



**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
[www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)  
Volume 36, No. 5  
**January 2020**

Dear reader, here we are in 2020. Given that this year is one of those years made up of nice, round numbers, I thought it might be fun to look back into the HBC newsletters past, so I chose January 2005, a full 15 years ago. Here are a few highlights.

Most of the January 2005 newsletter was devoted to the 2004 Northampton Christmas Count. It's no coincidence that this January's newsletter is also heavily devoted to the 2019 Northampton Christmas Count. Our program in January 2005 was by Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll who talked about the Blackstone River Corridor. Our field trip report talked about the Red-Headed Woodpecker that had been seen often that fall and winter in Leverett. The highlights from the Northampton Christmas Count were one or possibly two Greater White-Fronted Geese and a lone Green Heron. Sadly, that heron, which wasn't looking too well on count day, died the day after the count.

In a harbinger of a report that came out this year, the 2005 newsletter had an article about Manomet Observatory scientists reporting a long-term decline in the number of passerines observed there over a 30 year period. The HBC Conservation Committee was looking for new members and new ideas. The HBC President was Dennis McKenna and the Vice President/Program Chair was Geoff LeBaron. The one person who still holds the same position today as he did in 2005 is our club librarian, Henry Lappen. As with the January 2005 newsletter issue, Henry has an article about the library in this issue.

I suppose the moral to the story is that the more things change, the more they stay the same. In some cases, exactly the same. Hats off to Henry for his long and dedicated service to HBC!

**NEXT PROGRAM**  
**Monday, January 13 at 7:15 p.m.**  
**Brian Rusnica tells us about**  
**Mount Watatic Hawk-watching**

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst

Raptor Migration provides birders with the opportunity to experience one of nature's most mysterious and thrilling spectacles. Massachusetts offers several sites to observe diurnal raptor migration during Fall, including the oft-overlooked Mount Watatic. This 1,800 foot peak on the Massachusetts/New Hampshire border rewards visitors with stunning landscape views and rustic charm. Each September, it can also provide a unique vantage point to watch thousands of Broad-winged Hawks on their long migration journey. Brian's talk will introduce Mount Watatic, the dozen species of regular migrant raptors seen there, as well as a handful of irregular ones. He will talk about what makes Watatic so underrated and will answer all your questions about hawk watching – how to count all these birds, where they're going, and how to make sure you don't count the same bird twice.

(continued next page)

Brian Rusnica lives in Cambridge, MA and is originally from Upstate New York. He is a volunteer hawk migration counter and co-coordinator for the Mount Watatic Fall Hawk Watch site and has also contributed as an observer at the Plum Island Spring Hawk Watch site. He has served on the Board of Directors for both Eastern Mass Hawk Watch and North East Hawk Watch since 2017. His hobbies that intersect with birds of prey include photography, graphic design and travel. In 2014, he documented a [state raptor photographic 'big year'](#), and in 2018 documented [breeding Cooper's Hawks](#). He serves as an administrator on the "Raptor ID" Facebook group (endorsed by HMANA and Hawkwatch International). His [raptor photography](#) has been featured in Cornell University's [Living Bird](#) magazine, [Urban Raptors](#) (2018, ed. Boal & Dykstra) and [The Cooper's Hawk](#) (2018, Rosenfeld). In 2019, he launched an [online shop](#) which features his raptor artwork. His freelance design collaborations include work with the Cape May Raptor Banding Project and the Owl Research Institute.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**February 10, 2020. Susannah Lerman.** Let's talk about the birds and the bees: backyard habitats in suburban yards.

**March 9, 2020. Joan Walsh.** Topic to be announced.

**April 13, 2020. Ashley Green.** MAPS Banding Stations

**May 11, 2020. Matt Kelly.** Trinidad & Tobago

**June 8, 2020. Chris Fisher.** Topic to be announced.

## NEWS FROM THE HBC LIBRARY

We have a few new books in the library. Check 'em out - *literally*!

- Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America, and
- Flight Calls: Exploring Massachusetts through Birds.

Also, if you are traveling, the library might have a guide for that area. If not, I could get it for your trip. Let me know.

Henry, your trusty club librarian

## HBC NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The HBC Bylaws require the HBC President to convene a nominating committee for the purpose of proposing to the membership at its annual meeting in May a slate of candidates for club offices and the at-large board. That committee is composed of three club members of whom one must be on the board and one must not be on the board. Please let the President ([raz@umass.edu](mailto:raz@umass.edu)) or another member of the board ([board@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:board@hampshirebirdclub.org)) know by the February members' meeting (Monday, February 10) if you would like to be considered for membership on the nominating committee.

## NEWS FROM THE HBC BOARD

At its December 18, 2019 meeting the HBC Board voted to regularize its meeting schedule. Starting with January 2, 2020, the board will meet on the first Thursday of each month from September through June at 6:00 pm at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment. All club members are welcome to attend these meetings, though only Board members may vote on motions made at the meeting. Contact a Board member for the upcoming meeting agenda which is usually available two days prior to meetings. Should a Board meeting be cancelled, every effort will be made to announce the cancellation on the HBC website and on the club's Facebook page.

## RARE BIRD ALERT PROCEDURES

If you have been a member of the HBC for more than 15 years, you will recall that signing on for the club's Rare Bird Alert was more than agreeing to get emails from time to time. Back in the day we had a phone tree, and all participants were expected, when given an alert, to make one or two phone calls to fellow alertees when a rare bird was found in the area. We now have an email system in which gatekeepers pass along validated rare bird sightings.

If you signed up for alerts, you have received very few of them in the past year. That is because the gatekeepers have not been alerted to a sighting. If you think you have found or know of a rare bird in the area, you should report it to [alert@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:alert@hampshirebirdclub.org). Email sent there will go to our one current gatekeeper, Josh Rose, who in turn will evaluate the report and, if it appears to be valid and is indeed a rare bird for the area, will initiate the Rare Bird Alert for all club members who have signed up for alerts.

## FIELD TRIP REPORT PROCEDURES

There have been only a few reports from HBC field trips in the newsletter of late. We would like to have reports from all trips. A trip leader or participant may write up a brief description of the trip, highlighting whatever they think is interesting. It might be useful to discuss who will write the description when all participants are together. The report for a trip should be sent to the field trip chair, Carol Mardeusz ([fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org)), or to the newsletter editor ([newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)).

## MEETING AV SETUP COMMITTEE

There have been multiple calls at meetings and in the newsletter for a volunteer to take over for Jaap Van Heerden who for many years set up and ran the audio and computer systems that we used for our meeting presentations. No one person stepped up, but rather a fluid, ad-hoc group has been hauling, assembling, trouble-shooting and disassembling the AV equipment for our meetings this year.

The Board, recognizing that AV setup is a big job for one person and noting that a group is already working together to get the job done, has formalized this AV-by-committee structure. The goal now is to assemble a group of 3-6 individuals who can help with the various aspects of the AV setup. There are three major parts to the job: 1) storing the equipment between meetings (including transportation to and from meetings), 2) assembling and disassembling the hardware before and after meetings, and 3) troubleshooting problems during the meeting. The first two jobs would entail being at Immanuel Lutheran Church for setup at 4:30 pm on the day of a meeting and being present at the end of the meeting, generally around 8:30 pm. The last job would entail being at the meeting from 7:15 pm to the end of the meeting.

In becoming a member of the AV setup committee you will help when you can, but you will not need to be at every meeting nor will you need to do work that you feel is beyond your physical capability or technical skill. If you are willing and able to help out with the AV setup from time to time, let Lissa Ganter ([membership@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org)) or any other Board member know.

## HBC NEW MEMBER ADVANTAGE PROGRAM

The HBC welcomes new members at any time of the year, but there is a special advantage to joining the club in the new calendar year: First-time membership after January 1, 2020 is valid until **September, 2021**. In other words, new members get a bonus of up to eight additional months for the cost of a single year. Let your non-member friends know about this!

Are you a new or recent member who might have questions about your membership or about participation in club activities? Please feel free to get in touch: Lissa Ganter [membership@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org).

## NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2019

The HBC and several of its members were involved in various aspects of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count within the Northampton MANO count circle on Sunday, December 15, 2019. There are reports below on the count results, HBC-sponsored kids' counts at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment and the Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, and the potluck/compilation on the evening of the count.

### Count Results

Participants in the 2019 MANO Christmas Count found 31,616 individual birds within 83 species. The 267 participants, including feeder watchers, covered nearly 1000 miles on foot or in cars within the 75 separate parties of observers, spending over 350 party hours of field observation. The full list of species seen is appended to this newsletter. The unusual sightings found during the count day and count week are listed in the table below.

Unusual/Uncommon Species for Count Day and Week					
Species	Number	Note	Species	Number	Note
Snow Goose		CW	American Pipit		CW
Turkey Vulture	2		Lapland Longspur	1	
Black Vulture	6	FTS	Red Crossbill	3	
Red-shouldered Hawk	1		Pine Siskin	2	
Rough-legged Hawk	1		Yellow-rumped Warbler	6	
American Woodcock	1		Orange-crowned Warbler	1	
Short-eared Owl		CW	Chipping Sparrow	4	
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1		Eastern Towhee	4	HC
Eastern Phoebe		CW	Eastern Meadowlark		CW
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	5		Baltimore Oriole		CW
Brown Thrasher	1				
Notes: CW – count week; FTS – first time found for MANO; HC – new MANO high count					

### High Counts

Nearly every year a new high count for a species is achieved in the MANO Christmas Count. This year, there were seven new record breakers including one of the unusual species found. These new high counts are in the table below.

High Counts for MANO in 2019		
Species	High count this year	Previous high count
Black Vulture	6	0
Bald Eagle (adult)	15	14 (2017)
Red-bellied Woodpecker	247	246 (2014)
Northern Flicker	85	76 (1998)
Common Raven	42	33 (2018)
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	1 (1997)
Eastern Towhee	4	1 (1963)
The year in which the previous high count was found is in parentheses.		

(more MANO CBC news next page)

### **Kids' Count at Hitchcock**

The second-ever Christmas Bird Count for Kids at the Hitchcock Center was a success! It took place on Sunday, December 15 from 1-3 pm at the Hitchcock Center. As people were arriving, some kids chose to do a bird craft we had laid out for them on the tables. When everyone was settled, we began with a short introduction from me, followed by Heidi Stemple explaining what the Christmas Bird Count is and reading her book *Counting Birds*. Families loved hearing how she goes owling every year, and that on this particular year, her Hatfield owling group had to rescue the Hadley owling group from the mud! After that, we gave families a choice: 1) stay here and learn a little more about bird ID with Katie and Jan Ortiz before heading outside, 2) head out to the feeders now with Carol Mardeusz and begin the count, or 3) head out onto the trails to count the paper birds we had hanging up. There were so many ages represented (baby to elders) that it was helpful to have a choice for those who had been sitting down too long. The weather outside was sunny, cold, and windy. We counted 11 species. There were 29 participants. There were 5 adults helping coordinate the event: Stephanie Sansoucy (Hitchcock volunteer) – craft; Heidi Stemple (HBC) – story & introduction; Jan Ortiz (HBC) – help with ID; Carol Mardeusz (HBC) – recording the count; and Katie Koerten (Hitchcock staff) – coordinating the event. Families loved it and I recognized at least one family from last year!

Katie Koerten

### **Kids' Count at Arcadia**

On Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, three of us welcomed families with small children to the first annual family Christmas Bird Count at Mass Audubon Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. The little ones as well as their parents were delighted to observe closely such a colorful variety of active feeder birds plus squirrel and chipmunk through the viewing window. Several dads started lists with their kids which were augmented during a short bird walk around the parking area nearby. Tree sparrows and juncos were busy in the bushes outside and all were delighted when a Red-tailed Hawk swooped low overhead. Hot cocoa and several bird activities inside added to the experience and all left eager to return another day, another year.

Many thanks to Anne Lombard, Janet Bissell and Devorah Levy for their CBC time spent with these families.

### **2019 CBC Pot Luck**

Thanks to the *dozens* of HBC members and friends who offered such willing and cheerful help to produce another successful CBC Pot Luck this year. We are grateful for the many who contributed the tasty array of foods and beverages; for those who helped to set up the room, including the Hitchcock Center staff, following the kids' own CBC program; for those who helped to re-set the room for the compilation; and for those who stayed to clean up and carry out the remains! It is great to be part of such a community.

Lissa Ganter

### **2020 MANO CBC**

The date for the MANO CBC for 2020 has been set: Sunday, December 20. Mark your calendars and note the proximity to important holidays: last day of Chanukah (Dec. 18), Solstice Celebration (Dec. 21), Festivus (Dec. 23), Christmas Day (Dec. 25) and Kwanzaa (Dec. 26).

For more information about the MANO CBC including many downloadable historical records, go to the CBC page at the HBC website: <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/cbc/>.



## WINTER-SPRING-SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

- Wednesday, January 15, 5:00 a.m., All Day, Cape Ann (weather permitting).** Join Scott Sumner for an all day trip to Cape Ann to look for various duck species, scaup, eiders, gulls, loons, and scoters. Please bring lunch and dress warmly. You must be an HBC member. Limit is 12 participants. Please email Scott ([ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com)) to sign up. (E/M)
- Wednesday, March 25, 5:00 a.m., All Day, Moose Bog, Vt.** Join Scott Sumner on this all day trip to look for boreal species such as the Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, Canada Jay, and Boreal Chickadee. You must be an HBC member. Limit is 12 participants. Please email Scott ([ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com)) to sign up. (E/M)
- Sunday, April 12, 7:00 a.m., Half Day, Ashley Reservoir.** Join Mike Locher as he 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) for more information. (E/M with one optional S section)
- Saturday, April 25, 7:00 a.m., Half Day, Look Park.** Join Betsy Higgins for a half day trip to Look Park in Florence to look for Louisiana Waterthrushes and other Spring migrants. Meet at 7 a.m. in the JFK Middle School parking lot on 100 Bridge Road, Florence, Ma. We'll walk some paved paths and some wooded, uneven paths along the river and look and listen for anything with wings or fur or any other treats that Spring brings. Please contact Betsy at [hignik@comcast.net](mailto:hignik@comcast.net) or 413-586-7585 with any questions. (M)
- Sunday, May 3, 7:00 a.m., Half Day, Mitch's Way.** Join Mike Locher as he searches for vireos, warblers, flycatchers, local woodpeckers, and other Spring migrants. Meet at the Mitch's Marina parking area, near the gate. Contact Mike (413-585-5864) for more information. (E/M)
- Saturday, May 9, 7:00 a.m., Half Day, Mineral Hills Conservation Area.** Join Marcia Merithew and Betsy Higgins as they lead birders through one of the lesser known Northampton conservation areas. This has been a consistent place for Prairie Warblers over the past several years. For information, contact Marcia (413-896-9539 or [mmerithew@comcast.net](mailto:mmerithew@comcast.net)). Meet at the JFK Middle School parking lot (100 Bridge Road, Florence, Ma) at 7 a.m. (E/M)
- Sunday, May 17, 6:00 a.m., Half Day, Mt. Holyoke.** Join Mike Locher as he hikes up the park road to the top of this local peak hoping for some later Spring migrants and deep-woods breeding specialties including Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers (both quite reliable in recent years). Meet at the (gated) entrance to Skinner State Park (at the end of Old Mountain Road in Hadley) at 6:00 a.m. This is an occasionally steep hike on a paved road. For more information contact Mike (413-585-5864). (M/S)
- Date TBA, 9:00 a.m., 2-3 Hours, Holyoke Dam and Fish Lift (Robert Barrett Fishway).** Join Harvey Allen to see what birds the Shad Run will bring in. Meet in the parking area at the end of the Fishway entrance road, 1 N Bridge St, Holyoke. From Amherst, take Rt 116 South and after you drive over the Connecticut River via the South Hadley Falls Bridge, take an immediate right into the fishway entrance. To use a navigation system for directions, type in Holyoke Fishway. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for details.
- Saturday, May 23, 6:30 a.m., All Day, Hilltown Rambles.** Join Dave Gross and Bob Zimmermann as they ramble around the Berkshire hilltowns to look for those migrants that prefer higher elevations than the valley provides. We'll be on the lookout for American Bittern, Sandhill Cranes, Blackburnian Warblers and Spotted Sandpipers along with anything else we can turn up. There will be a bit of hiking at the Moran Wildlife Area. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop parking lot at 6:30 a.m. Pack a lunch or pick one up at our stop at the Cumington Creamery. For information or to sign up contact Dave ([djgross@gmail.com](mailto:djgross@gmail.com) 413-687-8161) or Bob ([zimmermann@biochem.umass.edu](mailto:zimmermann@biochem.umass.edu) 413-626-3381). (E/M/S)
- Sunday, May 24, 7:00 a.m., Half Day, Knightville Dam.** Join Marcia Merithew and Betsy Higgins as they visit Knightville Dam looking for Spring migrants and local residents. Contact Marcia (413-896-9539 or [mmerithew@comcast.net](mailto:mmerithew@comcast.net)) for details. Meet at 7 a.m. at the John F. Kennedy Middle School (100 Bridge Road, Florence, Ma). (E/M)
- Sunday-Wednesday, May 24-27, Monhegan Island.** Scott Sumner leads the Hampshire Bird Club's pilgrimage to Monhegan Island. This charming island and the variety of migrating birds can be astonishing. The weekend promises to be memorable and enjoyable. The trip is limited to 15 Hampshire Bird Club members. Contact Carol Mardeusz ([fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org)) **on or after January 11 to sign up and receive information about expenses.** Contact Scott (413-256-5438) for other information.

## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

*Bald Eagles* with Patti Steinman

Saturday, January 25, 10 am – 1 pm

[Register online](#) or call 413-584-3009 to register by phone.

It is now quite common to see bald eagles throughout the state. Once rare, these large raptors are a success story, thanks to a reintroduction project that began in the 1980s. Arcadia is proud to be home to one of the several dozen nesting pairs in our state. Come learn about these birds and their reintroduction and take a walk into the meadows to look for eagles.

*Winter Nature Walk at Quabbin Reservoir* with John Green

Sunday, January 26, 8 – 11 am

[Register online](#) or call 413-584-3009 to register by phone.

Winter is a great time to enjoy the outdoors and all that Quabbin Reservoir has to offer. We'll meet at the Quabbin Visitor Center, then take a walk in search of winter songbirds, bald eagles, animal tracks, and more. Dress to be outdoors.

*Birding Plum Island and Surrounding Area* with Patti Steinman and John Green

Friday, February 7, 7 am – 6 pm

[Register online](#) or call 413-584-3009 to register by phone.

Plum Island offers spectacular winter birding opportunities. Starting at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, we'll look for waterfowl, songbirds, and raptors, hoping to see northern harriers and snowy owls. Depending on bird reports, we may visit other productive locations in the region.

### Hitchcock Center for the Environment

*Owl Prowls* with Dan Ziomek

Friday, January 17, 7:30 – 10 pm

Saturday, February 1, 7:30 – 10 pm

[Register online](#)

Dress INCREDIBLY warmly because we'll be standing around in the dark a lot. Bring your sharp ears, a flashlight, and a thermos of something hot to drink. We will meet at the Hitchcock Center at 7:30 and then carpool to the site. *Weather makeup day will be Saturday February 8th if needed.*

*Spring Birding Class* with Scott Sumner

Evening classes at Hitchcock: Wednesdays, 6:30-8pm, February 12, April 1, April 15, June 10

Fieldtrips: see schedule at the Hitchcock Center website: <https://www.hitchcockcenter.org/programs/>

Registration opens online [HERE](#) January 15 at 9am. Follow the link to set-up a registration reminder!

Join this Hitchcock tradition! Scott has been leading classes since 1979. Space is limited and in high demand.

Dave Gross, Editor  
[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)

# December 15, 2019 MANO Christmas Bird Count Tally

Number		Species
3076		Canada Goose
5		Wood Duck
123		American Black Duck
1136		Mallard
2		Northern Pintail
22		Common Goldeneye
19		Hooded Merganser
79		Common Merganser
3		Ring-necked Pheasant
1		Ruffed Grouse
81		Wild Turkey
15		Great Blue Heron
4		Northern Harrier adult
5		Northern Harrier-imm
13		Sharp-shinned Hawk
37		Cooper's Hawk
15	HC	Bald Eagle adult
5		Bald Eagle immature
178		Red-tailed Hawk
147		Ring-billed Gull
4		Herring Gull
18		gull sp
344		Rock Pigeon
1124		Mourning Dove
24		Eastern Screech-Owl
14		Great Horned Owl
2		Barred Owl
13		Belted Kingfisher
247	HC	Red-bellied Woodpecker
10		Yell-bellied Sapsucker
360		Downy Woodpecker
96		Hairy Woodpecker
85	HC	Northern Flicker
18		Pileated Woodpecker
3		American Kestrel
3		Merlin
5		Peregrine Falcon
1278		Blue Jay
2606		American Crow
42	HC	Common Raven
437		Horned Lark
1064		Black-capped Chickadee
482		Tufted Titmouse
6		Red-breasted Nuthatch
386		White-breasted Nuthatch
42		Brown Creeper
4		Winter Wren
106		Carolina Wren
176		Golden-crowned Kinglet

Number		Species
368		Eastern Bluebird
3		Hermit Thrush
2154		American Robin
3		Grey Catbird
67		Northern Mockingbird
7345		European Starling
565		Cedar Waxwing
45		Snow Bunting
203		American Tree Sparrow
5		Field Sparrow
1		Fox Sparrow
1791		Dark-eyed Junco
5		White-crowned Sparrow
908		White-throated Sparrow
5		Savannah Sparrow
363		Song Sparrow
4		Swamp Sparrow
535		Northern Cardinal
201		Red-winged Blackbird
CW		Rusty Blackbird
4		Common Grackle
10		Brown-headed Cowbird
588		House Finch
3		Purple Finch
1146		American Goldfinch
1290		House Sparrow

Unusual and Uncommon Species for Count		
CW		Snow Goose
2		Turkey Vulture
6	FCS	Black Vulture
1		Red-shouldered Hawk
1		Rough Legged Hawk
1		American Woodcock
CW		Short-eared Owl
1		Northern Saw-whet Owl
CW		Eastern Phoebe
5		Ruby-crowned Kinglet
1		Brown Thrasher
CW		American Pipit
1		Lapland Longspur
3		Red Crossbill
2		Pine Siskin
6		Yellow-rumped Warbler
1		Orange-crowned Warbler
4		Chipping Sparrow
4	HC	Eastern Towhee
CW		Eastern Meadowlark
CW		Baltimore Oriole

Number	Mammals and Critters
16	Eastern Cottontail
9	Coyote
27	White-tailed Deer
17	Red Squirrel
389	Gray Squirrel (Gray morph)
4	Opossum
6	Chipmunk
9	Gray Squirrel (Black Morph)
3	Beaver
1	Raccoon
1	Muskrat
4	Red Fox
1	Bobcat
10	Vole, Meadow, Mouse
1	Striped Skunk
2	Woolly Bear

MANO SUMMARY	
<u>Birds</u>	
83	Species not including CW birds
31616	Total Birds
<u>Observers</u>	
183	Observers in the field
86	Observers at feeders
22	Owlers
267	Total participants
<u>Daytime</u>	
75	Parties
234.36	Hours on Foot
120.85	Hours by car
355.21	Total Party Hours
209.63	Total Miles on Foot
763.98	Total Miles by Car
973.61	Total Party Miles by Foot & by Car
<u>Feeders</u>	
79	Feeder Hours
86	Feeder watchers
<u>Owling</u>	
10	Owling parties
29.75	Owling Hours
111.1	Owling Miles
Midnight	Starting Time
6:30 p.m.	Ending Time

Next MANO CBC Sunday, December 20, 2020

CW - species recorded during Count Week      HC - Highest Count ever      FCS - First Count Ever





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Volume 36, No. 6  
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Dear reader, what's a birder to do when it's cold, inclement, and inhospitable outside? Simple. Get your favorite hot beverage, find a comfy chair by a window, and look at your feeder. That's what the Cornell Lab of Ornithology recommends for the weekend of February 14-17. That Friday through Monday, which is Presidents Day, over 150,000 observers will be counting and reporting the birds that they see during the Great Backyard Bird Count. Like the Audubon Christmas Count, this citizen-science activity provides essential data on bird numbers and distribution, data that will inform research on climate change and changing numbers of our winter birds.

Participants can count for any amount of time at any locations they wish. Data reporting is straightforward on the Great Backyard Bird Count website. Data from around the globe is available in real time as are photos submitted by observers. You can find out more about the count and see the data at the count website: <https://gbbc.birdcount.org>.

If that's not enough excitement and adventure for you, start your planning for our March and April field trips that you can read about on page 5. If that's STILL not enough excitement and adventure for you, read the Conservation Notes piece on page 3 and write some letters!

**NEXT PROGRAM**  
**Monday, February 10 at 7:15 p.m.**  
**Susannah Lerman presents**

**Let's Talk About the Birds and the Bees: Backyard habitats in suburban yards**  
Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst

Urban and suburban development results in the loss and alteration of vegetation, and is one of the leading causes for severe declines of birds, bees and other wildlife populations. However, backyards have the potential to mitigate some of the detrimental impacts by providing wildlife habitat. Although these green spaces result in small fragments of non-cohesive parcels, collectively, they have the greatest potential for increasing and enhancing habitat in urban and suburban areas. Thus, individual households, in particular, their associated landscaping decisions, have a role to play in improving the capacity of backyards for supporting wildlife and other ecosystem services. This seminar will describe research that has demonstrated how wildlife has responded to landscape design variation, highlighting native plant and native bird relationships, lawn mowing frequency and bee abundance, and wildlife responses at a continental scale. Improving habitat in private yards has implications for human well-being as well since this is where people have their primary interaction with the natural world. Increased exposure and participation in field science programs can further enforce the importance of conservation initiatives and policies aimed at improving habitat in our cities and suburbs.

Dr. Susannah Lerman is a Research Ecologist with the USDA Forest Service in the Communities and Landscapes of the Urban Northeast unit. Susannah earned her B.A. in American History from the University of Delaware in 1994, an M.S. in Conservation Biology from Antioch University in 2005, and a

Ph.D. in Organismic and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Massachusetts in 2011. Her research explores the links between human management of urban green spaces (e.g. yards, neighborhood parks and open space) and the health and success of native wildlife populations, and how these impacts subsequently feedback to influence people due to the role of biodiversity in delivering ecosystem services. Susannah translates the application of scientific information into management tools and integrates a citizen science approach with the ultimate goal of improving the sustainability of urban environments for birds, bees and other wildlife, and advancing human well-being through reconnecting people with nearby nature. Susannah seeks opportunities to explain scientific findings to varying audiences while trying to facilitate connections between the public's personal lives and the urban ecosystem.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**March 9, 2020. Joan Walsh.** Topic to be announced.

**April 13, 2020. Ashley Green.** MAPS Banding Stations

**May 11, 2020. Matt Kelly.** Trinidad & Tobago

**June 8, 2020. Chris Fisher.** Topic to be announced.

Note: A PDF copy of the slides from the January HBC meeting talk by Brian Rusnica is available on the HBC website. The link can be found on the "Resources" page of the website: "Eastern Mass Hawk Watch – Watatic presentation by Brian Rusnica January 2020".

## RIDE SHARING

Some of our club members cannot drive to meetings. Others of us have ready transportation with seating available. If you fall into either of these categories, perhaps you would like to take or provide a ride to and from an HBC meeting. The HBC Board would be happy to connect riders and drivers. If you would like a ride or if you are available to provide a ride to someone who needs one and lives in your vicinity, then send a note to the HBC membership secretary, Lissa Ganter, at [membership@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org). If you already have an arrangement for ride sharing, there is no need to contact Lissa about that.

## DINING WITH MONTHLY SPEAKERS

Most of our monthly speakers have supper with some board members and meeting setup crew members. Would you like to be included in the group, usually numbering 6-8 diners? The suppers usually start around 5:45 PM and are done with plenty of time to get to the meeting. Our Program Chair and Vice President Josh Rose will keep a list of members who would like to join in the pre-meeting suppers. If there is space at the table for more diners, Josh will contact members on the list. Please contact Josh at [programs@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:programs@hampshirebirdclub.org) to express your interest and to get on the list. (Note that this is Dutch treat – all diners except the speaker and her or his guest pay for their own meals.)

## HBC NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The HBC Bylaws require the HBC President to convene a nominating committee for the purpose of proposing to the membership at its annual meeting in May a slate of candidates for club offices and the at-large board. That committee is composed of three club members of whom one must be on the board and one must not be on the board. Please let the President ([president@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:president@hampshirebirdclub.org)) or another member of the board ([board@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:board@hampshirebirdclub.org)) know by the February members' meeting (Monday, February 10) if you would like to be considered for membership on the nominating committee, which will be selected by mid-February.

## CONSERVATION NOTES: SUPPORT THE *MIGRATORY BIRD PROTECTION ACT*

The National Audubon Society has told us that the North American bird population has plummeted by over 25% – more than 3,000,000,000 birds – since 1970. But are you aware that our government is now trying to make life for birds even harder? The Department of Interior has directed the Fish and Wildlife Service to end a well-established policy of the 100-year-old Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) prohibiting the inadvertent but often predictable killing of birds which is frequently (and euphemistically) referred to as “incidental take”? This would mean, for instance, that an electric power company would no longer have to take into account the consequences of erecting transmission towers in a major avian flyway even though these structures can be predicted to kill large numbers of birds. To put this in perspective, it has been estimated that annual bird deaths resulting from collisions with power lines and towers may be as high as 65 million in the U.S. alone. There are many other causes of bird mortality attributable to commercial or industrial activity.

To counter this proposed policy change, Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) has introduced a bill called the *Migratory Bird Protection Act* that would explicitly amend the MBTA to prohibit incidental take in five broad industrial sectors. The new bill, HR 5552, was recently approved by the House Natural Resources Committee by a strongly bipartisan majority and is now on its way to the full House. This measure is also backed by a host of conservation organizations, including the National Audubon Society, Sierra Club, American Bird Conservancy, Environmental Defense Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council, Endangered Species Coalition and many others – in short, a Who’s Who of the country’s environmental protection community. Despite this backing, it’s likely that the bill will encounter strong opposition from industry and provoke especially strong pushback in the Senate.

Now here’s where we come in. Since bird conservation underlies the pastime that we all love and enjoy, it’s time to advocate – and advocate strongly – for passage of the *Migratory Bird Protection Act*. Please take up your pen, mobile device or computer and write our congressional representatives to let them know of your unambiguous support for HR 5552.

Postal addresses, email addresses and phone numbers of our representatives in Congress are:

Rep. James (Jim) McGovern

[www.mcgovern.house.gov/contact](http://www.mcgovern.house.gov/contact)

408 Canon Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
202-224-3121  
or  
94 Pleasant St.  
Northampton, MA  
413-341-8700

Senator Elizabeth Warren

[www.warren.senate.gov/contact](http://www.warren.senate.gov/contact)

309 Hart Senate Office  
Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
202-224-4543  
or  
1550 Main St., Suite 406  
Springfield, MA 01103  
413-788-2690

Senator Edward (Ed) Markey

[www.markey.senate.gov/contact](http://www.markey.senate.gov/contact)

255 Dirksen Senate Office  
Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
202-224-2752  
or  
1550 Main St, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Springfield, MA 01103  
413-785-4610

And if you have a chance, please send a note of thanks to Rep. Lowenthal for introducing HR 5552. You can email him at [lowenthal.house.gov/zip-code-lookup?form=/contact/email-me](mailto:lowenthal.house.gov/zip-code-lookup?form=/contact/email-me).

For more information: [www.audubon.org/news/a-new-bill-aims-counter-rollback-bedrock-bird-law](http://www.audubon.org/news/a-new-bill-aims-counter-rollback-bedrock-bird-law).

Bob Zimmermann

## HBC EDUCATION COMMITTEE PROJECTS

The following are some of the projects that the Education Committee is actively engaged in creating:

**Massachusetts Young Birders Club (MYBC)** – Jeremy Spool has been building support for this new endeavor with the Manomet Bird Observatory and our committee has endorsed a \$500 grant to support start up activities. The mission of the MYBC is “to support and empower a sustainable community of young birders” and the purpose is “to guide youth in building their understanding and love of birds and nature.” The plans for the MYBC and our grant proposal have been submitted to the HBC Board and is under consideration.

The **Valley Family Birds Festival** is May 2 at MA Audubon at Arcadia. As has been the case since its inception, both the Education Committee and HBC general funds will help defray costs of the festival with a \$500 gift. The committee is planning to offer a program there.

Discussion continues with the Robin Foley at the **Anne Dunphy School** in Williamsburg in support of her efforts to explore birds and birding with her students.

Education Committee members distributed a **survey** and recorded responses from over 50 HBC members at a previous members’ meeting. Some of our future projects will be based on your responses. Maybe the first workshop will be on navigating eBird, led by Janice Jorgensen. A workshop on our best birding locations, guides and companies was also in high demand, as were workshops on warblers, sparrows and shorebirds.

We need you support! Along with Broad Brook Coalition we are planning to run a bird walk this spring at the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area in Northampton. We could use your support in assisting our leader to *get the kids on the bird*. Individuals with elementary birding skills are welcome. Assistance with supporting kids, perhaps with a birding book, images, photos, binoculars, or a long finger pointing out where the mystery bird is would be helpful. Also, do you know any young birders who might be invited?

Bruce Hart

## BIRD OBSERVER AUTHORSHIP

The bimonthly birding journal *Bird Observer* is looking for authors for Where to Go Birding, Field Notes, and feature articles. The *Bird Observer* editor, Nate Marchessault, is looking for authors to write articles on their favorite birding patches and areas. Where to Go articles are generally 4-10 pages (2000-5000 words) and which give readers insight in where and how to bird at a specific location in New England. Much of the format of the article is up to the author. Authors can choose to write about one specific location or several within a geographical area, within a specific season or year-round, and even focus on a particular group of species. Articles from anywhere in New England are welcome, with articles focusing on Western and Central Massachusetts particularly wanted. An example would be an article on the hills and mountains of Western Mass.

Samples of Where to Go articles, feature articles, and Field Notes can be found on the *Bird Observer* website. Where to Go articles can be accessed at [www.birdobserver.org/Where-to-Go-Birding/Bird-Observer-Key-Word-Index](http://www.birdobserver.org/Where-to-Go-Birding/Bird-Observer-Key-Word-Index). Articles from issues more than three years old are available to all, even nonsubscribers. Anyone interested in writing an article can email Nate at [natemarchessault@gmail.com](mailto:natemarchessault@gmail.com). Nate will be in touch to discuss details.

## QUABBIN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

This year’s Quabbin Count, which was held on December 28<sup>th</sup>, included forty-five observers and two feeder watchers. The count day featured unusually nice weather with temperatures in the range of 31-44 °F and wind out of the WNW ranging from 0-15 MPH with a few gusts near 20 MPH. It was generally cloudy throughout the day but there were some breaks in the clouds in the afternoon. For most locations in the count circle, snow cover was basically non-existent, which is incredible since there had been over

20" on the ground on December 3<sup>rd</sup>! The main body of the Quabbin was open, but smaller bodies of still water (coves, beaver ponds, etc.) were frozen while most streams were open. There were no new species found on the count, but there were 4 new high counts. The overall numbers were generally down.

Many thanks to everyone for helping out, and, if you like to plan ahead.....next year's Quabbin count will be on January 2, 2021.

### **Count Results**

Participants in the 2019 Quabbin Christmas Count found 5201 individual birds of 60 species. The largest number of individuals found for a single species was 660 (Black-capped Chickadee). Five species had all-time high counts: Ring-billed Gull (288), Carolina Wren (20), Eastern Bluebird (119), Gray Catbird (2) and Yellow-rumped Warbler (1, tied with two other years). Unusual species found during count week were Greater Scaup, Great Black-backed Gull, Eastern Phoebe and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Scott Sumner

## **MARCH AND APRIL FIELD TRIPS**

**Wednesday, March 25, 5:00 a.m., All Day, Moose Bog, Vt.** Join Scott Sumner on this all day trip to look for boreal species such as the Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, Canada Jay, and Boreal Chickadee. You must be an HBC member. Limit is 12 participants. Please email Scott ([ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com)) to sign up. (E/M)

**Saturday, March 28, 8:00-10:00 a.m., Fort River Refuge.** Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628), Jim Lafley, Derek Allard, and Janice Jorgensen in the lower parking lot at the Refuge, 69 Moody Bridge Rd, Hadley to look for early Spring migrants. The entire Fort River Trail, 1.2 miles, is fully accessible, including boardwalks, and has occasional benches for resting. Enter Moody Bridge Rd from the west end. Since the U.S. Fish and Wildlife demolished the stables at Fort River, this site may no longer be a good place to see large numbers of barn swallows. (E/M)

**Wednesday, April 8, 7:30-9:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge.** Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628), Jim Lafley, Henry Lappen, and Janice Jorgensen in the lower parking lot at the Refuge, 69 Moody Bridge Rd, Hadley to look for early Spring migrants. See above for more Fort River information. (E/M)

**Sunday, April 12, 7:00 a.m., Half Day, Ashley Reservoir.** Join Mike Locher as he 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) for more information. (E/M with one optional S section)

**Saturday, April 18, 7:30-9:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge.** Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628), Jim Lafley, Sasha Auer, Kevin Barnes, and Janice Jorgensen in the lower parking lot at the Refuge, 69 Moody Bridge Rd, Hadley to look for early Spring migrants See above for more Fort River information. (E/M)

**Saturday, April 25, 7:00 a.m., Half Day, Look Park.** Join Betsy Higgins for a half day trip to Look Park in Florence to look for Louisiana Waterthrushes and other Spring migrants. Meet at 7 a.m. in the JFK Middle School parking lot on 100 Bridge Road, Florence, MA. We'll walk some paved paths and some wooded, uneven paths along the river and look and listen for anything with wings or fur or any other treats that Spring brings. Please contact Betsy at [hignik@comcast.net](mailto:hignik@comcast.net) or 413-586-7585 with any questions. (M)

**Other birding field trips** throughout New England may be accessed by going to <https://www.birdingcalendar.com>. A special thank-you goes out to Jan Howard who has worked diligently to get HBC trips posted on this site.



## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

*Birding Plum Island and Surrounding Area* with Patti Steinman and John Green

Friday, February 7, 7 am – 6 pm

[Register online](#) or call 413-584-3009 to register by phone.

Plum Island offers spectacular winter birding opportunities. Starting at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, we'll look for waterfowl, songbirds, and raptors, hoping to see northern harriers and snowy owls. Depending on bird reports, we may visit other productive locations in the region.

*Winter Raptors of the Connecticut River Valley* with Dan Russell

Saturday, February 15, 9 am – noon

[Register online](#) or call 413-584-3009 to register by phone.

Winter is a great time to observe raptors flying over fields in search of food. The east and west meadows in Northampton are ideal spots for us to view these birds, including red-tailed hawks, northern harriers, and even hardier falcons that frequently visit our site. Depending on hawk sightings and snow cover, our location may change, carpooling to Hadley or other locations.

*Warblers for Beginners* with Laura Beltran

Wednesdays, March 11, 18, 25 and April 1, 7 – 9 pm

[Register online](#) or call 413-584-3009 to register by phone.

Warblers are the jewels of the bird world. Learning some basics can prepare you to enjoy the waves of spring migrants coming our way. During this series, we'll explore the keys to identification of spring warblers; learn some of their songs; and discover how knowledge of their life histories can enrich our birding experience.

### Hitchcock Center for the Environment

*Owl Prowls* with Dan Ziomek

Friday, February 7, 7:30 – 10 pm

[Register online](#)

Dress INCREDIBLY warmly because we'll be standing around in the dark a lot. Bring your sharp ears, a flashlight, and a thermos of something hot to drink. We will meet at the Hitchcock Center at 7:30 and then carpool to the site. *Weather makeup day will be Saturday February 8th if needed.*

*Spring Birding Class* with Scott Sumner

Evening classes at Hitchcock: Wednesdays, 6:30-8pm, February 12, April 1, April 15, June 10

Fieldtrips: see schedule at the Hitchcock Center website: <https://www.hitchcockcenter.org/programs/>

Registration opens online [HERE](#) January 15 at 9am. Follow the link to set-up a registration reminder!

Join this Hitchcock tradition! Scott has been leading classes since 1979. Space is limited and in high demand. As of January 30 there were only three more slots open!

Dave Gross, Editor  
[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)





# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

## Amherst, Massachusetts

[www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)  
Volume 36, No. 7  
**March 2020**

Dear reader, this issue starts a new feature that will appear from time to time in the newsletter. I sat down with Jan Ortiz, former HBC President, Hitchcock birding class instructor, and Northampton Christmas Count compiler, for a chat about her memories of the beginnings of the HBC and her introduction to birding. There will be more member interviews, including one next month with a member who has been birding the Valley for over 50 years. This month, though, is my chat with Jan:

**Newsletter:** *I have heard stories about the beginnings of the Hampshire Bird Club. What are your recollections of how that came about?*

**Jan Ortiz:** I was a beginning birder. I was taking Scott Sumner's birding class. A Great Grey Owl was found in Hadley and the class went to see it. Sally Venman was there, and Scott and Sally were talking. They were saying "There was a bird club in the past. We should start another one. Look at all these people here to see the Great Grey Owl." So Sally had a meeting at her house. A lot of people were there – Jim Marcum, myself, Scott, Harvey – a lot of the birders who were around at the time. After that it just kept developing.

After that first meeting in the Fall of 1984 was the first trip to Monhegan Island, also.

**N:** *Really? I didn't realize that the first club-sponsored Monhegan trip was in the first year of the HBC.*

**JO:** Yes, it was a Fall trip. That was the inaugural Monhegan trip that then became a tradition within the club, usually going in the Spring but sometimes going in the Fall, and sometimes both.

The club started off by having great speakers, right from the beginning. That was one of the things that distinguished our club.

**N:** *Who started that? Did it just organically grow?*

**JO:** I can't remember who the first Vice

President was. I held that position at one point. I took various week-long classes from the Institute for Field Ornithology in Machias, Maine. When I later became Vice President, I was able to successfully invite some of the experts who taught the workshops at the Institute to speak at HBC. Those people included Wayne Peterson, Jon Dunn and Greg Budney from Cornell. We also got people from UMass like Don Kroodsma to speak.

Thinking back over 35 years it's hard to remember who all of the officers were. The club has that written down. I've done all of the officer jobs except for Secretary and Treasurer. All of our meetings were held at Hitchcock, but we outgrew that space. We would have some big-name-speaker meetings at the Junior High. Things really changed when Geoff LeBaron took over as Vice President. Don Kroodsma asked me "What is going on with all the great speakers?" I told him that the difference was, when I would call someone, sometimes they would call me back. When Geoff called someone, everyone would call him back.

There were classes at Hitchcock, and there was a lot of recruiting from those classes to help the club grow. At the start the club was a mixture of old-time birders, mostly males, and then more and more people got involved, mostly from the Hitchcock classes.

One of the things we were known for was the attendance at our meetings because we had such good speakers. They brought a lot of people in.

(continued on page 5)

## NEXT PROGRAM

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

**Joan Walsh presents**

### **My Year at Sea: Offshore Wind and Massachusetts' Birds**

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant Street

Offshore wind energy production is a newcomer to the waters of the United States, but it is a long-time source of energy in the UK and Europe. As our climate changes and we look for ways to reduce the worst drivers of climate change, the states in the northeast are adding offshore wind to their electricity producing portfolios. These efforts, led by Massachusetts and New York, are being done at a dizzying rate.

Before there were turbines in these waters, there was a rich and diverse wildlife. How will we navigate the complexity of protecting marine birds and other animals in a green future?

This talk will be a primer on this rapidly developing industry, the areas likely to be developed, summarize what we know about the birds in those areas, what we don't know, and review the opportunities for the conservation community to influence Green Infrastructure.

Joan is Mass Audubon's Gerard A. Bertram Fellow in Natural History and Field Ornithology. She has been watching—and learning from—birds for over 40 years and was the Director of Bird Monitoring at Mass Audubon from 2006-2017. During her time at Mass Audubon, she focused on research that has direct implications for bird conservation. This interest led to the creation of hundreds of citizen scientists for the creation of the highly regarded [Massachusetts Breeding Bird Survey](#) and two [State of the Birds of Massachusetts](#) reports.

She was a Farallon Island Laysan Albatross Banding Project member, studied Elephant Seals, Tufted Puffins, Brandt's Cormorants, Western Gulls, and a little Great White Shark work. She went to graduate school in Georgia, where she studied Great White Sharks, and was the former Director of Research at Cape May Bird Observatory in NJ. Her years as an ornithologist were spent on Great Gull Island, NY, home to the largest colony of Herring Gulls and Roseate Terns in the North Atlantic.

Joan has traveled to many places (only missing OK, HI and KY), Canada, Costa Rica, Belize, Mexico, Ireland, Europe, South Georgia Island and the Falklands (Malvinas). While being particularly keen about sea birds, studying bird ecology and behavior, Joan has never met a bird she didn't love. She travels with an eye for culture as well as nature, and can think of no better way to spend a day than to be in a new place, with new friends, simply watching birds.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**April 13, 2020. Ashley Green.** MAPS Banding Stations

**May 11, 2020. Matt Kelly.** Trinidad & Tobago

**June 8, 2020. Chris Fisher.** Journey to the Edge of the Earth – the Galapagos Islands

## HBC ELECTIONS FOR BOARD MEMBERSHIP

At the March meeting we will announce the members on the nominating committee that will contact HBC members about becoming members of the board. There will be at least two openings for the 2020-2021 club year, one of which is HBC Treasurer and one of which is an at-large board membership. The board meets monthly to conduct club business, plan meetings and activities, and otherwise ensure that the club is solvent and operating according to its nonprofit status. If you are interested in joining the board, please contact a member of the nominating committee once members are announced. You can learn who is on the nominating committee by coming to the March meeting or checking in on the club Facebook page after March 9.

## HBC EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

After substantial consideration and discussion, the HBC Board of Directors last month voted unanimous approval for the Education Committee's support and funding for the Western chapter of the Massachusetts Young Birders Club (MYBC). Our \$250 grant will come from funds donated for use by the Education Committee. An additional \$250 to the MYBC will come from HBC's general funds. This grant will defray costs of background checks for coordinators and guides, a website for club members and parents, five bird guides, and recruitment material. Manomet, a non-profit environmental and educational center in Plymouth, MA, will provide legal and financial support for MYBC. Club member Jeremy Spool is the Western coordinator. See the article below for more on the Western chapter of the MYBC.

Other programs in which we are involved or support include the Smith College Birders which have programs in March and April at Arcadia, exploring eBird with 20+ participants in three sessions during the last week of February, and an introduction to birds for the Williamsburg kindergarten class (so sweet) including setting up a feeder station at the school.

Volunteers to assist with the Smith College Birders are welcome. Please contact a member of the Education Committee for more information. There will be an opportunity for HBC members to support a field program with the Williamsburg kindergarteners and also support children and families on a Spring wildlife walk at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area in Florence. More information about these opportunities will be forthcoming in the April newsletter.

The Education Committee also offers financial support to attend a Birding/Natural History camp or conference to HBC members 12-18 years old.

Bruce Hart

## MASSACHUSETTS YOUNG BIRDERS CLUB

Western Massachusetts has a rich birding community and fantastic outreach programs but does not yet have a club dedicated to young birders. That has now changed. The **Massachusetts Young Birders Club** (MYBC), which has Eastern and Western chapters, is now up and running. The club is designed to create and empower a sustainable community of young birders aged 11 to 18 by providing the structure for youth to build their understanding and love of birds and nature. Monthly field outings and developing camaraderie between local young birders are the core features of the club. The Education Committee of the HBC has provided funding to support the work of the MYBC.

Jeremy Spool and Kit Straley are co-coordinating the Western chapter of the MYBC. Jeremy and Kit are beginning to go about the tasks of (1) recruiting youth for the club and (2) obtaining optics for the club to use on field trips.

Here's how you can help us with these two tasks:

- (1) Spread the word! Pass this information and Jeremy's email (see below) along to parents and teachers who have or work with youth in our target age range (11-18 years old).
- (2) If you have a pair of binoculars or a scope collecting dust, you are welcome to donate them to the club (and donations are tax deductible).

To get in touch with Jeremy and Kit, send a note to [spool@umass.edu](mailto:spool@umass.edu). Thanks so much for your support and the support of the Hampshire Bird Club!

Jeremy Spool

## VALLEY FAMILY BIRD FESTIVAL 2020

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Valley Bird Festival will be held at Mass Audubon's Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary on Saturday, May 2, 2020 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. This year it will feature Tom Ricardi presenting a Birds of Prey program at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm. It will also include bird walks in the morning, bird banding, bird games and activities, children's crafts, a story walk and tents with educational information about birds, the Hampshire Bird Club, and Mass Audubon. The event is free.

### MARCH AND APRIL FIELD TRIPS

**Saturday, March 7, 8:30-10:30 a.m., Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary.** Share your joy of birds and birding with students from the Smith College Bird Club as leaders Laura Beltran and Jim Lafley look for early Spring migrants at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. This trip is free and co-sponsored with Mass Audubon's Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. Meet at the main parking lot at Arcadia, 127 Combs Rd, Easthampton. (E)

**\*\*NOTE: Recent addition to the field trip list!\*\***

**Thursday, March 19, 9 a.m., All Day, Franklin and Worcester Counties.** Waterfowl Quest. Join Josh Rose in a tour of lakes, rivers, ponds, and more across Franklin County and into northern Worcester County, aiming to encounter the peak of spring waterfowl migration. Meet at 9:15 a.m. at the parking lot for the Turners Falls Power Canal, just outside the gate on Migratory Way in Turners Falls. Be prepared to carpool. The trip will happen either rain or shine – more interesting waterfowl often show up on rainy days.... Contact Josh ([opihi@mindspring.com](mailto:opihi@mindspring.com) or 413-835-0093) if you have any questions. (E/M)

**Wednesday, March 25, 5:00 a.m., All Day, Moose Bog, Vt.** Join Scott Sumner on this all day trip to look for boreal species such as the Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, Canada Jay, and Boreal Chickadee. You must be an HBC member. Limit is 12 participants. Please email Scott ([ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com)) to sign up. (E/M)

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**Saturday, April 18, 8:30-10:30 a.m., Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary.** Share your joy of birds and birding with students from the Smith College Bird Club as leader Laura Beltran looks for early Spring migrants at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. This trip is free and co-sponsored with Mass Audubon's Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. Meet at the main parking lot at Arcadia, 127 Combs Rd, Easthampton. (E)

**Saturday, April 18, 7:30-9:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge.** Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628), Jim Lafley, Sasha Auer, Kevin Barnes, and Janice Jorgensen, See March 28 for details.

**Saturday, April 25, 7:00 a.m., Half Day, Look Park.** Join Betsy Higgins for a half day trip to Look Park in Florence to look for Louisiana Waterthrushes and other Spring migrants. Meet at 7 a.m. in the JFK Middle School parking lot on 100 Bridge Road, Florence, MA. We'll walk some paved paths and some wooded, uneven paths along the river and look and listen for anything with wings or fur or any other treats that Spring brings. Please contact Betsy at [hignik@comcast.net](mailto:hignik@comcast.net) or 413-586-7585. (M)

**Other birding field trips** throughout New England may be accessed by going to <https://www.birdingcalendar.com>.

(Jan Ortiz interview continued)

**N:** *That's still true. Everyone seems to have a story about how they got hooked on birding. How did that happen for you?*

**JO:** On a trip to Plum Island. The Hitchcock spring birding class had rotating trip leaders, and Scott Sumner was one. Scott then taught a fall class. I debated whether to take it, and then I thought "Oh well, I guess I'll sign up for it." We went to Plum Island and there was a White-rumped Sandpiper. Scott said "Can anyone distinguish it from the others, and why?" I ended up in the back of a car, going through all of the field guides with a couple of other people. And I thought, "OMG, I'm acting just like those other people." I was pleased and horrified at the same time. That same day, our last stop was to see a Marbled Godwit in beautiful light. The combination of those two things got me hooked. From there it was more trips, and eventually being asked to teach the classes.

**N:** *You must have been interested, but not hooked yet, when you started.*

**JO:** I was just curious about the birds at the feeder in the back yard. I thought "Gee, I'd really like to know what these birds are and learn a little bit more about them." That was the reason for taking the class.

I remember thinking that Scott was a madman. The week that he led trip for the class that I took, we were driving through Quabbin and all of a sudden he stopped the car, jumped out, and started running up the slope shouting "Come on! Cerulian Warbler!" And I'm thinking "Wow! Not only does he stop all the time, he runs up the hill and yells for everybody to follow him." Of course, at that point I don't think I had any idea what a Cerulian Warbler was.

**N:** *You've done work on the MANO Christmas Count for a number of years.*

**JO:** I think this will be my 27<sup>th</sup> year.

**N:** *What got you started? What keeps you going?*

(Laughs) The second question is a good question. Chris Hill became a friend. And when he lived here he was very interested in owls. I went on some owl prowls, and later Chris and I led some owl prowls together. It just kept snowballing. I started to teach. I got very involved with

ornithology. I started taking week-long classes up in Maine at the Institute for Field Ornithology. I started taking some trips, long distance trips. The most exciting trip I took was to the High Arctic. Then I started doing the breeding bird census for the Town of Amherst and a couple of censuses for Manomet. It just kept going. People understood that I could identify some birds.

**N:** *Did someone invite you to start working on the Christmas Count?*

**JO:** Yes, Chris was the Christmas Count Compiler. He still is, down in South Carolina. Chris was leaving and he asked if I'd take it over. I've had the advantage of having tremendous co-compilers who are much more computer savvy. Mary Alice Wilson was the first person. I kept asking to resign and Mary Alice would say "No, no, no." Then she invited me over to her house one day and she said "I'm going to resign." She had talked to Janice Jorgensen who is another super-organizer and who is computer literate. Now I've been co-compiling with Janice who does the majority of the work. I review the rare bird reports and do a bit of the writing. Janice and I toss ideas back and forth, but she does the bulk of the organizing and compiling. So I've been asking Janice about resigning for I don't know how many years, and she says "Let's just keep it going. It works." As long as she does as much as she does, it's hard for me to say no.

I've also been on the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, for 6 years. That was interesting. When they called up to ask me, I said "Is this a joke?" But it turned it wasn't. I was on for two terms.

**N:** *I know that there's a connection between you, Monhegan Island, and Zero Mostel's house. Are you willing to share with the readers that connection?*

**JO:** Zero Mostel's son Josh now owns the house. A group of us started renting the house from him. That was many years ago. We stopped for various reasons, but we do think about renting it again.

*[Editor's note: The house sits on the harbor, looking toward Manana Island. It's a lovely location, and the first place ever that I saw a Lark Sparrow, just 20 yards from the deck of the Mostel house.]*



## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

*Warblers for Beginners* with Laura Beltran

Wednesdays, March 11, 18, 25 and April 1, 7 – 9 pm

[Register online](#) or call 413-584-3009 to register by phone.

Warblers are the jewels of the bird world. Learning some basics can prepare you to enjoy the waves of spring migrants coming our way. During this series, we'll explore the keys to identification of spring warblers; learn some of their songs; and discover how knowledge of their life histories can enrich our birding experience.

*Ducks* with Peter Redfern

Saturday, March 21, 9 am – 1 pm

[Register online](#) or call 413-584-3009 to register by phone.

With temperatures rising and ice melting, more ducks are returning to our region. Join birder and waterfowl enthusiast Peter Redfern for a presentation, followed by a walk around the Arcadia Marsh in search of hooded mergansers, wood ducks, and common goldeneyes. Dress to be outdoors for half of this program.

*Bird Sounds: Songs and Calls* with Patti Steinman

Thursday, April 16, 7 – 9 pm

[Register online](#) or call 413-584-3009 to register by phone.

Learning to identify the calls of birds can be overwhelming because they often sound alike. Many tricks to learn bird songs do exist, and we will share them in this introductory mini-course. Learn the differences among the three mimics and the five Robin sound-a-likes. For bird identification, see how listening goes hand in hand with knowing the species' behavior. We will also review some of the resources available to aid your developing bird sound identification skills.

### Hitchcock Center for the Environment

*Woodcock: Skydancer* with Dan Ziomek

Friday, March 27, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

[Register online](#)

Have you heard the telltale peep of the woodcock looking for a mate to do its early spring sky dance? If not you are in for a treat that will likely become an annual tradition, you'll be hooked. Join bird song radio personality and our favorite garden advisor Dan Ziomek to enjoy this special spring event. Recommended for adults and young people 4th grade and up.

*Birding for beginners and families (and those who prefer a slower pace)* with Dan Ziomek

Saturdays, April 18 – May 16, 7am -12pm

[Register online](#)

This class will consist of five Saturday mornings (7am- 12pm) during the peak of spring migration. We will visit five local hot spots and try to highlight not only the birds but the habitats that they prefer. We will walk at a leisurely pace and look and listen for the many species that use our valley as a migration highway. Check out the weekly schedule and the Hitchcock Center website:

<https://www.hitchcockcenter.org/programs/community-programs/>.

Dave Gross, Editor  
newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org





**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
[www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org)  
Volume 36, No. 8  
**April 2020**

Dear reader, our lives have been upended by the rapid spread of the SARS-Cov-2 virus that causes COVID-19. We are confining ourselves to home, cancelling events, meeting and visiting each other using online tools or the phone, and generally just hunkering down. I, personally, have been working in my yard much more than I had done in in past years, and my firewood stacks are the better for it. As more and more spring migrants arrive in our fields, woods and yards I, for one, aim to be outside looking at and listening to them. By myself. And that's the rub, isn't it? Birding is, to many of us, such a social activity that it is unsettling to be out with the birds but not with our people. This spring will be very different than past springs for us. The birds won't notice much of any difference except maybe a few more people looking at them, and fewer cars that need to be avoided. My suggestion to you is to get out twice as often as you used to do. With some luck you'll see and hear more birds and you'll end the season with better identification skills that you can use in future springs.

This newsletter is also upended from its usual content. There is no April program description because it was cancelled. There are no April or May field trip descriptions, because, too, they were cancelled. At its monthly meeting on Thursday, April 2 the HBC board decided that it is just too dangerous to bring our members together through at least the end of May, perhaps longer. Of course we met via the internet, each of us isolated in our respective domiciles. There is a possibility that the club will be able to have a semi-normal May meeting if our speaker can manage to give his presentation via the internet. The cancellations go well beyond the HBC: there are no Hitchcock or Arcadia programs listed in the newsletter because they were cancelled, including the Valley Family Bird Festival. What we do have, though, is a poem by HBC member and poet Phyllis Katz, an interview with a long-time birder in the Pioneer Valley, a rebus contest from our Education Committee, and a list of candidates for the HBC Board. So, till next month, stay healthy, enjoy the newsletter, and get out there to see some avian migrants!

### **UPCOMING PROGRAMS**

**~~April 13, 2020. Ashley Green. MAPS Banding Stations CANCELLED~~**

**May 11, 2020. Matt Kelly. Trinidad & Tobago IN-PERSON CANCELLED**

**June 8, 2020. Chris Fisher. Journey to the Edge of the Earth – the Galapagos Islands**

The May meeting will not be held in person at Immanuel Lutheran Church. It may be possible that Matt Kelly's presentation and some aspects of our regular meeting will be held online as a webinar. As of now the June meeting is not cancelled. That may change. There will be announcements on both the HBC website and the HBC Facebook page as our plans develop. The May newsletter will also have information about the status of our last two meetings of the year.

## HBC BOARD NOMINATIONS

The HBC Nominating Committee this year is Bruce Hart (chair), Marcia Merithew, and Jim Lafley. They have been hard at work talking with current and prospective board members. They have a slate of candidates to bring before the club at our official annual meeting in May. Given that we will not be meeting in person in May, we need to conduct the 2020 election via remote ballot. The details of how that will work have not been fully worked out. It is likely that we will vote online, with the option of a mailed-in paper ballot for those who prefer not to vote online, or who cannot do so. The May newsletter will have the details about voting, and for members who have an email address registered with the club, there will be an email announcement about voting. It is likely that the vote will occur in mid-May.

In order to provide an opportunity for club members to nominate themselves or others for any of the positions on the board, names of proposed nominees can be sent to the Nominating Committee at [nominations@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:nominations@hampshirebirdclub.org). The Nominating Committee needs to have names of alternate candidates in order to be included on the ballot by April 30. If you nominate someone other than yourself, please contact the nominee to confirm that they are willing to run.

The slate proposed by the Nominating Committee is given below. Incumbents are indicated by (I) and names of nominees who would be new to the board are in italic.

### Officers

President: Bob Zimmermann (I)  
Vice President and Program Chair: Josh Rose (I)  
Treasurer: *Steve Winn*  
Membership Secretary: Lissa Ganter (I)  
Communications Secretary: Elaine Reilly (I)

### Members-at-large

*Laura Beltran*  
Dave Gross (I)  
Jan Howard (I)  
*Amanda Kallenbach*  
Carol Mardeusz (I)  
Helen Symons (I)

## A CHAT WITH HARVEY ALLEN

In February 2020 the newsletter editor sat down with Harvey Allen, long-time Valley birder and one of the founders of the Hampshire Bird Club, to talk about the history behind the formation of the HBC and how the bird distribution in the Valley has changed over the years.

**Newsletter:** *What got you interested in birding?*

**Harvey Allen:** I grew up on a farm. My mother was interested in birding. She was a birder. She'd never think of herself as a birder, of course. She just observed birds. She made sure I knew what a Bluebird was.

**N:** *So pretty much from when you were a kid you were interested in birding.*

**HA:** I was outdoors all the time on the farm. There's nothing to do unless you wanted to become a farmer.

**N:** *When did you get to the point where you were identifying birds and going out looking specifically for birds?*

**HA:** I always knew what I was seeing, pretty much. There wasn't any formal birding – I was just outdoors a lot. I knew what birds we had on the farm. I didn't think much about the seasons; the birds came in the spring and they nested.

**N:** *This was in Amherst, is that right?*

**HA:** This was in North Sunderland – Gunn Farm. This is on route 47 about a mile and a half south of the Montague town line. It now has an agricultural preservation on it.

My grandmother lived where our bird club meets at the Lutheran Church – that was her farm. The University took it over and then they sold to the Baptists and my uncle was very mad that they didn't tell them first. The University made money on that. They kept the land on both

sides of it. At that time they were thinking about taking all of North Amherst, and now they do have most of it.

**N:** *Who were the influential birders in the Valley before the HBC got started?*

**HA:** If it hadn't been for Jerry Bozzo there wouldn't be a Hampshire Bird Club because he taught birding in junior high. He had at least 80 students interested, and out of the 80 he had 40 who stuck with it. Out of the 40 there are probably at least 20 still doing it. Scott Sumner is one of them. A lot of them have gone on to professional careers. And then the other person was Rud Stone. He came from Syracuse or maybe Schenectady – I guess it was Schenectady – to be curator of Wisteriahurst in Holyoke. He loved birds – he and his mother were birders. He taught people like Al Richards and Tom Gagnon. He didn't drive and Tom did, so Tom drove him. Tom refused to go to Peru one day with him to get a Hawk Owl. There has never been another one. He says "that's been my biggest blunder".

Steve Stann started the birding classes when the Hitchcock Center moved to Amherst. His mother Alice was my seventh grade homeroom teacher. Alice was really interested in birding – she was a birder. Steve was very smart and he went to Amherst College on scholarship. If you lived in Amherst and you carried a high B you could get into Amherst College for free. He graduated and got a job at the Hitchcock Center as a naturalist. They wanted him to be director but he didn't want to fundraise so he went over to the Hudson River and he got a job with Pete Seeger on a boat, the Clearwater [ed. note: see [www.clearwater.com](http://www.clearwater.com)].

**N:** *You had said that he was the person who started the birding class at Hitchcock, correct?*

**HA:** Right. He set it up and it's still being run in pretty much the same format. Jan Ortiz took it up after he left.

**N:** *I sat with Jan earlier this year, talking about the beginnings of the Hampshire Bird Club. It's interesting to see the flow of how it all came about.*

**HA:** We started the Amherst Bird Club at the Hitchcock Center. And then it became the Hampshire Bird Club because all the other clubs kind of joined in. David Spector was one of the

original members. And there were Sally Venman, Barbara Tiffany, John Green and Pete Westover also.

**N:** *And you. The usual suspects.*

**HA:** Those were the people. The room in the old Hitchcock Center that became the reception room is where we met. And then Steve Stann's father built the addition, the larger room, onto it. Then we moved into there since it held about 35 people comfortably. Now we have 75 or more attending meetings. They must be there because of the programs because not so many go on the field trips.

**N:** *That's what Jan said also. What makes the club unique is the quality of the speakers.*

**HA:** And Sally Venman's newsletter. She was the clerk for a long time and she loved to write. She and I and Barbara were in the first class that Steve Stann taught. My son was in there too, I think. We always walked around the grounds first for his class, doing our birding right there, either on that property or on the farm next to it. We got a huge list of species on that piece of land. We went out with Scott Sumner on the first day of the year one time. We started out with a Sapsucker and we got three or four Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs right there on that piece of land.

**N:** *That leads into my next question. In your experience what would you say have been the biggest changes in the distribution and numbers of birds since you started watching?*

**HA:** I think we have as many birds, but the Starling population is way off and the warblers are way off. I think if you look at the Christmas Bird Counts over the years the numbers of Starlings have dropped considerably. There are still a lot of Starlings, but I think there used to be about 5000 underneath the Coolidge Bridge every night. Crows have done well. Wood Ducks have done well. Bluebirds, Peregrines, Turkeys, Eagles and Harriers have done well. The Red Tails are really doing well. Red Tails used to be very spooky if you ever went near them. Kestrels are down. All grassland birds are down. Other birds have come in. We started out with the Cardinal and Mockingbird and then the Titmouse came, and the Gnatcatcher and Carolina Wren. And the Raven. We had never had Ravens. The

first Ravens I ever saw I was on the bike trail during the Christmas Count in 1977. There was a pair of Ravens and they eventually nested on the hill up here [in South Amherst].

**N:** *Red-bellied Woodpeckers have come in.*

**HA:** Very recently. They got as far as the Connecticut line down there in Suffield. They were a long time in Connecticut before they got into Longmeadow and then within five years they got all the way into Canada. We used to have a lot of Red-headed Woodpeckers when we had elm trees. When the elms started dying that got rid of the woodpeckers. They liked those old, big elms. Apparently they could dig into them just fine. We had a colony on Station Road, we had a colony where the new University police station is on East Pleasant Street, there were some in Sunderland. When the elm trees all fell over and rotted, we didn't have any more.

**N:** *That's so interesting. It's all about the environment. The loss of grassland birds makes sense, too, since we don't have much in the way of grassland any more.*

**HA:** If you want to see what we used to have, just go down to Westover. On South Maple Street we used to have Upland Sandpipers, and one year we had both the Eastern and Western Meadowlark. I don't think we ever had Grasshopper Sparrows over there, but we had a lot of Savannahs. And the Sedge Wren. Not many, and you had to go out and look. They sang day and night. They like meadows that have just a little bit of water on the ground, like hay fields. We had one nesting down here in South Amherst a few years ago and we got that on the Amherst Breeding Bird Count.

Up here in the spring in the orchard in back of me I had a whole tree full of Bay-breasted Warblers and I used to get Cape Mays right out the back yard here. I used to go to Mount Greylock and get hundreds of White-throated Sparrows, and Purple Finches would sing in the morning. I first noticed the temperature and climate change up there. The foliage changed and the Gray-cheeked Thrush disappeared and

the Swainson's followed it. We had the Olive-sided Flycatcher up there at one time.

**N:** *I see that you have a folder with some old count records.*

**HA:** We used to have a bird meeting every year in March sponsored by Mass Audubon. Some of these papers are records of that.

**N:** *Here's an agenda from 1961, and I see that there was an afternoon talk by Alan Richards about the Mourning Dove. I know that was the topic of his graduate thesis.*

**HA:** Yes.

**N:** *And here are lists from the 1957 and 1961 Christmas Counts. In 1957 there were 43 species and the Evening Grosbeak count was 139.*

**HA:** This stuff probably came from Rud Stone's materials. He died and all of his stuff got thrown in a dumpster. Somebody called me up and said "You'd better come down here." I ran down and retrieved it.

**N:** *Here's an article from the Worcester Telegram from April 2, 1961 saying that strong action was needed to protect bluebirds.*

**HA:** We had that strong hurricane in 1938 that knocked everything down. The Bluebirds didn't have any trees left to nest in. The same was true for the Wood Ducks. Both the Bluebirds and the Wood Ducks were saved by people building boxes for them.

**N:** *Are there any particular memories of birding around here that you would like to share?*

**HA:** I went down with my kids on a party boat out of Provincetown with the owner of the boat. We fished, and the boat owner was complaining about losing tackle and sinkers, and having to spend the winter making more. I mentioned this to Tom Tynning – this was just when the Hitchcock Center was starting – and Tom arranged to charter that same boat for a whale watch. The boat owner said that it was cheaper to run a watch than making new tackle all the time for a bunch of drunk fishermen, so he changed his business to a whale watch. Then he hired a naturalist to be on board, and that's how Provincetown whale watching got started.

## Finding the Harpy Eagles in Panama

by Phyllis Katz

They had built their nest  
forty feet up on a tree  
where two branches forked,  
perfect place for a nest of sticks  
and leaves, deep enough  
for birds, eggs, and young to be safe.  
For almost two hours we  
had gone up a whirling muddy  
river in hollowed out wooden canoes  
then walked an hour more  
and found the female on the nest  
but we could see only the tips  
of those amazing feathers  
that stood upright over her head.  
We waited and waited, worried,  
for we would soon have leave,  
to return to our boats, the bird  
barely visible when suddenly  
she rose in all her glory, rose  
high enough for all to see her  
majestic body, and we could leave  
rejoicing back to our canoes  
when the heavens burst open  
and never closed. Raincoats  
could not hold the endless pounding  
water; sopped, we bailed and bailed,  
agreeing afterwards we had never been  
so wet and cold but, admitting it didn't matter.  
We'd seen our bird, watched her mate fly down  
to join her and joy and celebration warmed us all,  
thankful for this gift of a Red-Letter-Day,  
one we would never forget.



Photo credit: Carlos, a guide for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, on a trip to Darien, Panama in October 2018.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We welcome these new members who have joined HBC since the publication of the Directory in December:

Shirley Crites, Montague; April Downey, Hampden; Robin Gurdak-Foley, South Deerfield; Jan & Thomas Hawkins, Belchertown; Bambi Kenney, Agawam; Torben Lorenzen, North Falmouth; Tom Mangan, Northampton; Susan Tyler, Amherst; Christopher Williams, Montesano WA; Sara Woodbury & Sid Siff, Amherst.

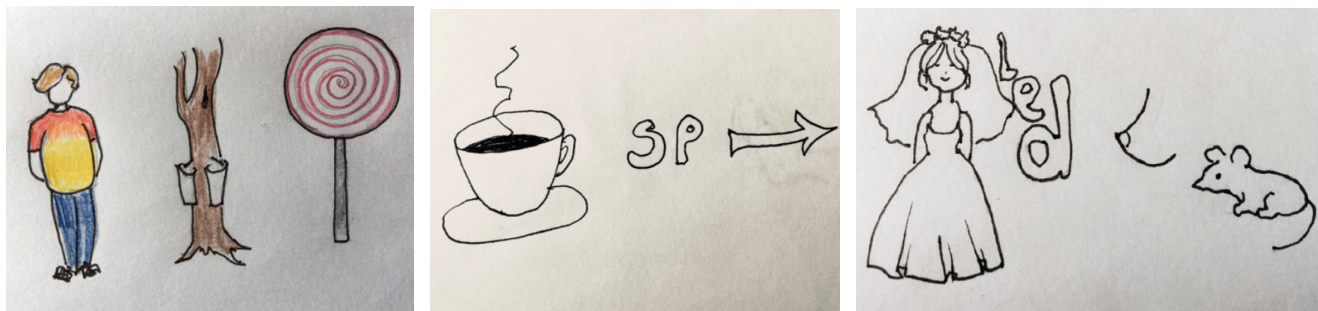
We hope it won't be long before we get to know them at meetings and on field trips!



## REBUS CHALLENGE

Our Education Committee has too much time on its collective hands, apparently. Here is a PG-rated rebus challenge that they have concocted.

Looking for a diversion while sitting in quarantine? Here is a fun game we can play. Make up a bird rebus. What is a rebus you might ask? A rebus is a picture puzzle that links pictures together to come up with a word or phrase. Here are three examples. Can you identify them? (For those of you reading the black and white hardcopy edition, the shirt at the far left is red at top and yellow below.)



Now you don't have to be artistic, you can use clipart. You can do it with a buddy on the phone or as you while away the hours at home. We know that you are all clever, so let's see what you can do!!!

Rebuses will be shared on the HBC website's [Education page](#) and the HBC [Facebook page](#) (and you can share yours there, too). Send your entries to: [education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org) or post on Facebook.

## MAY FIELD TRIPS

*All May field trips have been cancelled. Please check the HBC website or Facebook page for updates.*

Included among the May field trips that have been cancelled is our longstanding Memorial Day trip to Monhegan Island, Maine. This migrant trap is amazing in the spring, and it can be just as spectacular in the fall. Trip leader Scott Sumner is planning a trip to Monhegan from Thursday, October 1 to Sunday, October 4. Members who signed up for the Memorial Day trip will get first dibs to go on the October trip. If any spaces remain once that group has decided whether or not to go, then Scott will open the trip to other club members. Stay tuned for details.

**Other birding field trips** throughout New England may be accessed by going to <https://www.birdingcalendar.com>

## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

Arcadia, and all Mass Audubon sanctuaries, are closed until further notice.

### Hitchcock Center for the Environment

The Hitchcock Center is closed at least until April 5. An announcement will be made then about the status of the center and its programs. Given the ongoing closings throughout the state, it is unlikely that May programs will be held. Check the Hitchcock Center website for updates.

Dave Gross, Editor  
[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)





# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

## Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 36, No. 9

### May 2020

Dear reader, as I write this a bit after noon on April 30 it is raining, the temperature is below 40° F, and a fire is in the wood stove in front of me. The Goldfinches, Purple Finches, Red-winged Blackbirds and squirrels have half-emptied the feeders that I filled yesterday evening and a Black-capped Chickadee is poking around in the lilac just outside the window, a lilac that is just beginning to show some life in this long, cold spring. So goes life on the hill in Pelham.

I've been working on the newsletter most of this morning. But I don't want you to think that this is a solo endeavor. Far from it. By my count at least 12 HBC members besides myself have contributed words or images to this newsletter. Once the final draft is ready later today, our President Bob Zimmermann and Membership Secretary Lissa Ganter will look it over and point out my typos, awkward phrases, and factual errors as they have done for all of the other newsletters this year. When the corrections are finalized, the newsletter will be sent to either Lissa or Jan Howard who then will submit it for printing while I post the newsletter on the HBC website followed by an email to our online-only members that the new issue is available. In these coronavirus times the print shop will handle the collation and mailing of the newsletter hardcopy. In happier times the printed newsletter was picked up by Lissa who then got a group together to collate, seal, address, stamp and mail it. As they say, it takes a village...

## HBC BOARD ELECTION

As required by the HBC Bylaws, the HBC Nominating Committee has delivered to the President a slate of candidates for the HBC Board for 2020-2021. The slate is as follows (incumbents are indicated by (I) and nominees who will be new to the board are in *italic*):

### Officers

President: Bob Zimmermann (I)  
Vice President and Program Chair: Josh Rose (I)  
Treasurer: *Steve Winn*  
Membership Secretary: Lissa Ganter (I)  
Communications Secretary: Elaine Reilly (I)

### Members-at-large

*Laura Beltran*  
Dave Gross (I)  
Jan Howard (I)  
*Amanda Kallenbach*  
Carol Mardeusz (I)  
Helen Symons (I)

The HBC Bylaws require a vote for the slate of candidates at the May meeting. Given that gatherings of more than 10 are not allowed due to the current COVID-19 pandemic and thus there is no in-person May meeting, the HBC Board has voted to move the election to an online format, with an option for mail-in voting. The online ballot may be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/HBC2020vote> where members will be asked to verify their membership by indicating their name and vote for or against the slate as if this was a vote at the in-person May meeting. Online voting closes on midnight on May 23. Members who wish to vote by mail may request a ballot via email ([membership@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org)) or USPS mail (PO Box 716, Amherst, MA 01004-0716). Mail-in ballots must be requested by May 13, postmarked by May 23 and received by May 27.

Two election monitors (Marcia Merithew and Jim Lafley) will observe the online voting and will review the results to confirm that only club members have voted.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**7:15 pm, May 11, 2020. Susan Myers.** Borneo: A Virtual Birding Tour

*This **online meeting** takes the place of our previously scheduled May meeting. To join the meeting, you **must pre-register** at <https://tinyurl.com/HBC-May-register>. After registering and about 24 hours prior to the meeting you will receive an email with meeting login information. (Direct questions to [newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org).)*

Borneo is home to a spectacular assortment of birds, from the Pygmy Ibon to the Rhinoceros Hornbill, Mountain Blackeye to Whitehead's Spiderhunter, Blue-crowned Hanging-Parrot to Dulit's Frogmouth. The island has well over 650 recorded species, more than 40 of them endemic. Come on a virtual tour of Borneo's geography, habitats, and birding highlights.

Susan Myers has been a birder and naturalist since her childhood in Australia. The author of 'A Field Guide to the Birds of Borneo' and 'Wildlife of Southeast Asia', as well as a number of scientific papers and popular articles, she has over 30 years' experience in several Asian countries. She speaks fluent Indonesian and Japanese, and in addition to the birds is enthusiastic about Asia's other wildlife, languages, cultures, and food. She currently works for WINGS, leading birding tours in not only Borneo but Vietnam, Japan, the Philippines, Cambodia, India, and several other countries, plus SCUBA tours of the Great Barrier Reef.

**June 8, 2020. Chris Fisher.** Journey to the Edge of the Earth – the Galapagos Islands

As of now no decision has been made about holding the June meeting. There will be announcements on both the HBC website and the HBC Facebook page as our plans develop. The June newsletter will have information about the status of the June meeting.

## MICRO FIELD TRIP REPORTS

We've had no HBC-organized field trips for a while, and that will continue through May (except for the virtual field trips – see the Education Committee section below). But we're birders, and we watch birds. Some observations during this migration season have been submitted by HBC members. If you have a micro report, please send it in (to [newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)) for publication in the June or September newsletters. And now, for the reports...

Just two of us, my son and I, went to Farley Ledges in Erving State Park on 4/16 The cliffs are beautiful, and popular among rock climbers though few were out that day. Peregrines, Ravens and TVs nest on them. In fact, we watched a Raven pair enter under an overhang where I presume they are nesting. The trail goes up moderately steeply and then winds through some lovely woods. We heard 3 Winter Wrens and 2 Sapsuckers drumming. Otherwise it was quiet with only scattered Chickadees and Titmice, and a pair of Phoebe's making a nest. But we did see some beautiful hepatica blooming and trillium budding up. At the top, the view is outstanding and the TVs were soaring back and forth at very close range.

Henry Lappen

Birding during Covid-19: April 1...guess it's time to take down the feeders...hmmm, there hasn't been much evidence of bears...maybe I'll leave them up for a while. The Juncos are on their way but here and there a Goldfinch. April 8...18 Goldfinches; April 13...30 Goldfinches; April 17...40 Goldfinches; April 21...50 Goldfinches! They're everywhere, on the feeders, on the ground, in the trees – transient yellow flowers against the bare branches. What a treat!

Bob Zimmermann

I have a Sapsucker drumming on my wind chime every morning.

Jan Howard

We've had a Broad-Winged Hawk visiting our yard every day for the past couple of weeks. It prefers to sit on the Bluebird box from which it spies and then grabs bugs on the ground. The Bluebird is not happy with this arrangement. We've also been observed by the Ravens that hang out on the cell tower near our house. When we go out to work in the yard, a Raven scout flies over, amusedly chatting to his mate about the odd-looking, pale bears that seem to like to scratch the dirt. I don't blame him for being amused.

Dave Gross

Nash Hill Rd. April 17, Friday, 5:48 a.m.; sunrise in 20 minutes. I'm standing in the middle of a Louisiana Waterthrush territory, waiting for him to awake and begin his day. *In flight* he sings, past me, headed downstream, not just the standard song but the full song with the extended twitters on the end. After that burst of exuberance (perhaps only mine, not his), he offers only his simple song for the next few hours. What a way to begin the day (for both of us)!

Don Kroodsma

A mystery bird appeared at my feeders on 1/18/20 which I reported on the Western Mass Birders FB page a day or so later after seeing it a second time. I described the bird as brownish with two wingbars, a broken white eye ring, brown legs and toes, clear light breast, and a forked tail. I posted a rather poor photo. My guess was that it might be a Pine Warbler. But what was it doing here now? I suspected that it had come with the flock of American Goldfinches or Dark-eyed Juncos that arrived earlier that week.

On 1/23/20 Larry Therrien stopped by to take some photos and confirmed that my guess was correct and a few days later Scott Turner also visited to take a look. By his 2/23/20 visit, Larry determined that it was a female! No surprise that he was correct.

She managed to survive the bitter cold nights we had in January and February, along with the snow, and fed primarily on a peanut flavored suet cake and occasionally millet seed on the ground. Dried, loose mealworms or those in the form of a cake seemed to hold no appeal for her; nor did the sunflower, finch mix, or thistle seed. On 4/10/20 one lone male appeared mid afternoon at the suet cake and wasted no time in singing to establish territory while sitting on one of the top branches of the lilac shrub next to the feeders. By 4/11/20 the female appeared with him on the suet. Apparently, he did a good job of wooing her as well as defending his territory, which he continues to do each time he comes to the suet cake.

Starting 4/16 the two have appeared frequently at the suet cakes during the times I have checked the feeders from my living room window. Presumably, she has been constructing a nest at the end of a high branch in a White Pine trees near my home. According to the Cornell and Audubon sites, nest building takes about 14 days. She will then lay 3-5 white, grayish or greenish white eggs with brown speckles, each of which took 24 hours to form. For ten days both parents will incubate the eggs and then for ten days both will feed the nestlings. I wonder if they will bring the babies to the feeders. Time will tell.

Carol Mardeusz

Report for 6 April driveway HBC trip. Participants: Magda Bechar and David Spector. On the return hike from the mailbox we noted a "stick" emerging from a crude nest 30 feet up in a white pine that proved to be a Cooper's Hawk tail. A couple of weeks later, despite some days with heavy precipitation and strong winds, the female (a yearling on her first nest) is still incubating, and we hope to have hawklets soon. A Cooper's pair that conducts itself well should meet with no resistance unless temperatures go beyond a critical point or the wind proves to be too strong a physical phenomenon. [Editor's note: This is a super report. It might even merit a Nobel Prize, like that awarded in 1972 for BCS theory. (Look it up.) And second editors note: When I was in grad school at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the late 70s, in the Physics Library I would often see John Bardeen reading the New York Times as I was perusing recent journal articles. (Look him up, too.)]

David Spector

# WORDS AND DEEDS FROM THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## Paradise at Semaphore Hill, Panama, 2001

by Phyllis Katz

In mid-October that year  
my husband and I lived for a week  
below a radar tower. You might think  
this was not an ideal place  
for good birding, since the tower  
had been used in wartime  
by the US Airforce,  
guardians of the Canal  
against all enemies,  
and was not of course,  
seen then  
as a birder's paradise.

Now the Canopy Tower,  
is a delightful small hotel,  
radar tower surrounded  
by a broad walkway,  
place for views of sky above  
and woods below.

Here late October brings to Panama  
kettles of thousands of raptors,  
especially Broad-winged  
and Swainson's,  
and tens of thousands  
of Turkey Vultures  
filling the sky  
swirling from dawn  
to dusk above the tower.

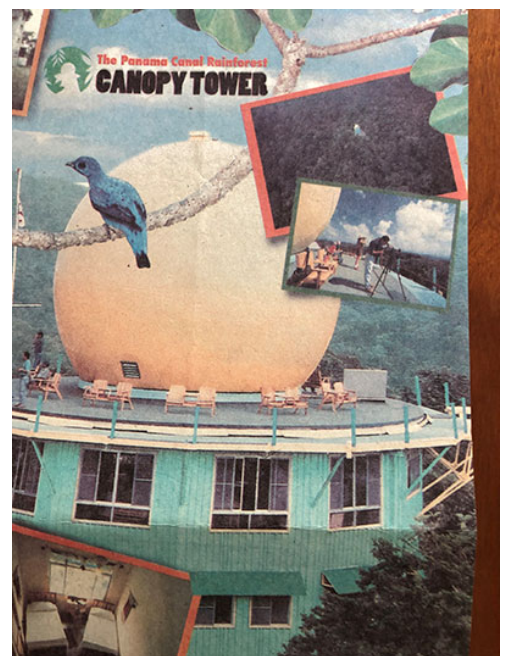
### Author's Notes

Our week at the Canopy Tower was a naturalist's paradise  
of birds, various reptiles, amphibians, butterflies and  
mammals, among them Howler Monkeys, Sloths, and a  
Woolly Opossum.

The frosting on this delicious the cake: Our group bird  
count was 264 species.

Clouding the sky as they fly,  
single groups joining others  
find the way to South America,  
as the kettles widen,  
the air a music of beating  
wings and throated calls,  
until the sun dips  
slyly into the night  
and the birds drop  
down to rest in the trees.

Rising early next day  
they fly on  
before we breakfast,  
to find safety  
in a warmer world  
until spring when their wings  
carry them north again  
to build their nests and raise  
their young and as the cold returns,  
teach them the way to Paradise.



An early advertisement for the Canopy Tower's new function as a small hotel.



## Virtual Field Trips!

The Hampshire Bird Club Education Committee is offering virtual birding each week. Enjoy watching birds and sharing what you see while virtually chatting with others through your computer, phone or tablet. Pre-registration is required since space is limited. Register by e-mailing your name, cell phone number, and which day you'd like to join to [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org). Please try to choose one time per week since we'd like to offer these to as many folks as possible and space is limited.

Mondays starting May 4: 8:30 a.m. - 9 a.m. using Zoom (Host: Laura Beltran)

Tuesdays starting May 5: 8:30 a.m. – 9 a.m. using Skype which must be downloaded on your device prior to the event (Host: Jim Lafley)

Wednesdays starting May 6: 8:30 a.m. – 9 a.m. using Facetime and you must have an iPhone or Mac (Host: Janice Jorgensen)

These virtual field trips will continue through the month of May.

## Bird Feeding Tips

I tried a couple of new ideas for my feeders this year as I no longer have a tray feeder. One idea I got from "Bird Watcher's Digest." I put a cinder block on end and placed a mix of food in the two openings. It protects the seed from the rain and snow and the birds don't seem to mind either reaching in or climbing in to get the food.



The other idea was to layer black oil sunflower and millet or fine cracked corn in a tube feeder. The finches, titmice, and chickadees only want the sunflower so they spread the other seed on the ground for the sparrows and doves.

Jim Lafley

## PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Two books on birdsong have been published this Spring by local ornithologists. David Sibley has come out with *What It's Like to Be a Bird: From Flying to Nesting, Eating to Singing--What Birds Are Doing, and Why*. This book is geared for a general audience, and it includes many new illustrations that for most species are life-sized. The book answers frequently asked questions about birds such as "Do Robins hear worms?" The book is available from Amazon: [www.amazon.com/What-Its-Like-Bird-Singing-What/dp/0307957896/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=1S52W2VQ9IDUA&dchild=1&keywords=david+sibley+bird+books&qid=1587052948&sprefix=david+sibley%2Caps%2C142&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/What-Its-Like-Bird-Singing-What/dp/0307957896/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1S52W2VQ9IDUA&dchild=1&keywords=david+sibley+bird+books&qid=1587052948&sprefix=david+sibley%2Caps%2C142&sr=8-1).

Don Kroodsma's new book is *Birdsong for the Curious Naturalist* that comes with an accompanying website ([www.birdsongforthe curious.com/](http://www.birdsongforthe curious.com/)). From that website the book is described as "a basic, how-to guide that teaches anyone, from beginning to advanced bird-lover, how to listen to our singing planet. The approach is organized concept by concept, and nested within concepts, species by species." It, too, is available from Amazon: [www.amazon.com/Birdsong-Curious-Naturalist-Guide-Listening-ebook/dp/B07SZBFXR9/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=kroodsma&qid=1587052977&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Birdsong-Curious-Naturalist-Guide-Listening-ebook/dp/B07SZBFXR9/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=kroodsma&qid=1587052977&sr=8-1).

## MAY FIELD TRIPS

*All May field trips have been cancelled. Please check the HBC website or Facebook page for updates.*

The Education Committee has organized some virtual field trips as noted on page 5.

**Other birding field trips** throughout New England may be accessed by going to [www.birdingcalendar.com](http://www.birdingcalendar.com).

## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Bird-A-Thon

Mass Audubon's Bird-A-Thon this year will focus on birding near home to maintain safety and to reduce our impact on the climate. It will still be held over a 24 hour period on May 15-16. We will rely on cooperative teams working in their yards, neighborhoods, and natural areas within walking or biking distance of their homes. You can bird individually, with a partner, or as part of a family/household. Fundraising will happen as usual. The Arcadia team is open to birders from anywhere in the state or across the county. Those who give or raise \$250 or more during Bird-A-Thon win an invitation to a birding outing here in the Valley led by David Sibley & Joan Walsh.

Many of the members of the Hampshire Bird Club are involved in organizing and participating in the event and we would like as many HBC members as possible to join us in counting as many species as we can in one day.

Bird-A-Thon funds are used by Arcadia's Sanctuaries to protect land, educate about the environment, and act to address climate change. Arcadia maintains 140 of acres of grasslands for Bobolinks, American Kestrels, and Eastern Meadowlark as well as climate change mitigation.

For more information or to sign up please email Patti Steinman at [psteinman@massaudubon.org](mailto:psteinman@massaudubon.org)

### Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

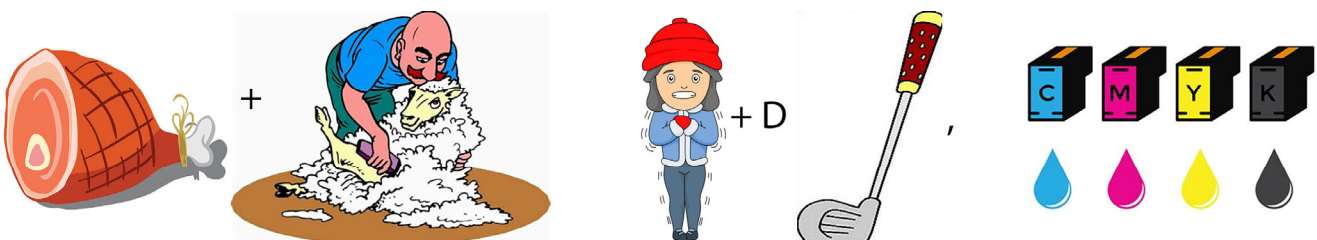
Arcadia, and all Mass Audubon sanctuaries, are closed until further notice.

### Hitchcock Center for the Environment

The Hitchcock Center remains closed. Check the Hitchcock Center website for updates.

Dave Gross, Editor  
[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)

PS – Remember the rebus contest by the Education Committee in the April newsletter? Here's my entry (with images from stockphotos.com, cityfolkclub.blogspot.com, classroomclipart.com, allthingsclipart.com, and vecteezy.com):







**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
www.hampshirebirdclub.org  
Volume 36, No. 10  
**June 2020**

Dear reader, here we are another month into social distancing restrictions that have upended the usual flurry of collective activity that we as birders practice during spring migration season. The HBC cancelled 9 field trips for the month of May including the one to Monhegan Island, Maine that has been a club staple since the very first year of the HBC. (See the interview with Scott Sumner for more about this history.) Still, the birds came back and are happily singing and raising their chicks. So at least some things lend a sense of normalcy in these unusual times.

As was mentioned in the May HBC newsletter, this year the Mass Audubon Bird-a-Thon was the Bird-at-home-a-Thon. I'm on a team with Dave Pritchard and our team leader Bob Zimmermann. We each hiked from our house to our local sites as per this year's rules: Haydenville, the Fitzgerald Lake area, and Pelham near the old town center. We saw or heard 76 separate species in total, with lots of overlap between our 3 lists. My best bird was a Cape May Warbler in a large spruce tree at the corner of the historic cemetery behind the Pelham meetinghouse (yes, the one that holds the US record for longest continuous use for annual town meetings, a record that gets longer each year and is approaching 280 years). I checked my records and found that the very first Cape May that I saw was on an HBC trip to, you guessed it, Cape May, NJ. And I also recall that last one I saw was on an HBC trip to Monhegan Island, also in a spruce tree. Were these coincidences? You tell me.

## **HBC BOARD ELECTION**

The final voting totals for the HBC Board election, as reported by election monitors Marcia Merithew and Jim Lafley, were 81 yes, 1 no, 0 abstain. All votes were online; no mail-in ballots were requested. The list of candidates who were elected include

### Officers

President: Bob Zimmermann  
Vice President and Program Chair: Josh Rose  
Treasurer: Steve Winn  
Membership Secretary: Lissa Ganter  
Communications Secretary: Elaine Reilly

### Members-at-large

Laura Beltran  
Dave Gross  
Jan Howard  
Amanda Kallenbach  
Carol Mardeusz  
Helen Symons

The new board assumes its duties on June 1, 2020 for a 1-year term. The board will meet on Thursday, June 4. No other meetings are currently scheduled, but the board will likely meet in August. The June meeting will be via Zoom. You may contact any board member to obtain instructions for joining a meeting.

## **A NOTE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

The club soon will be on summer hiatus, but always feel free to get in touch if you have membership questions. Through your participation, interest, and the knowledge that you share, HBC thrives. Thank you. I hope we get to actually meet in person again come the fall, and for now I wish each of you a safe, healthy and restorative summer! [membership@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org)

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

The 2020-2021 meeting schedule is shaping up. Of course, there is still uncertainty about our ability to meet in person, but for now we are planning to have a regular meeting season. Our Program Chair Josh Rose has lined up the speakers who were scheduled for this year but whose programs were cancelled due to the restrictions on in-person meetings. Those speakers are

- Joan Walsh, speaking about how offshore wind development in MA is expected to impact our birds
- Ashley Green, speaking about MAPS banding stations, her own in Warwick plus the one at the Conte NWR/Fort River Trail which is operated by other ornithologists
- Matt Kelly, speaking about Trinidad & Tobago, where he spends every winter
- Chris Fisher, speaking about the Galapagos

Another speaker whose schedule didn't work for this year but who is tentatively scheduled is John Kricher, with topic to be announced.

Josh is working on an online program for our meeting scheduled for June 8. As we go to press plans are not finalized. If we do get a speaker lined up, information about the online meeting will be posted on the HBC website and on the HBC Facebook page.

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

*Please check the HBC website or Facebook page for updates.*

**Thursday-Sunday, October 1-4, Monhegan Island.** Scott Sumner leads the Hampshire Bird Club's pilgrimage to Monhegan Island. This charming island and the variety of migrating birds can be astonishing. The weekend promises to be both memorable and enjoyable. The trip is limited to 15 Hampshire Bird Club members. Please contact Carol Mardeusz (camardeusz@yahoo.com) to register **on or after June 7**. Please contact Scott (413-427-8896) for further information.

**Other birding field trips** throughout New England may be accessed by going to [www.birdingcalendar.com](http://www.birdingcalendar.com).

## VIRTUAL BIRDING PROGRAMS REPORT

The Hampshire Bird Club Education Committee offered virtual birding programs each week on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays through May. Birders connected on-line to share what they heard and observed in their neighborhoods, yards, or at their feeders. Casey Clark noted "I found the virtual birding sessions with you (Jim) and Laura very interesting, especially during this weird time of isolation. I also enjoyed hearing from experienced birders about the birds they have seen and their recent experiences." Additionally, Judy Hyde said "I enjoyed the details and viewing of Jim's backyard bird feeding...and glad to have someone to vent to about the silliness of not going birding together these days." Thanks to all who participated!

The virtual birding events will be continuing. Below are more dates for on-line birding (using Zoom) and chatting, so grab your coffee, a comfortable chair where you can watch birds, your computer, iPad or phone, and join us by registering (space is limited) at [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org).

Virtual birding dates: Mondays, June 1, June 8, June 15, June 22, and June 29, 8:30 am – 9 am.

## A CHAT WITH SCOTT SUMNER

Scott Sumner has been a central participant in the activities of the Hampshire Bird Club. He was the club's first president and is well known as a trip leader, bird instructor, and go-to guy for bird identification. He and I met via Zoom for a chat in mid-May.

**Newsletter:** *So how did you become interested in birds and birding?*

**Scott Sumner:** Well, when I was a kid I liked nature and stuff. And I can remember when I must have been five or so, something like that, we rented an apartment on Grey Street and I vividly remember walking up to the window. There was a neighbor downstairs who had made a window feeder and put sunflower seeds in it. I can vividly remember the whole tray full of Evening Grosbeaks. I don't remember anything else about the place at that time, but I can remember those Evening Grosbeaks.

**N:** *Cool.*

**SS:** This was the point in time when they were really starting to explode into New England. This was the mid 60s or so. And I did various nature things and like camps and such. Then in the seventh grade, I took the birding segment offered at the high school, what they call middle school now. Jerry Bozzo offered that. We went out on field trips with these terrible binoculars. But we walked around Chestnut Street and areas like that. I started to get hooked. I said, "Hey, I can see this stuff and I can ID it." And off I went. That was in the early 70s.

And then I took a couple of the continuing ed classes that were being offered at the time. There were two in town then. Back in those days, there was the Hitchcock Center class that Steve Stan taught. I took it one year and then the next year I took a continuing ed class in Amherst that David Fisher was teaching it back in those days. I did that for, I think, a couple of years and then, by my senior year in high school, I took it over with Peter Yaukey and started leading those trips. There were many other local birders from whom I learned a lot. Tom Gagnon in particular stands out.

**N:** *Was that through Amherst College?*

**SS:** No, it was through the Town of Amherst continuing ed series. I don't know if they do that anymore. I know they don't do the birding course.

**N:** *How do you recall the beginnings of the Hampshire Bird Club?*

**SS:** Well in 1979 or 80 There was the Amherst Bird Club. Besides myself there was David Stemple and Peter Yaukey and several other people. We had a few successful meetings at the Hitchcock Center and then some of us went off to college. The club just seemed to fade away after a few years. Then in 1984 the Great Gray Owl showed up on Huntington Road in Hadley. The bird was around for something like six weeks. Hundreds if not thousands of people saw that bird.

My recollection is that Sally Venman and I were just looking at the bird and we started talking about the Amherst club that had failed. We didn't see why we couldn't get a bird club going because so many people were out looking at the owl. So we met at Sally's house. I think Jan Ortiz was there, and there were others who are not coming to mind right now. One of the discussions I remember was what to name the club and that's when we came up the Hampshire Bird Club to include all of Hampshire County. We had the first meeting at the Hitchcock Center. I think we had close to 100 people at that meeting and it just took off from there.

**N:** *You've been teaching birding for a while. What got you into that?*

**SS:** I don't know. I think it was that continuing ed didn't have anybody to lead at the time. Perhaps David [Fisher], who was graduating from UMass, had recommended that Peter and I could do it. And so we said, "Hey, sure. We'll try it." And off we went. Then we went to the Hitchcock Center. I did that for a bunch of years and then backed out of that for a while and then I came back in the early 2000s and I've been doing it since then.

**N:** *So you've led lots of field trips. I consider that also teaching about birding. What do you have to say about that?*

SS: I just like sharing the experience with people. Sure, there are those days when it's really slow. It might be really nice out but there's nothing singing – those days are a little slow. But then it's fun on those days when things are popping. Warblers coming through, or you have lots of shorebirds whatever the case may be. And then you can see in their faces “Wow, look at this!” especially the new folks. They'd only seen stuff their backyard and they just didn't realize what was the beyond their yard.

N: *Did you start the club's Monhegan trips?*

SS: I did. I went up in the spring of 80. Blair Nicula had told me about Monhegan. And I thought to myself, “Oh, this is off the coast of Maine and Blair is real Cape Codder. For Blair to pull himself off of the Cape and go up to Monhegan, well, this place must be pretty cool.” So in the spring of '84 we went up there. It was just a couple of us to scout it out. On that particular trip I had a beautiful male Dickcissel singing, my only one I think. That was at Tom Martin's feeding station. And then a Henslow's Sparrow that Jan Pierson pointed out. I happened to be walking near one of his groups. He called me over and there's a Henslow's Sparrow. Those two birds really stuck out. so we proposed to the club to do a trip and we did one that fall on Columbus Day weekend. Back then we always tried to do the trip on Columbus Day or Memorial Day weekend because a lot of our members at that time were working and time off was precious.

On that first trip we stayed in the annex at the Trailing Yew. We got there Friday night, saw some birds and ate. When we got up on Saturday morning it was 28 degrees. I don't remember my feet touching the ground, but they must have. I could hear moans throughout the house. We still had a wonderful weekend. For Yellow-rumped Warblers, we estimated we saw 10,000 birds.

The next spring we went on Memorial Day weekend. The majority of our trips over the years have been in the spring on Memorial Day weekend or slightly before. There's only one trip that comes to mind that was really slow. For most trips we've come away with something. There have been spectacular fallouts in the spring. We had a good one in 2013 and last

year's was good too. In 2013 we had some crummy weather, but we saw Acadian and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers on the beach, Redstarts, all sorts of stuff.

N: *So I believe you have been HBC President longer than anybody else in the club. You were President two different times, right?*

SS: Think I did it for five years in the very beginning and I think this last stint was for 10 years.

N: *Yeah, I was trying to figure that because you picked it up at the club's 25th anniversary. And I think you let it go at the 35th anniversary. How is the club different, or the same, now compared to what it was 30 some years ago?*

SS: Our membership seems to be greater. We have more money in the treasury. In the early years we barely had anything and it was always a struggle. Some times, to get the next year we had to get donations from people to get audio equipment and stuff like that. Nowadays we're in really good shape. It's nice to have enough so that we can splurge on a program or buy a new computer for the meetings.

In terms of field trips, I think they've been pretty consistent over the years. We've had lots of good leaders over the years.

Obviously the club's getting older. Back when we started, I don't know what it was, but I'm sure the average age was noticeably less than what it is today. Many of us have been with the club for over 30 years. The Board has had discussions about trying to get younger people involved.

When we started the club, one of the things that we wanted to do was, to the best of our ability, to have good monthly speakers. That was going to be our mainstay – that was what we were going to be known for. It's just amazing how many people show up for our meetings, compared to other bird clubs. I've done programs for other clubs, and there are seldom as many who show up.

Another thing that's changed is the birding. When the club first started out, we had a telephone hotline tree. It went from there to the Voice of Audubon where one would call in to find out what was being seen. Then the internet

showed up and Massbird was really the place to be. And now there is Facebook, you've got eBird. It's a bit watered down, now, in my opinion. We have to check Facebook, eBird, and maybe Massbird to see what's going on. People will report on one but not all of these. It's not all concentrated like it used to be.

*N: Well, so what's the future going to bring for you? Do you think you'll keep leading trips and doing the birding class and all that kind of stuff?*

**SS:** Not yet. I'll still lead trips and do the bird class.

*N: Is there something on your bucket list having to do with birding that you haven't done yet that you would like to do or see?*

**SS:** I wouldn't mind to go down to Central America, Costa Rica. I went to Belize in March. and got back just before the pandemic made travel difficult. We had a wonderful time. I'm often torn between going back to places I've been once and just loved. I'd love to go back to Alaska. I liked the Arctic and the tundra quite a bit.

## BIRDING APP WORKSHOPS

The Hampshire Bird Club Education Committee is offering on-line workshops using Zoom on birding apps for your phones. We will discuss basics of how to use each app, what we like about it, and any challenges. Please have the app already installed on your phone prior to the workshop. To register (space is limited), e-mail [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org).

Wednesday, June 10, 9 am – 10:00 am

*Merlin Bird ID* with Laura Beltran

Please have the app already installed on your phone prior to the workshop. To get the app, go to <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/download/> and then install it.

Wednesday, June 17, 9 am – 10:00 am

*Raptor ID* with Janice Jorgensen

Please have the app already installed on your phone prior to the workshop. To get the app, go to <https://hawkwatch.org/blog/item/1164-raptor-id-app-now-free> and then install it.

Wednesday, June 24, 9 am – 10 am

*iNaturalist* with Laura Beltran

Please have the app already installed on your phone prior to the workshop. To get the app, go to <https://www.inaturalist.org/> and scroll to the bottom to install it.

## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The Arcadia trails are open, though buildings and rest rooms are not.

*Ducks* with Peter Redfern

Thursday, June 18, 7 – 8:30 pm

[Register online](#) or call 413-584-3009 to register by phone.

We are all familiar with a duck, but as a group we have many and they can be hard to identify. Ducks can live in salt or freshwater and some can be found in both. Ducks are divided into two main groups: divers and dabblers. Learn about the duck species found in Massachusetts and tips on identification in this online class.

*Birds and Bogs of the Upper Coast of Maine* with Patti Steinman and John Green

Wednesday, July 15 – Saturday July 18

Program is currently full. Call 413-584-3009 to place your name on the wait list.



Travel to the upper coast of Maine to see seabirds and their island habitats. Visit a northern New England bog, a spruce/fir forest, and coastal habitats. We will focus on birds and botany on this four-day, three - night trip. On the way we will stop at Scarborough Marsh, the largest salt marsh in the state, comprised of tidal marsh, salt creeks, freshwater marsh, and uplands. Weather permitting, we will visit Machias Seal Island, where we will have an opportunity to photograph Atlantic puffins and other seabirds such as razorbills and murres up close from small blinds. Another day we will visit Quoddy Head State Park and learn the botany of a raised coastal bog. We will take a walk at Cobscook Bay State Park where we hope to see eagles, mergansers, ospreys and more.

The fee for the program will include transportation from Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton, lodging in a double room, admission fees, and the Puffin tour. Single rooms are available for an additional fee. Food is not included.

### Hitchcock Center for the Environment

The Hitchcock Center remains closed. Check the Hitchcock Center website for updates.

## **SOME VERY LAME BIRD JOKES**

One day, a blonde and his friend were walking through the park. Suddenly, the blonde's friend said, "Oh, look, a dead birdie!" The blonde looked up and said, "Where?"

"Look at that speed!" said one hawk to another as the jet fighter plane hurtled over their heads. "Hmph!" snorted the other. "You would fly fast too if your tail was on fire!"

Why did the birds want a snack?  
They were feeling a bit peckish.

Q: Why did the turkey cross the road?  
A: To prove he wasn't chicken.

Q: Why do hummingbirds fly south?  
A: It's just too far to walk.

A duck walks into a drug store and buys a chapstick. The clerk says, "Will that be cash or charge?" The duck says, "Just put it on my bill!"

Did you ever notice that when geese migrate in their Vee formation, one side of the line is longer than the other? Know why that is? There are more geese in it.

Q: How many HBC members does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: Five.

Q: Why five?

A: One to spot the bulb, one to set up the scope to look at it, one to post the sighting to eBird, one to write up the sighting for the newsletter, and one to screw in the new bulb.

Knock, knock!

Who's there?

Toucan.

Toucan who?

Toucan play at this game!

What do you call a formal dance for ducks?

A fowl ball.

Q: Which bird steals soap from your tub?

A: A robber duck.

Two birds were sitting on a perch.

The first bird said to the second "Do you smell fish?"

Last week I x-rayed a bird in Norway.

Yep. Scanned an avian.

Dave Gross, Editor  
[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

## Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 37, No. 1

### September 2020

Dear reader, I am pleased to welcome you back to the 37<sup>th</sup> year of operation of the Hampshire Bird Club. I believe that the fact that you are reading this suggests that both you and I have survived another year, which, to my mind, is a substantial accomplishment for the both of us given the state of the world. I'd suggest that we sit down over a beer (or tea or whiskey, depending on your current outlook on life), but of course that's not going to happen until the pandemic is no longer a pandemic.

I want to relate to you the tale of the poor bluebird. We have two nest boxes in our north yard that usually attract attention in the spring. The yard is a bit too small to make it highly attractive, but we always get Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows surveilling and nest-building. Both species have found mates and produced offspring in past years. This year, Mr. *Sialia sialis* fended off some aggressive Tree Swallows to the point that they decamped from their nearby nest box. He spent most of the months of May and June sweetly singing atop his box. Alas, no Ms. *Sialia sialis* took him up on his crooning. Then, around the first part of July, Mr. Troglodytes aedon (the true troglodyte that he is) showed up and began to harass our hero. After a week of relentless chiding and poking into nest box holes by the wren, the bluebird departed for less stressful accommodations and the wren set up housekeeping. It took him a few weeks to convince a female to join him and they are now the parents of a brood of young wrens. I know there must be a moral buried somewhere in this tale, but it eludes me. Now if it was a morel, I'd spend more effort to find it. Those are tasty.

As with the last set of HBC newsletters from last club year, this newsletter is not typical of those from past years. We have neither in-person meetings coming up nor field trips scheduled for the rest of the year. We are still hunkering down, trying to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus that has changed so many aspects of our lives. We had some interviews in the newsletter last year with some of the founders of the HBC – Jan Ortiz, Harvey Allen and Scott Sumner. There will be more interviews, but there isn't room this month for one. If you are itching for one, you might look at Katie Koerten's chat with John Green about his life choice as a naturalist, photographer, birder and mentor. I highly recommend it. You can find it at <https://www.hitchcockcenter.org/blog/a-conversation-with-naturalist-john-green/>.

### Please Join or Renew Your Membership NOW

- Your **membership status** is shown on the back of the cover page if you received this newsletter via the USPS. **Check** to see if you owe dues this year.
- Complete the **Membership Form (both sides)** either online or on pages 3 and 4 inside. We need your contact details, dues level (if owed), newsletter delivery preference, participation interests, Field Trip Agreement, and Rare Bird Alert sign up (the last being optional). Don't forget to complete both sides.
- Use the **Online Renewal procedure** should you owe dues this year or wish to donate money. Go to the secure HBC website, <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/shop/>, select your dues level, and proceed to checkout where you will complete the Membership Form and make payment, **or, alternately**,
- **Mail Form** from the newsletter with your check enclosed for dues and/or donation (if applicable) to the address on the Membership Form.
- And then **congratulate yourself** on a job well done!
- For those joining HBC **for the first time**, you can have one year free! Fill in the online form at <https://forms.gle/1SG72gx5DVXW2y819>.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

We will not be having in-person meetings for a while. Program Chair Josh Rose put together two terrific online programs for our May and June meetings last year. Susan Myers talked about Borneo and Andrew Digby gave a presentation on the Kakapo of New Zealand. Both of those were delivered via Zoom, and that is the plan for our meetings starting with September. As of press time, the speaker and date for the September meeting are not finalized. Please watch for an announcement about the speaker, topic, date and access information on the HBC website, HBC Facebook page, and via an email announcement. Also note in your calendar that the October meeting will be on the third Monday of October on the 19<sup>th</sup> due to the Indigenous Peoples' Day holiday on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

## HBC BOARD UPDATES

The HBC board membership for 2020-2021 is

### Officers

President: Bob Zimmermann  
Vice President and Program Chair: Josh Rose  
Treasurer: Steve Winn  
Membership Secretary: Lissa Ganter  
Communications Secretary: Elaine Reilly

### Members-at-large

Laura Beltran  
Dave Gross  
Jan Howard  
Amanda Kallenbach  
Carol Mardeusz  
Helen Symons

The board meets from 6 to 8 pm on the first Thursday of each month from August through June. You are welcome to attend these meetings on Zoom or via telephone. Contact any board member to get the connection information.

At its June meeting, the Board adopted a statement about inclusion in response to the Black Lives Matter outrage at the killing of George Floyd and the many dead and abused Black Americans who preceded him. The statement is below and it can be found on the HBC website home page.

*The Board of Directors of the Hampshire Bird Club want all people who bird with us to feel warmly welcomed, included, and safe. Like many, we are deeply disturbed and saddened by the racial harassment of a Black birder in Central Park, NYC; the horrific death of George Floyd in Minneapolis; and the persistent racism that afflicts our society. Birdwatching is a joyful activity that can bring people together across all differences. We commit to supporting efforts that increase diversity in birding and, indeed, within our own club.*

A group from Virginia Tech recently offered a webinar on *Social Science Perspectives on Ethno-racial Diversity in Wildlife Viewing and Conservation*. A closed-captioned recording of the webinar is available online at [https://video.vt.edu/media/0\\_4ng4izoa](https://video.vt.edu/media/0_4ng4izoa). Bob Zimmermann attended the webinar and found it to be excellent and very relevant to inclusivity in the birding community.

The Board received a recommendation from the Education Committee about facilitating more inclusivity in the HBC, and the Board has begun to implement some of those suggestions. See the Book Discussion Group article on page 8 for more about this.

Mass Audubon has summarized the most eye-opening moments that were brought forward as a result of Black Birders' Week (<https://blogs.massaudubon.org/distractiondisplays/black-birders-week/>). The American Birding Association has made recent and ongoing efforts to make the birding community more equitable, diverse and inclusive (<https://www.aba.org/the-aba-and-equity-diversity-and-inclusion/>). The Mass Audubon blog is quite good as it provides links to many of the talks that were given throughout Black Birders' Week. The ABA statement is rather dry though it provides some guidelines about what organizations – especially large organizations – can do to encourage under-represented birders.







## FIELD TRIP NEWS

*Please check the HBC website or Facebook page for updates.*

Out of an abundance of caution regarding the various effects of the coronavirus on individuals who contract the disease, the fact that it presents asymptotically in some individuals, and that mask wearing is not 100% effective, as well as the unpredictability of cases as the autumn months progress, the HBC Board has decided by majority vote to forego scheduling field trips until further notice. The Board will reevaluate this decision on an ongoing basis and will schedule some get togethers as soon as possible.

If you would like to lead a field trip please use the membership form to volunteer to do so or call or email the Field Trip Chair, Carol Mardusz (413-467-7279 [leave a message if necessary]; [fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org)). You don't need to be an expert to be a leader, just a willingness to bring fellow birders with you when you go out. With any luck, spring will find us together again.

Carol Mardeusz  
Field Trip Chair

Other birding field trips throughout New England may be accessed by going to [www.birdingcalendar.com](http://www.birdingcalendar.com).

## FALL BIRDING SPOTS

The HBC Board thought that it would be nice to have a list of local birding areas for those of us who would like to go out on our own to look for fall migrants and those confusing fall warblers. One source for local sites is the *Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts* from 2003 that was edited by Jan Ortiz, David Spector, Pete Westover and Mary Alice Wilson. Another source is a growing compilation curated by Cory Elowe of Western Massachusetts birding areas. Cory posted a link to the Google doc with the list on the HBC Facebook page. Other suggestions from this fall are below.

### **Larch Hill & Bramble Hill Farm-Amherst**

This area seems forgotten, but it has consistently produced birds over the years. Parking is available at the past home of the Hitchcock Center, located at 521 S. Pleasant Street. The area is easy to bird. Just follow the boardwalk and trails through the forest and thickets around Larch Hill. Larch Hill will be your best bet for those frustrating fall warblers and vireos through September into early October. As sparrow migration heats up, Larch Hill can attract loads of White-throated Sparrows and the agricultural fields at Bramble Hill Farm can be quite productive. Look for Chipping, Field, Vesper, White-crowned, White-throated, Song, Savannah, Lincoln's and Swamp Sparrows. Bramble Hill Farm is located behind Larch Hill and can easily be accessed from the trails at Larch Hill. As you make your way to the agricultural fields, keep an eye to the sky for migrating hawks.

Scott Sumner

### **Hadley Dike**

Park at the Alexandra Dawson Conservation Area lot (18 North Lane, Hadley). Walk up the dike and look for ducks in the river, waders along the shore, and shorebirds along the opposite bank if the water is low. Turn left and walk along the top of the dike toward the Honey Pot. Check the brushy edge of the river for sparrows, and the trees, when you get to them, for warblers. When you get near the Hadley Transfer Station start looking for sparrows in the fields. (As of September 1 the long grass field just past the Transfer Station had lots of Bobolinks.) Continue onto the dike as it juts inland (looking for sparrows, buntings, and possibly a Blue Grosbeak). If time and energy permit, take a right onto the dirt road (Cemetery Road) at the end of the dike and explore the fields and wires for migrating swallows, American Kestrels, sparrows (including the local specialty, the Vesper Sparrow), and warblers (especially Palm Warblers in mid-September). Continue as far as you want, then backtrack (or continue out the dike to the bike trail, then loop back to Hadley Commons and your car).

### **Huntington Road River Access**

This is where the Pacific-slope Flycatcher was. There is a small parking area opposite Huntington Road along Route 47. (There is an additional small parking area at the southern intersection of Huntington Road

and Route 47.) It is a short walk to the river, but the brushy edge holds sparrows and Common Yellowthroats, and the trees have migrating warblers and vireos as of early September. When the water in the river is low, the bank can be good for shorebirds, and later in the fall and through the winter, this is the most reliable location in Hadley to find Common Goldeneyes.

### **Mount Holyoke**

This is definitely an under-birded hawk-watching site. Truth be told, I would rather go to Goat Peak; it has better northern views and seems in general to produce more hawks. However, in the current pandemic, the Goat Peak tower can fit perhaps 2 birders (and you know Tom Gagnon will be there before you on a good day), and it's moderately difficult to get to. On weekends you can drive up to the Summit House on Mount Holyoke, find lots of space to hawk-watch, and enjoy better views of the valley.

### **Meadow Street Fields**

This is the collection of agricultural fields in North Hadley bounded by Route 47, Comins Road, Meadow Street, Roosevelt Street, and Stockbridge Street. While this can be a very productive area for shorebirds (depending on whether the fields are clear and the amount of standing water), I've found that it's typically less interesting in the fall than the spring. However, it's worth an occasional quick circuit looking for Golden-Plovers and other species that prefer dry fields. As waterfowl migration begins in October, this area is typically a Mecca for geese. The vast majority will be Canada Geese, but if you can find an unobtrusive place to park, and have the patience to scope through a huge flock, many unusual species can be found. In the past five years this area has produced both Ross' Goose and Pink-footed Goose, and back in 2008 there was a Barnacle Goose.

Mike Locher

## **ONLINE BIRDING WORKSHOPS**

The Hampshire Bird Club Education Committee is offering on-line workshops using Zoom. For the workshops about apps we will discuss basics of how to use each app, what we like about it, and any challenges. Please have the app already installed on your phone prior to the workshop. To register (space is limited), e-mail [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org) with the workshop you are interested in.

### Tuesday, September 15, 7 p.m. – 8 p.m. Hawks and Hawk Watching with Dan Russell

This introductory hawk course will feature the more common hawks in our area and how to identify them. Dan will describe the methods he uses for telling these birds apart. He will also share some places in the area where hawks can be seen migrating this time of year.

### Tuesday, September 22, 4 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Hearing Aids for Birders by Tim Walker

Tim is an Electrical Engineer by training, but would rather be birding. He started back in 1985 trying to identify what was coming to his feeder. Tim and Nancy have birded all over the US, but currently just stay in Essex County. In recent years he has grown jealous of his wife's hearing, so decided to do something about it. This seminar details some of what he found out. Tim's *Bird Observer* article: <https://www.birdobserver.org/Issues/2020/August-2020/hearing-aids-for-birders>. You will need to be a subscriber to read it.

### Tuesday, September 29, 7 p.m. – 8 p.m. eBird Hotspots and Alerts with Janice Jorgensen and Sara Griesemer

Janice and Sara use eBird extensively to explore hotspots and alerts when they are planning a local bird walk or traveling to places farther away. Learn these tips and tricks so you can use eBird more effectively, especially if you are looking for those unusual species.

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Education Committee held a haiku writing contest in August. There were 17 entries. Although there will not be any individual winners declared we hope to publish many of the entries in the HBC newsletter throughout the year as space permits. One of the entries is below.

A weekly *Birding in Your Backyard* series was held virtually during May and June with HBC members attending. We saw some birds and a wide variety of bird attracting options from bird feeders, such as fruit, seeds, suet, meal worms and nectar, as well as plantings and bird baths. Members also shared their birding adventures.

We offered virtual birding app workshops July and August and are beginning to offer virtual workshops on other bird topics like hawk watching, feeding birds, bird house construction and birding equipment. Please check the HBC website or Facebook page periodically to learn about these upcoming programs.

A very successful Book Discussion Group was led by Education Committee members Jeremy Spool and Meghadeepa Maity. They focused on J. Drew Lanham's book *The Home Place*. It was so popular that they are offering a discussion on the same book this fall.

The Young Birders Club progress has been slowed by the pandemic, but they are proceeding on administrative and financial matters while developing a plan and contacts for the future.

We have also discussed creating a New Members session before the regularly scheduled membership meeting, a Beginning Birders Walk program, and a mentoring program once we are able to meet again in person. The mentoring program could take the form of similar "Birding Buddies" programs elsewhere or just be a listing of HBC members who are willing to take others on bird walks.

If you are interested in helping the Education Committee implement any of these ideas or if you have ideas or topics you would like the Committee to consider please either share them or join the Committee by contacting Jim Lafley at [jimlafley@gmail.com](mailto:jimlafley@gmail.com) or [education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org). You can also join by indicating your interest on the HBC membership application.

## BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP REPORT

This summer, alongside the horrific killings of Black citizens by US police, a video showing a White woman calling the police on a Black birder made national news. The incident kicked off a national conversation about the experience of Black and other non-White birders in the US. It's led many birders here in Western Massachusetts to examine inclusion within our own birding communities.

In June I proposed a book club, with the support of the Education Committee, to read *The Home Place* by Dr. Drew Lanham to begin conversations about Black experiences with birding and nature. Meghadeepa Maity joined me to facilitate the book club. Nineteen participants drawn from the HBC and the surrounding community were drawn to the prose and the depth of the writing of Dr. Lanham. We met three times via Zoom to discuss the themes of the book, which at its heart focuses on the intersection of family, land, community, and personal passion in the author's love and respect for birds.

The group brainstormed an initial list of ideas for what the HBC could do to foster an inclusive birding environment. Ideas included intentionally diversifying invited speakers, a mentorship program to increase participation of new birders in the club, and an updated resource to describe the accessibility of local birding hotspots. Meghadeepa drafted a set of starting resources for the book club members and beyond, which can be found at the following link: <https://bit.ly/32XchMf>.

Jeremy Spool

Vulture protection  
with projectile vomiting  
predator deterred

Haiku by Laura Beltran

Dave Gross, Editor  
[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)



**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
www.hampshirebirdclub.org  
Volume 37, No. 2  
**October 2020**

Dear reader, as we continue in this most unusual of years, 2020, we are constantly inundated with news of politics, climate change catastrophes, the pandemic, and on and on. It has gotten difficult to sort out the critical from the important from the interesting from the irrelevant (or irrational). I've found a couple of things that you might have missed that relate to the overarching news topics.

On a somewhat somber note, the raging wildfires are affecting wildlife in ways that were not expected. A wide variety of bird species have been dying in large numbers in the Southwest US as they head south for the winter. The reasons behind this are not yet known. Some hypotheses are that an early cold snap caused birds to leave early or killed insect food sources or smoke from western wildfires interfered with migration. There is a preliminary report on this at the National Audubon website: <https://www.audubon.org/news/the-southwest-facing-unprecedented-migratory-bird-die>.

On a brighter note, the human response to the pandemic, staying inside more, has had a beneficial effect on wildlife. There have been reports of animals moving into areas in national parks where they had seldom been seen in recent times. And birds, too, seem to have benefitted from reduced human activity. In a study published in [Science](#) in September, 2020, it was reported that songs of White-crowned Sparrows in San Francisco improved within weeks of the shutdown. The reason: less noise. Birds sang more softly and with greater vocal bandwidth when it was quieter. You can read about the study and hear songs prior to and after the shutdown at the National Geographic website (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/>). Search for "white-crowned" and you should find the article.

## **NEXT PROGRAM**

**Monday, October 19 at 7:15 pm via Zoom**

**Laura Berthold tells us about**

### **Maui's Native Forest Birds**

Maui's native forest birds are found nowhere else in the world. Known as the "Hawaiian honeycreepers", many of these rare birds are extinct or facing extinction. The Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project (MFBPR) has been working to recover these native birds since 1997. Our primary focus is on the two endangered species endemic to Maui, the Kiwikiu (Maui Parrotbill) and the 'akohekohe (Crested Honeycreeper). Learn more about the natural history of Hawaii, the honeycreepers and forests of Maui, invasive species and threats, and the current projects of MFBPR (<https://mauiforestbirds.org/>).

Laura Berthold is one of the lead conservation biologists for the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project. She has been with the organization since 2009. Originally from the suburbs of Chicago, Laura received her B.A. in environmental studies from Loyola University Chicago.

Zoom connection information and password for the meeting will be emailed to all HBC members on October 12. If you lose the email or do not get it, send a note to [programs@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:programs@hampshirebirdclub.org) for the information.

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

If you have renewed your membership this year, THANK YOU. If, however, you have not, we would ask you please to renew as soon as possible. Membership funds allow the club to bring great talks to the valley, fund kids' programs through Hitchcock and Arcadia, and provide services to club members. Use the **Online Renewal procedure** (<https://hampshirebirdclub.org/shop/>) or mail in a paper copy (found on pages 5 and 6) of the **Membership Form** with your check.

## ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS BIRD CLUBS

The Association of Massachusetts Bird Clubs (AMBC) held its first Zoom meeting on September 23rd. Seventeen people representing 11 organizations attended. Topics of discussion included AMBC's successful efforts in conservation advocacy, 2020 Christmas Bird Counts, highlights of a survey of member clubs, club activities during the pandemic, and a presentation from Cory Elowe on his collaborative project around safety, accessibility and in-depth information on birding in hotspot locations around the state (a link to this innovative and ongoing project is located on the HBC website under 'Resources'). Time constraints postponed our discussion about membership diversity and inclusion. That topic will headline the agenda at AMBC's next meeting (spring 2021, date TBD). Any HBC club member is welcome to attend these meetings. Contact an HBC Board member for more information.

Amanda Kallenbach

## NEWS FROM THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Committee has sponsored 3 virtual workshops in September, and they were all well attended. Hawks and Hawkwatching was led by Dan Russell as he described the more common hawks one is likely to see in the Valley and during migration. He also focused on field marks and behaviors to help tell them apart. Tim Walker of the Brookline Bird Club shared his research on finding an effective hearing aid for birders. He explained some particularly good features to share with an audiologist when choosing a hearing aid and some models that he thought were best for hearing bird songs and calls. The third workshop, offered by Sara Griesemer and Janice Jorgensen, expanded on the eBird workshops offered earlier by concentrating on "hotspots", an important element for those who use eBird.

Planning for another Book Discussion Group led by Education Committee members Jeremy Spool and Meghadeepa Maity is ongoing. They will once again use J. Drew Lanham's book *The Home Place* as the source for discussion. The group will be meeting in January. Look for the announcement about the group in upcoming newsletters and on Facebook.

If you are interested in helping the Education Committee implement any of these ideas or if you have ideas or topics you would like the Committee to consider please either share them or join the Committee by contacting Jim Lafley at [jimlafley@gmail.com](mailto:jimlafley@gmail.com) or [education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org). You can also join by indicating your interest on the HBC membership application.

Blue jay on my deck  
Browsing herbs in the planter  
Healthy green breakfast

Haiku by Linda L. Marston

white breasted nuthatch  
racing down thick white pine bark  
in a headfirst plunge

Haiku by Marcia Merithew

## MANO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

**Yes**, we **are** planning to have it on 12/20/20.

The Northampton (MANO) Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. It will be a challenge this year due to Covid-19 restrictions, and we're in need of more help with the count. Even if you haven't participated before, we hope you'll consider taking part in the largest citizen-science project ever... and have fun doing it! If you would like to participate in the count this year, let us know by emailing [CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org).

Don't let pandemic restrictions stop you from counting birds in your yard, or taking a walk around your neighborhood for the count! Prior to the event we will host Zoom workshops for feeder-watchers and new count participants, explaining how the CBC works and answering your questions. To view our count circle, browse to <https://tiny.cc/ManoCBCMap>. Did we mention it's fun?

For updates continue to check the HBC [website](https://hampshirebirdclub.org) and Facebook page and please feel free to contact the team with questions.



Have you recently flown on Delta Airlines and left onboard a pair of Nikon binoculars with an HBC tag on the strap? Then we may have good news. Someone named Robert from Lost and Found Central has them. Contact [president@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:president@hampshirebirdclub.org) for more information.

## RECORDINGS OF HBC PRESENTATIONS

Did you miss the September meeting on Zoom? HBC speaker presentations this year will be recorded for your viewing pleasure, and John Van de Graaff's talk about a trip to Point Pelee is no exception. To view it, go to the Programs page of the HBC website and click on the "Videos of past presentations" link. John has given permission for the video to be viewable without a password. We will only post videos with the permission of the speaker, so some future meetings may not be recorded.

(And should you wonder about proper behavior during our HBC Zoom meetings, this YouTube video demonstrated the dos and don'ts: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFVHaus\\_pjI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFVHaus_pjI).)

## SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE

Did you hear about the study published in July 2020 about an alternate **White-throated Sparrow** song that has spread across Canada? The study, published in the journal [Current Biology](#), describes the replacement of the old Canada, Canada, Canada song by a new two-phrase song. The article includes a video summary with examples of the old and new songs.

## ONLINE BIRDING WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee is offering 3 more virtual workshops in October:

Tuesday, October 13    7:00 – 8:00 pm    Sparrows    Scott Surner

Scott will feature mostly local sparrows and some regular migrants. The program is designed to help introduce new birders to the subtle differences that birders use in sparrow identification.

Tuesday, October 20    7:00 – 8:00 pm    iNaturalist    Laura Beltran

Laura uses this app all the time when out birdwatching or walking to help identify many non-bird species. You must have the app loaded onto your phone and use a computer or tablet to participate so you can explore the app during the program.

Tuesday, October 27    7:00 – 8:00 pm    Bird Feeders & Foods    Dan Ziomek

There are a wide variety of feeders and bird foods available to backyard birdwatchers. With the potential of an eruptive year the yard might be more exciting this winter. Dan will show some of the options for feeders and foods as well as answer your questions about bird feeding.

If you are interested in attending any of these, please email [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org).

## A CHAT WITH DAVID SPECTOR

David Spector is an expert in bird song, an emeritus biology professor, and a founding member of the Hampshire Bird Club. He and I met via Zoom for a chat in early August. Given the space constraints this month, the following is part 1 of the chat. Part 2 will appear in the November newsletter.

**Newsletter:** *What and when was it that you became interested in birds?*

**David Spector:** Well, I've always had some interest in nature. My father was a biologist. But birdwatching really started when I was in my mid 20s. Friends of mine were moving to California and another friend and I drove one of their cars across country for them and stopped in Yellowstone and different places along the

California coast. I didn't really identify many birds. I remember in particular White Pelicans and Trumpeter Swans at Yellowstone, Ravens along the way, and Brown Pelicans on the Pacific. When I returned home, which was then Philadelphia, I read a newspaper article about the hawk migration at Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania, and I went up there. Arguably, that was my first official birdwatching trip.

And then I received some field guides as birthday presents and started bird watching in the Philadelphia area. One place that stands out is the Tinicum refuge near the Philadelphia airport. I didn't participate in any formal birdwatching activities, but I met various people there, in particular, Jim Carroll, the refuge manager. When I moved up here I learned that he had also been a major influence in getting John Green involved in bird watching.

At the time I started bird watching I was out of school and it was bird watching that inspired me to go back to college. I finished my undergraduate degree as a biology major, and then moved to Western Massachusetts for graduate school working with Don Kroodsma.

**N:** *You retired very recently. The academic work you have done for many years is based in biology, and in particular bird activity and bird behavior. What can you tell me about that?*

**DS:** In graduate school and the years following I did research on bird song, especially on the singing behavior of the Yellow Warbler and other warblers. In more recent years I have focused my intellectual efforts more on birds in literature. My academic career was more as a teacher than as a researcher. I taught in a department where we had a heavy teaching load. I taught subjects ranging from introductory level courses for general education on up through upper level courses for biology majors; I enjoyed the opportunity to develop a wider view of biology and various connections among different aspects of biology.

**N:** *You have been very involved with the Hitchcock Center (HCE) and also with the Hampshire Bird Club (HBC) for a long time. Would you expand on that?*

**DS:** In the period roughly half a year between when I finished my undergraduate degree and when I came up here to go to grad school at UMass, I worked at a nature center – The Wetlands Institute in Stone Harbor, New Jersey. When I moved up here one of the first things I did was to find a local nature center. I contacted the Hitchcock Center and connected with Clif Read to volunteer to do programs. One of the things we did was to organize trips back down to New Jersey. We did weekend trips for the fall migration to

Cape May which continued, I think, for six years in a row. That was a lot of fun. I was one of many people who taught the spring birding class at Hitchcock. One of the best things I ever did for the Hitchcock Center was that one year when I was asked if I would teach that class, I said that I wasn't available, but that it was time that Jan Ortiz stop taking the class and start teaching it. She took it over and ran with it for about a decade.

In addition to doing programs at the Hitchcock center I eventually was asked to be on the board and I was board president for a few years. When I was president, Dave Ziomek was HCE Director. He is one of many people, along with his brother Dan, Scott Sumner, Steve Stanne, and others, who were heavily influenced by Jerry Bozzo of the Amherst school system. So a lot of what's happened at the Hitchcock Center and in the bird club is due to the indirect influence of one middle school teacher.

**N:** *Let's move on to the HBC.*

**DS:** Okay. Well, my friend and grad school officemate Tod Highsmith and I one day were pulled over on South Maple Street scanning the fields there. That was before South Maple Street became a major highway, and it was still possible to pull over safely. Another car pulled up and the person I later realized was Sally Venman said, "Are you two bird watchers?" We said yes. Then she said, "Well, there's a new bird club forming" and she gave us the time and place. That meeting was in the Perry Room at the Hitchcock Center.

I showed up at the first meeting. I remember it well. The speaker was Dave Nelson, a grad student in wildlife at UMass working on the reintroduction of Bald Eagles at Quabbin. He was involved with the hacking of the first two eaglets there, named Betsy and Ross.

I've been a member of the bird club since that first meeting. I've done various things. For a while I was the refreshments coordinator. I've been a board member. I've given, I think, a dozen or more talks to the bird club on various topics. It's been a good place to connect with and meet people. I met my spouse and life partner there. And, of course, many friends.

(to be continued)

Dave Gross, Editor  
[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)

Date	Payment: <input type="checkbox"/> cash <input type="checkbox"/> check <input type="checkbox"/> online	Trip Release?	Newsletter ?	Date Entered
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## HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC. MEMBERSHIP FORM: 2020-2021

Use this form to join, renew, or update. The club membership year is October 1 – September 30.  
If you wish to pay by credit card, you may join or renew online at our secure site, <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/shop/>  
For questions, please contact: [membership@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org)

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

<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b>		<b>NEWSLETTER: How do you want to receive your issues?</b>	
Name(s)		<input type="checkbox"/> <b>By email link</b> to download from HBC website. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>By U.S. postal mail.</b>	
Address		<b>OPTIONAL WAYS TO PARTICIPATE – PLEASE CHECK</b> (For questions, contact: <a href="mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org">membership@hampshirebirdclub.org</a> )	
City, State, Zip:		<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally provide refreshments <input type="checkbox"/> Lead Field Trips <input type="checkbox"/> Share information on birding locations/networks Serve on a committee: <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments committee <input type="checkbox"/> Education committee <input type="checkbox"/> Field trips committee <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation committee <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting room (chairs) set up committee	
Home Phone: Cell/Other:		<input type="checkbox"/> Share your skills. (Financial or database management; AV, computer or web technology; editorial; graphics; ornithology; environmental education; consider serving on the HBC Board) Other? Please specify:	
<b>May we publish your contact information</b> in the fall club directory? <i>[Published only in hard copy, provided only to members.]</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
<b>May we contact you via email</b> with time-sensitive information such as cancellations, field trips, or educational and other opportunities?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		

*Please choose a level of membership below. All membership contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.*

<b>MEMBERSHIP – REGULAR</b>	
Student @ \$ 5.00	\$
Individual @ \$ 18.00	\$
Family @ \$ 30.00	\$
<b>MEMBERSHIP – SUPPORTING</b>	
Downy Woodpecker @ \$ 40.00	\$
Northern Flicker @ \$ 60.00	\$
Red-Bellied Woodpecker @ \$ 100.00	\$
Pileated Woodpecker @ \$ 250 or more	\$
<b>OUTREACH ACTIVITY (Optional)</b>	
Donate to Education Activity (Optional)	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	
<i>TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED</i>	\$

Please make checks payable to the **Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.** Bring to the next meeting, or mail to:  
Hampshire Bird Club, P.O. Box 716, Amherst MA 01004-0716

On reverse side: **Field Trip Release (required for away trips); and Rare Bird Alert sign-up (optional) →**

## FIELD TRIP RELEASE AGREEMENT

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: ....., ....., .....  
(day, month, year)

All participating family members, please sign and print name:

- 1)Signature► ..... print name► .....  
2)Signature► ..... print name► .....  
3)Signature► ..... print name► .....

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### RARE BIRD ALERT SIGN UP: Optional

The Rare Bird Alert is an optional email-only alert system for members that informs you when and where rare birds are sighted in the valley, or, in some cases, the broader region. To automatically receive all RBA announcements, participants must provide at least one (1) active email address. And please also let us know if your email changes! Thank you.

To join here:

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

To join online:

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

# HBC/ABA Code of Birding Ethics

## 1. Respect and promote birds and their environment.

(a) Support the conservation of birds and their habitats. Engage in and promote bird-friendly practices whenever possible, such as keeping cats and other domestic animals indoors or controlled, acting to prevent window strikes, maintaining safe feeding stations, landscaping with native plants, drinking shade-grown coffee, and advocating for conservation policies. Be mindful of any negative environmental impacts of your activities, including contributing to climate change. Reduce or offset such impacts as much as you are able.

(b) Avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger. Be particularly cautious around active nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display sites, and feeding sites. Limit the use of recordings and other audio methods of attracting birds, particularly in heavily birded areas, for species that are rare in the area, and for species that are threatened or endangered. Always exercise caution and restraint when photographing, recording, or otherwise approaching birds.

(c) Always minimize habitat disturbance. Consider the benefits of staying on trails, preserving snags, and similar practices.

## 2. Respect and promote the birding community and its individual members.

(a) Be an exemplary ethical role model by following this Code and leading by example. Always bird and report with honesty and integrity.

(b) Respect the interests, rights, and skill levels of fellow birders, as well as people participating in other outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience and be especially helpful to beginning birders.

(c) Share bird observations freely, provided such reporting would not violate other sections of this Code, as birders, ornithologists, and conservationists derive considerable benefit from publicly available bird sightings.

(d) Approach instances of perceived unethical birding behavior with sensitivity and respect; try to resolve the matter in a positive manner, keeping in mind that perspectives vary. Use the situation as an opportunity to teach by example and to introduce more people to this Code.

(e) In group birding situations, promote knowledge by everyone in the group of the practices in this Code and ensure that the group does not unduly interfere with others using the same area.

## 3. Respect and promote the law and the rights of others.

(a) Never enter private property without the landowner's permission. Respect the interests of and interact positively with people living in the area where you are birding.

(b) Familiarize yourself with and follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing activities at your birding location. In particular, be aware of regulations related to birds, such as disturbance of protected nesting areas or sensitive habitats, and the use of audio or food lures.

### *Addenda during the Covid era*

Even so, there are gray areas and places where reasonable, caring birders will differ. Here are a few thoughts to help guide your birding as we all get through these challenging, rapidly changing times together:

- i. Birding is a GREAT thing to do right now, whether you're a lifelong birder or someone who has just started noticing birds out your window. Keeping a connection with birds and nature is a valuable way to improve mood, lower stress, and gain perspective on our current troubles. As such, birding should be strongly supported and encouraged.
- ii. Some types of birding and birding locales are specifically to be avoided now, particularly any situation or location that would encourage or require people to violate physical distancing guidelines or travel away from one's local area. These should be scrupulously avoided.
- iii. There is no "one size fits all" prescription for how to accomplish this. People are in many different types of living situations, from high-density urban dwellings to very lightly populated, rural landscapes. Exactly what is appropriate will vary significantly from place to place.
- iv. Please remember that every time you hike into the wilds or get on the road to drive to go birding, you have the potential to require emergency services. This could put pressure on an already strained group of emergency personnel at this challenging time. As such, work to stay as close to home as possible.
- v. People's judgement of what is safe will vary. There is little to be gained from birders attacking each other on social media and elsewhere about perceived lapses in physical distancing. However, thoughtful discussion, promotion, and modeling of one's own "quarantine" birding practices are welcome and appropriate.

In short, bird as much as you are able, close to home, and without exposing yourself or anyone else to risk. We look forward to seeing you in person in the field once these difficult times have passed!





**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
www.hampshirebirdclub.org  
Volume 37, No. 3  
**November 2020**

Dear reader, snow is falling as I write this. Tomorrow is Halloween. Three days after that is election day. Somehow those two seem to have clear parallels, with scary people and the color orange linked to both. As we enter the winter season, I wish that you be safe and healthy. And remember to wear your mask!

That's all I have this time. As usual, what is below is the product of our great team of birders who have programs and activities planned for us. Enjoy. Talk to you next month.

## **NEXT PROGRAM**

**Monday, November 9 at 7:15 pm via Zoom**

**Anna Lello-Smith** tells us about

### **Greener pastures: How valuable are restored cattle pastures in Guatemala for tropical resident birds?**

Forest restoration has become an essential part of global biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation strategies, particularly in the tropics. For example, the World Resource Institute's 20x20 Initiative has been supporting country-led efforts across Latin America to bring 20 million hectares of land into restoration by 2020. International enthusiasm for restoration is driven in part by research that suggests that secondary forests can complement remaining mature forest as valuable habitat for many species. However, we still have a long way to go toward understanding which species are likely to benefit from restoration programs, and how exactly species are able to use regenerating agricultural landscapes. Which bird species use restored agricultural lands and which avoid them? How much time does it take for regenerating agricultural lands to be able to support forest-dependent species or species of conservation concern? And, increasingly importantly these days, how do tropical forest fires impact the habitat value of regenerating forests for birds? My talk will explore these questions across a landscape of naturally regenerating cattle pastures in the Maya Biosphere Reserve of Guatemala. Get ready for lots of pictures of beautiful tropical birds!

Anna Lello-Smith is a PhD Candidate with Dr. Amanda Rodewald in the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment and at the Lab of Ornithology at Cornell University. Although one of her favorite activities nowadays is hiking around the Guatemalan rainforest identifying birds by sound, she didn't start studying or watching birds until college, when she landed her first avian field tech job with Saltmarsh Sparrows in coastal Maine. From there she was hooked and spent the next four years traveling around the U.S. and the world doing seasonal fieldwork. From the cool mountains of western Virginia to the Manu Road in Peru, she had the privilege of working on projects that inspired her to care deeply about land use change and its effect on bird communities. At Cornell she studies how regenerating cattle pastures in Guatemala can support forest birds, and how fire and rainfall seasonality affect the value of these habitats for birds.

Zoom connection information and password for the meeting will be emailed to all HBC members shortly before the meeting. If you lose the email or do not get it by the meeting time, send a note to [programs@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:programs@hampshirebirdclub.org) for the information.

## DECEMBER MEMBERS' MEETING

**Send us your photos!** Our December meeting is the time when members are welcome to share approximately 10 slides during the meeting. Because we are not meeting in person, we need to coordinate the slides into one PowerPoint program prior to the meeting. Therefore, if you would like to share slides for this meeting, please send them as an attachment to Laura Beltran at [lauraandnature@gmail.com](mailto:lauraandnature@gmail.com) by **November 30** since Laura will need time to organize and coordinate the slides prior to the December 14 meeting. Thank you.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Our thanks to the many members who have renewed to date, and the number of you who have made additional contributions to the Education Activity fund. We are also glad to welcome these new members who joined HBC over the summer and early fall: Elizabeth Adzima, Belchertown; Patricia Brennan, Amherst; Cory Elowe, Hadley; Susan and Chris Hall, Wilbraham; Harlee Strauss, Northampton; Priscilla and Peter Morrill, Canaan NY; Howard Natenshon, Greenfield; Dan Russell, Easthampton; and Anna Kohlberg, Amherst.

We also thank the members of HBC's Education Committee for organizing virtual opportunities to help keep us all connected in the absence of field trips right now.

If you have not yet renewed your HBC membership, we hope this is just an oversight that you will soon correct. HBC is a *community* of birders that you help to complete. At our secure site, you can find links to download the form for mail-in, or you can proceed to renew and pay online. If you have questions, please contact me at [membership@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org). Thanks, Lissa.

The Member Directory for this year will be published in early December. It will include the names of all current members who agree to share their contact information with other members. The Directory is published and mailed only in hard copy, and is not shared outside HBC.

## MANO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Circle 'round the Northampton (MANO) Christmas Bird Count...we need you! Want to know where we count? Check out [MANO CBC count circle](#).

Brainstorming continues for the December 20<sup>th</sup> event. We've been reaching out to leaders and participants alike to get everyone's ideas on how to cover our 36 territories. A few leaders are adopting new and different ways to cover their areas, and some of the areas are using multiple small parties. We will see more people walk their respective neighborhoods, and/or nearby roads and rail trails. And keep an eye on your feeders! What's *your* top feeder bird? Please let us know if you can help count your feeder birds on December 20<sup>th</sup>. And stay tuned for announcements about workshops for feeder-watchers and new count participants!

Check the HBC website <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/cbc> and [HBC's Facebook](#) page for updates, and please feel free to contact us with questions: [CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org). If anyone is able to help with the CBC web page, please let us know that, too.

Made it to the shore  
Plovers forget that we're here  
We sit in puddles

Haiku by Julie Blue

Rowing through the sky  
The crows sail quietly by  
On their way to roost

Haiku by Jim Lafley

## NEWS FROM THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Committee sponsored 3 virtual workshops in October, and they were all well attended. The Sparrow workshop by Scott Sumner was so popular that 31 members signed up and he was willing to offer it twice. As usual, he did an excellent job and many of us benefitted from his knowledge of recent experiences in the field. Laura Beltran had so much interest in the iNaturalist app last time she scheduled a second class. She took us through the various features of the app and help us understand them. She was unsure of a couple of items, so she researched them and got back to the participants after the class. She is a very thorough instructor! Dan Ziomek of Wanczyk Nursery offered a popular presentation on Bird Feeders and Food to 14 Club members. Dan showed and explained some new innovations in feeders along with some of the standards while including recommendations for cleaning. He covered many useful bird feeds and others that are wasteful for birds and those purchasing them. He shared some interesting feeding techniques and answered many questions for the audience.

Other ideas for future classes are Bird House design and placement (George Regmund); Winter Irruptions; CBC history and uses (Geoff LeBaron); Bird ID; Young Birders Club; Owls; Bird Brains; Bird Breeding; Dragonflies (Dave Small); Safe Places to Bird; Female Bird Song (Amy Strauss)

The Education Committee is offering 3 more virtual workshops in November:

- Tuesday, November 10 7:00 – 8:00 pm Feathers Robert Mesta  
In 2010, Robert collaborated with the USFWS to establish a feather repository to provide Native Americans with a cost-free source of non-eagle feathers for religious and ceremonial purposes. He will share this project with participants through a slide presentation and entertain questions about his effort.
- Tuesday, November 17 7:00 – 8:00 pm Kestrels Sebastian Moreno  
Sebastian was fortunate in obtaining permission to house and raise an American Kestrel. He will share his experience and discuss these amazing birds.
- Tuesday, November 24 7:00 – 8:00 pm Local Places to Bird Various HBC Members  
Hampshire Bird Club members will share birding spots with participants. Some of these places were featured in the Club's book, Bird Finding Guide to Massachusetts, while others have been discovered since its publication.

If you are interested in attending, please email: [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org) ]

Phyllis Katz is exploring the possibility of connecting with birders interested in poetry and possibly starting a poetry group among Hampshire Bird Club members. Two poems she suggested HBC members read are "The Darkling Thrush" by Thomas Hardy and "Cardinal Song" by Phyllis Katz. Both poems share the joy and hope found in bird song during dreary or depressing times. She was thinking a poetry writing group could use that theme to work on poems together. If you are interested please contact us through [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org).

If you are interested in helping the Education Committee implement any of the above ideas or if you have ideas or topics you would like the Committee to consider please either share them or join the Committee by contacting Jim Lafley at [jimlafley@gmail.com](mailto:jimlafley@gmail.com) or [education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org). You can also join by indicating your interest on the HBC membership application.

## SIMPLE GUIDELINES FOR BIRDING

- ✓ Subtle colored clothing is less likely to alert or scare birds. (Exception: During hunting season and wear an orange vest or hat.)
- ✓ Sudden movements and pointing scare birds.
- ✓ Remain quiet as birds are alert to noises.
- ✓ Scan those clumps in trees and shrubs, not all are leaves or nests.

## A CHAT WITH DAVID SPECTOR

This is part 2 of the chat I had with David Spector back in August. In part 1 we heard about his introduction to bird watching and his involvement with the Hitchcock Center and the Hampshire Bird Club. You can find part 1 in the October 2020 issue of the newsletter.

**Newsletter:** *I've seen several of your presentations and it seems to me that fairly often you talk about literature and birds together in some fashion. What got you started down that path?*

**David Spector:** I've always been interested, as long as I can remember, in biology, and I have always enjoyed reading literature. This specific connection actually happened in a general education class when I returned to college to finish my undergraduate degree. I took a course in Victorian novels, and the very first novel we read was *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. It opens with the title character sitting and reading Thomas Bewick's *A History of British Birds*. As I read that novel I realized how much the author Charlotte Brontë incorporated birds into her writing. I did a paper for that course on birds in Victorian novels, and that really triggered what eventually became a major intellectual focus as I paid more and more attention to this issue of how birds are used by authors in their writing. That expanded to an interest in the influence that biologists have in the flow of the understanding of nature to the general public through popular writing.

Scientific information flowing through magazines like *Natural History*, nature centers, field guides, etc., gets to, among other people, novelists, poets, and short story writers. These authors may incorporate some of that natural world information into their work. That flow of information from science into the general culture is something that interests me.

**N:** *Do you have a bucket list for things having to do with bird watching?*

**DS:** I expect to do more bird watching, but what direction that will take I'm not sure. I'm much less of a lister than I was at one time, say 20-30 years ago. I am interested in possibly seeing some new places, seeing some new birds. It may be some months or a couple of years before travel really becomes practical again. Now I'm much more inclined to combine a little bit of bird watching with whale watching. Looking at

architecture and visiting art museums as I travel have renewed interests from an earlier part of my life. I do expect to travel, but exactly what form that will take and what birds I might be chasing where I don't really have a sense yet.

**N:** *Bird watching is a big thing for you, obviously, but I'm sure there are many other things that keep you amused. Want to tell me about something?*

**DS:** Reading literature. And, of course, I read more slowly than many people because I'm always taking notes on birds if I'm reading a novel.

**N:** *On that subject, what are you reading right now?*

**DS:** One of the authors I'm interested in is Ralph Ellison. His classic 20th century book *Invisible Man* incorporates a number of birds. That was the only novel he published during his lifetime, but he worked on drafts of a second novel for the rest of his life, including in his summer home in Plainfield, Massachusetts. After his death editors put together a collection of some of the drafts for the second novel, which is called *Three Days Before the Shooting*. It's a massive book, over 1000 pages, and I'm slowly working my way through that. It's very interesting to see the draft work of a master writer.

I have connections with some of the books that I've had since before I was a bird watcher. For example, a major influence on me and the 1950s and 1960s was Walt Kelly's *Pogo*. In recent years I have returned to some of the books I collected when I was much younger such as some *Pogo* books; I have been delighted to see that Deacon Mushrat was a bird watcher and that there are characters like Miz Limpin, which I wouldn't have noticed when I first read these books. Another book I grew up with, a massive book, is the *Century Dictionary* from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>, beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It had been my grandfather's and then my father's book, and now it's mine. It is over 8000 pages long. And, again, I now see connections in it that I would not have seen as I was growing up. The

editor was William Dwight Whitney, who grew up in Northampton. He collected birds here in Western Massachusetts. Some of those birds are still in the collection at the Yale museum. His brother Josiah Dwight Whitney has Mount Whitney in California named for him and the scientific name of the Elf Owl is named for him

And as I looked in this *Century Dictionary*, I realized that the zoological entries were written by Elliot Coues, one of the greatest American

ornithologists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the zoölogical illustrations are by Ernest Thompson Seton, a very influential bird and general natural history illustrator and author. My book collection, which goes back from well before I was a bird watcher, sometimes allows me to make these connections.

## MORE POETRY

David Spector, Janice Gifford and I went on a hawk watch at the Summit House on Mount Holyoke in mid-September where we saw a number of hawks and also a number of fellow HBC members. David sent me the following poem by Roswell Park. I thought you might enjoy it.

### *Mount Holyoke*

Oh ! who can view from Holyoke's height  
The varied scene below,  
Nor yield to feelings of delight,  
And rapture's deepest glow!

If there be aught upon the earth  
Of beautiful and fair,  
In all the freshness of its birth  
It dwells unrivall'd there.

Grand is the rugged mountain's form  
Beneath the sunbeam's glow,  
Whose rocky brow has faced the storm  
While thunders roll'd below;

And bright the summer-house uprears  
Its pinnacle on high,  
Whose beaming lamp at eve appears  
The watch-tow'r of the sky.

Mount Tom, in endless verdure crown'd,  
Adorns the lovely view,  
While lofty mountains, rising round,  
Grow dim in distant blue;

And rolling on, with swelling tide,  
Majestic to the main,  
Connecticut, thy waters glide  
Along the extended plain.

Fair meadows, crown'd with vernal flow'rs,  
The bushy banks adorn,  
Where morning suns and evening show'rs  
Mature the yellow corn;

And gaily spread beneath the eye  
Are rising village spires,  
And far and near is curling high  
The smoke of village fires.

Here Hadley's long and ancient street  
In loveliness is drest,  
And there Northampton's mansions greet  
The gazer and the guest;

And Amherst, with its college walls,  
In distance melts away,  
Where science lights her lofty halls  
With reason's brightest ray.

Then who can view from Holyoke's height  
The varied scenes below,  
Nor yield to feelings of delight  
And rapture's deepest glow!

If there be aught upon the earth  
Of beautiful and fair.  
In all the freshness of its birth  
It dwells unrivall'd there.

— Roswell Park (1807–1869)



## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Hitchcock Center for the Environment

#### *Nature Trivia Night*

Wednesdays 7 pm-8:30 pm: November 11, December 9

\$50 per team of 1-4 people; please [register online](#) at [www.hitchcockcenter.org](http://www.hitchcockcenter.org)

Join us for a monthly online trivia contest fundraiser for environmental education. The quiz will test you on a wide breadth of science, nature and environmental knowledge. **The winning team will split the award with the Hitchcock Center for the Environment that will help provide 25%-50% discounts on program fees for economically challenged and low-income household.**

### Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

*Crows, Ravens and Winter Roosts* - Online with Patti Steinman and Kathleen Regan

Thursday, December 3, 7 pm – 8:30 pm

[Register online](#) at [www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org) or call 413-584-3009 to register by phone.

Crows and ravens are considered to be the brains of the avian world. This online presentation will introduce these clever birds, the amazing behaviors they display, and how they demonstrate cognitive thinking. Learn about the intelligence and life history of crows and ravens, including the fascinating phenomena of winter crow roosts, an annual nightly gathering that takes place from October to March. In some places in Massachusetts, these roosts may have up to ten thousand birds! Our special guest for the evening will be a Mass Audubon Animal Ambassador raven, where we'll get up close and personal and see characteristics we discussed in real time.

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary will be offering two in-person field trips to a large crow roost in Springfield on January 3 and 10, as an excellent complement to this program. Register at [www.massaudubon.org/programs](http://www.massaudubon.org/programs).

### Berkshire Botanical Garden

Berkshire Botanical Garden's 5<sup>th</sup> annual *Rooted in Place* Ecological Gardening Symposium will this year be held online, offering access to gardeners, horticulturists and environmentalists worldwide.

The symposium features three informative lectures and a panel discussion offered over the course of two Sundays, November 15<sup>th</sup> and November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 11 am - 2 pm. Sessions will be offered live through Zoom, followed by question and answer periods. In their talks, our expert presenters will examine the intersection of the wild and cultivated landscape while exploring ecosystem services offered by native plantings, including the role they play in our gardens. Key speakers include Heather Holm, Ulrich Lorimer and Dr. Desiree Narango.

Recordings of the lectures can be accessed by registered participants until January 1, 2021—meaning that if your time zone or schedule precludes you from attending any of the lecture livestreams, you will be able to enjoy them later at your leisure.

The registration deadline for this event is 9 a.m. on November 15. Student discounts are available. [Visit the BBG website](#) for more information on the Berkshire Botanical Garden presenters and to register.

## HBC LIBRARY NEWS FLASH

From Henry, Club Librarian:

I now have authorization to go into the Hitchcock Center, so I can return books and get out new ones. Please contact me to return any books you have or to request a book.

Email ([library@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:library@hampshirebirdclub.org))

Phone (413-549-3722).

The library list is on the club website: [hampshirebirdclub.org/wp-content/uploads/HBC-library-list.pdf](http://hampshirebirdclub.org/wp-content/uploads/HBC-library-list.pdf)

*Saying that wearing a mask during a pandemic is “living in fear” is like saying that using oven mitts means you’re “afraid” of the oven...*

Anon.

Did you hear about the White House staffer who told President Trump about a dream she had?

*Staffer:* I had a dream that you got the big military parade that you wanted. All the military brass were there and the streets were lined with cheering spectators.

*Trump:* Did I have a smile on my face?

*Staffer:* I couldn't tell. The casket was closed.

If something is thrown at the president does the Secret Service yell “DONALD DUCK!!!!”?

Dave Gross, Editor  
[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)



**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
www.hampshirebirdclub.org  
Volume 37, No. 4  
**December 2020**

Dear reader, somehow we seem to have made it through November's election and its aftermath. Or at least so it seems. This awful year of 2020 is nearly at an end. My wife Julie saw an analogy for 2020 that I think is most fitting, particularly given the weather report that I have been hearing on the radio this morning. "If most years are like a cherry sno-cone, then 2020 is like a sno-cone made from the slush at the side of the road at the end of the winter – grey, salty and filled with grit."

You have been reading in past newsletters entries from our haiku contest last summer. In the spirit of the times and with thoughts of calmer political times, here's my contribution. Thanks to the Raven family that visits the cell tower near my house.

Raven calls "Barack,  
Barack." Snow falls silently  
like serene days past.

**NEXT PROGRAM**  
**Monday, December 14 at 7:15 pm via Zoom**  
**Members' Meeting**

Our December meeting is the time when members are welcome to share approximately 10 slides of birds or birding adventures. Join us this year for our annual slide show and cookie fest. (Note that you will need to provide your own cookies this year.) Because we must do this year's edition via Zoom, former club members who have moved away, and current ones who are unable to regularly participate in meetings due to mobility issues or long travel distances, may well be in attendance. There will also be a short presentation on the MANO Christmas Count with time for questions and answers.

**HBC BOUTIQUE NEWS**

If anyone needs anything from the Boutique, give me a call, email me, text me....whatever works best for you. We can arrange a socially distant pick up and payment. I am also willing to mail things to people if they pay postage. A new hat or a new shirt for the holidays....some lens cloths to keep your optics clean....the *Bird Finding Guide of Western MA*....HBC pins....binocular harnesses with the HBC logo....lots of goodies! [hignik@comcast.net](mailto:hignik@comcast.net) 413-320-2026 (call or text), or 413-586-7585 (call only).

Betsy Higgins

**MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

We are happy to welcome several new HBC members in the last month. Joining us are Ami Jean Aubin, Williamsburg; Kate Finn & Angela Conti, Greenfield; Kevin Grennan, Hadley; Eric Klopfer, Pelham; Heidi Scott, Northampton; and Rosemary Laporte, Easthampton. In January or February, date yet to be determined, we are planning to hold a special Zoom meeting so that new members can learn more about HBC and get to meet other members.

## CBC PREP ZOOM MEETINGS

Three online meetings to prepare for this year's unusual MANO Christmas Bird Count will be held:

### **Area Leaders Meeting—Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-7:30pm**

We'll discuss Covid-19 protocols; whether you feel you have sufficient coverage for your area; the new form for data submission and determination of who from your team will submit it; owling; and Rare Bird forms/photos.

### **Feeder Watcher Meeting—Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 7:00-8:15pm**

This meeting will piggy-back on the Education Committee's "Feeder Birds and Birdfeeder Community Science Projects" workshop, at the tail end of the call. We'll continue the discussion of identifying common feeder birds; a brief overview of the CBC and its purpose; and the data submission form for feeder counts.

### **Participants Meeting—Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-7:30pm**

The last prep call will cover a brief overview of the CBC and its purpose; the new data submission form; the "how, where and when" of the count; Covid-19 protocols; maps; website and Rare Bird forms/photos.

**To register for these free meetings, please email [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org).** The count will be on Sunday, December 20. Check the HBC website <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/cbc> and [HBC's Facebook](#) page for updates on the count.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

Once again, the Education Committee held 3 virtual workshops in November, and we had the best attendance yet at the events. Robert Mesta's feather repository workshop was a quite different topic, and about 20 members really appreciated his presentation. Club member Sebastian Moreno shared his experiences in raising and releasing Kestrels and discussed the life history of these small falcons. Again, over 20 members signed up for his talk and found it informative and entertaining. The talk on "Local Places to Bird" included 7 presenters and there were many new attendees. This presentation covered well-known areas like Fitzgerald Lake and Hadley Cove as well as newly established conservation areas on both sides of the river. Most areas were new since the publication of the *Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts*, making it clear that HBC members are out there exploring new birding sites.

We will hold two virtual workshops in December. Both are on Wednesday nights. You can sign up for these workshops by contacting the Education Committee at [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org).

### **Wednesday, Dec. 9, 7:00 – 8:00 pm**

#### **Crows & Ravens**

**Patti Steinman**

Crows and ravens are known as the brains of the avian world. Learn the difference between crows and ravens, their intelligence, and life histories. Explore the fascinating phenomenon of winter crow roosting, a nightly gathering that takes place from October to March. A large roost exists in Springfield with the location changing yearly, monthly or daily. We will discuss some of the more common places in Springfield to see winter crows roosts.

### **Wednesday, Dec. 16, 7:00 – 8:00 pm**

#### **Feeder Birds and Community Science Projects**

Join various HBC presenters to explore the differences between some common but confusing birds that may visit your bird feeder. Then learn about ways that you may contribute to science by watching birds at your feeders. At the end of the program we will discuss how to be involved with the Christmas Bird Count (see above).

When we can once again meet safely in person for walks, the Education Committee would like to hold a series of them for new club members and some walks for beginning birders. Our goal for these walks is to assist club members in meeting other birders and to find new places to watch birds.

We welcome our new Education Committee members Cory Elowe, Lesley Farlow, and Robin Gurdak-Foley. They have generously volunteered to help us with our upcoming programs and projects.

## MASSACHUSETTS YOUNG BIRDERS CLUB

Since HBC supported the revitalization of The Massachusetts Young Birders Club, we've been busy. Here, I'll share some exciting updates with you – and also a request!

Updates: We have been leading several bird walks and activities (all socially-distanced!) with the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club in partnership with the Eagle Eye Institute. Our website is receiving a major makeover as I write (hopefully up and running by the time you read this: <https://massyoungbirders.org>). We've worked through the logistics of running a club for youth in the midst of COVID, and feel confident that this winter and spring we are ready to expand membership safely. Next month, we are going to help facilitate two youth/family-oriented Christmas Bird Count feeder stations: one in Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, and the other at the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club.

That brings me to the request. We are looking for bird feeders to set up at the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club. We are also looking for tripods for scopes, and any optics for the Massachusetts Young Birders Club to use. In case you have recently upgraded your feeders, tripods, binoculars, or scopes, and want to donate your old equipment, please reach out to me at [spool@umass.edu](mailto:spool@umass.edu). Thanks, and I look forward to sharing more news with you all soon.

Jeremy Spool, co-coordinator of The Massachusetts Young Birders Club

A Mt. Skinner hike  
with binoculars in hand  
Cerulean joy

Haiku by Laura Beltran

brown creeper spirals  
on deep furrows of white ash  
cryptic and searching

Haiku by Marcia Merithew

## AREA MAN MAKES DISCOVERY

Area man David Spector, Emeritus Professor, has reported a remarkable geological discovery at the Holyoke Range. In a recent ascent to the summit of Mount Holyoke, Prof. Spector found that over the course of the past several years “the slopes of the Holyoke Range get steeper every year.” The editor encourages Prof. Spector to report this remarkable finding to a scientific journal of higher repute than the HBC newsletter. A publication that comes to mind is *The Onion*.

In a separate meteorological finding, Prof. Spector noted that it “was windy, windy, windy” at the summit. Both of these notable observations occurred on November 3, 2020.

## THIS JUST IN...

As of December 4, 2020, according to my chocolate Advent calendar, there are only 2 days left till Christmas. It's been one of those years.

Dave Gross, Editor  
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