its varied avifauna. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well ahead of time for meeting information and to register. (M)

Saturday, May 12. Norwottuck Rail Trail/Station Road, Amherst. 10 AM to Noon. Jan Ortiz investigates bird life at this wheelchair accessible and lively location. Binoculars and scopes are available for use as well as other assistive technology such as portable folding chairs, large print field guides, monopods, and listening devices. Meet at the Station Road rail trail parking lot. Please contact Jan Ortiz (549 1768) or the DCR (545 5758) for further information. (E/A).

Sunday, May 13. Mt. Auburn Cemetery. All day. David Peake-Jones goes to Boston's most historic cemetery, which is also one of the Eastern Massachusetts' birding hotspots, to see what happens to fly in. The numbers and variety can be astonishing. Call David (413-529-9541) for meeting information. (E)

Wednesday, May 16. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) shows off his favorite birding spots. Meet at 7:00 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Saturday, May 19. Coastal Rhode Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron heads to our petite southern neighbor for the warm (really, this time) season to track down migrants and other seasonal specialties. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for meeting information and further details. (E)

Friday, May 25 – Monday, May 28. Monhegan Island. Overnight trip. Betsy Higgins and Andrew Magee guide birders on the Hampshire Bird Club's annual pilgrimage to this charming Atlantic isle. Not only is the island charming, but the migrating birds can be astonishing. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) to register. (E/M)

Saturday, May 26. Poor Man's Monhegan. All day. Bob Bieda guides the rest of us to Massachusetts' less artsy, but no less birdy, isle. Past trips have found Wilson's Phalaropes, Piping Plovers, Seaside Sparrows, Orchard Orioles, and Evening Grosbeaks. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and get meeting information. (E)

JUNE

Saturday, June 2. Westover Air Force Base. Half day. Pending permission, Bob Bieda will lead his annual trip into New England's premier grassland habitat, looming for Upland Sandpipers, Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only, and is wheelchair accessible. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E/A)

Saturday, June 2. Norwottuck Rail Trail/Station Road, Amherst. 10 AM to Noon. Jan Ortiz investigates bird life at this wheelchair accessible and lively location. Binoculars and scopes are available for use as well as other assistive technology such as portable folding chairs, large print field guides, monopods, and listening devices. Meet at the Station Road rail trail parking lot. Please contact Jan Ortiz (549 1768) or the DCR (545 5758) for further information. (E/A).

***Saturday, June 9. West Quabbin ramble.** Half day. Dave Gross offers a trip “through his backyard” and will be listening for nesting migrants, permanent residents, and hiking through blooming Mountain Laurel. If this sounds appealing, email or call David (413-253-2897) for further details. (M)

Sunday, June 10. Mt. Greylock. Full Day. David Peake-Jones will revive this never-predictable trip to our states’ highest point. We can expect some high altitude breeders, great views, and maybe even the elusive Mourning Warbler. Please expect to hike up to a mile or two on the AT and other rough hiking trails. Please call David (413-529-9541) for meeting details. (M)

Saturday, June 16. Hammonasset Beach State Park, CT. All day. In a new trip for the Hampshire Bird Club, Betsy Higgins goes to the coast of Connecticut to find unusual sparrows, rails, and other seaside denizens. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for details as the date approaches. (E)

Wednesday, June 20. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) leads birders through the local landscape, seeking out late migrants. Meet at 6:00 a.m. across from Atkin’s Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Friday-Sunday, June 22-24. Connecticut Lakes, NH. Overnight trip. David Peake-Jones and Mike Locher fill in for Tom Gagnon this year. They will be leading this trip to northern New Hampshire. Migrants, boreal specialties, and moose abound. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Contact David (413-529-9541) or Mike (413-585-5864) to register. (M)

JULY

Saturday, July 28. New South Beach, I. All day. David Peake-Jones goes looking for early migrating shorebirds, especially Red Knots. Bring a lunch, a jacket, water and \$20 for the boat ride. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (M)

AUGUST

Saturday, August 25. New South Beach, II. All day. Bob Bieda leads birders in their quest for late shorebird migrants, including Curlew Sandpipers and Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits. Bring a lunch, a jacket, and \$20 for the boat ride. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register. (M)



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 23, No. 8

April, 2007

Late winter and the first stirrings of spring brought some notable visitors to our valley this past month. Many of us were fortunate enough to see at least one of the Rough-legged Hawks which mysteriously congregated in the shadow of Mt Warner in Hadley. At least seven birds spent several days in this wonderful landscape, to the delight of local birders. As one who had never before seen a dark morph of the species, I confess to being struck by the superficial similarity in flight to Turkey Vultures, though the grace with which these birds perched atop the spindliest foliage they could find hardly evoked images of their storky brethren.

Amongst other tantalizing reminders of the miracle of migration was the fallout of Fox Sparrows which occurred this month, an event so singular and uncommon as to make the local radio news! What happened of course, is that the birds were put down by bad weather just as the peak of their numbers were negotiating our latitudes. What is really rather more remarkable than their presence at our feeders this season, is their ability to sneak by us most years leaving nary a streak of red across the inscrutable sky.

In this edition are:

- an introduction to the program next Monday, field trip reports and upcoming trips, a brief glimpse into the sordid inner workings of the mysterious Nominating Committee,
- an exhortation to sign up for two wonderful overnight trips,
- more on the Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas (2) from the peripatetic Mary Alice Wilson,
- some offerings from other local environmental organizations, and
- a tribute to John Lynes, who died recently.

PROGRAMS

Monday, April 9 at 7:30 PM

Sam Fried speaks about **The Yukon, North West Territories, & the Dempster Highway**
Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Winding like a gravel ribbon for 450 miles through the boreal forest and across the arctic tundra, the Dempster Highway offers unparalleled scenery and opportunities for birding and wildlife viewing. Golden Eagle, Long-tailed Jaeger, and Willow and Rock Ptarmigan are common birds seen from the road. Gyrfalcons and Peregrines build their aeries on roadside cliffs, and 25 species of ducks and swans are easily observed. Northern Hawk Owls sit atop spruce trees as we pass by. In tundra areas, Smith's and Lapland Longspurs breed, while Northern Wheatear can be found in the talus slopes. Mammals will not be overshadowed, as we encounter moose, gray wolf, caribou, snowshoe hare, grizzly and black bears and lynx. Truly one of the continent's most exciting drives, the Dempster Highway is the road to adventure!



Sam Fried is a past president of Hartford Audubon Society. Hundreds of his photographs and over 35 feature articles have been published in field guides, books and magazines worldwide, including *National Audubon*, *Birder's World*, *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Birding* and *Living Bird Quarterly* magazines and most recently, the *United States Golf Association Environmental Section Magazine*! Sam co-founded Flights of Fancy Adventures, Inc., a birding, photography, natural history and golf travel company offering small group, low cost, high quality trips to North, Central and South American destinations. For the listers amongst us, Sam has seen 731 species of birds in North America, and photographed 709 of them!

May 14, 2007.
June 11, 2007.

Paul Sievert.
Joan Walsh.

Coming Up

The Short-tailed Albatross.

The Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas (Two)

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Connecticut Valley Waterfowl. Saturday, March 24.

Al Richards, Chuck Horn, Andrew Magee, and David Peake-Jones toured temporary and permanent wetlands of the Connecticut River valley between Hadley and Turners Falls in search of migrating waterfowl. Since we overlooked the extended daylight savings time, we assembled in the dark at the Hadley Stop and Shop. Not to be deterred, we used the On-Star Doppler radar in Al's vehicle to identify skeins of geese overhead by flight pattern, and ground-truthed the resultant identifications based on flight call notes. As dawn broke, we headed to Hadley Cove. The assembled birds were mainly Canada Geese, and it seemed we would find little else with them. However, as the light brightened, birds found their way by random motion from invisible corners into the tiny viewing windows provided by the streamside silver maples. In this way, we found Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Wood Duck and American Wigeon. Eventually, a **Greater White-fronted Goose** appeared close to our vantage point.

The Honeypot was bird-less, except for a possible Peregrine close to Route 9, but in flooded fields along Rt 47, approaching Sunderland, we found masses of Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, and a solitary Snow Goose, mingling with the ubiquitous Canada Geese. Both Peregrines appeared after a short time near the Sugarloaf nest site, and we observed one harassing a stoical Common Raven for several minutes. In the flooded fields at the southern end of Great Pond in Hatfield (off Cow Path Road) we found yet more Green-winged Teal, along with several Wood Ducks and several Killdeer. From the bluffs on the other side of the marsh, we could see several Hooded Mergansers and a pair of Northern Shovellers, who provided rather graphic evidence of an intent to procreate.

At the Rod and Gun Club, we found Tree Swallows cruising the retreating ice edge, another nice pod of Wigeon, a couple of distant **Pied-billed Grebes** (alertly spotted by Andrew), some Ring-necked Ducks, and a lone **Ruddy Duck**. We searched in vain for the origin of a suspiciously Red-headed-sounding woodpecker call note, but after a couple of reps, the singer went silent. All-in-all, we were blessed with a satisfying diversity of ducks and a very nice day.

David Peake-Jones



Cape Ann and Plum Island. March 3.

Sue Emerson, Geoff LeBaron, Chris Ellison, and Andrew Magee (in order of decreasing cranial hairiness) went looking for the esoteric winter specialties of coastal Massachusetts. They struck out at Jodrey Fish Pier, found the Eared Grebe still chained to its buoy off Niles Beach, and located a motley crew led by Scott Sumner following a parallel course for the day. Courting Red-breasted Mergansers enlivened the tony vistas of Eastern Point, as did a drake **Redhead**. Diverse gulls populated Niles Pond, including two **Black-headed Gulls**, **Glaucous** and **Iceland Gulls**, and the potential highlight of the trip, for those who can stomach this sort of thing, a (still being reviewed), possible, just-could-have-been first-year **California Gull**! Razorbills followed their usual mysteriously urgent trajectories just off shore. A herd of Harlequin Ducks sported in the foam off Emerson Rocks, and Northern Gannets plied the breezes further out. The day ended at Plum Island where there was a bonanza of no less than six or seven hunting **Short-eared Owls**, and a "monster" Peregrine Falcon.

(David Peake-Jones, from Geoff's trip notes)

Coming Trips

(See also the REVISED Winter-Spring-Summer Trip Schedule. Yellow = GOOD, Green = BAAd!)

***Saturday, April 14. Norwottuck Rail Trail/Station Road, Amherst.** 10 AM to Noon. Jan Ortiz investigates bird life at this wheelchair accessible and lively location. Binoculars and scopes are available for use as well as other assistive technology such as portable folding chairs, large print field guides, monopods, and listening devices. Meet at the Station Road rail trail parking lot. Please contact Jan Ortiz (549 1768) or the DCR (545 5758) for further information. (E/A).

***Saturday, April 14. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher tries to fill Bob Bieda's shoes in searching out early migrants. We're hoping to find Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and migrating Broad-winged Hawks and Ospreys. Meet at the Holiday Inn parking lot, Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7:00 a.m. (If anybody is interested, we may listen for American Woodcock nearby in the predawn hours. Call Mike (413-585-5864) to express interest and get meeting details.) (E)

Wednesday, April 18. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) looks for the early migrants Bob missed. Meet at 7:30 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

***Saturday, April 21. More Migrants.** Half day. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) looks for migrants, starting around Look Park in Northampton. Meet at 6:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the JFK Middle School on Bridge Street in Northampton. (E)

On the first three **Tuesdays** in May, we will offer guided walks at Wildwood Cemetery (E) in Amherst from 6:30 - 8:30 a.m. Meet in the small parking area just outside the entrance on Strong Street. On the first three **Thursdays** in May, we will offer guided walks along the rail trail (E/A) from 6:30-8:30 a.m. Look to the May newsletter for leaders and more details.

OVERNIGHT TRIPS

Both these trips have plenty of space. Sign up early to avoid disappointment.

MONHEGAN ISLAND: A Birding Pilgrimage

Memorial Day Weekend (May 26-29), 2006

Ask any of the best birders in the northeast where to go for the ultimate spring birding experience, and most will mention one place: Monhegan Island. Ask most Hampshire Bird Club veterans to name the five most memorable moments of their lives with the club, and most will mention the Monhegan Island trip. Here's why!

During the Spring, migrant songbirds moving northward up the Atlantic seaboard are sometimes pushed out over the ocean by storms, and have to fight their way back toward the safety of land. Monhegan Island lies about twelve miles off the coast of Maine and is often a haven for exhausted birds to recuperate before resuming the perilous journey northward. We will arrive on the island on the Friday of Memorial Day weekend, without vehicles, and immerse ourselves in the gentle rhythms of island life. We'll find migrant songbirds throughout the tiny village of Monhegan, sheltering in the numerous apple trees, sometimes picking through the sea-wrack on the town beach for sand-fleas, or even hiding in the lobster pots piled almost everywhere. Each day will bring fresh migrants to the island, and a storm could even produce one of the fallouts of birding legend. Rarities can and do crop up at any time.

When the birding slows down, we can venture off on any of the island's numerous walking trails to Lobster Cove, the stupendous seaward cliffs, the Seal Rocks (aptly named), or the Enchanted Forest.

Most of us will leave the valley early on Friday, May 26, and arrive on the island late that afternoon. We will stay at the rustic Trailing Yew, which will lay on breakfast and dinner each day, including a local lobster dinner. This is the perfect opportunity to slow down, REALLY learn the birds, and remember what life *should* be about. We depart the island at mid-day on Memorial Day, and most will be home by early evening, traffic permitting. This trip is open only to members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Registration is by deposit.

For further details, including an estimation of costs, call Betsy Higgins (586 7585) or Andrew Magee (586 1509).

CONNECTICUT LAKES, New Hampshire.

Friday, June 22 – Sunday June 24, 2007.

Mike Locher and David Peake-Jones will be doing their best to deputize for Tom Gagnon this year on our trip to the "Great North Woods."

Less than a mile south of the Canadian border in extreme northern New Hampshire, our beloved Connecticut River begins as a stream one can almost literally step over at Fourth Connecticut Lake. From here, the river flows through the progressively larger Third, Second, and First Connecticut Lakes, and Lake Francis, before hurrying through Pittsburg, New Hampshire, and on to points south. The streams, lakes, swamps and spruce woods of the Connecticut Lakes are superbly scenic, and provide the closest large tract of boreal forest for us in New England. We will stay in comfortable cabins at Powderhorn Lodge, and make our way daily along Rt 3 (part of which is aptly nicknamed Moose Alley) and adjacent logging roads to visit the various habitats which make up the lakes experience.

There should be great opportunities to observe nesting warblers, including Bay-breasted and Blackpoll, perhaps even the rare Cape May Warbler. Winter finches like Evening Grosbeak and Pine Siskin should be around, along with boreal specialties such as Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Olive-sided Flycatcher and White-winged Crossbill. If we are really lucky, we might come across jewels like the Spruce Grouse or Black-backed Woodpecker.

Please contact David Peake-Jones (413 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com), or Mike Locher (413 585 5864, mlocher@yahoo.com) for further information or to sign up.

SECOND MASSACHUSETTS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

What Breeding Bird Atlas? If you are not already involved, go the www.hampshirebirdclub.org, click on Breeding Bird Atlas to find background information and instructions on how to participate.

Downloading the handbook, field card, breeding bird protocol, and safe-date list

1. If you are computer savvy and have a fast internet connection: Wait to download everything until the final versions are online. You will get an email when all the pieces are ready to go (estimated date April 6).

2. If you are not-computer-savvy and/or have a slow internet connection: You may find that the downloading process will drive you CRAZY. No problem. Mary Alice will download all this stuff as soon as the final version is ready and put it on a CD for you. Just let her know before the

April 9th HBC meeting and she will bring it to the meeting. Cost = \$0.75 After that you will also have to pay for postage or drive to Leverett. (mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu)

Downloading maps

If you are having problems, let Mary Alice know. She can print them out for you (and bring them to the April 9th meeting.) Email is still mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu.

March 26th workshop

1. If you were at the workshop with Joan Walsh, you know what a well-thought-out project this is. (And how interesting it is going to be to talk with her at our June 11th HBC meeting when we are deeply into the atlas work.) Please check out the workshop notes (www.hampshirebirdclub.org) because I have added some additional information on some points.
- 2 If you were not able to attend, there are notes on www.hampshirebirdclub.org (click on breeding bird atlas).

Special thanks to David Gross and Sue Emerson for helping with the arrangements, to the Hitchcock Center for hosting the meeting, to all the participants for such a great turn out (ran out of chairs) and such good questions and, of course, to Joan Walsh and Simon Perkins.

Atlas Guidelines

See the Handbook for all observation/data entry protocols.

And, as always, Use Common Sense and Courtesy to:

the **birds** (never disturb or endanger, no tapes)

the **birders** (share information, expertise)

the **landowners** (ask permission, provide information, thank)

yourself (be safe, have fun)

Other questions?

Go to www.hampshirebirdclub.org or contact mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu.

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Beyond “An Inconvenient Truth”: Taking Action. *Nick d’Arbeloff and Frank Kleimig*

Wednesday, April 25, 7 p.m. Held at the USFWS in Hadley

Amherst Butterfly Institute

Classes: Tuesdays, May 1, 15, 29, June 12, and 26, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Field Trips: May 5, 20, June 2, 17, and 30 (or July 1), 10:00 a.m. (time varies)

Bluebird Program and Nest Box Workshop: *John Rogers*

Saturday, April 7, 10 a.m. to noon

Paddle the Watershed. Connecticut Watershed Adventures, 2007.

Saturday, April 14, 10 a.m.: River Rat Race and Parade, Millers River, Athol to Orange, 978-248-9491.

Thursday, May 3, 7:30 p.m.: Full Flower Moon Canoe, Mill River and Arcadia Oxbow, Easthampton, 413-584-3009.

Birding By Ear: *John Green*

Sunday, April 29, Saturday May 26 and Saturday June 2, 6:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Citizen Science: Salamander Egg Mass Survey: *Micky McKinley*

Variable date. Call to sign up for April/May dates.

Low Maintenance Design with Native Plants: *Owen Wormse*

Saturday, May 5, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Nasami Farm Native Plant Nursery in Whately, MA

Fantastic Landscape Connections: *Richard Little*

Tuesday, April 10, 7 p.m. Held at Holyoke Heritage State Park, Holyoke

Montague Plains Field Walk: *Tim Simmons*

Tuesday, April 24, 6:30 p.m. Meet at the Montague Plains, Montague

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.

GREAT FALLS DISCOVERY CENTER PROGRAMS

Signs of Spring: *Refuge staff*

Saturday, April 7, 11am

Something's Fishy! *Refuge staff*

Saturday, April 7, 1 pm

Fantastic Landscapes: Connections: *Richard Little*

Tuesday, April 10, 7 pm. Held at Holyoke Heritage State Park, Holyoke.

A Place Called Pondicherry: *David Govatski*

Wednesday, April 11, 7 pm

Sustainable Forestry Practices in the Valley: *Jay Healy, Hall Tavern Farm, Charlemont MA.*

Thursday, April 12, 7 pm.

Harvesting and Stewardship for Multiple Values: *Lincoln Fish, Greenfield Conservation Commission*

Saturday, April 14, 11 9:30 am – 12:00 pm. Held in the field. Please register with the center.

Montague Plains Field Walk: *Tim Simmons, Mass. Nat. Heritage and Endangered Species Program*

Tuesday, April 24, 6:30 pm. For ages 10 and older. Pre-registration required at 800-859-2960.

Friends Coffeehouse Series

Wednesday, April 25, 7 pm

Great Falls Discovery Center is located at 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA

Open Fridays and Saturdays from 10 AM to 4 PM

Phone (413) 683 3221

Nominating Committee

The committee this year consists of Elissa Rubenstein, Jim Marcum, and Bruce Callaghan. They are charged with recruiting people to serve on the board of the club, thus ensuring its survival and vibrancy. If you are interested in serving, please contact one of these folks.

OK, it was just a hook to get you to read this far. There are really no details of the lurid machinations of the Nominating Committee. Some things, as Don Rumsfeld might have said, can never be known, and, even if they were known, can never, never be told!!!

Welcome, New Members!!

Robert Jones -----Monson, Ma.

James Mallet -----Hadley, Ma.

We will close this month with a wonderful tribute to John Lynes, written by Bob Bieda.. Until May, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor

(413) 529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

In Memory of John Lynes

It is with deep sadness that I announce the passing of John Lynes on Sunday, March 18. John was a long time Western Massachusetts birder, classical music expert, and dear friend. He was genteel, optimistic, and lived life with great enjoyment. John was 97.

When John moved to the area in the 1940s, he and his wife Marion bought a farm in Westhampton. When Marion died in the early 1990s he donated this land to the Massachusetts Audubon Society and it is now the Marion Sherman Lynes Sanctuary. John kept almost daily list of birds seen in Westhampton and nearby areas for more than 50 years. He also did his version of breeding bird surveys for Westhampton. He reported, to his surprise, little change in the breeding bird status of Westhampton during that time.

Many Massachusetts birders may remember visiting his home in 1970 to view a Varied Thrush that spent the winter at his feeder. He also observed three White Ibis flying over Westhampton in 1974. He was very familiar with these birds, having lived in southern Georgia for several years before coming to this area. In Georgia, his and Marion's favorite bird was the Painted Bunting, a regular visitor to his yard.

John spent a good deal of time during the 1960s, 70s and 80s birding with Rudd Stone and Sam Eliot. He and Sam were on the faculty of Smith College together. It was wonderful to listen to the stories he would tell about these two rather eccentric gentlemen.

John will be deeply missed by his many friends here in Western Massachusetts.

Bob Bieda



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 23, No. 9

May, 2007

"If there's a bustle in your hedgerow, don't be alarmed now! It's just a spring clean for the May Queen." (Led Zeppelin)

On a dank late April day recently I wandered toward the orchard at Arcadia, desperately trying to kick start my (already abandoned) resolution to bird every day of the spring migration. At first it seemed it would be one of those days when, inexplicably, the birds simply had not come in overnight. However, as I approached a single large tamarack tree, I heard a plaintive, piping song that is, more than anything else for me, the harbinger of spring. There, silhouetted in the gloom, were no fewer than six Ruby-crowned Kinglets, each determinedly prying open the nascent buds of the tree in search of sustenance. Their quicksilver wing-flicking and gymnastics established their identities beyond the need for closer examination. Few other migrants had arrived by that date, and I was reminded of the hope these tiniest of travelers always kindle, often before their gaudier cousins have reached these latitudes. Hence, in honor of the migrants of that morning, I would like to propose a new collective noun for the species: a "bustle" of kinglets. I hope there's a bustle in your hedgerow.

In this edition:

- information on this month's program,
- several florid trip reports, only 33 % of which can be attributed to the editor,
- coming field trips and plugs for the Monhegan and Connecticut Lakes overnight trips,
- the long awaited slate of officers to be nominated at the Annual General Meeting,
- more about the second breeding bird atlas
- disturbing news about Barton's Cove,
- a plethora of programs from local environmental organizations, and some other snippets.

I hope you find some of it useful.

PROGRAMS

Monday, May 14 at 7:30 PM

Paul Sievert follows the travels of the Short-tailed Albatross

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Short-tailed Albatross were once the most common albatross in the North Pacific, with a population thought to consist of 5 million birds. This situation changed rapidly following the onset of feather hunting in the 1880s, and by 1949 the species was declared extinct. Fortunately, this declaration was premature, as several birds survived at sea and founded the populations that currently nest on Torishima and the Senkaku Islands. This program will take you on a tour of Torishima Island, and around the North Pacific, as we follow the movements of Short-tailed Albatross during the chick-rearing period, and beyond. We will look at the growth of the population, along with present day threats to Short-tailed Albatross, including eruption of the volcano on which they nest!

Paul Sievert is Assistant Unit Leader for the USGS, Massachusetts Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His first studies of Pacific albatrosses began 20 years ago when he examined the effect of plastic ingestion on Laysan and Black-footed Albatrosses in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Since then, he has used satellite telemetry to examine the at-sea movements of the three species of North Pacific albatross, and has collaborated with the Yamashina Institute of Ornithology, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a six-year study of the oceanic travels of Short-tailed Albatross.

Coming Up

June 11, 2007.

Joan Walsh.

The Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas (Two)

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Ashley Ponds. Saturday, April 14.

Anne Lombard, Shirley Hammerschmith, Janet (? an unaffiliated birder from South Hadley) Elissa Rubenstein, **Mike Locher**, and David Peake-Jones, (participants listed in approximate order of fashion sense) visited this piny paradise in Holyoke for the club's traditional sampling of early songbirds. We misplaced Shirley and Anne at the start of the trip, so they went on ahead and scared all the good stuff away. Hence it was that an abbreviated group finally made it to the gates of the reservation and set out. Global warming deniers took great encouragement from this day. Forecast temperatures were in the low fifties, but winter's grip was still clearly evident in the raw winds of the early morning. Song was quite subdued, but at least one **Pine Warbler** sang cooperatively along the track down to the causeway.

As we crossed the causeway, each of us made resolutions related to the temperature. Mike resolved to refer Bob Bieda to a good audiologist, so that he may never again pass this trip off to the field trip coordinator. Janet threatened to quit until we lied to her that it was "only another twenty minutes to the shelter of the trees." Elissa resolved to stay in bed next year, and yours truly resolved to wimper dejectedly, which I did right there and then. We were temporarily warmed by the oscillatory antics of several Palm Warblers toward the end of the reservoir.

We did make it to the comparative shelter of the far side, and were rewarded with nice looks at a close group of Ring-necked Ducks in morning light. Moving along the Maclean reservoir section of the ring road, we were blessed with our first sighting of the world's perkier jogger, and there ensued a tasteless discussion of why she might be running with arms stuck out at 45 degrees to the vertical. She cheerfully informed us that she would be leaving our pedestrian butts in the dust at least another four times, and she was as good as her word. Not to be distracted, we followed the sounds of a suspiciously slow Pine Warbler into the woods, on the strength of Peake-Jones airy assertion that it had to be a Chipping Sparrow. We found, of course, a suspicious, slow Pine Warbler, who blessed us with wonderful views. In this area we also heard **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** (though we never saw it), Red-breasted Nuthatch, and the ethereal spring notes of a Brown Creeper, which again decided to remain invisible.

A little further along, we encountered a **Fox Sparrow** in a tangle of bridal creeper, and an Osprey glided overhead, no doubt up to something fishy. About all we saw for the rest of the trip was the spritely aspiring marathoner, circulating steadfastly with nary a sign of fatigue. We departed for home just as the warmth of the day began to penetrate our chilled bones.

David Peake-Jones



Mid-week Sweep of the Connecticut River Valley. Wednesday, April 18, 2007.

Harvey Allen and participants braved cold and wind on the bike path to get good looks at a Pine Warbler (near the ground). They also found a Great Egret and a Great Blue Heron with black head plumes blowing straight out behind the head. There were 3 Osprey, a pair of American Kestrels, 2 Female Harriers, 1 immature Red-tailed Hawk, and a displaying Eastern Meadowlark. There must have been a singing song sparrow every 30 feet!

Mary Alice Wilson



Look Park. Saturday, April 21, 2007.

This year's Look Park excursion, led by Betsy Higgins, commenced on an early and chilly morning under bright and promising skies. As I pulled into the (wrong) parking lot (five minutes late), I spied a cluster of birder's bristling with all manner of Zeiss, Swarovski, and Leica tracking some unseen (to me) object. It was a Northern Goshawk. Alas, let that be a lesson to those of us who are tempted to activate snooze alarms.

Appetites duly whetted, we embarked on a slow circuit of Look Park's perimeters and rushing stream. Though a quieter morning than one may have wished, we were treated to a number of both auditory and visual treats. Heard-but-not-seen were Winter Wren, Louisiana Waterthrush, Pileated Woodpecker, and a "goofy" Field Sparrow. Seen and savored species included both Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Pine Warbler, Hermit Thrush, Red-bellied Woodpecker, wonderfully close views of Common Merganser, and a Double-crested Cormorant flyover. The total number of species seen approximated 25.

Betsy, David, and I decided to get some breakfast at Look Restaurant and then engage in some après-trip birding. As we sauntered toward the restaurant entrance, we were speculating on the start of the Broad-winged Hawk migration. Glancing up, we were treated to a kettle of three rising overhead. As if to mark the moment, we were then strafed by a scolding Belted Kingfisher. Breakfast duly consumed, we headed for Graves Farm. Highlights included gloriously sunlit displays by Tree Swallows and a pair of Eastern Bluebirds, a Cooper's Hawk in hunting mode, a Brown Creeper, and probable Ruffed Grouse.

Leslie Hoffman

* I would like to commend Leslie for (in addition to the generally excellent quality of her trip report) the first documented use of the prefix "après" in the newsletter during my tenure. Ed.

Coming Trips

Please see also the REVISED Winter-Spring-Late Summer Field Trip Schedule.

On the first three **Tuesdays** in May, we will offer guided walks at Wildwood Cemetery (E) in Amherst from 6:30 - 8:30 a.m. Meet in the small parking area just outside the entrance on Strong Street. On the first three **Thursdays** in May, we will offer guided walks along the rail trail (E/A) from 6:30-8:30 a.m. Please meet at the Station Road parking lot.

Saturday, May 12. Spring Migration in the Quabbin. All day. Tom Gagnon guides birders through the Quabbin in search of its varied avifauna. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well ahead of time for meeting information and to register. (M)

Saturday, May 12. Norwottuck Rail Trail/Station Road, Amherst. 10 AM to Noon. Jan Ortiz investigates bird life at this wheelchair accessible and lively location. Binoculars and scopes are available for use as well as other assistive technology such as portable folding chairs, large print field guides, monopods, and listening devices. Meet at the Station Road rail trail parking lot. Please contact Jan Ortiz (549 1768) or the DCR (545 5758) for further information. (E/A).

Sunday, May 13. Mt. Auburn Cemetery. All day. David Peake-Jones goes to Boston's most historic cemetery, which is also one of the Eastern Massachusetts' birding hotspots, to see what happens to fly in. The numbers and variety can be astonishing. Call David (413-529-9541) for meeting information. (E)

Wednesday, May 16. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) shows off his favorite birding spots. Meet at 7:00 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

(continues next page→)

Saturday, May 19. Coastal Rhode Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron heads to our petite southern neighbor for the warm (really, this time) season to track down migrants and other seasonal specialties. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for meeting information and further details. (E)

Friday, May 25 – Monday, May 28. Monhegan Island. Overnight trip. Betsy Higgins and Andrew Magee guide birders on the Hampshire Bird Club's annual pilgrimage to this charming Atlantic isle. Not only is the island charming, but the migrating birds can be astonishing. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) to register. (E/M)

Saturday, May 26. Poor Man's Monhegan. All day. Bob Bieda guides the rest of us to Massachusetts' less artsy, but no less birdy, isle. Past trips have found Wilson's Phalaropes, Piping Plovers, Seaside Sparrows, Orchard Orioles, and Evening Grosbeaks. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and get meeting information. (E)

Saturday, June 2. Westover Air Force Base. Half day. Pending permission, Bob Bieda will lead his annual trip into New England's premier grassland habitat, looming for Upland Sandpipers, Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only, and is wheelchair accessible. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E/A)

Saturday, June 2. Norwottuck Rail Trail/Station Road, Amherst. 10 AM to Noon. Jan Ortiz investigates bird life at this wheelchair accessible and lively location. Binoculars and scopes are available for use as well as other assistive technology such as portable folding chairs, large print field guides, monopods, and listening devices. Meet at the Station Road rail trail parking lot. Please contact Jan Ortiz (549 1768) or the DCR (545 5758) for further information. (E/A).

***Saturday, June 9. West Quabbin ramble.** Half day. Dave Gross offers a trip "through his backyard" and will be listening for nesting migrants, permanent residents, and hiking through blooming Mountain Laurel. If this sounds appealing, email or call David (413-253-2897) for further details. (M)

Please note that the **Mt Greylock trip (June 10) has been cancelled** due to the closure of all roads in the Mt Greylock State Reservation for the season.

OVERNIGHT TRIPS

MONHEGAN ISLAND: A Birding Pilgrimage

Memorial Day Weekend (May 26-29), 2007.

There's birds (lots of them, some of them on the beach), there's spectacular seascapes, there's lobster fisherman and lobster dinner, there's the enchanted forest and fairy houses, there's the gentle pace of island life, there's sunsets from the lighthouse bench, there's afternoon visits to art galleries and, and, and,.....

This is really a great trip and there are still a few spaces left!

For further details, or to sign up, call Betsy Higgins (586 7585) or Andrew Magee (586 1509).

CONNECTICUT LAKES, New Hampshire.

Friday, June 22 – Sunday June 24, 2007.

Mike Locher and David Peake-Jones will be doing their best to deputize for Tom Gagnon this year on our trip to the "Great North Woods."

Less than a mile south of the Canadian border in extreme northern New Hampshire, our beloved Connecticut River begins as a stream one can almost literally step over at Fourth Connecticut Lake. From here, the river flows through the progressively larger Third, Second, and First Connecticut Lakes, and Lake Francis, before hurrying through Pittsburg, New Hampshire, and on to points south. The streams, lakes, swamps and spruce

woods of the Connecticut Lakes are superbly scenic, and provide the closest large tract of boreal forest for us in New England. We will stay in comfortable cabins at Powderhorn Lodge, and make our way daily along Rt 3 (part of which is aptly nicknamed Moose Alley) and adjacent logging roads to visit the various habitats which make up the lakes experience.

There should be great opportunities to observe nesting warblers, including Bay-breasted and Blackpoll, perhaps even the rare Cape May Warbler. Winter finches like Evening Grosbeak and Pine Siskin should be around, along with boreal specialties such as Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Olive-sided Flycatcher and White-winged Crossbill. If we are really lucky, we might come across jewels like the Spruce Grouse or Black-backed Woodpecker.

Please contact David Peake-Jones (413 529 9541; davidpj@the-spa.com), or Mike Locher (413 585 5864, mlocher@yahoo.com) for further information or to sign up.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Hampshire Bird Club, Incorporated, will be held on Monday, May 14 at 7:30 PM at Immanuel Lutheran Church. The church is located at 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst. The assembled membership will elect the Board of Directors for the club for 2007-2008. The Nominating Committee will nominate the following slate of officers at the meeting.

President: David Gross

Vice-President/Program Chair: Geoff LeBaron

Treasurer: Janice Jorgenson

Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson

Communications Secretary: Elissa Rubenstein*

Members-At-Large: Bruce Callaghan*
Mike Locher
Dennis McKenna
Jaap van Heerden
Lisa Rock*
Scott Turner*

Nominees marked with an * are not currently on the board, though some have held office before. Nominations for any position will also be accepted from the floor.

Second Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas Update!!

With the help from the Hampshire Bird Club and the Athol Bird and Nature Club, newspapers, newsletters, and just good folk working hard, we have more than half the blocks in both Hampshire and Franklin County assigned.

Blocks Still to Be Assigned

As of April 27th, there are still 2 blocks in the most populated areas:

Shaftsbury 3: Amethyst Brook, Mount Orient, Pratt Corner

Ludlow 1: Stony Brook, Bagg Hill, Facing Hills

There are also blocks available in:

Southampton, Westhampton, Huntington, Chesterfield, Middlefield, Worthington, Cummington, Ashfield, Plainfield, Greenfield, Shelburne, Buckland, Hawley, Orange, Northfield, Bernardston, Colrain, Heath, Rowe, and Monroe.

These are beautiful places with great birds. (Some are fabulous; others just very, very good.) There are two approaches to get them covered:

a) **Block Busting**: As soon as everyone is comfortable with the atlas work on their present blocks, we can start having block-busting teams visit some of these great areas. Present atlasers will hear more about this.

b) **More Atlasers**. Please volunteer if you have not already done so, and please contact birding friends and acquaintances who live in these areas. They can sign up at www.massaudubon.org/birdatlas/bba2, or contact Mary Alice Wilson (mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu, 413-548-9078)

Barton's Cove for the Birds?

A permitting process is now ongoing to turn Barton Cove IBA into a water ski park. The area does have a public boat ramp and hunting/ fishing/kayaking is considered recreational use. I do feel that adding more noise to the cove is not in standing with an Important Bird Area designation and am opposed to it. If you feels strongly about this, contact Tony Zaharias at Massachusetts E.P.A., 436 Dwight St.. Springfield, MA. 01103 to express an opinion, which may, or may not, influence a decision on this matter.

Thanks.

Mark Taylor
Northfield, MA
birdnorth@earthlink.net

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Sustainable Farm Tour: *Deb Habib & Ricky Barnuc, Seeds of Solidarity Farm, Orange*
Saturday, May 5, 3 - 5 p.m.

Chicopee Landfill & Methane Recapture Field Trip: *Bob Magnusson*
Wednesday, June 6, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Amherst Butterfly Institute: Classes: Tuesdays, May 1, 15, 29, June 12, and 26, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Field Trips: May 5, 20, June 2, 17, and 30 (or July 1), 10:00 a.m. (time varies)

Birding By Ear: *John Green*
Sunday, April 29, Saturday May 26 and Saturday June 2, 6:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Living With Wildlife: Black Bears of Western Massachusetts: *Ralph Taylor*
Thursday, May 10, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Design & Plant a Native Perennial Garden: *James McSweeney*
Saturday, May 19, 1 - 4:30 p.m. Held at Nasami Farm Native Plant Nursery in Whately, Mass.

Happy Birthday, Rachel Carson! *Donna Dufresne*, Historical Performer, as Rachel Carson
Sunday, May 20, 1 p.m.

Alpine Flora of New England: *Pete Westover and Ted Watt*
Tuesday, June 5, 7 p.m.

HITCHCOCK SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The Natural History of the Everglades and South Florida: John Green & Tom Tynning,

Thursday, May 24, 7-8:30pm.

Members: free/Non-members: \$5

John will start the program with a slide show of some of his most prized photos of the lush natural Floridian landscapes that include intimate looks at the American Alligator, crocodiles, wading birds, and much more. Tom will give a brief overview of the unique ecological communities and remarkable wildlife that abounds in this subtropical mecca. This program will also provide a first introduction to the 8-day natural history excursion to the Everglades and South Florida that John and Tom will be leading in partnership with the Hitchcock Center this coming Winter!

Hiking the Presidentials - An Alpine Wildflower & Birding Trek: *Pete Westover and Ted Watt*

Friday-Sunday, June 15-17, 2007

Members: \$205/Non-members: \$225

Join Ted and Pete for this very special excursion to the Presidential Range of the White Mountains for some of the most spectacular scenery in New England. Planned to coincide with peak bloom of the alpine wildflowers, we will visit Mount Washington's Alpine Garden and other areas both above and below timber line. We will lodge at the 5,000-foot high Lakes of the Clouds Hut on Friday night, hike across the high plateau to the Alpine Garden on Saturday, and hike down to Joe Dodge Lodge at Pinkham Notch for Saturday night. Sunday we'll explore lower elevation areas near Pinkham.

The Art of Falconry: *Chris Davis, Master Falconer.* Saturday, June 2, 10:30am-Noon

Members: \$12/Non-members: \$18. Held at New England Falconry in Hadley

Chris Davis is a Master Falconer, breeder, and the founder and director of New England Falconry. He has been a licensed falconer since 1979 and is the first Master Falconer permitted in this country to offer hands-on falconry education. You will experience the ancient art of falconry while learning about the life history of raptors, their role in the environment, and the efforts underway to ensure their survival and conservation.

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

Birding By Canoe: *David McLain.* Saturday, May 5, 9:00 am-noon

Early Morning Bird Walks: *Various leaders.*

May 5, 7-8:30 a.m. at Marion Sherman Lynes

May 19, 7-8:30 a.m. at Arcadia

May 26, 7-8:30 a.m. at Laughing Book

May 14-18, 6:30-8:00 a.m. at Arcadia

Barton Cove Eagles and Canoe Trip: *Aimee Gelinas.* Thursday, May 31, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Springtime at High Ledges: *Ron Wolanin.* Sunday, June 3, 9:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m.

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

GREAT FALLS DISCOVERY CENTER PROGRAMS

Struggles of a Migratory Bird: *Refuge Staff.* Saturday, May 5, 1 pm

Suitcase for Survival: *Tom Laskowski and Eddy Edwards (federal wildlife officers)*

Thursday, May 10, 7 pm. Held at The Montshire Museum of Science, Norwich, VT. (802 649 2200 x222)

Build-A-Bird: *Refuge Staff.* Friday, May 11, 10:30 am

Bat Explore!: *John Foster.* Thursday, May 17, 7 pm

Great Falls Art Fest: Saturday, May 19 and Sunday, May 20 10 am to 4 pm

Birds of the Connecticut River Watershed: *Refuge Staff.* Friday, May 25, 1 pm

Pre-1840 Rendezvous in Northfield, MA

Sunday, May 27, 10 am – 4 pm

Tuesday, May 29, 10 am – 4 pm

Friends Coffeehouse Series. Wednesday, May 30, 7pm

2nd Annual Family Fish Day! Saturday, June 2, 10 am – 2 pm

Great Falls Discovery Center is located at 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA

Open Fridays and Saturdays from 10 AM to 4 PM

Phone (413) 683 3221

Welcome, New Members!

Jean Marie Casbarian: Northampton

Susan Jones: Monson

Bryan Bridges: Easthampton

Mrianna McKim: Northampton

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!

Well, that seems to be it for this month.

Until June, 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 23, No. 10

June, 2007

“Gossamer-thin.” This (invented) term came unbidden into my mind recently, and, lacking any legitimate editorial material, I decided that it should be the theme of the last editorial of the year. “Gossamer” was an old English word, apparently derived from the term “goose summer.” This referred to that part of the year when domestic geese were fattest and ready for eating. Coincidentally, this was also the autumn in England, a time when the evening air over the meadows was filled with the parachute threads of baby spiders. Then, as now, baby spiders used the slightest air currents and the aerodynamics of fine silken thread to disperse from their progenitors, whose parental responsibilities had already been replaced by a rather indiscriminate hunger.

The word came to me on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend when, as luck would have it, I went to the legendary Beech Forest near Provincetown looking for a concentrated view of the tail end of the warbler migration. I found only concentrated mosquitoes, who set about draining my circulatory system, despite the best chemical deterrents Avon can market. So it was that, having encountered nothing more interesting than a Pine Warbler in an hour and a half of birding, I stopped at the restrooms, with my patience gossamer-thin.

“Gossamer-thin” also describes the toilet tissue now being used in most public restrooms, though you would be spared the following diatribe if the tensile strength of the stuff even approached that of spider silk. Not for the first time, I was forced to reach up into the dark innards of the (fortunately not quite) tamper-proof machine to manually turn the toilet roll, the paper being so thin that it would tear under the modest tension required to unroll the prescribed length. Prescribed length? Who decided that, and would it not have been better to assign the calculation to an earthling?

An age passed thus, as I gently coaxed the priceless tissue from its roll, accumulating a bare fistful of little fragments, like some giant goldfinch plundering a milkweed pod. Some avian atlaser will no doubt mark me down as “CN”. Am I, (I asked myself), actually using less tissue than I would if it was actually of functional thickness? What diabolical evil was I planning, that made it necessary to seclude me from society for this long, and don’t they realize I am much more dangerous now than I was ten minutes ago? What is the national economic and emotional cost of millions of people spending this long to achieve even a dubious level of posterior hygiene with this stuff? What must it be like for the fragments of paper spread all over the floors of bathrooms nation-wide, denied their only opportunity to be useful?

Encumbered with these (admittedly) unproductive questions, I emerged, seething, from the bathroom, ready to call it quits. Before I could stomp my way to the car, a distinctive “kowl, kowl, kowl” drew me a hundred yards or so down a side trail, where I eventually caught a glimpse of my first decent Yellow-billed Cuckoo of the year. Were it not for the delay, I’d have been long-gone when that bird betrayed its whereabouts. Gossamer-thin. Toilet tissue. Serendipity. Connect these concepts as you will over a G and T in the yard, and apply them to your own birding. It is what keeps it all going. See you in September, by which time we will be close to the gossamer-draped evenings of the fall.

This edition (if you have not already abandoned it in disgust) contains:

- a brief introduction to the last program of the year,
- a preview of next year’s program schedule,
- field trip reports and coming trips,
- an atlas update,
- formal announcement of the new HBC Board,
- changes to the Rare Bird Alert
- Hitchcock Programs (apologies to Arcadia and Great Falls Discovery Center).

I hope you find some of it useful.

PROGRAMS

Monday, June 11 at 7:30 PM

Joan Walsh speaks about **Breeding Bird Atlas (2)**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

If you are not involved in this project (yet), the breeding bird atlas (now in phase 2, the first iteration having been in the 1970's) aims to determine the distribution of all breeding birds in Massachusetts. Unlike the Christmas count, mere observation of species during the breeding season is insufficient. Volunteers (and there are hundreds of them state-wide) must look for evidence that species are actually breeding, and compile (evolving) bodies of data from patches of territory about 10 miles square.

If you are anything like me, you have found the Breeding Bird Atlas work all-consuming, and, like any great work of public importance, long periods of tough slogging interspersed with brief moments of unique achievement and insight. My birding will never be the same, (nor will my attitudes to multiflora rose and domestic dogs).

Joan is the coordinator of Breeding Bird Atlas 2 for MassAudubon. In addition to some insight into the progress so far this year of this wonderful project, perhaps she will shed some light on just how one is supposed to confirm Pine Warbler without a chainsaw, and what might be referred to a somewhat destructive sampling technique? Come along and get some further insight into the workings of this special project.

Next Year's Programs (Provisional)

September 10, 2007. **Larry Holt**. The Making of "Drawn from Nature"

October 15. **John van de Graaff**. Birds of the Eurasian Continent

November 12, 2007. **Susan Russo**. The Conte Refuge and Discovery Center

December 10, 2007. **Members Meeting**

January 14, 2008. **Don Kroodsmma**. Bicycle Trip 2

February 11, 2008. **Ed Neumuth**. Palmyra Atoll Research

March 10, 2008. **Scottt Hecker**. NAS Coastal Waterbird Program

April 14, 2008. **Chris Elphick**. Sharp-tailed Sparrow Nesting

May 12, 2008. **Rob Williams**. Avian Endemism in Peru

June 2008. **Bruce Beehler**. Foja, New Guinea Expeditions

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Mt Auburn Cemetery. Sunday, May 14

The day dawned beautifully and stayed that way as we hurtled along the pike toward Watertown, Massachusetts. Participating this year were Betsy Higgins, Lori and John Rogers, Juliana Vanderwielen, Eileen Rutman, Bernie and Elissa Rubenstein, Rachel Greenwood, and Janet Polvino, dubiously led by David Peake-Jones.

We began, as is customary, with a stroll along the Indian Ridge path, past the grave of Henry Longfellow. There were one or two nice warblers about, including a briefly cooperative **Bay-breasted Warbler**. The characteristic "tubular-bells" chiming of a **Bobolink** was so unexpected as not to register with a good proportion of the assembled birding multitudes, but we eventually located it in the top of an oak tree. We also found several **Wilson's Warblers** by their hesitant twittering. Perhaps our best-seen bird was a gorgeous **Canada Warbler** sporting in an apple tree. From the tower later in the morning we managed to find an **Indigo Bunting**, and a **Scarlet Tanager**, and had rather unsatisfactory looks at a Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Our tally of 18 species of warblers did not include some remarkable misses, including Chestnut-sided Warbler, Pine and

Prairie Warblers. Thrushes, normally a staple of this trip, were conspicuously rare, but we did have three species.

In the early afternoon we adjourned to Great Meadows NWR in Concord to try to round out our list. The cat-tails had barely sprouted in the marsh, which perhaps explained the absence of Marsh Wrens. We had icky looks at breeding water snakes, cuter looks at nesting Yellow Warblers, and a Least Sandpiper sneaking along at the water's edge but could find little else to write home about.

dpj



Poor Man's Monhegan. Plum Island and Cape Ann. Saturday, May 26.

Slow, slower, slowest. No that's not David Peake-Jones listing trip participants in order with me at the end. That's the bird activity on this year's Memorial Day week-end trip to Plum Island. After two outstanding trips in the past two years, this year's highlights are limited to staring at the SOUND of a Swainson's Warbler for an hour and a half, excellent views of four Wilson's Phalaropes, a wonderful discussion about a possible Long-billed Dowitcher, and mouth-watering fried clams. The weather leading up to and including the day of the trip could not produce a fallout of either land or sea birds.

When the eight of us finally got together at an area on Plum Island known as the Warden's, we found a group of fifty or sixty birders staring at a wall of green shrubs. Emanating from that wall was the loud, clear song of a Swainson's Warbler. This bird was banded at the nearby banding station two days earlier. At times it seemed that the bird was within ten or fifteen feet but never showed. To avoid a mutiny our group moved on after more than an hour. Hellcat was quiet except for a nice look at a female Black-throated Blue Warbler and a great show by singing Marsh Wrens. To a person our group wanted those wrens to teach the Swainson's a thing or two.

The state beach lot was full (it being a beautiful beach day) so we scoped some shorebirds just north of Stage Harbor. We found a single dowitcher that, based on the very long, thin bill and hunch-backed appearance, we feel was a Long-billed Dowitcher.

After leaving the island we stopped at the marsh area near Pikul Farm on Route 1A. This was our best birding of the day with Glossy Ibis, Blue-winged Teal, White-rumped and Pectoral Sandpipers, and Wilson's Phalaropes showing well. We finished the day with about 45 species, a few less than the hundred plus of the last two years.

"We bird because every year is different", Rudd Stone used to say. He also used to say: "There are long billed dowitchers and longer billed dowitchers."

Bob Bieda



Monhegan Island. May 25 through May 28.

Participants: Nancy and Denny Baker, Larry and Joan Duprey, Steve and Carol Gehlbach, Isabel Higgins, Bob Jones, Marcia Merithew, Elissa and Bernie Rubinstein, and Shirley Smigel. Trip leaders: Betsy Higgins and Andrew Magee.

The weather was fair, save for one pre-dawn downpour, and for this leader, often TOO WARM: how odd! Despite the birds lower numbers (quantity) than usual (except for Baltimore Orioles and especially female Blackpolls), the island slowly but steadily gave up here hidden migrants.

The birds had a tendency this year to often be furtive, zippy and "over there" (and no new "fall-out"). Things seemed to improve as the weekend progressed, our "hunting" spirit was high and we finished with 120 species, about 2 species below our highest, and (ahem) nine more than some Allen Bird Club members saw in the days leading up to our visit. (.....hmmmm- is such inter-club teasing allowed??....). Everyone probably had her or his particular bird highlights. Mine were three: 3 male Magnolia Warblers on a log at one point no more than 24 total inches apart; a **Parasitic Jaeger** all too quickly zipping *right* over our Puffin Boat, with a **Razorbill** lifting alongside and, in *one small cone-laden spruce* close by, whole families of (that's adult males, females, and striped-and-begging juvenals) of BOTH **Red-** and **White-winged Crossbills** like strange, northern upside-down hanging parrots, with the smallish tree also festooned with warblers and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Colorful? You bet!

We "worked hard", stayed cheerful, and dedicated our rousing rendition of the club song to its founder, the "retired" and dear Barbara Tiffany.

Thank you, everyone!
Andrew Magee

Coming Trips

***Saturday, June 9. West Quabbin ramble.** Half day. Dave Gross offers a trip "through his backyard" and will be listening for nesting migrants, permanent residents, and hiking through blooming Mountain Laurel. If this sounds appealing, email or call David (413-253-2897) for further details. (M)

Sunday, June 10. Mt. Greylock. **Cancelled** due to the closure of all roads in the park this year.

Saturday, June 16. Hammonasset Beach State Park, CT. All day. In a new trip for the Hampshire Bird Club, Betsy Higgins goes to the coast of Connecticut to find unusual sparrows, rails, and other seaside denizens. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for details as the date approaches. (E)

Wednesday, June 20. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) leads birders through the local landscape, seeking out late migrants. Meet at 6:00 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Friday-Sunday, June 22-24. Connecticut Lakes, NH. Overnight trip. David Peake-Jones and Mike Locher fill in for Tom Gagnon this year. They will be leading this trip to northern New Hampshire. Migrants, boreal specialties, and moose abound. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Contact David (413-529-9541) or Mike (413-585-5864) to register. (M)

Saturday, July 28. New South Beach, I. All day. David Peake-Jones goes looking for early migrating shorebirds, especially Red Knots. Bring a lunch, a jacket, water and \$20 for the boat ride. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (M)

Saturday, August 25. New South Beach, II. All day. Bob Bieda leads birders in their quest for late shorebird migrants, including Curlew Sandpipers and Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits. Bring a lunch, a jacket, and \$20 for the boat ride. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register. (M)

RARE BIRD ALERT CHANGES

Effective June 1, 2007, the club will offer an email Rare Bird Alert only. We are, reluctantly, discontinuing the phone tree because of persistent problems with its implementation. If you are currently on the email alert list, you will notice no changes.

If you are on the phone tree, and if we have an email address for you, we will automatically transfer you to the email list for the balance of the 2007 season (ending in September, 2007). There will be fresh opportunities to sign up for the Rare Bird Alert (email only) in September. The “gatekeepers” of the Rare Bird Alert are listed below. This means that if you see a bird you believe is ‘alert-worthy’ you should contact one of them immediately.

email (all gatekeepers): alert@hampshirebirdclub.org

Scott Surner: (413) 256 5438

Jan Ortiz: (413) 549 1768

Geoff LeBaron: (413) 268 9281

Bob Bieda: (413) 527 2623

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Hampshire Bird Club, Incorporated, was held on Monday, May 14 at 7:30 PM at Immanuel Lutheran Church. The assembled membership elected the following Board of Directors for the club for 2007-2008.

President: David Gross

Vice-President/Program Chair: Geoff LeBaron

Treasurer: Janice Jorgenson

Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson

Communications Secretary: Elissa Rubenstein

Members-At-Large: Bruce Callaghan

Mike Locher

Dennis McKenna

Jaap van Heerden

Lisa Rock

Scott Surner

Our thanks to the outgoing members; Betsy Higgins, Marcia Merithew, and Bob Zimmermann!

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 2

In Hampshire-Franklin County there are now 89 blocks assigned and 87 folks working as primary and secondary atlasers. Lots of birders, lots of birds, lots of good stories, lots of questions.

Stories about: a chimney swift picking up fiber from the top of a stump (presumably for nesting material); a bittern in a nearby, underappreciated pond, the surprise at how much fun atlasing is - the slower, more careful observations required.

And some frustrations: how come mating birds only get a “probable” rating? How do I find the list that includes Raven? How to I tell what other folks are finding on this block? Why is every good birding site on the corner of four blocks?

Keep those stories and questions coming.

And if you aren’t already working on the atlas and have even a little time to help out, just do it. You will find all the information you need at hampshirebirdclub.org or contact Mary Alice (mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu).

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Chicopee Landfill & Methane Recapture Trip: *Bob Magnusson, Waste Management Engineer*

Wednesday, June 6, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Paddle the Watershed: *Connecticut Watershed Adventures 2007*

Saturday, June 16: Canoe Instruction Clinic, Deerfield River, 413-586-8612.

Saturday, June 23, 10 a.m.: Otter River Tour, Baldwinville to South Royalston, 978-248-9491.

Friday, June 29, 7 p.m.: Eagle Watch by Boat, Barton Cove, Gill, 800-859-2960.

Tarantulas, Whip Scorpions and Hissing Cockroaches: *Denise Passias & Jay Whitney*

Saturday, June 9, 10 a.m. to noon

Citizen Science: Monarchs are Back! *Ted Watt*

Sunday, June 24, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Nature Writing Workshop: In the Lap of the Earth: *Rema Boscov*

Session 1: Sundays, April 29, May 6: 10 a.m. to noon

Session 2: Sundays, June 3, 10, 24, July 1, 8: 10 a.m. to noon

Quigong: Exploring Nature's Energy: *Rema Boscov*

Sundays, June 3, 10, 24, July 1, 8: 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

The Soulful Landscape Writing Workshop: *Erica Wheeler*

Sunday, June 10, 1 - 5 p.m.

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

Welcome New Members!

Sara Griesmer ---Sunderland

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, and till September.

Until then, 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 24, No. 1

September, 2007

Fall is approaching. In the minds of birds - the post-breeding adults and developing juveniles alike - an impulse is coalescing that will eventually become an irrepressible and unrelenting sense of purpose. Birds are moving! This fall, we will sample the migration across the length and breadth of New England: from the September thickets of the valley to the bracing expanses of the Lake Champlain farmlands. We'll go on into the winter, and be ready again when spring brings birds back to us again!

We hope you will join us for superb field trips and some of the presentations in our widely-respected monthly program series. To help you further, we have a library, located at the Hitchcock Center and cataloged on-line, and we participate in bird conservation in the local area, particularly in collaboration with the national and state Audubon societies, and the Hitchcock Center in Amherst.

Mind you, none of this is possible if you do not renew! Memberships are our major financial engine, and it is through numbers that we gain our strength. This year, we have decided upon a modest increase in dues, which will help defray increasing costs for postage, speakers, and to help us purchase the ever-more-complex technologies required to bring the best speakers to the club. We hope you will agree it is worth it!

In this issue:

- an introduction to this month's program, and the program schedule for the year,
- the Membership Form (due in by September 30) and Rare Bird Alert sign-up (due by October 15) for 2007-2008,
- the fall field trip schedule, and
- a survey for the 25th anniversary committee, to help plan for this event in 2008-2009.

I hope you find some of it useful.

Please renew your membership NOW or at the September program!

PROGRAMS

Monday, September 10 at 7:30 PM

Larry Hott speaks about The Making of "American Masters. John James Audubon: Drawn From Nature"

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

John James Audubon, whose name has become synonymous with conservation in North America, created the largest and most beautiful book of the nineteenth century: "Birds of America". Few people, and certainly few birders, could fail to associate most of these 435 illustrations of birds with their progenitor, but equally, few know the details of his extraordinary, tempestuous, and ultimately tragic life.

The documentary film "*American Masters. John James Audubon: Drawn from Nature*" had its world premiere in Northampton earlier this year, and aired on PBS on July 25. Larry Hott directed this exquisite film, and promises to give us an inside look at its making.

Lawrence R. Hott has been producing nationally-acclaimed documentary films since 1978, when he left the practice of law to join Florentine Films, based in Northampton, Massachusetts. Mr. Hott was a Fulbright Scholar in Film and Television in the UK, and has been widely recognized for his broad contributions to journalism, film, the humanities, and non-fiction writing. Larry has made twenty-one other films for national PBS broadcast, including (recently) *Imagining Robert: My Brother, Madness and Survival*, and *The Harriman Alaska Expedition Retraced*.

Coming Programs

October 15, 2007. John Van de Graaff. Birds Across Europe: A Photographer's Odyssey

November 12, 2007. Susan Russo. The Conte Refuge and Discovery Center

December 10, 2007. Members Meeting

January 14, 2008. Don Kroodsma. Bicycle Trip 2

February 11, 2008. Ed Neumuth. Palmyra Atoll Research

March 10, 2008. Scottt Hecker. NAS Coastal Waterbird Program

April 14, 2008. Chris Elphick. Sharp-tailed Sparrow Nesting

May 12, 2008. Rob Williams. Avian Endemism in Peru

June 2008. Bruce Beehler. Foja, New Guinea Expeditions

The 25th Anniversary Committee Needs your Help!

The committee is beginning the planning process for this anniversary, which occurs during 2008-2009, and to do this, they need your ideas. The committee has compiled a survey, which will help you provide your ideas on what you would want to see as part of the 25th celebration. The survey is up on the web at

www.hampshirebirdclub.org.

Please do one of the following:

- **download and complete the survey and bring it to the September meeting, or**
- **come a few minutes early to the September meeting.** We'll have more paper surveys there and writing implements.

HBC NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ON-LINE

On the annual membership form, we ask you to choose between two versions of the HBC newsletter. The club offers an on-line (or "electronic") version of the newsletter, as an alternative to the "hard copy" delivered via USPS..

"How does that work?"

All members get the first two newsletters as a hard copy owing to the large number of forms we need to send you. The eight editions coming after the October edition are posted on the HBC website. If you choose the 'On-line' option, you will receive an email notification, whereupon you can view and/or download the newsletter from the website at your leisure. You need to give us an email address on the membership form in order to get the on-line version.

"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. You also reduce the labor involved in assembling and mailing the hard copies.

What if I encounter technical difficulties?

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

What are the computer/software requirements?

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

How do I sign up?

Sign up in the upper right hand corner of the Membership Form.

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

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

Thank you!!

That's all for this month. More from the bird club in late September!

Until then, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor

(413) 529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Date received:	Payment: ___ cash, ___ check, \$ _____	Release Form signed?	Newsletter Choice?	Data entered:
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For administrative purposes only

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC. MEMBERSHIP FORM: 2007-2008

Please note that contact information may be shared with other members of the club, unless you request otherwise below.

Name(s): Address: City: State: ZIP: Home Phone(s): Work Phone(s): E-mail(s): 	<p>Please select ONE of the two options below to receive the newsletter:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">I will download the newsletter from the HBC Website (club will send monthly reminders)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Send me the newsletter via US mail</p> <p>Please check any activities listed below in Which you would like to participate:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally provide refreshments</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Committee</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Field Trip Committee</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Lead field trips</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Share information on birding locations</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe)</p>
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☐ Please mark this box only if you would like to EXCLUDE your name and contact information from the club membership list (distributed ONLY to members). Thank you.

25th ANNIVERSARY CONTRIBUTION: Tax deductible

2008-2009 will be the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Hampshire Bird Club. Please consider an additional donation to support special programs and activities in celebration of this milestone.

\$

Please choose a level of membership from the options below. Funds generated through supporting membership categories aid in financing the outstanding programming for which our club has become known. **All membership contributions are tax deductible** (if you itemize your deductions).

MEMBERSHIP - REGULAR: Tax deductible

Individual @ \$18.00

\$

Family @ \$30.00

\$

MEMBERSHIP – SUPPORTING: Tax deductible

Downy Woodpecker @ \$40.00

\$

Northern Flicker @ \$60.00

\$

Red-bellied Woodpecker @ \$100.00

\$

Pileated Woodpecker @ \$250.00 or more

\$

Reminder: Complete and sign the Release Form on the reverse side.

Please make checks payable to the **Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.** and send (with this form) to:
Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. P.O. Box 716, Amherst, MA 01004-0716.

RELEASE FORM: 2007-2008

Please complete the release form below if you intend to go on field trips or think you might participate in the future. We need members to share responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others during field trips. The signed release will be filed with the club secretary. For family memberships, all participating members should sign.

RELEASE OF ALL DEMANDS - HOLD HARMLESS

I hereby acknowledge that as a participant in field trips with the Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. (HBC) I may be exposed to significant risks. These may include, but are not limited to, vehicular travel over land and water, foot travel over difficult terrain, and hazardous weather conditions. I may also encounter poisonous plants, dangerous wildlife, and/or disease-carrying insects. In the event of injury, I understand that I may face considerable delays in reaching professional medical help.

I fully accept these risks and agree to hold the Hampshire Bird Club, Inc., its officers, directors, volunteers, employees, and agents free from any and all liability for injuries and/or loss which I may incur, directly or indirectly, while on field trips run by HBC during the 2007-2008 membership year.

EXECUTED freely and voluntarily this day:.....,,
(month) (day) (year)

.....
(Signatures of all participating family members)

Please print names:

HBC Rare Bird Alert: Where Are the Birds Today?

All of us are interested in knowing what birds are in our area each day. We do this by:

- birding
- talking with other birders
- calling the Voice of Audubon or reading "The Voice" in the newspaper
- checking the Web
- joining the Rare Bird Alert (for those interested in unusual species)

To check The Voice of Audubon:

Call toll free **1-781 259 8805**

Follow the directions (press 2 to listen to Seth Kellogg, the Western Mass voice). Seth updates The Voice once a week - more often when necessary - so check regularly. (Thanks to Trudy Tynan, the transcript also appears weekly in most of our local papers.)

To share local sightings with other valley birders via email:

You may wish to join the Allen Bird Club "*Bird News of Western Massachusetts*" network. To join, email Seth Kellogg at skhawk@comcast.net

To check various sources on the web:

Go to the HBC website: www.hampshirebirdclub.org. From the **Related Links** section on the Home Page, you can go to **the Voice** and/or to **Massbird**

To join the HBC Rare Bird Alert (RBA).

This operates by email ONLY. You will need at least one active email address. Fill in the form below and return (perhaps with your membership form) **by Monday, October 15**. You may turn the form in at the September/October meetings, if you like.

Date: _____

Rare Bird Alert (RBA) Form: 2007-2008

Name(s): _____

You may provide as many email addresses as you like (within reason, please). Participants automatically receive all RBA announcements.

email address/es (1) _____

(2) _____



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 24, No. 2
October, 2007

Mother Earth, here in New England, is about to assume her earth-toned fall plumage. Earth-toned (or less complimentary descriptors) can also be attached to the fall migrants who are wending their way south through the crisp dark of night, or the last thermals of a dying summer. It is a time to revel in crisp mornings, dun-colored weeds in quiet fields, fall warblers, sparrows, hawks and the promise of waterfowl to come.

Please note that this on-line version of the newsletter has the following documents included with it, so you will not have to navigate through a multitude of links: HBC Field Trip Guidelines, HBC Field Trip Policy, and HBC Directory (contact list for board and officers). Hope this is helpful DPJ

Please Renew Your Membership NOW (if you haven't already)!

Memberships are due by October 31, and this is the last complimentary newsletter we will be sending. Membership forms can be downloaded from www.hampshirebirdclub.org if you lost the nice tan-colored one we sent in September. New members who joined after January 1, 2006 do not need to pay dues this year. Don't forget that we are seeking funds to begin organizing events for the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations in 2008-2009. Your contribution can be recorded on and sent in with your membership form and dues.

On-Line Newsletter

The club offers an on-line (or "electronic") version of the newsletter, as an alternative to the "hard copy" delivered via USPS.

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PROGRAMS

Monday, October 15 at 7:30 PM

John Van de Graaff shows us **Birds Across Europe: A Photographer's Odyssey**
Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

This digital slide show covers an extensive swath of Europe: from Spain (John's earliest bird-photo trip, in 2001) through France to England, and northeasterly to Estonia (May 2007). The presentation includes such continent-wide species as (for example) White Storks, Common Cranes, Wagtails, Chaffinches, European Robins, and Common Buzzards. There are vivid portrayals of many other species as well, showing both the birds themselves and their habitats.

A native of Boston, **John Van de Graaff** has been photographing birds virtually full-time since 2001 and particularly enjoys traveling in Europe, especially France. He migrated from New York City to Northampton in 2003 with his wife Marylee Bomboy. John has made presentations to a number of birding and photography groups including several major bird clubs in Massachusetts. A widely-attended exhibition of his bird photos appeared at the Burnett Gallery in Amherst this past July, and a smaller selection appeared during September at Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary on Cape Cod. His Painted Bunting appeared on the June 2006 cover of *Birder's World* magazine. He has photographed extensively on the Massachusetts coast, capturing images which have been used by Mass Audubon to support their IBA and Coastal Waterbird Programs. John's website is easily remembered: www.birdsbyjohn.com.

Coming Programs

November 12, 2007. **Susan Russo**. The Conte Refuge and Discovery Center

December 10, 2007. **Members Meeting**

January 14, 2008. **Don Kroodsmas**. More Fun With Bird Song: Local Heroes

MORE REMINDERS

Rare Bird Alert

If you want to be part of the Rare Bird Alert (now via email only), please send the form in with your membership, turn in at the October meeting or to the club at P.O. 716, Amherst, MA 01004-0716. The RBA will go into operation around October 15, so get your application form in before then to be part of the first contact list. The RBA form, if yours got shredded by the USPS in September, is also available at www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Twenty Fifth Anniversary Celebration Survey

The committee, headed by Shirley Hammerschmith, is busily gathering, filtering, and developing ideas for this still-nascent event. Please let your ideas be heard by completing and bringing the salmon-colored survey to the October meeting, or mailing it to Shirley as indicated on the form.

Welcome New Members!

Christopher Benning and Lana Fiala, Amherst	Paul and Susan Laliberte, Easthampton
Bryan Bridges, Easthampton	Deborah Levy, Northampton
Cindy Chamberland, Easthampton	Marianna McKim, Northampton
Sara Griesemer, Sunderland	Jeff Rankin, Florence
Robert and Susan Jones, Monson	Barbara Snook, Westhampton

Interesting to see a majority from the better side of the river!

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Westover Air Force Base. Saturday, June 2 with Bob Bieda

Highlights included the following:

10 Upland Sandpipers - pair with a newly hatched chick
 1 Chimney Swift carrying a small stick
 2 Willow Flycatchers
 2 Horned Larks - juveniles hatched this year
 2 Prairie Warblers
 2 Field Sparrows

8 Savannah Sparrows
 10 Grasshopper Sparrows - carrying food, entering nest sites
 Bobolink - many
 6 Eastern Meadowlarks
 2 Orchard Orioles

Also our annual walk through a cranberry bog that is rapidly being lost to invasive plants.

Bruce Hart

Connecticut Lakes. June 22-24 with Mike Locher and David Peake-Jones

Participants (in order of edibility to black flies): David Gross, Julie Gross, Betsy Higgins, Isabel Higgins, Mike Locher, Marcia Merithew, Joanne Parker, Lou Peugh, David Peake-Jones, Ed Olmstead.

Auxiliary: Elizabeth McAnulty, Bob Wilce.

Surrogate Bird Finders: Tom Gagnon and Bruce Callahan

After assembling at Powderhorn Lodge early on Friday afternoon, we leapt right into the fray by traveling out along Indian Stream road, which runs just a few miles inside the Canadian border. Conditions were cool and breezy. In no time, we picked up a Winter Wren singing in the dense undergrowth on the outskirts of Pittsburg, along with breeding Magnolia and other warblers. A lone Hooded Merganser prowled the snags of Muddy Pond, and a Belted Kingfisher chattered along the shore. Going further, we quickly became immersed in the world of boreal breeding birds. Least and Alder Flycatchers were abundant, along with Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Cedar Waxwings. Swamp Sparrows and a Northern Waterthrush sang from the marshy environments of the stream. Breeding Dark-eyed Juncoes and Northern Parulas were everywhere, and the song of the north woods was definitely that of the White-throated Sparrow. As we continued along the road, the first car flushed a female **Ruffed Grouse with young** from the roadside ditch, all of whom were seen nicely by those in the car behind as they scuttled off into the undergrowth.

During the evening hours we went looking for moose along Moose Alley. Both cars, though we ended up separated, were successful. We enjoyed a hearty dinner at the local restaurant, and went to bed with loons calling from Back Lake.

On Saturday morning, acting on intelligence from Tom Gagnon, also staying at the Lodge, we headed toward East Inlet to look for a Black-backed Woodpecker. At the bridge near the head of second Connecticut Lake, we came across a MassAudubon group looking at a boisterous group of **Gray Jays** right by the road, which gave us great looks. We proceeded down Scotts Bog road to the reported Woodpecker location, pausing for a family group of **American Woodcock** who bobbed their way enchantingly across the road. Even as we approached the parking area by the outlet of the bog, we saw another moose beating a dignified retreat through the swampy vegetation. This was probably the same animal which swam across Scott's Bog a few minutes later. As we disembarked from the cars, we could hardly have failed to see the two woodpeckers flying back and forth from the surrounding woods to a nest hole about five feet off the ground in open view. The black backs of both birds were unmistakable and one had a bright pastel-yellow head. They were indeed one of the signature birds of the region: **Black-backed Woodpeckers**. Shivering in the driving winds blowing off Scott's Bog, we watched these birds for about half an hour before leaving to search the length of the Scott's Bog Road. We were impeded by strong winds, which obscured all sight and sound of birds, but we were able to locate singing Wilson's and Canada warblers during the morning. Later in the afternoon, after a period of regenerative rest, we set off along Day Road. With the wind having died some, this proved to be one of our best locations. We found an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** foraging from a high dead tree, and several wonderful clusters of mixed songbirds, which included the elusive **Boreal Chickadee**, along with **Pine Siskin**, Blackburnian Warbler, Nashville Warbler, and singing Purple Finch.

Sunday dawned perhaps too clear and sunny for optimum birding, but we found **Cliff Swallows** nesting at the Lake Francis dam, and observed another swimming moose, this one crossing the substantial expanse of Lake Francis, in which effort it was engaged for about fifteen minutes. Proceeding along a logging road from Lake Francis, Betsy's sharp ears

picked up a Mourning Warbler singing by the roadside. This bird flashed in and out of view for well over half an hour, allowing Marcia to add it to her life list with more than a clear conscience. The birds quickly went silent in the clear morning sun, allowing the butterflies amongst us to browse the offerings amongst the roadside wildflowers, while the rest of us had to be content with a family of Eastern Phoebes lining up along a branch to be fed. After a compilation and picnic lunch at the Lake Francis State Park, we set off for home.

David Peake-Jones

New South Beach. Saturday, July 28 with David Peake-Jones.

Geoff LeBaron, Elaine Pourinski, and David Peake-Jones (participants in order of increasing susceptibility to greenheads) alighted on the fog-enshrouded tip of the beach after an agonizingly slow boat ride through the fickle shoals of the Monomoy channel. As always, as our feet found the sand and our ears and eyes adjusted to the glare of the beach, we slipped effortlessly into the milieu of the mud. For the next few hours we would pick our way amongst a beautiful array of shorebirds. We were, no doubt, oblivious to the subtleties of water and worms that govern their lives, but content to bear witness to the miracle of their migration just for a moment.

Black-bellied Plovers stood, enigmatic as ever, apparently ignoring the dainty dancing of Greater- and Lesser Yellowlegs in the shallows. **Hudsonian Godwits** – we counted a conservative 44 of them this year – fossicked among hordes of Willet and Short-billed Dowitchers, betraying themselves by their beautiful chestnut breasts, subtle size difference, and, of course, those gorgeous bills. We were delighted to find a **Marbled Godwit** leading an unassuming life amongst its more common cousins. On the drier sands, the constant scurry and chirrup of a moving carpet of Semi-palmated Plovers, Least- and Semi-palmated Sandpipers soon challenged our willingness to sort through them for rarities. However, the masses did give up a beautiful **Dunlin**. Better yet, having prophesied the possibility of a trans-continental visitor amongst the semi-palmated herd, Geoff managed to locate a **Western Sandpiper** in almost full breeding plumage.

In our all-too-frequent detours away from the fractious birds at the shoreline into the abrasive world of the beach grass, we came across three Whimbrel, a Salt-marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow, and the most unbearably cute family of Piping Plovers, whose brethren were encouragingly common on the shore. Overhead, Common and Least Terns pursued their fishy errands, as yet unaccompanied by the dispersing Roseate Terns and rarer species that Bob will no doubt document in August. Amongst the massed gulls on the sand, we found a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** trying to remain anonymous.

Even the possibility of rarities pales for me beside the true wonder of this time of year on South Beach. Amongst the extremes of shorebird physiognomy on display are several hundred rather dumpy birds, with unremarkable bills, whose only claim to fashion sense comes from the pastel apricot of their breasts. These are a good proportion of the embattled eastern race of the **Red Knot**, perhaps the most endangered shore bird on the beach. I, for one, said a silent prayer that each of these, and ultimately, a healthy population of their kind, may once again find horseshoes crabs massed on the beaches of Delaware Bay next spring. Having been doused with a bracing sprinkle from the flanks of a passing mid-afternoon rainstorm, we reluctantly made our way to the pick-up point, to relinquish our place among the shorebirds, at least for this July.

David Peake-Jones

New South Beach II. Saturday, August 25, 2007 with Bob Bieda

Bob Bieda led a group of 9 HBC birders to the islands off Chatham and delivered all of the target species as advertised. It was a warm, sunny day with a steady breeze from the south. After a short boating commute via Outermost Adventures, the group landed at the south tip of the island for a northward day-hike along the beach through large numbers of shorebirds, gulls and terns.

Just before the boat reached shore, a **Black Tern** flew directly toward our boat, providing views that were so close that we had to put down the binoculars and resort to the naked eye. Other terns seen throughout the day included **Common, Least, Roseate** and **Forster's**. We had great opportunities to observe **Semipalmated, Black-bellied and Piping Plovers, Sanderlings, Dunlin, and Semipalmated, White-rumped and Least Sandpipers**. The highlight for most of us was the **Curlew Sandpiper**. It was initially difficult to find and some of us were getting restless with the thought of a possible miss. But it was ultimately picked out of the pack with a long scope as a “dowitcher with a distinctly different feeding behavior”. Closer inspection provided excellent views of this life bird for several of us. We also had a nice comparative study of eastern and western **Willetts**, along with a reminder of the challenges of fall peep plumages as we watched a Western Sandpiper with a group of Semipalmateds all morph into a flock of White-rumped Sandpipers when flushed! A

nice mix of **Short-billed Dowitchers, Ruddy Turnstones, Hudsonian and Marbled Godwits, American Oystercatchers, Red Knots and Whimbrels** rounded out the beautiful day on the beach.

After a “refreshing” boat ride through the salt spray back to the Chatham dock, we retired to the Kreme N Kone to sample the local fare and tallied about 45 species for the day.

Dave Mako

Goat Peak Hawkwatches. Friday, September 14 and Monday, September 17 with Tom Gagnon.

On the 14th, the highlights were close looks at a couple of hundred Broad-winged Hawks, six (6) Coopers Hawks, thirty three (33) Sharp-shinned Hawks and a Northern Goshawk. In addition, three (3) Merlin flashed by and nine (9) Osprey loped past the tower.

However, the real fireworks happened on the 17th, when **3685 Broad-winged Hawks** swirled past in a series of elegant and stupendous kettles! Not to be content with this, Tom and Larry Therrien managed to locate a **Connecticut Warbler** in the Red Maple swamp at Arcadia, just for good measure!

Tom Gagnon

On Sunday, September 30, Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien led a trip into the magical interior of the Quabbin. Amongst the 61 species of birds they encountered were a **Northern Goshawk** (unfortunately seen by only a lucky few), a **Greater Yellowlegs**, three **Bald Eagles**, and a fine showing of **Swainson’s Thrushes**. Hidden innocuously in Larry’s on-line trip summary is the following entry: “White-throated Sparrow: 220.” Also of note were nine species of warblers, including abundant Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers. The undoubted highlight was a superb **bull moose**, which remained in view for seven or eight minutes.

Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien

Coming Trips

Please see also the Fall Field Trip Schedule, 2007

Saturday, October 13. Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area: Snow Geese.

All day. Al Richards will lead birders to the annual spectacle of thousands of Snow Geese (and a Ross’s Goose or two, with any luck) fueling up for their migration, then explores the shore of Lake Champlain. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting information. (E)

Saturday, October 27. Coastal Rhode Island. All day. Join Geoff LeBaron on this trip to Rhode Island to find the birds along the coast. For meeting information and further details, call Geoff (413-2689281) as the date approaches. (E)

Sunday, November 4. Berkshire Lakes: Migrating Waterfowl. All day. Tom Gagnon leads participants to the lakes and ponds of western Massachusetts for ducks and other migrating waterfowl. Meet at Stop & Shop in Northampton (228 King St.) at 6:15 a.m. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to register and for further details. (M)

Where Are They Now?

Several of our members appear to have moved without leaving a forwarding address, presumably to avoid receiving the newsletter. Well, not so fast! If anyone knows where these good members are, please notify the Membership Secretary, Sue Emerson: membership@hampshirebirdclub.org, 584 6736

Mary McDermott, formerly of Northampton
Anne and Robert Grose, formerly of Amherst
Mary Schneider, formerly of Belchertown

Thanks, HBC.

LIBRARY

October, 2007. Pg 5 of 9

HBC has a substantial library, located at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst.

Hours are those of the Hitchcock Center:

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. from Tuesday through Friday, and

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday.

The collection is catalogued on-line at www.hampshirebirdclub.org.

The library contains birding resources in various media, including field guides, bird-finding guides to almost every major birding destination in the U.S., and overseas, natural histories, periodicals and videos. Items can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. Henry Lappen, the librarian, is happy to bring items to meetings, if you give him a few days in advance. You can reach him at (413) 549 3722.

“Valley Land Fund” has a New Logo and Website!!

Valley Land Fund, a local land trust, has revamped their logo and launched a new Web site at valleylandfund.org. Working with Nancy Haver, a well-known local artist in the Pioneer Valley, the new logo is a visual image which truly represents the beauty of our valley and the goals of VLF. Incorporating Forest, Field, Wetland, and Wildlife Habitat, the new logo reflects the preservation focus of VLF. The Web-site features a slide show of the Valley and has extensive information on VLF and land preservation. The new site represents seven months of care and effort with web-designer Brit Albritton.

Founded in 1986 and serving Hampshire, Hampden, and Franklin counties, the trust has saved over 8,000 acres from development. Among the special places already protected by Valley Land Fund are 160 acres on Mt. Toby in Leverett and Sunderland, 100 acres of the Holyoke Range sheltering six rare animal species, 148 acres on Lake Fitzgerald in Northampton, 180 acres of farmland in Montague, 118 acres of floodplain in Longmeadow, and 300 acres adjoining wildlife in Chesterfield. At valleylandfund.org, users can view many other past land projects, as well as pending projects. The site also features “Landowner Q & A” to help landowners interested in protecting their land from development.

The mission of Valley Land Fund is to protect threatened forests, farms, wetland, and wildlife habitat in the Connecticut River Valley of Massachusetts. Collaborating with local communities, conservation groups, and government organizations, we provide loans, grants, and technical support to help preserve our special places for future generations.

John Body, President of the Board of Directors, can be reached at info@valleyfund.org.

Tom and Bill in Print

For those of you dabbling in butterflies, we are pleased to announce that two of our members have recently published a paper in the field.

Tom Gagnon and Bill Benner wrote one of the articles in the “Definite Destinations” series, presented in the journal “*American Butterflies*.” It is entitled “**The Mt Greylock State Reservation**,” and appears in the Spring-Summer 2007 edition of the journal. Congratulations. Tom and Bill!!

Because of shortage of space we cannot include program information from Hitchcock, Arcadia, and the Turner’s Falls Discovery Center. Our apologies!

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

(413) 529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Field Trip Guidelines for New Field Trip Participants and Drivers: 2007-2008 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 \$0.40/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.

FIELD TRIP POLICY: 2007-2008
HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC. 9/27/2006

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. The maximum recommended reimbursement (currently \$0.40 cents per mile) is the federal government employee mileage reimbursement rate, rounded down to the nearest 10 cents, 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 and obtain a signed Medical Information Form from each participant.
 - c. Be reimbursed for all costs associated with planning (i.e. long-distance calls, postage), lodging, and transportation during the trip. The maximum reimbursement for automobile travel shall be one quarter of the costs incurred by a single vehicle under clause 4 of this policy.
 - 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 and a Medical Information Form. The completed evaluation form, to be returned to the Field Trip Chair, will help the Field Trip Committee plan future trips and provide feedback for leaders. Participants should give their signed Medical Information form to the trip leader prior to departure.
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.

HBC Directory October, 2007

President - David Gross: (413) 253 2897; president@hampshirebirdclub.org

VP/Program Chair - Geoff LeBaron: (413) 268 9281; programs@hampshirebirdclub.org

Membership Secretary - Sue Emerson: (413) 584 6736; membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

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Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 24, No. 3

November, 2007

In this edition:

- information about this month's **program**, and those coming up in the next few months,
- **field trip reports** and **coming trips**,
- a reminder about the must-do birding event of the winter: the **Christmas Count**,
- a chance to **help a local after-school program**,
- **Hitchcock Programs**, and
- a gathering from **recent ornithological research**. *I hope you find some of it useful!!*

PROGRAMS

Monday, November 12 at 7:30 PM

The Fall Mystery Presentation!!

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Susan Russo, who was our scheduled speaker for November, has had to cancel. Fortunately, either **Beth Goettel** or **Sue Cloutier**, both of the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls, will speak to us instead. We won't know till after press time what the topic is, so serendipity will rule the day. Please join us for whatever the program will bring!!

Coming Programs

December 10, 2007. Members Meeting

January 14, 2008. Don Kroodsma. More Fun With Bird Song: Local Heroes

February 11, 2008. Ed Neumuth. Palmyra Atoll Research

Kakapo Hopping on the Supplement Bandwagon!

Mention of some birds is simply guaranteed to get my attention. One of these is the Kakapo. I first heard of this bird through a book published in 1985 by Douglas Adams and Mark Carwardine called "Last Chance to See." The authors traveled to several locations in the world searching for animals on the very edge of extinction.

The Kakapo is just such a creature. The largest known parrot, it is flightless, nocturnal, and ekes out a living in the depths of the New Zealand temperate rainforest. Almost extirpated by habitat reduction and introduced predators such as cats, this species declined until it was represented by only 51 individuals by 1995. The surviving individuals are mostly, if not entirely, confined to a few small islands which remain predator-free. It turns out that, along with their numerous other vulnerabilities, Kakapo breed only every 2-6 years, depending on the infrequent fruiting of either of two native tree species to provide enough nutrition to reproduce.

Now comes news of a radical attempt to increase the fecundity of breeding individuals. When fed a supplement created by zoologists from the University of Glasgow, the Kakapo dramatically increased the number of eggs laid, and thus their potential reproductive rate. With luck, and in tandem with other intensive efforts, this strategy may provide a glimmer of hope for one of our most priceless birds.

Reference: University Of Glasgow (2007, August 29). Saving The Remarkable Kakapo Bird From Extinction. *ScienceDaily*. Full article available on the web at www.Sciencedaily.com.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Hammonasset State Park, Connecticut: June 16, 2007

On a bright and beautiful early Saturday morn in mid-June, an intrepid trio consisting of **Betsy Higgins** (trip leader), Helga Beatty, and Leslie Hoffman set forth on a birding trip to Hammonasset State Park on the Connecticut shoreline. The day proved to be a fruitful one with a total of 54 species. We were successful in spotting both Salt Marsh Sharp-Tailed Sparrows and Seaside Sparrows and had a lengthy and up-close-and-virtually-personal look at a stunning **Little Blue Heron**. Other marsh birds of note included Green Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, and numerous **Glossy Ibis**. Shorebird sightings included Willets-Willets everywhere, Killdeer, and 2 Ruddy Turnstone with a single chick. Oystercatchers; Common and Least Terns; and Herring, Greater Black Backed, and Ring-billed Gulls rounded out the mix. Throw in a Sharp-Shinned Hawk, nesting Purple Martins, and a couple of Marsh Wrens playing hide and seek, and you end up with a truly good day.

Leslie Hoffman (who had 3 life birds for the day!)

Cape May. Friday, October 5 to Monday, October 8, 2007

Participants: **Scott Sumner, Dan Ziomek**, Valerie Miller, Emily Ziomek, Priscilla Moor, Helga Beatty, Sally Hills, Tom Gagnon, Bruce Callahan, Betsy Higgins, Donna Rickerby

The weather was the warmest ever for this trip. No gloves, warm hats or heavy coat were needed. We came away with 140 species, but no major early morning fallouts at Higbee Beach.

Highlights

American Wigeon: 100+

Blue-winged Teal: 6

Northern Shoveler: 25

Northern Pintail: 125+

Green-winged Teal: 300+

Ruddy Duck: 6

American White Pelican: 1 (Brigantine)

American Bittern: 1

Little Blue Heron: 2

Tricolored Heron: 6

Black-Crowned Night Heron: 18

Roseate Spoonbill- 1 (Brigantine)

10 Species of Hawks including Peregrine Falcon-6/7 in view at once.

Clapper Rail: 2

19 Species of Shorebirds including **Marbled Godwit, Red Knots, American Golden Plover**

Caspian Tern: 37

Royal Tern: 25

Forster's Tern: 300+

Black Skimmer: 40

Black Billed Cuckoo: 1

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 2

White-eyed Vireo: 1

Carolina chickadee: 17

16 species of Warblers...Cape May Warbler: 3, Yellow-breasted Chat: 1

Boat-tailed Grackle: many

Scott Sumner

Coming Trips (see also the Fall Field Trip Schedule)

Sunday, November 18. East Quabbin. All day. Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien head to the other side of the reservoir to see what they can find. You must be a Hampshire Bird Club member to go on this trip. Bring snacks, warm clothes, and a lunch. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well in advance to register and get meeting information. (M)

Friday, November 23. Cape Ann: Turkey Trot. All day. Al Richards and Bob Bieda help you work off those third helpings by seeing what they can find along the coast. Expect sea ducks, Purple Sandpipers, and a few alcids. Bring snacks and warm clothing. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting information. (E)

Sunday, December 9. Moran Wildlife Management Area: Feast-or-Famine Winter Birding. Half day. Mike Locher goes to the almost-boreal habitat in Moran WMA to look for Northern Shrikes, crossbills, and other northern species. In the event of difficult snow conditions, the site may be changed. Wear boots, and dress warmly. Call Mike (413-585-5864) to register, and get meeting information and details. (M)

LIBRARY

The HBC Library is located at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst.

Hours are those of the Hitchcock Center:

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. from Tuesday through Friday, and

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday.

The collection is catalogued on-line at www.hampshirebirdclub.org.

The library contains birding resources in various media, including field guides, bird-finding guides to almost every major birding destination in the U.S., and overseas, natural histories, periodicals and videos. Items can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. Henry is happy to bring items to meetings, if you give him a few days in advance. You can reach him at (413) 549 3722.

CHRISTMAS COUNT, 2007

How could you keep track of changes in bird populations and distribution across the entire continent of North America? The annual Christmas Count aims to do just this. Birders all over the U.S., Canada, the Caribbean, Latin America and Pacific Islands come together every holiday season to count birds. It is one of the world's finest examples of citizen science.

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. This is basically a fine day of birding, with every observation becoming part of the longest-running database in all of ornithology. Both local counts end with a compilation session when the entire count group combines observations to create the data that's will be submitted to National Audubon. Interestingly enough, our numbers ultimately end up on the desk (metaphorically, of course) of our very own Geoff LeBaron who is the national Christmas Count coordinator for Audubon. If you want to contribute to bird conservation and the greater understanding of bird populations on this continent, there is no more satisfying way to spend a day.

Here is one (admittedly optimistic) account of how the day might go!

3:30 AM. Arrive at first owling site and begin playing tapes.

3:40 AM. Attempt to explain to local constabulary why you are parked in a housing development with a car full of maps, clothing, junk food, telescopes and audio equipment.

(continues on the next page ► ►)

3:55 AM. Finally reach Mary Alice and explain bail request.

4:30 AM. Resume owling. Encounter one of these wonderful nocturnal animals through sound or even a glimpse of movement. Irreplaceable data and a lifelong memory!

6:30 AM. Pause for breakfast at local eatery. Maybe the owl was enough? Surely it can't get any better. After a pancake-mediated moment of doubt, gird up your binocs and get out into the field.

8:30 AM. Was that fifty Song Sparrows in the same thicket, or the same one going around fifty times? Better compromise.....

9:30 AM. Yep that was definitely one Fox Sparrow with them. Another data point down to you.

11:30 AM. Hmm that's a funny looking mockingbird. No – it's your first christmas count Shrike! A warm inner glow.

1:30 PM. "What happened to the warm inner glow? Smart Wool my foot!" Focus on frozen feet temporarily assuaged by finding a Lapland Longspur in with a bunch of larks.

4:30 PM. Start making your way back toward the church. You are smelling chili at a range of several miles. Could that be? No – not a Northern Oriole at someone's feeder. Surely not! "Do I dare count it?" Better call someone for an independent ID.

5:00 PM. Approaching the potluck in the fading light. "If I see another Song Sparrow I am going to scream." What was that shape bobbing like a marionette across the field? Short-eared Owl. What a culmination to the day.

5:15 PM. "This lasagna is even better than I thought!"

Northampton Christmas Count Nitty Gritty

Date: December 16, 2007

Information packets for Team Leaders: handed out at the HBC meeting on November 12, mailed to those not present.

Potluck Set-Up: Immanuel Lutheran Church, 2 PM

Potluck Supper: Immanuel Lutheran Church, 4:30 PM

Compilation of Results: Immanuel Lutheran Church, 6-7 PM

Help Wanted: Christmas Count

Helpers Wanted

Let Sue Emerson (spe33@hotmail.com, 584-6736) know if you can help out by

- doing set-up at the church (2 PM)
- bringing food to the potluck (4:30)
- helping with the clean-up while the compilation is going on (6-7 PM)

New Participants

Please contact Mary Alice Wilson (mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu, 548-9078) or Jan Ortiz (jtortiz@aol.com, 549-1768).

And for the Over-Achiever.....

If you will be away mid-December to mid-January (or even part of that time), you can research Christmas Counts all over North, Central, and South America (www.audubon.org/bird/cbc). While you are on the web, you can also learn more about the history and the scientific/conservation contributions of CBC data. If you want to learn more about the Northampton CBC, search for MANO. You can also go to the HBC website (hampshirebirdclub.org), click on Christmas Count and look especially at the summary chart and the map.

The Care and Feeding of Young Birders!!

An after-school science program at Sunderland Elementary School is in need of gently used binoculars. The students in question are participating in the UMass-sponsored "STEMRAYS" (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Research Academies for Young Scientists) program. Students are learning about local birds, monitoring bird feeders, and making reports on the Cornell website: eBird. This is a great opportunity to promote interest in birds amongst the youngest and most impressionable people in our area. *If you have optics you would like to donate, please contact **Dave Mako**: massmakos@yahoo.com; 665 2999*

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Special Travel Program

**The American Subtropics: South Florida and the Everglades
A Natural History Excursion with John Green and Tom Tynning**

Dates: December 28, 2007 to January 4, 2008 (8 days, 7 nights)

Fee: \$1695/person (double occupancy), not including airfare.

A couple of spaces remain!!

Meet Three Locavores: *Paul Lipke, Lissa Greenough, & Mark Lattanzi*

Wednesday, November 14. Local Food Potluck 6 – 7 p.m. Presentation 7 - 9 p.m.

Panel Discussion: Living with Solar: *Chris Riddle, Aaron Hayden, Tom Hartmann*

Thursday, December 6, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Covey Wildlife Management Area Exploration: *John Green*

Sunday, November 4, 8 - 10 a.m.

Turtles of the Connecticut Valley: *Lori Erb*

Thursday, November 8, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Slide Show: Nature's Will to Survive and Aquarius: *John Green*

Thursday, November 29, 7 p.m.

Qigong (Chi Kung) (Series 2): *Rema Boscov*

Sundays, 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.: November 4, 11, 18, December 2, 9, & 16

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.

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!

That's it for this month. Brevity is the soul of wit.

Till next month, walk softly and carry a big scope! David Peake-Jones, editor.

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org; (413) 529 9541

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 24, No. 4

December, 2007

This edition is mainly devoted to our regular monthly information on programs and field trips, with a nod to the **Christmas Count**, and a smattering of general interest information from the ornithological literature. Also included is the **club membership list**. This is provided to help us stay in touch with one another, and the personal information it contains is for personal use only. Please keep the list at home and safe from prying eyes! Thanks!

PROGRAMS

Monday, December 10 at 7:30 PM: Members Meeting

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.

First on the program is our annual members slide and photo show.

If you have slides and/or digital images with a natural history theme from the recent, or even more distant past that you would like to share with others, please collect ten or so of these to present at the meeting. Depending on the number of people who want to present, you may be able to get away with more than ten images, but please be ready to limit the number to ten if necessary.

Please bring conventional slides or digital images on either CD or flashstick. They will be loaded into a laptop prior to the show. Please be prepared to narrate your material.

In the past we have seen some unbelievably beautiful and sometimes whimsical images from the collections of our own members. Please share if you can. It helps us recognize the depth of world experience and photographic ability that lurks within our humble bird club.

In keeping with my own level of technical expertise, I will be bringing some images from a recent vacation to Uzbekistan, hand-engraved on clay tablets, which you may peruse at your leisure.

The second item on the agenda will be planning for the Christmas Count. This is left to individual teams. Please check with your area leader to see whether you will meet at the members meeting.

Coming Up

January 14, 2008. **Don Kroodsmma**. More Fun With Bird Song: Local Heroes

February 11, 2008. **Ed Neumuth**. Palmyra Atoll Research

March 10, 2008. **Scott Hecker**. NAS Coastal Waterbird Program

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Sunday, November 4. Berkshire Lakes and Bartletts

Leader **Tom Gagnon** and all but this participant remembered to set their clocks back for the end of daylight saving. We made our way up Route 9 into the Berkshire hills with the anticipation of waterfowl and donuts or, in my case, donuts and waterfowl. At windswept Moran NWR we found one very distant **Northern Shrike**. Notwithstanding its personal attributes, it was a long way off, too. Wending our way further, we found the northern end of Cheshire Lake fairly quiet, with only five **Ring-necked Ducks** enlivening the resident

compliment of mallards and a few gulls. At the central isthmus, we found a scattering of Pied-billed Grebes, and at the southern end of the lake there were nine **Green-winged Teal**.

From Cheshire Lake we made our way to an undisclosed location in Pittsfield to look for a male *Selasphorus* hummingbird which had been frequenting a feeder. The very-kind home-owners allowed us into their porch to view a feeder, to which the bird came right on cue. It was a bright individual, with prominent streaks on the throat, and remnants of a necklace on the breast. The flanks were a pronounced rufous colour, and the mantle was largely greenish-rufous. We left after good looks, and Scott got nice photographs. The bird was banded and measured later the same day, and confirmed as an immature male **Rufous Hummingbird**.

At Pontoosuc we found a good number of American Coot, a couple of Brant, and a Lesser Scaup. A **Merlin** perched briefly overhead. From the nice vantage point of the Onota causeway, we got nice views of a pair of **Northern Pintail** at close range, along with 24 Hooded Mergansers and a Common Goldeneye.

At Bartletts, the donuts sat helplessly awaiting consumption and we were only too happy to oblige. Perhaps because of the consequent hyperglycemia, my only memory of Stockbridge Bowl is that there was a **Wood Duck** there, along with other distant things. Thanks, Tom and all!

David Peake-Jones

Sunday, November 18. East Quabbin with Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien.

Wood Duck 8	Ruffed Grouse 5	Brown Creeper 4
Gadwall 3	Common Loon 27	Eastern Bluebird 5
American Black Duck 145	Pied-billed Grebe 2	Cedar Waxwing 213
Northern Pintail 2	Horned Grebe 23	Yellow-rumped Warbler 1
Ring-necked Duck 87	Bald Eagle 10	American Tree Sparrow 15
Bufflehead 12	Northern Harrier 1	Field Sparrow 1
Common Goldeneye 6	Barred Owl 1	Pine Grosbeak 1
Hooded Merganser 241	Pileated Woodpecker 2	Common Redpoll 67
Common Merganser 50	Northern Shrike 2	
Red-breasted Merganser 2	Common Raven 1	

Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien

Friday, November 24, 2007. Turkey Trot to Royalston, Salisbury and Plum Island.

Al Richards, Bob Bieda and David Peake-Jones resisted the temptation to camp out overnight at the mall, and instead opted to go birding. On a raw morning, with winter making its presence clearly felt, we started in Royalston. The crab-apples across from the library were rather deserted when we first arrived, but on our second go-around, we found a nice collection of **Pine Grosbeaks** perched in a nearby dead maple. Between cracks at the crabapples, we explored nearby roads, and came across a gorgeous group of **Evening Grosbeaks** staking out a feeder.

We drove on to Salisbury State Park, where crossbills had been reported. We drove first to the boat launch where, for the first time in the collective memory of those on the trip, we saw several immature **Northern Gannets** plying the biting winds over the Essex estuary, along with scattered sea ducks. A large group of **Dunlin** squatted at the edge of the saltmarsh. Elaine Pourinski joined us briefly as we scoured the stunted pines of the park by car and on foot. After almost an hour, it seemed the crossbills must have left, but another group led us to a male and a female **Red Crossbill** feeding quietly in a cone-laden pine. The waters off the breakwater were scattered with a good number of graceful Red-throated Loons.

Sustained with remnants of turkey, we proceeded down Plum Island. The Hellcat boardwalk provided little joy, except a close encounter with a Golden-crowned Kinglet that briefly took pity on us. Al had a group of redpolls fly over the parking lot, but we reluctantly decided that these birds had moved on, and left for down-island. Fortunately, the birds flew over us and alighted in a white birch not far from the road, where we were able to

view them at close range. Despite at least one somewhat frosty individual, we were forced to find them all **Common Redpolls**. What a delight to again watch these determined foragers creating a gentle rain of birch seeds in the frosty air.

Further down the island, we found scattered scoters and other sea ducks, plus a few grebes off the rocks, and a large number of Northern Pintail in the Stage Island Pool. As dusk fell, we finished off at our favorite fried fish place. Thirty-seven very good quality species for the day, and not a cheap piece of electronics to be seen!

David Peake-Jones

Coming Trips

Sunday, December 9. Moran Wildlife Management Area: Feast-or-Famine Winter Birding. Half day. Mike Locher goes to the almost-boreal habitat in Moran WMA to look for Northern Shrikes, crossbills, and other northern species. In the event of difficult snow conditions, the site may be changed. Wear boots, and dress warmly. Call Mike (413-585-5864) to register, and get meeting information and details. (M)

The Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip List will be coming with the January newsletter.

HBC Christmas Count Pot Luck Supper.

A plea for food donations for the HBC Christmas Count pot luck on Sunday, December 16 th. The following items are needed:

- three (3) main dishes (preferably hot and vegetarian if possible),
- three (3) salads,
- three (3) desserts (cookies or cake),
- bread & butter,
- one or two hot soups,
- two gallons of water, and
- two gallons of cider.

That should about do it. You don't have to volunteer for all the above items! Please email Sue Emerson (membership@hampshirebirdclub.org) or let me know at the club meeting on the 10th. All will be very much appreciated by all the counters. Thanks...

Barred Owls in the “Burbs”?

It is easy to get discouraged by the preponderance of bad news concerning native species and their future amidst a mounting series of threats including habitat loss and fragmentation, introduced species, and a myriad of human influences.

In amongst this gloom and doom, there are stories of animals holding their own, and even some surprising discoveries of species which adapt to and thrive in habitats shared with humans. We are all familiar with raccoons, skunks, and coyotes, but who would ever imagine that Barred Owls might thrive in human cities? Apparently this is happening in Charlotte, North Carolina. Rob Bierregard, of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, has been conducting the largest-ever study of Barred Owls in the city, and has found that, ecologically, the city resembles the old-growth forests traditionally favored by Barred Owls. There are plenty of mature trees with nesting holes, and the manicured understorey provides the clear sight and flight lines required by these “perch and drop” hunters. In fact, as the city has expanded, overtaking surrounding farmland, habitat is becoming available where previously there were open farmlands. These were inhabited by Barn Owls, but virtually devoid of suitable habitat for Barred Owls. The study is beginning to flesh out the private lives of urban Barred Owls, revealing surprising dietary adaptability, and the fact that, not surprisingly, the major source of mortality for these owls is collisions with cars.

Reference: University of North Carolina at Charlotte (2007, October 18). Ecologists Discover City Is 'Uber-forest' For Big Owls. *ScienceDaily*.

Rare Bird Alert Sign Up

It is not too late to join the RBA. Please contact Sue Emerson at membership@hampshirebirdclub.org if you would like to be part of it. The list allows for email notification only.

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Panel Discussion: Living With Solar

Chris Riddle (*Kuhn Riddle Architects*), Aaron Hayden (*Amherst College*), Tom Hartman (*Coldham and Hartman Architects*)

Thursday, December 6, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

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

www.hitchcockcenter.org.

Winter Finch Superflight

In case you hadn't noticed, we are experiencing the biggest winter finch irruption since the "superflight" of 1997-1998, when many boreal finches went well beyond their normal ranges. The cause is the largest tree seed crop failure in a decade across more than 3200 km (2000 mi) of boreal forest from Saskatchewan into Quebec. Here in western Massachusetts, we have had good numbers of Pine Grosbeak, Evening Grosbeaks, Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins and Purple Finches. Enjoy!!

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Winter Birds and Citizen Research: Anne Lombard, Patti Steinman

Thursday, December 6; 7-9 p.m. and Saturday December 8; 9-11 a.m.

Pre-Winter Walk at Laughing Brook: Kevin Kopchynski, Patti Steinman

Sunday, December 9, 10 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Solstice Celebration, Saturday, December 22; 5:30 p.m.

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

Watch Your Mouth, Saint Nick!

News this past month from a Santa training school in Australia. The would-be 'strine Santas are being forbidden to use the time-honored Clausian exclamation "Ho!, Ho!, Ho!" This is because, in our increasingly coarse and historically disconnected society, people interpret this as a reference to prostitution.

In related news, the AOU Checklist Committee has the Hoary Woodpecker on its next meeting agenda.

That's it for this month.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

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