



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 34, No. 5
January, 2018.

In this edition:

- Our **next program** and the coming program schedule,
- **Field trip reports** and a **coming trip** in January,
- **Hitchcock programs**,
- Some suggestions on bird-finding in Mass. and a chance to sign up for the **Rare Bird Alert**, and
- Summary and provisional results of the **2017 Northampton Christmas Count**.

I hope you find some of it useful!

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, January 8 at 7:15 p.m.

Don Kroodsma reflects on a coming challenge for listers:

You Can't Count It Unless You Hear It

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

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

This program will help you adjust to the new guidelines that have been proposed to the ABA, which would require listers to have a good listen to each species before counting it. We'll wander about the continent, from New England across the midsection to the west coast, heading north from California to Oregon and on up to Alaska, choosing a few sample species with extraordinary voices. First up: the Black-capped Chickadee; later, Red-winged Blackbirds, American Robins . . . to birds who mimic, those who sing through the night, or sing in dialects, or sing from the nest, or sing with enormous variety . . . each species so special that a good listen elevates the soul, and the list.

After getting hooked on birds in college in the late sixties, **Don Kroodsma** attended graduate school at Oregon State University, asking a question about how Bewick's Wrens learn to sing. There followed 23 years during which Don taught at the University of Massachusetts, publishing copiously on the subject of bird song and becoming a leading international authority on the same. Since being (somewhat) liberated from the rigors of full-time teaching, Don published his groundbreaking "*The Singing Life of Birds*" in 2005 and several other books bringing insight into bird song to a wide audience.

For his lifetime of enquiry, Don has received the 2003 Elliot Coues Award (American Ornithologists Union) and the 2006 Robert Ridgway Distinguished Service Award from the American Birding Association. Don was also recognized in 2014 by the Wilson Ornithological Society with the Margaret Morse Nice medal for lifetime contributions to ornithology.

COMING PROGRAMS

February 12, 2018. Keenan Yakola. Seabird Research at Seal Island.

March 12, 2018. Dave Wiley. Great Shearwaters on Stellwagen Bank.

April 9, 2018. Shawn Carey. A Wing and a Care.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area and Lake Champlain Valley, Vermont.

Sunday, October 29

Amanda Kallenbach, **Mike Locher**, Andrew Magee and David Peake-Jones made the now-annual HBC expedition to far western Vermont. We were blessed with an early sighting of **Rough-legged Hawk**, and Green-winged Teal. Eventually, we coasted down Route 17 from the Addison General Store, to find the goose viewing area enveloped only in low cloud and drizzle instead of the anticipated torrential rain. And there were **3,000 Snow Geese**.

In a testament to the triumph of hope over reason, we found various excuses to remain at the viewing area, including a **Peregrine**, several **Northern Harriers**, several confusions* of American Pipits and a kaleidoscopic cluster of mixed blackbirds whirling in and out of a field of standing corn. Just as we finally resigned ourselves to heading out into the rain, a wonderful thing happened. About fifty of the Snow Geese (obviously the “movin’ and shakin’ contingent”) made up their minds to get up and fly over our heads into a corn-stubble field to our north. With growing delight we watched the entire flock follow in groups of several hundred at a time. It was like being an aircraft enthusiast being invited to stand at the end of the flight deck on an aircraft carrier. Every detail of plumage and flight in intimate detail! But there was more delight to come. Having put down several hundred yards away, they then proceeded to steadily forage their way to within fifty yards of us over the course of the next hour. Thus it was that we spent an entire morning, longer than on any other trip in recent memory, enjoying unprecedented views of them feeding and squabbling good-naturedly with one another. We could even hear (for the first time, in my case), a muttering they make as they forage across a muddy field. It is low-pitched and very quiet, not unlike (but quieter than) the sound you hear when you get close enough to Common Eiders. What a treat!

As we typically do, we then adjourned from the refuge to poke around in the mysterious patchwork of farmland, marshes and muddy sloughs that make up the Champlain Valley. From the Stone Bridge we spied a Green-winged Teal and a **Greater Yellowlegs**, as well as an improbable pair of Peregrine Falcons racing overhead. At the confluence of Otter and Dead Creeks we counted over 100 Common Mergansers (apparently there was a merg convention that weekend) and a lonely Bald Eagle perched on a streamside snag. Button Bay, our first chance for open-lake birds did not disappoint. In addition to the usual complement of Horned Grebes we came up with a group of White-winged Scoters, multiple Common Loons, and, the highlight of the trip, a **Pacific Loon**. This highly active and petite bird led us on a merry chase, diving every few seconds and re-emerging elsewhere. It took over an hour of patiently gathering snippets of information and gradually overcoming our reluctance to make waves before we were willing to put our names to the ID. The Vermont Avian Records Committee will have to make its ruling for posterity, but we know what we saw.

The “trench-work” of the trip came at Pantown Road crossing where, with the weather beginning to deteriorate, we came across a group of shorebirds on a muddy flat, obscured by reeds. After trying several different vantage points, and, again, after painstaking group effort, we could confirm nine (9) **Black-bellied Plovers**, three (3) **Dunlin**, and five (5) **White-rumped Sandpipers**.

Finally, from Potash Bay and the Tri-town Water District, we took a last stab at lake birds in failing light and increasing rain. We were able to add good numbers of **Bonaparte’s Gull** and some Black Scoters to the tally before turning our damp bodies for home.

**I have just made “confusion of pipits” my personal collective noun for this species. The term seems to encapsulate both their (apparently) random dashing about in the late fall landscape, and also my abilities with respect to their identification. DPJ*

David Peake-Jones



Plum Island and Environs. Saturday, November 4, 2017.

Peter Allison, Jesse Brownback, Pat Eagan, Betsy Higgins, Leslie Hoffmann, Andrew Magee and Lynne Shapiro headed for the jewel of Massachusetts birding under the guidance of **Geoff LeBaron**. A crisp but relatively mild day made for enjoyable birding.

The group spent some good time at Lot 1 of the Parker River N.W.R., which included nice looks at **Horned Larks** and **Snow Buntings** in the dune-field, and a gaggle of Black-bellied Plovers on the beach. A surprise **Stilt Sandpiper** graced the salt pannes, along with a fly-over **Lapland Longspur**. A late **Lesser Yellowlegs** was in evidence at “the wardens,” as was a **Chipping Sparrow**. The fun continued at Hellcat Swamp, where a very late **Red-eyed Vireo** eked out an existence in the brush, along with a couple of Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Lot 7 played host to a bunch of **Semi-palmated Sandpipers**, more Black-bellied Plovers, spectacular **Snow Buntings**, a nice assortment of sea ducks and distant, diving **Northern Gannets**.

HBC continued a long and nefarious tradition of law-breaking at the Newburyport Waterfront Park, running afoul of local parking authorities. With the sunlight winding down, the party crossed to Salisbury Beach State park, observing a **Peregrine Falcon** devouring a pigeon on the Newburyport Bridge along the way. The salt-marsh mudflats off the boat ramp yielded a staggering **three Hudsonian Godwits** and a gorgeous family of **Brant** out in the mouth of the Merrimack. More subtle fare included Betsy’s **Ipswich Sparrow** (it is a subspecies of Savannah Sparrow). Owls were absent or not playing this day, so all that was left to do was to admire a beautiful sunset.

Other birds which would have wowed me, but which Geoff merely mentions in passing, are **150 plus American Wigeon**, **15 Long-tailed Ducks**, **45 Greater Yellowlegs** and **75 Red-throated Loons**! Ho hum!! Just another boring day at Plum Island.....

The Editor, from Geoff’s notes

COMING FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, January 13. The Second Annual Cape Ann Winter Ramble. All day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths go to the chilly shore to look for ducks, alcids, gulls, and all the other good birds of winter. Dress for the weather (many layers). Meeting time is 6 a.m.; contact Devin (413-323-8417) for the place, or further information. (M)

Please note that the **Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule** will be published in the **February** newsletter.

Please let Mike Locher know as soon as possible if you can contribute to our field trip program by leading or co-leading a trip between February and August of this year!!!

NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS COUNT

The **84th Northampton Christmas Count** took place on **Sunday, December 17, 2017**. The final tally was not the most impressive in number of birds or species (85) but there were many unusual sightings, including a new count species (**American Wigeon**) and a number of **new high counts**. There is one species ID pending. **183 people took part**. Thirty-three counted from a comfortable chair with feeder views but most dressed for and took to the field on a sunny but cold morning. The afternoon brought clouds but still, thankfully, little or no wind. We were pleased to welcome **two first time owlers** and **three new young people** to the Count. Our dedicated owlers found four species including a **Short-eared Owl** but most notable was a new high count of **108 Eastern Screech-Owls**.

Janice Jorgenson and Jan Ortiz, compilers.

CHRISTMAS COUNT THANK YOU's

Janice Jorgensen and Jan Ortiz once again brought the whole thing together with gusto. Area leaders and volunteers made traipsing about in the winter landscape a creative and productive endeavor, the Hitchcock Center allowed us use of their wonderful new space for the compilation. John Green and Josh Rose endured technical glitches with grace while compiling the results. HBC members donated the wonderful spread of hot food, salads, snacks and dessert to which we have become accustomed (and for which I am personally VERY grateful). Finally, **Susan Emerson**, having wheedled, cajoled, and, word has it, even bribed our membership to donate for the potluck over so many years, announced that she is handing over the reins as potluck coordinator to some (as yet unknown) successor. **THANK YOU, Sue!!**

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS (selected)

Nature All Year Study Club 2018

Sundays once per month, 9am-12pm (some class times may vary depending on topics). Fee.

Buds, Leaves and Global Warming: What 8 years of data collection tells us about phenology trends at Belchertown High School: *Louise Levy (MA Conservation Teacher of the Year*

Thursday, January 11, 7-8:30 pm.

Butterflies of the World: *John Root*

Thursday, February 1, 7-8pm (snowdate-Feb. 15). Fee.

Prowling For Owls: *Dan Ziomek*

Friday, January 26, 8pm-10pm

Saturday, February 17, 8pm -10pm

Youth 8 and older welcome with an adult. Fee.

Attracting Pollinators at Hitchcock: What Plants Where? *Tom Sullivan of Pollinators Welcome, Montague*

Saturdays, February 3, 10, 17, 10am-12pm. Fee.

Spring Birding Class with Scott Surner

Classes: 4 Wednesdays 6:30pm-8pm

Weekend Field Trips: February 10-June 10 see online for all dates. Fee.

For details and registration for all Hitchcock programs, please contact the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 845 West St., Amherst MA 01002. Telephone (413) 256 6006, or on the web at www.hitchcockcenter.org.



That is all for this month. Attached are:

- the **Hampshire Bird Club Field Trip Policy**, and
- the full (but provisional) results of the **2017 Northampton Christmas Count**.

The **Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule** will appear in the February newsletter.

That gives you more time to contact Mike and volunteer to lead a trip!

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor
529 9541

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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.

Continues on Page 2 ►►

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.

Northampton Count 2017 and Historical: Provisional ONLY

High counts in bold

Unusual species in *italics*

(Name) = no recent records.

Unusual species found this year

| Species | 2017 | High Year | High Count | Species | 2017 | High Year | High Count |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------|------------|-------------------------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Gr'ter Wh'-fr'ed Goose | 0 | n.a.t. | | Bald Eagle (adult) | 14 | 2015 | 13 |
| Greylag Goose | 0 | n.a.t. | | Bald Eagle (imm.) | 3 | 2010 | 3 |
| <i>Snow Goose</i> | 4 | 2008 | 32 | Northern Harrier (adult) | 4 | 2010 | 11 |
| Brant | 0 | n.a.t. | | Northern Harrier (imm.) | 4 | na | na |
| Canada Goose | 6,186 | 1999 | 7,977 | Sharp-s'd Hawk | 15 | 2007 | 22 |
| Cackling Goose | 0 | n.a.t. | | Cooper's Hawk | 37 | 2014 | 32 |
| Mute Swan | 0 | 2002 | 29 | Northern Goshawk | 1 | n.a.t. | |
| Wood Duck | 0 | 2010 | 19 | Red-s'd Hawk | 7 | 1957 | 4 |
| Gadwall | 0 | 2012 | 5 | Red-tailed Hawk | 151 | 2014 | 187 |
| <i>American Wigeon</i> | 1 | 1999 | 10 | Rough-l'd Hawk | 0 | 1989 | 12 |
| Northern Shoveller | 0 | | | American Kestrel | 4 | 1974 | 31 |
| Am. Black Duck | 199 | 1992 | 286 | Merlin | 4 | 2016 | 6 |
| Mallard | 383 | 1994 | 1,338 | Gyr Falcon | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| Northern Pintail | 2 | 2014 | 54 | Peregrine Falcon | 6 | 2016 | 7 |
| Green-winged Teal | 0 | 2015 | 3 | American Coot | 0 | 2014 | 1 |
| Canvasback | 0 | n.a.t. | | Virginia Rail | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| Ring-necked Duck | 0 | n.a.t. | | Killdeer | 2 | n.a.t. | |
| Greater Scaup | 0 | n.a.t. | | <i>Wilson's Snipe</i> | <i>0</i> | n.a.t. | |
| Lesser Scaup | 0 | n.a.t. | | <i>American Woodcock</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>n.a.t.</i> | |
| White-winged Scoter | 0 | n.a.t. | | Ring-billed Gull | 140 | 2006 | 1,088 |
| Long-tailed Duck | 0 | n.a.t. | | Herring Gull | 2 | 1986 | 2,196 |
| Bufflehead | 0 | n.a.t. | | <i>Iceland Gull</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>n.a.t.</i> | |
| Common Goldeneye | 112 | 1992 | 109 | <i>Lesser Bl'-backed Gull</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>n.a.t.</i> | |
| Barrow's Goldeneye | 0 | n.a.t. | | <i>Glaucous Gull</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>n.a.t.</i> | |
| Hooded Merganser | 61 | 2014 | 92 | <i>Black-headed Gull</i> | <i>0</i> | | |
| Common Merganser | 113 | 2012 | 227 | Great Bl'-b'd Gull | 1 | 1994 | 367 |
| Red-b'd Merganser | 0 | n.a.t. | | Rock Pigeon | 648 | 1988 | 2,778 |
| Ruddy Duck | 0 | n.a.t. | | Mourning Dove | 1,710 | 1998 | 3,904 |
| Ring-n'd Pheasant | 3 | 1960 | 196 | E. Screech-Owl | 108 | 2006 | 82 |
| Ruffed Grouse | 0 | 1966 | 37 | Great Horned Owl | 35 | 2014 | 68 |
| Wild Turkey | 64 | 2016 | 200 | Snowy Owl | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| Red-throated Loon | 0 | n.a.t. | | Barred Owl | 2 | 2012 | 19 |
| Common Loon | 0 | n.a.t. | | <i>Long-eared Owl</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>2004</i> | <i>3</i> |
| Pied-billed Grebe | 0 | n.a.t. | | <i>Short-eared Owl</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>n.a.t.</i> | |
| Horned Grebe | 0 | n.a.t. | | N. Saw-whet Owl | 0 | 2006 | 5 |
| <i>Do'-c'd Cormorant</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>n.a.t.</i> | | Selasphorus sp. | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| (Great Cormorant) | 0 | nrr | | Belted Kingfisher | 10 | 2001 | 23 |
| Great Blue Heron | 8 | 2006 | 27 | <i>Red-headed Woodpecker</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>n.a.t.</i> | |
| Green Heron | 0 | n.a.t. | | Red-b'd Woodpecker | 226 | 2014 | 246 |
| Turkey Vulture | 0 | n.a.t. | | Yellow-b'd Sapsucker | 19 | 2007 | 22 |
| | | | | Downy Woodpecker | 361 | 2014 | 503 |
| | | | | Hairy Woodpecker | 99 | 1974 | 192 |
| | | | | Northern Flicker | 57 | 1998 | 77 |

Northampton Christmas Count 2017 and Historical. Page 2 of 2

| Species | 2017 | High Year | High Count | Species | 2017 | High Year | High Count |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Pileated Woodpecker | 43 | 2010 | 34 | <i>Clay-c'd Sparrow</i> | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| Eastern Phoebe | 1 | n.a.t. | | Field Sparrow | 2 | 1982 | 58 |
| Northern Shrike | 0 | 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 | 46 | 2000 | 46 |
| Blue Jay | 1,465 | 2014 | 1,722 | Fox Sparrow | 1 | 1943 | 20 |
| American Crow | 2,623 | 1997 | 5,836 | Song Sparrow | 332 | 1992 | 559 |
| Fish Crow | 2 | 2008 | 6 | Lincoln's Sparrow | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| Common Raven | 21 | 2015 | 26 | Swamp Sparrow | 6 | 1992 | 23 |
| Horned Lark | 669 | 1993 | 2,504 | White-t'd Sparrow | 838 | 2009 | 1,008 |
| Black-c'd Chickadee | 920 | 2005 | 2,096 | White-c'd Sparrow | 2 | 2014 | 26 |
| Tufted Titmouse | 629 | 2006 | 894 | Dark-e'd Junco (slate-col.) | 2,413 | 2006 | 3,585 |
| Red-b'd Nuthatch | 4 | 1993 | 295 | <i>Oregon Junco</i> | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| White-b'd Nuthatch | 397 | 2015 | 644 | <i>Pink-sided Junco</i> | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| Brown Creeper | 13 | 1973 | 53 | <i>Lapland Longspur</i> | 0 | 1989 | 31 |
| Carolina Wren | 71 | 2014 | 175 | Snow Bunting | 82 | 1989 | 706 |
| House Wren | 0 | n.a.t. | | Northern Cardinal | 579 | 2014 | 786 |
| Winter Wren | 5 | 2014 | 9 | Indigo Bunting | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| Golden-c'd Kinglet | 160 | 2001 | 332 | Dickcissel | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| <i>Ruby-c'd Kinglet</i> | 3 | 1973 | 6 | Red-winged Blackbird | 76 | 2008 | 304 |
| Eastern Bluebird | 271 | 2014 | 539 | (Eastern Meadowlark) | 0 | nrr | |
| Hermit Thrush | 4 | 2014 | 33 | Rusty Blackbird | 17 | 2008 | 100 |
| American Robin | 1,233 | 2013 | 9,899 | Common Grackle | 67 | 2006 | 501 |
| Gray Catbird | 5 | 2005 | 5 | Brown-h'd Cowbird | 6 | 2006 | 876 |
| N. Mockingbird | 104 | 1999 | 238 | Baltimore Oriole | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| Brown Thrasher | 0 | n.a.t. | | Pine Grosbeak | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| European Starling | 5,740 | 1985 | 94,630 | Purple Finch | 0 | 1976 | 221 |
| American Pipit | 1 | 2015 | 129 | House Finch | 910 | 1994 | 2,215 |
| (Bohemian Waxwing) | 0 | nrr | | Red Crossbill | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| Cedar Waxwing | 858 | 2007 | 2,194 | White-w'd Crossbill | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| <i>Yellow-r'd Warbler</i> | 3 | 2000 | 5 | Common Redpoll | 0 | 1959 | 1,069 |
| <i>Pine Warbler</i> | 0 | n.a.t. | | Hoary Redpoll | 0 | n.a.t. | |
| <i>Palm Warbler</i> | 4 | n.a.t. | | Pine Siskin | 0 | 1993 | 372 |
| <i>Eastern Towhee</i> | 0 | n.a.t. | | Amer. Goldfinch | 766 | 2006 | 2,094 |
| Amer. Tree Sparrow | 490 | 1992 | 2,637 | Evening Grosbeak | 0 | 1969 | 3,000 |
| <i>Chipping Sparrow</i> | 1 | 1974 | 11 | House Sparrow | 2,163 | 1961 | 2,662 |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

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

For High counts in 2017, the previous high count and year are shown.

n.a.t. = now and then. Recorded in fewer than five (5) years between 1999 and 2017.

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



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 34, No. 6
February, 2018.

In this edition:

- The **next program** and **coming presentations**,
- The **blockbuster Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule** including the **Monhegan** overnigher,
- The **Quabbin Count** results and summary, plus
- **Hitchcock** and **Arcadia** offerings.

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, February 12 at 7:15 p.m.

Keenan Yakola gives an account of **Birding from the Edge**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

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

Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge is located 22 miles off Rockland, Maine. The island is a national wildlife refuge and is home to a large colony of nesting seabirds including Atlantic Puffins, Arctic- and Common Terns, Razorbills, Black Guillemots and Leach's Storm-Petrels as well as Double-crested- and Great Cormorants. For the past three summers, Keenan Yakola has been part of a group of biologists and interns working for the National Audubon Society's "Project Puffin," to better understand the biology of the seabirds breeding on the island. During this time, Keenan has accumulated stories, pictures, and a deep understanding of these charismatic seabirds, as well as of the migrant song- and shorebirds that visit the island during spring and fall. This is a rare opportunity for us to share Keenan's experiences with the never-ending and seamless beauty of Maine's coastal islands.

Keenan Yakola is a native Cape Codder who first got interested in birding and conservation at Wellfleet Bay Audubon Sanctuary during an internship through Nauset High School. Since then he has completed a degree in Wildlife Conservation at the University of Massachusetts, studied songbirds in Kenya and Tanzania, bushwhacked through the Peruvian Amazon and banded birds from Cape Cod to Florida. Over the past four years, Keenan has lived out of his tent for four months each summer on islands in the Gulf of Maine. He is now back at UMass, Amherst as a Master's Fellow with the DOI Northeast Climate Center, studying the vulnerability of seabirds to climate change in the Gulf of Maine.

COMING PROGRAMS

March 12, 2018. Dave Wiley. Greater Shearwaters on Stellwagen Bank.

April 9, 2018. Shawn Carey. A Wing and a Care.

May 14, 2018. Sam Fried. Adventures from the Field.

COMING FIELD TRIPS

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

"These will be the greatest field trips we have had in years, centuries maybe, and they will be great and they will have thousands attending them, countless thousands, believe me!"

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS (A SELECTION)

Nature All Year Study Club 2018

Sundays once per month beginning in March, 9am-12pm. Registration Required. Fee.

Prowling For Owls: *Dan Ziomek*

Saturday, February 17, 8pm -10pm. Registration Required. Fee.

Youth 8 and older welcome with an adult

Attracting Pollinators at Hitchcock: What Plants Where? *Tom Sullivan*

Saturdays, February 3, 10, 17: 10 am – 12 noon. Registration Required. Fee.

Winter Nature Walk on Snowshoes: *John Green*

Saturday, February 17, 9am-12pm (snowdate Feb. 24). Registration Required. Fee.

Salamander Tunnel Maintenance

A weekend day in March.

If you register, you will be notified of the date.

Tree Pruning and Tree Health: *Walker Korby of Whole Tree*

Saturday, March 3, 9am-12pm. Registration Required. Fee.

For details and registration for all Hitchcock programs, please contact the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 845 West St., Amherst MA 01002. Telephone (413) 256 6006, or on the web at www.hitchcockcenter.org.

ARCDIA PROGRAMS (A SELECTION)

Winter Walk, Eagle Reintroduction at Quabbin, Feb 10, 10:00 am-1:00 pm.

Winter Raptors, Feb 17, 9:00 am-1:00 pm.

Walking the Winter Milky Way, Feb 18, 8:00-10:00 pm

February Vacation Camp, Feb 20-23

Frogwatch Citizen Science, Feb 23, 6:00-9:00 pm

Birding Plum Island, Feb 27, 8:00 am-5:00 pm

*For more details and/or to register for all Arcadia programs, go to www.massaudubon.org/arcadia
You may also contact **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary** direct at 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton MA 01027 or telephone (413) 584-3009.*

That's all we have room for this month.

The following have been **postponed** until the **March** edition.

- The **Cape Ann**, **Owling** and **Valley Waterfowl** trip reports,
- The **HBC Fast Food Calorie Count** results.

The Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule is enclosed.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Quabbin Count 2017 and Historical

Species with high or equal high counts this year are listed in **bold** and the previous high count is also listed.

| Species | 2017 | High Year | High Count | Species | 2017 | High Year | High Count |
|----------------------------|----------|-------------|------------|------------------------------|----------|--------------|------------|
| Snow Goose | 0 | 2015 | 1 | American Coot | 0 | unusual | |
| Canada Goose | 0 | 2015 | 236 | Black-headed Gull | 0 | unusual | |
| Mute Swan | 0 | unusual | | Ring-billed Gull | 60 | 2011 | 185 |
| Wood Duck | 0 | unusual | | Herring Gull | 0 | 1990 | 280 |
| American Wigeon | 0 | unusual | | Glaucous Gull | 0 | unusual | |
| Black Duck | 43 | 1993 | 349 | Great Black-backed Gull | 0 | 1990 | 47 |
| Mallard | 111 | 1994 | 975 | Rock Pigeon | 21 | 1999 | 339 |
| Northern Pintail | 0 | unusual | | Mourning Dove | 361 | 1999 | 440 |
| Green-winged Teal | 0 | unusual | | Eastern Screech Owl | 3 | 1989 | 4 |
| Blue-winged Teal | 0 | unusual | | Great Horned Owl | 13 | 1994 | 24 |
| Ring-necked Duck | 0 | 2001 | 41 | Snowy Owl | 0 | not yet | |
| Greater Scaup | 0 | 2001 | 5 | Barred Owl | 5 | 1993 | 21 |
| Lesser Scaup | 0 | unusual | | Long-eared Owl | 0 | unusual | |
| White-winged Scoter | 1 | unusual | | Saw-whet Owl | 4 | 1994 | 61 |
| Black Scoter | 0 | unusual | | Belted Kingfisher | 2 | 2010 | 6 |
| Long-tailed Duck | 0 | unusual | | Red-bellied Woodpecker | 37 | 2016 | 51 |
| Bufflehead | 0 | 1994 | 28 | Yellow-bell'd Sapsucker | 2 | unusual | |
| Common Goldeneye | 2 | 1992 | 105 | Downy Woodpecker | 139 | 1994 | 169 |
| Barrows Goldeneye | 0 | unusual | | Hairy Woodpecker | 58 | 2012 | 62 |
| Hooded Merganser | 30 | 2006 | 186 | Northern Flicker | 3 | 2010 | 10 |
| Common Merganser | 312 | 1999 | 1127 | Pileated Woodpecker | 20 | 2010 | 61 |
| Red-breasted Merganser | 0 | unusual | | Eastern Phoebe | 0 | unusual | |
| Ruddy Duck | 0 | unusual | | Northern Shrike | 0 | 1995 | 10 |
| Ring-necked Pheasant | 0 | 1994 | 16 | Blue Jay | 297 | 1993 | 1140 |
| Ruffed Grouse | 10 | 1994 | 42 | American Crow | 131 | 1995 | 395 |
| Wild Turkey | 151 | 2008 | 248 | Common Raven | 20 | 2013 | 62 |
| Common Loon | 0 | 2014 | 28 | Horned Lark | 0 | 2016 | 95 |
| Horned Grebe | 0 | 1997 | 195 | Black-capped Chickadee | 539 | 1993 | 2516 |
| Red-necked Grebe | 0 | 1995 | 2 | Boreal Chickadee | 0 | unusual | |
| Double crested Cormorant | 0 | unusual | | Tufted Titmouse | 294 | 2015 | 298 |
| Great Cormorant | 0 | unusual | | Red-breasted Nuthatch | 25 | 1993 | 1886 |
| Great Blue Heron | 0 | 1991 | 2 | White-breasted Nuthatch | 183 | 2001 | 303 |
| Turkey Vulture | 0 | unusual | | Brown Creeper | 10 | 1996 | 82 |
| Osprey | 0 | unusual | | Carolina Wren | 1 | 2011 | 12 |
| Bald Eagle | 21 | 1994 | 38 | Winter Wren* | 4 | 2014 | 5 |
| Northern Harrier | 0 | unusual | | Golden-crowned Kinglet | 112 | 1996 | 312 |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | 1 | 1993 | 12 | Ruby-crowned Kinglet | 0 | 1996* | 3 |
| Cooper's Hawk | 3 | 2016 | 7 | Eastern Bluebird | 28 | 2014 | 88 |
| Northern Goshawk | 0 | 2007* | 3 | Hermit Thrush* | 4 | 2006 | 4 |
| Red-shouldered Hawk | 4 | 2017 | 4 | American Robin | 113 | 2016 | 2624 |
| Red-tailed Hawk | 23 | 2014 | 32 | Gray Catbird | 1 | 2008* | 1 |
| Rough-legged Hawk | 0 | unusual | | Northern Mockingbird | 7 | 1991 | 45 |
| Golden Eagle | 1 | 1997* | 2 | European Starling | 644 | 1999 | 1690 |
| American Kestrel | 2 | 2017 | 2 | Bohemian Waxwing | 0 | Not yet | |
| Merlin | 0 | unusual | | Cedar Waxwing | 244 | 1997 | 550 |
| Peregrine Falcon | 0 | unusual | | <i>(Continues next page)</i> | | | |

Quabbin Count 2017 and Historical (continued)

| Species | 2017 | High Year | High Count | Species | 2017 | High Year | High Count |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|--|------|-----------|------------|
| Yellow-r'd Warbler* | 0 | unusual | | House Finch | 14 | 1992 | 429 |
| Pine Warbler | 0 | unusual | | Red Crossbill | 0 | 1993 | 240 |
| Eastern Towhee | 0 | 2009 | 3 | White-winged Crossbill | 0 | 1993 | 27 |
| American Tree Sparrow | 111 | 1998 | 611 | Common Redpoll | 0 | 1997 | 1357 |
| Field Sparrow | 0 | 1999 | 2 | Hoary Redpoll | 0 | unusual | |
| Fox Sparrow | 1 | unusual | | Pine Siskin | 0 | 2008 | 137 |
| Song Sparrow | 30 | 1994 | 50 | American Goldfinch | 299 | 1994 | 664 |
| Lincoln's Sparrow | 0 | Not yet | | Evening Grosbeak | 0 | 1989 | 413 |
| Swamp Sparrow | 0 | 2014 | 3 | House Sparrow | 808 | 2004 | 1032 |
| White-throated Sparrow | 114 | 2009 | 584 | | | | |
| White-crowned Sparrow | 0 | unusual | | | | | |
| D'-eyed (pink sided) Junco | 0 | unusual | | | | | |
| D'-eyed (slate-co') Junco | 1564 | 2009 | 2297 | | | | |
| Snow Bunting | 0 | 2013 | 230 | Write Ins | | | |
| Northern Cardinal | 135 | 2005 | 123 | | | | |
| Rose-breasted Grosbeak | 0 | unusual | | | | | |
| Red-winged Blackbird | 37 | 2006 | 309 | | | | |
| Rusty Blackbird | 1 | 2011 | 51 | | | | |
| Common Grackle | 0 | 2006 | 100 | | | | |
| Brown-headed Cowbird | 58 | 2006 | 553 | Number of species this year | | | 60 |
| Pine Grosbeak | 1 | 2007 | 154 | # of <u>new</u> species this year | | | 0 |
| Purple Finch | 1 | 1992 | 169 | Cumulative # of Species (historically) | | | 124 |

Species counted in fewer than five (5) years between 1988 and 2017 are described as "unusual."

QUABBIN COUNT 2017 SUMMARY

The **Quabbin Christmas Bird Count** took place on the last Saturday of 2017 under less than favorable conditions. Pre-dawn owling teams were faced with minus nine (-9) degree temperatures, but despite the frigid conditions they turned up four species of owls. As dawn approached temps got to around -2 and would later top off at around 16 degrees. During the morning, a light snow developed and basically lasted throughout the day, making visibility an issue at times.

We had 37 Field Observers and 1 feeder watcher for the count this year. Our volunteers found most of the small streams, coves and even some larger bodies of water around the Quabbin completely frozen. The main body of the reservoir remained open and produced most of our waterfowl sightings. Interestingly we missed Common Loon for only the 4th time and Horned Grebe for the 3rd time in the 30 year history of the Quabbin count.

Scott Surner

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule, 2018

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 – suitable for people who can walk on level ground at a relaxed pace)**, **Moderate (M – suitable for people who can walk over uneven ground at a relaxed pace)**, or **Strenuous (S – suitable only for people who can walk over uneven or difficult terrain at a quick pace)** to give a rough indication of the pace and/or terrain. Please check all information with the trip leaders.

In an effort to change things up, there's a new series this spring: **Quick-and-Dirty Midweek Birding (QDMB)**: a series of very short trips around Hadley. Think of this as a chance to see something before heading off to work, or an opportunity to get together with other birders who have no immediate commitments and explore an area more fully after the leader leaves (by 7 most mornings).

FEBRUARY

Sunday, February 25. Leader's Choice. Half day. Mike Locher will chase any local rarities that happen to be around. If there aren't any rarities, he'll figure something out. Contact Mike for more information (413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org). Meet at the Hadley Village Barn Shops, (41 Russell St., Hadley) at 7 a.m. (E/M).

MARCH

Saturday, March 3. Winter Coastal Rhode Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron leads his annual winter trip to a great area for ducks, gulls, and seabirds. Contact Geoff (413-268-9281) to register and get meeting information. (M).

Tuesday, March 13. QDMB: Alexandra Dawson Conservation Area. Morning. Mike Locher scans the river for ducks. Bring a scope, if you have one. Meet at the eastern parking area (North Lane, Hadley) at 6:30 a.m. (E)

Saturday, March 17. Connecticut River Waterfowl. Half day. Mike Locher seeks out the ducks and geese migrating up the Connecticut River to their breeding grounds. We may work the south and east (Coolidge Bridge, Holyoke Dam, Quabbin); or more to the north (Hadley Cove, Great Pond, Turner's Falls Power Canal, and Barton's Cove), depending on the prevalence of ice. Contact Mike for more information (413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org). Meet at the Hadley Village Barn Shops, (41 Russell St., Hadley) at 7 a.m. (E/M)

***Wednesday, March 21. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Ted Gilliland, and Leslie Hoffman lead the first spring walk into the refuge. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 8:00 a.m. (E/M)

APRIL

***Saturday, April 7. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund and Leslie Hoffman look for early migrants, hangers-on, and residents. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E/M).

***Sunday, April 8. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher (413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) looks for early migrants like Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Louisiana Waterthrushes. Meet in the Holyoke Elks parking lot (250 Whitney Ave.), near Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7 a.m. Contact Mike (413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) for more information. (E/M with one optional S section).

Thursday, April 12. QDMB: Hadley Reservoir. Morning. Mike Locher looks for early migrants along Bay Road. Meet at the dirt access road to the reservoirs (Reservoir Road, Hadley) at 6 a.m. (E/M).

***Wednesday, April 18. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund and Marcia Merithew look for early warblers and other spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E/M).

Tuesday, April 24. Mount Tom. Morning. Tom Gagnon looks for migrating hawks and early-season butterflies at Mount Tom State Reservation. Meet at Bray Lake parking area at 8:30 a.m. From there the group will drive up to the old park headquarters and walk to Goat Peak tower. Contact Tom (413-584-6353) for more information. (Rain date: Wednesday, April 25.) (M).

Wednesday, April 25. QDMB: Aqua Vitae Road. Morning. Mike Locher looks for migrants, and with luck, there may be a few ducks and shorebirds. Meet near the entrance furthest from the bridge at 6:00 a.m. (E/M).

Saturday, April 28. Spring Coastal Rhode Island. All day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths ply the shores for migrants and residents. The species mix should be very different than for Geoff's March trip. Meeting time is 6 a.m. at a place to be determined. Contact Devin (413-323-8417) for information. (M).

MAY

***Tuesday, May 1. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Ted Gilliland, and Laura Beltran leading. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:00 a.m. (E/M).

Saturday, May 5. Station Road Rail Trail. Half day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths reprise last year's warbler-fest with a walk along the rail trail and a possible extension to Wentworth Farm in Amherst. Meet at the rail trail parking area on Station Road at 6:30 a.m. Contact Devin (413-323-8417) for more information. (M).

Sunday, May 6. Quabbin Gate 5 and Lake Wallace. Full day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths visit two Belchertown hotspots, looking for spring migrants and anything else they can find. Meet at Gate 5 at 6:30 a.m. Contact Devin (413-323-8417) for more information. (M/S).

Tuesday, May 8. QDMB: Hadley Transfer Station. Morning. Mike Locher looks for migrants around one of the (perhaps justifiably) underappreciated parts of the Honey Pot. Meet at the turnaround just past the transfer station (end of North Branch Road, Hadley) at 6:00 a.m. (E/M)

***Tuesday, May 8. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Ted Gilliland, and Laura Beltran look for warblers, vireos, grosbeaks, tanagers, flycatchers, and other spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E/M).

Saturday, May 12. Mineral Hills Conservation Area. Half day. Marcia Merithew and Betsy Higgins lead birders through one of the less-known Northampton conservation areas. This has been a consistent place for Prairie Warbler over the past several years. For information, contact Marcia (413-896-9539 or mmerithew-at-comcast-dot-net). Meet at the JFK Middle School parking lot (100 Bridge Road, Florence) at 7 a.m. (E/M).

Sunday, May 13. Mt Auburn Cemetery, Watertown, MA. All day. David Peake-Jones heads to this legendary garden cemetery and migrant trap in Watertown, MA. Possible optional stop on the way home. We will meet at the Northampton Bowling Alley at 5:45 AM to carpool. Contact David Peake-Jones (newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org) before the end of Friday, May 11 to register. (E/M).

***Tuesday, May 15. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Henry Lappen, Stephen LaValley, and Devin Griffiths look for warblers, vireos, grosbeaks, tanagers, flycatchers, and other spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:00 a.m. (E/M).

Wednesday, May 16. Montague Plains WMA: Whip-poor-wills. Evening. Al Richards searches the unique habitat around the Montague Plain for whip-poor-wills and other local specialties (like Towhees and Prairie Warblers). Contact Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting information. (E).

Saturday, May 19. Hilltown Ramble. All day. Bob Zimmermann (413-585-0405) and a co-leader to be named later visit migrant spots from Cumington through Moran Wildlife Management Area, to Savoy, Plainfield and Hawley. Some hiking will be done. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop on King Street at 6:30 a.m. to organize carpools. (M)

Sunday, May 20. Montague Sandplains. Half day. Jeremy Coleman leads a daylight trip into this unique habitat. Expected birds include Prairie, Blue-winged, and Pine Warblers, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, Eastern Towhee, Brown Thrasher, Grasshopper and Field Sparrow, maybe Canada- and Mourning Warblers and Red Crossbills. For information, contact Jeremy (jcolemanarch-at-gmail-dot-com). (E/M).

Tuesday, May 22. QDMB: USFWS Northeast Regional Headquarters. Morning. Mike Locher looks for Willow Flycatchers, orioles, and warblers. Meet at the visitor's lot (300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley) at 6:00 a.m. (E).

***Tuesday, May 22. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Stephen LaValley, and Devin Griffiths look for warblers, vireos, grosbeaks, tanagers, flycatchers, and other spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:00 a.m. (E/M)

Thursday-Sunday, May 24-27. Monhegan Island. THREE NIGHTS. Scott Surner leads the Hampshire Bird Club's pilgrimage to Monhegan Island. Not only is the island charming, but the numbers and variety of migrating birds can be astonishing. This trip is limited to 12 Hampshire Bird Club members. Price will depend upon the number of participants. Contact Scott (413-256-5438) for information, and Mike Locher (413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) to register or for questions about the cost of the trip. (E/M/S).

***Saturday, May 26. Knightville Dam.** Half day. Marcia Merithew and Betsy Higgins look for spring migrants and local residents. Contact Marcia (413-896-9539 or mmerithew-at-comcast-dot-net) for details. Meet at 7 a.m. at the John F. Kennedy Middle School (100 Bridge Road; Florence, MA). (E/M)

Sunday, May 27. Mt Holyoke. Half day. David Peake-Jones takes the steep hike up this local peak hoping for deep-woods breeders including Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers (both quite reliable in recent years). We will meet at the (gated) entrance to Skinner State Park (at the end of Old Mountain Road in Hadley) at 6:00 am. Contact David Peake-Jones (newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org) before the end of Friday, May 25 to register. (M/S)

Tuesday, May 29. QDMB: Orchard Arboretum. Morning. Mike Locher looks for warblers around this hidden conservation area. Meet at Russett Lane in Amherst at 6:00 a.m. (M)

***Tuesday, May 29. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. Devin Griffiths, Henry Lappen, and Stephen LaValley leading. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E/M).

JUNE

Saturday, June 2. Westover Air Force Base. Half day. Mike Locher 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. Contact Mike 413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) at least two weeks ahead of time to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E/M).

***Saturday, June 9. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Laura Beltran, and Josh Rose leading. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:00 a.m. (E/M)

Sunday, June 10. Mt Greylock. Full Day. David Peake-Jones samples the altitudinal variation in species from the bottom to the top. Most of the journey is by car, but we hike the last ½ mile (steep and rough). We will meet at the Northampton Stop and Shop on King Street to carpool at 6:00 AM. Contact David Peake-Jones (newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org) before the end of Friday, June 8 to register. (M/S)

***Saturday, June 23. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Laura Beltran, and Josh Rose leading. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:00 a.m. (E/M)

Check the website and newsletter for possible additions to the schedule, including Quabbin, Mount Mansfield, Southwick WMA, and Milford Point, CT, among other possibilities.



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 34, No. 7
March, 2018.

In this edition:

- The **next program** and **coming programs**,
- **Field trip reports** and **coming trips**,
- **Conservation Survey** results,
- **Massachusetts Birders Meeting**, **Bird-a-thon** and **Bird Festival** reminders, as well as
- **Hitchcock** and **Arcadia** programs. Also, a few other odds and ends.

I hope you find some of it useful!

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, March 12 at 7:15 p.m.

Dave Wiley delves into

Migration of Greater Shearwaters on Stellwagen Bank and Beyond

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

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

Great Shearwaters, named for their habit of gracefully trailing a wing tip through the waves, spend their lives at sea, coming to land only when they nest in giant colonies on the tiny Tristan Da Cunha Islands, almost exactly midway between southernmost Argentina and South Africa. When winter comes to the southern hemisphere, they migrate more than 6,000 miles northward to the rich waters of Stellwagen Bank, five miles off Gloucester. Some of the long-lived birds that we see only during our summer have made the round trip between hemispheres for more than 60 years.

David Wiley, research director for the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, will discuss what we are learning from satellite tracking and other research on Great Shearwaters. Researchers have discovered vital connections between the biology of these birds, and that of the sand lance, their primary food. There are also intriguing inter-relationships between these peripatetic birds and humpback whales, which also spend the northern summer in waters in and around the sanctuary.

Dr. David Wiley's research has appeared in many scientific journals such as *Animal Behavior*, *Behaviour*, *Biological Conservation* and *Conservation Biology*. He is the recipient of numerous awards and honors including the Department of Commerce's Gold Medal for scientific leadership, an Ian Axford (Fulbright) Fellowship in Public Policy, a NextGov Bold Award for scientific innovation and the Society for Marine Mammalogy's award for Excellence in Scientific Communication.

COMING PROGRAMS

April 9, 2018. Shawn Carey. A Wing and a Care.

May 14, 2018. Sam Fried. Adventures from the Field.

June 11, 2018. Lois & Alan Richardson. Adventures in Papua-New Guinea.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Valley Waterfowl. Sunday, November 12, 2017

Bill Benner, Mike Locher, Dave Maxcy, Marianna McKim, Eric Morrisette, **David Peake-Jones**, Ruth Pullen, Tom Pullen and Joe Wicinski explored the scattered wetlands of the valley, along with some upland habitats. As the sun crept above the horizon, we left our meeting point and travelled first to Hadley Cove, which hosted only Canada Geese and Mallards. The Honey Pot, always too interesting to avoid, yielded a selection of songbirds, a few Hooded Mergansers on the river, a couple of Bald Eagles and a demure Coopers Hawk. Great Pond was unburdened by waterfowl, but a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker provided some light relief on Cow Path Road, and a raft of Black Ducks on the river at the Water Treatment plant masqueraded as much brighter birds, courtesy of reflected sunlight. At the Power Canal in Turners, eight **Common Goldeneye** gave us great looks. The Rod and Gun Club hosted a huge party of humans, an impressive raft of Mute Swans, and our first Ring-necked Ducks of the day. Barton's Cove hosted about 27 Hooded Mergansers, three **Lesser Scaup**, a string of Common Mergansers, a few more Ring-necked Ducks and some more Goldeneye.

The real fireworks took place, sadly, after the group had disbanded for the day. Joe, Bill and David learned through the wonders of the internet about a rare warbler that had been found around noon in the Honey Pot. Convinced this would be a wild goose chase, these three showed up for the second time in the same day at That's a Plenty Farm, and found a very cooperative **MacGillvray's Warbler** sporting in the bittersweet tangles. A truly bittersweet end to an absorbing day.

David Peake-Jones



Owls. Saturday, December 2

Mike Locher, **David Peake-Jones** and seven other folks braved the dark of night in search of owls. We began by targeting **Eastern Screech Owls** which, as Christmas Count volunteers may know, are generally rather abundant in riparian habitats throughout the valley, most obviously in woodlands adjacent to the Connecticut River itself. We were not disappointed, turning up very responsive Eastern Screech Owls at all but one of our first four sites visited. A bonus **Great Horned Owl** added to the fun. Turning our attention to more challenging fare, we sought dense evergreen growth areas in the Leverett/Shutesbury areas. We heard two (2) distant **Barred Owls**. Perhaps the highlights of our evening were **Northern Saw-Whet** owls at two different sites, each responding to our auditory prompts with the extraordinary array of snarls, whines and shrieks for which they are known.

David Peake-Jones



Cape Ann. Sunday, January 14, 2018 (rescheduled from the day before)

Devin and Aiden Griffiths plus five other resilient souls got out of the cars at Jodrey Fish Pier full of anticipation, and tried to ignore the hostile cold that instantly began eating into fingers, toes and faces. This always-productive spot yielded 14 species including 22 gorgeously pastel **Long-tailed Ducks**, Surf and White-winged Scoters. Of course, there HAD to be a large raft of scaup on the water and there ensued the inevitable attempts to unravel the secrets of crown shape. Eventually, we settled on 46 Greater Scaup and 7 Lesser Scaup. Two **Peregrine Falcons** surveyed the harbor from the clock tower, and two Fish Crows were present, just to justify their names. However, with extremities succumbing to that dangerous kind of pain that presages more serious issues, we quickly retreated to the cars and made a run for the nearest Dunkin' Donuts, where warm beverages were ingested. From the furthest aisle at the pharmacy across the way we laid in a supply of hand warmers which, for this reporter, were the difference between birding and hiding in the car for the rest of the day.

(continues next page) ►

Cape Ann. January 14 (continued)

Eastern Point played host to 19 species, including a gorgeous collection of Gadwall at close range a bevy of bright Bufflehead and our first Horned Grebes of the day. A **Bonaparte's Gull** did a circuit of the enclosed cove right in front of us, as did an immature **Iceland Gull**.

Departing Eastern Point, past frozen Niles Pond, we began to skirt Niles Beach. It is here that I must pay tribute to a remarkable piece of birding. As we crawled (in cars) along the beach road trying to warm up and idly glancing at the scattering of sea ducks off the beach, the Griffith mobile came to a sudden halt.

Something about the hue of the brake lights bespoke events of great moment, and sure enough, Aiden Griffiths popped out of the vehicle and flung out an arm. It turned out that, in a group of female eiders close to shore, one had the definitive dish-shaped face, short bill, pale lores and upturned gape of a different species. Yep. Mr. Griffiths junior had identified a **female King Eider** in a group of Common Eiders from a moving car. We mortals can only genuflect in awe.

Fired with new-found enthusiasm and diligence, we enjoyed the spectacular surf and the sweeping vistas of Bass Rocks briefly, but without adding to the species count. However, en route to Pebble Beach, Griffiths senior decided to get in on the act, spotting a dark-morph **Rough-legged Hawk**.

Rockport Harbor again provided a winter refuge for an unlikely **Northern Pintail**, probably one of the same birds that wintered there last year, and another Iceland Gull soared lazily over Back Beach. Cathedral Ledges played host to a wonderful group of 21 **Harlequin Ducks** and a suspiciously slender loon that we were unable to get a good handle on. At Andrew's Point, we found another 30 Harlequin Ducks, a fly-by **Red-throated Loon** and a nice range of other things, but no kittiwakes, for which we had hoped.

As the day began to go down in the west, we swung by the succession of sheltered coves on the northern side of the cape, including Plum, Folly and Lane (in no particular order). Nice views of the water in late afternoon light but no new birds of note.

David Peake-Jones



Hampshire Bird Club. Fast Food Consumption Count. Winter Coastal Category

| Trip | # participants | Number of fast food items logged | Calories (per participant) | Sat. Fat (g per participant) | Sodium (mg per participant) |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Coastal Rhode Island. 2/4/2017 | 15 | Not recorded | 414.0 | 7.6 | 670.0 |
| Cape Ann 1/14/2018 | 7 | 18 | 871.0 | 13.4 | 825.8 |

In the second fully documented year of this count, we can see the Cape Ann, 2018 trip thoroughly outpacing the pedestrian performance of the Rhody's in every category assessed. This can be attributed to

- The brutal temperatures which prevailed during the Cape Ann jaunt this year and active promotion of the count by the Cape Ann leader, and
- Excessive (and surreptitious) consumption of "real" food on the Rhode Island trip by folks who, it appears, may also have declined to report eligible consumption to the count compiler.

Though rarities were sparse this year, the single biggest calorie contributor was an innocuous-looking turkey sandwich from an outlet that began with neither M nor DD, weighing in at a respectable 640 calories.

Consumption padding by the newsletter editor, though undoubtedly present, can be discounted from the results since it was constant between the two trips.

Hampshire Bird Club FFCC Coordinator

COMING TRIPS

Saturday, March 3. Winter Coastal Rhode Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron leads his annual winter trip to a great area for ducks, gulls, and seabirds. Contact Geoff (413-268-9281) to register and get meeting information. (M).

Tuesday, March 13. QDMB: Alexandra Dawson Conservation Area. Morning. Mike Locher scans the river for ducks. Bring a scope, if you have one. Meet at the eastern parking area (North Lane, Hadley) at 6:30 a.m. (E)

Saturday, March 17. Connecticut River Waterfowl. Half day. Mike Locher seeks out the ducks and geese migrating up the Connecticut River to their breeding grounds. We may work the south and east (Coolidge Bridge, Holyoke Dam, Quabbin); or more to the north (Hadley Cove, Great Pond, Turner's Falls Power Canal, and Barton's Cove), depending on the prevalence of ice. Contact Mike for more information (413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org). Meet at the Hadley Village Barn Shops, (41 Russell St., Hadley) at 7 a.m. (E/M)

Wednesday, March 21. Fort River Refuge. Morning. George Regmund, Ted Gilliland, and Leslie Hoffman lead the first spring walk into the refuge. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 8:00 a.m. (E/M)

Saturday, April 7. Fort River Refuge. Morning. George Regmund and Leslie Hoffman look for early migrants, hangers-on, and residents. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E/M).

Sunday, April 8. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers. Half day. Mike Locher (413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) looks for early migrants like Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Louisiana Waterthrushes. Meet in the Holyoke Elks parking lot (250 Whitney Ave.), near Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7 a.m. Contact Mike (413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) for more information. (E/M with one optional S section).

CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Little known fact about all the data for all the CBCs in the world.

The National Audubon CBC site has all the CBC histories available to all. You can download the entire MANO history since 1934 to learn what birds were seen in the first count, how many people participated and then how MANO has grown.

Go to this National Audubon webpage <http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/> and select what you want to do. Historical or Current Year information is typically available. (Current year is not yet operational as CBCs are still entering data).

Janice Jorgensen, cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org

Just a little flashback to the days when our beloved Sally Venman edited this newsletter..
Why wouldn't the policeman get out of bed?
Because he was an undercover cop!

LIBRARY

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

The library contains birding resources in various media, including field guides, bird-finding guides to almost every major birding destination in the U.S., and overseas, natural histories, periodicals and videos. Items can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement.

The collection is accessible at the Hitchcock Center or the Environment, where you can peruse the stacks and/or take out items during Hitchcock open hours. Alternatively, you can contact our librarian, **Henry Lappen**, and ask him to bring specific items to a meeting for you.

You can reach him at **(413) 549 3722** or **library-at-hampshirebirdclub-dot-org**.

Conservation Survey Results

A simple three question survey was sent out electronically and by paper in January to Hampshire Bird Club (HBC) members asking for opinions on the club getting involved with bird and bird habitat conservation. 131 members responded (55%) which is an exceptionally good response for surveys of this type. Results for the questions were:

| Survey Question | Responses as Percent | | |
|--|----------------------|------|---------|
| | Yes | No | Opinion |
| Would you be in favor of HBC supporting conservation of birds and bird habitats? | 95.4% | 2.3% | 2.3% |
| Would you be in favor of HBC representatives supporting the Association of Massachusetts Bird Clubs of which we are a member when they take a position on an issue related to bird or bird habitat conservation? | 90.4% | 0.8% | 8.8% |
| Would you be in favor of the Board of HBC choosing to contribute funds to support bird and bird habitat conservation? | 92.0% | 3.2% | 4.8% |

HBC membership appears to be strongly in favor of the club supporting conservation of birds and bird habitat be it as a club purpose, in supporting the AMBC or in financial support of such efforts.

Bird-a-thon 2018

6:00 PM Friday, May 11 to 6:00 PM, Saturday, May 12

As with the event last year, the Connecticut Valley Sanctuaries team will again be concentrating on Hampshire County, so think about local areas you would like to cover. I will be mailing more information to those who participated in recent times within the next few weeks. For those who may be new to the bird-a-thon, you can get more information at www.massaudubon.org/birdathon

Our 20+ teams did very well last year in terms of numbers of species recorded, especially given that we stayed closer to home in acknowledgement of the need to minimize the carbon footprint of the count. Our success, in turn, provided a great financial boost for Mass Audubon's Connecticut River Valley Sanctuaries' climate change activities. Thank you again for those efforts, and I hope you and our new teams do even better this year!

Chuck Horn

26th Annual Massachusetts Birders Meeting
Highlands and Islands of New England: a Bird's Perspective
UMass Boston
 Campus Centre Ballroom
 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA
Sunday, March 11, 2018
8:00 am–5:00 pm

High elevation habitats—including regional “sky islands”—and low-lying coastal islands provide unique habitat for a suite of breeding, migrating, and wintering birds and exciting birding opportunities.

The 2018 Birders Meeting will feature the ecology of these habitats and their significance to birds and birders. Speakers include **Victor Immanuel, Sarah Morris, Keenan Yakola, Kent McFarland, Chris Rimmer** and **Geoffrey Wells**.

Lunch can be purchased as an option during registration and numerous vendors will be plying their wares at the event. Go to : <https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/birds-birding/birders-meeting> or enter “Massachusetts Birders Meeting” into your search engine to register and for more information.

DON'T MISS THE
Fourth Annual Family Bird Festival
Saturday, May 5: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Arcadia Sanctuary
127 Coombs Road, Easthampton, MA 01027

Join environmental organizations from around the Valley for the Fourth Annual Family Bird Festival. The event features:

- Morning **bird walks** at Arcadia led by members of the Hampshire Bird Club,
- **Live birds of prey** with Tom Ricardi (shows at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.),
- **Bird-watching tips,**
- **Bird-feeding information,** and
- **Activities** for all ages.

Sponsors include the Hampshire Bird Club, Mass Audubon, Springfield Naturalists Club and SWCA Environmental Consultants

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee will be officially appointed at the March meeting, but we can spill the beans on its composition in this humble publication. The committee this year includes Mike Locher (chair), Marcia Merithew and Scott Sumner. They will be charged with finding replacements for any existing board members who choose to leave the board at the end of this year (June, 2018). If you have interest in serving on the board, please contact Mike at fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org.

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Nature All Year Study Club 2018

Sundays once per month beginning in March, 9 am-12 pm. Fee.

Spring Birding Class: *Scott Sumner*

Wait List Only

Buds, Leaves and Global Warming: What 8 years of data collection tells us about phenology trends at Belchertown High School: *Louise Levy*

Thursday March 14, 7-8:30 pm

Morning Nature Walks for Seniors: *John Green*

Thursday, March 15, 9 am-11 am. Fee

Edible Perennial Gardening and Landscaping: *John Root*

Thursday, March 22, 7-8 pm. Fee

Attracting Pollinators Workshop: *Tom Sullivan*

Evening Talk: Thursday, April 5, 6:30-8:30 pm. Fee.

Design Charette for Hitchcock Gardens: April 7, 9:30 am-12:30 pm. Fee.

Woodcock: Skydancer: *Dan Ziomek*

Friday, April 6, 8-10 pm (weather date: April 13). Fee.

Rich Earth Institute: Urine Nutrient Reclamation Project

Saturday, March 10, 11 am-12 pm. FREE

Get the Buzz on Electric Vehicles: *Sally Pick*

Tuesday, April 10th, 7-8:30 pm. FREE

For details and registration for all Hitchcock programs, please contact the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 845 West St., Amherst MA 01002. Telephone (413) 256 6006, or on the web at www.hitchcockcenter.org.

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Botanical Drawing series

Starts March 5, 1:30-4:30 pm

Arcadia Family Bird Fun

March 10, 8:00-10:00 am

Climate Change: Nature Solutions

March 17, 9:00 am-12:00 noon

Dance of the American Woodcock

March 17, 6:00-8:30 pm

Ducks

March 24, 9:00am-1:00 pm

Big Night, our popular enchanted family evening March 31. Sign-up for 45 minute walks between 5:30 and 7:15 pm.

*For more details and/or to register for all Arcadia programs, go to www.massaudubon.org/arcadia. You may also contact **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary** direct at 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton MA 01027 or telephone (413) 584-3009.*

Firehawks of the Australian Bush

"I have seen a hawk pick up a smouldering stick in its claws and drop it in a fresh patch of dry grass half a mile away, then wait with its mates for the mad exodus of scorched and frightened rodents and reptiles".

(Waipuldanya of the Alawa, an Indigenous Australian people from Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, Australia. From I, the Aboriginal. Douglas Lockwood, 1988).

One step at a time, the idea that only humans use tools is being torn down. It has been a long time since we recognized that chimpanzees use sticks to extract termites from their nests. It is even old news that chimps and Caledonian Crows, which use sticks in a similar fashion, can manufacture these tools, manipulating the size and shape of the tool for maximum effect.

For a time, the firewalls (no pun intended) between human and other-animal intelligence were thought to be language and the use of fire. Now one of those bright lines is getting blurry.

Fire is an integral and inescapable part of Australian ecology. It has long been observed that predators, especially raptors, congregate ahead of an advancing fire front, preying on the multitude of small mammals and reptiles that flee in front of the flames. It is also well known that Aboriginal Australians, like many other indigenous people, have a cultural tradition of using fire both to assist with hunting in the short term and to rejuvenate and diversify the biota of Australian landscapes.

Recently, researchers have documented the active and apparently purposeful dispersal of fire by birds of prey. Bonta and others (2017) in a paper entitled "*Intentional Fire-Spreading By "Firehawk" Raptors in Northern Australia,*" found that Black Kites, Whistling Kites and Brown Falcons may pick up smoldering sticks from the area of a fire front, and drop these over unburned areas over half a mile away. This behavior has been referred to even in the research literature at least as far back as 1970. However, the authors are quick to point out that fire-spreading by birds has been known to Aboriginal Australians for many thousands of years. Waipuldanya said he thought his people may have learned fire-spreading from the birds.

I am not aware, as I write this, that any animal other than *Homo sapiens* is yet known to make fire (without human aid). I wonder if this distinction too, may be found wanting at some point in the future.

Reference (The scholarly one)

Intentional Fire-Spreading by "Firehawk" Raptors in Northern Australia.

Mark Bonta, Robert Gosford, Dick Eussen, Nathan Ferguson, Erana Loveless, and Maxwell Witwer
[Journal of Ethnobiology](#) Dec 2017 : Vol. 37, Issue 4 Special Section: Birds II, pg(s) 700- 718

Reference (for the rest of us). <https://blogs.crikey.com.au/northern/2011/06/28/birds-of-the-week-firehawks-of-the-top-end/> (or just type "firehawks of the top end" into your search engine).

That's all for now.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 34, No. 8
April, 2018.

In this edition:

- The usual news about **programs** and **trips**,
- The (now official) **Nominating Committee** and some proposed **By-law amendments**,
- **Education Committee** news,
- Another reminder about the **Bird Festival** at Arcadia,
- A **Birdathon** prompt,
- **Hitchcock** and **Arcadia** programs,
- A fascinating **conference on insectivorous birds** in Ware,
- **Help Wanted** with the Amherst Breeding Bird Survey,
- A **Broad Brook Coalition** event, and

Maybe even more. I can't keep track of it all.
I hope you find some of it useful!

NEXT PROGRAM
Monday, April 9 at 7:15 p.m.
Shawn Carey and Devin Griffiths present
A Wing and a Care

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Snowy Owls, **Atlantic Puffins**, and **American Kestrels** are connected by more than simply a resemblance of form or function. A crucial thread ties them together: each one has an advocate committed to protecting it and educating others about its plight. Migration Productions' latest work, "A Wing And A Care," opens a window onto the lives of these three birds, and introduces you to the men dedicated to their preservation and survival.

"A Wing And A Care" follows the stories of three men as they work to protect the birds they love, and shows how a single individual can make a world of difference in the life of a bird. The presentation asks a critical question: how can each one of us get involved and help build a better future for these incredible birds?

COMING PROGRAMS

May 14, 2018. Sam Fried. The Latest from Flights of Fancy.

June 11, 2018. Lois & Alan Richardson. Adventures in Papua-New Guinea.

COMING TRIPS

Coming Trips are listed on the next page. Note that Ted Gilliland has a previously unpublished trip on April 21st and that the Griffiths April 28 trip now has a "leaders choice" destination.

***Saturday, April 7. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund and Leslie Hoffman look for early migrants, hangers-on, and residents. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E/M)

***Sunday, April 8. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher (413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) looks for early migrants like Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Louisiana Waterthrushes. Meet in the Holyoke Elks parking lot (250 Whitney Ave.), near Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7 a.m. Contact Mike (413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) for more information. (E/M with one optional S section)

Thursday, April 12. QDMB: Hadley Reservoir. Morning. Mike Locher looks for early migrants along Bay Road. Meet at the dirt access road to the reservoirs (Reservoir Road, Hadley) at 6 a.m. (E/M)

***Wednesday, April 18. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund and Marcia Merithew look for early warblers and other spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E/M)

Saturday, April 21. PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED Station Road Rail Trail: Early Migrants. Half day. Ted Gilliland seeks out early migrants along the rail trail. Meet at the Station Road parking area at 7 a.m. Contact Ted at 480-381-5617 or tgillila-at-mtholyoke-dot-edu for more information. (M)

Tuesday, April 24. Mount Tom. Morning. Tom Gagnon looks for migrating hawks and early-season butterflies at Mount Tom State Reservation. Meet at Bray Lake parking area at 8:30 a.m. From there the group will drive up to the old park headquarters and walk to Goat Peak tower. Contact Tom (413-584-6353) for more information. (Rain date: Wednesday, April 25.) (M)

Wednesday, April 25. QDMB: Aqua Vitae Road. Morning. Mike Locher looks for migrants, and with luck, there may be a few ducks and shorebirds. Meet near the entrance furthest from the bridge at 6:00 a.m. (E/M)

Saturday, April 28. NEW DESTINATION. Coastal Leader's Choice. All day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths go to the shore somewhere. They'll make their decision based on where the best sightings are. Meeting time is 6 a.m. at a place to be determined. Contact Devin (413-323-8417) to register and for information on the destination. (M)

***Tuesday, May 1. Fort River Refuge. Morning.** George Regmund, Ted Gilliland, and Laura Beltran look for warblers, vireos, grosbeaks, tanagers, flycatchers, and other spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:00 a.m. (E/M)

Saturday, May 5. Station Road Rail Trail. Half day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths walk the rail trail with a possible extension to Wentworth Farm in Amherst. Meet at the rail trail parking area on Station Road at 6:30 a.m. Contact Devin (413-323-8417) for more information. (M)

Sunday, May 6. Quabbin Gate 5 and Lake Wallace. Full day. Aidan and Devin Griffiths visit two Belchertown hotspots, looking for spring migrants and anything else they can find. Meet at Gate 5 at 6:30 a.m. Contact Devin (413-323-8417) for more information. (M/S)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The committee this year includes **Mike Locher** (chair), **Marcia Merithew** and **Scott Surner**. They will be charged with nominating replacements for any existing board members who choose to leave the board at the end of this year (June, 2018). If you have interest in serving on the board, please contact Mike at fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org.

BY-LAW AMENDMENTS

There will be three (3) By-Law Amendments presented for a vote at the Annual General Meeting on May this year.

By-Law Amendment 1 was presented in the March newsletter and at the March meeting. It would establish conservation of birds and bird habitats as one of the stated goals of the club.

By-Law Amendment 2 was presented in the March newsletter and at the March meeting. It would require the Nominating Committee to consider diversity when compiling a slate of nominees for vacancies on the Board of Directors each year.

By-Law Amendment 3 will be presented here and at the April meeting. It would provide a viable channel for any club member to run against the Nominating Committee's nominee for any club position.

The present HBC By Laws state that a Nominating Committee shall be appointed each year to select a slate of nominees for the Board of Directors in the following year. In addition to outlining this process the By Laws then state that, (at the AGM), "Nominations will be accepted from the floor, if seconded." In the history of the club there has not yet been a nomination made from the floor at the AGM. However, if this were to occur:

- 1) There would be serious procedural difficulties in holding a vote without notice for some positions, and
- 2) Given that the members present would be taken unawares, the likelihood that the challenge would be taken seriously is very slim.

The board believes the founders intended that there be a procedure for a member to mount a viable challenge to a Nominating Committee candidate, but that such a procedure is not allowed by the current By-Laws. The amendment creates an alternative procedure whereby a challenger would be nominated early in the electoral process and be presented to the membership as an alternative to the Nominating Committee candidate throughout the electoral process. The amendment also allows for a secret ballot at the AGM in the event of any contested position.

It is impossible to consider By-Law changes 2 and 3 in isolation, since they both affect the same clause of the By Laws. Consequently, what follows is a comparison of the existing language pertaining to elections in the Bylaws, with the new language that would apply if either one or both of amendments 2 and 3 pass.

Current By-Law language: Article X

10.1 In consultation with the Board, the President shall appoint a nominating committee at the March program meeting each year. The nominating committee shall be composed of three members of the HBC. At least one member of this committee shall be a member of the Board and at least one shall be a person who is not on the Board, but from the membership at large. The nominating committee shall present a slate of officers and other board members to be voted on at the annual meeting in May. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor, if seconded.

If ONLY Amendment 2 (Board diversity) passes, Article X would read as follows:

10.1 In consultation with the Board, the President shall appoint a nominating committee at the March program meeting each year. The nominating committee shall be composed of three members of the HBC. At least one member of this committee shall be a member of the Board and at least one shall be a person who is not on the Board, but from the membership at large. The nominating committee shall present a slate of officers and other board members to be voted on at the annual meeting in May. To the extent possible, this slate shall fully represent the diversity of the HBC membership, e.g. in gender, age etc. and shall reflect any specific directions from the board with respect to diversity. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor, if seconded.

If ONLY Amendment 3 passes, Article X would read as follows.

10.1.a. In consultation with the Board, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee at the January program meeting each year. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three members of the HBC. At least one member of the committee shall be a member of the Board and at least one shall be a person who is not on the Board, but from the membership at large. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of officers and other board members for the following year and shall present this slate in writing to the membership before the March meeting and at the meeting. Additional nominations to contest any Board position against the Nominating Committee candidate must be seconded and shall be accepted by the Nominating Committee up until March 25.

10.1.b. In the event that any board position is to be contested, the following shall occur:

- The Nominating Committee shall present the Nominating Committee slate and any additional nominations in writing to the membership before the April meeting and at the meeting. All candidates for any contested position may present a case for their election to the membership in writing before the April meeting and at the April meeting.*
- A secret paper ballot for any contested positions shall be held at the May meeting, and*
- Ballots shall be counted by the Nominating Committee and the results communicated to the membership in writing before the June meeting and at the June meeting.*

If BOTH Amendments 2 and 3 pass, Article X would read as follows:

10.1.a. In consultation with the Board, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee at the January program meeting each year. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three members of the HBC. At least one member of the committee shall be a member of the Board and at least one shall be a person who is not on the Board, but from the membership at large. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of officers and other board members for the following year and shall present this slate in writing to the membership before the March meeting and at the meeting. To the extent possible, this slate shall fully represent the diversity of the HBC membership, e.g. in gender, age etc. and shall reflect any specific directions from the board with respect to diversity. Additional nominations to contest any Board position against the Nominating Committee candidate must be seconded and shall be accepted by the Nominating Committee up until March 25.

10.1.b. In the event that any board position is to be contested, the following shall occur:

- The Nominating Committee shall present the Nominating Committee slate and any additional nominations in writing to the membership before the April meeting and at the meeting. All candidates for any contested position may present a case for their election to the membership in writing before the April meeting and at the April meeting.*
- A secret paper ballot for any contested positions shall be held at the May meeting, and*
- Ballots shall be counted by the Nominating Committee and the results communicated to the membership in writing before the June meeting and at the June meeting.*

The HBC Board of Directors recommends a YES vote on each of Amendments 1, 2 and 3.

Our Aerial Insectivorous Birds: Current Conservation Issues

An All-Day Conference

Saturday April 28, 2018. 8:00 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.

Harvard Forest, Petersham

\$35 Members*/ \$45 Non-members. Lunch Included

The guild of northeastern avian insectivores—birds that specialize in feeding on flying insects—includes Whip-poor-wills, Common Nighthawks, Chimney Swifts, several species of swallows and flycatchers, and Purple Martins. Most of these species are experiencing dramatic population declines and range contraction. The magnitude of the declines over the past 25 years has been alarming. For that reason the plight of aerial insectivores is gaining increasing attention among biologists in New England.

Numerous speakers will address the ecology and current status of many of these species, particularly in New England; present theories regarding population decline; summarize recent research strategies and findings; and explore citizen science opportunities. Margaret Rubega of UConn will give the keynote address on Chimney Swifts.

You can download a printable registration form at:

<http://www.warivernatureclub.org/avian-aerial-insectivore-conference.html>

or contact: warivernatureclub@yahoo.com

DON'T MISS THE

Fourth Annual Family Bird Festival

Saturday, May 5: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Arcadia Sanctuary: 127 Coombs Road, Easthampton, MA 01027

Join environmental organizations from around the Valley for the Fourth Annual Family Bird Festival. The event features:

- Morning **bird walks** at Arcadia led by members of the Hampshire Bird Club,
- **Live birds of prey** with Tom Ricardi (shows at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.),
- **Bird-watching tips,**
- **Bird-feeding information,** and
- **Activities** for all ages.

Sponsors include the Hampshire Bird Club, Mass Audubon, Springfield Naturalists Club and SWCA Environmental Consultants.

Heroes or Heroines Wanted

The **Amherst Breeding Bird Survey** has provided data along 16 routes (99 sites) in the Amherst area for twenty eight (28) years. Breeding Bird Surveys typically involve skilled observers travelling fixed routes, listening for breeding bird song and perhaps making other observations that indicate the distribution of breeding species in our region. You can take a look at some of the results at (<https://gis.amherstma.gov/bbs/>) (check “About” and “Help”). It is an extraordinarily valuable database, probably unique over much of the country, especially since it does not have the backing of a major organization to maintain the records etc.

Help is needed to coordinate this noble work. If you have anything to offer, please contact maryalice1936@gmail.com

Mass Audubon Bird-A-Thon

Friday, May 11 6:00 PM to Saturday, May 12: 6:00 PM

Once again, this year, the **Arcadia** team will be focusing our efforts on Hampshire County in order to minimize the carbon footprint of our efforts. Each birding team will record as many species as they can and email their results to me, charleshorn66@gmail.com, or Patti, psteinman@massaudubon.org. Bird with what time you have available. Raise what funds you can; small amounts add up quickly. Make it a fun time, and remember that the money goes to Arcadia's public school environmental programs (1700 students last year!) and the Western Mass Youth Climate Summit.

For more details, copy/paste <http://web.massaudubon.org/goto/ArcadiaBAT> into your browser, ask one of our participants, or simply get on our Bird-a-thon 2018 email list via my above gmail address. (We email via Bcc). Find online giving a problem? You can make a check to Mass Audubon with memo, "Arcadia BAT 2018". Mail to attn.: Jonah Keane, Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, 127 Combs Road, Easthampton, MA 01027. Thank you for your time.

Chuck Horn and the Bird-a-thon Team: Phil Doyle, Chuck Horn, Janice Jorgensen, Anne Lombard, and Patti Steinman.

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS (selected)

Nature All Year Study Club 2018

April to July, various dates.

Attracting Pollinators Workshop

Thursday, April 6: 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

Saturday, April 7, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Woodcock: Skydancer

Friday, April 6, 8-10 pm

Henry Street Spotted Salamander Egg Mass Count

A weekend afternoon in April, depending on weather.

Timber Rattlesnakes in Massachusetts

Thursday, April 12, 7-8pm

Nature Photography: Rock, Flower, Water

Sunday, April 29, 9-11:30am at the Holyoke Range

Sunday, May 20, 9-11:30am at Mt. Toby

Sunday, June 10, 9-11:30am at Sunderland Water Falls

Bird Migration

Saturday, May 5, 7-10 am

For details and registration for all Hitchcock programs, please contact the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 845 West St., Amherst MA 01002. Telephone (413) 256 6006, or on the web at www.hitchcockcenter.org.

ARCADIA PROGRAMS (Selected)

Bird Sounds: Songs and Calls,

April 5, 7:00-9:00pm

Bird Walk at Graves Farm,

April 7, 7:00-10:00am

Pioneer Valley Ecological Research and Management Symposium,

April 7, 9:00am-noon

Earth Day Weekend Floodplain Canoe Paddle,

April 21, 10:00am-1:00pm

All About Gardening for Pollinators,

April 22, 1:00-3:00pm

Arcadia Family Bird Fun,

April 28, 8:00 to 10:00am

*For more details and/or to register for all Arcadia programs, go to www.massaudubon.org/arcadia
You may also contact **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary** direct at 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton MA 01027 or
telephone **(413) 584-3009**.*

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Committee is looking for the following:

- Expressions of interest in a Decoy Construction program led by an expert club member. There would be a fee, but the event would be subsidized by the committee. We would appreciate knowing if you might participate or have other feedback, (we do not need a firm commitment at this time),
- Leaders for a beginning birder program that would focus on helping those new to birding to learn common birds, use of scopes and binoculars, become familiar with birding apps, learn about bird habitats, and
- Names and contacts for groups that might be interested in Education Committee programs.

If you have anything to share on these topics, please contact bhart2000@aol.com or call 413 320 2841.

Remembering Bill Buchanan

Long-time club member Bill Buchanan passed away on March 22. He was a regular at meetings and on club trips for many years. Birding was but one part of his fascinating and highly accomplished life. We will miss him. His obituary is at <http://www.kostanskifuneralhome.com/notices/William-BuchananJr>.

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



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 34, No. 9
May, 2018.

In this edition,

- The **next program** and a reminder about the **last program** of the year,
- A couple of **trip reports**,
- The voluminous list of **coming trips**,
- The agenda for this year's **Annual General Meeting**, including the **slate of Board nominees** from the Nominating Committee and a trio of **bylaw amendments**,
- A **thank you** from Sue Emerson, and
- **Hitchcock** and **Arcadia** programs and a reminder about **Birdathon 2018**.

I hope you find some of it useful!

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, May 14 at 7:15 p.m.

Sam Fried presents Birding Cuba

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Just 90 miles from Key West, Cuba has been a “lost world” to American travelers for almost 60 years. Despite its political isolation from the USA, Cuba is still a large Caribbean island with a highly diverse bird population including numerous endemic species. This program chronicles my 10-day visit to the island, in search of birds and a sense of what Cuba is really like today.

Sam Fried is the founder of *Flights of Fancy Adventures, LLC*, a birding, photography and natural history travel company offering small group, low cost, high quality birding trips. Sam has had over 1000 photographs and 56 feature articles published in field guides, books, newspapers and magazines worldwide, including *National Audubon*, *National Geographic*, *Birder's World*, *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Birding and Living Bird Quarterly* and various golf magazines. He wrote several chapters of the *Insight Guides* book on birding in North America, published by *The Discovery Channel*. Sam has made approximately 500 photo presentations to a wide variety of organizations, including several to Hampshire Bird Club! He is a regular speaker and field trip leader at the Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival and a past president of Hartford Audubon Society.

Sam just happens to mention that his North American life list includes 763 birds seen and 747 photographed!!

COMING PROGRAMS

June 11, 2018. Lois & Alan Richardson. Adventures in Papua-New Guinea.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Valley Waterfowl. Saturday, March 17.

Mike Locher and some other anatophiles took a spin through the valley on a mild and pleasant day.

Hadley Cove was crowded with Mallards, Canada Geese and Black Ducks with only one **Green-winged Teal** to provide some variety. The northern reaches of Great Pond in Hatfield gave up 10 Wood Duck, one (1) **Gadwall**, nineteen (19) Green-winged Teal, three (3) Ring-necked Duck, 16 Hooded Mergansers and 21 Common Mergansers.

At the Hatfield marsh we found one Bald Eagle sitting on the nest, and some happy Eastern Bluebirds told (optimistically, it turned out) of the impending spring. Leader Mike made, it turns out, an inspired detour through the Montague Sandplains, where we found the pair of reported **Red Crossbills** working energetically on a new nest right above the road. It was great to meet a pair of decidedly young and decidedly avid photographers there, and the Hitchcock birding class showed up to join the party as well.

At the Road and Gun Club in Turners Falls, we added a pair of **American Widgeon**, several **Northern Pintail** and a Bufflehead to the days tally. Barton's Cove hosted 19 Common Goldeneye, a continuing **female Redhead**, which eventually showed itself, more Ring-necked Ducks, four (4) **Greater Scaup** and several Bald Eagles. The Power Canal in the middle of the day was a goose farm, but we did spy one (1) Sharp-shinned Hawk searching for the unsuspecting tweety birds of late winter. Finally, after a long jaunt through the river-adjacent farmlands on the western side of the Connecticut, we stopped off at Bridge Street in Hatfield where there were a few additional Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers but not the Rusty Blackbirds for which we had hoped.

A good day in our very own valley, with just enough novelty to keep us engaged throughout.

David Peake-Jones

Ashley Reservoir. Sunday, April 8 with Mike Locher

This year's version of the Ashley Reservoir trip ran on April 8, which seemed early this year, given the unrelenting cold we were experiencing. Checking eBird before the trip, ducks were scarce, hawks were scarcer, and warblers were almost unmentioned.

On the morning of the big event, our small group set out in the chilly breeze with high hopes and cold noses. On the way down to the reservoir we found a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. We had our first real action crossing between the Ashley Pond and Wright Pond, looking at the stand of pines that catches the morning sun. Tree Swallows were perched on the distant fence line, occasionally getting flushed, then returning to their perches. In the pines we spotted a mixed group of **Palm Warblers**, **Pine Warblers**, **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, and Yellow-rumped Warblers actively feeding. Several of them gave us great looks, although the breeze made it difficult to keep the binoculars from shaking and the eyes from tearing. So we headed onward. Soon thereafter we had **Brown Creepers** singing, but the back side of the reservoir was pretty quiet. We found a patch of hepatica preparing to bloom, but no water snakes on the rocks near the outflow. By then the sun was warming us a bit, and a few raptors were starting to take to the air. We crossed the railroad tracks and, after much toil and trouble, located a **Louisiana Waterthrush**, chipping and bobbing its tail about twenty feet above the stream.

On the way out, we found Ring-necked Ducks in the back of Connor Reservoir, and picked out a few Northern Rough-winged Swallows among the Tree Swallows. All told, we tallied 45 species, which isn't too bad for a day in early April.

Mike Locher

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 – suitable for people who can walk on level ground at a relaxed pace), Moderate (M – suitable for people who can walk over uneven ground at a relaxed pace), or Strenuous (S – suitable only for people who can walk over uneven or difficult terrain at a quick pace) to give a rough indication of the pace and/or terrain. Please check all information with the trip leaders.*

Tuesday, May 8. QDMB: Hadley Transfer Station. Morning. Mike Locher looks for migrants around one of the (perhaps justifiably) underappreciated parts of the Honey Pot. Meet at the turnaround just past the transfer station (end of North Branch Road, Hadley) at 6:00 a.m. (E/M)

***Tuesday, May 8. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Ted Gilliland, and Laura Beltran look for warblers, vireos, grosbeaks, tanagers, flycatchers, and other spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E/M)

Saturday, May 12. Mineral Hills Conservation Area. Half day. Marcia Merithew and Betsy Higgins lead birders through one of the less-known Northampton conservation areas. This has been a consistent place for Prairie Warbler over the past several years. For information, contact Marcia (413-896-9539 or mmerithew-at-comcast-dot-net). Meet at the JFK Middle School parking lot (100 Bridge Road, Florence) at 7 a.m. (E/M)

Sunday, May 13. Mt Auburn Cemetery, Watertown, MA. All day. David Peake-Jones heads to this legendary garden cemetery and migrant trap in Watertown, MA, which can play host to a dazzling array of warblers on a good day, and is a beautiful and sometimes moving place to bird. Depending on weather and interest we may make an optional stop along the way home. We will meet at the Northampton Bowling Alley at 5:45 AM to carpool. Contact David Peake-Jones (newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org) before the end of Friday, May 11 to register. (M)

***Tuesday, May 15. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Henry Lappen, Stephen LaValley, and Devin Griffiths look for warblers, vireos, grosbeaks, tanagers, flycatchers, and other spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:00 a.m. (E/M)

Wednesday, May 16. Montague Plains WMA: Whip-poor-wills. Evening. Al Richards searches the unique habitat around the Montague Plain for whip-poor-wills and other local specialties (like Towhees and Prairie Warblers). Contact Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting information. (E)

Saturday, May 19. Hilltown Ramble. All day. Bob Zimmermann (413-585-0405) and a co-leader to be named later visit migrant spots from Cummington through Moran Wildlife Management Area, to Savoy, Plainfield and Hawley. Some hiking will be done. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop on King Street at 6:30 a.m. to organize carpools. (M)

Sunday, May 20. Montague Sandplains. Half day. Jeremy Coleman leads a daylight trip into this unique habitat. Expected birds will be Prairie, Black and White, Blue-winged, Chestnut-sided, and Pine Warblers, Redstart, Ovenbird, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, Eastern Towhee, Brown Thrasher, Grasshopper and Field Sparrow, and many other breeding species, with the possibility for late migrants such as Mourning or Canada Warbler. And there's the possibility of Red Crossbills. For information, contact Jeremy (jcolemanarch-at-gmail-dot-com). (E/M)

Tuesday, May 22. QDMB: USFWS Northeast Regional Headquarters. Morning. Mike Locher looks for Willow Flycatchers, orioles, and warblers. Meet at the visitor's lot (300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley) at 6:00 a.m. (E)

***Tuesday, May 22. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Stephen LaValley, and Devin Griffiths look for warblers, vireos, grosbeaks, tanagers, flycatchers, and other spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:00 a.m. (E/M)

Thursday-Sunday, May 24-27. Monhegan Island. Overnight. Scott Sumner leads the Hampshire Bird Club's pilgrimage to Monhegan Island. Not only is the island charming, but the numbers and variety of migrating birds can be astonishing. This trip is limited to 12 Hampshire Bird Club members. Price will depend upon the number of participants. Contact Scott (413-256-5438) for information, and Mike Locher (413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) to register or for questions about the cost of the trip. (E/M/S)

***Saturday, May 26. Knightville Dam.** Half day. Marcia Merithew and Betsy Higgins visit Knightville Dam, looking for spring migrants and local residents. Contact Marcia (413-896-9539 or mmerithew-at-comcast-dot-net) for details. Meet at 7 a.m. at the John F. Kennedy Middle School (100 Bridge Road; Florence, MA). (E/M)

Sunday, May 27. Mt Holyoke. RESCHEDULED to Sunday, June 3.

Tuesday, May 29. QDMB: Orchard Arboretum. Morning. Mike Locher looks for warblers around this hidden conservation area. Meet at Russett Lane in Amherst at 6:00 a.m. (M)

***Tuesday, May 29. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. Devin Griffiths, Henry Lappen, and Stephen LaValley look for warblers, vireos, grosbeaks, tanagers, flycatchers, and other spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:30 a.m. (E/M)

Saturday, June 2. Westover Air Force Base. Half day. Mike Locher 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. Contact Mike 413-585-5864 or fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) at least two weeks ahead of time to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E/M)

Sunday, June 3. Mt Holyoke. Half day. **RESCHEDULED from May 26.**

David Peake-Jones will lead birders on a hike up the park road to the top of this local peak hoping for some deep-woods breeding specialties including Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers (both quite reliable in recent years). We will meet at the (gated) entrance to Skinner State Park (at the end of Old Mountain Road in Hadley) at 6:00 am. This is a steep hike on a paved road. Contact David Peake-Jones (newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org) before the end of Friday, May 25 to register. (M/S)

***Saturday, June 9. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Laura Beltran, and Josh Rose look for warblers, vireos, grosbeaks, tanagers, flycatchers, and other spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:00 a.m. (E/M)

Sunday, June 10. Mt Greylock. Full Day. David Peake-Jones will lead us up the state's tallest peak by car, stopping frequently to sample the changing avifauna as we gain altitude. The wind-dwarved spruce habitat at the top of the mountain still supports (dwindling) breeding populations of Blackpoll Warbler, Purple Finch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and White-throated Sparrow, amongst other sky-island breeders. We will meet at the Northampton Stop and Shop (228 King Street) to carpool at 6:00 AM. Contact David Peake-Jones (newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org) before the end of Friday, June 8 to register. (M)

***Saturday, June 23. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Laura Beltran, and Josh Rose look for warblers, vireos, grosbeaks, tanagers, flycatchers, and other spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet in the lower parking lot at the refuge (69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley) at 7:00 a.m. (E/M)

Check the website and newsletter for possible additions to the schedule, including Quabbin, Southwick WMA, and Milford Point, CT, among other possibilities.

Thank You

Sue Emerson was recently recognized by the club with a small gift for her years of service as the potluck coordinator for the annual Northampton Christmas Count. Here is her response.

"Dear Hampshire Bird Club members,

I cannot begin to thank all of you for the Saw-Whet Owl painting. It is an unexpected and very much appreciated gift. The success of the annual compilation pot-luck evening is due in no small part to the assistance and generosity of all of the members, and especially my "elves". Thank you."

Sue

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The **Annual General Meeting** of the **Hampshire Bird Club Incorporated** will be held on **Monday, May 14, 2018** 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 2018-2019, and to vote on three (3) proposed By-law amendments.

The **Nominating Committee** includes **Mike Locher, Scott Sumner and Marcia Merithew** and has nominated the following for election to the Board of Directors for 2017-2018:

President: Scott Sumner

Vice-President/Program Chair: Geoff LeBaron

Treasurer: Stephen Baker

Membership Secretary: Lissa Ganter

Communications Secretary: Jan Howard

Board Members at large:

Bruce Hart

Mike Locher

Carol Mardeusz

Jim Lafley

David Peake-Jones

Josh Rose

We are deeply grateful to two current Board members: **Sharon Dombeck** and **Jaap van Heerden**, who are stepping down at the end of this year.

Bylaw Amendments

Three bylaw amendments were presented at in the March and April meeting and have been described in detail in the March and April newsletters. A detailed handout will be available at the AGM for members to again review the details prior to the vote. Here is a basic outline of what each bylaw amendment means for the club.

Bylaw Amendment 1 would expand the stated purpose of the club to include the conservation of birds and bird habitats.

Bylaw Amendment 2 would require the Nominating Committee to actively consider diversity (in, for example, age, gender etc.) when nominating individuals to serve on the HBC Board of Directors.

Bylaw Amendment 3 would disallow nominations for the Board at the AGM but would establish a process for any qualified member to run against the Nominating Committee nominee for any position on the HBC board. This process would involve the nomination being made much earlier in the electoral process.

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Wildflower Walk at Bear Swamp, Ashfield: *Nancy Goodman*
Saturday, May 12, 10 am-1 pm

Book Club: *Braiding Sweetgrass* : *Rae Griffiths and Casey Beebe*
Wednesday, May 23, 7-8:30 pm. Free. Please register

Morning Nature Walk for Seniors: *John Green*
Thursday, May 24, 9-11 am. Free. Please register

Season of Dreams: A Book Launch Reading and Slide Show: *Jonathon Wright*
Sunday, May 20, 4-6 pm. Free. Please register.

Edible Wild Plants Presentation : *John Root*
Tuesday, June 12, 7-8 pm. Fee.

An evening with Conservation Law Foundation (CLF): *Brad Campbell*
Thursday, May 31, 6-8 pm. Free. Please register.

Gathering Rain: 3-Season Rainwater Collection for Outdoor Use: *Kris Walter*
Saturday, June 9, 2-4 pm in Greenfield.

For details and registration for all Hitchcock programs, please contact the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 845 West St., Amherst MA 01002. Telephone (413) 256 6006, or on the web at www.hitchcockcenter.org.

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Bird Camp for Ages 11-16
June 25-30, 9:00 am-3:00 pm

Bird Walks at Arcadia
Monday-Friday, May 7-11, 7-8:30 , meet at Arcadia

Bird Walk at Graves Farm: *John Green*
May 26, 7-10 am

For more details and/or to register for all Arcadia programs, go to www.massaudubon.org/arcadia

*You may also contact **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary** direct at 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton MA 01027 or telephone (413) 584-3009.*

**BIRD-A-THON 2018
MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON
CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY SANCTUARIES**

Bird-a-thon Supports Arcadia's Climate Change Center

Climate change is the biggest environmental threat to both people and wildlife. Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary will be one of three statewide pilot Climate Action Center sites. As a Climate Action Center, Arcadia will expand our education for youth and provide a speakers series on climate change for adults. The center will also feature interpretation, and networking on the topic. There has never been a better time to support this effort as a booster or an individual contributor.

For more information or to give, please go to

www.massaudubon.org/Arcadia, , then look for Bird-a-thon 2018.

Alternatively, you can simply write out a check to Mass Audubon with a memo "Arcadia Bird-a-thon 2017" and send it to "Jonah Keane, Arcadia Sanctuary, Mass Audubon, 127 Combs Road, Easthampton, MA 01027".

Bird-a-thon Birding, Saturday, May 12:

To reduce our carbon footprint, we are birding just the three CRV Sanctuary counties. Beginning birders are encouraged to join us. We will try to saturate Hampshire County, but we will also need data from Franklin and Hamden Counties. Please contact one of our Bird-a-thon team leaders if you would like to participate. It has always been a fun day of birding.

Birdathon team leaders (alphabetically): Phil Doyle, Chuck Horn, Janice Jorgenson, Jonah Keane, Anne Lombard, and Patti Steinman.

Chuck Horn

That's all for now.

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor
newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org=



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 34, No. 10
July, 2018

Alert readers may note some firsts this month. We generally have a June newsletter but this year circumstances conspired to delay publication until now. Thus, instead of looking forward to the next program, we must content ourselves with a quick note on the program from June that has already happened. For those wondering what the point of that is, I must (with all due humility) point out that the newsletter serves not only to advertise events that are to come, but also to record those that have been.....

This is the last edition of the club year. We take a break from organized activity until September, when the next program will take place, but not all in our ranks can afford to put our feet up. Geoff is frantically working to nail down (perhaps literally) speakers for next year, and **our new Field Trip Chair, Carol, needs your commitments to lead fall field trips as soon as possible.** Please look for the September, 2018 edition and be ready to renew your membership promptly!

Also in this edition,

- A **field trip report** just to prove there were some,
- The **HBC elections** and **post-election changes** on the board,
- **Help Wanted** for the post of **Set-Up Chair**,
- A **Pot-luck Coordinator** required,
- A definition of “**HBC specialist**” and some **changes** in those ranks, too,
- **Thanks** to the club from the Griffiths family.

I hope you find some of it useful!

PREVIOUS PROGRAM
Monday, June 11 at 7:15 p.m.
Lois and Al Richardson presented
Papua New Guinea: A Birding Adventure
Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

In a quest to try to see at least half the birds in the world, the Richardsons have birded in Europe, Africa, Asia, Antarctica, North, South, and Central America, and most recently in Bhutan. This program documented a memorable trip to Papua New Guinea: home to many magnificent and diverse birds – including several Birds of Paradise. The Richardson’s presentation included insights into many of the local people (including the famous Wigmen of the Huli tribe at a Sing-Sing in the highlands), described birding the wettest place on earth, and gave a first hand account of life in a primitive camp along a tributary of the Fly River.

COMING PROGRAMS

No word yet on Geoff’s star-studded line-up for next year but you can bet it is worth waiting for.....

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Skinner State Park. Sunday, June 3, 2018

At 6 a.m. on Sunday, June 3, **David Peake-Jones** led a small group up the road to Mt. Holyoke. The road from the gate to the summit is closed to cars now because of repaving, but the machinery wasn't out early Sunday morning, so we were able to hike the road.

Right at the gate we got a few species (Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Eastern Phoebe, American Robin). On the way to the Halfway House we heard our first **Worm-eating Warbler**, saw a Yellow-throated Vireo, and identified several other forest denizens. At the stone bridge we saw a **Hermit Thrush nest** with a pair of fuzzy hatchlings, and watched a pair of Eastern Phoebes feed a much larger chick (Brown-headed Cowbird?). We heard our first **Cerulean Warbler** not far past Taylor Notch, and spotted a Garter Snake that slid *backwards* (yes, backwards) into a hole.

In recent years, the big S-curve below the summit (where the road is currently painted with the numbers 79 and 80) has been my favorite spot on the mountain. I have consistently had great views of unusual species there, and Sunday was no exception. Just before arriving at the curve we admired the Pink Lady's Slippers that were blooming under the evergreens, but at the curve itself we were treated to an active pair of Worm-eating Warblers that came so close that I had to back up in order for my binoculars to focus. We also got good looks at a male Cerulean Warbler singing, and heard another nearby responding. On the way down at the same location we first heard, then spotted, a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** perched in the open.

At the summit we added Dark-eyed Juncos and Indigo Buntings, and an uncooperative and unidentified Empidonax flycatcher, to the list. By my count we had a total of 37 species, including 4 Cerulean Warblers, 5 Worm-eating Warblers, 3 Yellow-throated Vireos, and 1 Yellow-billed Cuckoo, all of which afforded great views.

Mike Locher

LEADERS NEEDED NOW FOR THE FALL FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE! (An Appeal from Carol)

First, let me acknowledge Mike Locher, who has not only been leading HBC field trips for more than fifteen years, but has also been searching for leaders and organizing our birding adventures since 2001. I do wish to thank him for his time, energy, and consideration on behalf of the Club in this endeavor. He will be missed in this capacity and I will try to fill his shoes in terms of the quality and quantity of field trips you have come to expect during the four seasons of trying to observe our avian friends.

If you are willing to lead a field trip between August 2018 and December 2018, please email Field Trips Coordinator Carol Mardeusz (fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org) with the date, time, destination, types of birds you are hoping to find, and the maximum number of participants if there is a maximum. Also, please rank it as an easy, moderate, or strenuous day of birding. Finally, please also include your phone number and/or email if you would like members to notify you of their desire to attend.

Alternatively, email me your phone number and we can discuss planning over the phone.

If you would like to join the committee to help organize field trips, please email me at the address above indicating your interest and I will get back to you on a date, time and place to meet to plan for the upcoming field trips. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Carol Mardeusz

BOARD of DIRECTORS, 2018-2019

The **Annual General Meeting** of the **Hampshire Bird Club Incorporated** was held on **Monday, May 14, 2018** at the **Immanuel Lutheran Church** in Amherst, MA.

The following were elected at that meeting:

President: Scott Sumner

Vice-President/Program Chair: Geoff LeBaron

Treasurer: Stephen Baker

Membership Secretary: Lissa Ganter

Communications Secretary: Jan Howard

Board Members at large:

Bruce Hart
Mike Locher
Carol Mardeusz
Jim Lafley
David Peake-Jones
Josh Rose

Since the Annual General Meeting there have been some changes in the composition of the Board. In alphabetical order, these are:

Sharon Dombeck has been appointed to the board as a Member-at-Large,

Mike Locher has resigned, and

David Peake-Jones has resigned.

As a result, as of June 28, 2018, there is one (1) Member-At-Large position vacant.

With the changes described above, the board of the Hampshire Bird Club as at June 28, 2018 is as follows:

President: Scott Sumner

Vice-President/Program Chair: Geoff LeBaron

Treasurer: Stephen Baker

Membership Secretary: Lissa Ganter

Communications Secretary: Jan Howard

Board Members at large:

Sharon Dombeck
Bruce Hart
Carol Mardeusz
Jim Lafley
Josh Rose
(Member-at-Large vacancy).

The next scheduled Board meeting is on Thursday, August 2nd at 7 p.m. at the Hitchcock Center, 245 West Street, Amherst. The meeting is open to any member of the Hampshire Bird Club.

HBC Specialists: Departures

Our “specialists” are board-appointed folks who provide somewhat specialized support for the club. In the past month or so, three (3) of them have resigned from their former roles. In alphabetical order, they are as follows.

Mike Locher generated the Fall Field Trip schedule in 2001 and has been creating the Fall, and Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedules ever since. During this time, Mike has overseen major improvements to our process for coordinating overnight trips, including increased club supports for the trip leaders, and has pushed constantly to diversify our trip offerings as well as to hold on to the old favorites we cherish. Thank you, Mike!

David Peake-Jones is resigning as Newsletter Editor. Thank you, David!

Jaap van Heerden has been our Program Set-Up Chair since 2003 but is stepping away after 14 years of yeoman service. He oversaw the transition from celluloid slides and an ancient audio system to newer equipment, including a digital projector in 2007. It is through Jaap’s genius and unfailing presence prior to meetings that the wonderful presentations we have grown so used to at HBC have been visible and audible to all. Thank you, Jaap!

HBC Specialists: Arrivals

Carol Mardeusz, who has been on the Board and the Education Committee for a number of years, is stepping in as our new **Field Trip Chair**. Welcome, Carol!

Devin Griffiths, an active field trip leader, voice for conservation causes, and published author, will be our next **Newsletter Editor**. Welcome, Devin!

HELP WANTED: Program Set-Up Chair

The Set-Up Chair works closely with the Program Chair and is responsible for:

- In conjunction with the program chair, communicating with our program host, Immanuel Lutheran Church, regarding the annual church booking schedule and changes thereto,
- Storing club audio-visual equipment between programs and transporting the equipment to our program venue on the day of a program,
- Setting up the space for each monthly program (both furniture and computer/audio-visual equipment), in conjunction with speakers, the Program Chair, and volunteer help,
- Restoring the program space to pre-program condition (with volunteer help),
- Transporting AV equipment back to storage after the program,
- Researching, recommending and purchasing audio visual and other program-related equipment in consultation with the Board.

The tasks described above are best suited to someone with some recent experience with audio-visual technology, specifically digital projection equipment, and modern audio amplification equipment. The set-up chair needs a basic familiarity with computers (ideally Apple and PC) and software in order to be able to trouble-shoot for speakers. Please note that scheduling flexibility to be available at the program location several hours prior to the meeting is highly desirable.

Historically, our Set-up chair has donated the use of his personal laptop (Power Point enabled, and with HDMA/VGA outputs) to the club for use as a back-up for programs, or if the speaker is unable to provide their own laptop. If you are otherwise interested but would prefer not to continue this tradition, the Board will arrange an alternative back-up.

A detailed job description is available and Jaap will be able to assist with the transition.

If you are interested in this position, please contact the Board at board@hampshirebirdclub.org

Pot Luck Coordinator Needed. Christmas Count

We weren't bluffing. Sue Emerson, after years of coordinating our beloved Christmas Count Potluck, really does deserve a rest and really has moved on. We need a new coordinator. The person we seek will start working with our ever-willing but sometimes prompt-requiring membership as early as October, to get commitments for dishes and beverages. He or she, in company with assistants recruited from amongst that same selfless membership (and always referred to by Sue as her "elves") will also arrange the set-up and deliveries of dishes for the pot-luck at Hitchcock center on the day of the count and keep things running smoothly during the potluck itself. Rewards include the eternal gratitude of tired and hungry birders, a round of applause, and a bunch of stuff to clean up, in that order.

If this could be you, please contact the Board at board@hampshirebirdclub.org. If you prefer, you can also contact Sue directly at spe33@charter.net, or 413 588 6900.

Thanks from the Griffiths Family

Dear Hampshire Bird Club Members,

We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to all of you for the unwavering support you have given Aidan over the years. From helping sponsor his attendance at ABA's Camp Colorado in 2014 and The Washington Youth Summit on the Environment last summer, to participating in his walks and admiring his photographs, you have been an integral part of his birding education since we joined the HBC all those years ago. As most of you know, Aidan is off to Juniata College in Huntingdon, PA to study wildlife conservation and environmental science with an interest in focusing on birds and education. It truly has meant the world to our family to have you encourage his love of birds in all the ways you do. Thank you!

Devin and Rae Griffiths

Editor's note:

I think I can speak for many in the club when I say that Aiden taught me more than I taught him!

Best of luck, Aiden, and we hope you will come back and bird with us whenever possible. Our egos can take it!

Signing Off

So this is it for the first July edition in club history.

Devin takes over as editor for the September edition.

I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to those who have helped with the assembly of the newsletter over the years. The core group includes **Sue Emerson, Helga Beatty, Sally Hills and Lissa Ganter** with some others involved from time to time. They have responded at ridiculously short notice with their time, space on their kitchen tables, good cheer, cookies, beverages and, of course, finger-numbing labor.

I would also like to thank our readers for whatever respectful uses you make of this publication each month, and for the many kind comments I have gotten over the years.

On the end pages, something I wrote in May that I just can't bear to waste.

Good luck, Devin and to all of us,

Talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Chimney Swifts: the Disappearance of an Almost Invisible Bird

The mysterious biology and decline of the Chimney Swift

My recollections of a presentation by Margaret Rubega of UConn.

I recently attended the Avian Insectivore Conference, put on at Harvard Forest by the Ware River Nature Club on April 28, 2018. There were a series of extraordinary presentations by noted researchers and conservation professionals from throughout the region.

The keynote presenter was Margaret Rubega from UConn. Margaret is a past-presenter at our club and readers may remember the incredibly innovative research by her lab into the feeding mechanics of humming birds. Her more recent detective work on the decline of a common and seemingly unassailable bird is an inspiring story about the power of science, the dangers of accepting the conventional wisdom, and a call to action on behalf of a small and wonderful bird. With her permission I have tried to present my recollections of her talk with the hope that our readers will find it as thought-provoking as I did. I need to make it clear that this is NOT a peer-reviewed article and nor do I have the credentials to mix it up with the research community. This article is, no doubt, a self-indulgence on my part, but I hope our readers will perhaps find at least a few bits interesting enough to justify the expenditure of ink, paper and reader attention.

What is a Chimney Swift?

“A cigar with wings and a catcher’s mitt on its face...”

Chimney Swifts are part of a guild of birds, known as aerial insectivores. We are most familiar with their seemingly constant presence overhead in summer, especially in urban and semi-urban areas. Chimney swifts are superbly adapted for their singular lifestyles. Margaret describes them as carrying a “catcher’s mitt” on their faces, and showed some awesome photographs to illustrate this description. In biological terms, a Chimney Swift’s gape extends all the way to beneath the eye and, when the bird opens its bill all the way, muscles and flexible bones along the sides of the head deform the entire gape sideways, creating a prodigious maw. In all but size, they are the humpback whales of the skies. They have understandably short legs which are nonetheless equipped with a fearsome set of grappling hooks for gripping the vertical surfaces on which they rest when not foraging. They are, in fact, incapable of perching on a horizontal surface.

Singular Nesting Behavior

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in North America, these neo-tropical migrants probably nested in hollow trees in old growth forests and, perhaps, in natural “chimneys” on rock faces. Now, they are almost entirely dependent on human-built chimneys for nesting and summer roosting sites, but there are historical accounts of them using the walls/ceilings of barns and even outhouses.

A pair of swifts will select a nesting chimney and build a nest of sticks along the chimney wall, the sticks stuck together with proteinaceous swift saliva, which dries to a tenacious glue. The pair will generally defend their chimney against other swifts but, curiously, may tolerate the presence of (generally just a few) other swifts in that chimney. These “tolerated others” are probably young of the previous year, enlisted by the parents to help rear the current brood.

Summer Roosts?

Maybe, like me, you also took for granted that the spectacular communal roosts, with their dusk-time swirling vortices of returning birds, are part of the migrational and wintering biology of these birds. Not so. Throughout the northeast, Margaret and her researchers have identified summer roosts also in mysteriously chosen locations.

Who are the birds in these summer roosts? Young or otherwise non-breeding birds, perhaps, but Margaret poses the intriguing possibility that the roosts may also harbor one or the other of a mated pair, “off-shift” at the nearby nest, and choosing to spend the evening in the more thermodynamically favorable environment of a communal roost.

A Bird in Decline

Chimney Swifts, like all aerial insectivores, are in a desperate state of decline. The North American Breeding Bird Survey estimates that Chimney Swifts declined by 72% across their extensive breeding range between 1966 and 2015. Margaret, with the help of other researchers in her lab at UConn, have been asking why.

Too few chimneys? Too few bugs?

Conventional wisdom has it that shortage of nesting habitats might be to blame. Recent trends (to which I have fallen prey, I must confess) are toward capped and lined chimneys, which are less hospitable for nesting birds. However, Dr Rubega and her team found that despite the trend toward lined and capped chimneys in modern construction, there is no shortage of suitable chimneys in the parts of Connecticut she studied. Also, though there is some frightening research on changing insect abundance and diversity in North America and world-wide, breeding success for Chimney Swifts, at least in Connecticut, seems to be high, suggesting that, at least locally, food resources are adequate. Looking further afield, however, the scary but sparse data on insect abundance and diversity, and the guild-wide declines in avian aerial insectivores are a cause for grave concern.

Trouble in Paradise?

Margaret and her team were inexorably drawn toward an all-too-familiar question in conservation of neo-tropical species. What is happening to these birds when they disappear for the winter? Published accounts say that Chimney Swifts winter in the northern Amazon basin, in parts of Peru, Ecuador, Chile and Brazil, but precise information on their wintering grounds is hard to come by. We do know that rainforest clearing is proceeding apace in some of the Amazon basin. Stable isotope analysis of specific feather groups in Chimney Swifts found that the wintering birds consume insects that inhabit the canopies of rainforests as opposed to groups of insects that inhabit the cleared pasturelands and other anthropogenic landscapes that are replacing them. Translation: wintering Chimney Swifts need intact rainforest. It is reasonable and unavoidable to suspect that decline in Chimney Swift populations may have something to do with declining rainforests in the Amazon.

Disturbing, familiar, and for North American conservationists, news that tends to create a sense of hopelessness. But yet another in the multitude of reasons to take an active interest in conservation in the tropics as well as at home.

Post Script

As my first afterthought, I want to note that the researchers at UConn have started a unique relationship with a local business in Willimantic, Connecticut, a town which is home to two of the largest summer Chimney Swift roosts in Connecticut. As a result of this partnership, swift enthusiasts willing to travel to that town can participate in the swift story in a unique way (but you will have to wait until at least next May). If you would like to know more, take the time to peck this link into your browser.....

http://willibrew.com/event/chimney-swift-conservation-night-2018/?instance_id=27127

(if you enter Willimantic Chimney Swift Night into a search engine it will work too.)

Secondly, I am pleased to note that Chimney Swifts in my home town of Easthampton, seem to be bucking the overall decline of their species. My neighborhood is over-run with them, and their metallic chatter fills the air from dawn to dusk. It is a measure of my sadly unobservant nature that it was only this year that, for the first time, I witnessed the magical moment when several birds swirled, without warning, into the neighbor's chimney at dusk.

Lastly, keep an eye on the Ware River Nature Club. They have put on several very affordable local conferences aimed at the broader birding community and their future offerings will be well worth attending.

David Peake-Jones



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 35, No. 1

September 2018

Throughout my life, birds have been a constant source of inspiration, wonder, and joy. They provide solace and comfort, and connect me to all that is beautiful and sublime. I've stood rapt on the shores of the Galápagos among the finches that inspired Darwin, and I've been moved to tears by the grace of a backyard sparrow. Through birding, I've created lifelong friendships with perfect strangers, and I've shared birds with the people closest to my heart. Birding to me is more than a hobby; it's an abiding passion as necessary as food, water, shelter, and air.

If you're reading this, you know what I mean. Some time ago—three days, three years, three decades—a bird lit a spark in you, and you've been captivated ever since. As with me, your life and the lives of the birds are intertwined, and a world without them is beyond contemplation. Sadly, the birds we love are in trouble. The world over, birds are in the fight of their lives. Many are teetering on the brink, and they need our help.

There is much we can do as individuals, but the roar of our voices is far louder when we raise them as one. Bird clubs like the HBC play a critical role in organizing and amplifying those voices, and focusing the power of their members on the goal of conserving the birds who share their lives with us. But a bird club is only as strong as the people who comprise it. If you haven't yet renewed your HBC membership, please do so today; if this is your first time with us, we hope you'll consider joining. It may seem like a small step, but great change is built on such steps. Never underestimate the power of a group of people united in common purpose. Together, we stopped the assault on Santa Ana. Together, we can create a better world for the birds we love, and ensure that they continue to delight us long into the future.

Please Renew Your Membership NOW (or join us for the first time).

- ☐ Your **membership status** is shown on the cover page. Check to see if you owe dues this year.
- ☐ Complete the **Membership Form**. This will involve deciding on your membership contribution for this year, any additional support you may want to provide for the Education Committee, and also keeping us updated with important information about your membership. Please note that even if you got the ONLINE newsletter last year we ask all members to make a choice of newsletter options on the membership form this year as well.
- ☐ Fill out the reverse side of the Membership Form, which includes the **Field Trip Release Form** and **Rare Bird Alert** sign up,
- ☐ Fill out the **HBC Member Skills Survey**,
- ☐ Write a **check** for the required funds (if any), and
- ☐ **Mail** the forms and check as shown on the Membership Form, or bring them to the first program.

Our first program for this year is on MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 (details p. 2)
The Fall Field Trip Schedule is enclosed, too!!

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, September 17 at 7:15 p.m.

Mara Silver presents

Aerial Insectivores and Barn Swallows in New England

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst

Many species that belong to the group of birds known as aerial insectivores are showing alarming declines in the Northeast, including both Cliff and Barn Swallows. Both species commonly breed in agricultural settings—they use barns and other farm buildings for nesting, forage in open fields, and use mud for nest building. Reasons for population declines include habitat loss, large-scale agricultural practices, and competition from House Sparrows; more recently, pesticide use, climate change, and threats during migration and on wintering grounds have been implicated as well. However, in spite of large population declines, breeding success of both species can increase when habitat is improved at local nesting sites.

Mara Silver has been involved in swallow conservation projects for the past 25 years. She holds a Masters Degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where she researched characteristics of riverbanks used by nesting Bank Swallows.

COMING PROGRAMS

October 15, 2018. Mark LaBarr, Audubon Vermont. Golden-winged Warblers in the Champlain Valley of Vermont.

November 12, 2018. Peter Trull. The Symbiotic Relationship Between Humpback Whales and Marine Birds.

December 10, 2018. HBC Members' Meeting. Celebrate our 35th year with photos of the birds we've found both far and wide and right here at home.

January 14, 2019. Fred Baumgarten, Mount Holyoke College. Who's Buried in Audubon's Tomb? The Artist, the Musician, and the Birds of America.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: The Mission

The Education Committee is looking to develop school presentations, senior walks and programs, live bird interactions (captive and wild), visits to raptor centers, falconry demonstrations, boy & girl scout merit badge events, member workshops... in fact ANY activities that will bring the wonder of birds to new people. You can contribute with your donation (via the Membership Form) and by sharing your ideas with the committee. You can reach them at education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

That's all for this month. **Please send us your membership renewal NOW!**

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

Devin C. Griffiths, Editor

323-8417

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Date received: | Payment: __ cash, __ check, \$ _____ | Release Form signed? | Newsletter Choice? | Data entered: |
|----------------|---|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|

For administrative purposes only

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC. MEMBERSHIP FORM: 2018-2019

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

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Name(s): Address: City: State: _____ ZIP: _____ Home phone: Other phone (whose?): E-mail(s) (Please print clearly in CAPS) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">May we publish your contact information in the annual club membership list (sent to members)?</td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">No <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>May we contact you via email with time-sensitive information such as cancellations, impromptu trips etc.?</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">No <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> | May we publish your contact information in the annual club membership list (sent to members)? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | May we contact you via email with time-sensitive information such as cancellations, impromptu trips etc.? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | How would you like to get the HBC newsletter? (For the "online" version, we need to have an email address for you). <input type="checkbox"/> Download from the HBC Website (club will send reminders), OR <input type="checkbox"/> Send me the newsletter via US mail Please check any activities listed below in which you would like to participate: <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally provide refreshments <input type="checkbox"/> Field Trip Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Lead field trips <input type="checkbox"/> Share info on birding locations <input type="checkbox"/> Education Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe) _____ |
| May we publish your contact information in the annual club membership list (sent to members)? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | |
| May we contact you via email with time-sensitive information such as cancellations, impromptu trips etc.? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | |

Please choose a level of membership below. **All membership contributions are tax deductible.**

MEMBERSHIP - REGULAR: Tax deductible

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Student @ \$5.00 | \$ |
| Individual @ \$18.00 | \$ |
| Family @ \$30.00 | \$ |

MEMBERSHIP – SUPPORTING: Tax deductible

| | |
|--|----|
| Downy Woodpecker @ \$40.00 | \$ |
| Northern Flicker @ \$60.00 | \$ |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker @ \$100.00 | \$ |
| Pileated Woodpecker @ \$250.00 or more | \$ |

OUTREACH ACTIVITY

| | |
|--|----|
| Donation to Education Committee (Optional) | \$ |
|--|----|

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

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▶

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

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** to automatically receive all RBA announcements. Please email 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.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 35, No. 2
October 2018

When I started birding nearly four decades ago, it wasn't a thing most people did—at least, not most people we knew. And folks looked at you kind of oddly when you told them what you did for fun. “You watch birds?” they'd say, like it was the strangest thing they'd ever heard of. You could almost see the gears turning as they backed slowly away from you. Why, they thought, why on Earth would you *watch* birds?

Well, times have changed, and those of us who remained steadfast in our love for the birds have seen the nation wholeheartedly embrace our passion. There are now some 80 million birders in this country alone, and that number is growing. Every year, more and more people take up binoculars and dive headlong into the obsession. Birding has gone mainstream, and birds are celebrated. A welcome shift indeed.

But times have changed again. When I started birding, climate change was theoretical, habitat was plentiful, and half the species I saw weren't staring into the grinding maw of extinction. Birds today face some pretty grim prospects, and without direct intervention many of them may disappear. It's no longer enough to just be birders, to just sit back and watch. We have to take on the responsibility of conservation. We have to act.

The good news is that we're not at the end game yet. There is still time to save the birds we love. Across the country—and throughout the world—more people are waking up and getting serious about conservation. The chorus of voices in support of the birds is growing louder. Attitudes are changing, and with them, again, so are the times.

We're all here because of the birds, because everything being equal, we'd rather be out with them than anywhere else. For me—and for all of you as well, I'd wager—a world without birds is something too horrible to contemplate. Fortunately, each one of us can help hold this at bay, can prevent the horrible from becoming our reality. In the grand scheme of conservation there are parts for all of us to play, and myriad ways to play them—from donating time or money, to writing letters, to simply changing the way you buy coffee. The challenge is great, but the rewards of action are far greater. If we bring to bear the full measure of our passion, our courage, and our resolve, we just might change the world.

NEXT PROGRAM

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

Mark LaBarr presents

What's Buzzing in Vermont:

Golden-winged Warblers in the Champlain Valley

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst

This talk will focus on Audubon Vermont's work with Golden-winged Warblers, from our early surveys in the Champlain Valley to our geolocator work on both Golden-winged and Blue-winged warblers. Also discussed will be current conservation efforts to create and maintain Golden-winged Warbler habitat in the Valley.

Mark LaBarr is Conservation Biologist and Program Manager at Audubon Vermont, the state program of the National Audubon Society. He oversees conservation projects, project staff and volunteers including the Champlain Valley Bird Initiative and the Endangered Species Recovery Project. As a biologist Mark's focus is on the Common Tern Recovery Project as well as efforts to better understand breeding populations of Golden-winged Warblers and other shrubland obligates in the Champlain Valley. Mark is a Master bird bander and runs the bird banding station at the Green Mountain Audubon Center; he is also the Chair of the Scientific Advisory Group on Birds for the VT Endangered and Threatened Species Committee, and served on the Bird Technical Committee for the State's Wildlife Action Plan. He obtained his undergraduate degree in Wildlife Biology from the University of Vermont and a master's degree in Education from St. Michael's College.

COMING PROGRAMS

November 12, 2018. Peter Trull. The Symbiotic Relationship Between Humpback Whales and Marine Birds.

December 10, 2018. HBC Members' Meeting. Celebrate our 35th year with photos of the birds we've found both far and wide and right here at home.

January 14, 2019. Fred Baumgarten, Mount Holyoke College. Who's Buried in Audubon's Tomb? The Artist, the Musician, and the Birds of America.

February 11, 2019. Bruce Beehler. North on the Wing: Travels with the Songbird Migration of Spring.

Field Trips September 2018 – January 2019

Please contact leaders if a phone number or email is listed at least two days in advance of the trip (if possible) to register and if you have any questions. Activity level is indicated as E/easy, M/moderate, S/strenuous. It's always wise to bring snacks and dress appropriately. If you want to keep a list of birds seen during the field trips, Mass Audubon has checklists for each of their sanctuaries and these can also be used as trip lists (<https://massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/birds-birding/bird-checklists>). Finally, at all times, whether on a trip with or without a leader, please follow the American Birding Association guidelines dictating ethical birding behavior (<https://hampshirebirdclub.org/aba-code-of-ethics/>) and those on our website regarding field trips (<http://hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines/>). Thank you.
Carol Mardeusz, Field Trip Coordinator

October

Saturday, October 13, 7:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge. Morning. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and, has occasional benches for resting. Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628) in the lower parking lot at the Refuge, 69 Moody Bridge Rd., Hadley to look for late fall migrants. (E/M)

Sunday, October 14, 7:00 a.m., Sparrows in Hadley and Environs. Morning. Join Scott Sumner (ssurner@aol.com) as he looks for sparrows in and around Hadley, Amherst, and Northampton. Meet at Stop & Shop (440 Russell St., Hadley). Registration required. (E)

Wednesday, October 17, 5:30 a.m., Plum Island and Newburyport. All day. Join Scott Sumner (ssurner@aol.com) during this midweek romp to one of our favorite birding areas to look for shorebirds, egrets, waterfowl and hawks. Meet at Stop & Shop (440 Russell St., Hadley). Registration required. (E/M)

Wednesday, October 24, 8:00 a.m., Fort River Refuge. Morning. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks, and has occasional benches for resting. Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628) in the lower parking lot at the Refuge, 69 Moody Bridge Rd., Hadley to look for late fall migrants. (E/M)

Sunday, October 28, 7:15 a.m., Turners Falls Halloween Birding Trip. All day. Join Josh Rose as he leads his annual trip to Satan's Kingdom, Hell's Kitchen, and other birding spots in the area of Northfield to Turners Falls in his annual trek through the northern Connecticut River Valley. Meet at the parking area for the Power Canal on Migratory Way in Turners Falls. Please email Josh (jrose@hampshirebirdclub.org) to register. (E/M)

November

Saturday, November 3, 5:30 a.m., Dead Creek WMA and Lake Champlain Valley. All day. Join Mike Locher (413-585-5864 or mlocher@yahoo.com) as he 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 raptors in the fields and ducks on Lake Champlain. Meet at Stop & Shop in NORTHAMPTON (228 King Street) at 5:25 a.m. for carpooling. (E/M)

Sunday, November 4, 6:20 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Berkshire Lakes. All day. DO NOT RUN. All day trip to look for ducks, loons, and donuts. Meet at Stop & Shop in NORTHAMPTON at 6:20 a.m. Leave at 6:30 a.m. sharp and returning about 4 p.m. Easy trip. Carpool if possible. Contact Tom Gagnon 413-584-6353. (E)

Saturday, November 10, 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Quabbin Reservoir. All day. Rain date November 11th. Moderate trip in search of ducks, loons, and Northern Finches. LIMITED participation. Please sign up early. Dress for cold weather. Meeting place to be determined. You MUST be a member of the Hampshire Bird Club. Call Craig Allen 413-467-3028. (M)

Saturday, November 10, 7:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge. Morning. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks and occasional benches for resting. Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628) in the lower parking lot at the Refuge, 69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley. (E/ M)

Wednesday, November 14, 7:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge. Morning. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks, and has occasional benches for resting. Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628) in the lower parking lot at the Refuge, 69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley. (E/M)

Saturday, November 17, CT shore. All day. Join Devin Griffiths as he searches the CT shore for ducks, shorebirds, and late fall migrants. A little luck might reveal Nelson's and Saltmarsh Sparrows, and maybe something rare. Contact Devin at 413-323-8417 or dcgwriter@gmail.com for meeting time/place. (E/M)

December

Saturday, December 8, 7:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge. Morning. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks, and has occasional benches for resting. Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628) in the lower parking lot at the Refuge, 69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley. (E/M)

Sunday, December 9, 7:00 a.m., Moran and Peru WMAs. Three-quarter day. Join Mike Locher as he visits the most boreal habitat in Western Massachusetts looking for Northern Shrikes and hoping for an early winter finch eruption. Get warmed up for the CBC! Dress for the weather and choose footwear wisely; snowshoes may be useful. Lunch options are scanty, so you may want to pack something to eat. Contact Mike (413-585-5864 or mlocher@yahoo.com) to register and for further information. Meet at the Stop & Shop in NORTHAMPTON (228 King Street). (M/S)

January

Sunday, January 13, 6:00 a.m. The Third Annual Cape Ann Winter Ramble. All day. Aidan Griffiths makes his triumphant return from the halls of higher learning to co-lead the HBC to birding greatness on the chilly shores of Cape Ann. Join he and Devin for a day of searching the coast for ducks, alcids, gulls, and the near-certain appearance of something odd, unusual, or downright rare. Bring snacks/lunch and dress for the weather (many layers). Contact Devin (413-323-8417) for meeting place or further information. **Note:** This trip is limited, so please get in touch ASAP if you're interested. (M)

CHRISTMAS COUNT

If you haven't already, mark your calendars now! The Northampton Christmas Bird Count is **Sunday, December 16, 2018**. It's a great day of birding followed by a wonderful feast among friends, with plenty of time to regale each other with the day's triumphs and share tales of the ones that got away. If you want to participate please contact cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Call for Help – AV and Meeting Setup

Are you a birder and a techie? After many years of providing AV and practical operations for HBC meetings, the retirement of Jaap Van Heerden has left us in need of a Coordinator (or Co-Coordiators) to carry on this important function. Our speakers need good technical support, and we all enjoy arriving to a welcoming array of places to sit!

What's needed:

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That's all for this month.

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

Devin C. Griffiths, Editor

323-8417

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 35, No. 3

November 2018

Since I've taken over the mantle of responsibility for our newsletter from the capable and dedicated hands of David Peake-Jones, you may have noticed that it's been arriving a bit... well, late would be the kind way to put it. Barely in time for the month's meeting is perhaps closer to the truth. Now, I could say that it's a big job, I'm still getting up to speed, my organizational skills, never great to begin with, are being stretched... there are a number of reasons that might contribute to the newsletter's delinquency. And while they are all to some extent true, there's a simpler and more honest explanation that gets right to the heart of the matter.

There were birds.

I picture many of you nodding in solidarity, knowing looks crossing your faces. After all, who of us hasn't been delayed by an errant songbird skulking in the bushes, a skein of geese dropping in out of the sky, or a circumnavigation of raptors rising on a column of heated air? No matter the flavor, there is always some bird, in the words of Aldo Leopold—artfully summing up the birder's dilemma—“needing identification.”

And so it goes. If I'm running late for something, if I let a deadline slip or am up excessively late playing catch-up, it's likely because there were birds. And as long as there are birds, I will continue to be diverted by them. It's okay. I've embraced the birding obsession, the fundamental need to get out and see what's waiting for me in the next hedgerow, the next marsh, or that stand of trees just up ahead.

And I know I'm not alone.

Now if you'll excuse me, I've got to go. There's a bird.

ADDITIONS TO THE HBC LIBRARY

Henry Lappen, our inimitable collector and curator of bird tomes from far and wide, has two new additions to the HBC Library. See him before or after our monthly meeting to check out one of these, or any of the other great books available to HBC members.

- The new *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, by Jonathan Alderfer & Jon Dunn
- *Far From Land, the Mysterious Lives of Seabirds*, by Michael Brooke

Also, anyone with a CWMARS library card can log in for free to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Birds of North America. Check out <https://www.joneslibrary.org/birds> for more info.

NEXT PROGRAM
Monday, November 12 at 7:15 p.m.
Peter Trull presents
The Symbiotic Relationship Between Humpback Whales
and Marine Birds

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst

Symbiotic relationships occur throughout Nature, some subtle, others compelling! In the open sea, Humpback Whales create bubble columns and bubble clouds that trap and drive small fish to the surface, providing an opportunity for a diversity of marine birds to share in the bounty. Symbiosis occurs in three forms, Mutualism, Commensalism, and Parasitism. In “The Symbiotic Relationship Between Humpback Whales and Marine Birds,” we’ll see through vivid images how one form, commensalism, occurs in a dynamic display of power and beauty. Learn about the behaviors and adaptations of birds, most notably the gulls, shearwaters, and petrels found in our coastal waters, as they coexist with Humpback Whales. A diversity of marine birds and marine mammal species will be shown and described in close-up images.

Peter Trull has been involved in field research and education on Cape Cod for over 40 years. In the ‘70s and ‘80s he coordinated Massachusetts Audubon Society’s coastal seabird monitoring program, assessing the breeding success and its limiting factors on 4 species of terns as well as Piping Plovers. He conducted field research in Guyana and Surinam, studying the market trapping of Common Terns and Roseate Terns, working with local bird trappers in several coastal villages where he hesitatingly admits he’s eaten Common Terns and 15 to 20 species of sandpipers and plovers. As Education Director at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, he developed programs and began studying Eastern Coyotes in 1989. Through the ‘90s, as a researcher and Education Director at the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, he developed and taught classes related to whales and marine birds and has completed over 2300 whale watching trips related to education and research. He recently retired as a 7th grade Science teacher at the Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School in Harwich, MA, and holds a Master’s Degree in Education. He has written seven books about Cape Cod natural history. His newest book, *The Life of Terns, Birds of Paradox*, is due out in spring of 2019. Peter lives in Brewster on Cape Cod.

COMING PROGRAMS

December 10, 2018. HBC Members’ Meeting. Celebrate our 35th year with photos of the birds we’ve found both far and wide and right here at home.

January 14, 2019. Fred Baumgarten, Mount Holyoke College. Who’s Buried in Audubon's Tomb? The Artist, the Musician, and the Birds of America.

February 11, 2019. Bruce Beehler. North on the Wing: Travels with the Songbird Migration of Spring.

March 11, 2019. Isabel Brofsky, M.Sc. candidate, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Farmland Bird Research in the Connecticut River Valley.

April 8, 2019. Sam Fried. Birding Honduras.

Field Trips November 2018 – January 2019

Please contact leaders if a phone number or email is listed at least two days in advance of the trip (if possible) to register and if you have any questions. Activity level is indicated as E/easy, M/moderate, S/strenuous. It's always wise to bring snacks and dress appropriately. If you want to keep a list of birds seen during the field trips, Mass Audubon has checklists for each of their sanctuaries and these can also be used as trip lists (<https://massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/birds-birding/bird-checklists>). Finally, at all times, whether on a trip with or without a leader, please follow the American Birding Association guidelines dictating ethical birding behavior (<https://hampshirebirdclub.org/aba-code-of-ethics/>) and those on our website regarding field trips (<http://hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines/>). Thank you.
Carol Mardeusz, Field Trip Coordinator

November

Wednesday, November 14, 7:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge. Morning. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks, and has occasional benches for resting. Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628) in the lower parking lot at the Refuge, 69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley. (E/M)

Saturday, November 17, CT shore. All day. Join Devin Griffiths as he searches the CT shore for ducks, shorebirds, and late fall migrants. A little luck might reveal Nelson's and Saltmarsh Sparrows, and maybe something rare. Contact Devin at 413-323-8417 or dcgwriter@gmail.com for meeting time/place. (E/M)

December

Saturday, December 8, 7:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge. Morning. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks, and has occasional benches for resting. Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628) in the lower parking lot at the Refuge, 69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley. (E/M)

Sunday, December 9, 7:00 a.m., Moran and Peru WMAs. Three-quarter day. Join Mike Locher as he visits the most boreal habitat in Western Massachusetts looking for Northern Shrikes and hoping for an early winter finch eruption. Get warmed up for the CBC! Dress for the weather and choose footwear wisely; snowshoes may be useful. Lunch options are scanty, so you may want to pack something to eat. Contact Mike (413-585-5864 or mlocher@yahoo.com) to register and for further information. Meet at the Stop & Shop in NORTHAMPTON (228 King Street). (M/S)

January

Sunday, January 13, 6:00 a.m. The Third Annual Cape Ann Winter Ramble. All day. Aidan Griffiths makes his triumphant return from the halls of higher learning to co-lead the HBC to birding greatness on the chilly shores of Cape Ann. Join him and Devin for a day of searching the coast for ducks, alcids, gulls, and the near-certain appearance of something odd, unusual, or downright rare. Bring snacks/lunch and dress for the weather (many layers). Contact Devin (413-323-8417) for meeting place or further information. **Note:** This trip is limited, so please get in touch ASAP if you're interested. (M)

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

The Annual Halloween Adventure: Satan's Kingdom, Hell's Kitchen and More Sunday, October 28

We followed the usual itinerary, starting at the power canal in Turners Falls. The waterbirds were nice but fairly routine: Hooded and Common Mergansers, Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Ring-billed Gulls, etc. But there was a fair amount of landbird activity, including one active little green warbler. I tried my best to turn it into an Orange-crowned, or perhaps a Cape May, but we all had pretty good looks at the critter, and its field marks pointed decisively to a first-year Tennessee! On our way out, a bird perched atop an old factory building, which I expected to be a pigeon, turned out to be an adult Cooper's Hawk.

We headed north toward Satan's Kingdom. Sawyer Ponds, the pair of ponds which bracket the south end of Old Vernon Road, had few birds of note, but an adorable trio of River Otters put on a show for us there, climbing up on a log and grooming themselves and each other for a while. The next marshy little pond down the road, dubbed "The Devil's Pantry" last year, had a half-dozen Green-winged Teal and a male Mallard with a companion whom I originally skimmed over and assumed was a female, but one of the group members called attention back to it; it turned out to be a Black Duck-Mallard hybrid.

The large muddy wetland of Hell's Kitchen is usually the highlight of this trip, and this year was no exception. A group of five Pectoral Sandpipers was present—the third year in a row, and fourth time in six years, that we've seen the species during this trip. But maybe the surprise of the day was who these Pects had for company: a Semipalmated Plover, and a Dunlin! As usual, the Kitchen had Yellow-rumped Warblers and a few Palms swarming along the edges, looking for insects grounded due to the weather.

Satan's Kingdom can be a bit of a letdown after Hell's Kitchen, but this year had one more surprise in store, a Solitary Sandpiper! That made four shorebird species in Franklin County. We birded Caldwell Road and River Road next, hoping for a fifth shorebird species—sadly, to no avail. We did cross paths with a Pileated Woodpecker, then discovered a nice little flurry of sparrow activity in a weedy field edge, dozens of birds of six species including the increasingly unsurprising (this month, anyway) White-crowned Sparrow. A pair of Pine Siskins flew over the area calling.

We stopped for a picnic lunch at Pauchaug Brook WMA, on the river right near the state line. A female Purple Finch dropped down from the canopy and perched in a patch of riverside weeds just a few meters from David Peake-Jones and myself. A quartet of eclipsed Wood Ducks paddled away across the river.

We finished our day at Northfield Meadows. Most of the action was on the dirt road that runs along the edge of the plowed field: This road was covered with so many sparrows that it looked like we could have walked down it stepping on sparrows and never had to touch the ground! While we missed some of the species previously reported by James Smith from this area, we found an American Tree Sparrow, first of the fall for all of us. And White-crowned Sparrows here numbered easily into the double digits! We also flushed 14 Wood Ducks off of the nearby cattail-choked pond, and heard Horned Larks out in the field.

But the bird of the stop, maybe of the day, came when Peter Gagarin wandered away from the rest of us, leaving the rest of us in our sparrow-induced fog. At some point Dawn Winkler noticed that Peter was signaling for the rest of us to join him. He'd been scanning far off in the field, trying to spot the larks that we had heard earlier, when some movement much closer caught his eye. A Snow Bunting was sitting on the ground, feeding, only 25 feet or so away! It remained there, not flying away, not even moving around very much, while all of us basked in its beauty. The closest and best look I've had at that species, definitely for a while, maybe ever!

CHRISTMAS COUNT

The MANO Christmas Bird Count countdown has begun! Less than 45 days until December 16, 2018.

1. If you are set—know what team you're on, who your leader is, where to get the forms, where you are meeting, etc., TERRIFIC
CBC maps, forms and info online? <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/cbc/cbcforms/>
2. Contact us at cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org if you:
 - a. Don't know if we know you want to participate
 - b. Have not received anything from Jan or Janice or your area leader
 - c. Can't find the forms and need forms
 - d. Have questions.
 - e. Have children and are wondering how they can participate. Check out:
Christmas Bird Count for Kids and Families
Sunday, December 16
2:00pm-4:00pm
Free
At the Hitchcock Center for the Environment
 Use this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/christmas-bird-count-for-kids-and-families-registration-51779062570>
3. Count is all night and day
4. Give your data to your team leader—numbers, species, miles walked, miles driven, and time spent looking for birds
5. Plan to come to the compilation and potluck at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst

CHRISTMAS COUNT POTLUCK

After the Northampton Christmas Count, please gather for a hearty and delicious potluck, beginning at 4:30 p.m. at the Hitchcock Center. It's a fun time, fine food, and we get to hear the reports from all the teams. For the potluck, we need main dishes, salads, desserts, and beverages. If you can contribute food or drink, please contact Lissa Ganter, lissa.ganter@gmail.com, or 413-253-1337. We also need a few helpers for an hour or so the day before (Saturday), to help set up the tables. Hope to hear from you!

Call for Help – AV and Meeting Setup

Are you a birder and a techie? After many years of providing AV and practical operations for HBC meetings, the retirement of Jaap Van Heerden has left us in need of a Coordinator (or Co-Coordiators) to carry on this important function. Our speakers need good technical support, and we all enjoy arriving to a welcoming array of places to sit!

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As per usual, the December newsletter is too chock-full to allow for the literary ramblings of this itinerant birder: The extravaganza that is the annual members' meeting, the high adventure of the 85th Christmas Bird Count, the HBC member directory, a call for trip leaders, a potluck plea, and the third edition of the Cape Ann Winter Ramble... I'm exhausted just thinking about it all. But fear not: For those enquiring minds, the details are all here. Read on, gentle readers, read on.

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, December 10 at 7:15 p.m.

The Hampshire Bird Club presents

The Annual Members' Meeting

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst

Join the Hampshire Bird Club for an evening of planning for the upcoming Christmas Bird Count season, plus a series of mini-presentations from members about recent (or not so recent!) interesting experiences from hither and yon, for the most part bird-related.

If you're a member and want to present at the meeting, please keep your presentations to 10-20 images, in PowerPoint format on a flash drive, and contact Geoff LeBaron/Program Chair in advance.

COMING PROGRAMS

January 14, 2019. Fred Baumgarten, Mount Holyoke College. Who's Buried in Audubon's Tomb? The Artist, the Musician, and the Birds of America.

February 11, 2019. Bruce Beehler. North on the Wing: Travels with the Songbird Migration of Spring.

March 11, 2019. Isabel Brofsky, M.Sc. candidate, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Farmland Bird Research in the Connecticut River Valley.

April 8, 2019. Sam Fried. Birding Honduras.

May 13, 2019. John Van de Graaff. Spirits of Spring: Warblers and More.

June 10, 2019. Tom Ricardi. Raptor Rehabilitation. Our local raptor rehab expert brings his knowledge, his experiences, and his raptors!

Field Trips December 2018 – January 2019

Please contact leaders if a phone number or email is listed at least two days in advance of the trip (if possible) to register and if you have any questions. Activity level is indicated as E/easy, M/moderate, S/strenuous. It's always wise to bring snacks and dress appropriately. If you want to keep a list of birds seen during the field trips, Mass Audubon has checklists for each of their sanctuaries and these can also be used as trip lists (<https://massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/birds-birding/bird-checklists>). Finally, at all times, whether on a trip with or without a leader, please follow the American Birding Association guidelines dictating ethical birding behavior (<https://hampshirebirdclub.org/aba-code-of-ethics/>) and those on our website regarding field trips (<http://hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines/>). Thank you.
Carol Mardeusz, Field Trip Coordinator

December

Sunday, December 16. The 85th Annual MANO Christmas Bird Count. All day. Join area birders today to count as many species of birds as possible from midnight to midnight December 16, 2018. You can spend the entire day or part of the day looking for our feathered friends. Beginners are welcome and age is no barrier for enjoying being in the outdoors. You can even participate by counting birds at your feeder as long as it is within the CBC circle. If you have not already signed up, please contact Janice Jorgensen or Jan Ortiz at **cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org** to be included.

At the end of the day, bring a dish to share at the Potluck Dinner to be held at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 845 West Street, Amherst, MA beginning at 4:30 p.m. After enjoying the good food and camaraderie of fellow participants, we will tally the species discovered. With luck, maybe one (or more) of our teams will have found a rare bird!

For more information go the CBC section on our website; it's under field trips.

January

Sunday, January 13, 6:00 a.m. The Third Annual Cape Ann Winter Ramble. All day. Aidan Griffiths makes his triumphant return from the halls of higher learning to co-lead the HBC to birding greatness on the chilly shores of Cape Ann. Join Aidan and Devin for a day of searching the coast for ducks, alcids, gulls, and the near-certain appearance of something odd, unusual, or downright rare. Bring snacks/lunch and dress for the weather (many layers). Contact Devin (413-323-8417) for meeting place or further information. **Note:** This trip is limited, so please get in touch ASAP if you're interested. (M)

Call for field trips

If anyone is willing to lead a field trip during the January to April months, please let me know at camardeusz@hampshirebirdclub.org. If you include your phone number, I will call you for information about the day. Otherwise, please include date, start and end time, meeting place, how strenuous the trip is, target birds, birding locations to cover, and if it's limited to HBC members. At this point, nothing is scheduled. Please include FIELD TRIPS in the Subject line so your email doesn't get deleted. Thank you.

THE 85th ANNUAL MANO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The hour grows late; the CBC is almost upon us. There are birds, and they must be counted. As part of an elite team of dedicated birders, your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to scour the greater Northampton area and surrounding environs for those hardiest of birds that thrive in the icy grip of a New England winter. This mission is fraught with peril: You may face extreme cold, birder-swallowing snow drifts, flocks of silhouetted songbirds flying away from you into the sun, and countless inanimate objects posing as count-circle rarities. Not all of you will make it, but those who do will be rewarded with a sumptuous feast, the chance to regale fellow survivors with tales of bravery and triumph, and the right to tell generations of younger birders that yes, you were there for the 85th Annual MANO CBC.

CBC ROUND-UP

The Christmas Bird Count is too grand to be contained within a single day. For those who want to take on the ultimate challenge, a week of bird counting awaits.

Saturday 12-15, Athol (Dave Small, Dave@dhsml.net) & Springfield (George Kingston, gcking@yahoo.com); Berkshire North (Pam Weatherbee, pambweath@gmail.com) & Central (Holly Higinbotham, higinbo@hotmail.com)

Sunday 12-16, NoHo (Jan Ortiz & Janice Jorgensen, cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org)

Tuesday 12-18, Sturbridge (Mark Lynch, moa.lynch@verizon.net)

Saturday 12-22, Cobble Mountain (Westfield), (Janice Zepko, jzepko@comcast.net)

Saturday 12-29, Quabbin (Scott Surner, ssurner@aol.com)

Sunday 12-30, Greenfield (Mark Fairbrother, bogelfin@crocker.com)

Tuesday 1-1, Berkshire South (Rene Wendell, renewendell@hotmail.com)

Saturday 1-5, Westminster (Chuck Caron, caronenv@aol.com)

CHRISTMAS COUNT POTLUCK

After the Northampton Christmas Count, please gather for a hearty and delicious potluck, beginning at 4:30 p.m. at the Hitchcock Center. It's a fun time, fine food, and we get to hear the reports from all the teams. We still need items in all categories: main dishes, salads, desserts, and beverages. If you can contribute food or drink, please contact Lissa Ganter, lissa.ganter@gmail.com, or 413-253-1337. We also need a few helpers for an hour or so the day before (Saturday), to help set up the tables. Hope to hear from you!

HBC CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

The newly-formed Conservation Committee held its first meeting on Monday, November 26 at the Hitchcock Center. Eleven of 14 members were in attendance; initial goals of the committee are to develop a mission statement, identify areas of concern/priority, and outline necessary tasks or actions that may be helpful in our conservation efforts. If you have questions or ideas, you can reach the committee at conservation@hampshirebirdclub.org.

HMANA NEEDS YOU!

The Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) is looking for birders with an interest in and ability to identify raptors who want to take on annual winter driving surveys looking for raptors. Nora Hanke, previously of Southampton, founded a survey in the Connecticut River Valley of Western Mass. in the winter of 2013-2014 and conducted 3-4 surveys per season through last year. Having left the state, she is looking for a person to take ownership of this survey. The route is 49 miles long, starting in Northampton and finishing in Hatfield. She conducted it on dates from early December through February, each survey taking a full day. The survey is run along the same route, in the same direction, in weather conducive to observations: no persistent fog or precipitation, for example. Ideally the same group of 2-4 persons conducts each survey, and for a person wishing to perform only 1 survey/year, HMANA requests a January date is selected. To participate, at least the leader must be a HMANA member, which involves modest annual dues and entitles the member to a number of resources including their twice-yearly print journal, Hawk Migration Studies. Nora is available to provide assistance and answer questions regarding this project: nhanke@mail.com, 413-219-7584.

That's all for this month.

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

Devin C. Griffiths, Editor

323-8417

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