



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 24, No. 5

## January, 2008

### In this edition:

- our **program** for this month, (which barely needs introduction),
- one lonely **trip report** from the pre-Christmas lull,
- a reminder about our **library**,
- news from the **Anniversary Committee**, and musings on the **Northampton Christmas Count**,
- program details from **Hitchcock** and the **Broad Brook Coalition**, and
- some **bird lore** from central Africa.

Included with the newsletter this month is the **Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule**, courtesy of Mike Locher, and all those leaders who so graciously donate their time and expertise.

I hope you find some of it useful!

### (An Imminent Trip!)

**Saturday, January 5. 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)

## PROGRAMS

**Monday, January 14 at 7:30 PM**

**Don Kroodsma has "More Fun with Bird Song: Local Heroes"**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

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

It is one thing to marvel at Don Kroodsma writing about the evolution of song in Sedge Wrens, or in the intricate biogeography of voices amongst the Song Sparrows of Seattle. It is quite another to have Don speak, in person, about "our" birds. At this talk, Don brings his unique understanding of bird communication to the local dawn chorus. I believe no further introduction is necessary!!

**Don Kroodsma** was a chemistry major at Hope College, and discovered birds during his last semester there. Don attended the University of Michigan field station the following summer, taking "baby birds" and "big birds" courses simultaneously from the famed Sewall Pettingill. Thirty-five years ago, while in graduate school at Oregon State University, a singing wren in his backyard got Don started on what would be a life-long passion: listening to birds. During much of this time, Don taught right here in Amherst, at the University of Massachusetts. In 2005, many of us were thrilled to get a first-hand introduction from Don to his critically acclaimed book "The Singing Life of Birds." Many of us are still trying to read it!!

### Coming Up

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

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

**Sunday, December 9, 2007. Moran WMA and Environs.**

**Mike Locher** led Joyce Merriam, Janet Merriam Cornell, Barbara Snook, Rick McNeill and David Peake-Jones into this snowy region of the Windsor Plateau. The icy marsh and bare deciduous woods close to the road seemed pregnant with the possibility of a shrike, and the big skies overhead did, in fact give up several unidentified winter passers-by. However, we found little but a few Black-capped Chickadees on our way to the spruce woods. Much to our dismay, we found the woods, too, silent and apparently deserted. We had to content ourselves with musing over tracks in the snow, which included those of fisher.

By the time we returned to the cars, it seemed the trip would be distinguished by the stunning absence of birds. However, soldiering on down North Road, David and Mike found **Common Redpolls** feeding in the verge, followed shortly afterward by nice groups of **Pine- and Evening-Grosbeaks**. We struck out at Notchview, but screeched to a halt to marvel at a **Barred Owl** on a road sign in Plainfield. To round out the day, we had more Pine Grosbeaks along Spruce Corners Road in Plainfield. Perseverance pays!

David Peake-Jones

### Coming Trips

*Please see the enclosed "Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule."*

## 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](http://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**.

## ANNIVERSARY

*The anniversary committee is toiling away, in preparation for our banner year in 2009. Here is what they would like you to know about early progress.*

- The committee would like to acknowledge the financial investment you, our members, have already made in this event. Following the request for funds with this year's membership drive, **we have already accumulated \$1, 333 in dedicated anniversary funds**. Thank you.!!
- Sue Emerson and Janice Jorgenson are planning the **Big Sit\*** and will organize a committee to thrash out the details of time, location, etc.
- Anne Lombard and Elissa Rubinstein will coordinate a **club book discussion**. The title in question is "**A Return to Wild America**" by Scott Weidensaul.
- The afore-mentioned **Scott Wiedensaul**, a noted naturalist and author, will speak at our meeting in March, 2009.
- We are working hard on the selection of some **outstanding long-distance trips**. Stay tuned!

\* Never have my limited proof-reading skills been so critical. Ed.

## A Grain of Truth

The lives of the Mofu people of the Mandara Mountains in Cameroon are intimately interwoven with the millet and other grain crops that sustain them, the insects which both imperil these crops and supplement their diet, and the seasons, upon which all depends. Amidst the extraordinary ecology of man and insect there is at least one interesting sidelight. Amongst the Mandara villages lives a small yellow bird, locally called the millet bird\*. The Mofu have observed that, following the torrential seasonal rains, certain species of ants will bring the contents of their underground granaries (mostly millet and other grains filched from the Mofu's fields) above ground to dry. This presumably avoids moisture-related spoilage and/or germination underground. Following the long dry season, these drying seeds provide one of the few seed sources for birds and other wildlife.

Not surprisingly, millet birds tend to congregate near the nests of the ant species concerned, and the Mofu believe they even prefer to nest in close proximity to the ants. The Mofu have also noticed that the millet birds take a proportion of the ants' grain to tide them over till the rains give rise to another seed crop. A bargain is made to return the favor at the next harvest. Sure enough, as the Mofu have pointed out to their children for generations, when the millet ripens again, the millet birds shake a proportion of the ripened grain to the ground in payment of their debt to the ants.

*Reference:* "Master of the Killer Ants". Nova. Aired on PBS; November 20, 2007. For more details, go to PBS.org

\* I can find no reference to this common name amongst the official bird lists for Cameroon.

## MUSINGS ON THE NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS COUNT

As of New Year's Eve (the newsletter deadline, hmmm), the compilation is not quite complete. Some reports on rare/unusual species and some time/mileage data are still missing. By the time you are reading this newsletter, you should be able to go on [hampshirebirdclub.org](http://hampshirebirdclub.org) to read the final tallies - maybe.

The most important news: the count was moved to the 15th for the safety of participants (and the ice and snow really did arrive on the 16th as predicted). Folks switched work days, abandoned families, failed to get those last, crucial presents, and waded into the snow. Of course, lots of good field participants had other obligations, including to counts already scheduled for the 15th, but others covered their areas and some excellent birders were talked/bribed/cajoled into joining the count teams. There are some pretty persuasive team leaders out there.

The most impressive total was **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (22, previous high was 3 in 2001)**. There were many "my best look ever" notes on the compilation forms. The other big winner was **Cedar Waxwing (2194, previous high 1647 last year during a mild day in a mild, snowless month)**. **Sharp-shinned Hawk matched the previous total of 22**, and **Cooper's Hawk at 18 almost matched the previous high of 19**. **Pine Grosbeaks were a special treat, although at 160 not a record (previous high 217 in 1954)**.

Robin numbers were down, perhaps because of the snow, but also changes in the Whately Christmas Tree Farm where oversized trees have been replaced with young stock. Keep a dawn/dusk eye out for possible new roosts. The pigeon and starling numbers were down, probably because folks did not have time to get to the best spots at the end of the day. Herring Gull numbers were really down (19, with last years count of 88 being the previous low in recent decades). Again, that might have been snow or available-time related.

As those of you know who have completed the Unusual Species Form, it takes time and energy. Traditionally folks have done a excellent job. Unfortunately, the bar has been raised (see next page). We were only given permission to publish this catterel (not up to doggerel standards) if we responded in kind. The coordinators' life is not an easy one.

Mary Alice Wilson  
(continues next page)

## **A Dozen Not-So-Common Redpolls on the Northampton CBC, 15 December 2007**

*With red caps and streaks  
And triangular beaks,  
Some had pink on breast  
But not all, not the rest;  
Paler than siskins,  
Feeding on catkins,  
They were a dozen cute finches,  
Not big, in length just a few inches,  
That found a dozen slender perches  
On just one, not a dozen white birches.*

*None, alas, so frosty,  
No rumps so streak-free  
As to suggest Hoary--  
A dozen Commoners they be,  
But not so common to me,  
Living from redpoll view southerly,  
Delighted to see  
Every few years  
These charming dears.*

*Well, my compilers and editors worthy,  
There's my write up in few words pithy.  
I know details are weak,  
From tail end to beak--  
No tarsal scutellation noted,  
No rictal bristles counted,  
Just impressions of a quick, happy view;  
I hope that they'll pass, I hope that they'll do.*

David Spector

### **Coordinator's Response**

*There once was a redpoll description  
That met every Rare Bird restriction.  
The words they did rhyme,  
It was snail mailed in time:  
Your report is accepted as written.*

Mary Alice Wilson

## **BROAD BROOK COALITION**

Animal Tracking at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area: *Molly Hale*

**January 12, 10:00 a.m. Meet at the North Farms Rd. entrance. Information 584 4176.**

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS** (well, returning actually!)

**Chris Yerlig and Colleen Jennings, Amherst**

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**Winter Botany** (Co-sponsored with the NEWFS): *Dr. William Kuriger*

Saturday, January 19, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**A Window Into the Past: Primitive Studies Program:** *Neill Bovaird*

Saturday, February 2, 1 - 2:30 p.m.

**Nature Drawing for the Complete Non-Artist:** *Dr. Elizabeth Farnsworth*

Sunday, February 3, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**Water Use and Conservation:** *Amy Vickers*

Tuesday, February 5, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

**Spring Birding Class:** *Scott Surner*

*Evening Classes: Wednesdays, 6:30 - 8 p.m., February 13, 27, April 9, 16, 30, May 7, 14, 21*

*Field Trips: February 16, March 1, 22, 29, April 12, 19, May 10, 17, 24, 31.*

*Start times for field trips vary between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m. (Owling on February 16 is at 3 a.m.)*

**Darwin's "Descent With Modification," Vernadsky's "Biosphere," and Lovelock's "Gaia":** *Lynn Margulis*

Thursday, January 3, 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](http://www.hitchcockcenter.org).*

### 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!

### Real Thanks for the Virtual Potluck!

Thank you all for your generous offer of "pot-lucks" for all we Northampton Christmas Counters to enjoy. It was sad that the weather turned against us but we will be back again next year --Have a wonderful birding 2008.

Sue Emerson and her "elves."

\* I screwed up the punch line of this tidbit last month. Here it is as it was intended. Ed.

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 Redpoll on its next meeting agenda.

A brief personal note. Contrary to the Gazette, I have not changed my name to Beake-Jones, though this might be kinda appropo for a birder. The above is all I have to offer this month.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor  
(413) 529 9541

[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)

## Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule, 2008

*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 an (A) indicates that the trip is accessible. Please check all information with the trip leaders.*

### JANUARY

**Saturday, January 5. North Shore: Cape Ann to Plum Island.** All day. Bob Bieda leads his annual New Year's pilgrimage 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 26. Coastal Rhode Island.** All day. Geoff LeBaron leads birders through the coastal nooks and crannies of our petite southern neighbor. Dress for cold weather. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for meeting information and further details. (E)

### FEBRUARY

**Saturday, February 16. South Shore: Plymouth and Falmouth.** All day. Al Richards leads birders 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)

### MARCH

**Saturday, March 1. 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)

**Saturday, March 22. Connecticut River Waterfowl.** Half day. Al Richards looks for waterfowl migrating through the valley along the Connecticut River. Call Al (413-665-2761) for meeting information as the date approaches. (E)

### APRIL

**\*Saturday, April 12. 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)

**\*Sunday, April 13. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher (413-585-5864) hopes to find Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and other early migrants. Meet in the Friendly's parking lot, near the Holiday Inn, close to Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7:00 a.m. (E)

**\*Sunday, April 13. Woodcocks.** Evening. Mary Alice Wilson (413-548-9078, or mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu) invites you to come listen to Leverett Woodcocks and other sounds of a spring evening. The listening will commence at 7:30 p.m., with the location to be determined (by the woodcocks). Contact Mary Alice Wilson for directions. (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.

**Friday, May 9. South Quabbin Park.** Half day (until about 1 o'clock). Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) birds the southern end of the reservoir. Meet at the Quabbin Visitor's Center parking lot at 7:00 a.m. (E)

**Saturday, May 10. Spring Migration in the Quabbin.** All day. Tom Gagnon guides birders through the Quabbin woods in search of its migrants. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well ahead of time for meeting information and to register. (M)

**Sunday, May 11. 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 beggar the imagination. Call David (413-529-9541) for meeting information. (E)

**Saturday, May 17. Coastal Rhode Island.** All day. Geoff LeBaron heads to our southern neighbor in warm weather to track down migrants and other seasonal specialties. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for meeting information and further details. (E)

**Friday, May 23 – Monday, May 26. Monhegan Island.** Overnight trip. Betsy Higgins leads the Hampshire Bird Club's annual pilgrimage to Monhegan Island. 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 24. Poor Man's Monhegan.** All day. Bob Bieda takes birders to Plum Island. 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, May 31. Tyringham Cobble and Tyringham Valley.** Half day. Ed Neumuth leads this new trip into a beautiful part of the Berkshires looking for migrants and local specialties. Call Ed (413-623-0186 or 413-884-4961) for meeting information. (E)

**Saturday, May 31. Westover Air Force Base.** Half day. Pending permission, Bob Bieda will lead his annual trip into New England's premier grassland habitat, looking for Upland Sandpipers, Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E/A)

## JUNE

**Saturday, June 14. Hammonasset Beach State Park, CT.** All day. Betsy Higgins goes to the coast of Connecticut to find sparrows, rails, and other seaside denizens. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for meeting time and place as the date approaches. (E)

**Sunday, June 15. West Quabbin ramble.** Half day. Dave Gross offers a trip from Pelham into the Quabbin and will be birding and hiking through blooming Mountain Laurel. Contact David (413-253-2897) for further details. (M)

**Saturday, June 21. October Mt. State Forest.** Half day. Ed Neumuth goes where no HBC trip leader has gone before (at least, in recent memory). Recent work in the area has provided excellent habitat for Mourning Warblers. Call Ed (413-623-0186 or 413-884-4961) for meeting information. (E)

**Friday, June 20 - Sunday, June 22. Connecticut Lakes, NH.** Overnight trip. David Peake-Jones and Mike Locher head to the boreal forests of 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 26. New South Beach, I.** All day. David Peake-Jones goes looking for early migrating shorebirds, especially Red Knots. Bring a lunch, a jacket, and \$20 for the boat ride. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (M)

## **AUGUST**

**Saturday, August 23. 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 24, No. 6

## February, 2008

In this edition:

- brief information about programs for this month and the remainder of the club year,
- some winter field **trip reports** and **coming trips**,
- trip announcements for overnights to **Monhegan Island** and the **Connecticut Lakes**,
- results from the **Northampton and Quabbin Christmas Counts**,
- early information about this year's **Breeding Bird Atlas** activity, and
- **Hitchcock Center** programs.

I hope you find some of it useful.

## PROGRAMS

**Monday, February 11 at 7:30 PM**

**Ed Neumuth speaks about Palmyra Atoll**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

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

Club member Ed Neumuth spent time not too long ago as a volunteer on Palmyra Atoll, which lies 960 miles south west of Hawaii. This remarkable series of islets is now managed by the Nature Conservancy, and is a nesting site for numerous species of nesting seabirds, as well as a rich and unique marine ecosystem. Ed will let us in on the secrets of this, one of the most secluded places on earth.

## Coming Up

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

**The North Shore: Cape Ann to Plum Island. Saturday, January 5.**

Despite the late notice, six of us remembered the place to be on the first Saturday of January is Cape Ann. If you know birders in Massachusetts and have not seen them in a while this is the place to refresh old friendships. The birding isn't bad either.

Some years wind chill factors are sub-zero. Last year we were in shirt sleeves in the mid 60s. This year was nicely in the middle, calm and mid 30s. We saw a respectable 51 species that included the indestructible Eared Grebe (same bird thirteen years in a row), male **King Eider**, close looks at **Dovekie**, and the previously reported **Townsend's Solitaire**. We also engaged in our usual gull identification workshop looking at every age cycle of **Iceland Gull** and a few

**Glaucous Gulls.** We tried to identify a reported Thayer's Gull but we knew we were in trouble when four of us reported viewing the bird and we were all looking in a different direction.

Mark your 2009 calendar now for the first Saturday in January!

Bob Bieda



### **Coastal Rhode Island. January 26, 2008**

**Geoff LeBaron** led Bob Bieda, Janet Cornell, Betsy Higgins, David Peake-Jones, Henry Lappen, Joyce Merriam, Sol Satin, and Mary Alice Wilson through “the nooks and crannies of our petite southern neighbor” on a kind day, with temperatures in the upper 30’s and little wind.

*Avondale Farm Preserve* was quiet, but for a gaggle of interesting birds in one corner. A hawk which popped out of the undergrowth onto a phone pole showed an even smattering of tear-shaped streaks on the breast, similarly even distribution of white on the back, and a petite face. After eliminating the democratic presidential contenders on behavioral grounds, we firmly identified it as a **Red-shouldered Hawk**. A chunky sparrow flashing across neighboring yards turned out to be the first of two **Fox Sparrows**, and a **Gray Catbird** co-inhabited a thicket with a more secretive **Hermit Thrush**.

The residential pine thickets of *Misquamicut* and *Weekapaug* revealed precisely NO crossbills, but we learned while observing a sitting accipiter that owing to differing positions of the eyes, “Cooper’s Hawks look fierce, and Sharp-shinned Hawks look cute (LeBaron, 2008).” A passing passerine enquired drily,

“So you’re telling me they’re *all* Cooper’s Hawks?”

The piny thickets of *East Beach* failed to give up the hoped-for Long-eared Owl, but offshore, several hundred Horned Grebes defied the norm.

Seeking some rarer fare, we made our way to *Moonstone Beach* and *Trustom Pond NWR*. This coastal wetland never seems to disappoint, and today was no exception. Barely had we alighted from our trusty global-warming facilitation devices when we glimpsed a striking buteo flying low over the cat-tail marsh. This turned out to be our first sighting for the day of a Trustom regular: a light-phase **Rough-legged Hawk**. From the parking lot, we made our way along the storm-ravaged beach to always-productive Trustom Pond, spotting an immature **Bald Eagle** soaring over the marsh. In the dwindling open water of the pond were two pairs of **Redheads**, a strong showing of Gadwall and American Wigeon, a raft of American Coot, a well-hidden pair of Northern Pintail and, standing with the inexplicable nonchalance of the true rarity, an adult **Sandhill Crane**.

The docks of *Galilee* were remarkably free of white-winged gulls. We arrived at *Camp Cronin*, (adjacent to Point Judith), just in time to see a tiny dark bird skittering across the inshore surf, before commencing a series of frustrating feeding dives. This proved to be a **Dovekie**, our only alcid of the day. Among a nearby raft of Common Eiders was a nice drake **King Eider**.

Last of all we dashed to *Sachuest Point*. Eschewing the **Short-eared Owl** perched alluringly in a tree on the way in, the fleet of foot made their way along the shoreline trail to find **Barrow’s Goldeneye**, copious Harlequin Ducks and a surprising **Orange-crowned Warbler**. The slow of foot made do with a more leisurely look at the owl, which made one last reprise in the last rays of the twilight, hovering over the grasslands of the point.

David Peake-Jones

## Coming Trips

**Saturday, February 16. South Shore: Plymouth and Falmouth.** All day. Al Richards leads birders 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)

**Saturday, March 1. 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)



*If you have never been to Monhegan Island in the Spring, it is a must for any birder. Many of us in the HBC have been over and over. Rumor has it that one or two of us never bothered to return.....*

## MONHEGAN ISLAND

### Memorial Day Weekend (May 23-26), 2008

Most birding trips are targeted affairs. We pile in and out of vehicles at strategic locations, carefully tailoring our effort to those places and times most likely to maximize our chances of seeing one of the rarer members of the world's dwindling avifauna, or of intercepting one of those migrants who bless us ever so briefly with their presence. This is all well and good, but if you have ever wanted to steep yourself in the spring migration, Monhegan is for you.

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. 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.

We'll 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. This trip is open only to members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Registration is by deposit. For further details, including an estimation of costs, contact Betsy Higgins ([hignik@comcast.net](mailto:hignik@comcast.net); 586 4948) or Andrew Magee (586 1509).



## Connecticut Lakes, New Hampshire.

### Friday, June 20 – Sunday June 22, 2007.

Mike Locher and David Peake-Jones will 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](mailto:davidpj@the-spa.com)), or Mike Locher (413 585 5864, [mlocher@yahoo.com](mailto:mlocher@yahoo.com)) for further information or to sign up.

## CHRISTMAS COUNTS

### Northampton Count: December 15

The count this year was scheduled for Sunday, December 16, but an impending storm led to its being moved forward by one day. 8-12 inches of pre-existing snow made any off-road travel very trying. Owlers found bitterly cold temperatures in the wee hours, and a period of brisk wind which threatened to curtail the nocturnal activity altogether. Daylight brought partly sunny skies and a merciful lack of wind, but continued cold. All-in-all, birds were hard to come by, even for those who donned snow-shoes or skis and defied the snow.

*Abbreviated results are included at the end of this newsletter.* The full local report is at [hampshirebirdclub.org](http://hampshirebirdclub.org), or you can go to [www.audubon.org/bird/cbc](http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc). The code for the Northampton count is MANO

### Quabbin Count: December 29, 2007

This year's count was hampered by dense fog at dawn, lasting well into the morning. However, once this cleared, the rest of the day was quite pleasant, dry and calm. Here are the highlights.

Bufflehead (8)	Barred Owl (8)
Common Goldeneye (25)	Northern Saw-whet Owl (5)
Hooded Merganser (49)	Belted Kingfisher (3)
Common Merganser (179)	Red-bellied Woodpecker (22) NEW HIGH
Ring-necked Pheasant (1)	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1) (2nd record)
Ruffed Grouse (27)	Northern Flicker (2)
Wild Turkey (45)	Pileated Woodpecker (17)
Common Loon (6)	Northern Shrike (4)
Horned Grebe (8)	Common Raven (20)
Great Blue Heron (1)	Red-breasted Nuthatch (16)
Bald Eagle (15)	Brown Creeper (14)
Sharp-shinned Hawk (7)	Carolina Wren (3) (ties high count)
Cooper's Hawk (2)	Winter Wren (1)
Northern Goshawk (3) (Ties high count)	Golden-crowned Kinglet (39)
Red-tailed Hawk (13)	Eastern Bluebird (18)
Golden Eagle (1 adult)	Hermit Thrush (1)
Great Horned Owl (4)	American Robin (788)

Northern Mockingbird (10)  
 Cedar Waxwing (237)  
 Swamp Sparrow (1)  
 Red-winged Blackbird (1)  
 Brown-headed Cowbird (3)  
 Pine Grosbeak (**154**) NEW HIGH.

Purple Finch (3) Red Crossbill (7)  
 White-winged Crossbill (3)  
 Common Redpoll (413)  
 Hoary Redpoll (1) 2nd record  
 Evening Grosbeak (115)

Seventy (70) species in all!  
 Scott Sumner

## BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

### New Folks are Welcome

If you were not involved last year, there are still lots of data to collect - contact mwilson@k12s.phast.umass (548-9078) for more information.

### Great Horned Owls

Everyone last year and this, record the dates/locations of the Great Horned Owls you are hearing now - those records will count - safe dates are being changed. (Reminder no tapes while these characters are setting up housekeeping or while young are on/around the nest.)

### Other Changes

Changes in safe dates, protocols, etc. will be available in February (see especially workshops below).

### Western Massachusetts Atlas 2 Workshops

Four workshops will be led by **Joan Walsh**. These are for BOTH experienced and new atlasers and will provide information on changes in safe dates and protocols as well as basic atlas information. (All the locations listed have websites with driving directions). The dates and locations are as follows:

**Monday, February 4** at 7:30 PM. Allen Bird Club, Springfield Science Museum, **Springfield**. If you are able to get to that meeting, bring along the topo or street map of your block(s).

**Saturday, February 23** at 1 PM. Athol Bird and Nature Club, Millers Falls Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, **Athol**.

**Tuesday, March 4** at 7 PM. Hampshire Bird Club and Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, 127 Coombs Road, **Easthampton**. (Snow date: March 5 at the same time and place).

**Monday, April 1** at 7 PM, Hoffman Bird Club, Berkshire Life Insurance, 700 South St., **Pittsfield**.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are three opportunities upcoming for HBC members to contribute time and effort to the Amherst community.

### 1. Saturday, February 9. The Winterfest at Cherry Hill Golf Course.

HBC in Association with the Amherst Chamber of Commerce and Friends of Amherst Recreation.

The HBC will lead two hour-long bird walks for novices at Cherry Hill and an adjacent tree farm. Anyone interested in co-leading a walk at 11:30 AM and/or 1:30 PM should contact Dave Gross.

### 2. Late February. Bluebird Box Maintenance (Amherst Town Land).

HBC in association with Amherst Conservation Department

### 3. Spring. Trail Maintenance along the Amherst Rail Trail.

HBC in association with the Amherst Conservation Department.

Initial efforts will focus on improving the trail to the bird-blind. Other projects to follow.

For more information on any of these volunteering opportunities, contact Dave Gross at [president@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:president@hampshirebirdclub.org).

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

### Quigong (Chi Kung): *Rema Boscov*

Sundays, February 10 - March 23, 2008, 8:30 - 9:45 a.m.

### Nature Poetry Writing Series: *Kathryn Good-Schiff*

Wednesdays, February 13 - April 16, 2008, 7 - 9 p.m.

### Winter Nature Walk (Quabbin): *John Green*

Saturday, February 16, 2008, 8 a.m. to noon

### Cheesemaking 101: *Ricki Carroll*

Sunday, February 17, 2008, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### Tracking White-tailed Deer: *Alan Emond*

Saturday, March 8, 2008, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

### Cabin Fever Environmental Hootenanny: *Peter Siegal*

(part of VEEC Lecture Series) Thursday, February 7, 2008, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Held at the Northfield Mountain Yurt, Northfield, Massachusetts

### Changing Views of Earth History: Hitchcock and the Dinosaurs: *Steve Sauter*

(Part of the (VEEC) Lecture Series). Tuesday, February 26, 2008, 7 p.m.

Held at the Amherst College Museum of Natural History

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

## 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](http://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.

***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!

## Welcome New Members!!

**John & Gretchen Fox:** Amherst

**Jeremy Abrahamson:** Erving

Members joining for the first time between now and September 1 get their 2008-2009 membership for free!

That's all for this month. The following two pages are selected results of the Northampton Christmas Count.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor  
(413) 529 9541

[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)

High counts bold, low counts bold italics

Northampton Christmas Count, 2007

Selected species include all regularly seen species, plus all unusual species seen in 2007.

Selected Species	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	high	yr of high	Notes
(Unusual Species Bold)					(pm snow)			(rain/fog)				
Canada Goose	2476	4196	1558	5411	2120	2887	5383	4501	<b>7977</b>	7977	1999	Regular since 1971, rare before
Mute Swan		5	5	11	5	<b>29</b>	13	14	10	29	2002	first began official reporting in 1995
Wood Duck	6	2	1	2	2	10				11	1990+96	Seen most years last 2 decades, less earlier, numbers never large
Am. Black Duck	97	100	128	180	155	185	142	90	140	286	1992	Most years vary from 100-250
Mallard	757	488	986	1072	897	981	620	1044	1089	1338	1994	First recorded 1940, mostly over 1000 1984-2000
<b>Northern Pintail</b>	4		1	1	2	2	1	3	1	10	1991	1950s (1), '70s (3), '80s (1), '90s (3+3cw)
<b>Ring-necked Duck</b>	1		1	<b>5</b>						5	2004	before this decade: 1941 (1), 1968 (2)
C. Goldeneye	17	35	36	20	11	79	56	76	18	109	1992	Uncommon until 1990s when most years have 4-75
Barrow's Goldeneye	1							1				1986 (1), 3 reports in 90s (1 cw)
Hooded Merganser	28	13	10	<b>30</b>	5	14	8	1	12	30	2004	Seen once/twice each decade, now every year
C. Merganser	99	97	107	119	82	157	35	49	145	180	1991	More common in 1990s-present
Ring-necked Pheasant	2		9	6	4	2	6	7	4	196	1960	Most reported 60s-70s, '02 1 female
Ruffed Grouse	2	7	9	21	5	6	11	1	12	37	1965+66	Numbers surprisingly similar since 1934 (1st count)
Wild Turkey	55	63	<b>162</b>	102	103	40	127	39	13	162	2005	1 in '71, almost every year since '85, # vary widely, prev. high 80
Great Blue Heron	1	<b>27</b>	3	11	5		1	1	5	27	2006	Few each decade, now some most years. 2006 mild, open water
Bald Eagle	7	5	7	5	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	5	1	5	8	2002, 2003	53(1), '58(1), '70(1), '86(1), every year '88 and beyond
adult	5	5	7	5	5	6	4		4			One each in 1986, 92, 97, two in 1998
immature	2	0	0	0	3	2	1(4th yr)	1	1			1-3 almost every year (until 2004) since first reported in 1988
N. Harrier	6	7	3		2	1	3	3	4	10	1989	Few times each decade since '47, 1990s+ almost every year
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<b>22</b>	11	<b>22</b>	11	8	18	14	6	12	22	2005, 2007	Regular reporting began 1940s, more common recently
Cooper's Hawk	18	16	10	14	7	<b>19</b>	8	4	16		2002	Earlier about 1/3 as many as sharpies, no longer true
N. Goshawk					1		2	1	1	4	1985	Most (1-3) in 70s, 7x 80s, 90s usually 1-2 /year, few recently
<b>Red-shouldered Hawk</b>		1				1	1		4	1957		1950s(6+cw), 80s(1), rest 2-4/decade (usually only 1/year)
Red-tailed Hawk	115	120	123	<b>124</b>	106	105	113	51	105	124	2004	Increased reporting over years, previous high 105
Amer. Kestrel	3	3	2 cw		1	7	4	1	3	31	1974	Until last few years, remarkably similar numbers 6-20s every year
<b>Merlin</b>	3	1	1	<b>3</b>		1	<b>3</b>	1	2	3	2001, 2004	1950 (1), '70(1), 4x '80s, 6x 90s, now almost every year
Peregrine Falcon	4	<b>4</b>	3	<b>4</b>	2	3	2	2	3	4	2004, 2006	1946(2), '57(1), '60s(2), '70s(1), '80s(2), '90s (4), now every year
<b>Wilson's Snipe</b>	2						2		12	1990		1949, '50, '53, almost every year '66-95, rarely since
Ring-billed Gull	238	<b>1088</b>	279	408	266	405	996	790	524	1088	2006	6x 50s, 2 x 60s, almost every year 73 on, numbers were increasing
Herring Gull	<b>19</b>	88	401	199	244	334	427	1076	868	2196	1986	Dramatic drop after 1986 (dump closings?) 2007 new low count
Great Black-backed Gull	17	5	66	46	171	155	131	150	85	367	1994	1973(1), '75(1), '78(10), most years in 80s, every year in 90-00s
Rock Pigeon	834	1254	1762	1810	1551	1389	1322	779	2036	2778	1988	Began reporting 1973 - presumably just didn't count earlier
Mourning Dove	1414	2876	2170	3395	1457	1766	2374	856	2798	3904	1998	Increase each decade until 80s, now 1500s-3900s
E. Screech-Owl	56	<b>82</b>	69	79	53	58	58	12	50	82	2006	Variation (0-82) mix of weather (2000), owls, and the owls
Great Horned Owl	20	30	37	41	<b>48</b>	20	32	16	30	48	2003	(same variation factors)
Barred Owl	7	6	3	3	5	3	4		6	10	1965	1930s(1), '40s--50s(5 with cw's), '60s-70s(6), 80s-90s(9)
<b>Long-eared Owl</b>	1	1		<b>3</b> cw		1			3	2004		reported 1-3 x /decade since 1957, 70s-90s(4-5)
N. Saw-whet Owl	2	<b>5</b>	3		<b>5</b>	3	1 cw		1	5	2003, 2006	1957 (cw), '60s (2), '70s (2), 80s (1), every year '90
Belted Kingfisher	2	17	11	16	15	21	<b>23</b>	6	12	23	2001	Slow increase in reported numbers, previous high 19 in 1990
Red-bellied Woodpecker	103	<b>152</b>	102	91	84	67	63	17	48	152	2006	1982 (1), then every year since 86, increasing almost every year
<b>Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker</b>	<b>22</b>	1	2	1	1	1	3		2	<b>22</b>	<b>2007</b>	One each reported in 1975, '80, '84, '88, '89; previous high 3
Downy Woodpecker	293	409	380	<b>452</b>	326	242	264	85	231	452	2004	Used to vary 100-350, previous high 362 in 1998
Hairy Woodpecker	72	111	106	110	81	60	74	24	77	192	1974	Used to vary 20-80, increasing recently
N. Flicker	24	65	28	33	35	40	40	25	58	77	1998	Numbers increasing last two decades, 77 unusually high
Pileated Woodpecker	10	<b>26</b>	11	<b>26</b>	17	9	15	5	17	26	2004, 2006	Had been 1-9 throughout years, now higher
Northern Shrike	6	2		3	3	1			9	15	1995	Not seen every year, but at least half the time, except '80s (1)
Blue Jay	1370	1625	1349	891	1288	965	1001	681	946	1686	1977	Around 900 most of last 10 years, increasing recently
Amer. Crow	2412	3091	1235	2000	3606	4372	5504	1583	3714	5836	1997	1974=4634, but usually much lower until 1997 (Springfield roost?)
Fish Crow			3	2		<b>5</b> cw			2	5	1996, 2002	Reports began 1994, now almost every year
C. Raven	12	<b>13</b>	6	6	11	10	10	2	6	13	2006	First report (3) in 1988, every year beginning in 90s
Horned Lark	953	531	775	984	391	861	726	498	1368	2504	1993	Varies widely over years
Black-capped Chickadee	1462	1900	<b>2096</b>	1742	1308	1215	1691	614	1783	2096	2005	Always present, increase over time, spikes in irruptive years
Tufted Titmouse	612	<b>894</b>	681	633	397	381	583	252	476	894	2006	1 each in 1942, '57, '58, every year since 1960, increasing
Red-breasted Nuthatch	12	21	120	13	67	11	21	2	25	295	1993	Occasional major spikes: 1937, 59, 76, 81, 93, 05
White-breasted Nuthatch	289	477	<b>489</b>	478	304	283	391	94	362	489	2005	Almost always more than red-b, wide variation



Selected species include all regularly seen species, plus all unusual species seen in 2007.

Selected Species (Unusual Species <b>Bold</b> )	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003 (pm snow)	2002	2001	2000 (rain/fog)	1999	high	yr of high	Notes
Brown Creeper	13	36	39	25	22	16	25	2	24	53	1973	recent variation 8-45 (53 unusual)
Carolina Wren	37	<b>96</b>	36	83	17	36	25	8	9	96	2006	1950s (7), 1960s (2), 70s (1), 80s (4), '90 and on, every year
Winter Wren	1	4	4	4		2	4	1	3	7	1998	Half to every year each decade, usually 1-3/yr, spikes: 5-7
Golden-crowned Kinglet	54	139	52	196	127	94	<b>332</b>	52	39	332	2001	Spikes each decade, varies widely, previous high 314 '96
<b>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</b>	1					2	4		2	6	1967+73	1-6 seen about half of the years, 1950s on
Eastern Bluebird	217	<b>474</b>	235	228	129	224	298	99	264	474	2006	Until 1989 2-3x in each decade, then more
Hermit Thrush	2	8	<b>9</b>	3	4	6	7	1	4	9	2005	Most years this decade, about 3x/decade before
American Robin	1123	<b>7555</b>	2795	3226	711	712	414	2232	2727	7555	2006	Until 1994 few to 80/year, now winter roosts (Whately,Amherst)
Gray Catbird	4	1	<b>5</b>	1	1	1	cw		2	5	2005	Had averaged 2/decade, 5 x 90s, now most years
N. Mockingbird	100	174	120	165	100	142	186	111	<b>238</b>	238	1999	A few early, seen every year since 1965
European Starling	4449	5300	4028	4538	4549	4715	6392	3908	9398	94630	1985	Most dramatic change 1990=35,642; 1991=5,507
Cedar Waxwing	<b>2194</b>	1647	1540	626	918	607	1375	1425	730	2194	<b>2007</b>	Varies widely (90s from 119-1567)
Amer. Tree Sparrow	1483	1414	845	899	1776	1176	1213	618	2230	2637	1992	Reported numbers higher 90s-00s, but always 300+
Field Sparrow	3	9	7	1	2	4	5		2	58	1982	Varies widely, perhaps more in 70s-80s
<b>Vesper Sparrow</b>	1		cw	1						2	1939, 1969	Once or twice each decade (except 40s)
Savannah Sparrow	5	22	27	37	13	33	28	<b>46</b>	5	46	1990+00	1930s-'50s(1-3), 60s(5), 70s(7), '80s-90s every year
Fox Sparrow		1	1	2	1	1	4	4	3	20	1943	Numbers higher in 60s-70s, but never many
Song Sparrow	201	458	354	365	330	267	325	274	228	559	1992	Almost always reported, numbers higher this decade
Swamp Sparrow	5	6	10	6	4	16	5		11	23	1992	Reported most years, always small numbers
White-throated Sparrow	580	687	363	309	506	222	301	396	218	770	1976	Occasional spikes (1992=753)
White-crowned Sparrow	3	8	2	2	6			2	<b>9</b>	9	1999	1950s(1), then 4-6 times/decade
Dark-eyed Junco	1915	<b>3585</b>	1627	2156	1948	1527	1255	2123	1394	3585	2006	1930s(6), then every year, at least one spike/decade
<b>Lapland Longspur</b>	3		1				3	1		31	1989	Half of years in '50s, '80s, '90s, almost every year '60s-'70s
Snow Bunting	76	7	49		34		3	161	7	706	1989	Great variation, second highest=215 in 1976
N. Cardinal	485	557	531	<b>649</b>	528	350	463	248	509	649	2004	First reported 1951, every year since 1957, slowly increasing
Red-winged Blackbird	1	<b>128</b>	3	99	94	76	52	26	28	128	2006	Each decade varies widely (111 in 1994)
Rusty Blackbird	39	1	1	cw	2	3	14	3	<b>74</b>	74	1999	Usually 0-30, 58 in 1984, now every year
C. Grackle	3	<b>501</b>	cw	3				5	4	501	2006	Numbers vary widely, few before 1960 (next highest 155 '98)
Brown-headed Cowbird	6	<b>876</b>	1	22		2	6	20	5	876	2006	Numbers down most of the recent years
<b>Pine Grosbeak</b>	160									217	1954	Half (or less) of courts each decade, wide variation in #
Purple Finch	40		13	3	7	7	cw	15	3	221	1976	Numbers down 90s-00s, but has always varied widely
House Finch	607	556	554	742	471	501	805	264	857	2215	1994	First 2 reported in 1967, spike in 94 (93=1469, 95=1366)
C. Redpoll	337		54	27	266		79		424	1069	1959	Reported about half the time, numbers vary widely
Pine Siskin	13		3		3		15		36	372	1993	Varies from 0 to 370s
Amer.Goldfinch	912	<b>2094</b>	1687	928	1470	728	1556	263	756	2094	2006	Varies, 1998 (1722) by far largest count up to that year
Evening Grosbeak	5		14		11		12		5	3000	1969	1970s by far largest counts
House Sparrow	1233	1156	1297	1654	1054	1089	1673	486	1282	2662	1961	Seems lower last 2 decades



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 24, No. 7

**March, 2008**

*In this edition:*

- an introduction to the **program** for this month,
- **coming field trips**, including **Monhegan** and **Connecticut Lakes**, scheduled for late-spring-summer,
- a primer for the **second year of Atlas 2**, and yet another new dimension to the **Christmas Count**,
- **"Birds of North America"** (online) at a discount?
- **Hitchcock Programs**, and
- a snippet from the rarified air of research ornithology.

*I hope you find some of it useful!*

## PROGRAMS

**Monday, March 10 at 7:30 PM**

**Scott Hecker speaks about the NAS Coastal Waterbird 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 efforts that have been made over the last two decades to protect and promote recovery of the Piping Plover have resulted in a four-fold increase in the population in Massachusetts. In addition, the number of locations with breeding pairs has doubled. Even more important than the fate of this charming bird is the fate of our barrier beaches in general, which have definitely been helped by the measures taken to protect the plovers. National Audubon have used the strategies applied to Piping Plover conservation as the basis for the nation-wide Coastal Bird Conservation Program. Scott Hecker will outline for us some of the challenges this program has taken on, how it is faring, and what the future may hold.

Scott Hecker is the Director of the National Audubon Society's Coastal Bird Conservation Program, an effort he launched in 2003 for the Audubon Science Division. The Coastal Bird Conservation Program aims to increase the on-the-ground protection of North America's most endangered plovers, terns, and other threatened coastal birds throughout their breeding and non-breeding ranges in the Western Hemisphere.

From 1984 to 2003 Mr. Hecker worked for the Massachusetts Audubon Society where he directed the Coastal Waterbird Program, co-directed the Massachusetts Important Bird Area Program, and assisted with the development of the Programme for Belize. In 1987 he completed a Master of Sciences degree in Resource Management from Antioch University, which focused on the conservation of wetlands in Belize, Central America. In 1998 his work in Massachusetts was recognized with a "Coastal Visionary Award" from the Gulf of Maine Council. His articles, photographs, and artwork have appeared in the publications of Audubon, the National Geographic Society, and the National Park Service. He lives in Duxbury, Massachusetts.

## Coming Up

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

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

**June 9, 2008. Bruce Beehler.** Expeditions to Foja, New Guinea.

## FIELD TRIPS

### Coming Trips

**Saturday, March 22. Connecticut River Waterfowl.** Half day. Al Richards looks for waterfowl migrating through the valley along the Connecticut River. Call Al (413-665-2761) for meeting information as the date approaches. (E)

**\*Saturday, April 12. 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)

**\*Sunday, April 13. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher (413-585-5864) hopes to find Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and other early migrants. Meet in the Friendly's parking lot, near the Holiday Inn, close to Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7:00 a.m. (E)

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### Overnight Trips

#### Monhegan Island Memorial Day Weekend (May 23-26), 2008

Most birding trips are targeted affairs. We pile in and out of vehicles at strategic locations, carefully tailoring our effort to those places and times most likely to maximize our chances of seeing one of the rarer members of the world's dwindling avifauna, or of intercepting one of those migrants who bless us ever so briefly with their presence. This is all well and good, but if you have ever wanted to steep yourself in the spring migration, Monhegan is for you.

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. 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.

We'll 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. This trip is open only to members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Registration is by deposit. For further details, including an estimation of costs, contact **Betsy Higgins** ([hignik@comcast.net](mailto:hignik@comcast.net); 586 4948) or **Andrew Magee** (586 1509).

## Overnight Trips (continued).....

### **Connecticut Lakes, New Hampshire. Friday, June 20 – Sunday June 22, 2007.**

Our ever-popular 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](mailto:davidpj@the-spa.com)), or **Mike Locher** (413 585 5864, [mlocher@yahoo.com](mailto:mlocher@yahoo.com)) for further information or to sign up.

## **BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 2**

### **Reminder**

Atlas Workshop with Joan Walsh, Tuesday, March 4, 7 PM, Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. (snow date March 5). Hear about data from the first year, changes in procedures and better ways to plan your strategies (habitat and species).

### **Here's the flow chart:**

#### **Plan**

Get codes and safe dates

Get block maps

Plan block strategy ► **Bird**

Habitats (ideally all types in each block)

ID

Behavior

► **Code**

PO (inside safe dates)

PR (inside safe dates and behavior)

CO (behavior only)

► **Enter**

Paper/computer

Time spent, Date, Code

Map/Description (rarities)



► **Enjoy**

Birds

Helping birders

Helping birds

(No excuses for confusion now).

## Volunteer Opportunities

Don't forget the following opportunity for HBC members to contribute time and effort to the Amherst conservation community.

### **Spring Trail Maintenance along the Amherst Rail Trail.**

HBC in association with the Amherst Conservation Department.

Initial efforts will focus on improving the trail to the bird-blind. Other projects to follow.

For more information on this volunteering opportunity, contact Dave Gross at [president@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:president@hampshirebirdclub.org).

## **Another Remarkable Story from the Christmas Count!**

As part of the Northampton Christmas Count, team #15 always walks the Barstow Farm in Hadley. The team leader, Sally Hills, visits the dairy farm in the week preceding the count to ask permission to walk the fields and sends a thank you note each year which includes the summary of the results both on the farm and of the entire count circle.

The Barstow Farm is a good place to be on those cold (or snowy, or rainy) Christmas Count mornings. The farm buildings border the edge of Mt. Holyoke and the Skinner State Park. The fields extend west to the Connecticut River. The day begins with the spectacular flight of crows headed from their Springfield roost to the open fields to the north. There are Bald Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, Common Ravens, the expected forest, edge, and open-meadow birds — and occasionally Rough-legged Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hermit Thrush, Horned Lark, or Common Redpoll. One year there was even a Nashville Warbler.

Last year, the Barstow Farm, like every other dairy farm in the northeast, faced a financial crisis. Milk prices were so low that none of the farms could cover their costs. Massachusetts was very close to losing both an important source of locally produced food and also the agricultural habitats so important to wildlife (and to the beauty of our communities.)

Because the Barstows knew about the Christmas Count and the data we collected and because they thought that data might make more of an impression on decision-makers in Boston than appeals to their conscience, they asked if we had any information on the birds that use the farm. We did and were able to send lists that could be presented at the legislative hearings.

This week the Hampshire Bird Club, as sponsor of the Northampton CBC, received a letter from Paula Barstow.

*"We love hearing from the bird club with the bird tallies. Thank you for your notes and information. We especially wanted to take this time to say thank you for all you do for the bird population and for us with your notes and communication.*

*"Just to let you know, we had asked for your help and support a while back when the Department of Agriculture was considering helping out the dairy farmers - well: it worked! We are getting a good and fair price for our milk and we were able to receive some funds to help tide over the bad year in 2006. We wanted you to know that it's your support and support of folks like you that did the trick!"*

Ever wondered why you are out there with hands so cold you can't hold your binoculars? Now you know.

Mary Alice Wilson

## Birds Of North America Discount?

Cornell University provides an online guide to the natural history of North American birds, called, appropriately enough, "Birds of North America." This is arguably the premier resource of its kind for this continent, and quite possibly the only thing standing between some of us and a subscription to the service is the \$40 annual fee!

The indefatigable Mary Alice Wilson is preparing to negotiate with Cornell to establish a discounted subscription fee of \$32 that would be available to HBC members, as it is already available to members of some other bird clubs. Mary Alice will be announcing this in more detail at the March 4 Breeding Bird Atlas Workshop at Arcadia. In case you do not plan to be there, stay tuned!

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**Tracking White-tailed Deer:** *Alan Emond*

Saturday, March 8, 2008, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**One Hundred native Plants for Your Home Landscape:** *Sue Reed*

Thursdays, March 13, 20, 27, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

**Amherst Breeding Bird Study Presentation:** *Douglas Hutcheson*

Thursday, March 27, 2008, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

**Quabbin Exploration:** *Ted Watt*

Saturday, March 15, 2008, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**From Land to Landscape: A Writer Looks At the World:** *Jane Yolen*

Wednesday, March 26, 2008, 7 p.m. at the Quabbin Visitor Center, Belchertown.

**The Third Annual Salamander Soiree:** A Benefit for the Hitchcock Center.

Friday, March 28, 2008, 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Amherst College Alumni House

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

## Head Starts in Redstarts

The migration of neotropical birds is becoming understood at an increasingly fine level. It has been known for some years that migrating male warblers arrive on breeding grounds before females and it was often thought that this in itself was an adaptive trait: the males needing to have established territories in order to successfully attract mates.

New work suggests the possibility of an alternative explanation.

A University of Maryland/National Zoo study of American Redstarts shows that the lifetime migration patterns in these birds are profoundly affected by the quality of their first wintering grounds. The study examined redstarts that spent their first winters in one of two adjacent Jamaican habitats. Some birds spent the winter in mangrove swamps, a relatively rich habitat with abundant insect diversity and adequate water. Others had to deal with adjacent arid lands, with less food and limited water.

(continues over ►►)

(Headstarts in Redstarts, continued.....)

The following interesting patterns emerged:

- a) the birds from the mangrove habitat maintained condition better, bulked up in preparation for spring migration earlier, and departed earlier. (continues over ► ►)
- b) these birds tended to establish territories in the southernmost areas of the breeding range. This meant a shorter fall migration and, on average, their arrival on the wintering grounds earlier. Being early arrivals, they were again able to establish and hold winter territories in the prime mangrove habitat.
- c) 70% of the birds in the mangrove habitat were mature males. The majority of young males and females had to make do with the arid lands.

Hence, while the study confirms that males tend to migrate earlier, it also suggests that this may be because they have the advantage of better condition, rather than a “need” to arrive early in the north.

Reference: *University of Maryland (2008, February 25). Early Experience Affects Where Birds Breed For Life: What Happens If Habitat Changes?. Science News.*

## Welcome New Members!

<b>Craig Goff,</b> <b>Casey Ravenhurst,</b> <b>Leanne Ksiazek &amp; Sandra Leiser,</b>	Amherst Hatfield Westhampton
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## 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 all for this month!

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

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



## Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

[www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)

Volume 24, No. 8

**April, 2008**

In this edition:

- a rare **editorial**,
- **program information** for this month (on page 2) and the rest of the club year,
- **field trip reports** and the coming schedule, including **some changes**,
- yet more encouragement to sign up for **Monhegan** and **Connecticut Lakes**,
- **atlas** exhortations from Mary Alice,
- **election information** (no, not the machinations of Washington, but of our own Board),
- **anniversary field trips** to Panama, Greater Yellowstone, and northern Maine
- news of a **miracle from New Jersey**, and some other general interest stories from the world of birds.

I hope you find some of it useful!

Owing to the euro-centric nature of the world, Easter in Australia comes in the autumn. Of course, the oddity of this only became apparent to me when I moved overseas. Easter and spring are inextricably intertwined in our northern minds. The Christian symbolism of death and renewal are mirrored by the obvious and exultant renewal that is taking place as the days lengthen and winter relinquishes its grip on the land. Curiously, though the seasons are reversed in South Australia, the same kind of parallel existed, only it was from the suffocating heat of summer that the people and landscape found respite. My chief memory of Easter was watching the parched earth by the front gate of the farm where, miraculously, the easter lilies would push their purple buds through earth dampened by the first autumn rains. It was, just as here, a time of hope, renewal, and relief.

For us in the Pioneer Valley, Easter (on a historically early date) was heralded this year by the geese. For the middle two weeks in March, geese spread through the morning sky like lines of wave foam on a beach. The rest of the waterfowl snuck in more surreptitiously, and tended to their needs in the creases and backwaters of the landscape, content to be far less noticed. On Easter Saturday (March 22), a gaggle of us were watching the now familiar congregation of geese off Meadow Street in Amherst. A nice collection of Snow Geese had arrived earlier in the morning to join hordes of Canada Geese in the wet cornfield, and more Canada Geese trickled in just as fast as it was possible to pick through the assembled multitudes on the ground. Hampshire Bird Club was there on our annual spring tour of the valley, as was Scott Sumner and the Hitchcock class. For some it was perhaps the first time they had tried to examine every one of two thousand different birds, looking for the one which did not fit. Others of us visualized Bob Bieda, or some other personal exemplar of persistence, in a vain attempt to maintain concentration upon the shifting tapestry of chin-strapped throats and dun breasts in the field. Having already found the orange tips and toes of the two Greater White fronted Geese in the flock, most of us were just going through the motions when a bird materialized in a fleeting gap in the parade. It was, of course, sitting on the mud, as inconspicuous as a goose can be, yet immediate discordant with its neighbors. The breast was dark! Moments later, the bird stretched innocently in the warming rays of the sun, revealing a white face with a dark eye line. A rare Barnacle Goose!

Perhaps this bird found its way here across the Atlantic, or perhaps it has escaped from some domestic setting. Perhaps MARC will declare it "listable", and perhaps not. Perhaps from Greenland, perhaps from Green Bay. – it matters little. For me, Easter always brings us something beautiful, whether it is lilies by the farm gate, or a goose in a muddy field, and that is enough to be going on with.



## PROGRAMS

**Monday, April 14, at 7:30 PM**

**Chris Elphick** speaks about **Sharp-tailed Sparrows**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

**Chris Elphick** is a conservation biologist, working primarily on birds, in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Connecticut. He grew up in England and began birding when he was big enough to hold a pair of binoculars. His research focuses on the conservation ecology of birds, especially in agricultural settings and wetlands. Along with David Sibley and Barny Dunning he edited the *Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior* and wrote the syndicated newspaper column *Sibley on Birds*. He is also a co-author of the recently published *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Nevada*. He will talk about his lab group's ongoing research on the ecology, behaviour and conservation of saltmarsh-nesting sparrows.

## Coming Up

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

June 9, 2008. **Bruce Beehler**. Foja, New Guinea Expeditions

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

#### Connecticut Valley Waterfowl. March 22, 2008

Mike Locher deputized for Al Richards. Also partaking were Juliana Vanderwielen, Joan Dupre, Chris Ellison, and David Peake-Jones. The night had been cold, and we grumbled our way down out of the cars at Hadley Cove in rather raw conditions, to find the small amount of open water skinned over with ice. It was relatively birdless. We proceeded to the Honeypot to find an eagle dutifully on the new Bald Eagle nest. From here we drove to the southern end of Lake Warner to find some Canada Geese, Mallards, and Hooded Mergansers eking out a living in a little patch of open water. From Comins Road in North Amherst, we perused a cluster of Killdeer on the banks of a spring mud-puddle, and watched as Canada- and **Snow Geese** flooded in to join the multitudes across the way off Meadow Street. Bluebirds flirting photogenically on a farm fence, and singing House Finches provided tantalizing glimpses of what is to come.

Making our way around the corner onto Meadow Street, we stopped and began scoping the large and growing congregation of Canada- and Snow-Geese. The editorial provides a florid account of our locating a **Barnacle Goose**. Fortunately, Scott's birding class were at the location at the same time, so all of us were able to enjoy this wonderful bird at the same time. Al Richards, defying doctors orders, somehow got himself out to see it too. After watching the geese for a time, and marveling at the apparently disembodied heads of Northern Pintail cruising along at stubble height behind them (the ducks were actually in a low point of the field, so that only their heads were visible to us) we moved on to Barton's Cove. From the Rod and Gun Club we could see a nice collection of Common Mergansers, sprinkled with Common Goldeneye and Ring-necked Ducks. Chris alone managed to catch a glimpse of a male **Northern Harrier** high above the cove. From the cove proper, we could see more Mergansers and Ring-necked Ducks.

The Power Canal played host to a large group of Geese, with two more **Greater White-fronted Geese** amongst them, and an immature **Iceland Gull**, along with a nice collection of Common Goldeneye. Finally we made our way south to Great Pond, where Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Wood Ducks, and Hooded Mergansers picked their way through the swamp. From Cow Path Road at the southern end of the pond, we could see more of the same at close range, and a Great Blue Heron.

David Peake-Jones

## Field Trips Rescheduled.

Due to tides:

**New South Beach 1** with David Peake-Jones **rescheduled to Saturday, August 1.**

**New South Beach 2** with Bob Bieda **rescheduled to Saturday, August 30.**

Updated field trip schedules are posted on the web and will be issued in hard copy.

## Sign Up for Westover

The Westover Air Force Base Field trip is scheduled for Saturday, May 31. We are required to give the base a list of participants prior to the trip. Please remember to contact Bob Bieda at least two weeks in advance (by May 17) in order to participate.

## Coming Trips

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On the first three **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays** in May, we will offer guided walks at the Amherst Rail Trail (E/A) from 6:30 - 8:30 a.m. Meet in the rail trail parking lot off Station Road. Look to the newsletter for leaders and more details as the time approaches.

**Friday, May 9. South Quabbin Park.** Half day (until about 1 o'clock). Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) birds the southern end of the reservoir. Meet at the Quabbin Visitor's Center parking lot at 7:00 a.m. (E)

## OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIPS

What better way to spend your economic stimulus rebate than by going on one or both of these outings to unusual locations in good company?

### Monhegan Island

### Memorial Day Weekend (May 23-26), 2008

*As we go to press, eight (8) places remain on this, the club's flagship overnight field trip!*

You can see the spring migration almost anywhere, but if you have ever wanted to steep yourself in the glorious warblers of May, while losing yourself in the gentle rhythms of an idyllic island, Monhegan is for you.

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

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

## **25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY FIELD TRIPS IN 2009**

To celebrate the Hampshire Bird Club's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are offering some exciting and exotic trips. Here are three trips to mark on your calendars:

1) **Panama** – the HBC is planning to go to Panama in the late winter or spring of 2009, using a professional guide or company to lead the trip. The trip is still in the planning stage. For information, email Mike Locher at [fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org).

2) **Northern Maine** – In late June of 2009, Geoff LeBaron will lead a 5-day trip to far northern Maine to look for boreal species and other local specialties. Contact Geoff for details. (This trip will replace CT lakes trip for the year.)

3) **Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons** – In late July 2009, Tom Gagnon will lead a 10-day trip through two great western parks. The trip will look for more than birds; be prepared to look at mammals, butterflies, wildflowers, and almost anything else that lives out there. Contact Tom for information.

## LIBRARY

### A Plaintive Appeal from the Librarian

I am missing a cigar box filled with (no, not those smelly things) but an assortment of library things including the rubber stamp, library cards etc. I haven't seen them since the February meeting. If anyone picked them up then or has info as to their whereabouts, please let me know. Thanks.

Henry Lappen, Librarian  
library@hampshirebirdclub.org

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The HBC Nominating Committee (Bill Benner, Betsy Higgins, Elissa Rubinstein) is working on nominations for the HBC Board for the June 2008-May 2009 fiscal year. The slate will be announced in next month's newsletter, so if you are interested in serving on the board or have suggestions for a club member who you think would be interested, please contact one of the committee members soon.

## MASSACHUSETTS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 2

*(by the numbers AND the web)*

### If you like numbers:

Atlasers: in Franklin and Hampshire Counties = 95 (that's amazing)  
65 Primary (20-hours on a block)  
30 additional Supporting Atlasers working with teams

Blocks in Franklin and Hampshire Counties = 143  
8 (VIII) blocks not yet assigned - do it alone or with friends, just do it.  
(Bernardston 1, 3, 7; Chester 1; East Lee 10; Greenfield 4; Rowe 6, 11).

Species recorded somewhere in the two Counties in 2007  
Franklin County = 151  
Hampshire County = 156  
(Confirmed breeding species somewhere in the 2 counties = 129)

Number of observations recorded in the two counties in 2007 = 7,460

### If you like the web:

ALL the changes in safe dates etc. will be on the web by April 16.  
<http://www.massaudubon.org/birdatlas/bba2/methods/index.php>

Local information including a new list with ONLY local birds and other good stuff will go on line by April 16th:  
<http://hampshirebirdclub.org> (click on Breeding Bird Atlas)

### And finally, the word.....

A bird carries straw...  
Ah! Another chases it!  
Is it Prob. or Conf?

*Haiku by Lula Field, of Athol Bird and Nature Club*

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**How to Attract Butterflies and Hummingbirds to Your Garden** (with NEWFS): *Bill Benner & Ted Watt*

Evening classes: Tuesdays, April 8 and 15, 7 to 9 p.m. at the Hitchcock Center

Saturday Field Trips, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Birding By Ear:** *John Green*

Saturdays, April 19, May 17, and June 14, 6:30 to 9:30 a.m.

**Early Spring Wildflowers:** *Ted Watt*

Saturday, April 19, 2008, 10 a.m. to noon. At Chapel Falls Preserve, Ashfield.

**Ridebuzz: Building A Community-Driven Rideshare Network in the Pioneer Valley:** *Jeff Brown*

Wednesday, April 23, 2008, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

**Nature Drawing for the Complete Non-Artist:** *Elizabeth Farnsworth*

Sunday, April 27, 2008, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Quigong (Chi Kung):** *Rema Boscov*

Sundays, April 27 to June 1, 2008, 8:30 to 9:45 a.m.

**Connecting Urban People to the Environment:** *Nuestras Raices staff*

Tuesday, April 8, 2008, 7 p.m. at Holyoke Heritage State Park, Holyoke, Massachusetts

**The Singing Lives of Birds:** *Don Kroodsma*

Tuesday, April 22, 2008, 6:30 p.m. at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton.

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

## Hope for the Red Knot

*Never too late for a miracle!*

Eastern populations of the Red Knot have declined by 80% in the past ten years, and the species hangs on the brink of extinction. By some estimates, the current numbers are below 20,000 birds, prompting speculation that the species may have already passed the point of no-return. **Nevertheless, the New Jersey Senate approved legislation on March 18 to ban horseshoe-crab harvesting in Delaware Bay, and the legislation was signed by Governor Corzine on March 25.**

The moratorium will remain in effect until Red Knot numbers reach the numbers outlined in the United States Shorebird Conservation Plan of May 2001. This is 240,000 birds. By some estimates, the current numbers are below 20,000 birds. The bill also requires evidence of an adequate egg supply before the ban is lifted. We can now pray that the population is still healthy enough to recover.

You can read more at [www.njaudubon.org/Conservation/HScrabalert.html](http://www.njaudubon.org/Conservation/HScrabalert.html)

## The Environmental Bond Bill.

*“The Environmental Bond Bill is the single most important environmental bill to be considered by the Legislature (in 2008)”.* (Coalition for the Environmental Bond, [www.envirobond.org](http://www.envirobond.org))

The “bond bill,” now technically known as H4561, (meaning it is currently under consideration in the House of Representatives), is the first comprehensive environmental funding legislation in Massachusetts since a previous bond in 2002. Funds from that legislation, and various funding “patches” have been either completely or virtually exhausted by the departments and agencies responsible for environmental quality in this state. The Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture declared the bill to be “emergency legislation” when it presented H4561 to the House of Representatives on February 14.

The Coalition for the Environmental Bond goes on to say,

*“Projects funded through the Environmental Bond directly affect communities across the state by protecting natural areas, safeguarding water quality, restoring rivers and streams, providing for dam removal, supporting working farms, building our economy and improving our quality of life.*

*The Environmental Bond is the cornerstone of the Commonwealth's long-term investment in its environment. It provides investments over the next five years for local and statewide projects that protect critical natural areas and wetlands, maintain our parks, beaches and bike paths, offer municipal aid, and more.”*

The scope of the bill is too wide to cover here, but here is a brief sample of some of the clauses that might be of interest to us as birders.

2000-7013 funds the LAND program, whereby municipalities acquire conservation land (\$36 M),

2000-7016 funds the Conservation partnership Grant Program, which assists non-profits such as land trusts in acquiring land to be conserved (\$7 M),

2300-7010 funds conservation land acquisition by the Department of Fish and Game (\$73 M),

2300-7013 funds activity under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (\$10 M),

2300-7014 includes funds for management of upland areas, including invasive species control (\$8 M),

2300-7017 funds the Comprehensive Conservation Strategy, which includes, amongst other things, the Coastal Waterbird Program (\$11.4 M)

2500-7012 funds the establishment of Agricultural Preservation Restrictions in the state (\$67 ¾ M)

You can read the text of the bond bill at [www.envirobond.org](http://www.envirobond.org) (the Coalition's website), or directly from mass.gov at [www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/185/ht04pdf/ht04561.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/185/ht04pdf/ht04561.pdf).

***Please consider contacting your legislators about this important legislation!***

## HBC Volunteers Wanted!

Assistance is needed to accompany birders with disabilities during 2 hour outings in the spring and fall. The outings will happen on Saturday mornings 10am-noon at a variety of locations. Offer your birding expertise and a helping hand as needed for mostly beginning birders. ***If you are interested in this continuation of Project Inspire, contact Marcy at 545-5758.***

That's all for this month

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

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



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 24, No. 9

## May, 2008

In this edition:

- an introduction to the **program for this month**, and **sneak preview of next year**,
  - field trip reports and the **REVISED field trip schedule** for the remainder of the club year,
  - last call for people to go to the **Connecticut Lakes** in June,
  - the **Annual General Meeting** announcement and some election campaigning,
  - a precise and strategic **ATLAS reminder** from Mary Alice,
  - an opportunity to help with a **bird monitoring project** in our local area,
  - and a number of other snippets.
- Hope you find some of it useful!

### Tuesday and Thursday Bird Walks

Please note that the Tuesday and Thursday bird walks in May, which have previously been held at Wildwood Cemetery, will henceforth be on the Amherst Rail Trail, beginning at the Station Road parking lot. please see the new FT schedule (enclosed).

## PROGRAMS

**Monday, May 12 at 7:30 PM**

**Rob Williams speaks about Avian Endemism in Peru**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

The ruggedness of the Andes mountains in northern Peru has conspired with two opposing oceanic currents and the climate generated by the Amazon basin to produce an incredible complexity of habitats. These have been relatively stable since the mid Miocene, during which time a complex and diverse fauna and flora have evolved. This talk will explore the origins and complexity of this diversity, focusing on the bird species (1300+) of the region, many of which are found nowhere else on earth. We will discuss the conservation status of these habitats and species and review new initiatives in their conservation.

**Rob Williams** is a conservation ecologist, photographer, author and birding tour guide. Having studied zoology at the University of Wales at Cardiff, he moved on to the University of East Anglia for his doctorate where he went on to spend two years wandering around the coniferous forests of northern England at night while studying the elusive Long-eared Owl. Finding the lack of tropical forests in England frustrating, he has spent most of the rest of his life in South America.

In 1999 Dr. Williams established a foothold for the Wildlife Conservation Society in Ecuador before moving on to work for BirdLife International. He then founded the Bosques Sin Fronteras (Forests without Borders) movement and became its first international coordinator. In 2003 he began helping a local Peruvian community in their efforts to establish the 34,000 hectare Chaparri Ecological Reserve, where he has also coordinated reintroduction of the critically-threatened White-winged Guan. Since December 2005, Dr. Williams has been working for the Frankfurt Zoological Society coordinating a large-scale Andes-Amazon rainforest conservation project. He continues to do field research and current studies include: White-winged Guans, Spectacled Bears, Andean Condors, Pampas and Andean Cats and a new species of Porcupine.

Rob has published over 25 scientific papers and four books: "*A Guide to Bird-watching in Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands*", "*Treasures of the Forgotten Forests*", "*Birds of the Clouds*" and "*A Guide to the Wildlife of Chaparri*". A birder from age 3, he has led more than 30 birding trips to 14 countries. He is married to Anahi, a very tolerant and understanding Peruvian photographer, and they have two sons, Alec and Oliver.



## Next Month

**June 9, 2008. Bruce Beehler.** A Lost World in Western New Guinea.

As part of his visit in June, Bruce will be happy to sign copies of his book, which will also be for sale at the meeting. Here is an excerpt from the publicity materials for the volume.

*“Perhaps it is not possible to experience all the mysterious sounds, the unfamiliar smells, and the spectacular sights of a tropical rainforest without ever visiting one. But this exhilarating and honest book comes wondrously close to taking the reader on such a journey.*

*Drawing on his experiences in Papua New Guinea, India, Madagascar, Indonesia, the Philippines, Panama, and the Ivory Coast, Beehler describes the surprises—both pleasant and unpleasant—of doing science and conservation in the field. He explains the role that rainforests play in the lives of indigenous peoples and the crucial importance of understanding local cultures, customs, and politics. The author concludes with simple but tough solutions for maintaining rainforest health, expressing fervent hope that his great-grandchildren and others may one day also hear the rainforest whisper its secrets.”*

*“Lost Worlds: Adventures in the Tropical Rainforest.”* Yale University Press. March 31, 2008. Hard Cover \$28. More information on the book, and video excerpts from Bruce’s visit to Foja, New Guinea at <http://yalepress.yale.edu/yupbooks/book.asp?isbn=9780300122282>

### IMPORTANT

If you will **NOT** be at the May meeting, but would like to buy a copy of *“Lost Worlds”* at the June meeting, please notify Mary Alice Wilson before May 12.

[mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu](mailto:mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu); phone 548 9078

## Programs for Next Year (Provisional)

<b>September 8, 2008</b>	<b>David Spector</b>	Ralph Ellison’s Invisible Bird Literature.
<b>October 20, 2008</b>	<b>Chan Robbins</b>	Wintering with the Neotropical Migrants.
<b>November 10, 2008</b>	<b>Norman Smith</b>	From Snowy Owls to Saw-whet Owls.
<b>December 8, 2008</b>	<b>HBC Members’ Meeting—Club Memories</b>	
<b>January 12, 2009</b>	<b>Don Kroodsma</b>	to be determined
<b>February 9, 2009</b>	<b>Mark Lynch/Sheila Carroll</b>	Birds and Art
<b>March 9, 2009</b>	<b>Scott Weidensaul</b>	Return to Wild America.
<b>April 13, 2009</b>	<b>John Van de Graaff</b>	to be determined.
<b>May 11, 2009</b>	<b>Susan Smith</b>	Chickadee Research.
<b>June 8, 2009</b>	<b>Kenn Kaufman</b>	Wings of the Imagination: Why We Need Birds.

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

#### **April 12. Look Park with Betsy Higgins**

Naturally, since it was the morning of the Look Park bird walk, 5:30AM brought thunder and pouring rain. Nevertheless, Sue Emerson and I donned our rain gear and set out for our meeting place. Happily, by 7AM, the rain had stopped. We had a nice walk through the park, along the Arch St. path up to the dam and over to the Water St. bridge. We found a pair of Common Mergansers making themselves at home on the river, one Red-tailed Hawk in the woods, and a Kingfisher flying high in the fog. A charming pair of Ruby-crowned Kinglets and the uneven drum of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker added to our 31 species. Our Louisiana Waterthrush did not make an appearance, but we’ll be patient and hope to see them in a week or so.

Betsy Higgins



### **April 13. No Waterthrush Found at Ashley Reservoir by Mike Locher et al.**

Catchy title, eh? And it works because, unfortunately, we didn't see or hear a single waterthrush when the HBC went on its annual trip to the reservoirs. On the other hand, we did see and hear **Palm Warblers**, **Pine Warblers** (many), Brown Creepers, Eastern Phoebe, and a host of other birds.

The day started with bright sun, and we quickly found the warblers, brown creepers, a pair of Wood Ducks, and four species of woodpecker (including Pileated) near the Elks Lodge. The sky had darkened by the time we made it down to the reservoir, where we saw Ring-necked Ducks, Mallards, Canada Geese, and a few Common Loons. We later saw Tree and Barn Swallows dipping over the water, and a pair of **Pied-billed Grebes** swimming near the shore. We even got a little rain just as we saw a pair of House Wrens and looked at the blooming hepatica. As the rain stopped, a Broad-winged Hawk flew over us and a lone Hermit Thrush watched us from the side of the path.

In all, we saw about 39 species and innumerable signs that spring had finally arrived.

Mike Locher

### **Coming Trips**

Attached is the revised Winter-Spring Summer Field Trip Schedule. It is Green. Please discard the old salmon-colored version published in September. Thank you.

### **Westover Trip Sign Up (required by May 17)**

The Westover Air Force Base Field trip is scheduled for Saturday, May 31. We are required to give the base a list of participants prior to the trip. Please remember to contact Bob Bieda at least two weeks in advance (by May 17) in order to participate.

## **OVERNIGHT TRIPS**

There are still spaces on the Connecticut Lakes trip in June and time is running out to sign up. Don't delay!

### **Connecticut Lakes, New Hampshire.**

**Friday, June 20 – Sunday June 22, 2007.**

*Our ever-popular 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](mailto:davidpj@the-spa.com)), or **Mike Locher** (413 585 5864, [mlocher@yahoo.com](mailto:mlocher@yahoo.com)) for further information or to sign up.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Hampshire Bird Club Incorporated, at which elections for next year's officers and board members is held, will be at the start of the regular club meeting on May 12, 2008. All members are encouraged to attend the meeting and to participate in the election.

### From the Nominating Committee

The HBC Nominating Committee (Bill Benner, Betsy Higgins, Elissa Rubinstein) has brought forward a slate of nominees for HBC officers and board members for the 2008-2009 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. The nominees are listed below. Those asterisked\* are new to the board, serving again after an absence, or will change roles next year.

**President:** Scott Turner\*

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

**Treasurer:** Janice Jorgensen

**Membership Secretary:** Sue Emerson

**Communications Secretary:** Elissa Rubinstein

**Members-at-Large:** David Gross\*, Mike Locher, Dennis McKenna, Lisa Rock, Jaap van Heerden, Joe Wicinski\*

## BREEDING BIRD ATLAS MADE SIMPLE

### 1. Get your new safe dates, change in code definitions, improved checklists.

*From Mass Audubon (state list):*

<http://www.massaudubon.org/birdatlas/bba2/methods/checklists.php>

*From Hampshire Bird Club (local list):*

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org/happening/BBA2/index.html>

You can also get this list sorted by safe date from the HBC website.

### 2. Download new, easy-to-use block maps.

*From BBA Explorer (click on MA2007 at the top)*

[http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bba/index.cfm?fa=explore.ProjectHome&BBA\\_ID=MA2007](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bba/index.cfm?fa=explore.ProjectHome&BBA_ID=MA2007)

### 3. Review birds seen in 2007 on your block.

*Get from BBA Explorer (address #2, click on Results at top)*

Use a colored pencil to mark on your checklist so you can plan more efficiently

### 4. Block parties.

*If you have ONE MORNING to help in an unassigned block, speak up.* You can (a) join an organized group and go out together, OR (b) take a geographic section of a block and do it entirely on your own time, OR (c) some other strategy - the possibilities are infinite, but the blocks finite (9). Come to the HBC meeting, or contact [mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu](mailto:mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu) if you can help out.

Mary Alice Wilson

## ***“Birds of North America”*: discount rate for HBC/Atlas birders**

BNA (Birds of North America) was originally a series of monographs available at vast expense. Recently Cornell put them on line and they are being updated regularly. It is a great source of information about species ID, but especially about behavior, distribution, habitat, etc. You can view sample species by going to <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/BNA/>

Typically, the service is expensive, but as a club and atlas group, we can each can get a reduced subscription rate of \$32/year. If you are interested, you just have to let me know. Within a few days I will be able to give you a “code” that will allow you to subscribe on line (or maybe by phone) and pay only \$32.

Mary Alice Wilson

## **LIBRARY**

The HBC Library is located at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst. Now that Henry has found his odds-and-ends box, things have returned to normal after a rocky couple of months!

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](http://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**

### **Birding with a Purpose: Help Local Land Conservation!!**

We received this letter from the Weirs of Shutesbury:

*“We are new members of the Hampshire Bird Club. We were reading your newsletters and found an interesting article about how the Bird Club assisted a Hadley couple in counting birds on their property. This helped them document the conservation value of their land and qualify for state assistance to keep it open. We are in the same boat!”*

*We live on a family farm situated at the southwest corner of Shutesbury. The farm has 140 acres in Pelham, 40 acres in Amherst, and 160 acres in Shutesbury. For the past three years we have received a grant from MA Wildlife to restore the agricultural fields to become open grassland. We have been very successful with woodcock and bluebirds and for the first time in about 40 years we had a whip-poor-will land in our back yard last summer. An Eastern Meadowlark visited our fields briefly in the late summer.*

*For the past two years we have counted resident and migrating birds present on the farm on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend. This year, we are hoping some members of the Hampshire Bird Club will be willing to volunteer to help in our annual count. The count is encouraged by MA Wildlife as a way to have citizen scientists document changes over time that our activities create to encourage grassland and shrub land birds to establish. MA Wildlife allows us to count the volunteer hours that people spend on this small project toward meeting the required 25% dollar match that we must generate in order to receive our grant. So your assistance will be doubly appreciated. This year, we will be doing the count on May 25, between 6 a.m. and 11 a.m. Please contact us if you can help. Kevin Weir and Cynthia Banfield-Weir; 259-0018; [addisoncro@aol.com](mailto:addisoncro@aol.com)”*

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**Slide Show: Birds of the American West:** *John Van de Graaff*

Thursday, May 8, 2008, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

**This is Rotten! Composting for the Home Garden:** *Hans Leo*

Saturday, May 10, 2008, 10 a.m. to noon

**Alpine Wildflowers of the Presidentials:** *Pete Westover and Ted Watt*

Wednesday, May 28, 2008, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

**Tour of the Smith College Rock Garden:** *Pete Westover and Lisa Rock*

Thursday, May 29, 2008, 10 a.m. or 6 p.m.

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

## Now You See It.....

“*Woodpecker*”, a feature-length film about the celebrated **Ivory-Billed Woodpecker**, held its New England premiere screening on Saturday, April 26th at the Independent Film Festival of Boston. It was received with critical acclaim. Keep an eye out for it at your local independent theater!!

## The Firefly Project

The Museum of Science in Boston is joining with researchers from Tufts University and Fitchburg State College to learn the status of fireflies in Massachusetts. Fireflies, everyone’s favorite summer insect, have been disappearing from much of their range. Now, a new citizen science project, hosted by the Museum, hopes to gather enough data from across the state to enable firefly researchers to get a true picture of the State’s firefly population and, if they are disappearing, what are the causes and what can be done to preserve these fascinating insects.

The Firefly Project seeks to enlist people across the state to log on to the website to report the occurrence of fireflies in their back yard throughout the summer, as well as record information about their particular habitat. The goals of this project are twofold. The first is scientific. The more data collected by citizen scientists, the more valuable it is to firefly researchers. The second is educational. The site will contain a lot of information about the natural history of fireflies as well as environmental factors within our control that may affect their populations.

As with any citizen science project, its strength is in numbers. The more people who participate, the more valuable the study. For more info, log on to <http://www.mos.org/firefly>. Thank you!

Don Salvatore, Museum of Science, Boston.

## 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!

## Rumors of my Demise.....

*Biodiversity on our planet has been, during human history at least, ratcheting inexorably in the wrong direction. For those of us who love "life" (literally), this is perhaps the greatest tragedy we deal with each day. So it is nice when, occasionally, a species thought to be extinct shows up large as life.*

**Beck's Petrel** was thought to have become extinct in the 1920's. Recently, however, Hadoram Shirihai, an Israeli ornithologist, returned from an expedition to the Bismarck Archipelago northeast of Papua New Guinea, with photographs of at least thirty living individuals, and a freshly dead specimen found at sea. The evidence has been ratified by ornithologists from the British Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and by Birdlife International. One for nature!

Reference: Regan McTarsney, Associated Press. Reported in the Daily Hampshire Gazette and spotted by my mother-in-law!

## A Word from One of the Candidates

"Hi, I'm Scott Sumner.

Firstly, you might be asking what is so special about me. Well, we gave a "Big Oil" man a chance in Washington, and now it's time for a "Home Heating Oil" man to have another shot at the top job at HBC. Now, we've all heard the remarks about the previous president and I want to disassociate myself from the cheap puns so unwisely employed by some of those in my campaign. I also want to disavow that line about it being "time for change, and the Sumner the better."

But I want you all to know that I am for change. My running mate, Al Richards, is too. He scrounges around under the drive-thru windows at McDonalds looking for it and I really think we see better birds when he says the omens are good. Change helps me believe my wallet contains more wealth than it actually does, and that, I now realize, is what I am supposed to make you believe about this economy, so again, I am eminently qualified. In closing, what I really want to ask the people of HBC is this:

When the phone rings at three o'clock in the afternoon, and it's a Sandhill Crane in Leverett, who do you want to answer the phone? I'll tell you right now, I'll be out birding. Leave a message!"

This message is presented by the Sumner for Change Political Action Committee. Scott Sumner had nothing to do with it, and was probably railroaded into the presidency in the first place. We had him sign something while he was preoccupied with the Barnacle Goose. It's not his fault.

## Welcome New Members!

**Janet Polvino**  
**Judith Davidov**  
**Nancy Goodman & Mike Kotarba**  
**Cindy White**  
**Hany Aziz**  
**Dan Williams**

South Hadley  
 Leverett  
 Hadley  
 Belchertown  
 West Springfield  
 Leverett

That's all till next month.

Until then, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor

(413) 529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule, 2008. Version 2**  
**Amended April 27, 2008**

*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 an (A) indicates that the trip is accessible. Please check all information with the trip leaders.*  
 (E)

## **MAY**

On the first three **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays** in May, we will offer guided walks on the Rail Trail (E/A) in Amherst from 6:30 - 8:30 a.m. Meet in the parking area off Station Road.

**Friday, May 9. South Quabbin Park.** Half day (until about 1 o'clock). Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) birds the southern end of the reservoir. Meet at the Quabbin Visitor's Center parking lot at 7:00 a.m. (E)

**Saturday, May 10. Spring Migration in the Quabbin.** All day. Tom Gagnon guides birders through the Quabbin woods in search of its migrants. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well ahead of time for meeting information and to register. (M)

**Sunday, May 11. 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 beggar the imagination. Call David (413-529-9541) for meeting information. (E)

### **Additional Trip**

**Friday, May 16. Hike to the top of Mt. Holyoke on the road.** Meet in the parking lot at the main gate at 7:30 a.m. A leisurely walk to the top, looking for spring warblers and wild flowers. Rain could cancel. Call leader the evening before if weather is questionable. Tom Gagnon 584-6353

**Saturday, May 17. Coastal Rhode Island.** All day. Geoff LeBaron heads to our southern neighbor in warm weather to track down migrants and other seasonal specialties. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for meeting information and further details. (E)

**Friday, May 23 – Monday, May 26. Monhegan Island.** Overnight trip. Betsy Higgins leads the Hampshire Bird Club's annual pilgrimage to Monhegan Island. 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 24. Poor Man's Monhegan.** All day. Bob Bieda takes birders to Plum Island. 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, May 31. Tyringham Cobble and Tyringham Valley.** Half day. Ed Neumuth leads this new trip into a beautiful part of the Berkshires looking for migrants and local specialties. Call Ed (413-623-0186 or 413-884-4961) for meeting information. (E)

**Saturday, May 31. Westover Air Force Base.** Half day. Pending permission, Bob Bieda will lead his annual trip into New England's premier grassland habitat, looking for Upland Sandpipers, Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E/A)

## JUNE

**Saturday, June 14. Hammonasset Beach State Park, CT.** All day. Betsy Higgins goes to the coast of Connecticut to find sparrows, rails, and other seaside denizens. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for meeting time and place as the date approaches. (E)

**Sunday, June 15. West Quabbin ramble.** Half day. Dave Gross offers a trip from Pelham into the Quabbin and will be birding and hiking through blooming Mountain Laurel. Contact David (413-253-2897) for further details. (M)

**Saturday, June 21. October Mt. State Forest.** Half day. Ed Neumuth goes where no HBC trip leader has gone before (at least, in recent memory). Recent work in the area has provided excellent habitat for Mourning Warblers. Call Ed (413-623-0186 or 413-884-4961) for meeting information. (E)

**Friday, June 20 - Sunday, June 22. Connecticut Lakes, NH.** Overnight trip. David Peake-Jones and Mike Locher head to the boreal forests of 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

### **Rescheduled**

**Saturday, August 2. New South Beach, I.** All day. David Peake-Jones goes looking for early migrating shorebirds, especially Red Knots. Bring a lunch, a jacket, and \$20 for the boat ride. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (M)

## AUGUST

### **Rescheduled**

**Saturday, August 30. 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 24, No. 10

**June, 2008**

June 9 is the last program for this club year, and after this wonderful presentation, we recess to some degree till September. You will be getting a break from the newsletter till that time, which means you will need to find other material to read/use in the bathroom, and will be able to concentrate more fully on finding the balance point of your hammock, or stomping across the vast swampy expanses of your atlas block being virtuous, as the case may be. Don't forget the club never fully grinds to a halt: there are a series of great field trips planned over June, July and August. In this edition:

- the **June program**, and the **schedule for next year**,
- a desperate plea for people to join us at the **Connecticut Lakes**,
- **field trip reports** and **summer trips**,
- **anniversary and library news**,
- the new **Board**,
- **Hitchcock programs and news of the Boreal Birds Initiative**.

### PROGRAMS

**Monday, June 9 at 7:30 PM**

**Bruce Beehler takes us to A Lost World in Western New Guinea**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

In November 2005 a team of Indonesian, American, and Australian scientists shuttled by helicopter into a mist-shrouded lost world atop the isolated Foja Mountains of Papua, Indonesia's easternmost and least-explored province on the western side of the great tropical island of New Guinea. There they discovered dozens of species new to science, and an environment entirely free of human impact. The most remarkable of their discoveries include:

- A new species of honeyeater, the first new bird species discovered on the island of New Guinea since 1939,
- The formerly unknown breeding grounds of the Six-wired Bird of Paradise,
- First photographs of the Golden-fronted Bowerbird displaying at its bower,
- A new large mammal for Indonesia, the Golden-mantled Tree Kangaroo,
- More than twenty new species of frogs, including one less than 14 mm long,
- A remarkable white-flowered rhododendron with the largest rhododendron flower on record, and
- Four new butterfly species.

**Bruce Beehler** is an ornithologist, ecologist, and conservationist, currently serving as Vice President for Development and Science within the Indo-Pacific Field Division at Conservation International in Arlington, Virginia. Dr. Beehler has spent much of his scientific career studying the birds of the Southwest Pacific and South Asia. After conducting pre-doctoral and doctoral fieldwork in Papua New Guinea, Bruce worked for 10 years at the National Museum of Natural History, followed by stints at the Wildlife Conservation Society, U.S. Department of State, and Counterpart International. Today he supports and advises a decentralized field program that conducts conservation initiatives in the tropical Pacific and Indonesia.

*The Program for 2008-2009 is on page 2. Yet one more reason to read on.....*



### Book Sales at June Meeting

Dr. Beehler is author or co-author of several natural history books, including *Birds of New Guinea* (Princeton), *The Birds of Paradise* (Oxford), *A Naturalist in New Guinea* (Texas), *A Biodiversity Assessment for Papua New Guinea* (Biodiversity Support Program), and *Ecology of Papua* (Periplus). His upcoming book from Yale, entitled *Lost Worlds*, focuses on research and conservation in rainforests around the world.

Copies of Bruce Beehler's Book "*Lost Worlds: Adventures in the Tropical Rainforest*" will be for sale at the June meeting (if you indicated your interest at the May meeting). We thank the fine folks at **Amherst Books** for making these sales possible at affordable prices. Dr Beehler will be happy to sign copies, regardless of their origin. Details of the book at the end of the newsletter.

### Programs Next Year

<b>September 8, 2008</b>	<b>David Spector</b>	Ralph Ellison's Invisible Bird Literature.
<b>October 20, 2008</b>	<b>Chan Robbins</b>	Wintering with the Neotropical Migrants.
<b>November 10, 2008</b>	<b>Norman Smith</b>	From Snowy Owls to Saw-whet Owls.
<b>December 8, 2008</b>	<b>HBC Members' Meeting—</b>	<b>Club Memories</b>
<b>January 12, 2009</b>	<b>Don Kroodsma</b>	(To be determined)
<b>February 9, 2009</b>	<b>Mark Lynch/Sheila Carroll</b>	Boids and Ahrt
<b>March 9, 2009</b>	<b>Scott Weidensaul</b>	(to be determined)
<b>May 11, 2009</b>	<b>Susan Smith</b>	Chickadee Research.
<b>June 8, 2009</b>	<b>Kenn Kaufman</b>	Wings of the Imagination: Why We Need Birds.

### FIELD TRIPS

#### Reports

#### Friday, May 9. South Quabbin.

Eight birders accompanied Tom Gagnon, two of whom had never been on a Hampshire Club trip before. The group found two **Wild Turkeys** (one of which was in full display), one adult **Bald Eagle**, and two **Common Ravens**, tending three nearly full-grown young, still in the nest. There were 16 species of warblers, represented by 86 individual birds. Thanks to Larry Therrien for record-keeping.

Tom Gagnon

#### Saturday, May 10. Quabbin (with Tom Gagnon)

On the tenth day of May my true love gave to me: ten Wood Duck squealing, two Black Duck schmoozing, two Hooded Merganser lurking, eight Common Merganser patrolling, three Ruffed Grouse drumming, one Common Loon quavering, four Double-crested Cormorants trolling, two Osprey fishing, six Bald Eagles scavenging, one American Kestrel hovering, three Solitary Sandpipers teetering, one Ruby-throated Hummingbird rocketing, four Pileated Woodpeckers trumpeting, sixteen Least Flycatchers che-beking, three Great Crested Flycatchers promenading, four Eastern Kingbirds arcing, four Yellow-throated Vireos rasping, ten Red-eyed Vireos enquiring, six Common Ravens marauding, ninety five Tree Swallows vacillating, one Northern Rough-winged Swallow roughing it, five Ruby-crowned Kinglets fluttering, seven Veerys skulking, one Swainson's Thrush peering, two Blue-winged Warblers wheezing, one Northern Parula wash-boarding, six Magnolia Warblers exhibiting, twenty-six Black-throated Blue Warblers foraging, seventeen Yellow-rumped Warblers boring, forty

six Black-throated Green Warblers overpopulating, eleven Blackburnian Warblers smouldering, twenty six Pine Warblers trilling, twenty four Black-and-white Warblers fossicking, twenty-five American Redstarts stuttering, forty-three Ovenbirds over-emphasizing, six Scarlet Tanagers blushing, two White-crowned Sparrows balding, thirty one Baltimore Orioles embellishing, and two Purple Finches running out of verbs.

Editor, from information supplied by Larry Therrien.

### **Sunday, May 11. Mt Auburn Cemetery, Watertown.**

David Peake-Jones, Nancy Goodman, and Mike Kotarba journeyed to this fabled place of rest, and promptly proceeded to do anything but!

As always the cemetery was abuzz with birders, enthralled by the sometimes-overwhelming song, and comings and goings of warblers in migration.

Moving through the golden green spring foliage and delicate blossoms of flowering trees, we quickly latched onto the more common warblers: Black and White's scurried about on the still-visible tree trunks, while Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green plied the outer branches. **Nashville Warblers** announced themselves from the blossomy depths with their signature "Tick-a, tick-a, tick-a, shwee, shwee, shwee, schwee," but made us work hard to clap eyes on them. Several **Blackpolls** stuck stubbornly to the highest branches and taunted us with their ventriloquial hisses. Chestnut-sided Warblers were apparently "Pleased, pleased. pleased to meet us." A **Louisiana Waterthrush** prospected along the shores of Auburn Lake, and at least two **Orchard Orioles** pierced the morning with their staccato whistles. Bobolinks chimed rather ironically from the tree-tops. The shady depths of the dell gave forth an Eastern Towhee, great close looks at Ovenbirds, and both Hermit and Wood Thrushes. We wandered back along Indian Ridge Path in the noon hour with a rather ordinary 52 species (only 15 warblers) to our credit, song echoing in our addled brains, and, for now, having to be content. There will be next year!

David Peake-Jones

### **Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. Mt. Holyoke.**

11 people showed up to hike to the top of Mt. Holyoke via the hard top road. Highlights of the walk were the following:

**Cerulean Warbler** 4  
**Tennessee Warbler** 1 heard singing  
**Worm-eating Warbler** 1  
**Scarlet Tanager** 8

**Yellow-throated Vireo** 3  
**Broad-winged Hawk** 1  
**Swainson's Thrush** 5

The display of Wild Columbine at the top was just spectacular. There probably is not a better display in the entire state of Massachusetts!

Tom Gagnon

### **May 17, 2008. Coastal Rhode Island**

**Geoff LeBaron**, Chris Ellison, Sue Emerson, Andrew Magee, Jim Marcum and Sol Satin toured our petite southern neighbor under partly sunny skies with temperatures in the upper 30s.

1. **Napatree Point, Watch Hill, Westerly:** just as the skies cleared...and winds picked up...we hiked to the base of Napatree Point. Lots of terns, and an "interesting" but still immature Double-crested Cormorant, graced our views, but given the very high tide and windy conditions we did not (as ever) walk to the point.
2. **Misquamicut & Weekapaug:** long study of one particular...but still Least...Sandpiper, plus a lovely colony of Purple Martins.
3. **Quononchontaug Pond ("Quonnie"):** gorgeous spot and high tides, with aquascapes reminiscent of the Florida Keys. A Green Heron and alternate-plumaged Dunlin, plus an especially interesting...maybe...maybe not...yet definitely "runt" Willet!

4. **Ninigret Park, Charlestown:** **Prairie Warblers** galore, but no visuals on House Wrens.
  5. **Kimball Wildlife Refuge, Charlestown:** fantastic views of a Yellow-throated Vireo pummeling and dismembering a large beetle, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers constructing their nest, and a very territorial male Ruby-throated Hummingbird.
  6. **Trustom Pond N.W.R and Matunuck area:** communing with the AMC crowd and a shocking paucity of birds, but marvelous views of various swallows and multiple Ospreys.
  7. **Jerusalem Marsh and Galilee:** deafening clapping from a Clapper Rail, but not a feather to be seen!
  8. **Richmond Turf Farms:** five Greater Yellowlegs, but no other shorebirds “of note.”
  9. **Carolina Management Area and White Brook Fish Hatchery:** escaping the wind, lots of warblers by voice, and wonderful views of a Broad-winged Hawk soaring overhead and a very “nesty” male Red-breasted Nuthatch. Upon departure, amazing daytime views of a healthy adult **Gray Fox** on King’s Factory Road.
  10. **Point Judith:** a lovely sunset, gonzo surfers, gannets, and five **Manx Shearwaters** to end the day.
- A total for the day of **104 species!**

Geoff LeBaron

#### **May 24, 2008. Poor Man’s Monhegan.**

**Bob Bieda**, Al Richards, Henry Lappen and David Peake-Jones took a trip to Plum Island and environs. Henry, after being forced to participate in the artery-clogging breakfast at the local McDonalds, made perhaps the most premature pre-supper enquiry in the history of HBC when he piped plaintively, “Where will we be having dinner?”

We began at the Newburyport marina, where a covey of Brant made an impressive show on the shore, matched by impressive numbers of shorebirds fossicking over the exposed mudflats in the Merrimack estuary. They included large numbers of Least Sandpipers, some Semi-palmated, and a liberal sprinkling of **White-rumped Sandpipers**, and dark-bellied Dunlin. We went on to Plum Island, where Blackpoll and Nashville Warblers sang from behind the Lot 1 bathrooms, and a **Brown Thrasher** made a brief cameo! A **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** flitted amongst the tussocks of the saltmarsh, and the salt pannes managed to produce a couple of Gadwall.

Moving on to Hellcat, we found a **Canada Warbler** sporting in a suitable tangle close to the edge of the marsh. From the edge of the reeds (site of the former blind), we listened indolently to the frenetic chittering of a myriad of **Marsh Wrens**, some of which also allowed themselves to be seen, and waited stubbornly for some exotic thing to materialize amongst the silent cat-tails. Wonder of wonders, things did. A **Virginia Rail** appeared briefly, as did a **Blue-winged Teal**. Finally, a crowning piece of good fortune: a **Least Bittern** forsook the depths of the reeds for a cinnamon-flashing moment, before vanishing into the inscrutable depths again.

Proceeding down the island a little, we found Osprey nesting at the pines, and a **Great Horned Owl** sharing a nest with a very large downy chick. From here, we made our way to Pikuls farm, for perhaps our most exotic birds of the day: at least four pairs of **Wilson’s Phalaropes**. These delicate and fastidious little shorebirds reverse the typical pattern of sexual dimorphism and life history. Males are comparatively drab, and do the bulk of the care-taking for eggs and young. The striking females, with their chestnut striping, cut an impressive dash in the shallow flooded fields of the farm.

Not content with these birds, we rounded out the day with a visit to some nearby wet meadows, where some thirty or forty **Glossy Ibis** probed the mud for whatever delicacies they could find. When we eventually tallied the day at a nearby restaurant, we found ninety five species on the list. Poor we were in pocket, but not in experience!

David Peake-Jones

### **An urgent appeal !!**

**Wanted:** birders to participate in an affordable trip to the headwaters of the Connecticut River, with the chance to see a myriad of breeding neo-tropical migrants, and boreal specialties.

Just such an opportunity is afforded by this year's HBC trip to Connecticut Lakes, but the trip is desperately short of participants!! Only you can correct this state of affairs!! ***If you are certain that you would like to go, please contact David Peake-Jones before the end of Thursday, June 5.***

### **Connecticut Lakes, New Hampshire.**

**Friday, June 20 – Sunday June 23, 2008.**

**Mike Locher** and **David Peake-Jones** will lead 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**.

**Cost estimate is \$150, not including food and transport. Car pooling will occur from the valley!!**

Please contact David Peake-Jones (413 529 9541; [davidpj@the-spa.com](mailto:davidpj@the-spa.com)) IMMEDIATELY for further information or to sign up. **The deadline is Thursday, June 5.**

### **Coming Up**

**Saturday, June 14. Hammonasset Beach State Park, CT.** All day. Betsy Higgins goes to the coast of Connecticut to find sparrows, rails, and other seaside denizens. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for meeting time and place as the date approaches. (E)

**Sunday, June 15. West Quabbin ramble.** Half day. Dave Gross offers a trip from Pelham into the Quabbin and will be birding and hiking through blooming Mountain Laurel. Contact David (413-253-2897) for further details. (M)

**Saturday, June 21. October Mt. State Forest.** Half day. Ed Neumuth goes where no HBC trip leader has gone before (at least, in recent memory). Recent work in the area has provided excellent habitat for Mourning Warblers. Call Ed (413-623-0186 or 413-884-4961) for meeting information. (E)

**Friday, June 20 - Sunday, June 22. Connecticut Lakes, NH.** Overnight trip. David Peake-Jones and Mike Locher head to the boreal forests of 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)

*Coming Field Trips (continued)*

**Rescheduled**

**Saturday, August 2. New South Beach, I.** All day. David Peake-Jones goes looking for early migrating shorebirds, especially Red Knots. Bring a lunch, a jacket, and \$20 for the boat ride. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (M)

**Rescheduled**

**Saturday, August 30. 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)

**Next Year**

**In September, 2008, Hampshire Bird Club will be co-sponsoring a walk in the East Meadows with our friends at Valley Land Fund.** The walk will likely be followed by an **Open House** at the new Valley Land Fund office in Northampton, featuring a **continental breakfast**.

Now, if you are anything like me, the word “breakfast” now has you reaching for the calendar, and drawing some representation of a bird sitting on a donut over the whole mid-September weekend, but there is perhaps a broader reason for interest here (not that one is necessarily required). We, as birders, will not only have the usual opportunity to indulge in our peculiar passion for the fall migration, but will also give us a chance to share our interest in the meadows and their habitats with members of the VLF and interested public.

The date has yet to be finalized, but will likely be mid-September. I encourage all in the Hampshire Bird Club to consider participating in this effort to broaden our involvement in the valley conservation scene. Watch the September newsletter and Fall Field Trip Schedule for further details.

**DA BOARD**

After a pitched battle at the May meeting, “Swift-boating” of alternate candidates, ballot-rigging, allegations of voter fraud, and calls for the votes of members who have relocated to Florida and Michigan, the following were elected to office for the 2008-2009 club year, which begins at some murky time over the summer.

**President:** Scott Surner

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

**Treasurer:** Janice Jorgensen

**Membership Secretary:** Sue Emerson

**Communications Secretary:** Elissa Rubinstein

**Members-at-Large:** David Gross, Mike Locher, Dennis McKenna, Lisa Rock, Jaap van Heerden, and Joe Wicinski.

Please join me in thanking the following for their wonderful service to HBC:

**David Gross** (as President), **Bruce Callahan** (member-at-large), and **Scott Surner** (member-at -large).

## ANNIVERSARY

### **HBC 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary “Club Read”: Scott Weidensaul’s *Return to Wild America*.**

Fifty years after Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher’s classic birding adventure, *Wild America*, Scott Weidensaul revisited their route and investigated the status of birds and habitats around the U.S. We will hold three discussions (or more depending on member interest) on different sections of this book to focus on a specific conservation issue and share member’s experiences. This is a wonderful opportunity to prepare for Weidensaul’s visit to the HBC in March! **Copies of the book will be available for purchase at the September meeting.**

*Come September, preparations for the anniversary will kick into high gear. Stay tuned!!*

## LIBRARY

We now subscribe to the **Bird Observer of Massachusetts**. It's a New England-based bimonthly journal for birders, with sightings from the last few months and articles of interest on various topics. We also have a new book: ***"The Race to Save the Lord God Bird"***, by Phillip Hoose, about the search for the Ivory Billed Woodpecker. Check them out!

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**.

Henry

## ATLAS (shrugged)

Great stories are coming in. Some are informative ("I used google earth pictures to plan ways to get into - and out of - a wetland I had never visited"); some useful ("I can help on Sunday morning"); and at least one indicate major hallucinations ("attached is a picture of a Canada Goose nesting in a Heron rookery 30 feet above the water").

And all the worry about safe dates is (almost) behind us. The last safe date (Blackpoll Warbler and Cedar Waxwing) is June 10th. Remember you can ignore safe dates for "C" and all COfirmated codes.

Feeling left out, guilty, bored or kind and considerate? No problem, there are still 9 blocks available. See Mary Alice at the June meeting, or contact her ([mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu](mailto:mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu)) even if you can only do ONE MORNING of atlasing.

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**Citizen Science. Monarch Caterpillar Research Project:** *Ken Lindsay*

Sunday, June 15, 2008, 1:30 to 3 p.m.

**Plants of Barton’s Cove:** *Roland "Boot" Boutwell*

Co-sponsored by the New England Wildflower Society

Sunday, July 6, 2008, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

*Hitchcock Programs (continued)*

**Responding to the Natural Landscape:** *Barbara Milot*

Co-sponsored by the New England Wildflower Society

Thursdays, July 10, 17, and 24, 2008, 9 to 11:30 a.m.

**Connecticut Valley Wild Edibles:** *Russ Cohen*

Co-sponsored by the New England Wildflower Society. Held at the Nasami Farm, Whately

Sunday, July 13, 2008, 2 to 5 p.m.

**Quigong (Chi Kung) [Summer series]:** *Rema Boscov,*

Sundays, July 13 to August 24, 2008, 8:30 to 9:45 a.m.

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

## **Boreal Birds Initiative**

The spring migration is winding up, and, as June begins, so do the breeding cycles of most of the neo-tropical migrants. I'd like to encourage you to support a petition to protect the primary breeding grounds for countless thousands of these migratory birds - Canada's boreal forest. Several Canadian conservation organizations are spearheading the Save Our Boreal Birds campaign, which is calling on the Canadian government to protect more of the boreal forest: North America's bird nursery.

The Save Our Boreal Birds web site is: <http://www.saveourborealbirds.org/>. This site contains information on the importance of the boreal forest region to waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds; details threats to Canada's boreal forest; lists everyday actions to help protect the boreal; and contains the on-line petition letter to be sent to Canada's prime minister. I encourage you to join the thousands of people who have already signed the petition, and pass the link along to a friend!

Matthew Medler. Science Coordinator  
Boreal Songbird Initiative  
[matthewmedler@borealbirds.org](mailto:matthewmedler@borealbirds.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 all till September.  
Until then, talk softly and carry a big scope!

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

My atlas notebook from July 3 this year has a terse entry on one of the weather-beaten pages: "Otters w E Kingbird." That morning, I was sitting quietly on an old stone wall on the shores of a beaver marsh in the Hiram H Fox WMA in Worthington, sure that the Great-crested Flycatcher I had heard ten minutes ago would give me a sign of breeding activity, or that the Northern Flicker hanging around would betray a nest full of begging young. But if there were avian nuptials or child-rearing in progress that morning, they were proceeding clandestinely, and I had breakfast on my mind as I prepared to leave. Then a commotion amongst the branches of a fallen tree in the water made me sit down and watch some more.

Eventually, a family of otters moved out into open water and hunted their leisurely, sinuous way across the pond in front of me. It was so quiet, I could hear little barks and other cries which I assume helped the family stay in contact. As the otters moved into a sun-dappled clearing in the marsh, they were suddenly beset from above by what must have seemed like a feathered whirlwind. The leading otter ducked under in alarm as, silhouetted in the morning light, a pair of Eastern Kingbirds, descended upon the intruder and began flailing furiously at its head with their wings and beaks. This, no doubt, in defense of a nest, and notwithstanding the fact that otters cannot climb trees. The other otters, perhaps amused, detoured patiently around this assault scene, as the offending otter beat a hasty retreat, leaving the kingbirds to re-order their rumpled plumages and inflamed tempers. Quiet returned, with no sign of what had transpired. Atlasing is hard work, and often frustrating, but by standing still in quiet places, we may brush against a thread of nature's web, and feel the tremulous joy of life itself beneath our fingers.

Many of us have completed another year of participation in the Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas, and are perhaps looking forward to some recreational birding. Perhaps we had our nature's web moment while resting in the veggie patch or hammocking by a breezy lake, or waiting for AAA to find the right rest area. In any case, the shorebird migration is in full swing, the nighthawks are on their way, and the hawks are waiting in the wings. Time for HBC to swing back into action!

**This is our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary**, and in honor of that milestone we hope to bring our usual high quality monthly programs to the valley, along with some big names to provide a celebratory flourish. Plans are already afoot for a big sit, an HBC "club read", some monumental field trips, and more. There is more information on the pages that follow. Memberships are the financial engine that makes all our endeavours possible. Please renew yours as soon as possible or join us for the first time. Here we go!

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE BY SEPTEMBER 30!**

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

*Here's the rest of your "to-do" list for this month:*

don't forget the **Release** form, also appended to this newsletter ,  
sign up for the **Rare Bird Alert** (RBA) if you wish. (form included),  
plan your **September field trips** (Fall Field Trip Schedule included)

*(Program information is on the next page)*

**NEXT PROGRAM**

**Monday, September 8 at 7:30 PM**

**David Spector** muses on **Ralph Ellison's Invisible Bird Literature**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

**David Spector** is a past president of the Hitchcock Center in Amherst and has been a member of the Hampshire Bird Club since its first meeting. He teaches biology at Central Connecticut State College. More importantly, Dave has a restless mind and eclectic interests in science and literature. He finds connections within the art, literature, and scientific study of birds that bring ornithology to vivid life. This with a dry and



penetrating sense of humor that spares few but maligns none. He is also the progenitor of the loudest recorded owl calls ever heard on the Christmas Count.

## PROGRAMS SCHEDULED

<b>October 20, 2008</b>	<b>Chan Robbins</b>	Wintering with the Neotropical Migrants.
<b>November 10, 2008</b>	<b>Norman Smith</b>	From Snowy Owls to Saw-whet Owls.
<b>December 8, 2008</b>	n/a	HBC Members' Meeting—Club Remembrances
<b>January 12, 2009</b>	<b>Don Kroodsma</b>	to be announced
<b>February 9, 2009</b>	<b>Mark Lynch/Sheila Carroll</b>	Boids and Ahrt
<b>March 9, 2009</b>	<b>Scott Weidensaul</b>	Return to Wild America.
<b>April 13, 2009</b>	<b>John Van de Graaff</b>	to be announced
<b>May 11, 2009</b>	<b>Susan Smith</b>	Chickadee Research.
<b>June 8, 2009</b>	<b>Kenn Kaufman</b>	Wings of the Imagination; Why we need birds.

## HBC NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ON-LINE

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?”

The newsletter is posted on the HBC website. Participants receive an email notification, whereupon they can visit [www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org) to view and/or download the newsletter from the website at their leisure. You need to give us an email address on the membership form in order to get the on-line 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.

### 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.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### Monhegan Island. May 23-26 (Memorial Day Weekend), 2008

The word that best describes our trip this year is “sweet.” Sweet our assemblage consisting of about 2/3 repeating participants (Betsy and Isabel Higgins, Shirley Smigel, Bruce Hart, Ilene Goldstein, Ed Olmstead, Lou Peugh, Marcia Merithew and myself), and 1/3 new visitors (Nancy Goodman and Mike Kotarba, Judith Davidoff, and Donna Rickerby). Sweet our conviviality, solicitousness and appreciation (yes, and sweet the leadership cooperation between Betsy and me). Sweet the weather (sunny and cool, even with a few quick, early squalls). Sweet the boat rides (including perfect visibility for the trip to Eastern Egg Rock: the sea was like a large quiet lake). And yes, sweet the birds, even more in the array of wowee-zowees than in the near-record 120 species seen.

For the sake of brevity, I will mention just the highlights. Before we reached the island, many of us had a good look at **Sooty Shearwater** going by. On the island, my third bird was a **Sandhill Crane**, seen in perfect profile on a high horizon line at some distance. With Bruce's telescope we could all see its red forehead, golden eye, and the sky through its prominent nostrils: then it flew right over us. My fifth species was a **White-winged Dove** flying by, which perched moments later, allowing us all to see it well, and some of us to hear it calling. My sixth bird on the island, spotted by Betsy Higgins, turned out to be an **Orange-crowned Warbler**. Later, after I had given myself up as "Prothonotary-cursed", we all had a great look at a **Prothonotary Warbler**.

Marcia, Donna and a few others had a good look at a **Summer Tanager**. Betsy and I found a classic, eensy, trim beauty of a spring **Clay-colored Sparrow**. On the puffin trip, I called a full-summer plumaged **Pacific Loon**, which was also seen by Betsy. The self-same Betsy then found a summer-plumaged, black **Black Tern** sitting on Eastern Egg Rock, which we all saw, and which was a new bird for the boat captain. Sol Satin, club member but independent *bon vivant*, had previously seen this bird in flight. Also on the puffin trip we saw a lotta puffin (? plural for puffins), **Arctic Terns**, **Roseate Terns**, and Laughing Gulls, all giving rather graphic evidence of their current interest in breeding.

What a funny place. We saw a Clay-colored Sparrow before we saw our first Chipping Sparrow, no thrushes, save perhaps for one Veery, almost no *Empidonax* flycatchers. And, a tiny alas, Shirley and Isabel missed a Yellow-headed Blackbird at a feeder by just few minutes: a bird none of us ever did see.

The island spread its wings and we all fell under its spell.....

Andrew Magee

## COMING FIELD TRIPS

*(Please see the Fall Field Trip Schedule enclosed)*

### A Spectacle of Wings: Photographs by Rosalie Winard

*Much heralded photographic portraits of birds in the wild.*

at Mt. Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley

from September 9 – December 14, 2008

*featuring*

*"An Itinerant Photographer of the Wetlands"*

**(an opening lecture by the artist, with a reception and book-signing to follow)**

on Thursday, October 16, 5:00 PM

at Gamble Auditorium, Lower Lake Road, South Hadley MA

**Admission to both lecture and Exhibition is free. Donation suggested.**

For more information, visit [www.mtholyoke.edu/go/artmuseum](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/go/artmuseum) or call 413-538-3185

## 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

### RAFFLE RAFFLE RAFFLE RAFFLE RAFFLE RAFFLE

To raise money toward our anniversary year, the HBC will be conducting a raffle. The prize, donated by an HBC member, is a **rare print after John James Audubon by J. T. Bowen: Townsend's Cormorant, Plate 418 from *Birds of America***. This hand colored lithograph, circa 1845, was part of a series by James Bowen who received permission from Audubon to reproduce his engravings in lithography in a smaller size than the original series. A representative from Christie's has valued this print at \$500.

Raffle tickets will be on sale for \$10 each at our Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. meetings. The print will be available for viewing at each of these meetings. The drawing will take place at our December 8<sup>th</sup> members' meeting. If you would like to purchase tickets at other times or have any questions, please contact Betsy Higgins at 586-7585.

### **www.hampshirebirdclub.org**

As always, the HBC web site has information about upcoming programs, postings of current and past newsletters, and useful links to other birding sites.

All **club officers and activities** chairs can be reached via email that ends in @hampshirebirdclub.org. For example, to ask a question of the president, mail goes to president@hampshirebirdclub.org. All of these new addresses are listed on the "about" link at the HBC web site.

If you have comments or suggestions about the web site, please send them to **webmaster@hampshirebirdclub.org** (who else?).

### **SAVE THE DATE!**

The 75th **Northampton Christmas Count** will be on **Sunday, December 14**. Fine weather has been ordered.

### **25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

#### **"Club Read": Scott Weidensaul's *Return to Wild America*.**

Fifty years after Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher's classic birding adventure, *Wild America*, Scott Weidensaul revisited their route and investigated the status of birds and habitats around the U.S.

We will hold three discussions over the course of several months (or more, depending on member interest) on different sections of this book to focus on a specific conservation issue and share members' experiences. This is a wonderful opportunity to prepare for Weidensaul's visit to the HBC in March! If you have any questions, call Anne Lombard (586-7509) or Elissa Rubinstein (549-5078).

**\*\*Copies of the book will be available for purchase at the September meeting\*\***

That's all till next month.

Until then, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor  
(413) 529 9541

[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto: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: 2008-2009**

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

Name(s):	Please select <b>ONE</b> of the two options below to receive the newsletter:
----------	---

Address:		I will download the newsletter from the HBC Website (club will send monthly reminders)	
City:		Send me the newsletter via US mail	
State:	ZIP:	<b>Please check any activities listed below in</b> <b>Which you would like to participate:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally provide refreshments <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Field Trip Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Lead field trips <input type="checkbox"/> Share information on birding locations <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe)	
Home Phone(s):			
Work Phone(s):			
E-mail(s)			

☐ 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.

**25<sup>th</sup> 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.

\$
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Please choose a level of membership from the options below. **All membership contributions are tax deductible.**

**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

\$
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Pileated Woodpecker @ \$250.00 or more

\$
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Please make checks payable to the <b>Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.</b> and send (with this form) to: <b>Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. P.O. Box 716, Amherst, MA 01004-0716.</b>
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**RELEASE FORM: 2008-2009**

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 2008-2009 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](mailto:skhawk@comcast.net)

### To check various sources on the web:

Go to the HBC website: [www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://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: 2008-2009**

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) \_\_\_\_\_

*Return to HBC, P.O. Box 716, Amherst, MA 01004-0716 or turn in at the September/October meeting.*

## Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Fall Field Trip Schedule, 2008

*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 50¢ per mile, as well as tolls and parking. See 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. However, check all information with the trip leaders.*

### SEPTEMBER

**\*Saturday, September 13. East Meadows: Migrating Warblers.** Morning. Harvey Allen looks for fall migrants (including the elusive Connecticut Warbler) in Northampton's East Meadows. Meet at the public parking lot between Route 9 and the Fairgrounds at 7 a.m. This trip is co-sponsored by the Valley Land Fund. Call Harvey at 413-253-7963 to register or for information. (E)

**\*Sunday, September 14. Hadley/Amherst: Migrants.** Half day. Scott Sumner searches the area around Hadley and Amherst for warblers, vireos, and other fall migrants. This trip will begin at 7 a.m.; call Scott (413-256-5438) to find out where to meet. (E)

**\*Tuesday, September 16. Mount Tom: Hawk Migration.** Half day. Tom Gagnon goes hawk watching at Goat's Peak, at the Mt. Tom State Reservation. Meet at 8:45 a.m. at the old park headquarters, and expect a 20 minute walk to the tower. In the event of rain, the outing will be postponed until Wednesday, September 17. Call Tom (413-584-6353) for information and to register. (E)

**Saturday, September 27. Quabbin: Fall Migrants.** All day. Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien lead this annual trip to the Quabbin to see southbound birds, late season flowers, butterflies, and mammals. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well in advance to register, because participation is limited, and to get meeting information. (M)

### OCTOBER

**Saturday - Sunday, October 11 – October 12. Cape Cod.** Two days. Join Scott Sumner to find shearwaters, jaegers, shorebirds, and migrating landbirds from Chatham to Provincetown on Cape Cod. Participants will need to make their own lodging reservations. This trip is limited to twelve participants, so call Scott (413-256-5438) soon to reserve your space and get further information. (M)

**\*Saturday, October 18. 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 explore the shore of Lake Champlain. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting information. (E)

## NOVEMBER

**\*Saturday, November 8. Berkshire Lakes: Migrating Waterfowl.** All day. Al Richards goes to the lakes and ponds of western Massachusetts to find ducks and other migrating waterfowl. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting details. (E)

**Sunday, November 23. East Quabbin.** All day. Tom Gagnon goes to the east side of the reservoir to see what he can find. You must be a Hampshire Bird Club member to go on this trip. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well in advance to register, because participation is limited, and to get meeting information. (M)

**Friday, November 28. Cape Ann: Turkey Trot.** All day. Al Richards helps you work off those third helpings by birding along the east coast. Expect sea ducks, Purple Sandpipers, a few alcids, and a cool breeze. Bring snacks and warm clothing. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting information. (E)

## DECEMBER

**\*Sunday, December 13. Feast-or-Famine Winter Birding.** Half day. Mike Locher goes west to the almost-boreal habitat around Moran Wildlife Management Area to look for Northern Shrikes, Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, Common Redpolls, crossbills, and other northern species. Meet at Michael's parking area at the Mountain Farms Mall on Route 9 in Hadley at 7:30 a.m. Call Mike (413-585-5864) to register or get further information. (E)





**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
**25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY YEAR**  
[www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)  
Volume 25, No. 2  
**October, 2008**

**In this edition:**

- Our **program** and **field trip information** for this month. Please note that there is an addition to the Fall Field Trip Schedule. **Geoff LeBaron** will be going to **coastal Rhode Island on October 25**. Please see the "Coming Trips" section.
- **Reports** on our outings to Hammonasset, Connecticut Lakes and New South Beach.
- **Sign-up** announcement for a special trip to **Yellowstone** next summer.
- The first installment of a **club history**, written in honor of the anniversary year by Trudy Tynan.
- News about the **anniversary raffle, book read, and big sit**.
- **Christmas Count** reminder.
- **Hitchcock Center** programs.
- Some other items of interest.

I hope you find some of it useful!

**NEXT PROGRAM**  
**Monday, October 20 at 7:30 PM**  
**Chan Robbins on Wintering with the Neotropical Migrants**  
Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Dr Robbins will summarize 20 years of field-work in Central America and the West Indies (primarily Belize, Mexico and Guatemala) by the U S Geological Service, through the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland. USGS ornithologists and volunteer banders visited eight tropical American countries to study habitat use by wintering neotropical migrants, including the effects of habitat fragmentation on migrants and on resident species. They trained local biologists and students to continue these studies on their own and ultimately protect important wildlife habitats.

**Chan Robbins** retired recently from the USGS Patuxent Research Center in Laurel, Maryland after 60 years of work in ornithology and conservation. Chan has devoted his life to the study of migratory birds. A senior author of "The Field Guide to Birds of North America", Robbins is also credited with organizing the North American Breeding Bird Survey, assisting with the Maryland and District of Columbia Breeding Bird Atlas, and writing and editing hundreds of articles in journals and other publications. In addition to his work in Maryland, Robbins has done extensive work in Latin America, studying the many species of birds that migrate thousands of miles annually. Chan is also known for his critical research on the effects of forest fragmentation on bird populations. There is a Website devoted exclusively to this champion of migratory birds. You can visit it at [www.pwrc.usgs.gov/whatsnew/events/robbins/](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/whatsnew/events/robbins/).

**Coming Programs**

**November 10, 2008. Norman Smith.**

**December 8, 2008.**

**January 12, 2009. Don Kroodsma.**

*From Snowy Owls to Saw-whet Owls*

**HBC Members' Meeting—Club Remembrances**

*Book II, or more birdsong, or...*

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE BY SEPTEMBER 30!**

**Send yours in via the membership form which came with the September issue. If you need another form, please visit our Website at [www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org). If you have already renewed, thank you!**

Don't forget the **Release** on the back of the membership form, and sign up for the **Rare Bird Alert (RBA)** if you wish. The form also came with the September issue or is available on the Website.

## **HBC Newsletter Available On-Line**

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?"**

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

### **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.

## **LIBRARY**

We now have Scott Weidensaul's "*Return to Wild America*" in the collection.

**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](http://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**.

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

#### Hammonasset Beach State Park: Saturday, June 14.

**Betsy Higgins** (leader), Joyce Merriam, Janet Merriam Cornell, Elaine Pourinski and Elissa Rubinstein set out under threatening skies for the Connecticut coast where the day remained sunny and warm enough for an after-birding swim in Long Island Sound.

Good views of **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow** and **Seaside Sparrow** (our target birds), a singing **Marsh Wren**, and **Glossy Ibis**. Other highlights were a flock of **Monk Parakeets**, American Oystercatcher, Least Terns nesting on beach, a lone Piping Plover, Surf Scoter, Common Goldeneye, **Little Blue Heron**, many pairs of nesting Osprey, and hordes of Willet (one parent with three babies). Total species seen: 54.

Elissa Rubinstein



#### Connecticut Lakes. June 20 – 22, 2008.

Betsy Higgins, Isabel Higgins, Devorah Levy, Rick McNeil, Elizabeth McAnulty (auxiliary), Janet Merriam Cornell, Joyce Merriam, and David Peake-Jones made their carbon-polluting way to Powderhorn Lodge on picturesque Back Lake in Pittsburg, New Hampshire on a sultry but pleasant Friday morning. Without further ado, we set off up Perry Stream Road. This day, perhaps more than any other, reminded us that birding the north country is as much an auditory as a visual experience. **Northern Waterthrushes** sang from the marshy environs of the stream, and, time and time again, we searched for singing Nashville and Magnolia Warblers, only to continue on with naught but the sound to keep with us. Late this first day, a sound like a House Wren on steroids heralded our first local specialty. We finally tracked the sound to a boisterous family of **Gray Jays** scuffling in a grove of spruce. As evening fell, we heard “Quick, three beers!” and knew this was more than the local bar calling. Again, we had to make do with an audio record of **Olive-sided Flycatcher**.

On Friday evening, we patrolled Moose Alley, and had a wonderful close encounter with a young **moose** that passed very close to the cars before heading off to more secluded habitat.

Saturday morning started well when the Higgins mobile spotted a **Common Snipe** sitting obligingly in a mown section of the Perry Stream fields, right by the road. Two more Gray Jays greeted us as we made our way over East Inlet bridge, but the mornings prize was sitting regally beside the Scott’s Bog road, where the lead car passed it by without a sighting. Luckily, car two were looking in the right place at the right time. A spectacular adult **Great Horned Owl** left its perch by the roadside and flew across the road to a vantage point in a spruce from whence it surveyed us balefully for at least five minutes. We, for our part, surveyed it rapturously, but this seemed to have little effect on the owl.

From mist-enshrouded Scott’s Bog, we car-shuttled back a couple of miles along the road, thus immersing ourselves in the song of Winter Wrens, Purple Finches and other breeding birds from the marsh on the right. We had a close encounter with a soaring raptor which failed to conclusively identify itself clearly. Northern Goshawk remained an intriguing but hypothetical possibility. We searched the brushy old clearcuts of East Inlet Road in vain for unusual woodpeckers, and ended up at a muddy track into what has, in recent years, been the most promising local spot for Spruce Grouse. Flooding over the track made it impossible to penetrate more than a few hundred yards into this mysterious wood, but it did not stop us performing some rather rudimentary grousy calls and wing-claps. To our surprise and delight, there was an answer: three clear and close wing claps. There was no other response to our efforts, but we remain convinced that this was, indeed, a **Spruce Grouse**. We feel privileged to have had even this evidence of such a reclusive bird.

(continues on page 4) ►

### Connecticut Lakes (continued)

Some lovely habitat on Smith Bog Road failed to produce anything new, though we repeated our hilarious grouse pantomime, compete with hiding routines, at some likely looking spruce regrowth. On the way home, we stopped to look at **Cliff Swallows** under the eaves of the Moose Alley icecream shop. On Sunday morning we toured Indian Stream Road which, though it yielded no new birds, was a quiet and scenic. After pack-up and compilation we searched vainly for some further sign of a **Boreal Chickadee** Betsy had located on Beach Road, near the cabins. We had to settle for a pair of loons, one of which carried a dark, downy chick on its back: an iconic and entirely suitable farewell to the lakes for another year. We worked really hard for our **seventy eight species**, and I for one, have been drifting off to sleep in the intervening days with the sound of three wing-claps firing my imagination for next year.

David Peake-Jones



### New South Beach. Saturday, August 2.

David Peake-Jones, Andrew Magee, and Chris Ellison made their way (at a remarkably civilized hour) to meet Sally Hills, Helga Beatty and Priscilla Moor at Outermost Harbor Marine for this year's first shorebirding trip. Having met and donned whatever outlandish level of sun protection each preferred, we climbed aboard one of the sturdy water taxis for the short trip down to the extreme tip of the beach. As we alighted in the shallows, we found the sandy sea bottom covered in tiny, fragile horseshoe crabs. As one who has always wondered why there were so many crab carcasses on the beach, but so few living crabs, it was inspiring to see evidence of these beleaguered animals actually reproducing!

We quickly set about brushing up on the (always rusty) suite of skills required to identify shorebirds, wrestling with the complex variables of size, shape, plumage and behavior. Some peeps lined up cooperatively, allowing us to compare the smaller, warmer-colored, delicately-billed and yellow-legged Least Sandpipers with the larger, grayer, dark-legged Semi-palmated version. We also set ourselves to the task of picking out Tree-, Barn- and Bank Swallows in various stages of development from the numerous swallows plying the air over the grassy flats.

Thus it went, as we patiently picked through the shorebirds arriving on the rising tide. There were portly, sword-billed **Hudsonian Godwits**, sporting the remnants of their barred chestnut waistcoats, and among them, a conspicuously cinnamon **Marbled Godwit**. In amongst the myriads of Short-billed Dowitchers sewing their way along the ever-changing tide line, were some stocky, medium-sized birds with apricot breasts. Though unremarkable, these represented a good proportion of the remaining embattled eastern race of the **Red Knot**. Now, with legislative relief from the over-fishing of horseshoe crabs in Delaware Bay, this tiny band of survivors must literally begin to rebuild the race almost from scratch. It is sobering to reflect that even with the situation in New Jersey improved, these and all shorebirds are still critically threatened by the consequences of global warming.

As we went, we found numerous opportunities to wrangle some less usual birds from the masses of the mundane. A number of sandpipers showed russet highlights on their backs, and, when they obligingly stood next to others, showed longer, more drooped bills than the surrounding Semi-palmated Sandpipers. Thus we exultantly marked down at least three **Western Sandpipers**. Several **Dunlin** were betrayed by dark bellies, and White-rumped Sandpipers were just a little big and long-sterned to hide successfully amongst the other smaller birds. We were treated to close looks at petite Least Terns plying the waters, and, in one case, chasing a Greater-Black-backed Gull away from nesting territories. Amongst our other highlights were sightings of a single **Black Skimmer**, one **Black Tern**, and a **Pectoral Sandpiper**. With nineteen species of shorebirds to our credit, and forty-three species for the day, we retired to the Cream 'n' Cone to dine and wrap up a wonderful day.

David Peake-Jones

## Coming Trips

*Please note: The HBC Field Trip Policy is currently under review. For now, the 2007-2008 policy applies.*

**Saturday - Sunday, October 11 – October 12. Cape Cod.** Two days. Join Scott Surner to find shearwaters, jaegers, shorebirds, and migrating landbirds from Chatham to Provincetown on Cape Cod. Participants will need to make their own lodging reservations. This trip is limited to twelve participants, so call Scott (413-256-5438) soon to reserve your space and get further information. (M)

**\*Saturday, October 18. 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 explore the shore of Lake Champlain. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting information. (E)

### Newly Announced Trip

**\*Saturday, October 25. Coastal Rhode Island.** All day. Join Geoff LeBaron on this trip to Rhode Island to see what's flying along the coast. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop at 6:30 a.m. Call Geoff (413-2689281) to register as the date approaches. (E)

**\*Saturday, November 8. Berkshire Lakes: Migrating Waterfowl.** All day. Al Richards goes to the lakes and ponds of western Massachusetts to find ducks and other migrating waterfowl. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting details. (E)

## OVERNIGHT TRIP

### Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Trip to Wyoming and Montana

**Tuesday, July 21 to Friday, July 31, 2009**

**Co Leaders: Tom Gagnon and Scott Surner**

**Limit of 20 Hampshire Bird Club members on this trip.**

This will not be just a birding field trip. We will be looking at big game mammals, wild flowers (should be at their peak), butterflies and photo options, and visiting 2 or 3 small museums. In fact, we'll time for a couple of photo opportunities and anything else that tweaks our interest. The cost should be approximately \$2,000 PLUS to cover 10 nights of motels (double occupancy) airfare, car rental, gas, leadership fee, club insurance, and a couple of incidentals such as a float trip on the Snake River, and an evening at the theater. Airfare is the hardest to estimate and we have to keep that in mind. We will need to make motel reservations by mid November so we will need a deposit by the end of October to reserve our motels early. Motels fill up VERY EARLY in Jackson. We will be renting cars, four people per car so everyone has their own door to get in and out. We will need to have two drivers per car.

**To register for this trip, please call Tom Gagnon, (584 6353) STARTING on SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13th, 2008.** This should give everyone time to receive their newsletter or read their email and to call me about any questions. If I am not home, please leave your name and telephone number. Tom Gagnon.

## 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!

## 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

### RAFFLE RAFFLE RAFFLE RAFFLE RAFFLE RAFFLE

To raise money toward our anniversary year, the HBC will be conducting a raffle. The prize, donated by an HBC member, is a **rare print after John James Audubon by J. T. Bowen: Townsend's Cormorant, Plate 418 from *Birds of America***. This hand colored lithograph, circa 1845, was part of a series by James Bowen who received permission from Audubon to reproduce his engravings in lithography in a smaller size than the original series. A representative from Christie's has valued this print at \$500.

Raffle tickets will be on sale for \$10 each at our Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. meetings. The print will be available for viewing at each of these meetings. The drawing will take place at our December 8<sup>th</sup> members' meeting. If you would like to purchase tickets at other times or have any questions, please contact Betsy Higgins at 586-7585.



### HBC BOOK DISCUSSION: *Return to Wild America* by Scott Weidensaul.

In 1953, Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher made an epic journey around the United States and published their classic account of that adventure, *Wild America*. Fifty years later, Scott Weidensaul followed in their footsteps to observe changes in bird populations and habitats, and to see if "Wild America" still exists. The result is his book: *Return to Wild America*. We are excited to welcome Scott as our speaker in March, 2009. In honor of that event, we've planned a series of book discussions and look forward to generating some good questions to ask him!

You are welcome to attend any or all of the three sessions outlined below. During each session, we will focus on a specific issue using material from both books, in addition to sharing personal experiences and observations. *Return to Wild America* is recommended reading. All sessions are scheduled for Mondays at the Hitchcock Center, at 7 PM.

**Session 1: Monday, November 3. *Habitat Change and Conservation (Florida)*.**  
(Chapters 4 and 5 in Weidensaul, Chapters 10-12 in Peterson/Fisher)

**Session 2: Monday, January 5. *The Border (Texas and Arizona)*.**  
(Chapters 7 and 9 in Weidensaul; Chapters 17, 19, and 20-21 in Peterson-Fisher)

**Session 3: Monday, March 2. *Species Conservation (California)***  
(Chapter 10 in Weidensaul; Chapter 26 in Peterson/Fisher)

For further information or to sign up, please contact group leaders Anne Lombard (586 7509) or Elissa Rubenstein (549 5078).



### ANNIVERSARY YEAR BIG SIT

**SAVE**



**MAY 17, 2009**

## CHRISTMAS COUNT, 2008

**Northampton Count:** Sunday, December 14

**Quabbin Count:** To Be Announced.

*For further information, watch coming newsletters, or contact Mary Alice Wilson (413 549 1768; [mwilson@k12.phast.umass.edu](mailto:mwilson@k12.phast.umass.edu), Northampton Count) and Scott Surner (413 253 5999; [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com), Quabbin Count).*

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**Fall Birding Sampler:** *Scott Surner.*

Saturday, September 20, 5:30 a.m., all day, Plum Island

Saturday, October 4, 7 a.m. to noon, Local birding

Saturday, November 2, 6 a.m. to 1 p.m., Berkshire Lakes / Worcester Reservoirs

**Amherst Renewable Energy Fair:** *Amherst Energy Task Force.*

Saturday, October 4, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Amherst Town Common

**How To Be A Tourist In Your Own Hometown: A Workshop In Place-Based Writing:** *Kathryn Good-Schiff.*

Sunday, October 5, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Going Towards Green: A Small Business Struggles with Sustainability:** *Dean Cycon of Deans Beans*

Tuesday, October 7, 7 p.m.

**The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Larch Hill English Style x-Country Classic: A Benefit for the Larch Hill Collaborative:** Sunday, October 12 at Bramble Hill Farm, Amherst. Start at noon. Kids' Fun Run (one mile): 11:30 a.m.

**Changing Views of Earth History: Edward Hitchcock and the Dinosaurs:** *Steve Sauter.*

Thursday, October 16, 7 p.m. at the Amherst College Museum of Natural History

**A Glimpse into the Sustainable World Of Two Papua New Guinea Tribes:** *Ziji Beth Goren.*

Saturday, October 18, 2 to 3:30 p.m.

**Solar Energy for Homes or Small Businesses:** *Center for Ecological Technology (CET). Co-sponsored by Amherst Energy Task Force.*

Thursday, October 23, 6 p.m. at Amherst Town Hall

**Autumn on Cape Cod: A Photographic Excursion:** *John Green and Mark Haffey.* Friday, November 7 to Sunday, November 9

**Evergreens Waiting for Snow:** *Ted Watt.*

Sunday, November 9, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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

That's all for this month.

I will leave you in the skillful hands of Trudy Tynan, who has put together the first chapter of an HBC history! Until next time, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)

## HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB HISTORY

### CHAPTER ONE: HATCHING

**By Trudy Tynan**

It all began with a bird, and what a bird! A Great Gray Owl swooped into Hadley around Valentine's Day 1984 and hung around Huntington Road for six weeks. It was featured in local newspapers and became so popular that one local real estate agent even used a photo of *Strix nebulosus* in his display ad with the caption, "I highly recommend HADLEY. I really enjoyed my stay here ... "

"Sally Venman and I are standing there and people are just coming out of the woodwork," Scott Sumner recalled. "We were just chatting. Then we thought: Look at all these people. We should be able to start a bird club and have it be viable and last. Of course, some were non birders, (everyone loves an owl), but there were a lot of birders."

"Sally and I talked about it right there in the field, and it happened quickly," Scott said. The first organizational meetings were all at Sally's house. "I remember the discussions about what to call ourselves," Scott said. "We picked "Hampshire" because we wanted to be inclusive of all the surrounding towns."

Within a few weeks, they had a flyer:

#### *HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB*

*An area bird club (replacing the former Amherst Bird Club) is being organized. Plans are to have monthly programs of interest to birders, both beginners and seasoned; to plan field trips; to form a rare bird alert telephone tree; and to swap bird stories.*

*The plans are to meet on the second Monday of every month during the school year. There will be two meetings this spring – April 9 and May 14 at 7:30 p.m. at the Hitchcock Center. Meetings will resume in September. There will be membership dues of \$7.00 to cover cost of programs, mailings, etc. Included in the \$7.00 is a year's subscription to Bird News of Western Massachusetts.*

*Please pass the word to people we may have missed in trying to throw together a mailing list. Questions or suggestions? Call Scott Sumner at 253-5983 or Sally Venman at 549-1098.*

*Hope to see you on April 9!!!!*

*Scott and Sally*

And we were beating the bushes. David Spector recalled being out in the field when a car pulled up and Sally leaned out the window and reeled him in with: "We're starting a bird club ..."

University of Massachusetts graduate student Dave Nelson gave the first program on "Quabbin Eagle Reintroduction" at the April 9 meeting. Scott followed on May 14 with a presentation on his trip to Churchill, Manitoba. Five days later, Scott led the club's first field trip - to Plum Island on May 19, 1984. By August, the club had 75 charter members; the beginnings of a logo featuring the Pileated Woodpecker, a bird of western Massachusetts; the first of Sally's witty newsletters, and a telephone hotline, the Hampshire Bird Voice, launched with equipment donated by Tom Arny. The club's first annual trip to Monhegan Island was Oct. 6-8, 1984.

Scott was elected president; Cliff Read, vice president; Sally formally became secretary, and Jan Tolhurst, treasurer. Natalie Drake, Jan Ortiz and Marge Tauer rounded out the board. After the September barbeque and party, Don Kroodsma of UMass opened the first full year of programs on Oct. 15 with "Tuning in to the Sounds of Birds," followed by Susan Smith of Mount Holyoke College, with "Flock Switching in Black-capped Chickadees, Jim Cardoza of MassWildlife with "Wild Turkey Restoration," Cliff Read on "Birding Tanzania", Scott on "Birding the Rio Grande" and John Green, naturalist and photographer, on "Birds, Alligators and Habitat of the Everglades." December saw the first annual members' party and slide show.

"We decided early on that our niche was going to be programs," Scott said. "We weren't going to be a club that had dozens and dozens of field trips. We were going to specialize in great programs." **(More Next Month)**





Great Gray Owl. Photo taken by Juan Anthony Roberts

*Hampshire Life 4/26/88*  
 "I highly recommend

**HADLEY** *Town & Country Realtors*

I really enjoyed my stay here ...

the friendly people, the beautiful vistas, (and I understand there are low taxes!).

**IT'S A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE!"**

**HADLEY** — An acre of open sunny land waiting for your garden enhances this 3 bedroom Raised Ranch. Heated with wood in the winter, and cooled with central air conditioning in the summer. The open living room flows into the dining area which leads to the deck. On the lower level is a large family room, utility area and a two car garage. Convenient location.

**\$76,500.**

**HADLEY** — Quality built 30 year old Tri-Level. Lovely hardwood floors, great fireplace, hot water heating system, newly re-modeled kitchen. The cathedral ceiling in the living room gives it a contemporary note. Minutes to I-91 and UMass. **\$71,900.**

## CHARTER MEMBERS

John C. Adams, Amherst  
 Barbara Alfange, Leverett  
 Harvey Allen, Amherst  
 Ruth Allen, Amherst  
 Tom Army, Amherst  
 Dorothy Barnes, Hadley,  
 William & Mary Bleckwehl,  
 Sunderland  
 Gerald Bozzo, Florence  
 Anne G. Cann, Amherst  
 Laurie Clark, Amherst  
 Lou Currin, Amherst  
 Verda Dale, Amherst  
 Dierdre L. Davis, Pelham  
 Natalie Drake, Amherst  
 Madilyn Engvall, New Salem  
 Bill Esselen, Amherst  
 Edith Field, Amherst  
 Elizabeth Henry Flint,  
 Northampton  
 Marilyn Gonter, Amherst  
 Bob & Tomoko Graham,  
 Northampton  
 John Green, Amherst  
 Janet Grenzke, Hatfield  
 Sue & John Hagberg,  
 South Hadley  
 Tod Highsmith, Amherst  
 Ann Inglis, Amherst  
 Sat Want S. Khalsa, Leverett  
 Don Kroodsma, Amherst  
 Suzanne M.B-Kielbasa, Amherst

Val Mailler, Hadley  
 Jim & Eric Marcum, Amherst  
 Julie Michaels, Williamsburg  
 Deedee Minear, Amherst  
 Kim Noyes, Hadley  
 Blanche Orrell, Pelham  
 Janet Ortiz, Amherst  
 Chris Page, Belchertown  
 Sheila G. Pelczarski, Montague  
 Mark Picard, Hatfield  
 Margaret Price, Amherst  
 Clif Read, Amherst  
 The Rhodes, Amherst  
 Henry Ritzer, Amherst  
 Hope Robson, Amherst  
 Toby Rockwell, Hatfield  
 Sarah & Richard  
 Sapon-White, Northampton  
 Ray Saul, Amherst  
 Marcy Schwartz, Belchertown  
 Karen Simon, Northampton  
 Barbara E. Smith, Hadley  
 David Spector, Amherst  
 David Stemple, Hatfield  
 Glen Stowell, Hadley  
 Scott Sumner, Amherst  
 Marge Tauer, Amherst  
 Julie Taylor, Shutesbury  
 Hans Teensma, Williamsburg  
 Lauren Kielbasa Therlensen,  
 Williamsburg

Bob Miller & Sarah Thompson-  
 Miller, South Hadley  
 Barbara Tiffany, Amherst  
 Jan Tolhurst, Amherst  
 Elaine Ulman, Northampton  
 Sally Venman, Amherst  
 Arleen Wall, Amherst  
 Pete Westover, Leverett  
 David & Peter Yaukey, Amherst  
 Howard Ziff, Amherst





# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

[www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)

Volume 25, No. 3

**November, 2008**

## In this edition:

- our **program** introduction for this month and the **coming programs**,
- **trip reports** and the **coming trips**,
- last chance to sign **up for Yellowstone next summer**,
- **the Christmas Count**,
- **Hitchcock Programs**, and
- some **miscellaneous items** which may be of interest.

I hope you find some of it useful!

## NEXT PROGRAM

**Monday, November 10 at 7:30 PM**

**Norman Smith: From Snowy Owls to Saw-Whet Owls**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Since 1981, Norman Smith has spent countless days and nights, in every imaginable weather condition, observing, capturing, banding and color marking Snowy Owls at Logan International Airport. Data has been collected on roosting, hunting and behavior while on their wintering grounds. Most recently satellite transmitters have been attached to owls to learn more about their movements. Find out what has been learned to date, what questions remain and how this project developed to include research on Saw-whet Owls.

**Norman Smith** is a self-taught naturalist who has worked for the Massachusetts Audubon Society since 1974. His current position is Director of Blue Hills Trailside Museum and Chickatawbut Hill Education Center in Milton, Massachusetts.

Norman has studied birds of prey for over 30 years, including rehabilitating the injured and successfully fostering over 800 orphaned hawk and owl chicks into adoptive nests. His ongoing long-term projects include trapping and banding migrating hawks and owls in the Blue Hills Reservation, banding nestling hawks and owls, and doing research on snowy owls and other raptors wintering at Boston's Logan International Airport. He has also traveled to Alaska to study snowy owls in their native tundra habitat. His research work has been published in *National Geographic*, *National Wildlife*, *Ranger Rick*, *Yankee*, *Massachusetts Wildlife*, *Bird Observer*, *Birding*, *Sanctuary*, *Geo*, *Nature*, *Grolier Encyclopedia*, *Owls of the Northern Hemisphere* and *Owls of the World*.

His mission is to use the information gathered from his research to stimulate a passion in everyone he meets to help us better understand, appreciate and care for this world in which we live.

## COMING PROGRAMS

**December 8, 2008.**

HBC Members' Meeting—Club Remembrances

**January 12, 2009.**

**Don Kroodsma**

Book II, or more birdsong, or...

**February 9, 2009**

**Mark Lynch/Sheila Carroll**

Boids and Ahrt

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### Quabbin (Prescott Peninsula): October 5, 2008.

**Tom Gagnon and Larry Therrien** rescheduled this trip following postponement due to rain and wind on the originally scheduled day. October 5th started cool with a few clouds but ended sunny and pleasant. Fifteen club members met at the Pelham overlook at dawn where a pair of Common Ravens called back and forth. The next stop was at Gate 22 with a trip down to the water. The road down held nice groups of warblers and sparrows including a couple **Nashville Warblers** among the six species of warblers. In addition we managed to hear a **Winter Wren** and view a **Swainson's Thrush**. At the Reservoir we had a Common Loon and a distant Bald Eagle. We then traveled to Gate 20 for our trip down Prescott Peninsula. At one of our first stops we had beautiful looks at a low flying **Peregrine Falcon**, the first of three for the day. The migration of raptors was much in evidence as we had a total of ten raptor species. Several areas turned up some nice varieties of migrants including eleven species of warbler including **Tennessee**, Chestnut Sided, and Northern Parula. We also had **Scarlet Tanager**, **Philadelphia Vireo**, **Lincoln's Sparrow** and additional Winter Wrens plus several Wild Turkeys and Ruffed Grouse with one grouse drumming. In total, we found 66 species of birds. Although we missed any large mammals, we did find a total of **35 Little Brown Bats** roosting in their usual spot at the observatory.

Larry Therrien

### Coastal Rhode Island. October 25, 2008.

**Geoff LeBaron**, Trudy Tynan, Bob Bieda, and Chris Ellison visited now well-trodden club haunts along the shore of our "petite southern neighbor." At Misquamicut and Watch Hill, thousands of Double-crested Cormorants milling about made an interesting spectacle, and there was a group of handsome Greater Yellowlegs at the Weekapaug Breachway. The group adjourned (rather unusually) to Point Judith to take advantage of the strong south-easterly winds. Numerous **Northern Gannets** plied the windswept waters offshore, indulging themselves in a couple of neat feeding frenzies while we watched, and a possible jaeger taunted us at about "twice the limit of conjecture."

At the previously unvisited Sodco turf farms in North Kingstown, there was a large flock of **American Pipits** and many distant birds of prey. At Ninigret, there was a Myrtle Warbler convention, with a Sharp-shinned Hawk waiting to dine on one of the attendees while at Firehouse Pond in Charlestown we found lots of **Green-winged Teal** and a **Northern Pintail**. At the parking lot close to Charlestown Breachway, we had astonishing looks at four **Snow Buntings**, including an impossibly perfect fresh-winter-plumage male. In the surf there were four **Red-throated Loons** and on the breakwater, an **Iceland Gull**.

At Trustom Pond and Moonstone Beach there was a nice selection of land birds in the thickets and, amongst the hordes of cormorants on the pond, a male **Ruddy Duck** bravely choosing breeding plumage to buck the local trend. The day ended with a reprise of our time at Point Judith, made memorable, not by anything new bird-wise, but by the departure of the sun, always a fitting end to a day of birding.

Geoff LeBaron

### Outer Cape Cod. October 11- 12

Eight members of Hampshire Bird Club led by **Scott Surner** birded outer Cape Cod over a weekend. We also ventured offshore on a Dolphin Fleet whale watch. We finished with 102 species. Really big highlights included **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Rough-legged Hawk** and the **Broad-billed Hummingbird** in Dennis. Other birds of note included Blue-winged Teal, Cory's Shearwater, Greater Shearwater, Black-crowned Night-heron, Bonaparte's Gull, Tennessee Warbler, White-crowned Sparrow, Purple Finch and Pine Siskin.

We birded in Provincetown-Beach Forest, Herring Cove & Whale Watch, Truro-High Head/Eastham-Fort Hill/Coast Guard Beach/Marsh, Dennis & Marstons Mills.

## COMING TRIPS

**\*Saturday, November 8. Berkshire Lakes: Migrating Waterfowl.** All day. Al Richards goes to the lakes and ponds of western Massachusetts to find ducks and other migrating waterfowl. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting details. (E)

**Sunday, November 23. East Quabbin.** All day. Tom Gagnon goes to the east side of the reservoir to see what he can find. You must be a Hampshire Bird Club member to go on this trip. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well in advance to register, because participation is limited, and to get meeting information. (M)

**Friday, November 28. Cape Ann: Turkey Trot.** All day. Al Richards helps you work off those third helpings by birding along the east coast. Expect sea ducks, Purple Sandpipers, a few alcids, and a cool breeze. Bring snacks and warm clothing. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting information.

## LAST CHANCE!!!

**Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Trip to Wyoming and Montana  
Tuesday, July 21 to Friday, July 31, 2009  
Co Leaders: Tom Gagnon and Scott Sumner  
Limit of 20 Hampshire Bird Club members on this trip.**

**Registration closes mid-November.**

This will not be just a birding field trip. We will be looking at big game mammals, wild flowers (should be at their peak), butterflies and photo options, and visiting 2 or 3 small museums. In fact, we may take time for anything that tweaks our interest. The cost should be approximately \$2,000 PLUS to cover 10 nights of motels (double occupancy) airfare, car rental, gas, leadership fee, club insurance, and a couple of incidentals such as a float trip on the Snake River, and an evening at the theater. Airfare is the hardest to estimate and we have to keep that in mind. We will need to make motel reservations by mid November so we will need a deposit by the end of October to reserve our motels early. Motels fill up VERY EARLY in Jackson. We will be renting cars, four people per car so everyone has their own door to get in and out. We will need to have two drivers per car.

*To register for this trip, please call Tom Gagnon, (584 6353). If I am not home, please leave your name and telephone number. Tom Gagnon.*

## 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](http://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: December 14, 2008

Tired of birding with the valley in full leaf? Do you long to bird when you will be mercifully untroubled by Nature's little carbon fixers. Well folks, you are hereby invited to contribute to the noble cause of citizen science in a season when the bare bones of our happy little valley are laid bare, along with the birds which call this halcyon place their home.

Every December, we get together to count all the birds in a circle of radius five miles around the Northampton GPO. The count circle is divided up into smaller areas, each counted by an experienced leader or leaders, with assistants. Groups plan who will participate, for how long, and how to divide up the count area. To take part, all you really need is a willingness to cope with the vagaries of December birding, and a willingness to count everything in a scientific manner. The coordinators can hook you up with a team that needs members in your area. The count culminates in a pot luck and compilation session during which those still standing come together to exult/commiserate and pool results. The sense of camaraderie and shared purpose is palpable and rarely equaled in birding! And you won't feel the blisters till your feet actually thaw, usually only a matter of a few days!

### 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).

### Northampton Christmas Count Bullets

- **Date:** December 14, 2008
- **Information packets for Team Leaders:** handed out at the HBC meeting on December 8, 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

## DECEMBER MEETING SLIDE SHOW

The **December** meeting traditionally has been one with lots of conversation, cookies and our own slides. This year we want to encourage members to bring slides that highlight HBC memories – trips from years past, pictures with members from years ago, and the like. Of course, we also welcome current birding slides as well. As in past years, please limit your show to 10 or fewer slides.

Please send an email confirmation about your slide presentation to either Jaap van Heerden (jvanheerden@hampshirebirdclub.org) or Geoff LeBaron (programs@hampshirebirdclub.org) by 6 PM on Dec. 7. We need to know the format of your slides (35 mm or digital) and, if digital, whether the images are in Powerpoint format or just stand-alone images. If you bring digital images, please have them on a memory stick or CD-ROM disk.

## FLORENCE SAVINGS BANK GRANT PROGRAM

Florence Savings Bank customers can vote for a nonprofit organization to share in \$50,000 to be donated by the bank. The Hampshire Bird Club and the Hitchcock Center for the Environment are both eligible non-profit institutions. Last year only 68 votes were needed to qualify for a grant. If you are an FSB customer, we suggest that you take the time to vote for your favorite non-profit. And we know which one that is, right?

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**Autumn on Cape Cod: A Photographic Excursion.** *John Green and Mark Haffey*

Friday, November 7 to Sunday, November 9

**Evergreens Waiting for Snow.** *Ted Watt*

Sunday, November 9, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Simple Gift Making.**

Saturday, December 6, 10 a.m. to noon

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

## Boreal Bliss

*A conservation decision earlier this year will have long-lasting implications for neo-tropical migrant birds.*

Five million Dark-eyed Juncoes, four million Magnolia Warblers, three million Palm Warblers, and two million Tennessee Warblers, not to mention their countless descendants and millions of birds of other species, got a huge and largely unheralded ticket to the future in early July of this year. On July 14, premier Dalton McGuinty pledged to designate about 55 million acres of boreal forest in Ontario, Canada for permanent conservation, and to require sustainable use plans for almost all the remainder of the boreal ecosystem in that province.

The region to be protected is the size of the United Kingdom. Keeping it ecologically intact is a huge undertaking which, provided the commitment is kept, is arguably the most significant contributions to the conservation of neotropical migratory birds in recent history. Jeff Wells of the Boreal Songbird Initiative speculated that the celebratory response to this announcement may come next summer when the voices of three million Swainson's Thrushes will "*emanate into the sky on a June morning, from the area ....that will be protected.*" What greater serenade is required?

You can read a story from the Toronto Star at [www.thestar.com/article/460305](http://www.thestar.com/article/460305).

## A Spectacle of Wings: Photographs by Rosalie Winard

*Much heralded photographic portraits of birds in the wild.*

from September 9 – December 14, 2008 at Mt. Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley.

**Admission to the exhibition is free. Donation suggested.**

For more information, visit [www.mtholyoke.edu/go/artmuseum](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/go/artmuseum) or call 413-538-3185

## Location, Location, Location!!

*How come some male warblers seem to continue singing, long after they have successfully bred? Dr Kroodsmma would tell us that this singing is vital to the acquisition of song by young warblers. It seems that, in at least one species, these songs are also the cue that second-year birds use to find breeding habitat.*

It has often been assumed that returning second year warblers somehow measure the suitability of the available habitats. Nick Rodenhouse, studying Black-throated Blue Warblers in the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest in New Hampshire, played taped songs of successful males in various habitats after the breeding season had ended. These included habitats such as clear-cuts, which normally do not support B-t Blues, and bear not even a superficial resemblance to suitable habitat. Next season, even the least suitable habitats attracted numerous prospecting B-t Blues, whereas control plots did not.

The conclusion is that, for this species at least, warblers simply prospect for territories in areas where their predecessors have been successful, and it seems that this simple strategy is the most reliable way to find a place to breed.

*Source: Baker, B. "Tuned In" Boston Globe, July 21, 2008.*

## Welcome New Members!

<b>Kevin Bourinot</b>	West Boylston, MA
<b>Judith Espinola &amp; Susan Perry</b>	South Hadley
<b>Martin Espinola</b>	Florence
<b>Stephen Severin</b>	Amherst
<b>Mary Lou &amp; James Splain</b>	Easthampton
<b>Don Taylor</b>	Amherst
<b>Cailin Xu</b>	Amherst
<b>Paul &amp; Victoria Wildman</b>	South Hadley
<b>Charlotte, Paul, Lily &amp; Luc Vesel</b>	Florence

## THANK YOU!

I would like to thank **Sue Emerson** and **Sally Hills** for their help with compiling the October edition of the newsletter.

David Peake-Jones

***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!

I will leave you in the skillful hands of Trudy Tynan, who has put together the second chapter of an HBC history!

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

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## HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB HISTORY

### CHAPTER TWO: Bylaws and the Dead Bird Sheet: 1985-1989

By Trudy Tynan

*Dear Friends:*

*It happened again! I woke up this morning and discovered that it is THE MIDDLE OF AUGUST! No one warned me, no one even suggested to me that summer days were in fact nearing an end. The shock of this realization was quickly followed by the booming voice of reality (sounded amazingly like Scott) saying "Write the Bird Club letter!" So I guess I will put aside my bathing suit, trash novel and wine cooler (for the moment) and get on with it.*

Thus, Sally Venman began her **August 1986** newsletter delightfully dunning us for the \$7 dues. She went on to point out that "last year was a good one" with programs by Seth Kellog, Tom Tynning, Scott Sumner, James Cardoza, Bob Humphrey, Ed Ochowski and Tom Army. Field trips included the annual jaunts to Monhegan (cost \$150) and the Connecticut Lakes, plus day trips to Plum Island, Quabbin, and the South Shore. The club also teamed up with the Allen Bird Club for its first pelagic trip on a 55-foot fishing boat out of Lynn called the "Gusty Gale II." Members also headed to Greenfield to see a European Goldfinch and carpooled to Concord for a Fieldfare, both of which were announced on the Voice of the Hampshire Bird Club. HBC is the only bird club in Massachusetts to have its own recorded telephone bulletin board.

**1986-87** started fast with programs by Mark Lynch on "Birds of Eastern Australia," John Green on "The Gannets of Bonaventure," Frank Mantlik on "A Year in the Life of a Birder." Susan Smith of Mount Holyoke College returned with a follow up on her chickadee research, Curtice Griffen of the UMass Dept. of Forestry and Wildlife spoke on "Breeding Strategies of the Galapagos and Hawaiian Hawks," Nat Drake of the Organization for Tropical Studies on "Costa Rica," and former Loon Ranger George Flores on "Amazonian Peru."

In addition to what have now become traditional field trips, Allen Richards led his first "Poor Man's Monhegan" jaunt to Plum Island in May. Officers, all of whom were re-elected for the 1987-88 year, were Scott Sumner, president; Jim Marcum, vice president; Sally Venman, secretary; Natalie Drake, treasurer, and board members Tom Army, Jan Ortiz, Marny Price, Marge Tauer, Jan Tolhurst and Jeff Zeyr.

**1987-88** saw the club adopt formal by-laws (on Feb. 8, 1988) and become incorporated as a non-profit in Massachusetts. This after more than six months work by a committee headed by Jim Marcum. The bylaws still define us: ***The first purpose of the HBC is to help its members enjoy birding. The second purpose is to educate its members and others about birds and bird watching.*** In May, the nominating committee presented its first slate of officers under the bylaws and immediately suggested an amendment increasing the size of the board to 10. *In preparing this slate, the nominating committee realized that it had a real problem: too many enthusiastic and able people*, Sally noted. The club also began a project, headed by Jan Ortiz, to install bird feeders and provide informational slide shows at local nursing homes and drew up a feeder checklist of 29 birds.

Laurie MacIvor, a UMass grad student, opened the year's programs with a review of "Piping Plover Recovery in Massachusetts," followed by UMass professor Don Kroodsma on "Your Check List \_ Is it for Real? or What is a Species Anyway," Eleanor Ellis and Olympia LeBeau on "Starting Bluebird Trails," Tim Armstrong, another UMass grad student, on "Birds and Mammals of Kenya," Mark Lynch and Sheila Carrol on "Birds of England and Scotland," Carolyn Boardman of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on "Hérons in Western Massachusetts," and David Spector on "Sweet, Sweet, Sweet, Sweeter than Sweet: The Life and Songs of the Yellow Warbler."

May was especially busy as the club sponsored 10 field trips, including six Warbler Walks in Wildwood Cemetery in Amherst, and the annual Monhegan Island jaunt. The club also made a winter excursion to the Moran Wildlife Management Area in Windsor and a June tour of Mt. Greylock. We participated in the Winter Raptor Survey and the

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Christmas Bird Count, or as Sally put it: *Start training your body NOW to face the rigors of the winter owl search; the numbness of the trudge through open fields at dawn listening for "chips" from birds much too smart to be wasting energy on bi-peds with binocular eyes in 20 degree weather; and, of course, the real intellectual challenge of accurate tabulation of thousands of starlings coming in for evening roost.*

**1988-89** saw passage of the bylaw amendment increasing the board members to five (on Sept. 23, 1988) and formal adoption of our logo, designed by Chris Page, featuring a pileated woodpecker, which was immediately made into decals. The club donated seven bird feeders to the Hitchcock Center, with thanks for continuing to host our meetings, and the Amherst Conservation Commission requested the club's help in locating raptor nests and ponds used by waterfowl and wading birds. The number of area nursing homes involved in the club's feeder and slideshow project rose to seven.

The fat membership packet included Rare Bird Alert phone numbers across the U.S. and Canada, the club's Field Trip Policy, information on birding courses at the Hitchcock Center, the HBC Feeder Checklist and the famous Dead Bird Sheet. For years, new HBC recruits wondered how they had managed to live without the DBS, which opened enticingly: ***Does anybody have a use for this dead bird? Yes!*** And went on to explain: *Dead birds are used in scientific collections for research and teaching purposes. The best way to preserve a dead bird until its final preparation as a specimen is to put it in a well-closed plastic bag and freeze it. Write down the date the bird was found, the location, the collector and circumstances of collection. It is illegal to keep dead or live birds without appropriate permits and it is illegal to shoot migrant birds without a permit.*

Roger Everett, photographer and author of *Wading and Shorebirds*, opened the year's program with "Birds of Cape Cod," followed by Cindy Staicer, a UMass grad student conducting in the first long term study of Adelaide's Warbler, on "Resident and Migrant Warblers of Puerto Rico," Scott Sumner on "Newfoundland – Land of Cod Tongue and Ptarmigan," Mark Lynch and Sheila Carrol on "The Northern Territory of Australia" where the top field hazard was the crocodile, and Ted Levin, photographer and author of *Backtracking: the Way of a Naturalist*, on "Life in the Arid Lands" based on his assignment in the South Dakota prairie for *National Geographic*. Clif Read, who accompanied Peter Alden on one of the first birding trips up the Gambia River, spoke on "Senegal and Gambia," and Rebecca Field, of the Mass. Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, gave a presentation on "Birds, Biologists, Blizzards and Bears: Avian Studies on Northern Coast of Alaska," which included preliminary results of her study on the impacts of oil exploration on the North Slope.

In May, the club teamed up with Manomet Observatory and Hampshire College to cosponsor a presentation by Trevor Lloyd-Evans of Manomet at Hampshire College on songbird migration and the impact of forestry on population declines. Lloyd-Evans speech was one of the rare times the club has charged to hear a speaker with a \$3 cost for members and \$4 for the general public.

New field trips included a weekend trip to Cape May, N.J., led by David Spector and Todd Highsmith a trip to Woodstock, Vt., and the Raptor Rehabilitation Center led by Jan Ortiz, while Jim Marcum headed to Salem, Conn., in search of Hooded, Cerulean and Worm-eating Warblers.

Jim Marcum took over as president of the club, Jan Ortiz became vice president, Sally Venman continued as secretary, Allan Richards became treasurer and Magda Becher, Bob Bieda and David Spector were elected to the board.



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Volume 25, No. 4  
**December, 2008**  
[www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)

## PROGRAMS

**Monday, December 8 at 7:30 PM**

### **Members Meeting: Anniversary Reflections**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

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

The **December Meeting** has traditionally involved lots of conversation, cookies and our own slides. This year we want to encourage members to bring slides that highlight HBC memories – trips from years past, pictures with members from years ago, and the like. Of course, we also welcome current birding slides as well. As in past years, please limit your show to 10 or fewer slides.

### **To Share Your Memories**

#### **By 6 PM on December 7:**

Please send an email confirmation about your slide presentation to either **Jaap van Heerden** ([jvanheerden@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:jvanheerden@hampshirebirdclub.org)) or **Geoff LeBaron** ([programs@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:programs@hampshirebirdclub.org)).

#### **We Need to Know:**

- Are your slides digital or 35 mm format?,
- If digital, are the images in Powerpoint format or just stand-alone images?  
(If you bring digital images, please have them on a memory stick or CD-ROM disk).

**See you On December 8!!**

## CHRISTMAS COUNTS

### **Northampton Christmas Count Bullets**

- **Date:** Sunday, December 14, 2008.
- **Potluck Set-Up:** Hitchcock Center, 2 PM.
- **Potluck Supper:** Hitchcock Center, 4:30 PM.
- **Compilation of Results:** Hitchcock Center, 6-7 PM.

### **Quabbin Count Bullets**

- ❖ **Date:** Saturday, December 27, 2008.
- ❖ **Contact:** Scott Turner: [president@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:president@hampshirebirdclub.org); 413 256 5438.

## COMING PROGRAMS

<b>January 12, 2009</b>	<b>Don Kroodsmma</b>	Birdsong By the Seasons.
<b>February 9, 2009</b>	<b>Mark Lynch/Sheila Carroll</b>	Boids and Ahrt.
<b>March 9, 2009</b>	<b>Scott Weidensaul</b>	Return to Wild America.

\*\*\* \*\* 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY \*\*\* \*\*

### RAFFLE, RAFFLE, RAFFLE, RAFFLE, RAFFLE

To raise money toward our anniversary year, the HBC will be conducting a raffle. The prize, donated by an HBC member, is a **rare print after John James Audubon by J. T. Bowen: Townsend's Cormorant, Plate 418 from *Birds of America***. This hand colored lithograph, circa 1845, was part of a series by James Bowen who received permission from Audubon to reproduce his engravings in lithography in a smaller size than the original series. A representative from Christie's has valued this print at \$500.

Please note that the time to purchase tickets for the raffle has been extended. Tickets will now be on sale for \$10 each at the December, January, February and March meetings. The print will be available for viewing at each of these meetings. The raffle will be drawn at the April meeting: the theoretical birthday of the club. If you would like to purchase tickets at other times or have any questions, please contact Betsy Higgins at 586-7585.

### HBC BOOK DISCUSSION

#### *Return to Wild America* by Scott Weidensaul.

In 1953 Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher made an epic journey around the United States and published their classic account of that adventure, *Wild America*. Fifty years later Scott Weidensaul followed in their footsteps. His goal was to observe changes in bird populations and habitats and to see if "wild America" still exists. The result: his thought-provoking book, *Return to Wild America*. We are excited to have Scott Weidensaul, Pulitzer Prize finalist, as our guest speaker in March.

In honor of that event, we've planned a series of book discussions. There was lively participation (and refreshments!) at our first meeting in November. The second will be held on **Monday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at the Hitchcock Center at 7pm.**

During this session we will focus on a specific issue using material from both books, in addition to sharing personal experiences and observations. While it is not necessary to read *Wild America* to participate fully in the discussion, we would encourage anyone who has the interest to do so.

#### **Session #2: "The Border". Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Locale: Texas and Arizona

(Chapters 7 and 9 in Weidensaul; Chapters 17, 19, 20-21 in Peterson/Fisher)

**If you have any questions, please call discussion co-leaders Anne Lombard (586-7509) or Elissa Rubinstein (549-5078). Look forward to seeing you on Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>!**

### FLORENCE SAVINGS BANK GRANT PROGRAM

Florence Savings Bank customers can vote for a nonprofit organization to share in \$50,000 to be donated by the bank. The Hampshire Bird Club and the Hitchcock Center for the Environment are both eligible non-profit institutions. If you are an FSB customer, we ask that you take the time to vote for your favorite non-profit. And we know which one that is, right?

I will leave you in the skillful hands of Trudy Tynan, who has put together the third chapter of an HBC history! Until next month, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor  
529 9541

[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)

## HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB HISTORY

### CHAPTER THREE: Ethics to Woozles 1989-1993

By Trudy Tynan

*The Hampshire Bird Club is a group of people who enjoy watching birds, either as a casual hobby or to the point of an addiction. We are a good source of information for those just getting started or for those who would enjoy knowing more about the natural history of birds. Anyone interested in birding regardless of experience or level of expertise is welcome.*

*We meet monthly, September through June, to hear guest speakers, see slide presentations, and review recent sightings and experiences. The Club also sponsors field trips throughout the year and participates in the annual Christmas Count. Members have access to a lending library, a rare bird alert and current birding information available through the Voice, an up-to-date recorded telephone service.*

Sound familiar? That's how Sally Venman described us in a newsletter 20 years ago, and it still holds true.

**1989-90** featured some good birds. The reports to the HBC Hotline included a Common Black-headed Gull and Hudsonian Godwit in Hadley in October, a Green-tailed Towhee in Brattleboro, Vt., in December, a Cassin's Finch in Athol in February and a Ross' Gull in Gloucester. March brought a Yellow-headed Blackbird to Northampton.

It also brought a new focus on birding ethics following an incident at the American Birding Association's national convention when 70 overeager birders harassed a yellow rail. The HBC responded by formally adopting the ABA Code of Ethics in January and distributing it to all members. The club followed up in April with a panel discussion on birding ethics by John Green, Mark Lynch, Jim Marcum and Susan Smith, moderated by David Spector.

Other programs included Greg Budney, curator of Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Library of Natural Sounds, on "The History of Bird Recording," Scott Sumner on Appledore Island; John Green on The Everglades; and Dave Ziomek and master falconer Chris David on Barn Owls in western Massachusetts. Tom Arny, UMass astronomer and birder, shared his sabbatical in a program entitled "Birdos and Billabongs, Cockatoos and Kangaroos, Aussies and Arny." Brian Cassie, bird tour leader and coordinator of the Butterfly Atlas, spoke on "Birding Argentina." John and Rita Squires, owners of Cassowary House a bed and breakfast in Kuranda, Australia, presented a program on "Australian Birds."

Jim Marcum served a second term as president. Also reelected were Vice President Jan Ortiz, Secretary Sally Venman and Treasurer Al Richards. Bob Bieda, Ged Dorman, Chris Page and Marny Price served on the board.

**1990-91** saw the first dues increase since the HBC was founded in 1984 to help finance fees and transportation costs for speakers. The \$2 boost brought the dues for individuals to \$9. Continuing as officers were President Jim Marcum, Vice President Jan Ortiz, Secretary Sally Venman, and Treasurer Al Richards.

Chris Page opened the year's programs with birding Grand Manan, followed by Thomas Martin, a master diemaker and naturalist, who worked amid the skyscrapers of New York City, David Klingener of UMass on the mechanics of flight, and Chris Davis on falconry. Don Kroodsma returned with a program on wrens, followed by Wayne Peterson of MassAudubon on shorebirds, Norm Smith on Snowy Owls at Logan Airport, John Kricher of Wheaton College on "Winter Migrants in Belize," and Paul Rezendes, former Quabbin Loon Warden, on "A Year with the Common Loon." In addition to the regular field trips, Scott Sumner and Jan Ortiz led a trip to south-east Arizona in July.

The HBC Voice became the Western Massachusetts Voice of Audubon – still with a local Amherst phone number. Some 1990-91 sightings were a Sandhill Crane in Belchertown (11/4), a Clay-colored Sparrow in Hadley (11/11), a Northern Hawk-Owl in Springfield, Vt. (12/22), a Snowy Owl at the Quabbin (12/27), a Lark Sparrow in Northampton (1/13), a Tundra Swan in Northampton (3/24), a Wilson's Phalarope in Hatfield (5/1/) and a Glossy Ibis in Hadley (5/10). [In 2008, the Western Voice is also on the Internet and appears weekly in the Boston Globe, Springfield Republican, Daily Hampshire Gazette, Berkshire Eagle, and North Adams Transcript.]

**In 1991-92** Jan Ortiz took over as president, Morris Lainer became vice president, Sally Venman continued as secretary and Al Richards as treasurer. Board members were Bob Bieda, Shirley Hilborn, Pat Lynch and Scott Surner.

David Spector, about to leave Amherst for a new job with the National Zoo, opened the year's programs with "Naturalists and Novelists" with emphasis on the Brontes. He was followed by Noble Proctor of Southern Conn. State on "Birding Alaska," Todd Highsmith, director of field training at Manomet on the genetic relationship between Blue-winged and Golden-winged warblers, and Mark Lynch and Sheila Carrol on Lord Howe Island. H. Warren Harrington spoke on "Great New England Birds" in February,, followed by former tern warden Peter Trull on Roseate Terns, George Clark of UConn., on "The History of Bird Populations in the Northeast," author Julio de la Torre on "Owls of North America." and Christopher Leahy of MassAudubon on Antarctica. The club teamed up with the Hitchcock Center, to cosponsor workshops by Wayne Peterson on waterfowl, gulls and shorebirds and Tom Gagnon led the first of his popular trips to Yellowstone in June.

Sally made sure we didn't let an obsession with birds allow us to forget these red-letter days: *To add to your October calendar: The 15<sup>th</sup>: National Grouch Day and/or World Poetry Day (take your pick or read poetry grouchy.) The 16<sup>th</sup> (1701) Yale founded by Congregationalists unhappy with liberal Harvard. The 26<sup>th</sup> (1785): Mules arrive in the U.S.*

*Favorite February moments designed for Frolic, Feasting and Fun: 10th – First day of National Kraut and Frankfurter Week, 11<sup>th</sup> – White Shirt Day in Michigan, 20<sup>th</sup> – Toothpick making machine patented in 1872 And finally ---- Heed this timely warning: Feb. 28 is the day that Ice Houses MUST be off Minnesota Lakes.*

*Ostrich mating season begins May 8. On May 10, you can celebrate the day skunks are born as well as honoring Mom. Looking ahead a bit to one of my own personal favorites we find that on June 1, 1938, Velveeta Cheese was introduced.*

**1992-93** saw the introduction of white t-shirts with the HBC logo. A trail in the Lawrence Swamp Conservation Area in Amherst was named in honor of HBC charter member Harvey Allen, and the club donated a slide projector stand and flood lights to the Hitchcock Center in thanks for continuing to host club meetings.

The year's programs started with Scott Surner's presentation on Monhegan Island. Noble Proctor spoke on Kenya, Susan Smith of Mount Holyoke College updated her chickadee research and artist Barry VanDusen spoke on New England birds. Julie Sibbing of Manomet updated the club on the Birder's Exchange Program to provide optics to Central and South America. Tom Arny spoke on birding Brazil, photographer Mark Picard gave a presentation on Great Blue Herons, Julio de la Torre returned to talk on warblers and Paul Roberts, past president of the Hawk Migration Association of North America gave a program on identifying hawks in flight.

Jan continued as president. Pat Lynch became vice president, Sally continued as secretary and Al as treasurer. Board members were Bob Bieda, Shirley Hilborn, Morris Lainer, Jim Marcum and Scott Surner.

Sally warned us to take special care because November is National UFO Abductions Month (*We would hate to lose you, even though we have your dues.*) Then she wowed us with Woozles when the Nashoba Valley Bird Club and Sally Hoffman, its secretary-treasurer, foolishly threw down the Gannet to challenge us with plays on bird names:

*Woody, would you peck her?*

*As a native of Bridgeport once said, there may be a sucker hatched every minute, but I'm no sap. So the Nebbish Valley folks have picid a fight? They don't have a flicker of a chance once we buckle downy. Hear ye! Hair ye! Oh, members of the HBC don't let any undertones of humor in what you have read belie the seriousness of the situation, but pile at it. Whenever members of the Club, born and bred, head to battle, we never (though we may appear as rabble) lack backedbone, but we gain courage by singing songs of Wood Guthrie to educate ourselves.*