



## Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 31, No. 5

**January, 2015.**

This month:

- the **program** for January 12 and the **up-coming slate**,
- the long-awaited **trip report** from our **Halloween Extravaganza**,
- the **Winter-Spring-Sumer Field Trip Schedule**, featuring some wonderful new offerings, and
- our **Field Trip Policy** in all its obfuscatory glory.

I hope you find some of it useful!

### NEXT PROGRAM

**Monday, January 12 at 7:15 p.m.**

**Don Kroodisma** brings us **Bird Song: The Hour Before Dawn**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

*Weather-related cancellations announced via the HBC email list and local media.*

Photographers wait until they have good light. It's the same for bird-*watchers*, as birds can't be seen until after sunrise. What everyone misses is one of the greatest shows on earth, the dawn chorus, when (almost) every singer is at his finest. In that hour before sunrise, the motivation to sing is highest, and song performances are especially energized, with males typically telling all the songs they know in the shortest amount of time. For other species, especially for wood-warblers, special songs are invoked at dawn, songs that are rarely heard at any other time of the day. And then there are the exceptions. Going where few ornithologists and birders go, we'll tour a few of the finest and most intriguing dawn performances among North American passerines, and dream of all the fine listening available before sunrise. If only it didn't all happen so early in the morning.....

It was the spring of 1968, my last semester in college, when I became hooked on birds in general, and a few months later on birdsong in particular. And it's been a rush since then, over 45 years, first in academic circles (until 12:01 A.M., January 1, 2004), and since then as a man freed to pursue birdsong full time. I am a life-long scientist, one who asks questions, seeking answers and increasingly deeper understandings. No longer entrenched at the University, I am eager to encourage a deeper appreciation of birds and their songs by the tens of millions of others who also treasure birds.

Don Kroodisma

For a more complete biography, please visit [donaldkroodisma.com](http://donaldkroodisma.com)

### COMING PROGRAMS

**February 9, 2015. Scott Sumner.** The Big Chicken Run.

**March 9, 2015. David Sibley.** The New Sibley Guide to the Birds.

**April 13, 2015. John Van de Graaff.** Fabulous birds!

## FIELD TRIPS THIS MONTH

Please see also the **Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule** (enclosed)

**Saturday, January 17. South Shore.** All day. Al Richards and Mike Locher will go to the Massachusetts coast south of Boston to look for seasonal specialties like sea ducks, gulls, alcids, and unseasonable rarities. Meet at Stop & Shop (at 456 Russell St.) in Hadley at 6:00. For further information and to register, call Al (413-665-2761). (M)

**\*Monday, January 19. Fort River Refuge: No Spring Migrants.** Morning. Jim Lafley, George Regmund, and Janice Jorgensen perambulate the trails of the Fort River Refuge clockwise in what Janice assures me will be a walk without any spring migrants. But there will be plenty of winter birds, so bundle up and come on out! Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 8:30 a.m. (E)

**\*Saturday, January 31. Coastal Rhode Island.** All day. Geoff LeBaron repeats his annual cold-weather trip to the coast of Rhode Island, looking for gulls, ducks, Short-eared Owls, and whatever else may be there. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) to register. Meet at Northampton Stop & Shop (228 King St.) at 6:30 a.m. (E)

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

**The Halloween Extravaganza: Satan's Kingdom, Hell's Kitchen and Beyond with Josh Rose. Saturday, October 25.**

My annual pre-Halloween birding trek to Satan's Kingdom and Hell's Kitchen was mostly slow but bookended with some excitement. The five of us met up to form carpools at the Turners Falls power canal, and we decided to take a short walk there before driving off. The "short" walk turned out to last nearly 2 hours and tally 30 bird species. The drake **Common Goldeneye** first spotted on Thursday by James Smith was still present, but now joined by two hens. A previously reported **Ruddy Duck** also continued.

Eventually a flock of land birds pulled our attention away from the water. Among several other species it turned out to include a late Northern Parula. As we were heading back to the cars a flock of **Pine Siskins** flew over. Another flock of mixed insectivores brought our attention to a berry-eating **Hermit Thrush**.

We finally got up to Hell's Kitchen, but found rainfall from the recent nor'easter had submerged nearly all the shallow areas and mudflats which normally harbor shorebirds and dabbling ducks. Satan's Kingdom was also almost bird-less save a Winter Wren and a Red-breasted Nuthatch. Another flock of Pine Siskins flew over, stopping only for a few moments in the top of a large and cone-heavy pine tree. We walked back to the parking area and heard a Brown Creeper nearby and a Pileated Woodpecker further off. After some departures from the group and unproductive visits to the fields of Caldwell and Munns Ferry Roads, we headed back to Gill for lunch at the Wagon Wheel. The outdoor lunch tables paid dividends. As we ate, one member of our group observed a "Turkey Vulture" which flapped suspiciously quickly and flashed white wing patches. It was actually a **BLACK Vulture**! To further validate choice of lunch venue, an adult Bald Eagle cruised by relatively low overhead shortly afterward.

Josh Rose

**We will try AGAIN to get the East Quabbin and Dead Creek reports in the February edition. Ed.**

That's all for this month.

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, Inc.

## Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule, 2015

### January 4, 2015

*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 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. Please check all information with the trip leaders.*

#### JANUARY

**Saturday, January 17. South Shore.** All day. Al Richards and Mike Locher will go to the Massachusetts coast south of Boston to look for seasonal specialties like sea ducks, gulls, alcids, and unseasonable rarities. Meet at Stop & Shop (at 456 Russell St.) in Hadley at 6:00. For further information and to register, call Al (413-665-2761). (M)

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#### FEBRUARY

**\*Monday, February 16. Fort River Refuge: Really Early Spring Migrants.** Morning. Stephen LaValley, George Regmund, and Janice Jorgensen explore the trails of the Fort River Refuge in what Janice assures me will be a walk that might have a spring migrant or two. If that kind of bold prediction doesn't get you out, nothing will. Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 8:00 a.m. (E)

#### MARCH

**Saturday, March 7. Plum Island, Newburyport, and Salisbury.** All day. Geoff LeBaron looks for migrants and residents at one of Massachusetts' premier birding locations. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) to register. Meet at Northampton Stop & Shop (228 King St.) at 6:30 a.m. (E)

**\*Monday, March 16. Fort River Refuge: Early Spring Migrants.** Morning. George Regmund and Janice Jorgensen lead birders in looking for avian signs of spring at the Fort River Refuge. Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E)

**Saturday, March 28. Connecticut River Waterfowl.** Half day. Josh Rose seeks out the ducks and geese migrating up the Connecticut River to their breeding grounds. Meet at the parking lot near Migratory Way (near 109 G St.) in Turner's Falls at 6:30. Lunch will probably be at the Wagon Wheel in Gill. Contact Josh (413-835-0093 or [opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com](mailto:opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com)) for more information and to arrange a possible southern meeting place for carpooling. (E)

## APRIL

**\*Sunday, April 12. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher (413-585-5864) looks for early migrants like Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Northern Waterthrushes. Meet in the Holyoke Elks parking lot (250 Whitney Ave.), near Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7 a.m. (E)

**\*Saturday, April 18. Northampton Migrants.** Half day. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) reprises her annual spring trip to Look Park to find warblers and other early migrants. Meet at the JFK Middle School parking lot (100 Bridge Road, Florence) at 7 a.m. (E)

**\*Monday, April 20. Fort River Refuge: Spring Migrants.** Morning. The HBC Monday Morning Birders seek out warblers, vireos, and other neotropical migrants at the Fort River Refuge. Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E)

**Wednesday, April 22. Spring hawk watching at Goat Peak.** Half day. Tom Gagnon leads his annual spring raptor (and butterfly) trip up the tower on Mount Tom State Reservation. Meet at the old park headquarters building at 9 o'clock for a 20 minute walk to the tower. Contact Tom (413-584-6353 or [tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com](mailto:tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com)) to register. (M)

## MAY

*\*On Tuesdays in May, there will be birding walks through the Fort River Refuge. All walks start at 6:30 a.m. Dates and leaders are as follows:*

*May 5, Janice Jorgensen;*

*May 12, Bob Bieda;*

*May 19, Pat Lynch;*

*May 26, George Regmund.*

*Meet at the refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley). These walks are co-sponsored by the HBC and the Friends of the Fort River Refuge. (E)*

**Saturday, May 2. Belchertown Hotspots: Herman Covey WMA and Lake Wallace.** Half/Full day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths go where no HBC trip leader has ever gone before (at least according to my records). Explore these two sites with a pair of local experts, then perhaps head over to the Quabbin headquarters to see what's on the water. Contact Devin (413-323-8417) to get meeting details and for more information. (M)

**\*Saturday May 9. Mitch's Way.** Half day. Josh Rose takes a walk along the river looking for neotropical migrants. Depending on interest, a more challenging walk into adjacent Skinner State Park to look for Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers could be arranged. Lunch and ice cream will be at the Barstow Creamery. Meet at 6 a.m. at the parking lot of the Hadley Village Barn Shops, (41 Russell St., Hadley), near the Ecuador Andino store. Any questions, contact Josh (413-835-0093 or [opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com](mailto:opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com)). (E/M)

**Saturday, May 9. Quabbin Park and East Quabbin.** All day. Tom Gagnon leads his annual spring trip to the eastern side of the reservoir in search of spring migrants. Participation is limited and you must be a member of the Hampshire Bird Club to participate. To register, contact Tom (413-584-6353 or tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com). Please register early. (M)

**Thursday, May 14. Mount Holyoke.** Half day. Tom Gagnon leads a hike up Mt. Holyoke in search of Cerulean Warblers and other spring migrants. Plan to stop along the way to look at some of the flora of Mt. Holyoke. Meet at 7 a.m. at the gate of Mt. Holyoke. For information contact Tom (413-584-6353 or tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com). (M)

**Saturday, May 16. Bartholomew's Cobble.** All day. Mike Locher travels to the southwest corner of the state to the unique habitat of Bartholomew's Cobble. There should be Bobolinks in the fields and woodland migrants in the forests around the cobble. The cobble is a haven for ferns and wildflowers found nowhere else in the state. Meet at Northampton Stop & Shop (228 King Street) at 6 a.m. and bring a lunch. Call Mike (413-585-5864) for further details. (M)

**\*Saturday, May 30. Wentworth Farm.** Half day. Josh Rose leads an easy walk looking for breeding Orchard Orioles, Brown Thrashers, Bobolinks, Green Herons, and whatever else he can find. If the weather is suitable we will also probably look at butterflies and dragonflies. Meet at 6 a.m. at the Stanley St. trailhead in Amherst. Any questions, contact Josh (413-835-0093 or opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com). (E)

**Sunday, May 31. Grace Robson State Wildlife Sanctuary.** Half day. Mike Locher goes in search of Hooded Warblers, who have been singing here for several years, but will stop for any of the numerous warblers that haunt this little-known reserve. If time and energy permit, we could extend the trip to bird around Mt. Tekoa. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop (228 King Street) at 6:30 a.m. Call Mike (413-585-5864) for further details. (M)

## JUNE

**Saturday, June 6. Westover Air Force Base.** Half day. Bob Bieda hosts the HBC's annual trip to 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) at least two weeks ahead of time to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E)

**\*Sunday, June 7. Knightville Dam.** Half day. Betsy Higgins and Marcia Merithew explore Knightville Dam for spring migrants and local residents. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for details. Meet at 7 a.m. at the John F. Kennedy Middle School (100 Bridge Road; Florence, MA). (E)

## JULY

**Saturday, July 11. Milford Point and Sherwood Island.** Full day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths head down to southern Connecticut to find Piping Plovers, American Oystercatchers, terns of various sorts, and many other coastal specialties. Contact Devin at (413-323-8417) for meeting details and more information. (M)

**Wednesday, July 22. Bobolinks and Baltimore Checkerspot.** Half day. Tom Gagnon leads us to look for birds and butterflies at the Bullitt Reservation in Ashfield and Conway (399-401 Bullitt Road, Conway – do not attempt to drive the impassable North Poland Road to get there), a 265-acre old New England farm now managed by The Trustees of Reservations. The farmhouse is now open to the public as a showcase for energy-efficient technologies that work for New England homeowners. We will explore some of the many fields and trails. There should be plenty of Bobolinks and gorgeous Baltimore Checkerspot. Restrooms available. Contact Tom (413-584-6353 or tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com) for meeting information and to register for the trip. (M)

# HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC.

## FIELD TRIP POLICY

Last Amended February 2, 2012

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

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

**Overnight Trips** (one or more nights, reasonable driving distance) are planned by the Field Trip Committee and approved by the HBC Board at least 3 months in advance (see #5 below). Such trips generally require more planning by the trip leader, including, for example, arranging for lodging and travel. Participants will be charged an amount equal to actual predetermined costs (including liability insurance) plus a prorated amount to cover reimbursement of the leader's expenses (see #5 below). All fees, including the trip deposit, shall be paid to the HBC Treasurer. In the event of a cancellation, if the vacancy can be filled, the trip fee will be refunded, less a 10% processing charge. If the vacancy cannot be filled, the trip fee will be refunded, with the following exceptions:

- a) the portion of the trip fee that covers a share of the leaders costs,
- b) the portion of the fee that covers the insurance charge, and
- c) any portion of the fee which has already been paid to another party and cannot be recovered by the club.

Any excess fees remaining after costs have been met will be refunded, unless they are less than twenty dollars (\$20) per person, in which case they will revert to the HBC treasury. Overnight trips are open only to HBC members who have signed a release form and who have completed a medical information form.

4. The HBC Board recommends that passengers reimburse owners of vehicles used on HBC trips for costs associated with vehicle operation. The maximum recommended reimbursement is the federal government employee mileage reimbursement rate, rounded down to the nearest 10 cents, plus tolls and parking to be shared equally by all persons in the car including the driver. The participants (not the leader) are responsible for making carpool arrangements.

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5. Leaders of Overnight Trips shall:
  - a. Submit a trip plan to the Field Trip Committee, which must be approved by the Board at least 3 months in advance of the trip. The plan should describe in writing the nature of the trip as completely as possible. Include an itinerary, estimated cost, conditions of lodging and lead time needed for reservations, roughness of terrain, pace of the trip, extra costs not covered by the fee, date of deposit and final payment, date after which fee is not refundable, and provide a list of any specialized items that participants should take on the trip. Repeat trips led by the same leader need only submit necessary changes to the previous plan. The Board can waive the 3-month planning time if there is a special birding opportunity.
  - b. Consult with the membership secretary before the trip to make sure that all participants have signed the HBC Release Form and obtain a signed Medical Information Form from each participant.
  - c. Be reimbursed for all costs associated with planning (i.e. long-distance calls, postage), lodging, and transportation during the trip. The maximum reimbursement for automobile travel shall be one quarter of the costs incurred by a single vehicle under clause 4 of this policy.
  - d. Upon return, provide the HBC Board with an itemized account of all income and expenses related to the trip including receipts for major expenses.
6. The Field Trip Chair will send all participants in overnight trips the Field Trip Evaluation Form and a Medical Information Form. The completed evaluation form, to be returned to the Field Trip Chair, will help the Field Trip Committee plan future trips and provide feedback for leaders. Participants should give their signed Medical Information form to the trip leader prior to departure.
7. Leaders of both Day and Overnight Trips are asked to submit a Trip Highlights Report to the newsletter editor for publication in the next HBC newsletter.
8. HBC may ask professional bird touring organization to organize trips further away than the Overnight Trips. All responsibilities for planning the trip and all liability will be assumed by the touring organization. Such trips must be approved by the Board at least 6 months in advance.



## Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 31, No. 6

**February, 2015.**

### **This month:**

- An irreverent introduction and biography for this month's **program and speaker**,
- Two long-overdue **field trip reports** and some **coming trips**,
- **Hitchcock Programs**,
- Results of the **2014 Northampton Christmas Bird Count**, and
- One or two other odds and ends.

I hope you find some of it useful.

### **NEXT PROGRAM**

**Monday, February 9, at 7:15 p.m.**

**Scott Surner** recounts the **Big Chicken Run**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

*Weather-related cancellations announced via the HBC email list and local media.*

*What do Marshawn Lynch (running back for the not-obviously-cheating Seattle Seahawks) and our speaker for this month have in common? No, it is not their physique or athletic ability. Neither are fond of talking to the media....*

*Notoriously self-effacing and overworked, our speaker for this month has, perhaps unwisely, encouraged me to "write whatever I want" about his talk and him. With thanks to Geoff LeBaron, (who is, however, blameless for the following) I shall do just that.*

In my world, a "Big Chicken Run" might be a desperate search of local grocery stores for something to feed a larger-than-anticipated family gathering. However, for those who like to visit the wilds of America in search of *living* birds, it is one of many nicknames for a "journey in search of as many members of prairie-dwelling grouse as can realistically be fitted into a single trip."

Otherwise known as the Grouse Grand Slam, the trip Scott will be describing generally takes about ten days, spent quartering the windswept prairies in Colorado and Kansas for Greater and Lesser Prairie Chickens, Greater and Gunnison's Sage Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. These are all lekking species, meaning that males display in mysteriously well-defined areas, where their (often bizarre) displays are perused by visiting females. The trips involve grueling travel itineraries and a lot of huddling in blinds near the leks in the pre-dawn. A trip to make (or break) friendships.....

**Scott Surner** is a founding member of the Hampshire Bird Club and has had more terms as president than the Bush and Clinton families combined, (though the math may need to be re-checked in 2016.....). He has lead wonderful trips both locally and across the country for HBC and is the current teacher of the annual Hitchcock Birding Class, which brings many new people to birding every year. He can presently be found holding forth at the beginning of every HBC meeting, in which capacity he is indistinguishable from the Field Trip Chair on the basis of plumage (but Scott generally talks for longer). Scott is a long-time valley resident (actually grew up here), small business owner, master-birder and, recently, star of local radio. This is only the latest of a number of programs he has presented for us, all enlivened by his genial style and great photos. Hope you will come along!

## COMING PROGRAMS

**March 9, 2015. David Sibley.** The Psychology of Bird Identification.

**April 13, 2015. John Van de Graaff.** Fabulous Birds!

**May 11, 2015. Jonah Keane.** New Visions for Arcadia Sanctuary.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### East Quabbin. Saturday, November 15 with Craig Allen

On Saturday November 15, we began our trip into Quabbin at the Windsor Dam. At 7am it was about 20 degrees Fahrenheit with a slight breeze from the NW. Ten of us headed into Gate 45 and drove along the east side of the reservoir, stopping at beaver ponds and along different parts of the reservoir. It was a cold, clear day with a warm sun, making for quite an enjoyable outing. It was a successful day with 49 species of birds, 5 species of mammals, 2 dragonflies, and 2 moths.

#### Highlights included:

63 Hooded Mergansers,  
55 Common Mergansers,  
1 Wood Duck,  
11 **Green-winged Teal**,  
21 Black Ducks,  
10 **Bald Eagles**,  
1 **Northern Goshawk**,  
2 **Black-bellied Plovers**,

11 Common Loons,  
2 Horned Grebes,  
1 **Red-necked Grebe**,  
3 **Ruffed Grouse**,  
3 Hermit Thrushes,  
3 American Pipits,  
1 **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, and  
30 Pine Siskins.

There were also 35 **Snow Buntings**, 1 White-winged Scoter, and 3 **Long-tailed Ducks** at the Windsor Dam. We saw one large buck on a sand bar at the fishing area at Gate 43. We ended the day close to 4pm at Gate 35. Josh Rose and a few others drove to Gate 41 where they saw the **Gray Jay** just as daylight ended. It was a good trip from start to finish.

Craig Allen



### Sunday, November 16. Dead Creek WMA and Lake Champlain with Mike Locher

Four HBCers (David Peake-Jones, Andrew Magee, Arn Krugman, under the tutelage of **Mike Locher**) gathered at the Goose Viewing Area of the Dead Creek WMA in Addison, Vermont early on November 16. Reports from the previous several days indicated that there were still geese in the area, with sightings of a Rough-legged Hawk and even Tundra Swans to sweeten the pot. We got out of our cars and started to scan the fields, with a stiff cold breeze in our faces.

The Snow Geese were visible, but sitting in a field far to the south. Even at a distance, though, it appeared that there were many more than the several hundred that had been reported two days previously. However, we were treated to an astounding five Rough-legged Hawks (3 dark morph, 2 light morph) hunting over the fields on both sides of the road, as well as a lone male Northern Harrier on the prowl.

From the end of Gage Road we hit the jackpot. There were about 4500 Snow Geese milling about, and we set to with our scopes, looking for the elusive Ross's Goose that had been sighted several days earlier. While we didn't find any Ross's Geese, we saw Snow Geese in all their glory: pure white Snow Geese, Snow Geese with orange chests and necks, blue phase Snow Geese with white heads and dark bodies, and young Snow Geese wearing various plumage combinations of white and slate gray. Again the raptors were out: here we saw five Northern Harriers, including both richly-colored immatures and gray males.

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*(Sunday, November 16. Dead Creek. Continued)*

From Gage Road we moved toward Lake Champlain. We saw a few Black Ducks and Mallards at the Brilyea Access, along with Canada Geese and two more Rough-legged Hawks. At Turkey Lane, where the Tundra Swans had been reported, we got a number of small foragers (Black-capped Chickadees, a Brown Creeper, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, several White-breasted Nuthatches, and a Carolina Wren), as well as a Belted Kingfisher, many Black Ducks, Mallards, and six Horned Grebes, the latter only a taste of what was to come.

We next drove north to the Button Bay overlook, where we spotted two Common Goldeneyes, our first Common Loon of the day, and at least 28 Horned Grebes. I've had winter days at the eastern shore when I've trained my scope on the gray waves and found dozens of loons and grebes bobbing contentedly in the water, but this seemed altogether excessive. It was difficult to find a view that didn't contain a Horned Grebe. I began to doubt myself as I counted: I thought I was slowly panning my scope from left to right, but every view had a grebe in the middle of a patch of gray-green water. With no landmarks on the water, I couldn't tell whether I had really moved, or just imagined it. I was at 23 when David Peake-Jones announced 28, so I took his word for it and packed up my scope.

At the Tri-Town Water Utility Company we found more Horned Grebes, along with a single Red-necked Grebe and a Long-tailed Duck off in the distance. I happened to make the comment that the regional eBird moderator would never accept our numbers for Horned Grebes, and the birder next to us said that he thought he would accept our numbers, since he was right there witnessing it. Thus we met Ian Worsley. As it turned out, we agreed on the Horned Grebe counts, but not the final Snow Goose tally, so read on.)

We made a final stop at Gage Road, and as we arrived the geese began to move to a plowed field right at the end of the road. We were able to stand within 30 yards of the birds as they filtered down by the hundreds. David counted almost 4300 right in front of us, and it seemed clear that there were many, many more in a grassy hollow just out of sight. eBird finally accepted 4300, along with 200 in the air, and another 300 I could see in a more distant field, but we reckon there were at least 5000 birds in reality. I had never seen so many Snow Geese in Dead Creek at one time (and neither had anyone else, this time of year, according to eBird). As we admired the birds in the waning light and in response to some unknown provocation, the entire flock took flight. It sounded and felt like a jet taking off. Every time I see the Snow Geese, I am left in awe of these birds, and of nature.

On the way home, we discussed the pros and cons of dates for this trip. Do I opt for the more colorful setting of October, with more ducks on the lake, or the starker, more elemental setting of November, with the increased possibility of Rough-legged Hawks (and, apparently, Horned Grebes)? I'll let you know my decision on the next fall field trip schedule.

Mike Locher

## 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. Our librarian, **Henry Lappen**, is happy to bring items to meetings, if you give him a few days in advance. You can reach him at [library@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:library@hampshirebirdclub.org) or (413) 549 3722.

## COMING FIELD TRIPS

*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 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. Please check all information with the trip leaders.*

**\*Monday, February 16. Fort River Refuge: Really Early Spring Migrants.** Morning. Stephen LaValley, George Regmund, and Janice Jorgensen explore the trails of the Fort River Refuge in what Janice assures me will be a walk that might have a spring migrant or two. If that kind of bold prediction doesn't get you out, nothing will. Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 8:00 a.m. (E)

**Saturday, March 7. Plum Island, Newburyport, and Salisbury.** All day. Geoff LeBaron looks for migrants and residents at one of Massachusetts' premier birding locations. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) to register. Meet at Northampton Stop & Shop (228 King St.) at 6:30 a.m. (E)

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**FrogWatch USA Citizen Science Training:** *Brittany Gutermuth and Patti Steinman*

Friday, February 6, 6:30pm-9pm

Held at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, 127 Combs Road, Easthampton

**The Winter Landscape from the Animals' Perspective:** *Alcott Smith*

Saturday, February 7. Field Walks from 9am-12pm OR 1-4 pm

**Family Musical Event:** *Sarah Pirtle*

Saturday, February 7, 1:30 pm

(Snow date Sunday, Feb. 8)

**How Much Arsenic Do We Eat?** *Julian Tyson*

Wednesday, February 11, 7-8pm

**Winter Quabbin Nature Walk:** *John Green*

Saturday, February 14, 9am-12pm

**Wildflowers, Orchids and Wildlife in Manitoba & Minnesota:** *Nancy Goodman*

Thursday, February 19, 7-8:30pm

**Salamander Citizen Science:** *Tim Zimmerman and Ted Watt*

Sunday, February 22, 1:30-3:00 pm

*Continues next page ►*

*(Hitchcock Programs. Continued)*

**Salamander Tunnel Maintenance:** *Hitchcock Center Staff*

A date in March dependent on weather and salamander activity  
Call to be put on our to-be-called-list.

**Tour of Amherst Wastewater Treatment Facility**

Saturday, March 7, 10am-11:30am OR Wednesday, May 20, 10am-11:30am

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

Sunday, March 8, 10am-12pm

*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).*



# Bird Observer

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## The New England Birding Journal

Bird Observer is a bi-monthly journal about birding in New England. Articles include detailed location and bird-finding guides, historical musings, book reviews and a welter of other content found no-where else.

If you are interested in *Bird Observer*, please visit [www.birdobserver.org](http://www.birdobserver.org) where you can find subscription information for both the printed and on-line versions of the magazine.

Included with this edition are the results of the 2014 Northampton Christmas Bird Count.

That's all for this month.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

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

# Northampton Christmas Count 2014 and Historical (unofficial)

High counts in bold

*Unusual species in italics*

(Name) = no recent records, hopeful...

| Species                          | 2014      | High Year     | High Count | Species                         | 2014            | High Year     | High Count |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
| Gr'ter Wh'-fr'ed Goose           | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Bald Eagle (adult)              | 12              | 2013          | 11         |
| Greylag Goose                    | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Northern Harrier                | 8               | 2010          | 11         |
| <i>Snow Goose</i>                | 5         | <i>n.a.t.</i> |            | Sharp-s'd Hawk                  | 20              | 2007          | 22         |
| Brant                            | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | <b>Cooper's Hawk</b>            | <b>32</b>       | <b>2010</b>   | <b>26</b>  |
| Canada Goose                     | 4,108     | 1999          | 7, 977     | Northern Goshawk                | 0               | n.a.t.        |            |
| <b>Cackling Goose</b>            | <b>1</b>  | <b>n.a.t.</b> |            | Red-s'd Hawk                    | 0               | 1957          | 4          |
| Mute Swan                        | 3         | 2002          | 29         | <b>Red-tailed Hawk</b>          | <b>187</b>      | <b>2010</b>   | <b>149</b> |
| Wood Duck                        | 8         | 2010          | 19         | Rough-l'd Hawk                  | cw              | 1989          | 12         |
| <i>Gadwall</i>                   | <i>1</i>  | <i>2012</i>   | <i>6</i>   | American Kestrel                | 5               | 1974          | 31         |
| American Wigeon                  | 0         | 1999          | 10         | Merlin                          | 2               | 2013          | 4          |
| <b><i>Northern Shoveller</i></b> | <b>1</b>  |               |            | Gyr Falcon                      | 0               | n.a.t.        |            |
| Am. Black Duck                   | 223       | 1992          | 286        | <b>Peregrine Falcon</b>         | <b>6</b>        | 2011          | 5          |
| Mallard                          | 786       | 1994          | 1,338      | <b>American Coot</b>            | <b>1</b>        | <b>2012</b>   | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Northern Pintail</b>          | <b>54</b> | <b>1991</b>   | <b>10</b>  | Virginia Rail                   | 0               | n.a.t.        |            |
| Green-winged Teal                | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Killdeer                        | 0               | n.a.t.        |            |
| Canvasback                       | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | <i>Wilson's Snipe</i>           | <i>0</i>        | n.a.t.        |            |
| Ring-necked Duck                 | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | American Woodcock               | 0               | n.a.t.        |            |
| Greater Scaup                    | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Ring-billed Gull                | 529             | 2006          | 1,088      |
| Lesser Scaup                     | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Herring Gull                    | 100             | 1986          | 2,196      |
| White-winged Scoter              | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Iceland Gull                    | 0               | n.a.t.        |            |
| Long-tailed Duck                 | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Lesser Bl'-backed Gull          | 0               | n.a.t.        |            |
| Bufflehead                       | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Glaucous Gull                   | 0               | n.a.t.        |            |
| Common Goldeneye                 | 40        | 1992          | 109        | <b><i>Black-headed Gull</i></b> | <b><i>1</i></b> |               |            |
| Barrow's Goldeneye               | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Great Bl'-b'd Gull              | 0               | n.a.t.        |            |
| <b>Hooded Merganser</b>          | <b>92</b> | <b>2012</b>   | <b>60</b>  | Rock Pigeon                     | 771             | 1988          | 2,778      |
| Common Merganser                 | 143       | 2012          | 227        | Mourning Dove                   | 2,043           | 1998          | 3,904      |
| Red-b'd Merganser                | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | E. Screech-Owl                  | 64              | 2006          | 82         |
| Ruddy Duck                       | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | <b>Great Horned Owl</b>         | <b>68</b>       | <b>2003</b>   | <b>48</b>  |
| Ring-n'd Pheasant                | 5         | 1960          | 196        | Snowy Owl                       | 0               | n.r.r         |            |
| Ruffed Grouse                    | 0         | 1966          | 37         | Barred Owl                      | 4               | 2012          | 19         |
| Wild Turkey                      | 123       | 2010          | 187        | <i>Long-eared Owl</i>           | <i>1</i>        | <i>2004</i>   | <i>3</i>   |
| Red-throated Loon                | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | <i>Short-eared Owl</i>          | <i>0</i>        | <i>n.a.t.</i> |            |
| <i>Common Loon</i>               | <i>1</i>  | <i>n.a.t.</i> |            | N. Saw-whet Owl                 | 2               | 2006          | 5          |
| Pied-billed Grebe                | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Selasphorus sp.                 | 0               | n.a.t.        |            |
| Horned Grebe                     | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Belted Kingfisher               | 14              | 2001          | 23         |
| <i>Do'-c'd Cormorant</i>         | <i>1</i>  | <i>n.a.t.</i> |            | <b>Red-b'd Woodpecker</b>       | <b>246</b>      | <b>2010</b>   | <b>159</b> |
| (Great Cormorant)                | 0         | nrr           |            | Yellow-b'd Sapsucker            | 11              | 2007          | 22         |
| Great Blue Heron                 | 6         | 2006          | 27         | <b>Downy Woodpecker</b>         | <b>503</b>      | <b>2004</b>   | <b>452</b> |
| Green Heron                      | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Hairy Woodpecker                | 142             | 1974          | 192        |
| Turkey Vulture                   | 0         | n.a.t.        |            | Northern Flicker                | 76              | 1998          | 77         |
|                                  |           |               |            |                                 |                 |               |            |
|                                  |           |               |            |                                 |                 |               |            |
|                                  |           |               |            |                                 |                 |               |            |

| Species                   | 2014         | High Year   | High Count   | Species                    | 2014       | High Year     | High Count |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|----------------------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Pileated Woodpecker       | 34           |             |              | <i>Clay-c'd Sparrow</i>    | 0          | n.a.t.        |            |
| Eastern Phoebe            | 0            | n.a.t.      |              | Field Sparrow              | 4          | 1982          | 58         |
| Northern Shrike           | 2            | 1995        | 15           | Vesper Sparrow             | 0          | n.a.t.        |            |
| (White-eyed Vireo)        | 0            | nrr         |              | Harris's Sparrow           | 0          | n.a.t.        |            |
| Blue-headed Vireo         | 0            | n.a.t.      |              | Savannah Sparrow           | 22         | 2000          | 46         |
| <b>Blue Jay</b>           | <b>1,722</b> | <b>1977</b> | <b>1,686</b> | Fox Sparrow                | 1          | 1943          | 20         |
| American Crow             | 4,486        | 1997        | 5,836        | Song Sparrow               | 415        | 1992          | 559        |
| Fish Crow                 | 0            | 2008        | 6            | Lincoln's Sparrow          | 0          | n.a.t.        |            |
| Common Raven              | 7            | 2010        | 13           | Swamp Sparrow              | 10         | 1992          | 23         |
| Horned Lark               | 864          | 1993        | 2,504        | White-t'd Sparrow          | 525        | 2009          | 1,008      |
| Black-c'd Chickadee       | 1,893        | 2005        | 2,096        | <b>White-c'd Sparrow</b>   | <b>26</b>  | <b>1999</b>   | <b>9</b>   |
| Tufted Titmouse           | 742          | 2006        | 894          | Dark-eyed Junco            | 3,079      | 2006          | 3,585      |
| Red-b'd Nuthatch          | 10           | 1993        | 295          | Oregon Junco               | 0          | n.a.t.        |            |
| <b>White-b'd Nuthatch</b> | <b>571</b>   | <b>2005</b> | <b>489</b>   | <i>Lapland Longspur</i>    | 3          | 1989          | 31         |
| Brown Creeper             | 27           | 1973        | 53           | Snow Bunting               | 9          | 1989          | 706        |
| <b>Carolina Wren</b>      | <b>175</b>   | <b>2013</b> | <b>139</b>   | <b>Northern Cardinal</b>   | <b>786</b> | <b>2004</b>   | <b>649</b> |
| House Wren                | 0            | n.a.t.      |              | Indigo Bunting             | 0          | n.a.t.        |            |
| <b>Winter Wren</b>        | <b>9</b>     | <b>2013</b> | <b>9</b>     | Dickcissel                 | 0          | n.a.t.        |            |
| Golden-c'd Kinglet        | 46           | 2001        | 332          | Red-winged Blackbird       | 130        | 2008          | 304        |
| <i>Ruby-c'd Kinglet</i>   | 2            | 1973        | 6            | (Eastern Meadowlark)       | 0          | nrr           |            |
| <b>Eastern Bluebird</b>   | <b>539</b>   | <b>2006</b> | <b>474</b>   | Rusty Blackbird            | 0          | 2008          | 100        |
| <b>Hermit Thrush</b>      | <b>33</b>    | <b>2005</b> | <b>9</b>     | Common Grackle             | 0          | 2006          | 501        |
| American Robin            | 1,188        | 2013        | 9,899        | Brown-h'd Cowbird          | 11         | 2006          | 876        |
| Gray Catbird              | 1            | 2005        | 5            | Baltimore Oriole           | 0          | n.a.t.        |            |
| N. Mockingbird            | 173          | 1999        | 238          | Pine Grosbeak              | 0          | n.a.t.        |            |
| Brown Thrasher            | 0            | n.a.t.      |              | Purple Finch               | 1          | 1976          | 221        |
| European Starling         | 5,369        | 1985        | 94,630       | House Finch                | 665        | 1994          | 2,215      |
| American Pipit            | 2            | 2010        | 66           | Red Crossbill              | 0          | n.a.t.        |            |
| (Bohemian Waxwing)        | 0            | nrr         |              | <b>White-w'd Crossbill</b> | <b>1</b>   | <b>n.a.t.</b> |            |
| Cedar Waxwing             | 156          | 2007        | 2,194        | Common Redpoll             | 0          | 1959          | 1,069      |
| <i>Yellow-r'd Warbler</i> | 3            | 2000        | 5            | Hoary Redpoll              | 0.         | n.a.t.        |            |
| <i>Palm Warbler</i>       | 0            | n.a.t.      |              | Pine Siskin                | 17         | 1993          | 372        |
| <i>Eastern Towhee</i>     | 0            | n.a.t.      |              | Amer. Goldfinch            | 1,019      | 2006          | 2,094      |
| Amer. Tree Sparrow        | 839          | 1992        | 2,637        | Evening Grosbeak           | 9          | 1969          | 3,000      |
| <i>Chipping Sparrow</i>   | 2            | 1974        | 11           | House Sparrow              | 2,020      | 1961          | 2,662      |
|                           |              |             |              |                            |            |               |            |
|                           |              |             |              |                            |            |               |            |
|                           |              |             |              |                            |            |               |            |

In the event of equal high years, the most recent is shown.

For High counts in 2014, the previous high count and year are shown.

**n.a.t.** = **now and then.** Recorded in fewer than five (5) years between 1999 and 2014.

Some species seen extremely rarely have been excluded in the interests of space.



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

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

Volume 31, No. 7

**March, 2015.**

## In this edition:

- the **program** for this month and the **coming slate**,
- coming **field trips**,
- **library news** (in a racy font),
- **two local conferences** that may be of interest, and
- announcing the **first annual Valley Birding Festival**: a wonderful new event for our area!  
I hope some of it is useful!

## NEXT PROGRAM

**Monday, March 9, at 7:15 p.m.**

**David Allen Sibley** looks into **The Psychology of Bird Identification**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

*Weather-related cancellations announced via the HBC email list, [www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org) and local media.*

In his presentation, illustrated with photos, drawings, and a few tests, David will talk about how we perceive the world around us, and how our brains both help and hinder our efforts at bird identification.

*The Sibley Guide to Birds*, published in the year 2000, was the realization of a lifelong dream for **David Allen Sibley**, who began painting birds when he was seven years old and has continued painting them for over three decades. *The Sibley Guide to Birds* contains over 6,600 original illustrations by Sibley, now recognized as America's leading ornithologist/illustrator.

David Allen Sibley is the preeminent brand in American birding and everywhere he goes hundreds of fellow birders come out to meet him. *The Sibley Guide to Birds* became the fastest selling bird book in history, earning the author the nickname “*Beagle of birding*” among the press. Stories about Sibley have run in *The New York Times*, *Audubon*, *Time*, and *Science*. David has appeared on *ABC World News Tonight* and on NPR's *Science Friday* and *The Connection*.

David Allen Sibley has been called the heir apparent to John James Audubon and Roger Tory Peterson and his long awaited guidebook immediately became the gold standard for bird identification when it was published. Used by millions of birders from novices to the most expert, *The Sibley Guide* became the standard by which natural history guides are measured. The second edition (published in March 2014) builds on this foundation of excellence, offering massively expanded and updated information, new paintings, new and rare species, and a new, elegant design.

## CARPOOL TO PROGRAM PLEASE!

Our program this month is likely to attract, shall we say, healthy interest. Parking is likely to be at a premium. Please consider carpooling with others from HBC so that those who REALLY need to park close to the church can do so.

## COMING PROGRAMS

**April 13, 2015. John Van de Graaff.** Fabulous birds!

**May 11, 2015. Jonah Keane.** New Visions for Arcadia Sanctuary.

**June 8, 2015. Mario Cohn-Haft.** What's so Special about Amazonian Birds?

## COMING FIELD TRIPS

See also the **Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule**  
at [www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)

**Saturday, March 7. Plum Island, Newburyport, and Salisbury.** All day. Geoff LeBaron looks for migrants and residents at one of Massachusetts' premier birding locations. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) to register. Meet at Northampton Stop & Shop (228 King St.) at 6:30 a.m. (E)

**\*Monday, March 16. Fort River Refuge: Early Spring Migrants.** Morning. George Regmund and Janice Jorgensen lead birders in looking for avian signs of spring at the Fort River Refuge. Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E)

**Saturday, March 28. Connecticut River Waterfowl.** Half day. Josh Rose seeks out the ducks and geese migrating up the Connecticut River to their breeding grounds. Meet at the parking lot near Migratory Way (near 109 G St.) in Turner's Falls at 6:30. Lunch will probably be at the Wagon Wheel in Gill. Contact Josh (413-835-0093 or [opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com](mailto:opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com)) for more information and to arrange a possible southern meeting place for carpooling. (E)

## LIBRARY

The HBC library has lots of new books, from guides to adventure stories. Come check them out, literally! Here is a sampling:

- **The Warbler Guide**, by Stephenson & Whittle
- **Beetles of Eastern North America**, by Evans & Arthur
- **Birds' Nests of the World**, by Mamoru Suzuki
- **The Nesting Season**, by Bernd Heinrich
- **The Big Twitch**, by Sean Dooley
- **Hope is the Thing With Feathers**, by Christopher Cokinus

**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).

Our librarian, **Henry Lappen**, is happy to bring items to meetings, if you give him a few days in advance.

You can reach him at [library@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:library@hampshirebirdclub.org) or (413) 549 3722.

If Henry has not yet convinced you to try out some of the new offerings in the collection, note that the library blurb comes to you in all the splashy glory of Comic Sans MS typeface.. Whoo hoo! Ed.

## PIONEER VALLEY ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

**Saturday, March 7, 9am-2pm**

**Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary**

Join Mass Audubon and our conservation partners for presentations on research and ecological management that is occurring in the Pioneer Valley. Presenters will include:

- **The Trustees of Reservations,**
- **Kestrel Land Trust,**
- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife,**
- **Smith College, and**
- **Mass Audubon's Connecticut River Valley Sanctuaries.**

Everyone welcome! The conference is **free**.

Please bring a lunch. Snacks and beverages will be provided.

**Registration is required at [www.massaudubon.org/arcadia](http://www.massaudubon.org/arcadia)**

## NORTHEAST HAWKWATCH

**Tenth Regional Hawk Migration Conference**

**Saturday, April 4: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**Holyoke Community College**

**Presentations Include:**

- Telemetry-tracking of nestling Broad-winged Hawks: **Rebecca McCabe**
- Increasing Red-shouldered Hawk breeding populations in Connecticut: **Shannon Kerney**
- Wintering Golden Eagles in New York: Camera Traps and Telemetry: **Andy Mason**
- Identifying Red-shouldered Hawks: **Steve Walton**
- Falcons on Fire: 33 Years of Falcon Trends Along the Fire Island Barrier Beach: **Drew Panko and Trudy Battaly**
- An Innovative Kestrel Nest Box Project: **Tom Sayers**
- Epic Journeys of Amazing Shorebirds: **Shawn Carey.**

**Costs:**        \$40 for NEHW members.  
                      \$45 for non-members  
                      \$13 (optional) for lunch.

More information including **registration** process, email update list, email address for questions at <http://www.battaly.com/nehw/conference/>

## FALL FIELD TRIP SUGGESTIONS

Even with spring a mere rumor in the whisperings of robins, our Field Trip Chair, **Mike Locher** is already beginning to think about the **Fall Field Trip Schedule**. If you have **new ideas** for trips to be done between September and the new year, especially if you are prepared to lead these trips, please let Mike know. You can find him at [fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) or by phone at **(413) 585-5864**.

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**Salamander Tunnel Maintenance:** *Hitchcock Center Staff*

A date in March dependent on the weather

**Tour of Amherst Wastewater Treatment Facility**

Saturday, March 7, 10am-11:30am OR

*Wednesday, May 20, 10am-11:30am*

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

Sunday, March 8, 10am-12pm

**Phenology Research in Your Own Back Yard:** *Carol Trosset*

Thursday, March 12, 7-8:30 pm

**Salamander Citizen Science:** *Tim Zimmerman and Ted Watt*

Sunday, March 15, 1:30-3:00 pm

**Still Life: Victorian and Contemporary Taxidermy:** *Jennifer Pyke*

Thursday, March 26, 7pm-8:30pm

**Citizen Science Spotted Salamander Egg Mass Survey:** *Ted Watt*

A Date in April dependent on the weather and development of egg masses.

**Make Your Home More Energy Efficient:** *Adin Maynard*

Wednesday, April 1, 7pm-8:30pm

**Tour of Smith's Bechtel Environmental Classroom**

Saturday, April 4th, 10am-2pm

*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).*

### CARPOOL TO PROGRAM PLEASE!

Our program this month is likely to attract, shall we say, healthy interest. Parking is likely to be at a premium. Please consider carpooling with others from HBC so that those who REALLY need to park close to the church can do so.

That's all for this month.

Included with this newsletter are two ALMOST identical flyers for **Celebrate Birds: the first Valley Birding Festival**. If you are printing this, please stick the un-bordered one on the fridge for your household and consider distributing the bordered one where it might gain the attention of people from outside the club!

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

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

# CELEBRATE BIRDS

## The first Valley Birding Festival

**Saturday, May 30 from 8:00 am to 2:30 p.m.**

Join environmental organizations from throughout the valley for a fun-filled and family-oriented day of learning about our feathered friends. The festival will feature events at Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge (Fort River Division)\* in Hadley and then later at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary\*\* in Easthampton. Both venues are **accessible** to all.

**At Conte Refuge (Fort River) from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.**

- **bird walks**,
- a **bird banding** demonstration, and
- a **falconry** demonstration by Chris Davis

**At Arcadia Sanctuary from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.:**

- **games, information and activities** for all ages, and
- **“Eyes on Owls.** 11 a.m. AND 1 p.m.

This wonderful demonstration of six (6) species of **live owls** from New England and beyond will occur at 11:00 a.m. and AGAIN at 1:00 p.m. Don't miss this unique opportunity to learn about these amazing birds.

The **venues** are:

\*The Silvio Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge  
(Fort River Division)  
69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley

\*\*Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Massachusetts  
Audubon Society)  
127 Coombs Road, Easthampton.

Festival **organizers** include

- ◆ Hampshire Bird Club,
- ◆ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
- ◆ Mass Audubon,
- ◆ Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation,
- ◆ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife),
- ◆ Hitchcock Center for the Environment,
- ◆ Friends of the Fort River Division and
- ◆ Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center.

Festival **sponsors** include

- ♣ Springfield Naturalists Club and
- ♣ Hadley Garden Center.

## Bird Festival Volunteers

The **Hampshire Bird Club** through the **Education Committee** is one of the partners in the upcoming Valley Bird Festival on Saturday, May 30.

We are looking for **volunteers** from the HBC to assist with the event that day.

If you are interested in volunteering or finding out more about the volunteer opportunities please contact **Jim Lafley** at [Jim.Lafley@state.ma.us](mailto:Jim.Lafley@state.ma.us) or at (413) 221-1941.

# CELEBRATE BIRDS

## The first Valley Birding Festival

**Saturday, May 30 from 8:00 am to 2:30 p.m.**

Join environmental organizations from throughout the valley for a fun-filled and family-oriented day of learning about our feathered friends. The festival will feature events at Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge (Fort River Division)\* in Hadley and then later at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary\*\* in Easthampton. Both venues are **accessible** to all.

### At Conte Refuge (Fort River) from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

- **bird walks**,
- a **bird banding** demonstration, and
- a **falconry** demonstration by Chris Davis

### At Arcadia Sanctuary from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.:

- **games, information and activities** for all ages, and
- **“Eyes on Owls.** 11 a.m. AND 1 p.m.

This wonderful demonstration of six (6) species of **live owls** from New England and beyond will occur at 11:00 a.m. and AGAIN at 1:00 p.m. Don't miss this unique opportunity to learn about these amazing birds.

### The **venues** are:

\*The Silvio Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge (Fort River Division)

69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley

AND

\*\*Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Massachusetts Audubon Society)

127 Coombs Road, Easthampton.

### Festival **organizers** include

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ◆ Hampshire Bird Club,   | ◆ Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, |
| ◆ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,                                | ◆ Hitchcock Center for the Environment,                    |
| ◆ Mass Audubon,  | ◆ Friends of the Fort River Division and                   |
| ◆ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife), | ◆ Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center. |

### Festival **sponsors** include

- ♣ Springfield Naturalists Club and
- ♣ Hadley Garden Center.



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

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

Volume 31, No. 8

**April, 2015.**

In this edition:

- The next program by **John van de Graaff** and the schedule for the remainder of the year,
- **Field trip reports** and coming trips,
- Another reminder about the first annual **Celebrate Birds** birding festival in May.
- Hot political intrigue regarding the **Nominating Committee** and the **AGM**,
- Two **new** offerings from the **Education Committee**,
- The **Rusty Blackbird Blitz**,
- **Hitchcock** programs
- **Broad Brook Coalition** programs,
- **Birds of Hawai'i** in Greenfield?
- An update on the **kestrel nest-box project**.

I hope you find some of it useful.

## NEXT PROGRAM

**Monday, April 13 at 7:15 p.m.**

**John van de Graaff** shows us **Fabulous Birds: The Americas 2001-2014**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

For those who may not be familiar, John is an extraordinary photographer who just happens to make his home right here in the valley. His photography includes the kinds of spectacular images of high-profile subjects that can excite the masses, but he is also known for finding subtle and often humorous beauty in the more mundane and humble elements of the natural world. His work is not to be missed.

Here's what John has to say about the program....

*"I took my first bird photo trip – with just a 300 mm lens and slide film – to southern California in January 2001, and I've barely looked back. I switched to digital in April 2003, with two dozen rolls of Velvia 50 in the fridge, which I ended up giving to a camera club.*

*For this presentation I've started very much at the beginning, and in fact I've put a distinct emphasis on the first six or eight years. A fair number of those images appeared in earlier shows, but I've improved the Power Point presentation of them, and I've pulled out quite a number of new ones. I cover everywhere I've been in the Americas, from Central America and the Galapagos, through Alaska, across Canada, and up to Maine. Birds are simply wonderful creatures. Even picking at random from my archives wouldn't have been bad, but I trust I've done better than that."*

## COMING PROGRAMS

**May 11, 2015. Jonah Keane.** New Visions for Arcadia Sanctuary.

**June 8, 2015. Mario Cohn-Haft.** What's so Special about Amazonian Birds?

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### Plum Island. Saturday, March 7

**Geoff :LeBaron**, Tim Carter; Andre, Elizabeth, and Laura Charron; Aidan, Devin, & Rae Griffiths; Arn Krugman.

After meeting at Joppa Flats, the group ventured forth into the snowy canyons of the Parker River NWR. The saltmarsh landscapes were dotted with thousands of white blobs, most of which were snow, but any of which MIGHT have been a **Snowy Owl**. One bird was observed fleeing across the dunes out into the estuary.

Sea-watching from Lots 1 and 3 yielded a nice selection of sea ducks, a Red-throated Loon, several Red-necked Grebes and several Common Loons struggling to swallow flatfish that looked like small flounder. Downtown Newburyport and Cashman Park offered great looks at Common Goldeneyes, Bufflehead, Common- and Red-breasted Mergansers, along with (especially) stunning Long-tailed Ducks.

Breeding-plumage Great Cormorants were further away than usual (but still visible) at the Chain Bridge due to lingering ice on the Merrimack.

A dead Thick-billed Murre was the only bird of note in the icy wastes of Salisbury State Reservation, but a Red Fox provided some mammalian diversion.

In a slight break with the traditional itinerary, the group headed up Route 1A into New Hampshire. At the 1A rest area in Seabrook, we found a wonderful adult **Glaucous Gull** and an immature (Kumleins) **Iceland Gull** with some tantalizing (but illusory) resemblance to a Thayers Gull. At Rye State Park, the only evidence of the winter-long Snowy Owl that has been in residence were some fresh pellets which the group field-dissected with interest.

Geoff LeBaron



### Connecticut River Waterfowl. Saturday, March 28

Only Harvey Allen braved the icy winds with me today but it was a good day of birding nonetheless. We started the day with Fish Crow and Golden-crowned Kinglet, both at the Turners Falls power canal. The ice has now broken big-time pretty much all along the river from Turners Falls to Hadley - no more birding around little holes in the ice! We saw Ring-necked Ducks, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, as well as Hooded- and Common Mergansers at several stops along the river including the just de-iced Barton Cove and Turners Falls Rod & Gun Club.

A flock of 60-ish Horned Larks was in the field near the south end of Mill Village Road in Deerfield. We found several Wood Ducks at Great Pond in Hatfield. Not far away there were a few more woodies plus a Pileated Woodpecker on the Mill River at Bridge Street. A half-dozen Green-winged Teal were in a muddy field at the Honeypot, where we enjoyed a very tasty lunch to-go from Andino Market. Finally, we wound up at a completely different Mill River near the east end of Hadley Street, where we found a **Merlin** plus a few more Wood Ducks.

Josh Rose

## COMING TRIPS

**\*Sunday, April 12. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher (413-585-5864) looks for early migrants like Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Northern Waterthrushes. Meet in the Holyoke Elks parking lot (250 Whitney Ave.), near Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7 a.m. (E)

**\*Saturday, April 18. Northampton Migrants.** Half day. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) reprises her annual spring trip to Look Park to find warblers and other early migrants. Meet at the JFK Middle School parking lot (100 Bridge Road, Florence) at 7 a.m. (E)

**\*Monday, April 20. Fort River Refuge: Spring Migrants.** Morning. The HBC Monday Morning Birders seek out warblers, vireos, and other neotropical migrants at the Fort River Refuge. Meet at the main refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E)

**Wednesday, April 22. Spring hawk watching at Goat Peak.** Half day. Tom Gagnon leads his annual spring raptor (and butterfly) trip up the tower on Mount Tom State Reservation. Meet at the old park headquarters building at 9 o'clock for a 20 minute walk to the tower. Contact Tom (413-584-6353 or tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com) to register. (M)

## MAY

*\*On Tuesdays in May, there will be birding walks through the Fort River Refuge. All walks start at 6:30 a.m. Dates and leaders are as follows:*

*May 5, Janice Jorgensen;*

*May 12, Bob Bieda;*

*May 19, Pat Lynch;*

*May 26, George Regmund.*

*Meet at the refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley). These walks are co-sponsored by the HBC and the Friends of the Fort River Refuge. (E)*

**Saturday, May 2. Belchertown Hotspots: Herman Covey WMA and Lake Wallace.** Half/Full day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths go where no HBC trip leader has ever gone before (at least according to my records). Explore these two sites with a pair of local experts, then perhaps head over to the Quabbin headquarters to see what's on the water. Contact Devin (413-323-8417) to get meeting details and for more information. (M)

**\*Saturday May 9. Mitch's Way.** Half day. Josh Rose takes a walk along the river looking for neotropical migrants. Depending on interest, a more challenging walk into adjacent Skinner State Park to look for Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers could be arranged. Lunch and ice cream will be at the Barstow Creamery. Meet at 6 a.m. at the parking lot of the Hadley Village Barn Shops, (41 Russell St., Hadley), near the Ecuador Andino store. Any questions, contact Josh (413-835-0093 or [opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com](mailto:opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com)). (E/M)

## FALL FIELD TRIP SUGGESTIONS

Even with phoebes barely here and woodcocks bemused by the still-frozen ground, our Field Trip Chair, **Mike Locher** is already beginning to think about the **Fall Field Trip Schedule**. If you have **new ideas** for trips to be done between September and the new year, especially if you are prepared to lead these trips, please let Mike know. You can find him at [fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) or by phone at (413) 585-5864.

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Nominating Committee for 2015-2016 was appointed at the March meeting and consists of Sharon Dombeck, Stephen P. Baker, and Harvey Allen. The committee is engaged in preparing a slate of nominees for the Board of Directors for 2015-2016. At the time of writing, we do have at least one nominee for all positions. If you have an interest in serving on the board for 2015-2016 or in the future, please contact the chair of the Nominating Committee: Sharon Dombeck: [communications@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:communications@hampshirebirdclub.org)

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting of the Hampshire Bird Club Inc. will be held on Monday, May 11, 2015 at 7:15 p.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Amherst. The meeting will immediately precede our May program. The sole agenda item, at this time, is the election of the Board of Directors for the club for 2015-2016. The slate of nominees will be announced at the April meeting and will appear in the May newsletter. Nominations will be accepted from the floor during the meeting.

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Not one but TWO presentations you might be interested in.

### **Plants Birds Love and Where to Put Them in Your Yard**

May 14, 2015. 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Hadley Garden Center

HBC member Dan Ziomek will host this workshop which is sure to give you some wonderful gardening ideas. Attendees are asked to make a donation so we may buy a tree that birds will love and plant it in Amherst. Rain date is May 21. Open for all Hampshire Bird Club members.

### **Spring Bird Photography Workshop**

HBC member John Van de Graaff, will be offering a photography workshop later this spring. The location will likely be the Rail Trail in Amherst. The date will be announced at April HBC meeting. This will be open to all Hampshire Bird Club members at no fee. More information will be available after April 7.

To see John's work go to <http://www.birdsbyjohn.com/index.htm>

## **Broad Brook Coalition Programs**

### **Birding for Children: Marcia Merithew and Bruce Hart**

**Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, Northampton.**

**Saturday, May 9, 9-11 a.m.**

Please help to spread the word about this birding program meant to help introduce children to the wonders of birding and the outdoors and fuel the fires for those already engaged. We'll have a few leaders and extra binoculars and we'll complement the program with 'live' photographs of some of the birds we see. Meet at the old Moose Lodge entrance, (Boggy Meadow Road, top of Cooke Ave., off Hatfield Street).

### **Birding: Bob Zimmermann**

**Saturday, May 23, 7-9 a.m.**

**Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, Northampton. North Farms Rd. entrance**

As migrating songbirds return from Central and South America, they busy themselves with staking out territories, finding mates and building nests. We'll use sight and sound to see who's returned to the FLCA as we walk along the Lake Trail from North Farms Road to the lake, the dam and Cooke's Pasture. The group will meet at the North Farms Rd. entrance.

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**What's That Tree? At Lawrence Swamp:** *Nancy Goodman*

Saturday, April 11, 10am-2pm

**All About Bluebirds - and More:** *John Rogers*

Tuesday, April 14, 7pm

**Sustainability Festival on the Amherst Town Common**

Saturday, April 25, 10am-4pm

**Vernal Pool/ Wetland Exploration at Our New Site:** *Charley Eiseman*

Saturday, April 25, 2pm-4pm

**Annual Biothon**

May 1-3 or 8-10

**Biothon Bird Walks**

with *Scott Sumner* at 7AM on Sunday, May 3rd in Hadley OR

with *John Green* at 7AM on Friday, May 8th in Belchertown

**Spring Bird Walk:** *John Green*

At Trustees of Reservations property, Mt. Warner, Hadley, MA

Saturday, May 2, 7am-10am

**Spring Wildflowers of the Valley at Mount Toby:** *Nancy Goodman*

Sunday, May 3, 10am-2 pm

**Tour the Orchard Arboretum at Applewood:** Dan Ziomek and Anne Cann

Wednesday, May 6, 3:30pm

*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).*

## MISCELLANEOUS PROGRAMS

**Birds of Hawaii:** *Josh Rose*

Saturday, April 11, 2015, 10:00 a.m.

**Greenfield Savings Bank, 282 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA**

You know about the ocean, the craggy volcanic mountains. Maybe you have seen a humuhumunukunukuapu'a (Hawaii's state fish). But, ah! Na Manu (The birds)! Area naturalist Joshua Rose is a bird enthusiast who spent time in Hawai'i, especially the Big Island. Josh will present slides of these truly gorgeous creatures and add his knowledge and insights. Come fly with us..... This program is presented by the Pioneer Valley Hawai'ian Island Style Meetup.

## CITIZEN SCIENCE: The Rusty Blackbird Blitz

The Rusty Blackbird Migration Blitz was initiated in 2014 in response to the dramatic and mysterious decline documented for this species over the last several decades. The project is coordinated by the Vermont Center for Ecostudies and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and challenges birders to scour the landscape for Rusty Blackbirds during this species' northward migration.

Last year, between 1 March and 15 June, **4750 birders** submitted **13,400 checklists** containing Rusty Blackbird observations to eBird. This provides a springboard for the project to start focusing on migratory hotspots and areas of special concern. Your help is needed this year! It's easy- bird as you normally do during the Blitz window (15 March through April for Massachusetts)

### And for the Over-Achievers in the Group.....

Based on data from last year, there seem to be some areas that may be of particular importance to Rusty Blackbirds. The coordinators would love to get more observation from these Areas of Interest which you can find at <http://rustyblackbird.org/outreach/migration-blitz/2015-areas-of-interest/>

To learn more about Rusty Blackbirds and the Blitz effort, please visit the Migration Blitz website (<http://rustyblackbird.org/outreach/migration-blitz/>), or check out the Blitz Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/rustyblackbirdspringblitz>).

## Kestrel Nest Project

The Kestrel Trust currently maintains 12 kestrel boxes in the Pioneer Valley. Five of these are in the Fort River Division of the Conte Wildlife management Area and there are seven (7) others scattered in farmland around the area. A total of ten (10) chicks fledged from the boxes in 2014.

The trust plans to install three (3) new boxes this year: one at Chris Davis' falconry property on Huntington Road in Hadley, and two at the newly-converted wildflower meadows at Hampshire College.

Two (2) kestrels banded as part of this project have so far been recovered. A bird banded in the valley on June 13, 2013 as a nestling was recaptured alive in Florida in October of the same year. Another valley-banded bird was recovered, unfortunately dead, at Washington-Dulles airport a year after banding.

### **Want to Get Involved?**

The trust is looking for **volunteer nest monitors**. This involves checking the box frequently throughout the nesting season and reporting findings to the Trust.

All kestrels that fledge from Kestrel Trust boxes have field-readable bands. The Trust would love to hear from you if you observe **banded kestrels** in the valley.

To volunteer or report banded kestrels, please email [office.kestreltrust.org](mailto:office.kestreltrust.org)

That's all for this month. A flyer for the Celebrate Birds festival is on last page.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

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

# CELEBRATE BIRDS

## The first Valley Birding Festival

**Saturday, May 30 from 8:00 am to 2:30 p.m.**

Join environmental organizations from throughout the valley for a fun-filled and family-oriented day of learning about our feathered friends. The festival will feature events at Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge (Fort River Division)\* in Hadley and then later at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary\*\* in Easthampton. Both venues are **accessible** to all.

**At Conte Refuge (Fort River) from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.**

- **bird walks**,
- a **bird banding** demonstration, and
- a **falconry** demonstration by Chris Davis

**At Arcadia Sanctuary from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.:**

- **games, information and activities** for all ages, and
- **“Eyes on Owls.** 11 a.m. AND 1 p.m.

This wonderful demonstration of six (6) species of **live owls** from New England and beyond will occur at 11:00 a.m. and AGAIN at 1:00 p.m. Don't miss this unique opportunity to learn about these amazing birds.

The **venues** are:

\*The Silvio Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge  
(Fort River Division)  
69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley

\*\*Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Massachusetts  
Audubon Society)  
127 Coombs Road, Easthampton.

Festival **organizers** include

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Hampshire Bird Club,</li> <li>◆ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,</li> <li>◆ Mass Audubon,</li> <li>◆ Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation,</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries &amp; Wildlife (MassWildlife),</li> <li>◆ Hitchcock Center for the Environment,</li> <li>◆ Friends of the Fort River Division and</li> <li>◆ Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

Festival **sponsors** include

- ♣ Springfield Naturalists Club and
- ♣ Hadley Garden Center.
- ♣ The Kestrel Trust

## Bird Festival Volunteers

The **Hampshire Bird Club** through the **Education Committee** is one of the partners in the upcoming Valley Bird Festival on Saturday, May 30.

We are looking for **volunteers** from the HBC to assist with the event that day.

If you are interested in volunteering or finding out more about the volunteer opportunities please contact **Jim Lafley** at [Jim.Lafley@state.ma.us](mailto:Jim.Lafley@state.ma.us) or at (413) 221-1941.



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

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

Volume 31, No. 9

**May, 2015.**

In this edition:

- The **program** this month, and the last remaining program for the year,
- **field trip reports** and the crowded **trip schedule** for the next month,
- some great offerings from the **Education Committee**,
- the **Annual General Meeting** announcement,
- a call-to-arms from the **Refreshment Committee**,
- **Celebrate Birds**: a family birding festival in the valley,
- **Hitchcock** and **Broad Brook Coalition** programs, and
- a plea on behalf of the **Worthington cranes**.

I hope you find some of it useful.

## NEXT PROGRAM

**Monday, May 11 at 7:15 p.m.**

**Jonah Keane** joins us to shed light on

**Arcadia: The Past, Present and Future of Mass Audubon in the Pioneer Valley**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

**Jonah Keane** will discuss the work of the country's oldest Audubon society. Mass Audubon has been active in the Valley for over 70 years, though questions exist about how they function, the breadth of their work, and what their connection to birds is in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Jonah will answer these questions as well as outline their vision locally for the coming years. He'll also describe the birds and habitat management that occur at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary and why Arcadia is one of the Valley's natural gems.

Jonah is the Sanctuary Director for Mass Audubon's Connecticut River Valley Sanctuaries and is based at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton and Northampton. He started in his position in January 2014 after nine years managing programs with the Student Conservation Association. He received a MS in Forest Ecology from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and a BS in Environmental Studies from the University of Vermont. Jonah served as an environmental educator and volunteer coordinator with the Peace Corps in Bolivia for three years. He enjoys spending time in the woods year round.

## COMING PROGRAMS

**June 8, 2015. Mario Cohn-Haft.** What's so Special about Amazonian Birds?

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### Hawk Watch at Goat Peak: Wednesday, April 22

Nine people hiked with **Tom Gagnon** to the venerable fire tower at the summit of Goat Peak and got great looks at (at least) **163 Broad-winged Hawks** and a smattering of other species, including one Bald Eagle. Elsewhere on the reservation, the group heard a wonderful singing **Winter Wren** and watched honey bees coming and going from a colony at least 50 feet off the ground in a White Pine\*. No-one was stung!

Tom Gagnon

\*This story bears a striking resemblance to one of my favorite Winnie the Pooh stories, but it appears no-one thought of using a balloon to get to the hunny. *Ed.*

## COMING TRIPS

*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 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. Please check all information with the trip leaders.*

Every Tuesday in May, field walks will take place at the Fort River Division of the Conte NWR, 6:30 a.m..

May 5, George Regmund;

May 12, Bob Bieda;

May 19, Mike Locher;

May 26, George Regmund.

Meet at the refuge parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley). These walks are co-sponsored by the HBC and the Friends of the Fort River Refuge. (E)

**\*Saturday May 9. Mitch's Way.** Half day. Josh Rose takes a walk along the river looking for neotropical migrants. Depending on interest, a more challenging walk into adjacent Skinner State Park to look for Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers could be arranged. Lunch and ice cream will be at the Barstow Creamery. Meet at 6 a.m. at the parking lot of the Hadley Village Barn Shops, (41 Russell St., Hadley), near the Ecuador Andino store. Any questions, contact Josh (413-835-0093 or [opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com](mailto:opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com)). (E/M)

**Saturday, May 9. Quabbin Park and East Quabbin.** All day. Tom Gagnon leads his annual spring trip to the eastern side of the reservoir in search of spring migrants. Participation is limited and you must be a member of the Hampshire Bird Club to participate. To register, contact Tom (413-584-6353 or [tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com](mailto:tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com)). Please register early. (M)

**Thursday, May 14. Mount Holyoke.** Half day. Tom Gagnon leads a hike up Mt. Holyoke in search of Cerulean Warblers and other spring migrants. Plan to stop along the way to look at some of the flora of Mt. Holyoke. Meet at 7 a.m. at the gate of Mt. Holyoke. For information contact Tom (413-584-6353 or [tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com](mailto:tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com)). (M)

**Coming trips continues next page►**

(Coming Trips, continued)

**Saturday, May 16. Bartholomew's Cobble.** All day. Mike Locher travels to the southwest corner of the state to the unique habitat of Bartholomew's Cobble. There should be Bobolinks in the fields and woodland migrants in the forests around the cobble. The cobble is a haven for ferns and wildflowers found nowhere else in the state. Meet at Northampton Stop & Shop (228 King Street) at 6 a.m. and bring a lunch. Call Mike (413-585-5864) for further details. (M)

**\*Saturday, May 30. Wentworth Farm.** Half day. Josh Rose leads an easy walk looking for breeding Orchard Orioles, Brown Thrashers, Bobolinks, Green Herons, and whatever else he can find. If the weather is suitable we will also probably look at butterflies and dragonflies. Meet at 6 a.m. at the Stanley St. trailhead in Amherst. Any questions, contact Josh (413-835-0093 or opihi-at-mindspring-dot-com). (E)

**Sunday, May 31. Grace Robson State Wildlife Sanctuary.** Half day. Mike Locher goes in search of Hooded Warblers, who have been singing here for several years, but will stop for any of the numerous warblers that haunt this little-known reserve. If time and energy permit, we could extend the trip to bird around Mt. Tekoa. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop (228 King Street) at 6:30 a.m. Call Mike (413-585-5864) for further details. (M)

**Saturday, June 6. Westover Air Force Base.** Half day. Bob Bieda hosts the HBC's annual trip to 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) at least two weeks ahead of time to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E)

**\*Sunday, June 7. Knightville Dam.** Half day. Betsy Higgins and Marcia Merithew explore Knightville Dam for spring migrants and local residents. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for details. Meet at 7 a.m. at the John F. Kennedy Middle School (100 Bridge Road; Florence, MA). (E)

## **Ahem! A Word from Miss Manners on Field Trip Etiquette**

With so many trips in the offering over the next month or so, a few gentle words on basic courtesies. Please look after our trip leaders and ensure that they feel like staying with the field trip program by following the Field Trip Guidelines. Here are some excerpts from the guidelines: the full version is at

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines/>

- ♥ *Please call the trip leader at least a few days before the trip. It helps the leader plan the trip and you learn about any special arrangements or any change of plans.*
- ♥ *Carpooling is essential to allow the group to park when space is limited, reduce delays, reduce the likelihood of auto accidents and to reduce the chances of the group becoming separated. Carpooling from the valley is best. Carpooling once the trip location is reached is the next best option. The participants (not the leader) are responsible for making all carpool arrangements.*
- ♥ *Please share costs with courtesy. We recommend a cost of \$0.50 cents per mile plus tolls and parking to be shared equally among the driver and all passengers, but the rate for your vehicle is entirely up to the driver and passengers. Agree on a mileage rate or flat contribution **BEFORE** the trip leaves to avoid misunderstandings. Bring cash or checks and be prepared to reimburse the driver at the time of the trip.*

Thank you for your cooperation!

## FALL FIELD TRIP SUGGESTIONS

Our Field Trip Chair, **Mike Locher** cannot afford to be distracted by the gaudy arrivals of Spring. He is hard at work on the **Fall Field Trip Schedule**. If you have **new ideas** for trips to be done between September and the new year, especially if you are prepared to lead these trips, please let Mike know. You can find him at [fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) or by phone at (413) 585-5864.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The **Annual General Meeting** of the **Hampshire Bird Club Incorporated** will be held on **Monday, May 11, 2015** at the **Immanuel Lutheran Church** (867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst) at **7:15 p.m.** The meeting will immediately precede the May program.

The agenda for the meeting is to elect the Board of Directors for the year from May 11, 2015 to May 11, 2016. The Nominating Committee has prepared the following slate of nominees, which is subject to change prior to and at the AGM.

**President:** Scott Sumner

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

**Treasurer:** Stephen Baker

**Membership Secretary:** Sue Emerson

**Communications Secretary:** Sharon Dombeck

**Board Members at large:**

Bruce Hart  
Mike Locher  
Jan Ortiz  
David Peake-Jones  
Josh Rose  
Jaap van Heerden

Hampshire Bird Club WELCOMES and encourages other nominations for ANY and ALL of the above positions. These may be sent to any member of the Nominating Committee or presented from the floor at the Annual General Meeting. At-meeting nominees must be present at the meeting so as to verify their consent.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**Plants Birds Love and Where to Put Them in Your Yard**

May 14, 2015. 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Hadley Garden Center

HBC member **Dan Ziomek** will host this workshop which is sure to give you some wonderful gardening ideas. Attendees are asked to make a donation so we may buy a tree that birds will love and plant it in Amherst. Rain date is May 21. Open for all Hampshire Bird Club members.

**Spring Bird Photography Workshop: FULL**

**John Van de Graaff's** photography workshop is booked up.

Contact Janice Jorgensen ([education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org)) to be wait-listed.

Education Committee continues next page ►

## (Education Committee Programs, continued)

**The Dawn Chorus:** *Don Kroodsmas*

Saturday, June 6, 2015 4:15 a.m. (Yup, that's when it all begins)

Mass Audubon's Graves Farm, Williamsburg, MA\* (directions below)

Join us as we listen to the world awake, or join us when the spirit moves you, as we will be in the area listening until 9 a.m., or whenever all participants have departed, whichever happens first. We will listen with unaided and aided (parabolic reflector, headphones, etc.) ears, recording whatever we hear so that it is available for possible later study indoors (but not the same day). Bring a chair.

Register DIRECT with Don Kroodsmas ([dekroodsmas@yahoo.com](mailto:dekroodsmas@yahoo.com)) in advance, as we may adjust the meeting place depending on bird activity. Expect an informational email from Don by Friday, June 5 at 6 p.m.

Co-sponsors: **Hampshire Bird Club Education Committee,**  
**Mass Audubon Connecticut River Sanctuaries,**  
**Allen Bird Club**

Further information: Bruce Hart, [bhart2000@aol.com](mailto:bhart2000@aol.com), 584-4176

**\*DIRECTIONS TO GRAVES FARM:**

Mileages are included as well as landmarks, 'cause its gonna be PITCH DARK.

From Amherst/Hadley

Rt 9 towards Northampton, cross Calvin Coolidge Bridge.

Immediately across the bridge (it will feel more civilized), RIGHT onto Damon Road.

POINT A is here.

Continue on Damon Road and CROSS King Street (Rt 5) onto Bridge Road after 1 mile.

Continue on Bridge Road for 2.3 miles to the Look Park Rotary. Take the 1st exit off rotary onto Rt 9 West.

Continue on Rt 9 West for 3.9 miles, RIGHT onto Depot Road, just past Lashway Lumber.

POINT B is here.

Continue on Depot Road for 1.1 miles, RIGHT onto Adams Road.

Continue past the farmhouse on the left, across the brook, up the hill to the parking lot on the RIGHT.

From points South.

I-91 North to Exit 18. At the foot of ramp (LIGHT) straight onto Damon Road.

Now follow directions from POINT A above.

From the boonies (points west)

Take Rt 9 toward Northampton.

About 0.7 miles past the Williamsburg General Store, LEFT onto Depot Road.

Now follow directions from POINT B above.

If you are interested in other educational workshops like, say, bird nest box building, choosing optics, hawk ID, warbler ID, shorebird ID, Freudian ID\*.....whatever! Contact the education Committee with your ideas.

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

\*OK, we can't do Freudian ID.

## **REFRESHMENTS: Help Wanted!!**

I am **retiring** from the refreshment table in June and am hoping that someone, or a group of folks willing to share the responsibility, will take over. I know everyone enjoys the food and the sociability it provides and it would be disappointing to have this disappear. Please contact me or any board member if you are interested.  
Sally Hills: [sara09-at-charter.net](mailto:sara09-at-charter.net).

**Yikes. HBC without the refreshment table would be like pancakes without maple syrup. JUST UNTHINKABLE. Need someone to step up.....**

## **HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS**

**Tour the Orchard Arboretum at Applewood:** *Dan Ziomek and Ann Cann*

May 6: 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm

**Biothon 2015**

May 8 - May 10.

**Tour of Amherst Wastewater Treatment Facility**

May 20: 10:00 am - 11:30 am

**Morning Nature Walk for Seniors:** *John Green*

May 25: 9:00 am - 11:00 am. FREE. At Fort River Division, Conte NWR. Space limited.

*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).*

## **Broad Brook Coalition Programs**

**Birding for Children:** **Marcia Merithew and Bruce Hart**

**Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, Northampton.**

**Saturday, May 9, 9-11 a.m.**

Please help to spread the word about this birding program meant to help introduce children to the wonders of birding and the outdoors and fuel the fires for those already engaged. We'll have a few leaders and extra binoculars and we'll complement the program with 'live' photographs of some of the birds we see. Meet at the old Moose Lodge entrance, (Boggy Meadow Road, top of Cooke Ave., off Hatfield Street).

**Birding:** **Bob Zimmermann**

**Saturday, May 23, 7-9 a.m.**

**Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, Northampton. North Farms Rd. entrance**

As migrating songbirds return from Central and South America, they busy themselves with staking out territories, finding mates and building nests. We'll use sight and sound to see who's returned to the FLCA as we walk along the Lake Trail from North Farms Road to the lake, the dam and Cooke's Pasture. The group will meet at the North Farms Rd. entrance.

## **The Worthington Cranes Ethical Role Models Needed**

Sadly, some of the people who are visiting Worthington (western Hampshire County) have been walking out into the fields to get close-up photos of the Sandhill Cranes which have been residing there for the past few summers.

The landowners have contacted HBC, and are extremely concerned for the continued well-being of the birds on their property as well as their own privacy.

This is a working farm, posted private property, and the landowners do NOT approve of anyone entering their fields. Repeated bothering of the cranes over the past two seasons has likely contributed to their lack of reproductive success to this point. When present, the birds are easily visible from the roadways, and birders should observe from the road (taking care to not block driveways, access to the fields by landowners, or any other traffic), but anyone entering the fields WILL be prosecuted for trespassing to the full extent of the law. If trespassing continues the landowners and local authorities will stop tolerating roadside observation.

If you are in Worthington and observe someone trespassing, please communicate with the person that the landowners will not tolerate such behavior and that they should leave the posted property, not only for the benefit of the cranes but as well as to avoid prosecution for trespassing.

The HBC website has a copy of the ABA Code of Ethics if such individuals require further information.

That's all for this month.

On the following pages we have two flyers for the Celebrate Birds event. Please pass the second one (no volunteer pleading) along to someone else to help spread the word.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

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

## CELEBRATE BIRDS

### The first Valley Birding Festival for Families Saturday, May 30 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Join environmental organizations from throughout the valley for a fun-filled and family-oriented day of learning about our feathered friends. The festival will feature events at Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge (Fort River Division)\* in Hadley and then later at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary\*\* in Easthampton. Both venues are **accessible** to all.

#### At Conte Refuge (Fort River) from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

- **bird walks**,
- a **bird banding** demonstration, and
- a **falconry** demonstration by Chris Davis

#### At Arcadia Sanctuary from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.:

- **games, information and activities** for all ages, and
- **“Eyes on Owls.** 11 a.m. AND 1 p.m.

This wonderful demonstration of six (6) species of **live owls** from New England and beyond will occur at 11:00 a.m. and AGAIN at 1:00 p.m. Don't miss this unique opportunity to learn about these amazing birds.

The **venues** are:

\*The Silvio Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge  
(Fort River Division)  
69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley

\*\*Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Massachusetts  
Audubon Society)  
127 Coombs Road, Easthampton.

Festival **partners** include

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ◆ Hampshire Bird Club,   | ◆ Hitchcock Center for the Environment,  |
| ◆ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,                                | ◆ Friends of the Fort River Division and |
| ◆ Mass Audubon,  | ◆ Northfield Mountain Recreation and     |
| ◆ Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation,       | Environmental Center.                    |
| ◆ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife), |  |

Festival **sponsors** include:

- |                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ♣ Hampshire Bird Club          | ♣ Hadley Garden Center.         |
| ♣ Backyard Birds               | ♣ U.S Fish and Wildlife Service |
| ♣ Springfield Naturalists Club |                                 |

### Help Wanted

We are looking for **volunteers** from HBC to help out on the day. Please contact **Jim Lafley** at [Jim.Lafley@state.ma.us](mailto:Jim.Lafley@state.ma.us) or at 413 221 1941 to help or find out more.

## CELEBRATE BIRDS

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|--|--|
| ◆ Hampshire Bird Club,   | ◆ Hitchcock Center for the Environment,  |
| ◆ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,                                | ◆ Friends of the Fort River Division and |
| ◆ Mass Audubon,  | ◆ Northfield Mountain Recreation and     |
| ◆ Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation,       | Environmental Center.                    |
| ◆ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife), |  |

Festival **sponsors** include:

- |                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ♣ Hampshire Bird Club          | ♣ Hadley Garden Center.         |
| ♣ Backyard Birds               | ♣ U.S Fish and Wildlife Service |
| ♣ Springfield Naturalists Club |                                 |



## **Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts**

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 31, No. 10

**June, 2015.**

### **NEXT PROGRAM**

**Monday, June 8 at 7:15 p.m.**

**Mario Cohn-Haft asks What's So Special About Amazonian Birds?**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

The Amazon is the world's largest tropical wilderness area. It has the highest diversity of bird species, the largest rivers and the most new species discovered in recent years. It is, without question, one of the greatest biological wonders of the world. But what's the reason for all these superlatives? What makes the Amazon different from other tropical rainforest areas? We will explore the ecological and evolutionary significance of being on the equator, of huge expanses of unbroken wilderness, of monstrous rivers, of climatic constancy and subtle habitat differences for the formation of one of the most marvelous and least-studied avifaunas known.\*

**Mario Cohn-Haft** was born and raised in western Massachusetts (Northampton and Williamsburg), where an early love of nature and wild places eventually led to a career in ornithology. A member of HBC as a teenager, Mario went on to study biology at Dartmouth College, where he got hooked on both boreal forests and, thanks to a foreign study program, tropical rainforests too. After brief forays as a "bird slave" on research projects from California to Canada and eventually Brazil, he got his Master's and Ph.D. degrees in southern Louisiana, at Tulane and LSU respectively. He is currently Curator of Birds and Staff Scientist at the Brazilian National Institute for Research in the Amazon (INPA), in Manaus, Brazil, where he has studied Amazonian birds since 1987. But he sneaks back up to the family home in Williamsburg as often as possible.

\*I bet there will be some groovy pictures too. . Ed.

### **COMING PROGRAMS**

Good things take time and great things usually involve some uncertainty. So it is with the program for next year.

There will be a great slate for next year. It will have ten programs. The presenters are likely to range, as always, from some of our very own local faves to high flyers from all over the country.

It's just that, well, just at this moment, we are not sure who they will be.

Rest assured that while the rest of us are whiling away the hours in our hammocks, Geoff LeBaron will be laboring to bring about the coalescence of this nebula of possibilities into a gleaming constellation of programs to dazzle and enlighten us. No pressure, Geoff!

So let's all relax and await the unveiling in the next newsletter.

**Oh, but DO mark your calendars for the FIRST program of the new year. Owing to a perfect storm of scheduling issues, the "September" program for 2015 will be held on Monday, August 31.**

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### **Mitch's Way and Skinner State Park, Hadley. Saturday, May 9.**

**Josh Rose** led a walk that included riparian birding along the Fort River floodplain, mountain birding on Mount Holyoke and support for local agriculture at Barstow's Creamery. A good day by any-one's yardstick.

At Mitch's Way, the highlight was probably having both species of waterthrushes singing simultaneously (even if we didn't actually see either one). The sheer abundance of Baltimore Orioles was astounding. Josh eBirded 18 but we were seeing and hearing them constantly, including one little swale where we saw 6 males all at once, so the real total was probably something much larger (somehow we didn't see a single Orchard Oriole though). Wood Thrushes were also surprisingly abundant, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks as well (but the orioles outnumbered both combined). A pair of Yellow-throated Vireos put on a nice show near the gate; at the far end of the road, a swirl of swallows include Bank-, Tree- and some astonishingly tame Rough-winged-. In between we saw a Solitary Sandpiper, two Green Herons, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a Fish Crow, a Common Raven being chased by a trio of American Crows, and lots more.

We finished walking Mitch's Way around 11 AM and decided to visit Skinner State Park. We had planned only a short walk here but wound up spending over 2 1/2 hours and traipsing about 3/4 of the way up Mount Holyoke. We added several species here that we had missed at Mitch's Way, most notably Worm-eating Warbler, one of the two usual target species at Skinner. Other additions to the day's list included Blackburnian Warbler, Winter Wren, and Hermit Thrush. At one point we thought we might be hearing Cerulean Warbler, the other usual Skinner target, but ultimately decided that the song was coming from either a Northern Parula or Black-throated Blue Warbler.

By then it was 2 PM and we were good and ready for lunch, so we headed to Barstow Creamery, just outside the park. We ate outdoors on the patio and observed 16 bird species over our corn chowder, quiche, and chocolate peanut butter chip ice cream, including Bald Eagle, Killdeer, and Barn Swallow. In all, we tallied 77 species including 77 warblers, four (4) thrushes, four (4) vireos and four (4) flycatchers.

Josh Rose



### **Wentworth Farm, Amherst. May 30**

**Josh Rose** led this walk, inadvertently competing with the first annual Pioneer Valley Birding Festival, which was scheduled for the same day after this walk was planned and announced.

The group saw Green and Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfisher, Barn Swallows, Brown Thrashers, a singing Blue-winged Warbler, and a quick flyover by a pair of Orchard Orioles. The heard-only list included Least- and Willow Flycatchers, Veery, and a faint, distant Yellow-billed Cuckoo. We also witnessed something I had not seen before: a group of Chimney Swifts drinking - repeatedly dipping down to the surface of the pond to scoop up water on the wing.

We saw little evidence of migration but plenty of breeding! We saw nest construction, nest occupation, or food being carried by a number of species including Cedar Waxwing, Baltimore Oriole, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallow, House Wren, and Song Sparrow. Three of the Song Sparrows that we saw were individually marked with color bands, courtesy of a squad of research assistants from Jeff Podos' lab at UMass. In fact, the enthusiasm for breeding went beyond the birds: a Snapping Turtle was crawling through the grass several meters from the edge of the pond, and a 2-foot-long Sea Lamprey was squirming around in a riffle just upstream of the footbridge over the Fort River.

Josh Rose

## **Grace Robson Wildlife Sanctuary, Westfield. Sunday, May 31.**

Tom Gagnon, Margaret Halbeisen, **Mike Locher**, David Peake-Jones and Mary Lou Splain went in search of Hooded and Cerulean Warblers in this much-neglected birding area west of Westfield. Arriving at the trailhead on Reservoir Road, we parked at the gate and walked in along the closed section of the road through beautiful mature riparian woodland. We gradually toted up a nice collection of birds, mostly by song, including Black-throated Blue Warbler, Wood Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Veery, American Redstart, Black-and-White Warbler, lots of Ovenbirds and Pine Warbler. An insect-like trill bespoke our one **Worm-eating Warbler** for the day and a number of Blackburnian Warblers sang inscrutably from the impossibly high white pines that soared skyward at intervals. A Sharp-shinned Hawk flashed through the dark woods, perhaps portending doom for at least some of the forest birds we were hearing. We paused at the cell phone tower to listen, but found no signs of either of our targets here.

Continuing up the road, we came to the foot of the tiny reservoir where the trail crosses Moose Meadow Brook. A pair of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were foraging madly about, carrying food to a nest hole right over the trail. As we paused here, a non-descript small bird flitted momentarily into view in the roadside vegetation. Tom got just enough to spark his interest and for ten minutes we were engrossed in trying to get better looks at what was actually a pair of birds. Both disappeared immediately into the higher canopy and steadfastly refused to reveal any more of themselves. We had enough to conclude that the female was, indeed, a **Cerulean Warbler** and this would be all we had to show of the target species for the morning.

Hooded Warbler is a species that seems to be gradually inching its way into Massachusetts from the south and, though they have been reliably reported from this area for some years, our experience demonstrated that the species is far from a 'gimme' even here. We had to content ourselves with a morning full of possibilities and hope for the future.

David Peake-Jones

## **COMING TRIPS**

**Saturday, June 6. Westover Air Force Base.** Half day. Bob Bieda hosts the HBC's annual trip to 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 and registration is now closed.. (E)

**\*Sunday, June 7. Knightville Dam.** Half day. Betsy Higgins and Marcia Merithew explore Knightville Dam for spring migrants and local residents. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for details. Meet at 7 a.m. at the John F. Kennedy Middle School (100 Bridge Road; Florence, MA). (E)

**Saturday, July 11. Milford Point and Sherwood Island.** Full day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths head down to southern Connecticut to find Piping Plovers, American Oystercatchers, terns of various sorts, and many other coastal specialties. Contact Devin at (413-323-8417) for meeting details and more information. (M)

**Wednesday, July 22. Bobolinks and Baltimore Checkerspots.** Half day. Tom Gagnon leads us to look for birds and butterflies at the Bullitt Reservation in Ashfield and Conway (399-401 Bullitt Road, Conway – do not attempt to drive the impassable North Poland Road to get there), a 265-acre old New England farm now managed by The Trustees of Reservations. The farmhouse is now open to the public as a showcase for energy-efficient technologies that work for New England homeowners. We will explore some of the many fields and trails. There should be plenty of Bobolinks and gorgeous Baltimore Checkerspots. Restrooms available. Contact Tom (413-584-6353 or tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com) for meeting information and to register for the trip. (M) Directions follow.

## Directions to Bullitt Reservation

### From points South

- 1) From I-91, Exit 24, take Route 5 North.
- 2) After 1.1 miles, turn left onto Route 116 West.
- 3) Drive West on 116 approx. 10 miles through Conway and into Ashfield.
- 4) Turn left onto Bullitt Road. Proceed approx. 1 mile to driveway and white buildings on right where road turns sharply left. Note: Do not try to take the impassable North Poland Road to Bullitt Road.

### From Points North

- 1) I-91 South to Exit 25.
- 2) Turn West on Rt 116, then follow steps 2-4 above.

## FALL FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

### Leaders and Ideas Wanted

Just like Geoff, there is no summer break for Mike Locher. Our long-suffering field trip chair will be toiling to put together the Fall Field Trip Schedule. If you have trip ideas, ESPECIALLY if you are prepared to LEAD these trips, please contact Mike ([fieldtrip-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org](mailto:fieldtrip-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org); 413 585 5864) as soon as possible. The schedule goes to press in mid-August.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**The Dawn Chorus:** *Don Kroodsma*

Saturday, June 6, 2015 4:15 a.m. (Yup, that's when it all begins)

Mass Audubon's Graves Farm, Williamsburg, MA

Meet in the parking lot, one hour before the sun rises.

Join us as we listen to the world awake, or join us when the spirit moves you, as we will be in the area listening until 9 a.m., or whenever all participants have departed, whichever happens first. We will listen with unaided and aided (parabolic reflector, headphones, etc.) ears, recording whatever we hear so that it is available for possible later study indoors (but not the same day). Bring a chair.

If you plan to gather with us, register DIRECT with Don Kroodsma ([dekroodsma@yahoo.com](mailto:dekroodsma@yahoo.com)) in advance, as we may adjust the meeting place depending on bird activity. Expect an informational email from Don by Friday, June 5 at 6 p.m.

Co-sponsors: **Hampshire Bird Club Education Committee,**  
**Mass Audubon Connecticut River Sanctuaries,**  
**Allen Bird Club**

Further information: Bruce Hart, [bhart2000@aol.com](mailto:bhart2000@aol.com), 584-4176

## THANK YOU, SALLY

It is finally happening (not that anyone looked forward to this (except perhaps, Sally herself).

For as long as I can remember, Sally Hills has chaired the refreshment committee, which is to say that, month-in and month-out, she is the one who has patiently coordinated the efforts of our many willing volunteers to provide refreshments at meetings. It takes some work and Sally has earned a rest.

So here's to you Sally! Next time you sample the fare at an HBC meeting it will be strictly for your own enjoyment, not to check for freshness.

Thank you for all your efforts and the pleasure they have brought to so many over so many years.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

“Throw the bums out” is a storied part of the American political tradition, but it just does not seem to apply to the HBC. Rather, the HBC has enjoyed, shall we say, considerable “continuity” on the board over a number of years. At the AGM on May 11, the following were elected to serve for the 2015-2016 season.

**President:** Scott Sumner

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

**Treasurer:** Stephen Baker

**Membership Secretary:** Sue Emerson

**Communications Secretary:** Sharon Dombeck

**Board Members at large:**

Bruce Hart  
Mike Locher  
Jan Ortiz  
David Peake-Jones  
Josh Rose  
Jaap van Heerden

Any resemblance to the board from last year is purely actual.

## REFRESHMENTS FUTURE

### Chairperson needed

Thank you to those who have expressed interest in helping coordinate refreshments for HBC.

We do need someone to actually take the plunge and offer to be the Refreshment Chair. This is where the rubber meets the road, or, perhaps, where the brownies meet the plate.

If you can be this person, even for a single season, please let the refreshment committee know.

You can reach them at [refreshments-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org](mailto:refreshments-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org).

We are coming down to the wire, folks, as August 31 approaches. Will the table be bare?

## Color-Banded Birds

During the recent pioneer Valley Birding Festival, Nestwatch color-banded a series of birds at Arcadia.

They would be delighted to hear from you if you observe any of these color-banded birds in the field.

Here is the list of birds and the color bands they are wearing.

I have not listed the number on the aluminum band, since the notification if you have the bird in hand would be the standard listed on the band.

| SPECIES                | LEFT LEG        | RIGHT LEG      |
|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Gray Catbird           | Black           | Aluminum/Pink  |
| Gray Catbird           | White           | Blue/Aluminum  |
| Gray Catbird           | Red             | Aluminum/Green |
| Gray Catbird           | Aluminum/Yellow | Blue           |
| Gray Catbird           | Aluminum/Yellow | Pink           |
| Black-Capped Chickadee | Yellow          | Pink/Aluminum  |
| Song Sparrow           | Red             | White/Aluminum |

If you observe one of these birds, please contact:

Neighborhood Nestwatch Springfield

email: [springfield.nestwatch@gmail.com](mailto:springfield.nestwatch@gmail.com); 413 545 5447.

## THE FIRST ANNUAL PIONEER VALLEY BIRDING FESTIVAL

The event went off at the Fort River division of the Conte Wildlife Refuge and at Arcadia Sanctuary on Saturday, May 30.

Jim Laffley was a primary organizer of this audacious event, which drew together a wide range of environmental organizations to provide a great series of programs for families.

Here are some of Jim's preliminary comments on the event.

*"I think our first effort at a festival went fairly well. We got a lot of positive responses during and after the event.*

*We got a report of almost 100 attendees at Fort River and about 300 at the Arcadia site.*

*We had a great turnout of members to volunteer and attend the event."*

Jim and all those from HBC who contributed to this ground-breaking event deserve our congratulations for the effort they contributed and the great response from the community.

The organizing partners will be meeting soon to consider the future of the event. Stay tuned!

That is all for this year.

We continue to have Field trips scheduled throughout the summer (see 'Coming Trips').

### **The next program is on Monday, August 31.**

Look for details in the next newsletter, scheduled to hit news-stands early- to mid-August. At this time we will also be asking for your membership renewal with its attendant transfer of wealth to our worthy non-profit. We trust you will be receptive. Until then, this publication takes a break.

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

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

P.S. I hope you all understand just how difficult it was for me to spell "Aluminium" **WRONGLY** on no fewer than **SEVEN** occasions for this newsletter. I am nursing a stiff drink while trying to recover.



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 32, No. 1

**September, 2015.**

**The first program for this year is on Monday, August 31. See p.2 for details**

There has been a surge of investment in our local communities lately. No, I am not talking about the new buildings at UMass, though they unquestionably qualify, and I am not talking about all the folks who shop at local farmer's markets, though that too is without doubt a commendable contribution to local agriculture and a sustainable food supply. I am referring instead to all those ratty looking young birds of every shape and size that are wandering about the landscape trying to figure out what this "life" business is all about. They are an investment by their parents in the unique genetic lineage which is their species.

After fledging, many get but a month or two to get their feet under them before braving a long and perilous journey southward for the winter. When we see them again, they will be making breeding investments of their own.

Time for us to make an investment in our bird club. As promised, we have yet another series of stimulating programs to offer each month between now and next June, starting with a humdinger on August 31. The Fall Field Trip schedule is packed with chances to get out there with like-minded folks to see real birds in action. The Education Committee has plans to draw new people into the joys of birding and a bunch of people from the Boutique Proprietor to the Refreshment Committee will be working to add some zing to our bird club.

It all requires a certain amount of green stuff, cashola, fiscal wherewithal, filthy lucre. Call it what you will, a TEENY percentage of your hard-earned income needs to leak over into the HBC coffers if we are to keep the whole show going for another year. You can really help by making your contribution NOW so we can get on with sharing our love of and appreciation for birds. Just follow the handy-dandy checklist below and THANK YOU!!

## **Please Join or Renew Your Membership NOW**

- ☐ If you are a current member, you will receive a newsletter and membership form in the mail. If you are new to us and want to join, print this document.
- ☐ Complete the **Membership Form** (including your membership contribution for this year) and its reverse side (the **Field Trip Release Form**),
- ☐ Throw in a donation for the work of the **Education Committee** if you wish,
- ☐ **Mail** the above forms (with your check if needed) to the address on the Membership Form, or bring them along on August 31.

**Please renew before October 1 by mail, or at the August 31 meeting. Thanks**

In this edition:

- The **September program**, (actually happening on August 31)
- The (as promised) **Program Schedule** for the year,
- The **Fall Field Trip Schedule**, and
- All the forms you need to renew.

Please read on!

## NEXT PROGRAM

**Monday, August 31 at 7:15 p.m.**

### **John Kricher asks Why Did I Go To Borneo?**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Borneo is the world's third largest island and historically has contained some of the planet's richest tropical biodiversity. While increasingly under threat from extensive logging and palm oil production, some significantly large tracts of rain forest remain and are protected, including in Sabah, in northern Borneo. John Kricher will share some observations from his recent trip to Sabah and provide an overview of Bornean biodiversity in a talk richly illustrated with images of everything from broadbills and babblers to orangutans and proboscis monkeys.

**John Kricher** is a Professor of Biology at Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts. Dr. Kricher teaches courses in ecology, ornithology, and vertebrate evolution. His most recent book is *Tropical Ecology*, (Princeton University Press 2011), now the leading textbook on the subject of global tropical ecology. He has also authored *The Balance of Nature: Ecology's Enduring Myth* (Princeton University Press 2009), and *Galapagos: A Natural History* (Princeton University Press 2006). Other books include the best-selling *A Neotropical Companion*, and three North American ecology field guides (*Eastern Forests*, *Rocky Mountain and Southwestern Forests*, *California and Pacific Northwest Forests*) in the Peterson series. His widely used book, *A Neotropical Companion* has been translated into Spanish through the Birders' Exchange Program of the American Birding Association. He has also produced three recorded lecture series, one on dinosaurs, one on ecology, and one on the biology of birds, all published by Modern Scholar. John is a Fellow in the American Ornithologists Union and has served as president of the Association of Field Ornithologists, and president of the Wilson Ornithological Society.

## COMING PROGRAMS

**October 19, 2015. Stephanie Clymer.** Preserving Old Bird Records.

**November 9, 2015. Drew Vitz.** Bird Conservation in Massachusetts.

**December 14, 2015. HBC Members.** The Members Meeting.

**January 11, 2016. Dave Wiley.** Tracking Great Shearwater Migration.

**February 8, 2016. Scott Weidensaul.** Project SNOWstorm and other studies of owls.

**March 7, 2016. Scott Sumner.** The Big Chicken Run.

**April 11, 2016. Gary Langham.** Climate Study.

**May 9, 2016. Andrea Jones.** A Perspective on Bird Conservation in California.

**June 13, 2016. Geoff LeBaron.** (to be determined)

## LIBRARY

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

Hours are those of the Hitchcock Center:

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

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

*The collection is catalogued on-line at [www.hampshirebirdclub.org](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 Lappen**, the librarian, is happy to bring items to meetings, if you give him a few days in advance. You can reach him at **(413) 549 3722 or [library-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org](mailto:library-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org).**

## ONLINE NEWSLETTER

The membership form asks you to select either “on-line” access to the newsletter this year, or the tried-and-true “hard copy” delivered to you via the United States Postal Service.

### **“Why choose “on-line?”**

You can archive our publication digitally, without accumulating paper files, or print at home if you like. You reduce postage and printing costs for HBC, which keeps dues down for all of us.

### **“How does on-line access 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 if I encounter technical difficulties?”**

The system is pretty easy to use if you have email access, are accustomed to downloading content from the Internet. 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 software requirements?”**

The newsletter will be posted on the Website in PDF format. This means you will need to have .pdf-reading software on your system. If you do not have it already, Adobe Acrobat 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?”**

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

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

*“The purpose of the HBC is to help members and the general public enjoy birding and to educate them about birds, bird watching, and bird habitats.” (HBC Bylaws)*

How do we attract more young people to birding? Do most HBC presentations really hold a child’s interest? How do we get kids out into the field? What to do when physical issues due to aging, illness or accident won't allow one to participate at meetings or in the field as before?

School presentations, senior walks and programs, live bird interactions (captive and wild), visits to raptor centers, learning about falconry, organizing boy & girl scout merit badge events, member workshops, purchasing and/or reading natural history and bird books to children: these are just a few of the ideas on the table. You can donate to support the work of the committee via your membership form, but just as importantly, we need your input and energy. What ideas do you have? Let us know! Or better still, join the committee!

Contact the committee at [education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org)

## CHRISTMAS COUNT

**Mark your calendars (or put some ones and zeroes in whatever digital device now serves...)**

The Northampton Christmas Bird Count will be on **Sunday, December 20, 2015**. Updated information on the CBC will be available at <http://hampshirebirdclub.org/cbc/>

## REFRESHING NEWS!!

With Sally Hills finally hanging up the Saran Wrap, we have all been on tenterhooks about the future of refreshments at meetings. Would we really be walking into a barren meeting room at the church henceforward? Would we be selling packets of airline peanuts at the door. Would the growling of stomachs drown out all but the most vociferous of speakers? For an intrepid group of members, hereafter to be known as the Lemon Bar Eight, the answer to these questions was a resounding NO.

**Helga Beatty, Marylee Bomboy, Grace Dane, Sue Emerson, Lissa Ganter, Mary Hocken, Jan Howard, and Elaine Reilly** met at an undisclosed location and, after a torrid series of negotiations have crafted some kind of agreement to coordinate refreshments at meetings. The details remain a closely guarded secret (are they using a public or private email server?) but clearly, we can breathe a collective sigh of relief.

One thing to emphasize is the meaning of the word “coordinate”. It does NOT mean that these noble folk will be slaving away until all hours to provide the actual goodies we all consume so avidly at meetings. No, dear reader. We, the membership, must continue to don the frilly apron\* and oven mitts if we want to eat at meetings. But the new refreshment committee will make sure that there is someone there to remind us and gently push us along if we are reluctant.....

Thank you to all the refreshment committee, and here’s to the long-life and health of the refreshment table!

\*All aprons are frilly, right?

The **Fall Field Trip Schedule** is attached along with materials to renew your membership.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

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



## FIELD TRIP RELEASE FORM.

### Required if you will participate in field trips.

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/we 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/we may incur, directly or indirectly, while on field trips run by HBC within one (1) year of the date below.

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

All participating family members, please sign and print name:

- 1)..... print name▶ .....
- 2)..... print  
name▶ .....
- 3)..... print name▶ .....

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## RARE BIRD ALERT FORM: Optional

The Rare Bird Alert is an optional email-only alert system that informs you when and where rare birds are sighted in the valley, or, in some cases, the broader region.

To join via this form

Complete the form and return it with your membership form or turn it in at the Sept./Oct. meetings.

To join online:

Provide name/s and email address/es to [membership@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org)

You may provide as many email addresses as you like (within reason, please). Participants **will need to provide us with at least one (1) active email address**. automatically receive all RBA announcements.

Please email [membership@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org) if your email changes.

I would like to receive RBA alerts ☐. email address/es (1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

|  |
|--|
| Return with membership form to HBC, P.O. Box 716, Amherst, MA 01004-0716 or turn in at the September/October meetings. |
|--|

## Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Fall Field Trip Schedule, 2015

*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 – [mlocher@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:mlocher@hampshirebirdclub.org)) is always looking for new trip ideas and leaders.*

*The Hampshire Bird Club recommends carpooling whenever possible, and suggests that all riders share equally the per-car cost of 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. Please check all information with the trip leaders, and look for updates on our new website (to be launched early this fall).*

### SEPTEMBER

**\*Saturday, September 12. Quabbin Gate 5 and Lake Wallace.** Half day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths lead a trip around Belchertown's two birdiest lakes. Contact Devin (413-323-8417) to get meeting details and for more information. (M)

**Wednesday, September 16. Hawkwatching at the Goat Peak.** Half day. Join Tom Gagnon (413-584-6353) at the old Mount Tom park headquarters at 8:45 for a 20 minute walk to the Goat Peak observation tower. Dress warmly, and bring lunch. If hawks are moving, the group may stay until 3 p.m., or you may leave when you wish. The rain date is Thursday, September 17. (M)

**\*Saturday, September 19. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. Friends of the Fort River Refuge lead birders through the refuge to find fall migrants and the local inhabitants. The leader threatens to include butterflies, dragonflies and wildflowers as well! Meet at 8 a.m. at the lower parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley). This trip is co-sponsored by the HBC and the FFRR. (E)

**\*Saturday, September 19. Knightville Dam.** Half day. Betsy Higgins explores Knightville Dam for migrants and local residents. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for details. Meet at 7 a.m. at the John F. Kennedy Middle School (100 Bridge Road; Florence, MA). (E)

**Saturday, September 26. Quabbin Reservoir: Fall Migrants.** All day. Tom Gagnon and Craig Allen head into the Quabbin wilderness to find southbound birds (and residents), late season flowers, butterflies, and mammals. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members. Participation is limited to 12 people in 3 cars, so carpooling is a necessity. Rain date Sunday, September 27. Contact Tom (413-584-6353 or [tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com](mailto:tombwhawk-at-aol-dot-com)) well in advance to register, and to get meeting information. (M)

### OCTOBER

**Saturday, October 3. Mineral Hills Conservation Area.** Half day. Betsy Higgins leads a new trip for the club to one of Northampton's conservation areas. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for details. Meet at 7 a.m. at the John F. Kennedy Middle School (100 Bridge Road; Florence, MA). (E)

**\*Wednesday, October 14. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. Friends of the Fort River Refuge lead birders through the refuge to find late fall migrants (especially sparrows). Meet at 8 a.m. at the lower parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley). This trip is co-sponsored by the HBC and the FFRR. (E)

**Sunday, October 25. Dead Creek WMA and Lake Champlain Valley.** All day. Mike Locher (413-585-5864 or mlocher@hampshirebirdclub.org) tries once again to find a Ross' Goose among the hundreds of Snow Geese at their premier staging area in New England. After the geese, he'll look for other seasonal specialties along the shores of Lake Champlain. Meet at Stop & Shop in Northampton (228 King Street) at 5:30 a.m. for carpooling. (E)

**Saturday, October 31. Halloween Extravaganza: Satan's Kingdom, Hell's Kitchen, and more.** All day-ish. Joshua Rose birds Massachusetts' northern stretches of the Connecticut River Valley from Turner's Falls to Northfield in his annual Halloween trip. Meet at the power canal parking area (closest address 1 Migratory Way, Turners Falls) at 7 a.m. Call Josh (413-835-0093) to register and for more information. (E)

## NOVEMBER

**\*Sunday, November 1. Donut Run to the Berkshire Lakes (or, Donuts and Ducks).** All day. Tom Gagnon goes into the hills to find cider donuts at Bartlett's Orchard and also visit the lakes and ponds of western Massachusetts to look for migrating waterfowl and anything else he can find. Meet at Stop & Shop in Northampton (228 King Street) at 6:15 a.m. for carpooling. (Remember to set your clocks back). Dress warmly and bring lunch and water. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to register. (M)

**Saturday, November 14. Chris Ellison Memorial Trip to the East Quabbin.** All day. Craig Allen leads our annual trip to the east side of the reservoir to look for waterfowl and winter finches. You must be a Hampshire Bird Club member to go on this trip. Rain date Sunday, November 15. Contact Mike Locher (413-585-5864 or mlocher@hampshirebirdclub.org) *well in advance* to register, because participation is limited, and to get meeting information. (M)

**Saturday, November 21. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. Friends of the Fort River Refuge lead birders through the refuge to look for whatever happens to be around. Meet at 8 a.m. at the lower parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley). This trip is co-sponsored by the HBC and the FFRR. (E)

## DECEMBER

**Saturday, December 5. Connecticut River Meadows CBC warm-up.** All day. Josh Rose works northward from Hadley hoping for pipits, buntings, longspurs, larks, raptors and all the bounty of early winter! Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot of the Hadley Village Barn Shops, 41 Russell Street, Hadley. Call/email Josh (413-835-0093; ophi-at-mindspring dot com) to register and for more information.

**Wednesday, December 9. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. Friends of the Fort River Refuge lead birders through the refuge to warm up for the Christmas Bird Count.). Meet at 8 a.m. at the lower parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley). This trip is co-sponsored by the HBC and the FFRR. (E)



**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
[www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)

Volume 32, No. 2

**October, 2015.**

**NEXT PROGRAM**

**Monday, October 19 at 7:15 p.m.**

**Stephanie Clymer looks into Preserving Old Bird Records**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

The **Dale Twining Birding Records Project** was initiated to preserve 75+ years of an avid birder's records, from 1935 to 2014 and from Philadelphia to the South Pacific. In order to preserve these records, his friends and family, together with the Wyncote Audubon Society, initiated an effort to digitize them and make the data available to researchers. Volunteers are entering the observations from Dale's record books into online spreadsheets, whence they can be uploaded to the eBird database. Dale Twining's records are the tip of the iceberg and there are many more historical records out there. We are working to preserve this valuable data by encouraging others to retrieve records from drawers and boxes and to use our methods to digitize them before they are lost.

With more records, researchers will be better able to trace the environmental history of climate change, pesticide use, and urban development as they have affected bird populations in the past century. This historical perspective will improve our understanding of bird populations and allow us to look to the past to guide our actions for the future.

**Stephanie L. Clymer** is the Project Director for the Dale Twining Birding Records Project and a Research Assistant for the Smithsonian Institution's Neighborhood Nestwatch at the University of Massachusetts. She previously worked with an urban watershed partnership in Philadelphia and studied plant ecology in Minnesota and West Virginia. Stephanie received her B.A. in Biology from Arcadia University in Pennsylvania and has experience in environmental education, community outreach, wildlife rehabilitation, bird banding, and field research. Her current interests include urban avian ecology and actively engaging citizen scientists in research.

**Membership Renewals are now OVERDUE**

**Thank you if you have already attended to this!**

**If not, please renew NOW!**

- ☐ Your membership status is shown on the cover page. Check to see if you owe dues this year.
- ☐ Complete the **Membership Form** (including your membership contribution for this year) and its reverse side (the **Field Trip Release Form**),
- ☐ Throw in a donation for the work of the **Education Committee** if you wish,
- ☐ **Mail** the above forms (with your check if needed) to the address on the Membership Form, or bring them along on October 19.

**You can also pay your dues ONLINE at [hampshirebirdclub.org/membership](http://hampshirebirdclub.org/membership), if you like.**

## COMING PROGRAMS

**November 9, 2015. Drew Vitz:** Bird Conservation at MassWildlife.

**December 14, 2015. HBC Members.** The Members Meeting.

**January 11, 2016. Dave Wiley:** Tracking Great Shearwater Migration.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### Fort River Division: Silvio Conte NWR. Saturday, September 19

Co-sponsored with Friends of the Fort River.

A dozen people joined **Josh Rose** and **George Regmund**, and tallied 36 bird species, not too shabby given that migration was just about negligible; only 2 species of warbler, 1 vireo, 1 sparrow, and 1 flycatcher.

Highlights were early, late, and in the middle. The people who showed up early were treated to a **Northern Harrier** cruising through the meadow. The last few to leave witnessed a stream of 2 dozen Turkey Vultures plus a few buteos passing over the area as the first real thermals started to form. And roughly halfway between those two, an especially observant participant saw a “blob” in the trees which was being attended by some agitated Blue Jays; it turned out to be one of the resident Great Horned Owls! A **Swainson’s Thrush**, a **Brown Thrasher**, and a pair of **American Kestrels** also highlighted the bird list.

Some non-birds also proved entertaining for the group:

Wildflowers - Nodding Ladies’-Tresses orchids, White Turtleheads, Jack-in-the-Pulpits (fruit), Virginia Virgin’s-Bower/Old Man’s Beard

Herps - Painted Turtles, Spring Peepers, Gray Treefrogs, Bullfrogs and tadpoles

Butterflies - Monarch, Pearl Crescent, Clouded Sulfur, Cabbage White

Dragonflies - Shadow Darner

Other invertebrates - Banded Argiope (spider - orb weaver), Locust Borer (longhorned beetle), Meloe impressus (blister beetles, a whole bunch of them)....

Josh Rose



### Quabbin Reservoir. Saturday, September 26.

**Tom Gagnon** ventured once again into the secluded depths of Boston’s most valuable wilderness in search of fall migrants.

The group found a Common Loon, **Gray cheeked Thrush**, two **Snow Geese**, a middle-of-the-road\* **American Woodcock** and two calling **Saw-Whet Owls**. Mysterious, magical birds in a mysterious, magical place!

To top it all off, the beechdrops were still in bloom.

Tom Gagnon

If the bird’s political inclinations matched its location, we could use him or her in the presidential race. Ed.

## COMING FIELD TRIPS

**\*Wednesday, October 14. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. Friends of the Fort River Refuge lead birders through the refuge to find late fall migrants (especially sparrows). Meet at 8 a.m. at the lower parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley). This trip is co-sponsored by the HBC and the FFRR. (E)

Continues next page ►

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### ***New Since the Schedule was Published***

**Saturday, November 7. Leader's Choice.** All day. Join Geoff LeBaron on this all-day trip. Possible destinations include coastal Rhode Island, coastal Massachusetts, or the local area. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) to get information about destination(s), to register, and get meeting information as the date approaches. (M)

*Please register with the trip leader(s) at least a few days before the trip. HBC recommends carpooling whenever possible, and suggests that all riders share equally the per-car cost of \$0.30 per mile, as well as tolls and parking. See also the "Field Trip Guidelines for Participants" (in the October newsletter or on the Website).*

*The Field Trip Chair (Michael Locher—413-585-5864, [fieldtrip-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org](mailto:fieldtrip-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org)) is always looking for new trip ideas and leaders.*

## **NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

**Sunday, December 20, 2015.**

The annual Northampton Christmas Bird Count (CBC), sponsored by the Hampshire Bird Club, enlists over a hundred volunteers across Hampshire County to count every bird they see and hear. For more than 80 years the CBC has been a citizen science tradition for the Valley.

This long record of data-keeping provides valuable insight into bird populations and the health of their habitats, helping wildlife organizations implement conservation strategies.

**We are looking for additional team members and feeder watchers.**

You can see a map of the Northampton count circle at

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=zRHuvL12FbAQ.kDhebR9yLozg>

If you are interested, contact Jan Ortiz or Janice Jorgensen at [cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org). We welcome newcomers to this fun and fabulous day.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

*“The purpose of the HBC is to help members and the general public enjoy birding and to educate them about birds, bird watching, and bird habitats.” (HBC Bylaws)*

How do we attract more young people to birding? Do most HBC presentations really hold a child’s interest? How do we get kids out into the field? What to do when physical issues due to aging, illness or accident won't allow one to participate at meetings or in the field as before?

School presentations, senior walks and programs, live bird interactions (captive and wild), visits to raptor centers, learning about falconry, organizing boy & girl scout merit badge events, member workshops, purchasing and/or reading natural history and bird books to children: these are just a few of the ideas on the table. You can donate to support the work of the committee via your membership form, but just as importantly, we need your input and energy. What ideas do you have? Let us know! Or better still, join the committee!

Contact the committee at [education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org)

## ON-LINE NEWSLETTER, ANYONE?

If you have not yet sent in your membership form and dues this year, why not consider the on-line newsletter? Why? Well, it is 2015, so anything with the words “on-line” in the title is automatically the best choice, right? It means the club sends less of our hard-earned geld to the USPS, and the newsletter-distribution staff deposit fewer of our skin cells in the folds of the paper newsletters. We editorial minions also have more time for watching reality TV, or whatever other guilty pleasures take the place of “newsletter night.”

It means you get a reminder every month to download the newsletter from the HBC Website in .pdf format. There are now more on-line users than paper recipients, and, as far as I know, the on-line folks are no more unhappy with the newsletter than the traditionalists. Well, think about it and sign up on the membership form if you like! You can always retreat back to the good old paper newsletter if it doesn’t work out.

*If this stealthy sales pitch has convinced you*

**Sign up for the on-line newsletter on the membership form or email the Membership Secretary**  
[\*\*\(membership@hampshirebirdclub.org\)\*\*](mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org)

## LIBRARY

HBC has a substantial library at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. **Hours** are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. Items are catalogued in the “About” section of the HBC Website and 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 or email** [library-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org](mailto:library-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org).

That’s it for this edition.

The Field Trip Guidelines are included, along with membership renewal material if you have yet to renew. 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, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
www.hampshirebirdclub.org  
Volume 32, No. 3  
**November 2015.**

The November newsletter did not go out this month before the program. Hopefully we will get back on track for the December newsletter. This, the belated November edition, contains:

- the **Dead Creek** trip report,
- some **up-coming trips**,
- information about the **Education Committee**,
- the **Northampton Christmas Count**,
- **Hitchcock Programs**, and
- a few other tid-bits.

I hope you find some of it useful!

**NOVEMBER PROGRAM**

**Drew Vitz** speaks about **Conservation at MassWildlife**  
**Monday, November 9 at 7:15 p.m.**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

*Weather-related cancellations announced via the HBC email list and local media.*

Drew will discuss the various programs being conducted at the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife that are related to bird conservation in the state. Topics that will be addressed include Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon restoration, Piping Plover and tern programs, American Kestrel conservation, managing for grassland and shrubland birds, and various other topics.

Andrew Vitz received a B.S. degree from the University of Wisconsin and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the Ohio State University where he studied the effects of forest management on migratory songbirds. Following graduate school, he was an avian ecologist at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pennsylvania, where he managed the Powdermill Avian Research Center. Andrew is currently the State Ornithologist for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife where his focus is on bird conservation throughout the state.

**COMING PROGRAMS**

**December 14, 2015. HBC Members.** The Members Meeting.

**January 11, 2016. Dave Wiley.** Tracking Great Shearwater Migration.

**February 8, 2016. Scott Weidensaul.** Project SNOWstorm and other studies of owls.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### **Dead Creek WMA and Lake Champlain Valley. October 25, 2015.**

**Mike Locher**, Andrew Magee, Devin Griffiths, Aidan Griffiths, David Peake-Jones.

The group only fully assembled along the roadside close to Addison itself, marveling at a gorgeous dark **Merlin** hunting a farmyard. Thence we proceeded to Addison, turned westward onto Route 17 and proceeded to the goose watching station. We struck it rich immediately. The fields right in front of the viewing shelter were solid white with a mass of snow geese: about 1700 by our estimate. We could find nary a Ross's Goose amongst them, but that did nothing to detract from the beauty of these wondrous creatures assembled at close range. A **Peregrine Falcon** perused the gathering from a dead tree. After some scanning and marveling we proceeded northward to Pantown Road and an inauspicious little slang beside the road. Perched in the mud, as reports had said it would be, was perhaps the most auspicious shorebird in the recent history of the trip. A **Hudsonian Godwit**, fully eclipsed but nevertheless a stately and very unexpected bird, perched on the mudflats along with a smattering of Killdeer. Just to remind us where we were, a duo of hunters dispatched a flock of **Green-winged Teal** which, moments before, had sailed serenely past us up the muddy waters of the slang.

Adjourning to the more open waters of Lake Champlain, we stopped first at Button Bay State park where we encountered a lone Horned Grebe (by contrast with the 26 we encountered last year at this location), a Common Loon and a Bald Eagle sitting in a cottonwood at close range. From Potash Bay, a little further south, we spied a raft of Common Mergansers, four (4) **Red-necked Grebes** and at least eight (8) **Bonaparte's Gulls** out in the middle of the lake before our gazes were turned inland by a flurry of songbird activity in a copse by the lakeshore. One by one, as we scanned the elusive critters flitting about in the undergrowth, we came up with **Fox Sparrow**, **Rusty Blackbird**, **Yellow-rumped Warbler** and **Baltimore Oriole** in addition to some more typical November residents.

In similar circumstances at the Tri-town water district we were able to add some Black Scoters to the water bird mix, before heading still further south to the Champlain narrows. Under the remarkable arches of the new Fort Henry bridge we found a series of unremarkable birds, which did include a large number of Double-crested Cormorants and some White-winged Scoters. South of the bridge in the muddy surrounds of McKuen's Slang and Whitney Creek we came up with **Greater Yellowlegs**, 2 Great Blue Heron lingering and a lurking **Dunlin**.

Returning to the Dead Creek NWR for a last sojourn with the geese, we found them not so accessible. From the end of Gage Road we were able to watch them flying in strings into the sheltered sloughs of the refuge, almost like someone were uncoiling and recoiling a rope braided with birds. Another Peregrine Falcon flashed past us in the beautiful late evening light, a fitting end to our day in the Champlain Valley.

## COMING TRIPS

**Saturday, November 21. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. Friends of the Fort River Refuge lead birders through the refuge to look for whatever happens to be around. Meet at 8 a.m. at the lower parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley). This trip is co-sponsored by the HBC and the FFRR. (E)

**Saturday, December 5. Connecticut River Meadows CBC warm-up.** All day.

Josh Rose works northward from Hadley hoping for pipits, buntings, longspurs, larks, raptors and all the bounty of early winter! Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot of the Hadley Village Barn Shops, 41 Russell Street, Hadley. Call/email Josh (413-835-0093; ophi-at-mindspring dot com) to register and for more information.

**Wednesday, December 9. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. Friends of the Fort River Refuge lead birders through the refuge to warm up for the Christmas Bird Count.). Meet at 8 a.m. at the lower parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley). This trip is co-sponsored by the HBC and the FFRR. (E)

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

How to attract more young people to birding? Do most HBC presentations really hold childrens' interest? How do we get kids out into the field? What to do when physical issues due to aging, illness or accident won't allow one to participate at meetings or in the field as before?

The Education Committee tries to reach out to people who might otherwise never have a chance to learn about birds and birding.

School presentations, senior walks and programs, live bird interactions (captive and wild), visits to raptor centers, learning about falconry, organizing boy & girl scout merit badge events, member workshops, purchasing and/or reading natural history and bird books to children, these are just a few of the ideas on the table. You can donate to support the work of the committee via your membership form, but just as importantly, we need your input and energy. What ideas do you have? Let us know! Or better still, join the committee!

Contact the committee at [education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org)

## NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

During the annual Christmas Bird Count, CBC volunteers across the world count birds over any 24-hour period from late December through early January and submit the data to the Audubon Society to be compiled. You can be part of one of the most important citizen science efforts in history.

Join the 83rd Northampton (MANO) CBC on December 20, 2015. We have 36 teams during the daylight hours and about 10 owling teams. At dusk we sit down to a yummy potluck at the Hitchcock Center to compile the results and share the thrills and spills of the day. Be there or be square. To join a team or be a feeder counter contact Janice Jorgensen and Jan Ortiz at [cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org)

## The Feeder Watch

The organizers ESPECIALLY want to increase participation in the feeder watch part of the CBC. If you'd like to be part of the Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 20 but aren't able to be in the field and are within our count area, your help would be appreciated. Please email the compilers at [cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org) or Sally Hills at [sara09@charter.net](mailto:sara09@charter.net).

## The Potluck

### *Food Contributions Needed!*

It is NOT too late to pledge a contribution to the culinary extravaganza that is the potluck. Please email or call Sue Emerson if you can chip in. Whatever you can provide, we, I assure you, can consume! HBC and all volunteer counters thank you!!

## LIBRARY

HBC has a substantial library at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. **Hours** are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. Items are catalogued in the "About" section of the HBC Website and 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** or email [library@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:library@hampshirebirdclub.org).

## HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

**Exploring Larch Hill – All Welcome Monthly Sunday Nature Walk:** *Leader TBA*  
Hitchcock Center, Amherst. 1-3 pm.

**Animal Tracks and Signs at the Quabbin:** *George Leoniak*  
Sunday, December 13: 9am-2pm. Fee.

**Trees of the Connecticut River Floodplain:** *Ted Watt and Nancy Goodman*  
Sunday, November 22: 10 am-1pm. Directions to meeting point at registration. Fee.

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

## WINTER SPRING-SUMMER FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE.

### Trips and Leaders Needed

Fall is giving way to winter as we speak. Mike Locher is charged with coming up with the Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule and he needs YOUR help! We need to keep our field trip offerings fresh and add new offerings to the tried and true range of trips we have at the moment.

If you have an area that you love to bird, or some wonderful birding niche that others would appreciate sharing, please consider leading a trip. Your new trip could become the next beloved HBC standard, but no-one will ever know unless you take the plunge and give it a shot!

If you have ideas for new trips, please contact Mike Locher: [fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) or 413 585 5864. We have to have the schedule set for the January newsletter!!

***Backyard Birds*** (on Strong St. in Northampton) offers a wide range of birding books, audio resources, gifts, feeders, and other paraphernalia. I was in there this past month to buy a replacement for my aging Sibleys, and the owner gave me a 10% discount without my even asking for it!! (The discount is current for all HBC members). It's a great, locally-owned company, and when you shop locally, your money stays here!

That's all for this month.

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, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
www.hampshirebirdclub.org  
Volume 32, No. 4  
**December, 2015.**

One quick glance at this missive will tell you that it is merely a trumped up postcard with three simple goals. One is to alert you that we are meeting this month. A second is to make sure you are aware of the Christmas counts that are happening around the Yuletide. The third is to get the HBC 2015 membership directory into your hands. It appears I have also slipped in an inadvertent quip about the current political circus into the editorial. I will leave you to identify it and let the circus tramp on past, for now.

An **ERROR** to confess to.

The hard copy of the December newsletter contained an error under "Coming Programs."

The February program will feature **David Spector** with "**Sam Peabody and Friends: A Look at Birdsong Interpretation.**" We hope Scott Weidensaul can join us at another time.

Whatever the holidays mean for you, I hope it is not presumptuous to wish for kindness, gentleness and peace in a world which seems to be struggling to hold onto these qualities.

**NEXT PROGRAM**  
**Monday, December 14 at 7:15 p.m.**  
**HBC Members Meeting**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

*Weather-related cancellations announced via the HBC email list and local media.*

**This month, the program is US!**

**Please bring some slides to share.**

As in past years, please limit your show to 15 or fewer slides and you must be prepared to narrate your own stuff. Please contact either **Jaap van Heerden** ([jvanheerden@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:jvanheerden@hampshirebirdclub.org)) or **Geoff LeBaron** ([programs@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:programs@hampshirebirdclub.org)) by 6 p.m. on Sunday, December 13. Please let them know:

- Are your slides digital or 35 mm format?
- If digital, are the images in Powerpoint format or stand-alone images?

If you bring digital images, please have them on a memory stick or CD-ROM disk.

**AND**

**Please bring some sort of snack to share.**

The Refreshment Committee are taking a well-earned break this month. If we don't bring stuff, we will go hungry!!

**COMING PROGRAMS**

**Please note a change to the February program.**

**January 11, 2016. Dave Wiley.** Tracking Great Shearwater Migration.

**February 8, 2016. David Spector.** Sam Peabody and Friends: A Look at Birdsong Interpretation.

# CHRISTMAS COUNTS

## Woo-Hoo!

### Northampton Christmas Bird Count

Join the 83rd Northampton (MANO) CBC on December 20, 2015. We have 36 teams during the daylight hours and about 10 owling teams. At dusk we sit down to a yummy potluck at the Hitchcock Center to compile the results and share the thrills and spills of the day. Be there or be square. To join a team or be a feeder counter contact Janice Jorgensen and Jan Ortiz at [cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org)

### The Christmas Count HOW –TO

*Wanna be part of this whole Christmas Count thing but new to birds and worried about your skill level?* Learn to identify birds at the feeders at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary and join birders from the Hampshire Bird Club to experience the Christmas Bird Count, and discover how your family can become citizen scientists. This program is **free** and requires no registration. Drop in any time between 10:00-12:00 on **Sunday, December 20** (the day of the Northampton CBC). Binoculars are helpful, but not necessary.

### The Feeder Watch

If you'd like to be part of the Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 20 but aren't able to be in the field and are within our count area, your help would be appreciated. Please email the compilers at [cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org) or Sally Hills at [sara09@charter.net](mailto:sara09@charter.net).

### The Potluck

Try, just try, to imagine the Christmas count without the potluck! Imagine struggling back to Hitchcock Center after a day on your feet in the winter weather, with nothing but the prospect of sitting in a cheerless room listening to other groups recount the rarities they found. Instead, we return to the wonderful culinary achievements of our members, ranging from stunning salads to steaming crockpots of chili and melt-in-the-mouth desserts, all washed down, of course, with hot drinks ranging from mulled cider to hot chocolate. **This does not happen by magic.** Please contact Sue Emerson — [spe33@me.com](mailto:spe33@me.com) or 413-588-6900. Whatever you can provide, we, I assure you, can consume. Volunteer counters thank you!!

### Quabbin Count

The Quabbin Count this year is on **Saturday, January 2**.

If you are looking for balmy conditions, balmy people and a frightening diversity of birds, you may want to consider signing on with a team.

Not dissuaded yet? Please contact Scott Turner: [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com) or 413 256 5834

Postponed to January because of lack of space and editor lethargy:

- Reports from the Satan's Kingdom trip in October and the Plum Island trip in November,

Added to the online version this month (after the closing):

- An entirely serious and well-researched compendium of **Christmas Bird Counts in Western Massachusetts** which deserved to make it into the printed letter but for spatial limitations, and
- An entirely frivolous message about December refreshments which has no place in any respectable publication whatsoever.

That's all for this month.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

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

## **December ONLINE Newsletter Extra #1**

### **A Directory of Christmas Bird Counts in Western Massachusetts 2015**

**Sturbridge**

Monday 12/14, contact Mark Lynch at [moa.lynch@verizon.net](mailto:moa.lynch@verizon.net)

**Athol**

Saturday 12/19 Athol, contact Dave Small at [dave@dhsmall.net](mailto:dave@dhsmall.net) or (978) 413-1772

**Central Berkshire**

Saturday 12/19, contact Holly Higganbotham and Bob Wood at (413) 684-3724

**Northern Berkshire**

Saturday 12/19, contact Pam Weatherbee at (413) 458-3538

**Springfield**

Saturday 12/19, contact George Kingston at [gcking@yahoo.com](mailto:gcking@yahoo.com) or (413) 525-6742

**Northampton**

Sunday 12/20 (but you already know all about this one)

**Cobble Mountain**

Saturday 12/26, contact Seth Kellogg at [skhawk@comcast.net](mailto:skhawk@comcast.net) or (413) 569-3335

**Southern Berkshire**

Friday 1/1, contact Rene Laubach at [renelaubach@gmail.com](mailto:renelaubach@gmail.com) or (413) 623-8803

**Quabbin**

Saturday 1/2, contact Scott Sumner at [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com) or (413) 256-5438

**Greenfield,**

Sunday 1/3 contact Mark Fairbrother at [bogelfin@crocker.com](mailto:bogelfin@crocker.com) or (413) 367-2695

**Compiled by Josh Rose**

## December ONLINE Newsletter “Extra” #2

### Cousin Vinnie’s December Refreshments Message

*Cousin Vinnie’s words of wisdom can best be understood if you imagine him standing before you. Please envisage a portly gentleman in a pinstripe suit with a carnation in the lapel and a comb-over. His voice is a high pitched cross between the Godfather and Corporal Klinger from M\*A\*S\*H. Hope that helps.*

“Hey dere. Cousin Vinnie here. Best you don’t know exactly where I am, but let’s just say its close enough that we know where you are. Did I say we? No, just me. No other tough guys in the room. Not even one.

OK, so da refreshment committee got some t’ings to share wit’ youse all. Da committee’s been woyking dey fingers to da bone and deys takin’ a break. Youse all wants anything to eat this month, youse gonna bring it is yaselves. Oh and da committee asked me to toyn up just to, you know, check on things December 14.

You should know I likes lady fingers and an’ I likes to get what I likes if ya know what I mean.

Da Committee hopes youse all can cooperate so nobody has to take an impromptu dip in the Connecticut with, shall we say, non-regulation footwear.

So, like I said, bring some nice eats on December 14 and nobody gets hoyt.

Oh, and IF my brudder Gino happens to show up, he’s gonna be a lot happier if theys cannoli on the table. And you probly wanna have Gino be as happy as possible.”

Jus’sayin’. Know what I mean?

Buon natale,  
Vincenzo.

*In case Vinnie’s message is in any way unclear, we need everyone to bring some goodies to share for the December meeting, lest we go hungry. THANK YOU!*