



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
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Dear reader, I have in my possession a copy of *The Peregrine*, Vol. III, No. 1 dated January 1960. *The Peregrine* was the newsletter of the Eliot Bird Club, a precursor to our very own Hampshire Bird Club. I got this from Harvey Allen when I chatted with him in February of last year for a piece in the April 2020 newsletter. Among the interesting items in *The Peregrine*, the Eliot Bird Club had an annual meeting on January 6, 1960 at which it was disclosed that the club had a bank balance of the princely sum of \$43.11.

Also in that issue was a summary of the 1959 MANO Christmas Bird Count that had been held on January 3, 1960. Of particular note on that count were an “incursion of Brown-capped (Boreal) Chickadees, the large number of Red-breasted Nuthatches, and the continued appearance of Cardinals west of the River.” In the list of species seen, of which there were 56 with about 9700 individual birds, there were 10 Northern Cardinals, 1069 Common Redpolls, 833 Evening Grosbeaks and 27 Meadowlarks. There were no Ravens, no Red-bellied Woodpeckers and no Canada Geese. Related to the Christmas Count, “there was an inconclusive discussion on the legitimacy of paying fifty cents for the insertion of the Club’s name in the report of the Christmas Census published by the National Audubon Society. The NAS lists individual participant’s names for fifty cents each but there seems to be no precedent for the inclusion of a group’s name.”

Our 2020 MANO CBC results can be found later in this newsletter and also online at the HBC website.

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, January 11 at 7:15 pm via Zoom (maybe)

Our Program Chair Josh Rose reports that he has yet to hear back from a number of potential presenters for our January meeting. Speakers are lined up for the February and March meetings, but filling the January slot has been difficult. Please check the HBC website for updates. An email will be sent to members who have not opted out of HBC emails if and when a January meeting speaker is identified.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to our new members who have joined recently: Robert Brooks, Amherst; Sara Brown & Kali Ransom, Greenfield; Rosemary Laport, Easthampton; Sue Lehman, Holyoke; Amy Loveless, Marlborough; Mike & Julie Marcus, Amherst; Hannah Schwartz, Northampton; and Jennifer York, Amherst. A special Zoom program and some opportunities for new members is still in the works, dates TBA.

Thanks to all members who have noted on their membership forms that they are willing to share any particular interests or skills that could be useful to club operations. In addition, we would also be grateful to hear from anyone has knowledge of or experience with MailChimp (the program we use for club-wide announcements). Good wishes to all for a happy and healthy 2021 ahead!

Lissa Ganter, membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee held two virtual sessions in December with great attendance at each event. *Crows and Ravens* by Patti Steinman was an entertaining and informative talk about these fascinating birds. She gave details about the history of the Springfield Crow roost and its current location for people interested in seeing this display of 10,000+ American Crows.

Feeder Birds and Community Science focused on feeder birds that might be difficult to identify due to similarities with other feeder bird species. Feeder watchers for the Northampton CBC were also specifically invited as they will be part of this Community Science program. A few other Community Science programs were also highlighted.

We are featuring 3 sessions in January. All are on Wednesday nights. If you are interested in attending, please email virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org and mention the session you would like to attend.

Wednesday, Jan. 13, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Murmuration Project

Cory Elowe

To improve the safety and accessibility for birders *The Murmuration* project was developed as an open-access resource that crowdsources local knowledge about birding hotspots across Massachusetts to ensure that information about safety and accessibility is readily available for new and veteran birders alike. Cory will talk about why it was important to create *The Murmuration*, describe how it can be used, answer any questions, and take note of any comments you might have about the project. A description of *The Murmuration* project is given later in this newsletter.

Wednesday, Jan. 20, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Birding in Franklin County

A number of birders who spend time exploring areas in Franklin County will share some of the good birding spots at the top of their lists. Some of these areas are well-known to Valley birders while others are new areas to many of us.

Wednesday, Jan. 27, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Feeder Birds and the Great Backyard Bird Count

This session will feature common and uncommon birds that we might find at our feeders in preparation for the *Great Backyard Bird Count* being held February 12 - 15, 2021. This international event is sponsored by Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. You can find out more information at <https://birdcount.org>.

We have decided to use an idea from a California bird club that we are calling **Do It Yourself Field Trips**. These will start as local trips but could expand beyond our area. Each month at a Zoom event an area will be chosen, and a leader will describe the location and choose 5 target species for that area. Anyone interested can visit the area, record the species they see, and report back at the Zoom event the next month. Stories, photos, and lists can be shared during these sessions. You can visit these areas on your own. We soon will be sending out an email to all HBC members with more details about these trips.

2020 NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS COUNT

There is a link on the Hampshire Bird Club CBC page to the “final” (is it ever final?) MANO 2020 compilation report with all the info we have received. A quick summary if the results is

- 86 species
- 36,374 individual birds
- Several High Counts: Cooper’s Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Pileated Woodpecker, Merlin, Common Raven, White-breasted Nuthatch, White-crowned Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren, Red-shouldered Hawk.
- New species to the count: Bufflehead, Sage Thrasher
- Participant tally shows 186 in the field and more than 42 feeder counters.

A table of the count results as of late December 2020 is on page 7 of this newsletter.

Janice Jorgensen

THE MURMURATION PROJECT

This summer sparked a conversation for many of us in Massachusetts – how do we make the outdoors safer, inclusive, and accessible to everyone, especially disabled birders, birders of color, LGBTQIA+ birders, and new birders?

We are introducing *The Murmuration*, a citizen science project that focuses on increasing accessibility to information as a first step to challenge the traditional image and demographic of the American birder. This project is OPEN ACCESS: anyone can read the comprehensive guide on Bird Observer (<http://bit.ly/BirdObs>) as well as access, edit, and share the project document.

Still confused? Here's a video walk-through of how to participate in this project: <https://bit.ly/MPWalkthrough>. If you have a health condition that limits your ability to interact with the spreadsheet, please email the.murmuration.project@gmail.com.

We are also looking for more contributors and collaborators, especially if you want to “adopt” (i.e. help monitor data quality for) your favorite Massachusetts county. With a diverse set of contributions, we can compile this dataset, learn more about our local hotspots, help new birders navigate some of the challenges in their way, and bridge some of the gaps in our knowledge that may come from a privileged view.

Meghadeepa Maity

PLIRDING AT HADLEY COVE

Hadley Cove is a fantastic refuge for waterbirds, and its offerings have delighted birders for decades. However, whether carried in from the ditches, leftovers from neighborhood dumping, or remnants of the summer's abundant boat traffic, the cove is also known for collecting trash on its shores after the high waters subside each winter. After some fantastic looks at autumn birds brought in lots of birders, Noah Kahn noted that we could all show our appreciation for the cove by carrying out a bit of trash with each visit, an idea that is reminiscent of the new activity of “PLIRDING.” Inspired by the Swedish movement of PLOGGING (combining Swedish “plocka upp” – or “picking up” – and jogging), PLIRDING is the act of picking up trash while birding.

Spurred to action, Steve Winn organized a group of birders, including Lesley Farlow, Deb Oakley and her husband Hobie, Noah Kahn and family, and others to help clean up the cove on November 20. I don't know how much birding other folks did, but together we hauled three truckloads away, including many float barrels that we donated to Sportsman's Marina. Though the day was not without incident – with a nail to Steve's foot, a stick to Hobie's eye, and some inconvenient poison ivy – it's fantastic to see the cove looking so clean and natural! This success could inspire many of us to take up PLIRDING to keep our favorite birding places looking their best. Check out Ray Brown's *Talkin' Birds* to learn more about PLIRDING (<http://www.talkinbirds.com/plirding>). You can sign up there to join the Massachusetts Litter Cleanup Crew to get some items to help you keep your favorite birding spots clean, like long-handled trash grabbers.

To get to Hadley Cove, from Bay Road drive approximately 0.3 miles south on Middle Street until you cross a ditch/culvert with cement pillars painted yellow on top. Park on the right at the edge of the road immediately after the pillars at the top of the slope down to a lawn. The cove is visible from here when leaves are gone. You can also walk down the slope and cross the lawn to reach an opening in the trees where an old set of stairs leads down to the water's edge. The homeowners welcome birders, but ask that they stay away from the house.

Cory Elowe

A CHAT WITH MARY ALICE WILSON

Mary Alice and I spoke in late August 2020 about her introduction to bird watching and her several roles with the HBC and the MANO Christmas Bird Count.

Newsletter: *What has been your relationship with the Hampshire Bird Club?*

Mary Alice Wilson: My husband Bill and I met as grad students in Berkeley. As soon as he finished, we moved to the Harvard Forest in Petersham (just north of the Quabbin Reservoir). We were living in a community of naturalists and I found myself learning to identify plants, birds, and planets.

After Bill took a faculty position at UMass, we moved to South Amherst. Some of the first people we met were birders, like John and Merry Cushing and Sally Hills –and our land backed up to the Lawrence Swamp conservation area so we learned to listen for that first woodcock in March.

I remember that one spring I signed up through the Hitchcock Center for a beginning birding class taught by Steve Stanne. (He was in college at the time and an inspiring teacher who later joined Pete Seeger on the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater.) I still wanted to learn more and when Dottie Barnes asked me what I was going to do when I retired, I said I was going to try to learn to be a competent birder. She said "Well, then, you better come with me Monday night to Jan Ortiz's class at the Hitchcock Center." I said that I just couldn't do it – I had too much work to do. I have never won an argument with Dottie. She talk me into it.

So there I was with a group of people who were as young as Zeke Jacob. I think he's now a very well-known Panamanian birder but at that time was a seventh grader. He arrived every week with Bill and Nancy Buchanan who were driving him because, of course, seventh graders don't have driver's licenses. It was a magic community of supportive people. Jan was an exceptional teacher, and part of her teaching was setting up the community of support. She was fierce about one thing: everyone in her class had to become a member of the Hampshire Bird Club – whatever that was.

So I took her courses. I then took Don Kroodsma's course because by then I had retired, so I could take a course during the daytime. I

never worked so hard in a college classroom in my life. And of course, he was a good teacher. His standards were high and, of course, I had to meet them.

I've had all these experiences with these wonderful teachers. Andrew McGee goes on that list. And if you look behind me over my shoulder you'll see some of his drawings, one of an Ovenbird and one of a Brown Creeper. One is a print from the book [*Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts*] and one was for a fundraiser.

N: *You also have a *Corvus corax* drawing of his that you got when you stepped down from running the Christmas Count if I recall correctly.*

MAW: Yes, that Raven is very special. With all these wonderful teachers, I said to Jan "You've done so much to help me. How can I help you?" hoping that my birding skills were good enough to be of use. What she really liked was the fact that I knew how to use a computer and I could make an Excel sheet for the Christmas count. So there I was doing what I already knew how to do. And then Jan managed to get me in as a co-Chair of the Christmas count. She introduced me to places and people; it was great. But the fact is, the reason I was there was because I could use Excel.

And then they asked me if I would be Program Chair for the Hampshire Bird Club. And I said, "Sure" because my job had been to develop programs for teachers. I knew how to do that. And I wasn't worried that I didn't know names of good speakers, because the board would provide those for me. I wasn't worried about publicity because Marion Gorham in those days did all the press releases for the bird club. I knew her and she just did a fabulous job. I got to the annual meeting where I was officially nominated and elected, and I found out that the Program Chair is Program Chair slash Vice President. Nobody had told me that.

So I did two or three years as Vice President. I then served as President for two or three years. After that I continued as an active member of the of the Hampshire Bird Club

community. That actually led to the Amherst Breeding Bird Survey, which, in the early days, I just did. But in the latter days, when the funding from Amherst dropped precipitously, Harvey [Allen] and I began to take over the job that the Amherst Conservation Commission folks had done before that. And then that led to the [Massachusetts] Breeding Bird Atlas. If Joan Walsh hadn't been leading that, I can't even imagine how it would have worked because she was just so wonderful.

It is because of the Atlas that I know the back roads of Rowe. Atlas birders could pick the places they wanted to survey. You might be surprised to know that there were not a lot of candidates who picked Rowe. So I got to watch bears walk across the road and all that sort of stuff.

I remembered the other day about a course I took with Andrew McGee. It was a June course and Nancy Steeper, who used to live in the Valley, was also taking it. And she said, "I want to go birding, but I don't want to go on weekends. Can't we just informally arrange a group?" This led to the Monday morning birding group, and not in an obvious way. Nobody anticipated that. I certainly didn't. So each step led to another that led to another.

I think that answers your question.

N: *It definitely does. You've been to a lot of HBC meetings. You've organized a lot of them, you've arranged for speakers, and so on. Can you think of one or more of those meetings that were particularly memorable to you?*

MAW: Well, the one I'm embarrassed to tell you about is the one that I remember the best. I wasn't involved except as a member of the of the audience. Chris Davis, who runs New England Falconry, brought Harris's Hawks to a meeting. He was standing in the front of the room and in his left hand he had a female Harris's Hawk. He was talking, and he had what in those days we used for the microphone, which was a clip-on. We could see that the hawk was watching everything and she quickly figured out that the microphone would amplify her voice. She began to play by bending down and trying different sounds in the microphone. And of course, Chris doesn't know what's going on; he's just trying to give a talk. And all of a sudden he just picks up

the bird, puts her in a cage, and says "I'm sorry. She's making so much noise. She doesn't usually do this." That bird had been having such a good time.

There were many other wonderful programs. I do recall John Van de Graaf's talk on the Galapagos. That talk hooked me on the Galapagos.

N: *Earlier you said that, just prior to retirement, you had told Dottie Barnes that you wanted to do some birding. There must have been some precedent to spark your interest. What was that?*

MAW: It was, I think, the trips that we took - especially to Australia. In my last year of working, Bill and I used to go backpacking every summer in Montana or Wyoming. The birds were not afraid of us. They came right up to us. That was a magical time. Bill always wore the same red felt fishman's hat, and those little Calliope Hummingbirds just came in to check him out. I was always behind so I could see them; he could hear them but he couldn't see them. There were many, many moments with Kinglets, various ducks, and hundreds of Robins filling an intermountain basin as if it were a lawn. So that's it. I knew I didn't get it. I didn't know how to look stuff up. I didn't know how to think about stuff. And I wanted that.

N: *I remember an HBC trip to Monhegan that you were on and I was on. I recall that you had just retired and you seemed to be having such a great time. Do you have remembrances of that trip?*

MAW: I don't. I can't separate out all of the Monhegan trips I took. That's a magic place. Once in the fall. I went up to the lighthouse. I was alone, and it was miserable. The wind was blowing strongly and I thought, "Wait a minute..." - there were Merlins coming over. I have no idea how many there were. They were migrating south, and they weren't slowing down. It was like there were fighter planes coming over me just at tree top level. And how many times have we seen trees or shrubs full of a single species? I remember Blackpolls once and Parulas once.

One time Sally Hills and I - I think we were there for a week, not just for the weekend - and we were sitting on that little bit of rocky shore down by the dock. There had been a

thunderstorm that had just cleared. All of a sudden a flock of Blackburnian Warblers arrived exhausted, apparently blown in by the storm. And they, this is first time they had a chance to land, they were literally sitting on our shoes. It was absolutely memorable.

N: *I think that, on the trip where you and I overlapped, Bob Bieda and Morris Lanier were the two leaders.*

MAW: Oh, did you go on that trip? I can remember Morris found a Kentucky Warbler. He was so focused on that and so excited.

N: *Yes, I remember that. I know the exact spot where the bird was, at a trail intersection near the Cathedral Woods. Every time I go back to Monhegan I stop at that spot and look for a Kentucky Warbler.*

MAW: Isn't it funny how you go back to the same places?

N: *Are there other HBC trips that are strong memories for you?*

MAW: I remember going to Cape May on a trip with Scott [Turner]. First of all we had to get up at some ungodly hour. We were out in a meadow theoretically looking for hawks, but in fact what we were doing was watching hundreds of flickers come overhead as the sun had just risen. The gold of the sunrise on the yellow feathers, it was breathtaking. That's my memory of that trip. I'm sure there should be other memories, but that's the one I have.

I think of the trip that I took to the

in my back garden
two young girls digging down deep
looking for a way to grow

soaring high above us
a red tail frightens my birds
they fly to the woods

while the girls dig down
do not see the diving hawk
they are finding themselves

two girls with a dream
to find a way to be new
fledglings learning to fly

Haiku in four stanzas by Phyllis Katz

Galapagos as being an HBC trip, but of course it was not. It was John Van de Graaff who gave me all the information that allowed my daughter and me to go to the Galapagos and have such a wonderful experience.

N: *I don't know about you but I have not been doing the same kind of getting out to see birds since we've been confined to our quarters. How has the pandemic affected your birding?*

MAW: What has really affected my birding was when I came down with what is called wear-and-tear-arthritis. I literally couldn't even lift my binoculars for a while.

We moved to Northampton in June. We had been living in Vermont in a very isolated house. The birding was great there. When we got here, it turned out that the best place to bird was our patio. We were able to watch practically every species of bird I would expect to see in a community like this feeding their young. We were in a nursery. And we also have trails here. The trails have led me to be able identify the teenage squeal of Barred Owls. There were two young Barred Owls there and you could identify them either by their whining complaining sound or by the small birds who were having hysterics. One day when Bill and I were walking the trail, there was a little fledgling songbird – pale and blotchy on a railing– and I said, “I have no idea what it is.” Then a Wood Thrush came in and fed it, so that was that. The birding here has been close and really, really excellent.

early morning dew
red-tailed hawk rises in mist
ready for the hunt

Haiku by Marcia Merithew

Dave Gross, Editor

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Northampton (MANO) Christmas Bird Count December 20, 2020

Species	2020	Highest	Year	Species	2020	Highest	Year	Species	2020	Highest	Year
Greater White-fronted Goose		1	04, 08	Northern Harrier	10	11	2010	House Sparrow	2456	2662	1961
Bufflehead	1	3	2008	Sharp-shinned Hawk	14	22	05, 07	American Pipit		129	2015
Snow Goose		32	2008	Cooper's Hawk	41	37	2017	Brambling		1	1961
Brant		1	1989	Northern Goshawk		4	1985	Pine Grosbeak	36	217	1954
Cackling Goose		1	2014	Red-shouldered Hawk	9	7	2017	Purple Finch	8	221	1976
Canada Goose	2810	7977	1999	Red-tailed Hawk	208	187	2014	House Finch	710	2215	1994
Mute Swan		29	2002	Rough-legged Hawk	2	12	1989	Red Crossbill	6	25	1969
Wood Duck	5	19	2010	Barn Owl		cw	1959	White-winged Crossbill	cw	98	1977
Duck (sp)	3	8	2015	Eastern Screech-Owl	26	108	2017	Common Redpoll	400	1069	1959
Gadwall		5	2012	Great Horned Owl	54	68	2014	Hoary Redpoll	1	2	2012
American Wigeon		10	1999	Snowy Owl		2	49, 78	Pine Siskin	192	372	1993
American Black Duck	117	500	1953	Barred Owl	7	19	2018	American Goldfinch	432	2094	2006
Mallard	480	1338	1994	Long-eared Owl		3	2004	Evening Grosbeak	3	3000	1969
Northern Pintail		54	2014	Short-eared Owl	2	4	1960	Lapland Longspur	1	31	1989
Green-winged Teal	1	3	2015	Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	5	03, 06	Snow Bunting	31	706	1989
Canvasback		3	1977	Belted Kingfisher	18	24	2012	Ovenbird		1	1961
Ring-necked Duck		5	2004	Red-headed Woodpecker	cw	1	2017	Orange-crowned Warbler		1	19, 97
Northern Shoveler		1	2014	Red-bellied Woodpecker	340	247	2019	Nashville Warbler		1	2001
Greater Scaup		1	1981	Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker	19	22	2007	Common Yellowthroat		2	1998
Lesser Scaup		5	1974	Downy Woodpecker	493	503	2014	Wilson's Warbler		2	1994
White-winged Scoter		1	1938	Hairy Woodpecker	182	192	1974	Black-throated Blue Warbler		1	1979
Long-tailed Duck		1	1989	Black-backed Woodpecker		1	1956	Palm Warbler		1	2017
Common Goldeneye	42	112	2018	Northern Flicker	58	76	19, 98	Pine Warbler		1	2016
Barrow's Goldeneye		1	2015	Pileated Woodpecker	70	43	2017	Yellow-rumped Warbler	1	9	1982
Hooded Merganser	55	92	2014	American Kestrel	2	31	1974	Green-tailed Towhee		cw	1946
Common Merganser	103	227	2018	Merlin	8	6	2016	Spotted Towhee		1	1999
Red-breasted Merganser		3	1991	Gyr Falcon		cw	2012	Eastern Towhee		2	1963
Ruddy Duck		2	2012	Peregrine Falcon	7	7	16/18	American Tree Sparrow	446	2637	1992
Northern Bobwhite		5	1970	Eastern Phoebe	1	2	1990	Chipping Sparrow		11	1974
Ring-necked Pheasant	2	196	1960	Western Kingbird		cw	2004	Clay-colored Sparrow		1	2013
Ruffed Grouse		37	1965	Loggerhead Shrike		2	1955	Field Sparrow	2	58	1982
Wild Turkey	72	200	2018	Northern Shrike		15	1995	Vesper Sparrow		2	69, 39
Pied-billed Grebe		2	1991	White-eyed Vireo		1	1984	Savannah Sparrow	56	61	2012
Horned Grebe		2	2000	Blue-headed Vireo		1	2012	"Ipswich Savannah Sparrow"	1		
Rock Pigeon	480	2778	1988	Gray Jay		cw	1973	LeConte's Sparrow		cw	1991
Mourning Dove	1918	3904	1998	Blue Jay	1791	1686	2014	Fox Sparrow	cw	20	1943
Selasphorus Hummingb.sp		1	2010	American Crow	2407	5836	1997	Song Sparrow	362	559	1992
Virginia Rail		1	2000	Fish Crow	cw	6	2018	Lincoln's Sparrow	cw	1	2010
Sora		1	1989	Common Raven	43	42	2019	Swamp Sparrow	6	23	1992
American Coot		1	2014	Horned Lark	1478	3222	2012	White-throated Sparrow	432	1008	2009
Killdeer		7	99, 71, 52	Black-capped Chickadee	2033	2096	2005	Harris's Sparrow		1	2013
Wilson's Snipe	2	12	1990	Boreal Chickadee		12	1961	White-crowned Sparrow	30	9	2014
American Woodcock		1	19,12, 65,	Tufted Titmouse	785	894	2006	Taiga White-Crowned Sparrow	1		
Black-headed Gull		1	2014	Red-breasted Nuthatch	80	295	1993	Dark-eyed Junco	2348	3585	2006
Ring-billed Gull	87	1088	2006	White-breasted Nuthatch	667	644	2015	Oregon Junco		3	1969
Herring Gull	2	2196	1986	Brown Creeper	23	53	1973	Pink-sided Junco		1	2015
Iceland Gull		4	17, 05	House Wren	1	1	06, 82	Rose-breasted Grosbeak		1	1990
Lesser Black-backed Gull		1	2000	Winter Wren	7	9	14, 13	Indigo Bunting		1	2011
Glaucous Gull		2	1986	Sedge Wren		1	1996	Dickcissel		3	1952
Great Black-backed Gull	cw	367	1994	Marsh Wren	0	4	1958	Northern Cardinal	820	786	2014
Gull (sp)	2	95	2014	Carolina Wren	218	175	219	Red-winged Blackbird	68	304	2008
Red-throated Loon		1	2012	Golden-crowned Kinglet	24	332	2001	Eastern Meadowlark		98	1976
Common Loon		1	15, 14, 12	Ruby-crowned Kinglet		6	73, 67	Yellow-headed Blackbird		1	1979
Double-crested Cormorant		1	08,12	Eastern Bluebird	342	539	2014	Rusty Blackbird	4	189	2011
Great Cormorant		1	2000	Hermit Thrush	9	33	2014	Brewer's Blackbird		1	1980
American Bittern		1	1978	American Robin	598	9902	2013	Common Grackle	32	501	2006
Great Blue Heron	17	27	2006	Varied Thrush		1	1981	Brown-headed Cowbird	2	876	2006
Green Heron		1	2004	Gray Catbird	2	5	17, 05	Bullock's Oriole		1	1952
Turkey Vulture		2	19, 10	Northern Mockingbird	102	238	1999	Baltimore Oriole		3	1969
Black Vulture	cw		2019	Brown Thrasher	1	2	1975	Most species ever	91	1999, 2008	
Osprey		1	1991	Sage Thrasher	1			2020 species	87		
Bald Eagle:	19	17	2018	European Starling	8790	94630	1985	2020 Individual birds	36489		
adult	14	15	2019	Bohemian Waxwing		1	1993	Field Participants	187		
immature	5	6	2018	Cedar Waxwing	77	2194	2007	Feeder Watchers	50		
Next MANO Christmas Bird Count 12/19/21				Thank you for supporting MANO CBC				Miles Walked	A LOT		



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Dear reader, this time last year we were planning lots of in-person events. Among them were club meetings at the Immanuel Lutheran Church and six field trips in March and April. The February 2020 newsletter asked for volunteer drivers to share rides to our meetings and also asked members if they would like to join the meeting speaker and the set-up crew for dinner. The Education Committee had several projects and reported on the outcome of a survey of what new things they could try.

There were also somewhat ominous reports of a nasty virus in Wuhan that had popped up in the Seattle area.

We're close to a year into the nearly complete shutdown of in-person events. At present we have no field trips scheduled, though there is light at the end of the tunnel. There has been very tentative discussion of the possibility that downsized HBC field trips might be able to resume once vaccinations become more widespread. It may be possible to have in-person programs again in the fall. One of these days we'll be able to see each other again in the flesh. Keep the faith. We'll get there.

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, February 8 at 7:15 pm via Zoom

Don Brightsmith presents

Urban and Endangered: a Parrot Paradox in South Texas

In the mid 1980's, Red-crowned Parrots established a population in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas (LRGV). The species is endemic to northeastern Mexico (naturally occurring within only a few hundred miles of the US border) and is listed as globally endangered by the IUCN. Wild individuals apparently wandered from Mexico to the LRGV on rare occasions, but, bolstered by numerous escaped pets, the population became established and grew steadily from 1995 well into the 2000's. Currently the USFWS and State of Texas consider the Texas population native. Since 2016, we have studied roosts and nests in the LRGV. Over 70% of nest trees are standing, dead, non-native *Washingtonia* palms. All Red-crowns observed roosted and nested in trees planted in suburban areas, most within 5 meters of residential streets, often in the front yards of private homes. We found no roosts or nests in natural vegetation. The Red-crowned Parrot presents a unique set of challenges as an endangered species whose US population depends on anthropogenic habitats.

[Donald J. Brightsmith](#) is an Associate Professor of Ecosystem Health in the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology and the Schubot Avian Health Center at Texas A&M University. He holds a Ph.D. in Zoology from Duke University, an M.S. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Arizona, and a B.S. in Natural Resources from Cornell University and is author of over 75 scholarly works. His interest in wild birds started at a young age with binoculars in the backyard and has led him to projects, presentations, and teaching in Peru, Costa Rica, Brazil, Nicaragua, Indonesia, England, Australia and throughout the US. His specialties are tropical ecology, ornithology and wildlife conservation, especially topics related to wild and captive parrots. He has worked on parrots in Peru since 1993 and has run the [The Macaw Society/Sociedad pro Guacamayo](#) (formerly the Tambopata Macaw Project) since 1999. His research has focused on a wide variety of topics including parrot conservation, clay lick use, nesting, movements, habitat use, etc. He also conducts research on diets of captive and wild parrots, parrot enrichment and wild Red-crowned Parrots in Texas. As an advisor to government and private parrot conservation projects he is helping put his knowledge to work for the benefit of wild parrots.

COMING PROGRAMS

March 8, 2021. Lukas Musher. Amazing Amazonia: the Evolution of South America's Mega-diverse Biome.

April 12, 2021. Daniel Klem. TBA.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee held 3 virtual sessions in January with about 20 people attending each event. *The Murmuration Project*, *Birding Franklin County*, and the *Feeder Birds and Great Backyard Bird Count* (Feb. 12–15; www.birdcount.org) were each well received. We are featuring three virtual sessions in February and four in March on Wednesday nights. If you are interested, ~~please register with the link below for the specific workshop you'd like to attend~~ please register by sending a message to virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Wednesday, Feb. 10, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Birding Plum Island David Moon

David directed Mass Audubon Joppa Flats and led regular weekly field trips out to Plum Island. He is truly knowledgeable about the prime locations at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge and the Sandy Point State Reservation.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0oceioqTMjGNzFEbeAuKmoAvjPfh_8Egtq](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?url=meeting/register/tZ0oceioqTMjGNzFEbeAuKmoAvjPfh_8Egtq)

Wednesday, Feb. 17, 7:00 – 8:00 pm New Members Meeting Lissa Ganter/Laura Beltran

We would like to welcome members new to the club since last January as we have been unable to meet them in person. This will give us a chance to introduce the various aspects of the club by getting to know them and sharing the different committees and their offerings with them. It will provide the opportunity to answer their questions and to meet other members.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9687111111?pwd=ZUJlYkRlMjNlZWdScDZkdzF0cWpBQz09>

Wednesday, Feb. 24, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Sharpie v. Coopers Scott Surner

This will not be a battle of accipiters, rather Scott will cover the similarities and differences between these two birds of prey. Hopefully after this session you will be better prepared to tell these two apart in the field and at the feeder!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9687111111?pwd=ZUJlYkRkdzVldjBldjNlcE1wZWpScDZkdz09>

Wednesday, March 10, 7:00 – 8:00 pm American Woodcocks Patti Steinman

Patti will review the natural history and unique mating ritual of these fascinating birds. This is prime season for the mating display and, although we can't do a field component, Patti may reveal some local observation spots.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMkdumqpzguHtUBee15XTZ3j9Bn5vR1VC1T](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMkdumqpzguHtUBee15XTZ3j9Bn5vR1VC1T)

Wednesday, March 17, 7:00 – 8:00 pm	Mississippi Kites in NH	Steve Mirick
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There is a breeding population of Mississippi Kites in New Hampshire and Steve Mirick has been studying them for several years now. Since this is not a common New England bird, it would make an interesting road trip for birders. Come find out about it.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9678123456?pwd=ZUJlZWVkdDZkdzRldjBwYkFMcE9KLT09>

Wednesday, March 24, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Bird Song Don Kroodsmma

Don is well-known for his work with bird songs and recordings. He will share the inside story of this enthralling aspect of these animals we find so engaging, especially in the spring as they sing an amazing variety of songs.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/joinme/register/tZcqfuqopzgpEtbCe2mnRMOg5gAFU5vDZFNe>

Wednesday, March 31, 6:30 – 7:30 pm **Volunteer Opportunities for Birders**

If you are interested in using your birding skill to assist a local non-profit organization, come listen to the local opportunities available at the Mass Audubon Connecticut River Sanctuaries by Jonah Keene, Sanctuaries Director, and at The Trustees (formerly The Trustees of Reservations) by Julie Richburg, Lead Ecologist, Inland Natural Resources.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?from=addon&url=https%3A%2F%2Fus02web.zoom.us%2Fmeeting%2Fregister%2FtZlPfumhrDojGdXV6w-RxITZNafLQmvTdY-Z>

FIELD TRIP NEWS

Please check the HBC website or Facebook page for updates.

Given the ongoing pandemic, there are no in-person field trips scheduled. The Board will reevaluate this decision on an ongoing basis and will schedule some get togethers as soon as possible. The [Resources](#) page of the HBC website includes links to some activities and descriptions of birding locations. A few field trips throughout New England may be accessed by going to www.birdingcalendar.com.

Carol Mardeusz, Field Trip Chair

THE HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB MIRACLE LENS CLOTH

This past August, I took a United flight to Salt Lake City. It was a work trip, but I brought along my new pair of 10x42 Nikon Monarch 7's, hoping to see some interesting bird life. The morning after my arrival I discovered to my horror that I had left my binocs under the seat on the plane. Scolding myself for not attaching a name tag to them, I returned to the airport. The baggage rep made an unsuccessful call, but told me that the last flights of the day go for servicing at the SkyWest hangar at SLC, and lost & found items from several airlines are pooled. All I could do was file a loss report with United and continue with my trip, disappointed there would be no proper birding in Utah and Wyoming. (Were those Swainson's Hawks I passed on the road?)

Weeks went by and I received a couple of 'Sorry!' messages from United. I consoled myself imagining that maybe a low-paid airline worker was enjoying unexpected, amazing optics, and had taken up birding. Meanwhile, actual miracles were happening...

It came to pass that the binoculars were discovered by diligent service folks, and sent to Lost and Found Central, a third party company in Atlanta. Their Delta department handled them (which is surprising since I lost them on United). An employee discovered the Hampshire Bird Club label on the lens cloth, attached to the binoculars. He looked up our club online, and contacted our president, Bob Zimmermann. Henry Lappen happened to hear Bob's announcement, during the HBC October Zoom meeting, that a pair of binoculars found on a plane had been traced to the club. Henry told me about it, and Bob put me in touch with Atlanta. The binocs arrived home safely a week later. Many thanks to Bob, Henry and all the hands, human and unseen, that played their part in returning my Monarchs.

Moral:

Always label every item while traveling.

Do an idiot check with hands as well as eyes under plane seats before exiting.

Don't give up hope when something is lost.

AND...

Never carry birding optics without attaching a Hampshire Bird Club Lens Cloth in its neat little bag!

Chris Yerlig, falcon@mailworks.org

PS: The first 5 people to email me will receive their very own HBC miracle lens cloth!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Save the date! **Welcome Meeting for New Members: Wednesday, February 17, 7-8 pm.** This informal gathering is sponsored by the HBC Membership and the Education Committees for us to meet and learn more about each other and the club. HBC is for birders of all levels, and whether you are brand new to birding or highly experienced, new to the area or a longtime resident, or some combination thereof, we hope this gathering will be an opportunity to share knowledge, meet some new comrades, and connect with a few people in preparation for the time that we can all finally get to meet and bird in person! All members who have joined HBC since last January will receive a Zoom invitation for this event. We hope you will attend. Questions? Contact Lissa, membership@hampshirebirdclub.org.

We welcome these new members who have joined in the past month: Sally Crawford, Pelham; Ellen Gallagher, Hadley; Jim Knittle, Belchertown; Deborah Levine, Holyoke; Mary Ann Lowe, South Hadley; Lauren Paret, Leeds; Halie Parker, Montague; Debbie Rittall, Montague; and Bill Donnelly, Florence

PROPOSED HBC BYLAWS CHANGE

Article X of the current HBC bylaws specifies that the membership shall vote on a slate of candidates for the Board of Directors as proposed by the Nominating Committee at the annual meeting in May of each year; the slate includes the names of the proposed officers (president, vice-president/program director, treasurer, communications secretary and membership secretary). At the same time, this section of the bylaws specifies that members may nominate candidates for positions on the Board from the floor at the annual meeting. It's not at all clear, however, how voting for the new nominee fits with a vote on the slate presented by the Nominating Committee. If elected, do they become the 12th Board member? Is that person excluded from consideration as an officer?

The Board proposes that the bylaws be changed so that the membership shall vote on individual candidates rather than a slate of candidates at the annual meeting; the requisite number of candidates with the most votes will be elected to the Board for two-year terms. The Board members will then elect the officers at the first meeting of the newly elected Board in the ensuing fiscal year, which begins on June 1.

Additionally, the current bylaws specify one-year terms for Board members. In practice this has led to the view that initial election to the Board implies long-term service on the Board. With an eye to encouraging more HBC members to become involved in HBC governance, the Board also proposes that Board members serve two-year terms, but without term limits. The aim of this change is to bring new ideas and more diversity to the Board, and ultimately to the HBC.

In accordance with Section XII of the current bylaws, we will present these changes for your consideration at the February members/program meeting and discuss them at the March members/program meeting. Assuming that we will not be able to meet in person in March, we will arrange for the entire HBC membership to participate electronically in a vote on whether or not to accept the changes between March 8, the date of the March members/program meeting, and March 22.

The current wording of the HBC bylaws (left column with changed portions in strike-through) and the proposed changes (italicized, right column) are as follows.

Article V - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

5.1 The HBC shall be directed by a Board of Directors (hereafter called "the Board") composed of the following: President, Vice President/Program Director, Treasurer, Communications Secretary, Membership Secretary, and six members at large, ~~including the immediate past president (if possible).~~

5.2 ~~Officers and Board members shall be elected for one-year terms and shall be eligible for reelection.~~

Article X - ELECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

10.1 In consultation with the Board, the President shall appoint a nominating committee ~~at the March program meeting~~ each year. The nominating committee shall be composed of three members of the HBC. At least one member of this committee shall be a member of the Board and at least one shall be a person who is not on the Board, but from the membership at large. ~~The nominating~~

Article V - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

5.1 The HBC shall be directed by a Board of Directors (hereafter called "the Board") composed of the following: President, Vice President/Program Director, Treasurer, Communications Secretary, Membership Secretary, and six members at large.

5.2 *Board members shall be elected for two-year terms and Officers for one-year terms; Board members and Officers shall be eligible for reelection.*

Article X - ELECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

10.1 *Directors.* In consultation with the Board, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee to be *announced at the February program/members meeting* each year. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three members of the HBC. At least one member of this committee shall be a member of the Board and at least one shall be a person who is not on the Board, but from the

~~committee shall present a slate of officers and other board members to be voted on at the annual meeting in May. To the extent possible, this slate shall fully represent the diversity of the HBC membership, e.g. in gender, age, etc. and shall reflect any specific directions from the board with respect to diversity. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor, if seconded.~~

~~10.2 Newly elected officers and board members shall assume their duties immediately after the June program.~~

~~10.3 To be eligible for election to the Board, nominees must have been members of the HBC for at least one calendar year prior to the election.~~

~~10.4 To be eligible for the presidency of the HBC, the nominee must have served on the Board for at least one calendar year prior to the election.~~

HBC members shall be invited to suggest individuals for Board membership to the Nominating Committee by the March program/members meeting.

10.2 Nominations. At the program/members meeting in April, the Nominating Committee shall propose a list of at least five or six nominees (in alternate years) to replace those Board members whose terms are expiring. Board incumbents are eligible for re-election and all nominees must have been members of the HBC for at least one calendar year prior to the election. The Nominating Committee shall strive to select nominees that represent the diversity of the HBC membership with respect to gender, color, race, age, and physical ability and, further, reflect any specific directions from the Board regarding diversity.

10.3 Election. The nominees shall be voted on individually by written ballot at the annual program/members meeting in May. Nominations may be made from the floor at the May meeting and, if seconded, added to the list of nominees. Only HBC members may make nominations and vote in the election. Following the vote, the five or six candidates (depending on the year) with the highest vote totals will join the Board. In the event that the members meeting cannot be held in person, the Board can hold the election in an alternate format that will allow all members to participate. In the case of a tie for the final (fifth or sixth) spot, one of the tied candidates will be selected by coin toss. Newly elected Board members shall assume their duties on June 1.

10.4. Officers. Officers shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors at the first Board meeting after June 1. This meeting will be convened and presided over by the President of the preceding club year. Each officer shall hold office for one year.

10.5. Vacancies. A vacancy on the board may be filled for the unexpired portion of the term by a two-thirds vote of the Directors.

10.6. In the first year in which this policy is enacted, the six Board members who have been serving the fewest number of years will be considered to be in the first year of their terms; other Board members, if nominated, may be considered for re-election.

2020 QUABBIN CBC RESULTS

The Quabbin count occurred on January 2, 2021. We tallied 62 species with two count week (CW) birds, and added a new species to the count, Iceland Gull, bringing our all-time total to 119 species. We had 4 new high counts, Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin, Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Wren and a third highest count of Red-breasted Nuthatch. Considering the weather we faced in the morning – slush and rain until around 10 am – I think we did pretty well! I was hoping winter finches would have made a bigger splash on this count, but it looks like they’ve moved on. I want to thank everyone for helping out especially under less than desirable conditions and let’s not forget about the pandemic!

American Black Duck - 47	Mourning Dove – 208	Carolina Wren - 30
Mallard - 103	Eastern Screech-Owl - 1	Golden-crowned Kinglet - 7
Ring-necked Duck - 2	Great Horned Owl - 5	Eastern Bluebird - 73
Bufflehead - CW	Barred Owl - 3	Hermit Thrush - 1
Common Goldeneye - 9	Northern Saw-whet Owl - 2	American Robin - 158
Hooded Merganser - 51	Belted Kingfisher - 5	Northern Mockingbird - 7
Common Merganser - 149	Red-bellied Woodpecker - 46	European Starling - 585
Red-breasted Merganser – CW	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 1	Cedar Waxwing - 2
Ruffed Grouse - 6	Downy Woodpecker - 86	American Tree Sparrow - 60
Wild Turkey - 139	Hairy Woodpecker - 33	Dark-eyed Junco - 416
Common Loon – 5	Northern Flicker - 7	White-throated Sparrow - 59
Horned Grebe - 4	Pileated Woodpecker - 18	Song Sparrow - 30
Sharp-shinned Hawk - 1	Merlin - 3	Northern Cardinal - 127
Cooper’s Hawk - 1	Blue Jay - 532	Red-winged Blackbird - 6
Bald Eagle - 16	American Crow - 123	House Finch - 56
Red-shouldered Hawk - 2	Common Raven - 28	Purple Finch - 2
Red-tailed Hawk - 43	Black-capped Chickadee - 920	Red Crossbill - 15
Ring-billed Gull – 113	Tufted Titmouse - 348	Common Redpoll - 55
Herring Gull - 2	Red-breasted Nuthatch - 240	Pine Siskin - 1
Iceland Gull - 1	White-breasted Nuthatch - 202	American Goldfinch - 30
Gull Species - 200	Brown Creeper - 26	House Sparrow - 533
Rock Pigeon – 91	Winter Wren - 2	

40 observers making up 18 parties with one feeder watcher.

Weather overnight included light snow and rain that created a slushy inch or so by daybreak and light to at times heavy rain that continued to about 10 am. After that it became partly cloudy with an occasional gusty wind out of the west-northwest. Temperatures ranged from 30 to 41 degrees F. Overall, there was a substantial amount of open water this year, with the main body of Quabbin wide open.

Scott Sumner

THE BOBOLINK PROJECT

Bobolinks are a grassland bird species that's disappearing in the northeastern US, and the decline is largely due to the early summer mowing of the hayfields in which Bobolinks are actively nesting. [The Bobolink Project](#) by Mass Audubon connects people who are able to donate funds with farmers who are willing to help Bobolinks—but who also face stark economic realities and financial pressures. Financial contributions to the Bobolink Project allow Mass Audubon to “buy time” for nesting Bobolinks on working farms. The link to donate is

https://secure2.convio.net/mas/site/Donation2?idb=1477565999&df_id=5140&mfc_pref=T&5140.donation=form1&5140.donation=root&df_id=5140&idb=168012366&mfc_pref=T.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Hitchcock Center for the Environment

Nature Trivia Night

Wednesdays 7 pm-8:30 pm: February 10, March 10, April, 10

\$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

Massachusetts Wildlife Success Stories: Peregrine Falcon & American Kestrel - Online

Thursday, February 18, 7:00-8:00 pm with Dave Paulson, MassWildlife

[Register](#) online at the Mass Audubon website.

Fast-flying, powerful, and efficient hunters, peregrine falcons are now more commonly seen than in previous years. With the help of a collaborative restoration effort, these birds are now nesting in cities as well as more rural places throughout the Commonwealth. In contrast, the American Kestrel, our smallest falcon, is still experiencing a decline in population throughout most of North America.

Current research on kestrels involves documenting nest boxes, which can lead to a better understanding of this species and how to help restore them. Learn about research efforts for both the kestrel and peregrine and how you can help to ensure the well-being of these amazing birds of prey.

Birding for Everyone

Saturday, February 20, 10 am

Join us online for our monthly lesson and birding discussion. This month Laura Beltran will talk about Project Feederwatch followed by questions and open discussion of birding in the Valley. We meet online the third Saturday of every month and lead small group walks on the fourth Saturday. Focus is on novice, beginner and intermediate birders with advanced birders sharing their experience and knowledge. All are welcome. For more info or to join, contact Jonah at jkeane@massaudubon.org.

Beginner Birdwatching 1 – Online

Wednesdays, March 3-31, 6:30-8:30 pm (8 sessions, some back-to-back on the same evening)

[Register online](#) at the Mass Audubon website.

Learn birding basics from the experts--from different bird families to various tools and resources used by birders. Find out what makes birds unique in the animal kingdom; where and how to locate birds in urban, suburban, and rural areas; and get introduced to basic bird biology and behavior. This online class will help you get started and build your skills at locating, observing, and identifying local birds so you can join one of the fastest growing hobbies in North America, with opportunities to practice every week.

Each weekly class will include optional, self-directed outdoor observation exercises and a 30-minute follow-up discussion session a week later, providing an opportunity for you to observe birds and share your discoveries and questions with classmates and instructors.

dropping from the sky
starlings mark naked branch
like musical notes

Haiku by Marcia Merithew

Sunlight reflecting
Scattered light on gray feathers
A corvid turns blue

Haiku by Laura Beltran

Dave Gross, Editor

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 37, No. 7
March 2021

Dear reader, do you know which song was awarded the “Song of the Century” by the National Endowment for the Arts? This song also has the same rating from the Recording Industry Association of America. And the American Film Institute ranked it as the best movie song of the past 100 years. The music was composed by Harold Arlen and the lyrics by Yip Harburg. And is about bluebirds. Yes, it’s *Over the Rainbow*. I am sure you know Judy Garland’s original version. There are many other covers. One you absolutely should hear if you haven’t is by Israel Kamakawiwo’ole. This recording is the single, first demo take of a “Rainbow” and “What a Wonderful Life” medley. It is phenomenal. You can find it on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1bFr2SWP1I>.

I think the lyrics really align with the state of the world right now as we get more and more people vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 just as we begin to enter bird spring migration season. Here they are.

Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high
There's a land that I've heard of once in a lullaby.
Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue
And the dreams that you dare to dream,
Really do come true.

Someday I'll wish upon a star
And wake up where the clouds are far behind me.
Where troubles melt like lemon drops,
High above the chimney tops,
That's where you'll find me.

Somewhere over the rainbow, bluebirds fly.
Birds fly over the rainbow
Why then, oh why can't I?
If happy little Bluebirds fly beyond the rainbow
Why, oh why can't I?

Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high
There's a land that I've heard of once in a lullaby.
Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue
And the dreams that you dare to dream
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COMING PROGRAMS

March 8, 2021. Lukas Musher. Amazing Amazonia: The Evolution of South America's Mega-diverse Biome.

April 12, 2021. Daniel Klem. Collisions between birds and windows: A deadly conservation issue for birds and people.

May 10, 2021. **TBA.**

June 14, 2021. **TBA.**

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, March 8 at 7:15 pm via Zoom

Lukas Musher presents

Amazing Amazonia: The Evolution of South America's Mega-diverse Biome

The outstanding biodiversity of Central and South America has fascinated biologists for centuries. Amazonia – the most biodiverse biome in the Neotropics – contains at least 10% of all bird, 18% of all tree, and as much as 40% of all butterfly species globally. Notably, Amazonia is observed to be the primary source of biodiversity to other Neotropical biomes, meaning that this region has produced a large portion of the biodiversity seen across tropical America in general. What drives species origination and accumulation in these biodiverse regions? Why is the Amazon rainforest so species-rich? What biological processes cause new species of birds to form in tropical America? How has the historical landscape influenced the patterns of biodiversity seen today? In this talk I will examine what makes Amazonia so extraordinary, focusing primarily on South American birds. I will discuss the history of the South American landscape and its biodiversity, highlight current challenges in studying this history, and point to some of the conservation concerns threatening South America. I will additionally discuss my own research and field experience in the American tropics, and try to answer some of the questions about what makes this region of the world so biodiverse. Using a combination of field sampling, genomic sequencing, and statistical analysis, I will show that the history of Amazonian birds is complex, but is closely tied to changes in the Neotropical landscape. I will also show that because much of the bird diversity in Amazonia is range-restricted and remains undiscovered, future deforestation and climate change pose major threats to Amazonian biodiversity in the near term.

Lukas Musher is a postdoctoral researcher at the American Museum of Natural History and a Research Associate at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University. He obtained a B.S. in Ecology and Evolution from the University of Pittsburgh, a M.A. in Conservation Biology from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. from the American Museum of Natural History's Gilder Graduate School. His research combines population, genomic, biogeographic, and macroevolutionary modeling in order to study how Neotropical bird diversity originates and is maintained.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

As announced at the February club meeting, the 2021 HBC Nominating Committee has been formed. The members are Betsy Higgins, Jim Lafley, and Dave Gross. The committee is charged with identifying candidates for board membership to be presented at the April club meeting.

If you have a suggestion for a club member who would make a good board member (including yourself) please let one of the Nominating Committee members know soon after the March club meeting.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We welcome these new members who joined last month: Cindy Drumgool, Deerfield; Jerry Schwartz, Hamilton; Karen and Joe Shea, Harvard; and Mary Sullivan, Boxborough.

It was a pleasure to meet the many who were able to attend the recent Zoom event for this year's new members!

Lissa Ganter, membership@hampshirebirdclub.org.

FIELD TRIP NEWS

Please check the HBC website or Facebook page for updates.

Given the ongoing pandemic, there are no in-person field trips scheduled. The Board will reevaluate this decision on an ongoing basis and will schedule some get-togethers as soon as possible. The [Resources](#) page of the HBC website includes links to some activities and descriptions of birding locations. A few field trips throughout New England may be accessed by going to www.birdingcalendar.com.

Carol Mardeusz, Field Trip Chair

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee held 3 well-attended virtual sessions in February. Plum Island Birding and Sharpies v. Coopers were very popular. The HBC Board and Education Committee members enjoyed meeting and sharing aspects of the Club with several new HBC members at the New Members Meeting on February 17.

We are featuring four virtual sessions in March and three in April on Wednesday nights. If you are interested, please register by sending a message to virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org and please **mention the workshop you would like to attend**.

Wednesday, March 10, 7:00 – 8:00 pm American Woodcocks Patti Steinman

Patti will review the natural history and unique mating ritual of these fascinating birds. This is prime season for the mating display and, although we can't do a field component, Patti may reveal some local observation spots.

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There is a breeding population of Mississippi Kites in New Hampshire and Steve has been studying them for several years now. Since this is not a common New England bird, it would make an interesting road trip for birders. Come find out about it.

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Don is well-known for his work with bird songs and recordings. He will share the inside story of this enthralling aspect of these animals we find so engaging, especially in the spring as they sing an amazing variety of songs.

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If you are interested in using your birding skill to assist a local non-profit organization, come listen to the local opportunities at the Mass Audubon Connecticut River Sanctuaries by Jonah Keene, Sanctuaries Director and available at The Trustees (formerly The Trustees of Reservations) by Julie Richburg, Lead Ecologist, Inland Natural Resources.

Wednesday, April 14, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Birding Hampden County

Join us for the third installment of our series on local birding places in the Valley. Several birders will share some birding locations in the southern county in Massachusetts' Connecticut River Valley.

Wednesday, April 21, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Dragonflies & Damselflies Dave Small

Expand your sightings while out birding by watching and identifying those fast-flying Odonates, aka dragonflies and damselflies. Dave will show us some of these beautiful and amazing creatures which can be an interesting diversion when birding gets slow in the summer.

Wednesday, April 28, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Plantings for Birds & Bees Dan Ziomek

Spring is a good time to consider expanding your garden. Dan is joining us again to share some plants we should consider adding to our yards to support the birds and bees that visit us. These plantings will aesthetically enhance our gardens for our pleasure as well.

Do-It-Yourself Field Trips started on February 1st with a virtual meeting to learn about Aqua Vitae Road, our first DIY field trip location. The session provided directions to the area and reviewed the access information and habitats so individuals could bird the area on their own. The five target birds were Horned Lark, Barred Owl, Peregrine Falcon, Song Sparrow, and Savannah Sparrow. On March 1st we will share our individual experiences with each other. We are hoping to record the session and make it available on the website.

Our next Do-It-Yourself Field Trip orientation session will be on Monday, April 5, 7 pm on Zoom. Each month an area is chosen, and a leader describes the location and the five target species for that area. Anyone who wishes to participate has a month to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the Zoom event the following month. For March our location is the 1840 Oxbow, Northampton and the target birds are Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, and Bald Eagle. If you wish to join the April DIY Zoom, report your findings at the Oxbow, and learn of April's field trip location, e-mail virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org.

PROPOSED HBC BYLAWS CHANGE

The HBC board is proposing a change to the club bylaws that will alter the election of board members. The gist of the proposal is that the vote will be on individual candidates rather than a slate of candidates at the annual meeting. In addition, Board positions will be changed from one-year to two-year terms and officers will be elected by the Board. The rationale for these changes is given in the February newsletter as are the current and proposed bylaws.

As noted in the newsletter and at the February club meeting, all HBC members are eligible to vote on this bylaws change. That vote will be done online between March 8 and March 22. The link to vote is https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSftwLjeklajay_UPcwQYXi1AiMUjQF6yzPu9BDF1pmbF9oaYQ/viewform?usp=sf_link. HBC members who wish to vote using a paper ballot should contact the newsletter editor at newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org by March 10 to allow for mailing delays. The proposed new language for the bylaws is below, with new language in italics.

Article V - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

5.1 The HBC shall be directed by a Board of Directors (hereafter called "the Board") composed of the following: President, Vice President/Program Director, Treasurer, Communications Secretary, Membership Secretary, and six members at large.

5.2 *Board members shall be elected for two-year terms and Officers for one-year terms; Board members and Officers shall be eligible for re-election.*

Article X - ELECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

10.1 *Directors.* In consultation with the Board, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee to be announced at the February program/members meeting each year. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three members of the HBC. At least one member of this committee shall be a member of the Board and at least one shall be a person who is not on the Board, but from the membership at large. *HBC members shall be invited to suggest individuals for Board membership to the Nominating Committee by the March program/members meeting.*

10.2 *Nominations.* At the program/members meeting in April, the Nominating Committee shall propose a list of at least five or six nominees (in alternate years) to replace those Board members whose terms are expiring. Board incumbents are eligible for re-election and all nominees must have been members of the HBC for at least one calendar year prior to the election. *The Nominating Committee shall strive to select nominees that represent the diversity of the HBC membership with respect to gender, color, race, age, and physical ability and, further, reflect any specific directions from the Board regarding diversity.*

10.3 *Election.* The nominees shall be voted on individually by written ballot at the annual program/members meeting in May. Nominations may be made from the floor at the May meeting and, if seconded, added to the list of nominees. Only HBC members may make nominations and vote in the election. Following the vote, the five or six candidates (depending on the year) with the highest vote totals will join the Board. In the event that the members meeting cannot be held in person, the Board can hold the election in an alternate format that will allow all members to participate. In the case of a tie for the final (fifth or sixth) spot, one of the tied candidates will be selected by coin toss. Newly elected Board members shall assume their duties on June 1.

10.4. *Officers.* Officers shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors at the first Board meeting after June 1. This meeting will be convened and presided over by the President of the preceding club year. Each officer shall hold office for one year.

10.5. *Vacancies.* A vacancy on the board may be filled for the unexpired portion of the term by a two-thirds vote of the Directors.

10.6. *In the first year in which this policy is enacted, the six Board members who have been serving the fewest number of years will be considered to be in the first year of their terms; other Board members, if nominated, may be considered for re-election.*

A CHAT WITH MARYLEE BOMBOY AND JOHN VAN DE GRAAFF

In mid-February I joined Marylee and John for a chat about birds, photography, travel and people they have known. This month is the first part of the chat that covers their entries into bird watching and some of the characters that they met along the way.

Marylee Bomboy: John isn't here yet, but I will just do a preface for you. When I met John Van de Graaff he had never in his life been to a US National Park.

Newsletter: Oh, my.

MB: He did not know one bird from the next. He had lived in Europe a lot, had been to every art museum in Europe, and he knew a lot about art. I knew very little, so when we got together he taught me about art and I slowly, slowly introduced him to the idea that it might be nice to visit a national park and to have some binoculars to look for a few birds. And, as with many people who are converted, he got really into it. So that's the preface to the story.

N: What got you started in bird watching?

MB: What got me started with birding was going to Kenya. I went to Kenya in 1980 and spent a month there. I was taking a graduate course on international education for which I visited schools, but part of the program was also going on safari. We went to the Maasai Mara and a number of other parks, but what blew me away was not so much the giraffes, zebras, lions and elephants, but the birds!

That was true even in Nairobi. There's a bird there called a Superb Starling and, indeed, it is a starling that is superb. It is turquoise and orange and it just *hits* you. It's all over the place. Out in the reserves there are tons of weaver birds that make all kinds of nests and colorful rollers among others. When we came back from that trip, my first husband and I bought a house in the country, bought a bird book, put up bird feeders and became birders.

N: John, how do you describe your entry into birdwatching?

John Van de Graaff: I was living in New York City close to Central Park and I had gotten to know a legendary Central Park birder called Starr Saphir – not her real name -- she invented it. She was leading regular birdwatching walks in

Central Park and I began joining her. It was it was great fun; after a little while I brought a camera and I started taking pictures of the birds. At one point I said to Starr, "Would you like to come over and see some of my bird pictures?" and she said, "Oh yes I'd love to." So she came to our apartment and I showed her the pictures and she said, "Oh John, these are great." I said "Would you like copies of them?" And she said "Oh yes." They were in the form of slides and I said "Fine. I can make copies for you." I ended up giving her probably 100 or more over the next couple of years. She used them in the classes on birding that she taught for New York Audubon. Her interest and support gave me a lot of confidence in my bird photography skills.

MB: Starr really became a friend and we had the good fortune to bird with her in Arizona when she was visiting her daughter there. She also came to visit us in Northampton soon after our move here and found our life Cerulian Warbler for us on a walk up Mount Holyoke. Unfortunately she died in 2013; she was featured in an HBO documentary called "Birders: The Central Park Effect."

JVdG: She was a wonderful person. And as I said, she was very encouraging to me about my bird photography. A bit later I got to know Arthur Morris, in Florida. We met him in 2001 at Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island. We were lined up early one morning to go in and there was a guy in a big car in front of us. He had a pony tail down his back and had a very large camera.

When the gate opened we headed in; our first stop was the same as his – he was photographing Roseate Spoonbills with his large camera. We fell into conversation, and he gave us a pamphlet with some of his bird photos. I later bought his book *The Art of Bird Photography*.

A couple of years later we were going out birding with him. Once we stopped with a number of people around and I told them, "We

are with Arthur Morris. He's one of the best bird photographers in the United States.” He turned to me and said “What's this *one of \$#~+?*”

N: That's an interesting revelation about him. Roughly at that same time, maybe the late 1990s or early 2000s or so, he gave a talk to the HBC. I recall that there were some comments in the audience that align with your recollections.

JvdG: I went on a couple of birding sessions with him in Florida, but the most significant thing I did with him were three wonderful trips to the Galapagos for a total of four weeks in 2006, 2008 and 2010. You may remember that I gave a talk to the HBC on the Galapagos.

MB: I had gone to the Galapagos on my own in 1987 so I did not go with John in any of these trips. But I did a lot of birding before I met John: in the Galapagos, in parts of Ecuador, in Costa Rica, in Mexico, as well as in the US. My first husband died in 1987 and birding provided a wonderful way for me to travel alone but with lovely people with interests similar to mine.

After John and I got together, one of the first birding trips that we did was to the Camargue in France (the Rhone delta, east of Marseilles). We went there in February 2001 and with a British organization called The Traveling Naturalist. It's a wonderful birding area and we have returned there on our own many times. We've also traveled throughout Europe, including to Albania, Bulgaria, Sweden, Italy and Spain with The Traveling Naturalist or Naturetrek (another British company that does excellent trips). I would particularly recommend Spain as a great destination for birding in Europe.

N: John, which comes first? Is it the photography that comes first, or is it the subject that that draws you to take the picture of the subject?

JvdG: It's very hard to prioritize those two. I photograph all the time. For example, my subject early this morning was shadows on snow just outside our back door. You may know my blips [<https://www.blipfoto.com/VandeGraaff>]. I put up an image every day, so if you go through them you get a good sense of what I do

photography-wise. I started on blipfoto in 2010, and I've posted some photos from earlier. That's a good way to see what I've been doing for the past decade (and more). Every blip has a commentary, mainly short but some longer. They include our stays in Paris in the winter, if you're curious about them.

MB: I would like to add something on the question of birds versus photography. John likes to photograph birds, and so, when there are birds available, he'll do birds. A lot of the time there aren't birds around, and he photographs of whatever is available. He really enjoys taking photos!

N: To what extent has this pandemic and the related restrictions on everything, including travel, affected your birding?

MB: We were in Paris in the middle of March 2020. We usually go to Paris the first week in January and we stay through the end of March or beginning of April. As you may know, the European Union now gives you 90 days without a visa, so we stay for 90 days. They used to not pay attention, so we used to stay longer, but now we come back in 90 days. We were there, as the pandemic hit, and we were going to wait it out over there until I got an email from my brother-in-law, who said “Look, I think Trump is going to close the airports. You better get back if you want to get back.” So we left on the 13th of March, and since the 13th of March, we haven't gone any further than Springfield. It's quite a change for us – spending the winter with snow and ice.

We've been doing birding around our neighborhood and at Fort River Refuge in Hadley, a 10-minute drive from our house. John has gotten some nice shots of Blue-winged Warblers there. We sometimes go to the Rail Trail, but the Rail Trail birding area for us is a longer drive and it is also full of people with bicycles and prams and so on. We sometimes go up Mount Holyoke for the Cerulian and Worm-eating Warblers and any others that happen to be there. Usually in season you'll find Indigo Buntings and Scarlet Tanagers.

(continued in the April newsletter)

MASS AUDUBON VIRTUAL 2021 BIRDERS MEETING

Mass Audubon's annual [Birders Meeting](#) has been a constant in the birding community for nearly 30 years. And we're determined to keep the tradition going in 2021! Online sessions will be held on March 7, 8, 14 and 15. Each session will include a live presentation followed by a Q&A.

This year's theme—*The Bird Next Door*—is all about birding locally. Birding your "patch" means focusing your efforts on one local area to develop a deep knowledge of the place and its birds. Your patch can be your yard, your neighborhood, the swamp down the street, your apartment balcony – any place you visit regularly.

We'll hear from experts on how to create bird-rich and biodiverse yards, the effect of neighborhood birds on the human-nature connection, strategies for finding interesting local species, and birding in urban landscapes. To sign up, click the link above or navigate to the Mass Audubon website.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Hitchcock Center for the Environment

Nature Trivia Night

Wednesdays 7 pm-8:30 pm: March 10, April, 10

\$50 per team of 1-4 people; please [register online](#) at 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 households.**

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

Beginner Birdwatching 1 – Online

Wednesdays, March 3-31, 6:30-8:30 pm (8 sessions, some back-to-back on the same evening)

[Register online](#) at the Mass Audubon website.

Learn birding basics from the experts--from different bird families to various tools and resources used by birders. Find out what makes birds unique in the animal kingdom; where and how to locate birds in urban, suburban, and rural areas; and get introduced to basic bird biology and behavior. This online class will help you get started and build your skills at locating, observing, and identifying local birds so you can join one of the fastest growing hobbies in North America, with opportunities to practice every week.

Each weekly class will include optional, self-directed outdoor observation exercises and a 30-minute follow-up discussion session a week later, providing an opportunity for you to observe birds and share your discoveries and questions with classmates and instructors.

Raucous Blue Jays abound
In summer, fall and winter
Spring finds them skulking
Haiku by Jim Lafley

dropping from the sky
starlings mark naked branch
like musical notes
Haiku by Marcia Merithew

Dave Gross, Editor
newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
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Dear reader, it with considerable sadness that I must announce that this will be the last issue of the Hampshire Bird Club newsletter. The crushing expense of USPS mail costs piled on top of the tremendous overhead of the HBC website has broken the HBC treasury to the point that the club must disband. I didn't want to be the one to break this to you, but, alas, it is my duty to do so. So here we are, with one last foolish newsletter, of all things, coming out on April 1!

If I got you with that one, you'd best pay attention to other parts of the newsletter that I and my merry band of fools, David Spector and Henry Lappen (one professional and two amateur, and one a bit naughty), have come up with. I realize that it may be difficult to tell the difference between the usual newsletter blather and actual satire, so best of luck. And yes, those are real towns in the USA. You'll see.

And speaking of Wisdom (?), did you see the article in *The Guardian* about Wisdom, the Laysan Albatross? She, at age 70, is the oldest known wild bird. That in and of itself is quite an accomplishment. What is in more remarkable is that on February 1 of this year she hatched a chick, approximately number thirty-seven for her, in the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge. You can read more about her at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/05/wisdom-the-albatross-the-worlds-oldest-known-wild-bird-has-another-chick-at-age-70>. And that's no foolin'!

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, April 12 at 7:15 pm via Zoom

Daniel Klem presents

Collisions between birds and windows: A deadly conservation issue for birds and people

Past and current investigations repeatedly document that birds behave as if clear and reflective windows are invisible to them. Building upon the published works of the 1970s-1990s, current investigators have refined estimates of annual avian mortality attributable to sheet glass and plastic, and the species, structure, and landscape settings involved in these unintended and unwanted strikes resulting in injury and death. With the exception of habitat destruction, and according to some estimates domestic cats, more birds annually are killed flying into windows than any other human-associated avian mortality factor, exponentially more than are attributable to communication towers, oil spills, pesticides and poisons, vehicles, and wind turbines. A billion birds annually are estimated to die striking windows in the U.S. alone, consisting of more than 12.5% (1,311 species) of the 10,500 avian species worldwide. The results of research addressing the evaluation of preventing bird-window collisions have revealed several effective methods, but additional education and short- and long-term solutions are needed to ensure the human-built environment is safe for birds the world over.

[Daniel Klem, Jr.](#) is Professor of Biology and [Sarkis Acopian Professor of Ornithology](#) and Conservation Biology at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Among other diverse avian investigations, for 47 years and continuing to the present, he studies, writes, and teaches about the [threat that sheet glass and plastic](#) pose to birds. Considered the foremost scientific expert on avian mortality attributable to windows, he regularly prepares up-to-date review articles on the topic, and is supported by research grants from government agencies, non-government organizations, and industry to evaluate methods to prevent these unintended and unwanted tragedies, by retrofitting existing windows and

developing new bird-safe panes for remodeling and new construction. His research has resulted in U.S. patents to guide the development of novel films and windows using ultraviolet (UV) signals that birds see and humans do not. He is motivated by available and growing evidence that bird-window collisions are an important animal welfare, architectural, legal, and wildlife conservation issue for birds and people worldwide.

COMING PROGRAMS

May 10, 2021. **Utku Perkas**.TBA.

June 14, 2021. **Aparajita Datta**.TBA.

BYLAWS VOTE RESULT

The proposed bylaws change for election of HBC board members passed by a vote of 69-0. Starting with the upcoming May election we will be electing board members for two-year terms and the new board will appoint club officers from among its ranks for one year terms at the board's June meeting. The goal of this change is to provide a straightforward procedure for nominating candidates from the floor at the club's May meeting and to encourage members who haven't served on the board to do so.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REORT

The 2021 HBC Nominating Committee (Betsy Higgins, Jim Lafley, and Dave Gross) has assembled a group of candidates for the upcoming board election. The nominees new to the board are Derek Allard, Ruth Garbett, Jim Lafley and Val Miller. The ballot will also include Josh Rose, who is the longest serving current board member, plus any additional candidates nominated from the floor at the April and May meetings. The current board members who will be continuing on the board, and by the new bylaw in the second year of their terms, are Laura Beltran, Lissa Ganter, Dave Gross, Helen Symons, Steve Winn, and Bob Zimmermann. They will not be on the ballot as per the new bylaw language.

A call for nominees from the floor will be made at the April and May meetings. The voting procedure will be announced at the May members' meeting and in the May newsletter.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee held four successful virtual sessions in March. The first three featured birds – *Woodcocks* by Patti Steinman, *Mississippi Kites* by Steve Mirick, and *Bird Song* by Don Kroodsma – and were all well-presented and appreciated by those attending. The fourth program focused on volunteer opportunities at Arcadia and The Trustees. The organizers of the fourth program are still looking for participants from the HBC to become involved with Arcadia and The Trustees activities.

We are featuring 3 Wednesday evening sessions in April. If you are interested, please register by sending a message to virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org and please **mention the workshop you would like to attend.**

Wednesday, April 14, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Birding Hampden County

Join us for the third installment of our series on local birding places in the Valley. Several birders will share some birding locations in the southern county in Massachusetts' Connecticut River Valley.

Wednesday, April 21, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Dragonflies & Damselflies Dave Small

Expand your sightings while out birding by watching and identifying those fast-flying Odonates, aka dragonflies and damselflies. Dave will show us some of these beautiful and amazing creatures which can be an interesting diversion when birding gets slow in the summer.

Wednesday, April 28, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Plantings for Birds & Bees Dan Ziomek

Spring is a good time to consider expanding your garden. Dan is joining us again to share some ideas for plants we should consider adding to our yards to support the birds and bees that visit us. These plantings will aesthetically enhance our gardens for our pleasure as well.

The **Do It Yourself Field Trips** are continuing. Each month an area is chosen, and a leader describes the location and 5 target species for that area. Anyone interested has a month to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the Zoom event the following month. We will meet on Monday, April 5th to share our findings from the 1840 Oxbow where the search in March was for ducks and Bald Eagles. If you are interested in joining us contact virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org.

For April the DIY Field Trip location is the Fort River, Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge and Moody Bridge Road in Hadley. The target birds are American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, Eastern Meadowlark, Turkey Vulture, and Black Vulture. Our next DIY Field Trip meeting will be on Monday, May 3, 7 pm on Zoom. If you'd like to join the meeting, report your findings at the refuge, and learn May's field trip location, e-mail virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Join us in a 30-Day Sitspot Challenge! We are inviting you to a challenge: do a "Sitspot" every day for 30 days in a row! A sitspot is a 20-minute practice of sitting at one spot outdoors and focusing on what is going on around you: the birds, the plants, the insects, the soil, the wind – all of it. You can choose to sit on your porch, in the woods, in a park – anywhere that you feel safe and comfortable to settle in for a bit. The idea of a sitspot is to widen your awareness and deepen your understanding of the natural world and you as a part of it, how you are impacting it, and how it is impacting you. What happens when you slow down and take the time to notice what is going on?

Halie Parker, Hannah Schwartz, and Janice Jorgensen will be offering a 30 minute Zoom session on **Thursday, April 15th at 6 pm** to go deeper into what a Sitspot is, the lineage of the practice, and how we can all participate in the challenge together. If you are interested in attending, please contact virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Nature Journaling with Jan Ruby-Crystal

The HBC Education Committee is featuring this new program in April. Nature Journaling has gained popularity lately and Jan Ruby-Crystal has generously offered to conduct a class for us on Zoom. Jan is the Volunteer Director of Arcadia's Art House. She has a Master's in Fine Arts and has shown her artwork locally.

In this two-hour workshop you will learn to use a Nature Journal to deepen your knowledge about birds, their behaviors, and their environments. Through Nature Journaling you will see more in nature, develop sharper awareness, improve your memory, and spark your curiosity. Whether you are new to birding or an experienced birder, bring your curiosity and a willingness to learn. No experience is necessary. You will need a blank paged journal or some blank paper (printer paper is fine), and a writing instrument. Keep it simple. If interested contact: virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Date: April 22, 2021 Time: 1:00 – 3:00 pm. Location: Zoom

Cost: Jan would appreciate a donation to Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary's Art House. Make out checks to Mass Audubon and mail to Mass Audubon – Arcadia, 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton, MA 01027 with a note or memo line that it is for the Art House.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

We welcome these new members who joined the HBC in the past month: Kristin and Matthew Bein, Belchertown; LeeAnn Kim and Alexi Arango, Amherst; Judith Lambert, Hatfield; Kevin Lewis, Belchertown; Florence Masson, Northampton; Jaime Rodominick, Brattleboro; Lenore Shepard, Northampton; Elaine Howes and Don Mientka, Williamsburg; and Kell Julliard, Shutesbury.

Also joining us on April 1 are H. Finch, streets of Northampton; W. Pleasure & W. Funn, Gum Springs, AR; U. R. Knott & I. M. Tew, Cranky Corner, LA; R. D. Arrarr, Happyland, CT; I. M. Lost, East Westmoreland, NH; and Theophilus Punoal, Florida, MA.

A CHAT WITH MARYLEE BOMBOY AND JOHN VAN DE GRAAFF

Here is part two of a chat I had with Marylee and John back in February. Part 1 in the March newsletter covered their starts in birding, Starr Saphir, Arthur Morris, and how the pandemic has interrupted their birding lives.

Newsletter: When you moved to the valley, how did you find the Hampshire Bird Club?

Marylee Bomboy: Do you remember how? I'm not sure I do.

John Van de Graaff: I think we must have looked on the internet.

MB: We did a lot of birding in New York City's Central Park. When we moved up here, we were already into birding, we knew we wanted to bird and we wanted to get to know local birders. We moved up here quite by accident. We wanted to leave New York, and we were going to see some friends who lived in Burlington Vermont. Northampton was about halfway, and we stopped here for lunch. We thought it was a nice small town. And we liked the idea of a small college town between New York and Boston.

JVdG: I can tell you how I found my local photographic group, the Pioneer Valley Photographic Artists (PVPA), which I think is the best photographic group around here. One day I went to see an exhibition of photographs at the Burnett Gallery in the Jones Library – nothing to do with birding, simply a show of photos by Bob Hallock, Professor of Physics at UMass. He told me about the PVPA, which I promptly joined.

I still am regularly involved in its meetings, usually putting up an image or two along with the other members. Another friend I met through PVPA was Les Campbell, a nationally known nature photographer. His wonderful property just up the road from the Quabbin Visitor Center in Belchertown became a frequent haunt, far more than simply the source of the frames which he provided for my photos. Sadly, Les recently passed away at age 95. We hope that the Quabbin Visitor Center will be named in honor of Les and his late wife Terry.

MB: Through the Hampshire Bird Club and the PVPA, we found a good way for us to get to know people and get to know the area. Both clubs have an interesting and lively membership

and have been a wonderful source of friendship for us.

N: John, I know the readers of the newsletter would love to find out about your father and his famous generator so, can you give us a brief description of him and the Van de Graaff generator?

JVdG: My father, Robert J. Van de Graaff, was the inventor of the Van de Graaff generator which he developed during the 1920s when he was at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. It generates high voltages which can be used for research and in industry. It is also used in physics courses to teach about static electricity. Its sparks can be spectacular, as in the shows at the Boston Museum of Science.

I'll tell you about his career. He was born in 1901 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama and studied engineering at the University of Alabama. Around 1926 he found his way to Paris, and, already interested in physics, he attended lectures by Madame Curie. We even have a letter where he described what she was like as a lecturer. Then he won a Rhodes Scholarship, so he spent four years at Oxford where he got his D.Phil. While he was at Oxford his research attracted the attention of Karl Compton, then Professor of Physics at Princeton. My father came back to the States just before Compton was appointed President of MIT and took my father along. He spent the rest of his academic career at MIT.

MB: The generator at the Museum of Science is in a large arena at the end of the museum. They do a show twice a day with it. We attended one of the shows last year, along with several groups of school children.

JVdG: My father was friends with Bradford Washburn, the museum's first director. In his early career, Washburn took a lot of aerial pictures of the western mountain ranges in the US and Canada. As the museum's founding director, he knew about my father and the generator, the original which by then was inactive in a building in Cambridge. It was

moved to its spot on the island in the Charles River where the Museum is before anything else was built. The museum was built around it. Unfortunately, my father died about a year before it was put into operation there. I have memories of a dinner at the Science Museum with my mother celebrating the opening of the generator exhibit.

N: I do have one more question that wasn't on my original list. Do you have a favorite bird photograph?

JVdG: The Painted Bunting.

MB: It's a beautiful bird. We happened upon one when we went to Texas to see Golden-cheeked Warblers. We took a side trip to a state park in Texas in the middle of nowhere; it was a long trek. They had a place where you could go into a blind to observe and photograph. The blind looked out at an area with food and water. Birds would come to bathe, because it, being Texas, was very hot.

JVdG: Soon after, in the early 2000s, I attended the National Association of Nature Photographers annual meeting and got to know a fellow called Ernie Mastroianni. I did a session with him; he was presenting. He became an editor of *Birders World*. Soon after that meeting he came upon my website with the photo of the Painted Bunting and asked if he could put it on the magazine cover. That photo is my most prestigious publication – and my favorite photo!

MB: Taking that photo was a wonderful experience. The male was there with the female – green and totally different from the multi-colored male. They were both splashing around in the water, and John took lots of pictures; it was very exciting. I suddenly looked down from the blind at something coming along crawling the ground – a big rattlesnake looking to me like it was going to come right into the blind. My life rattlesnake!

N: Oh boy.

JVdG: The other publication that I'm proud of is this one. [John holds up a copy of *MassAudubon Connections*.] This is a Piping Plover At Allens Pond in southeastern Mass.

MB: I love the Painted Bunting photograph, but the other one I love, is a gorgeous picture of an Elegant Trogon that he took in Arizona. It was in Patagonia State Park. The bird was known to be in one area of the state park and people were looking for it and looking for it, but nobody could find it. John got tired of looking and while he was having a little nap in the car I continued walking around, all alone, and there was the Elegant Trogon, sitting in silence. I ran back and got John and he ended up getting a fabulous picture of the bird from the front with all the beautiful red and green. It was our holiday card for a number of years.

N: My favorite Van de Graaff photograph is of the mother Plover with her young underneath her. It looks like a bird with six or eight legs. It's just a wonderful picture.

NEW LIBRARY BOOKS!

Check out these new additions to our bird club library:

Understanding Human Song by Woody Thrush

Feeder Etiquette: How to Eat, Drink and Be Merrily Patient at the Suet Cake by Jay Blue

Spot That Falcon: Eagle Eyes Save Lives! by Mo Dove

6 Fruits for Longer, Lusher Tail Feathers by Snow E. Egret

Why Bad Things Happen to Good Birds by Hugh Knowes

Posing for the Camera: How to Be the Most Popular Facebook Bird by Len Scloth

Qanon for the Birds by Raven Loon

Flycatcher in the Rye by Bob White

Seven Shortcuts to the Breeding Grounds by Toots Weet

Hi Sweetie! by Poecile Atricapillus

Henry Lappen, Club Librarian

HBC FIELD TRIPS RETURN!

In order to be as safe as possible during a field trip, please be sure to wear your mask, social distance, and bring your own scope as sharing is not safe as yet. All HBC field trips are limited to no more than ten participants and two leaders unless otherwise indicated in the descriptions.

Thursday, April 1, all day. Now that ice is gone from the lakes, we might have an opportunity to observe waterfowl that spent the winter hibernating under the ice. This is also the best day of the year to find Quabbie, the plesiosaur that inhabits the Quabbin Reservoir. Of course we cannot guarantee sightings of this leftover from the Cretaceous period, but we have as good a chance as anyone of seeing it. Because of the popularity of this trip, attendance is limited to those who have been on it previously. We will meet at the usual time and place, with the usual leader. Bring warm clothing, boots, food, and, in case we encounter snipe, flashlights and paper bags. Plans are being discussed for a trip to Scotland so that club members can compare Quabbie with Nessie, once international travel becomes easier again.

Sunday, April 18, 7 – 10 am, Park Hill Orchard, Easthampton. Join Laura Beltran to look for early spring migrants in Park Hill Orchard which has a variety of habitats including open fields, mixed forest, wetlands, and streams. Pre-registration is required by emailing Lauraandnature@gmail.com. (E/M)

Wednesday, April 21, 6:30 –? noon, Turners Falls Area. Join Scott Sumner as he looks for various waterfowl and early spring migrants around Barton's Cove, the Montague Sandplains, and Deerfield Meadows among other places. This trip is limited to four people. Please contact Scott by email at ssurner@aol.com to register and get the meeting location. (E)

Thursday, May 13, 6:30 – mid/late morning, Orchard Hill, Amherst. Join Scott Sumner as he looks for early spring migrants. This trip is limited to ten people. Please contact Scott by email at ssurner@aol.com to register and get the meeting location. (E)

Thursday, May 20, Morning Half Day, Quabbin, Gate 35. Join Janice Gifford and Dave Gross for this new park and walk field trip at Gate 35 in New Salem. A forested canopy, open areas, and open shoreline provide opportunities to see a variety of species. The path is wide for social distancing and is flat for easy walking. We will walk about 4-5 miles round trip and aim to be back at the cars by noon. Bring water and a snack. For information and to sign up please contact Dave at djgross@gmail.com or 413-687-8161. (E)

Saturday, May 22, 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 am. Pack a lunch or pick one up at our stop at the Cummington Creamery. For information and to sign up, please contact Dave (djgross@gmail.com or 413-687-8161) or Bob (raz@umass.edu or 413-585-0405). (E/M/S)

Carol Mardeusz, Field Trip Chair

IN LIKE A LAMB

Remember March 1 and the wind? According to Paul Caiano, the morning weather person at WAMC out of Albany, Mount Washington, New Hampshire reported that the temperature overnight on March 1 was -27 °F. The winds were out of the northwest at 102 mph, gusting to 117 mph, for a wind chill of -80 °F. Aren't you glad you decided to postpone that hike to and overnight at the Appalachian Mountain Club's Lake of the Clouds Hut?

DREAMING OF BIRDING IN BRITAIN

My breast was heaving with the hope of spying
The lovelies of England
I was Cuckoo with desire
First to woo me was the exposed Whitethroat
Atop the pendulous nests of the Golden Oriole
Next came the erect Firecrest
Naked as a Jay bird
On a flowering bush
The climax was the Ouzel

And the beautiful open Dunnocks
Carousing on the Field-fare soft undulating grasses
A Lark it was
A sensuous experience for an old Coot
Alas, I had but one Little Egret:
I never did see a pair of Great
...
Spotted Woodpeckers!

Henry Lappen

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Nothing of interest is upcoming.

Well, except for this:

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

Mass Audubon Bird-a-thon

May 14 - 15

This May bird lovers, climate champions, and nature enthusiasts from all over Massachusetts will participate in Mass Audubon's Bird-a-thon fundraiser. The birding will take place from 6 pm Friday May 14 to 6 pm Saturday, May 15. This year is particularly special because Mass Audubon is celebrating its 125th anniversary. Our goal will be to match our team's species count from last year: 153.

There will be special perks and prizes for those who fundraise at different levels, including a special event with David Sibley and Joan Walsh. For more details visit web.massaudubon.org/goto/west.

Ready to sign up for the Western Mass Bird-a-thon team? Email Patti Steinman at psteinman@massaudubon.org.

And there's this, too:

Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area

Would you be interested in maintaining bluebird and wood duck boxes at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area (FLCA)? FLCA in Northampton has 12-14 nest boxes. The bluebird boxes are cleaned and repaired annually, ideally in late winter, and the wood duck boxes should also be cleaned and prepared annually. There is need for someone to assist or lead this project. If that person is you, please contact Bruce Hart at (413)320-2841.

Raucous Blue Jays abound
In summer, fall and winter
Spring finds them skulking
Haiku by Jim Lafley

dropping from the sky
starlings mark naked branch
like musical notes
Haiku by Marcia Merithew

Dave Gross, Editor
newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 37, No. 9
May 2021

Dear reader, yes, we really didn't cancel the newsletter. I'm afraid you still have more issues coming. Pity that. (If you don't read this rag very often – and why would you? – then you should review the editorial comments for the April 2021 issue for this to make sense.)

Here we are in the big migration month of May. You'd better get out there and get some glimpses of those colorful passerines while the leaves aren't such a bother. There are some in-the-flesh field trips this month, and there are the virtual ones from our Education Committee, too. Just do it.

And finally, I'm not sure if Dolly Parton is a bird watcher, but she is a clever woman. When she was asked what she thought of dumb blonde jokes, she replied "I don't mind 'em. I know I'm not dumb and I know I'm not blonde." Happy spring!

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, May 10 at 7:15 pm via Zoom

Utku Perkaş presents

Phylogeography, species limits, phylogeny, and classification of the turacos

The bird family Musophagidae, commonly known as Turacos, are found only in sub-Saharan Africa. We used DNA sequences to examine patterns of evolution in the subfamily ([American Museum Novitates 2020\(3949\), 1-61](#)). Phylogeographic analysis revealed multiple instances of unexpectedly large divergences and cryptic taxa. Within both montane and lowland species, fixed haplotypes were found in disjunct portions of the ranges, suggesting evolutionarily independent populations with negligible recent gene flow. Two taxa originally described as subspecies, but not recognized for over 50 years, were found to be 100% diagnosable based on mitochondrial sequences. The data also revealed the existence of two polyphyletic traditional species as well as the polyphyly or paraphyly of all traditional superspecies complexes involving members of the genus *Tauraco*. Overall, our analyses of genetic and morphological variation revealed substantial and unexpected geographic diversity. We recognize 33 phylogenetic species and used DNA sequences to infer relationships among them. The results include all the phylogenetic species and, for the first time, nuclear data. We present a new classification of the Musophagidae based on our phylogeographic and phylogenetic results. We allocate the 33 species to seven previously recognized genera.

[Utku Perkaş](#) is an ornithologist and evolutionary biologist, a faculty member at the Faculty of Science in Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey, manager of the Biogeography Research Laboratory, and for 9 years a research associate in the Department of Ornithology at the American Museum of Natural History. His work incorporates practical and theoretical experience ranging from field research and museum-based studies to molecular-based laboratory and analytical techniques. Much of his recent research uses DNA sequences to reconstruct phylogeographic hypotheses of vertebrate species, particularly birds. His latest interest is how past responses to climate changes may affect the history of species, and how this knowledge can be used for conservation.

COMING PROGRAM

June 14, 2021. **Aparajita Datta**.TBA.

2021 HBC BOARD ELECTION

The recent change to the HBC Bylaws, approved in March, leads to a change in the voting procedure for the HBC Board of Directors. Starting this year, individual candidates will be elected for two-year terms. The candidates as of this writing are Derek Allard, Ruth Garbett, Jim Lafley, Val Miller and Josh Rose. Nominations from the floor for other candidates can be made at the May members' meeting. Such nominations require a second. Voting will open the day after the May meeting and will remain open through May 25. All members who provided email addresses with their membership form will receive an email with a link to the ballot. If you prefer to complete a mail-in paper ballot, please request one no later than May 14 by emailing or calling membership@hampshirebirdclub.org or (413)512-0849.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee held three successful virtual sessions in April. Over 20 birders attended the Birding Hampden County session where Michele Moore, Mike Locher, Lois Richardson, and Derek Allard featured some excellent birding areas. Dave Small gave an excellent presentation on Dragonflies and Damselflies to a very enthusiastic group. His photographs were amazing. Dan Ziomek's program on Plantings for Bird and Bees was attended by 25 HBC members who had many questions that he deftly answered. His talk featured yard plants that benefit wildlife.

Our programs are now recorded and available at the Hampshire Bird Club website at: <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/>.

We are featuring three sessions in May on **Tuesday nights**. If you are interested in attending one, please register by sending a message to virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org and **mention the workshop** you would like to attend in the subject line of your email. **Deadline for registering is 8 pm on the Sunday before the workshop.**

Tuesday, May 4, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Identifying Warblers DJ McNeil

Early May is a great time to look for warblers as they travel to their breeding grounds! This program is designed to help birders identify Northeastern warblers using sight and sound. DJ McNeil is visiting us from the University of Maryland where his research is on forest bird conservation.

Tuesday, May 11, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Spring Wildflowers Connie Parks

While you are out birding in the spring, take a break from "warbler neck" and look at the ground around you to observe the amazing wildflowers found in our woodlands, fields and marshes. Connie will introduce you to some of these special species.

Tuesday, May 25, 7:00 – 8:00 pm Foresters for Birds Jeff Ritterson

Jeff is a forester with extensive experience in forest habitat for birds and wildlife. He will be speaking about realizing habitat and broader conservation goals in forest management.

30-Day Sitspot Challenge: Following an informative session on what a Sitspot is, the 30-Day Sitspot Challenge has been poppin! HBC members participating in the challenge have been carving out 20 minutes a day to sit quietly outside and notice what is going on around them. Many people are sharing experiences through poems, photos, sound recordings, and observations. If you haven't participated yet and want to, feel free to jump in now – you can access the informational Zoom session recording on the HBC website: <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/>. We will be having a follow up Zoom meeting on Monday May 17 to make time for reflections from the 30 days. All are welcome!

Our next **Do-It-Yourself Field Trip** meeting will be on Monday, June 7 at 7 pm on Zoom. Each month an area is chosen, and a leader describes the location and 5 target species for that area. Anyone interested has a month to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the Zoom event the following month. For May, the location is Mitch's Way in Hadley. The target birds are Eastern Wood-Pewee, Veery, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler and Bank Swallow. If you'd like to join the June zoom and report your findings at Mitch's Way, e-mail virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We welcome these new members who have joined in the past month: Beth Rogers, Northampton; Amanda Pachomski, Northampton; and Jane & James Wing, Gilsum NH.

Diversity and Inclusiveness

Our club joined the AMBC (Association of Massachusetts Birding Clubs) in 2016 shortly after it was founded. The AMBC now has 22 member clubs. Its mission is to provide a forum for clubs to communicate with and learn from each other on a variety of matters pertaining to birds and the birding community. AMBC meets quarterly (now by Zoom) and also maintains a Google Group. Each club sends a representative to the meetings and any individual member of any member club is also welcome to attend and also to join the Google Group. AMBC also voices support for bird conservation legislation and other measures that protect birds. I am the temporary representative from HBC.

The main topic on the agenda for the recent AMBC spring meeting on April 6 focused on diversity, inclusion and safety within our clubs. The Anti-racist Collective of Avid Birders, Pioneer Valley and the Feminist Bird Club, Boston gave a joint presentation covering the basics of diversity, inclusivity and accessibility within their own organizations. They stressed the need for bird clubs to adopt a code of conduct that covers birding ethics but that *also* includes person-to-person behavior and a policy to address grievances. AMBC is working on a change to its own mission statement to address inclusivity and safety, as are many clubs. If you are interested in being part of a committee to work on a code of conduct for HBC please let me know at membership@hampshirebirdclub.org. There are many resources we can use.

Another presentation at the AMBC meeting was from coordinators Jeremy Spool, Kit Straley and Evan Dalton who spoke about the progress of the Massachusetts Young Birders Club (MYBC; www.massyoungbirders.org/). HBC helped to support MYBC's initial organization and it now operates under the aegis of Manomet. MYBC's goal is to make birding safe and accessible for young birders across the state. They offer online events and socially-distanced trips at locations throughout the state. In December they held a program in at the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club as part of the Christmas Bird Count.

Lissa Ganter

A CHAT WITH JANICE JORGENSEN

In April Janice Jorgensen and I talked about her work with indigenous groups in Panama, organizing the Northampton Christmas Count, her start with bird watching, and her friendly grouse. The part of the chat about Panama is here. Part two will follow in the next newsletter.

Newsletter: What got you interested in birding?

Janice Jorgensen: I had a former partner who was a birder. We lived in Belchertown at the time, and we put up feeders. A zillion Evening Grosbeaks came to it. There were Grosbeaks everywhere. The feeder was a plant tray on some plywood. I just dumped seed in it, just what the Grosbeaks like. I said, "Oh my god, look at this!"

I come from a family of hunters, so it wasn't like I didn't know what wildlife or birds were. My dad was a duck hunter, so I knew all about them, and that made it easy to get going in birding. I just have continued haphazardly without much training. Early on I took a class at Hitchcock with Steve Stanne and I just have continued.

N: I know that you go to Panama a lot. Tell me about that.

JJ: I was the Peace Corps country director from 1997 to 2002. That's how I started going to Panama, although I was there in 1971 to travel through Central America. One of the things I did while I was there was to begin formal agreements with six or seven indigenous groups. One by one I'd go meet the Chief or the King – they had different titles – to have them begin to identify the needs of their communities and learn how a Peace Corps Volunteer could assist them. During my tenure we created mutual agreements with five of the indigenous groups, approving placement of Peace Corps Volunteers within their "comarcas" or "propriedad colectivos". In

2004 I joined a board of former Peace Corps volunteers working with one indigenous group that was originally from Colombia and that crossed over into the Darién Province of Panama. I go back there over and over again to do my volunteer work. We have a nonprofit called Native Future (<https://nativefuture.org>).

We started by trying to help them get title to their land. Most of the Panamanian indigenous groups have a reservation. In essence, this group does not, so they're trying to get collective title to the land. That involves working with people and the government, and it's not exciting. I said that I didn't want to do that anymore, so I said "Why don't we do birding?" It's more fun and involves more people and we could do it as a community. I thought we could do a Christmas Bird Count there. So that's how we started.

First we had to go to the Chiefs and tell them what we were thinking of doing. They already knew us but they didn't know us in the birding element. We said here's what we do, and they said 'Yes, come to the National Congress and explain your project'. They have the Congress meeting every two years, so our President went and explained the project. Two or three communities said that it sounded interesting and that they wanted to do it. I said that we needed to pick the community that is the easiest to reach if we're going to bring our people there. It needs to be safe and, if somebody is injured, we need to be able to get them out of there. One of the communities that volunteered was one that I had visited. In 2000 I set up one of the first agreements with one of the indigenous groups, the Wounaan.

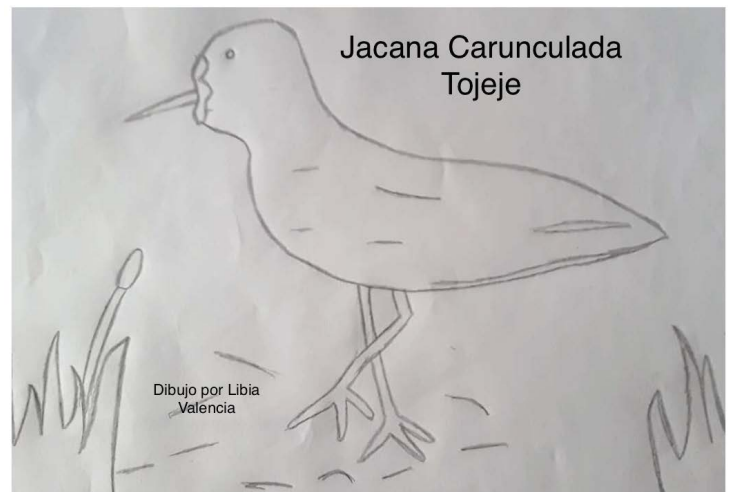
In 2017 another member of our group and I went to the community that had said yes at the National Congress meeting. We held community meetings to explain what we're doing and what birding is along with the potential benefits to the community. (Puerto Lara has many talented artisans in basket making along with carving tagua and rosewood.) We tried to explain how this potentially could bring some income to the community and what was the value of the Christmas Bird Count. I'm sure that they thought we were crazy. But ten young people volunteered to participate, and so the next day we started a training class for it. We started with

the way to identify a bird: look at its beak, look at its feet, and so on. Then we went out with a local guide who I knew from a previous trip. He lived nearby and he agreed to come once a month and work with the group.

And that's how it began. The first year we did a pretend, dry run CBC. We've done them every year since. We did one this year despite Covid, and everyone said "How can you do it?" I said "Because they're trained they know how to do it."

About seven months after we started – we were not there – a group of ten women went to the mayor of the town of about 450 to 500 and said "We want to do this, too, we want to learn too". And so they formed a group. I love going back and working with these women. When I started, I was training the women every day for two or three hours-whenver they were available. They were busy feeding kids, cooking, harvesting, and so on. I gave the women pads of paper and pencils and told them to come back the next day with a drawing of some bird that they had seen around their house. And what I learned is that one of the women is good at drawing. (Her Wattled Jacana picture is below.) I added the bird's name in Spanish and in their language. They wanted to work with kids – they wanted to teach kids what they were learning. They're delightful to me. I just have the best time with them.

What we decided was that they didn't need to go off into the trails in the mountains. We would talk about birds breeding around their homes in the community because they had lots of



responsibilities and not much time. What we did for the Christmas Count was to go to each one's home as a group, and then the home person would tell us what they saw around their house. That made them queen for a day. We all would travel from one home to the next with the kids and other community people and they would be the star. I think they like it because several of them said "I'm learning something new."

Building community is an important part of this. One of the things that we talked about with them was their folklore stories. When I'm with them, they go back and forth in both Spanish and Woun-meu, their native language. I don't need to know what they're saying – it's not important for me. Not all of them knew the folklore stories. So

I said "Well, why don't we see and how we can share stories so that you can learn the ones that you don't know?" That has not been easy, but that's the next little piece that we're working on. We are getting outside of bird folklore to folklore in general, which is something that they're losing. As they become more modernized these stories aren't being written down and people don't pass them along.

It's so much fun. That's why I keep going back twice a year. A couple of the women aren't literate. I have collected old iPhones and iPads which I have cleaned out and put in the songs of the birds and some free apps and then given to the women to study and learn. Some of the women have never had anything like that.

FIELD TRIP NEWS

In order to be as safe as possible during a field trip, please be sure to wear your mask, social distance, and bring your own scope as sharing is not safe as yet. All HBC field trips are limited to no more than ten participants and two leaders unless otherwise indicated in the descriptions. These restrictions may change as the CDC revises its Covid recommendations. Please check the website or with the trip leaders.

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Carol Mardeusz, Field Trip Chair

Red throat whirring wings
feathered frenzy near flowers
quickly sips nectar

Haiku by Laura Beltran

female mergansers
shake their spiky head feathers
like wild punk rockers

Haiku by Marcia Merithew

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

Mass Audubon Bird-a-thon

May 14 - 15

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Ready to sign up for the Western Mass Bird-a-thon team? Email Patti Steinman at psteinman@massaudubon.org.

Bring Back Birds Policy Initiative Webinar

A landmark 2019 *Science* study found that bird populations have declined by close to 3 billion birds since 1970. There is urgent need to address habitat loss and other threats so we can reverse this decline. We need a suite of actions that foster on-the-ground protection, mitigation of losses, and restoration of bird populations and the habitats they need to thrive. Accordingly, American Bird Conservancy and National Audubon Society have identified [policy options](#) needed to meet this challenge, address threats, and build capacity to deliver bird conservation on a much larger scale. A webinar will be held on May 18 at 4 p.m. Register for the webinar at the <https://act.audubon.org/a/bring-birds-back-policy-overview>.

Bird Observer

Bird Observer, the birding journal of New England, has two staff openings. These are volunteer positions. One is for a **Where to Go Birding editor**.

Key Responsibilities:

- Identify and recruit authors for bimonthly *Where to Go Birding (WTG)* articles about places to bird throughout New England.
- Work with authors and ensure that they meet deadlines.
- Review draft articles for accuracy and content before submitting them to the editor.
- Assist the mapmaker with creation and review of maps.
- Check all directions for accuracy.

This is a position that requires communication and organization skills, as well as great attention to detail. The WTG editor must be able to work independently to recruit authors, maintain schedules, and keep contact with authors prior to deadlines, as well as work collaboratively with the author, editor, and mapmaker from draft article to publication. Knowing birders throughout the New England area is helpful, but not a prerequisite. To inquire about this position, contact Marsha Salett at mσαlett@gmail.com.

buffeted by wind they twist and roll, tuck and dive ravens dance in air Haiku by Marcia Merithew

FISHING WITH EAGLES

Another Eagle memory! This one from the Missouri River in Montana while fishing with my older son Steve.

Both men are fly fishing. Here, the object is to catch a fish with an artificial insect attached to a line. Other types of attractions are also used. These patterns – all referred to as 'flies' – are composed variously of feathers, animal hair, threads, and fabrics.

On this day, Steve and I are walking quietly upstream in the river, close to the edge. It is a beautiful river surrounded with large sky, this being Big Sky Country, low and high mountains, forests, open fields, cattle ranches, and small towns. The expedition of Lewis and Clark passed through this area in 1805.

We are walking single file watching for rising fish, that is, fish that are rising to the surface to eat insects. These are fish that we will try to attract with our flies. Fish face upstream to see insects floating to them. When we cast to a fish, we throw our fly upstream and it will float to the fish – where it could be consumed.

The fishing situation is perfect. Large trout are rising to the surface to eat insects. Each of us has caught one or two fish. We return them to the water. As one man catches a fish, we change positions, so the other has the best chance. We continue to move forward quietly. I am watching a large trout eating insects and I am preparing to cast my fly to this fish.

Suddenly there is a surprising SWOOSH sound just above our heads. And with that an eagle catches a fish before our eyes, quite close to us. The eagle uses its claws to catch the fish and it does not land on the water. It continues to fly with the fish held in its claws. We stare as it flies to a tree and has a fine lunch of fresh trout! Perhaps this was MY trout! But no matter, this was a wonderful spectacle. And we learned to Fish With Eagles!

M. J. Fournier

A BIRD PUZZLER

This slightly modified puzzle is in *Bird Brain-Teasers* by Patrick Merrell from Storey Publishing (ISBN 978-1-60342-080-8). I obtained a copy from the micro library at Village Hill in Northampton. Answers will follow in the next newsletter issue. Unscramble the letters in each equation to spell a bird's name.

A + GLEE = _ _ _ _ _
B + IRON = _ _ _ _ _
C + EARN = _ _ _ _ _
D + CROON = _ _ _ _ _
E + HAT SNAP = _ _ _ _ _
F + CHIN = _ _ _ _ _
G + TREE = _ _ _ _ _
H + HURTS = _ _ _ _ _
I + RED BULB = _ _ _ _ _
J + BUY ALE = _ _ _ _ _
K + SORT = _ _ _ _ _
L + DEAN GRINS = _ _ _ _ _
M + TRAIN = _ _ _ _ _

N + FOCAL = _ _ _ _ _
O + OILER = _ _ _ _ _
P + ARROWS = _ _ _ _ _
Q + A BUS = _ _ _ _ _ (one bird's young)
R + HONE = _ _ _ _ _
S + ATLAS ORB = _ _ _ _ _
T + CHOIRS = _ _ _ _ _
U + OGRES = _ _ _ _ _
V + NEAR = _ _ _ _ _
W + BARREL = _ _ _ _ _
X + IN HOPE = _ _ _ _ _ (myth)
Y + ROPES = _ _ _ _ _
Z + ILL ARBOR = _ _ _ _ _

Dave Gross, Editor
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Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
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June 2021

Dear reader, yes, we have had a male turkey roaming around our place for about two months. I suppose he somehow knows that this is a hunting-free location, the food is good, and the occasional female comes by to observe his magnificent tail feathers fanned out. Have you ever seen a turkey jump three feet straight up when a thunder clap came unexpectedly? I have.

Last week a frontal system came through and brought rain and storms. One of those storms happened a couple of hours before dusk when Mr. Turkey was in the north yard, poking around the garden for bugs. Although there had been some distant thunder rumbles, nothing much was happening here. A sudden lightning bolt right above us produced a sharp thunder crack. The turkey, from a flat-footed stance, jumped vertically at least three feet. When he landed, he puffed out a bit, looked around, and went back to pecking. A second loud crack didn't faze him. Isn't bird-watching fun?

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, June 14 at 7:15 pm via Zoom

Aparajita Datta presents

Twenty years of understanding hornbills: Hope and resilience in the Indian Eastern Himalaya

Dr. Datta's talk will begin with key aspects of our understanding of hornbills based on two decades of research on their breeding biology, diet, functional role as seed dispersers, nesting and roosting sites, and the changes, possibly due to climate change effects, that we are seeing through long-term monitoring. She will outline the key conservation challenges and threats to hornbills in the Eastern Himalaya and how direct conservation action has sought to address these threats through a community-based Hornbill Nest Adoption Program, forest restoration, community engagement, and a nature education program. She will summarize results from large surveys across the region on the status of hornbills and recent efforts to initiate and scale up hornbill conservation across multiple sites in the Eastern Himalaya.

Dr. Aparajita Datta is the Senior Scientist of the Nature Conservation Foundation's Eastern Himalaya program, which has conducted research and community-based conservation for 20 years with hornbills as a flagship species. Dr. Datta completed her PhD on hornbill biology and their role in seed dispersal in 2000. Her work has encompassed long-term research on hornbill biology in north-east India (breeding biology, roosting, diet), hornbill movement and seed dispersal using telemetry, and a citizen science initiative for hornbills called Hornbill Watch. She is currently the Co-Chair (Asia) for the IUCN SSC Hornbill Specialist Group that facilitates hornbill conservation and research at a global level. While hornbills have been a primary focus of her work, Dr. Datta has also studied tree squirrels, carried out exploration surveys that led to new mammal discoveries in Arunachal, conducted camera-trapping studies for mammal species, and examined hunting and logging impacts, seed dispersal predation, and long-term monitoring of tree phenology. She has also engaged with communities for conservation that includes initiatives on education, health, rural energy and livelihoods. When she is not in the field, she finds peace and joy in watching and photographing birds in the city and making lists on eBird. She has been a member of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the State Wildlife Advisory Board of Arunachal and engaged with the government on the management/evaluation of some tiger reserves and several Protected Areas, and critiqued proposed hydro-power projects in north-east India.

2021 HBC BOARD ELECTION

Voting for the HBC Board, online this year, concluded on May 25. Ninety-two HBC members voted in the election. All five candidates were elected, with the following vote counts: Jim Lafley, 90; Derek Allard, 89; Josh Rose, 89; Val Miller, 87; and Ruth Garbett, 81. At the June HBC Board meeting new officers were elected: President, Bob Zimmermann; Vice President/Program Chair, Josh Rose; Treasurer, Steve Winn; Communications Secretary, Val Miller; and Membership Secretary, Lissa Ganter. Board members also continuing this year include Laura Beltran, Dave Gross, and Helen Symons.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee was able to hold two successful virtual sessions in May. Over 40 birders attended the Identifying Warblers session by DJ McNeil of the University of Maryland. He gave an excellent presentation. Thanks to Halie Parker for making the arrangements.

Connie Parks presented a detailed and engaging session on Spring Wildflowers to an enthusiastic group. Thanks to Laura Beltran for contacting Connie.

Our programs are now recorded and available at the Hampshire Bird Club website at <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/>

Due to the summer slowdown of HBC events we are only featuring one session in June on a **Tuesday night**. If you are interested, please register by sending a message to virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org and please **mention the workshop** you would like to attend **in the subject line** of your email. Deadline for registering is 8 pm the Sunday before the workshop.

Tuesday, June 15, 7:15 – 8:15 pm Hummingbird Gardens Bill Benner

Learn from Bill about their creatively designed Hummingbird Garden in Whately. Bill along with Joe Wicinski have built a hummingbird garden with special flowers and bushes. They started it in 2005.

For the past several pre-Covid 19 years they have opened up their yard to see hummingbird banding.

They have had several years with more than 50 hummingbirds banded. Bill will share with us how they have created that yard.

Do-It-Yourself Field Trips

Our next Do-It-Yourself Field Trip will be on **Tuesday, July 6**, at 7 pm on Zoom. Each month an area is chosen, and a leader describes the location and 5 target species for that area. Anyone interested has a month to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the Zoom event the following month. For June, the location is Station Road in Amherst. The target birds are Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Eastern Kingbird, Swamp Sparrow and Scarlet Tanager. If you'd like to join the Zoom meeting in July and report your findings at Station Road, e-mail virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Thanks to all our members, new and longtime, who support the HBC through their interest and participation. It has been more than a year since we've enjoyed in-person fellowship, yet we've continued to meet thanks to the many members who made sure that excellent programs, workshops and even do-it-yourself field trips continued to happen, and to all who showed up on Zoom!

We welcome these new and renewing members in the past month: Karen Bivona, Northampton; Leslie & Dwayne Breger, Amherst; Fran Fortino, West Whately; Autumn Guntor, Northampton; Daniel Hamel, South Hadley; Hobie Iselin & Deb Oakley, Northampton; Patricia Lepore, Holyoke; Melissa Melville, Westhampton; Kelsey Renner, Northampton; Mihaela Stefan, Longmeadow; Soliman Tomoum, Amherst; Emily Walsh, Northampton; and Christine Witschi, Monson.

The club will soon be on hiatus until fall, but feel free to get in touch at any time if you have questions about your membership. Our first meeting for 2021-2022 will be Monday, September 13. Hope to see you all there! In the meantime, I wish you all happy birding and a good summer ahead.

Lissa Ganter (membership@hampshirebirdclub.org)

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Franklin County with Scott Sumner

The HBC Franklin County trip on April 21st proved to be quite successful despite the incoming weather front. We started out at the Deerfield Meadows around 7 am and were treated to a sizeable flock of **Savannah Sparrows** that appeared to have just arrived. We counted close to 27, but the surprise was the great looks at a **Vesper Sparrow** that was with the flock. We also saw 5 Double crested Cormorants moving north and 4 “yellow” Palm Warblers that added a little color to the mix. Our next stop brought us to Barton’s Cove in Turners Falls. Though it was a bit late in the season, we identified seven species of waterfowl with the highlight being a raft of **30 Ring-necked Ducks**. We then crossed to the Gill side of the Cove where we encountered 7 Wood Ducks, Pileated Woodpecker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 4 Red-breasted Nuthatches, Carolina Wren, Louisiana Waterthrush, 4 Pine and 3 Yellow-rumped Warblers at the Barton Cove Campground.

At the Turners Falls Airport we found 7 American Kestrels perched around the airport proper and a quick pass by a **Peregrine Falcon** and 3 Rough-winged Swallows added a bit of excitement. The last stop on the tour was to the Montague Sand Plains. Chipping and Field Sparrows were quite vocal, along with an Eastern Towhee. We had terrific views of Pine Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Palm Warbler, 3 flyover Common Ravens and a **Pine Siskin**. The highlight of the Sand Plains were a number of **Red Crossbills**. We counted 18, but there were probably many more. As we began to wrap it up the forecasted rain showers and thunder were not far off. As the front approached we had a short but nice movement of birds including Great Blue Heron, 2 Turkey Vultures, Osprey, 13 Broad-winged Hawks and an American Kestrel. We got back to the cars just as the skies started to open up.

Scott Sumner

Wildwood Cemetery with Scott Sumner

Our scheduled destination on May 13 was to be Orchard Hill at UMass, but summer construction there plus the UMass commencement caused us to move to an old favorite, Wildwood Cemetery. The group met around 6:30 am and we birded the cemetery area and Brown's Field for the next three and a half hours. We tallied 50 species during our walk with the highlight being 13 species of warblers. Although we did not have large numbers of birds, we did get some good looks including at Pine, Black & White, **Bay-breasted** (a crowd favorite), **Blackburnian**, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green Warblers. Other highlights of the day were Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Veery, Wood Thrush, Baltimore Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Indigo Buntings.

Scott Sumner

Quabbin Gate 35 with Janice Gifford and Dave Gross

Three HBC members joined the leaders on this new park-and-walk trip to the north end of Quabbin on Thursday, May 20. We were out from 6:45 am to noon, and saw or heard 45 species including 12 of warblers on a perfect weather day. Ovenbirds and Eastern Towhees were calling all along our route, with the Towhee being the most identified bird of the morning of which there were at least eleven individuals. The group saw and heard seven **Scarlet Tanagers** and two **Common Loons** of which one was calling. Among the birds we saw on or over the water were Canada Geese, a **Belted Kingfisher**, Double-crested Cormorants and a lone Common Merganser.

Dave Gross

Hilltown Rambles with Bob Zimmermann and Dave Gross

This trip around Hampshire, Franklin and Berkshire Counties on May 22 started at the Northampton Stop and Shop parking lot where we saw the first of only two raptors of the day, a Red-tailed Hawk and ended at the Moran Wildlife Management Area in Windsor where we saw the second raptor, a **Northern Harrier**. In between we found 65 other species, some with amazing looks. We were fortunate to find the pair of **Sandhill Cranes** near Old Post Road in Worthington, though we didn’t see their two chicks which had been seen earlier by the local residents. We were even more fortunate to get very long looks at the Flatiron Road Marsh in Cummington at a pair of **American Bitterns** of which the male was displaying to

his mate for nearly an hour. We found Red-eyed, Blue-headed and Warbling Vireos at multiple stops along our route along with seven species of warblers, four of flycatchers, four of sparrows, three of thrushes and three of swallows.

Dave Gross

Monhegan Island with Scott Sumner

With Covid restrictions lifting and increased vaccination levels, the folks who had signed up for the cancelled 2020 Monhegan Island trip were given the opportunity to go on a May 21-24 trip and they did! The weather was exceptional, but the birding was on the slower side keeping in line with this year's migration. Only eighty species were found during the weekend though not all was lost. Among the highlights were a male Blue-winged Teal that had set up residence in the meadows along with **Virginia and Sora Rails**. We never saw the rails, but they just called all the time! One night I stepped outside at midnight to get a drink of water from my cooler, and I could hear those rails all the way up to the Trailing Yew. Ring-necked Pheasants had a good year on the island and we saw a late migrating Sharp-shinned Hawk, Black Guillemots, Brown Thrasher, super views of a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at Donna Cundy's feeder (across from the Trailing Yew), and the usual cast of characters. We found four species of vireos, the highlights being **Yellow-throated** and **Philadelphia**. We had a nice mini fallout of Red-eyed Vireos on Sunday, and we tallied fifteen species of warblers with the most numerous being **Blackpoll**, also in a mini fallout on Sunday. We ended our trip Monday morning with excellent looks at several **Red Crossbills** and managed to find the one **White-winged Crossbill** that was hanging out with them.

Scott Sumner

BRING BACK BIRDS POLICY INITIATIVE

As was described in the May newsletter, the American Bird Conservancy and National Audubon Society have identified [policy options](#) needed to meet the challenge of dramatic declines in bird populations in the past 50 years. This is the basis of the Bring Birds Back initiative. In mid-May a webinar described this initiative and the efforts that local bird groups can make. If you missed the webinar, you can watch in on demand [here](#) and download the slides [here](#). The Hampshire Bird Club board has voted to add the HBC's endorsement of this initiative.

REPORTING STATE-LISTED SPECIES

The HBC is one of 22 member organizations within the Association of Massachusetts Bird Clubs (AMBC). John Nelson, speaking for the AMBC writes "Every one of our club members, and every birder in our state, can make a direct contribution to bird conservation by reporting observations of state-listed species through the Heritage Hub reporting system, part of the state's Natural Heritage Program. The data collected through these observations are used in regulatory protection and habitat management and can be part of an effort to oppose development in areas where state-listed species breed."

Here's the link to Heritage Hub: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/overview-of-the-heritage-hub>. And here's a link to Massachusetts-listed species: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/list-of-endangered-threatened-and-special-concern-species>.

BIRD PUZZLER SOLUTIONS

Did you get all of last month's puzzler's birds? If so, congratulations! If not, here are the answers.

A. EAGLE	G. EGRET	M. MARTIN	S. ALBATROSS	Y. OSPREY
B. ROBIN	H. THRUSH	N. FALCON	T. OSTRICH	Z. RAZORBILL
C. CRANE	I. BLUEBIRD	O. ORIOLE	U. GROUSE	
D. CONDOR	J. BLUE JAY	P. SPARROW	V. RAVEN	
E. PHEASANT	K. STORK	Q. SQUAB	W. WARBLER	
F. FINCH	L. SANDERLING	R. HERON	X. PHOENIX	

A CHAT WITH JANICE JORGENSEN

In this second part of my April chat with Janice Jorgensen she talks about her work with the HBC, her start with bird watching, and her friendly grouse.

Newsletter: *You have been active on the Education Committee for a few years. What do you see happening in its future?*

Janice Jorgensen: I see the education committee activity continuing. Not everybody is going to go on a field trip and not everybody's going to come to one of HBC's monthly programs. We should do a survey to find out what members want and what their interests are so we can serve those who can't go out on a field trip. We offer a variety of programs now, and I see those continuing. Something new that has been great is the do-it-yourself field trip. We got that idea from a California Audubon. I got my sister in it, because it's a wildlife sanctuary near where I grew up and near where she lives. She and her husband went to a place that she knew and spent four hours. She was able to find the three of the six target birds that she had never seen before. She is not a birder, but still she loved it. I think that the offerings will evolve, but I see us continuing education activities.

N: *You have been coordinating the Christmas Count for a few years. Do you have something to say about that?*

JJ: The thing that amazed me as I took over from Mary Alice after working with Jan Ortiz was that people who I asked to participate thought that they needed a high skill level. They thought it was elitist. The Northampton count has a lot of participants compared to many other count circles where there will be only a handful of participants. And even so, leaders tell me that they couldn't cover their whole area. I hear that over and over again. A lot of what we want to do is to help leaders better look at their areas and get better coverage.

Another thing is to get people to understand they don't need to go out for all day. It is fine to go for two or three hours. We want people to participate and have a good time. It is supposed to be a fun day and be part of a community.

N: *Right. That's what it originally was about – switching over from shooting the birds at*

Christmas to looking at the birds. I think that sometimes we have the idea that it is a given that you have to go out and find every single last little bugger you can find out there and count it.

JJ: Yes. We would like you to find them, I mean we want good birds, but it's more about the fun. I often stop early because UConn women's basketball is on. We have incredibly helpful and talented participants. We have 36 leaders. Most other counts have maybe five.

I do some orchestration, and the logistical stuff is what I contribute, but the work is done by all those people going out that day. I've converted the hand-written compilation to a computer-based system, which saves a lot of time. I can't imagine how Mary Alice and Jan did all of that by hand.

N: *So how did you come to find and join the Hampshire Bird Club?*

JJ: When you were President and I was Treasurer, I had all of these old documents passed along to me. And in the lists of past members I found my name. I was a member in the 80s for a couple of years. And then I was not active in the 90s, and it wasn't until I came back from Panama around 2003 or 2004 that I got active again.

N: *So the Evening Grosbeaks preceded your joining the club.*

JJ: Yes, that was in the 70s.

N: *Okay, so besides birding what do you do to keep yourself amused?*

JJ: I do a lot of work with the Panama group. I also do a variety of volunteer work at home with the Council on Aging in Hadley. I used to make home visits for computer help because people said that they needed help after the grandkids came and moved the icons or updated something. I'd go do whatever they needed: adjust internet, install programs, move to new computers, install printers, etc. I do a lot of walking. I still do intermittent work for FEMA. I conduct remote training, but I no longer deploy to other locations. I also volunteer on the board of

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers from the Dominican Republic. I manage a database of about 4000 former PCVs. So I stay busy.

N: Do you have a favorite birding spot in the valley?

JJ: I have a favorite spot, maybe starting from ten to twelve years ago. I decided that to be a better birder I needed to go to the same place over and over again to bird that habitat at different times of day. I went to a private area that I call Grousey Lane or just Grousey. It's near Lake Warner. About ten years ago there was a

grouse there that would come out – this is why it got its name – and walk with me. If I was there ninety days in the summer, it would walk with me eighty-five of those days. This is the grouse that John Van de Graaff showed at one of his HBC presentations. I encouraged people to come along and see the grouse because it would be so close, at your feet, that most people including me had not seen one so well. Now the terrain has changed. The owners have cleared a lot of the property for farming. It's still a beautiful walk but the bird life has drastically changed.

BIG YEAR AT HOME

Hampshire Bird Club members are invited to join a fun and exciting new bird recreation and conservation campaign called **#BigYearAtHome (#BYAH)**. It is sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners in Flight, and the Klamath Bird Observatory.

The #BigYearAtHome campaign is an interactive, fun, engaging, friendly, and collaborative challenge that aims to welcome communities to participate in bird watching and bird conservation activities. Our goal is to share monthly challenges, information, and activities that will help people connect with birds (mainly through *eBird* and *Merlin*) and take action to help them recover.

The four main ways to participate are:

To receive BYAH updates and monthly challenges visit <https://partnersinflight.org/bigyearathome/>

To join the BYAH Partner Network visit <https://partnersinflight.org/bigyearathome/>

To request that your own bird-related activities and content be shared visit

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/8bbce21f9c934dfbb20d152d366768ae>

To visit the Partner resources board visit <https://trello.com/b/EdokVj8J/bigyearathome-partner-resources>

Have fun and please reach out to BYAH staff if you have questions.

RAMBLINGS

So we've mostly made it through the pandemic, right? Here is some commentary that popped up in my inbox in the past fourteen months having to do with those crazy times.

"I'll have a café mocha vodka valium latte to go, please."

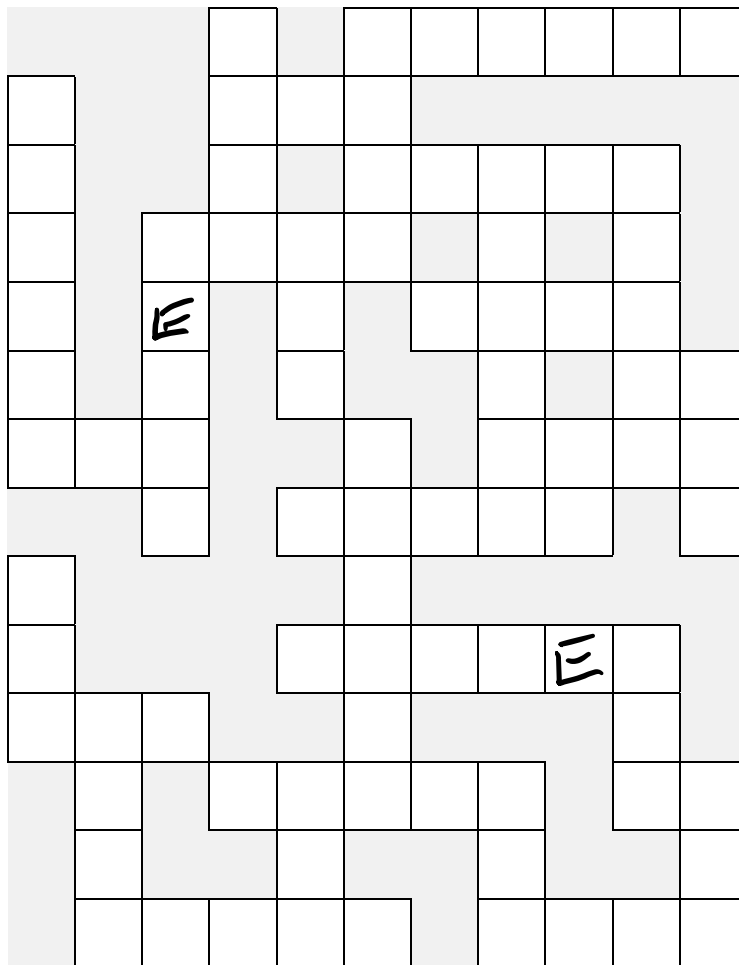
Imagine that, in London during the blitz, there'd been a whole bunch of people going "I'LL TURN ON MY LIGHTS IF I FEEL LIKE IT!"

CORONACOASTER: *n.* The ups and downs of a pandemic. One day you're loving your bubble, doing work-outs, baking banana bread, and going for long birding walks and then the next you're crying, drinking gin for breakfast, and missing people you don't even like.

Don't let anyone tell you not to put a fork in an electrical socket! IT'S YOUR RIGHT! More people are killed by the flu anyway.

My wife has been ordering a lot of stuff online recently. If asked what line of work she's in, she says that she's "in purchasing."

Here's another puzzle from *Bird Brain-Teasers* by Patrick Merrell from Storey Publishing (ISBN 978-1-60342-080-8). The words to the right are made up of letters in "BIRD WATCHERS". Two letters in the grid are there to start you out. Fill in the grid with the words at the right. There is only one solution.



2 letters

AD
AS
AT

3 letters

AIR	RED	SIT
ARC	SAC	THE
DEW	SEA	
ICE	SET	

4 letters

ACRE	RATE
BEAT	WEST
DRAW	WIRE
HERB	

5 letters

BEACH
BIRCH
CREST
STRAW
WATER
WHEAT

6 letters

BATHES
BREAST
HABITS
RACERS
WADERS

Wild, haunting loon calls
North woods and lakes memories
Soothing, quieting

Haiku by Jim Lafley

the sound of paddles
dipping in quiet water
as hermit thrush sings

Haiku by Marcia Merithew

And finally, to end this newsletter year, I would like to paraphrase what Mark Twain said about golf: Bird watching is a good walk spoiled. So that's the editor's new tagline. See you all in September!

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 38, No. 1

September 2021

Dear reader, you should note the volume number above. The Hampshire Bird Club is now in its 38th year. It is approaching or has reached middle age, this depending on your point of view. And it is high time to tip the hat to the newsletter editors who preceded me.

For about the first third of the history of the HBC our newsletter came in the form of a postcard, arriving on an irregular schedule. The first newsletter editor was Sally Venman who was also known, along with her husband Bill, as a founder of the Valley Light Opera. Sally was one of the funniest people I have known. And I mean that in the comedic sense. She always had a way with a phrase to turn most anything into a pun or a humorous anecdote. Her shoes were certainly very large ones to fill.

Somewhere in the late 1990s Sally turned over the duties of newsletter production to David Peake-Jones who, with his acerbic Aussie wit, kept the humor going. He filled Sally's shoes with a remarkably long run as editor, moving the newsletter from the postcard phase to the format you see now. David stepped down in 2018 and Devin Griffiths took over the editorship for the 2018-2019 club year. Alas, he moved to Cape May, NJ for a position at The Wetlands Institute in summer 2019 and had to step away as newsletter editor.

I recall a phone call from HBC President Bob Zimmermann in late July 2019 (which I remember quite well as I was madly trying to keep a soft-serve ice cream cone from Atkins from melting all over me) to see if I could help out. As I had just retired a couple of months earlier, and being in an ice-cream-induced addled state, I foolishly said yes. And, well, here we are.

David was the editor who brought the newsletter online (not without some outside encouragement if memory serves) in 2001. That makes this newsletter the 20th anniversary online edition. Surely that must make it worth double its usual cost!

Please Join or Renew Your Membership NOW

- Please **check your membership status** 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), opt-in for USPS newsletter delivery, participation interests, Field Trip Agreement, and Rare Bird Alert sign up (the last being optional). Don't forget to complete both sides.
- Note that the newsletter delivery is now **opt-in** for a printed copy. We hope that you will consider reading the newsletter online (or printing out your own copy) rather than having us send you one. Last year we spent \$2600 sending out newsletters. That's about the level of deficit spending that we have this year. That is the reason that we have moved to the default of online newsletter delivery. Please consider it if you don't do that already.
- 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 **thank you** for getting this done by the end of September.

HBC PROGRAM DATES FOR 2021-2022

As of this writing the speaker for the first club meeting on Monday, September 13 has not yet been finalized. Please check the HBC website and look for an email announcement for details as they become available. The dates for HBC programs for the year are set. They are September 13, October 18, November 8, December 13, January 10, February 14, March 14, April 11, May 9 and June 13. The first three meetings will be online via Zoom as was the case last year. We are waiting to see how the pandemic plays out as we move into winter before we commit to in-person meetings for 2022. See the Membership News for more on this.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee held two very successful virtual sessions in July and August. We had about 50 participants sign up for each of the workshops.

In July David Larson, formerly of Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Sanctuary, gave a very thorough and informative presentation on shorebirds one is likely to see at Plum Island, Salisbury Beach, and Sandy Point. Participants learned not only about the birds, but also the locations along the island that are most productive.

In August Patti Steinman of Mass Audubon's Arcadia Sanctuary described the life history of Common Nighthawks, their field marks and behavior for identification, and the timing and locations in the Valley to see them. She shared some of the reasons for their decline and conservation efforts to increase their numbers.

Three new workshops will be offered via Zoom in September and early October:

Wednesday, September 8, 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. *Fall Warblers with Scott Surner*

Those warblers in the fall can be a challenge as they move through and out of our area. Scott will share methods for telling these small, darting little birds from one another. We always learn some interesting techniques when Scott does a presentation.

Thursday, September 16, 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.

Wednesday, October 6, 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. *Sparrows with Scott Surner*

Once again Scott is presenting on sparrows as we prepare to identify them in the field. Some of us remember most of what he shared last fall, but, of course, not all of those wonderful field marks that help us tell these little, brown birds apart from each other. The photography alone is worth attending this workshop.

To sign up for a workshop send an email to education@hampshirebirdclub.org. To see a past workshop, note that they are now recorded and available at the Hampshire Bird Club website at <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/>.

Date	Payment: <input type="checkbox"/> cash <input type="checkbox"/> check <input type="checkbox"/> online	Sign Trip Release?	News Preference?	Date Entered
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HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC. MEMBERSHIP FORM: 2021-2022

Use this form to join, renew, or update. The club membership year is September – August.

If you wish to pay by credit card, you may join or renew online at our secure site, <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/shop/>

The first year is free for first-time members. For questions, please contact: membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

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

CONTACT INFORMATION [Optional: include gender pronouns if you wish.]		CHECK if you want <u>postal delivery</u> of the newsletter: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Name(s)		Gender pronoun(s)	
Address		OPTIONAL WAYS TO PARTICIPATE – PLEASE CHECK (For questions, contact: membership@hampshirebirdclub.org)	
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"/> Programs <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Field Trips <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Refreshments set up <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Room (chairs & AV) set up <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:	
Phone(s)			
Email(s)			
May we publish your contact information in the fall club directory? [Published only in hard copy, provided only to members.]	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
May we contact you via email 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.

First-time members may ignore this section unless they wish to contribute anyway.

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

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 membership 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►

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

FALL FIELD TRIPS

The Hampshire Bird Club has decided to resume offering field trips with some restrictions. If you are interested in any of the trips below, please carefully read this article and the field trip rules provided with your membership or found online at <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines/>.

All trips will be limited to 10 participants and up to 2 leaders.

The following additional rules will apply this fall due to the continuing Covid situation:

1. All field trip leaders and participants must be fully vaccinated and required to wear a mask when asked (possibly in carpool situations) and be aware of maintaining a safe social distance during the event.
2. Field Trips are for **Hampshire Bird Club Members only**.
3. Members can only register for **one (1) field trip from the fall selections**. We have over 250 members and we want all of them to have a field trip opportunity. Members can request a second trip in case the first choice is full.
4. Participants will receive specific information about their trip directly from the leader once registration has been completed.

Field Trip Schedule, 2021

Friday, Sept. 10, 6:30 - 8:30 am; Fort River USFWS, Hadley; Ted Gilliland

Wednesday, Sept. 15, 7 am – 12; Amherst/Hadley; Scott Surner; Fall Warblers

Saturday, Sept. 18, 7:30 – 10 am; Arcadia Meadows, Northampton; Sara Griesemer/Steve Winn

Wednesday, Sept. 22, 7 – 10 am; Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton; Jim Lafley

Sunday, Sept. 26, 8 – 10 am; Fort River USFWS, Hadley; Laura Beltran

Wednesday, Oct. 13, 7 am – 12; Hadley; Scott Surner; Sparrows

Saturday, Oct. 16, 7 – 9 am; Arcadia Meadows, Northampton; Jim Lafley; Sparrows

Thursday, Oct. 21, 7:30 – 10:30 am; Nonotuck Park, Easthampton; Amanda Kallenbach

Sunday, Oct. 24, 8 – 10 am; Pine Grove Conservation Area, Northampton; Laura Beltran/Jim Lafley

Sunday, Oct. 31, 5:30 am (all day); Dead Creek WMA/Lake Champlain Valley, VT; Mike Locher

Sunday, Nov. 7, 6:30 am (all day); Berkshire Lakes; Tom Gagnon

Saturday, Nov. 27, 5:00 am (all day); Plum Island or Cape Ann; Scott Surner

To register for a field trip please choose the one you would like to attend and send your choice to fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org. You may choose a second trip in case your first choice is full. You will receive an email confirming your registration and providing more details about the trip and the information from the leader.

Our next **Do-It-Yourself Field Trip** will be on Tuesday (to avoid the Labor Day holiday on Monday), September 7, 7 p.m. on Zoom. Each month an area is chosen, and a leader describes the location and 5 target species for that area. Anyone interested has a month to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the Zoom event the following month. Our summer field trip was Nonotuck Park, Easthampton, and the target birds were Chipping Sparrow, Cedar Waxwing, Tree Swallow, Northern Flicker, and Pileated Woodpecker. If you'd like to join the September Zoom and learn of the upcoming field trip, e-mail education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

If you have any questions, please contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com

BRING BACK THE FEEDERS

Over the spring and summer there were numerous reports of unusual bird deaths due to a mystery illness. Sick and dying birds with eye swelling and discharge, plus some with neurological symptoms, were reported across a swath of the eastern US from Indiana to Virginia, south to West Virginia and north to New Jersey. The majority of affected birds were reported to be fledgling Common Grackles, Blue Jays, European Starlings, and American Robins. No definitive cause(s) of illness or death have been determined at this time.

In early August Jim Lafley contacted Andrew Vitz, MassWildlife's State Ornithologist, about bird feeder precautions that should be taken here in the Pioneer Valley. Andrew wrote "The agency is currently requesting reports of sick/dead birds to get a better idea if the mystery illness is in Massachusetts. Not surprisingly, we received a lot of reports of dead birds and a few of these did have signs consistent with the mystery illness. Interestingly, as far as I know, wildlife rehabilitators across the state are not getting sick birds showing signs of the illness. Cornell put out the recent post about going back to the cicada link, but I have not seen other wildlife health centers (including the National Wildlife Health Center where much of the testing has been conducted) echo that sentiment. CT is currently waiting to hear back on some suspect birds they sent in for testing and we anticipate hearing about those results soon. At this time, we are recommending people take down their feeders, and we have been reviewing updated information weekly to determine when we can relax this recommendation."

And then on August 24, Mass Audubon posted an update to their earlier recommendation to take down feeders. They said "Wonderful news! Based on the absence of confirmed cases of the mysterious avian disease in Massachusetts and declining numbers of cases in states to our south, we are following the lead of our neighbors and recommending it is once again safe to resume bird feeding in Massachusetts." You can read the full posting at <https://blogs.massaudubon.org/yourgreatoutdoors/safe-to-start-feeding-birds-again/>. (And be sure to read the bio of the poster, William Freedberg, at the bottom of the post!)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to all new members, and welcome back to all returning members! We're happy to report that a record number of new members have joined HBC during the past year and this summer. And we're more than happy at the prospect of the **all-member outdoor picnic at Arcadia on September 12**, preceded by a bird walk for those of you who are new. Masks will be required except when eating or drinking. I hope many of you will be able to attend. As you will learn elsewhere in the newsletter, our regular monthly meetings will continue on Zoom through this fall. We have been in discussion with the folks at Immanuel Lutheran Church, our longtime host, about prospects for resuming our in-person meetings that could also include Zoom. We will keep you informed as we know more. Please note a couple of changes on the Membership Form. There is now the option of listing your gender pronouns, if you wish, and online delivery of the newsletter is now the default. You must check the opt-in box if you want the newsletter by postal mail. Again, I hope to see each of you on September 12 at Arcadia and/or on Zoom for our first meeting on September 13.

Lissa Ganter membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

FRIENDS OF THE ORCHARD ARBORETUM

The Friends of the Orchard Arboretum, the group working with the Town of Amherst to manage the arboretum, is looking to schedule more birding events in the future. The Friends are interested in finding a member of the Hampshire Bird Club to work with them and join the group. There are about five meetings of the Friends each year. The Orchard Arboretum is opposite Applewood in South Amherst.

Please contact Anne G. Cann (cann.amherst@gmail.com) for further information.

SAVE THE DATE!

The MANO (Northampton) Christmas Bird Count will be held Sunday, December 19, 2021. More information will be forthcoming.

BIRDNOTE PODCASTS

The folks from BirdNote who have a goal to make bird conservation accessible to everyone, contacted the HBC President to let us know that they have online resources that may be of interest and that align with the conservation aspects of the HBC's efforts.

BirdNote produces the podcasts *Bring Birds Back* and *Threatened*, as well as *BirdNote Daily*, their long-standing radio show, that serve to educate the public, draw attention to the alarming risks facing birds and their habitats, and inspire listeners to get involved in conservation.

[*Bring Birds Back*](#) is an interview-based podcast about the joy of birds and the ways that humans can help them through simple, everyday actions. It follows the journey of host Tenijah Hamilton as she falls in love with birds and learns they're in trouble. Through conversations with bird experts from all walks of life, and trips out into the field, she and the listener learn together how to bring birds back. The first eight-episode season wrapped up on August 25. You can find out more and listen [here](#), or find it in your favorite podcast app.

[*Threatened*](#) is an in-depth, narrative show about answering the call to protect the birds and places we love. In season 2, host and science reporter Ari Daniel, along with local producers, explored stories from around the world about people who are taking action on behalf of our fragile ecosystems and the birds that depend on them. The season finale was on August 31. [Take a listen to Season 2 episodes here.](#)

BIRD PUZZLE SOLUTION

Did you try the bird puzzle from the June newsletter? Here's the solution.

W WADERS
H ICE
A R STRAW
B BEAT A H
I E I ACRE
T A R E AS
SAC B RATE
H CREST T
S E
I BATHES
THE S E
E WATER AD
R R E E
BIRCH DRAW

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 38, No. 2
October 2021

Dear reader, I write this from Central Illinois, on a visit to in-laws. We are staying with my mother-in-law, about half a mile from the Sangamon River. This morning I walked over to the Rock Springs Conservation Area and Nature Center, about a mile away, along fields of brown soybean plants ready for harvest. Not much doing there. But when I turned the corner to the nature center, the world changed. There is a reconstructed tallgrass prairie, mostly made up of Little Bluestem which now is all brown. The prairie pieces abut on dense mixed hardwoods that slide down to the Sangamon. The first birds I saw were a couple of immature Indigo Buntings immediately followed by a flyover Great Blue Heron. A short distance down the trail two White-tailed Deer bounded away. As I walked the trails I saw large numbers of Eastern Phoebe and more Indigo Buntings. I got a great look at a male Black-throated Green Warbler and heard Red-Bellied and Pileated Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. It took me a while, but I finally confirmed the juvenile Red-headed Woodpecker that posed just long enough for a decent look.

In all I saw 20 species in about an hour and ten minutes. By the numbers, the most of any one species that I saw (no surprise) were 36 Canada Geese. The second highest species was Indigo Bunting of which there were lots of juveniles. On my walk back to the house I passed a pond where there were two tame white ducks settled down on the lawn with a wild (I presume) American Black Duck in between them. There was also a Trump 2020 sign. Seemed like a theme going on, though I wasn't quite sure what.

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, October 18 at 7:15 pm via Zoom

Roy Rodriguez presents

Real or Perceived Barriers to Birding – Inclusion, Messaging and Mentoring

When it comes right down to it, birding is about people and their deep connection to the resource. The future of birding and conservation of wild spaces falls on all of us. How do we reach and cultivate new birders and naturalists who maybe don't look, or sound like us? Join Texas Park Ranger, Roy J Rodriguez for a discussion on the optics and the reality of reaching out and connecting with new audiences and visitors.

Roy J. Rodriguez is a natural resource interpreter, consultant and environmental educator, working out of South Texas. He is an outspoken advocate fostering diversity among birders and is involved in numerous regional and international conservation endeavors. Roy's twenty years as an international tour operator and birding guide has taken him across North America and from the Arctic Circle to the shores of the Yellow Sea. He is Lead Instructor for the National Hispanic Environmental Council's *Environmental Training Institute Scholarships*, Presenter for the *Changing the Face of American Birding* Diversity Conferences and sat on the Diversity Committee with the US Fish & Wildlife Service's *Birder's Initiative*. Roy lives in Pharr, Texas with his wife Marisa Oliva and their two young naturalists: Alex, 9 and Julia, 7. He works for the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department as Lead Interpreter out of Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park & World Birding Center in Mission, Texas.

COMING PROGRAMS

November 8, 2021. **Jonathan Meyrav**. Champions of the Flyway.

December 13, 2021. **HBC Members' Meeting**.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee held 2 very successful virtual sessions in September. We had a total of 77 participants combined for the workshops.

On September 8th, Scott Sumner gave a very informative talk on warblers a birder might see locally and in migration this fall. Members learned a lot and enjoyed Scott's presentation style which is always educational and entertaining. He then led a Warbler Field Trip for the Club a week later.

On September 16th, Dan Russell, former professor at Springfield College and hawk watching enthusiast, led us through the process of identifying those migrating raptors. He covered the similarities and differences between the buteos, accipiters, falcons, eagles, osprey, and vultures. The timing was perfect as many members followed up with a trip to Skinner or Mt. Tom.

Our programs are now recorded and available at the Hampshire Bird Club website at <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/>

Upcoming program

Wednesday, October 6, 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. Sparrows with Scott Sumner

Once again Scott is presenting on sparrows as we prepare to identify them in the field. Some of us remember most of what he shared last fall, but, of course, not all the wonderful field marks that help us tell these little, brown birds apart from each other. The photography alone is worth attending this workshop.

Do-It-Yourself Field Trips

On Tuesday, September 7, 12 Club members shared their findings from their exploration of Nonotuck Park in Easthampton in July and August to report on their successes in finding the target birds for the summer: Chipping Sparrow, Cedar Waxwing, Tree Swallow, Northern Flicker, and Pileated Woodpecker. If you would like to participate for the current site or next month's site, see the note in the Field Trip section below.

News from the Education Committee

I have thoroughly enjoyed working as the Education Committee Chair for the last year and a half as the members have been very helpful and hard-working. I would like to thank Laura Beltran, Lesley Farlow, Bruce Hart, Janice Jorgensen, Sebastian Moreno, Jan Ortiz, Halie Parker, Hannah Schwartz, and Jeremy Spool for all their ideas, contributions, and work on the committee. I think we provided an essential service to the membership during the pandemic, and I am sure the work will continue. I recently joined the HBC Board and became the Field Trip Chair so I don't feel I can continue with the Education Committee. Janice Jorgensen and Lesley Farlow have agreed to finish out my term as Co-chairs of the Committee.

Jim Lafley

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Please join me in welcoming these first-time members: Melissa Aldrich, Holland; Todd Allen, Shelburne; Emily Breon, Amherst; Tammis Coffin, Lenox; Deirdre Curran & Wayne Duke, Florence; Frances D'Amico, Meriden CT; Kristen Elmes & Lucy Leete, Ashfield; Nancy Flam, Northampton; Beth Goldstein, Northampton; Kalpesh Krishna, Amherst; Louise Levy, Amherst; Dianne McLane, Easthampton; Cynthia Monahan, Florence; Kelly R. Novak, Amherst; Jessica Plaut and Steve & Callum Dunn, Amherst; Abigail Rogers-McKee, Great Barrington; Hilary Russell & Ken Pransky; Marlene Sauer, Amherst; Devon Whitney-Smith, Conway; and Valerie Woodring, Kirk Woodring, Ashley Telega & Matthew Telega, South Deerfield.

A question to all members: would you be interested in joining a list serve of HBC members who either need, or can offer, the occasional ride to club events? Or are you someone who knows how and would be willing to set up such a listserve? We're not meeting in person yet, of course, but field trips are

happening now and eventually we can indeed resume in-person meetings. It would be nice to have a rideshare program in place when the time comes. Thank you.

And thanks to the many returning members who have already sent their renewals. If you're not among them, I hope you will renew soon! Best, Lissa.

Lissa Ganter, membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Field trips remain for **HBC members only** and are **limited to 10 participants and up to 2 leaders**. Members are no longer restricted to only 1 trip this fall so please review the list and contact fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org if you are interested in signing up for a trip. The following additional rules apply this fall due to the continuing Covid situation: 1) All field trip leaders and participants must be fully vaccinated and required to wear a mask when asked (possibly in carpool situations) and be aware of maintaining a safe social distance during the event, 2) field trips are for **Hampshire Bird Club Members only** and 3) participants will receive specific information about their trip directly from the leader once registration has been completed.

Saturday, October 16, 7:30 to 9:30 am. Arcadia Meadows. Jim Lafley and Derek Allard will be searching for late migrants, sparrows, and raptors. We will meet at the parking lot on the Northampton side of the bridge in the Arcadia Meadows. (easy)

Sunday, October 24, 8:00 to 10:00 am. Pine Grove Conservation Area, Northampton. Laura Beltran and Jim Lafley will be searching for sparrows, finches, thrushes, raptors, and late warblers in this recently acquired Conservation Area. Meet along Old Wilson Road at the sign for the area. (easy)

Sunday, October 31. Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area and Lake Champlain Valley. All day. Mike Locher, (413) 585-5864 or mlocher@yahoo.com, will be leading this trip into Vermont in search of Snow Geese, ducks, and raptors. Meet at the Stop & Shop in Northampton (228 King St.) at 5:00 am. (easy to moderate)

Saturday, November 13. Chris Ellison Memorial East Quabbin Trip. All day. Craig Allen leads our annual trip to the reservoir's east side looking for waterfowl and winter finches. Dress warmly. This will be a carpooling event and you will be contacted once you are registered. (easy to moderate)

Saturday, November 27. Plum Island or Cape Ann. All day. Scott Sumner is leading this trip to the coast for late fall and wintering birds including seabirds, waterfowl, and raptors. Dress for windy, cold weather and pack water and lunch. Meet at Sumner Heating, 60 Shumway St., Amherst at 5:00 am for carpooling. (easy)

Our next **Do-It-Yourself Field Trip** will be on Monday, November 1, 7 p.m. on Zoom. Each month, an area is chosen, and the leaders describe the location and 5 target species for that area. Anyone interested has a month to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the Zoom event the following month. For October, the location is Pine Grove Conservation Area in Northampton. The target birds are White-throated Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Palm Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Dark-eyed Junco. If you'd like to join the October 4 Zoom and learn of the upcoming field trip, e-mail education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

If you have any questions, please contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com

CHRISTMAS COUNTING

It's never too early to think about the annual Audubon Christmas Counts. This winter the MANO (Northampton) Christmas Bird Count will be held Sunday, December 19, 2021 and the MAQB (Quabbin) Christmas Bird Count will be held Saturday, January 1, 2022. More information will be forthcoming.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

On Sept. 10th Ted Gilliland led a trip to Fort River for 10 members. He shared his extensive knowledge of identifying birds in the fall including small details to separate fall warblers. He learned some this from his past banding experiences. His patience and observation skills helped us find difficult to identify warblers. Two of the special birds were a **Canada Warbler** and a **Philadelphia Vireo**. It was a splendid trip with lots of information about the birds, their feathers and molting.

– Janice Jorgensen

The Wednesday Sept. 15th HBC trip had more of an August feel than a September one. It was muggy and a little buggy, but the 8 observers and I still managed to pull a few things out of the bushes at the West Meadows and Arcadia. The highlights for the morning outing were the 8 species of warblers, (Black & White, Tennessee, **Nashville**, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, **Northern Parula**, Magnolia and Yellow). All put on a good show except for the Nashville. Other highlights included Red shouldered Hawk, American Kestrel, a distant **Merlin**, Least Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireos, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Bluebirds and a heard-only **Dickcissel**. We ended the morning with 50 species of birds and very little loss of blood! I want to thank everyone who came out for the trip, Lori Williams, Lesley Farlow, Harlee Strauss, Sally Crawford, Susan Lewandowski, Steve Winn, Eric Morrisette and Marianna Massed.

– Scott Sumner

BIRDABILITY WEEK

Birdability Week is October 18 – 24, 2021 (see <https://www.birdability.org/birdability-week-2021>)! Many birding groups throughout the Valley are offering various field trips throughout the week. Birdability Week is a celebration of birders with disabilities and other health concerns, and an opportunity to share resources and ideas to help the birding community be accessible, inclusive, and welcoming to everyone and every body! The Hampshire Bird Club is partnering with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to offer a birding field trip on Monday, October 18, 8 am – 10 am at Fort River in Hadley, which is part of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge. Beginner birders are welcome, and binoculars will be available to those who need them. We will walk slowly for 1.1 miles on a path that alternates between crushed stone and wooden boardwalk. Strollers and wheelchairs are welcome. Benches and pull offs are available along the entire trail. The gravel parking lot is large with accessible parking spots towards the beginning of the trail. Here is a description from the USFW website: “The mile-long, fully accessible trail at Fort River allows visitors an up-close and personal look at diverse wildlife and habitats. The trail meanders through a series of successional habitats from grasslands to upland forest and provides important habitat for fish, grassland birds and a variety of herps and mammal species. The Fort River Division is located at 69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley, Massachusetts. Please note, visitors can access the trail via the intersection at Bay Road. The South Maple Street intersection with Moody Bridge Road is closed to through traffic.” Additionally, Everyone Outdoors did a blog about visiting Fort River’s accessible trail, and you can read more here for a detailed description:

<https://everyoneoutdoors.blogspot.com/2020/06/revisiting-fort-river-accessible-trail.html>. Space is limited to 10 participants, so please register by e-mailing fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org.

A CHAT WITH LAURA BELTRAN

I spoke with Laura Beltran, who is on the HBC Board and Education Committee, in mid-September. We talked about her educational work, her interests and her childhood introduction to nature.

***Newsletter:** I know that you work at the Arcadia Mass Audubon sanctuary. What is it that you do there?*

Laura Beltran: My title is Teacher/Naturalist and, being part of the education staff, I teach people of all different ages about the outdoors. I have subbed in with the preschool that we have. I

go into elementary schools as well as middle and high schools. I do field trips, in-class teaching and adult programming like bird walks and other similar things. I do all sorts of things, including helping with big a big events like our folk festival is that is coming up this weekend.

N: Has your work always been at Arcadia?

LB: I've been at Arcadia for almost six years. When I started, I worked part time, and the other part time work I did was at Northfield Mountain helping with elementary school field trips there. It was a really long drive for me to get to Northfield Mountain, and, since I got more hours at Arcadia, I just stayed there.

In 1995 I started at Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in the Berkshires. I worked there for seven years as their education coordinator and then my husband switch careers and we ended up moving to Maine. We moved back to Massachusetts six years ago and I thought "Oh, I'm going to introduce myself to the neighbors," so I went and knocked on my neighbor's door. I introduced myself, and we got to talking about what I like to do. I found out that she was at the time working as one of the office people at Arcadia. I had forgotten that Arcadia was in Northampton. I think I mixed it up with Laughing Brook which is down in Hamden County. She suggested that I volunteer at Arcadia so the next day I went and volunteered. Patti Steinman was there. I had known Patty from years before, and so that's how it all got started. I started the first few months as a volunteer and then I was eventually hired.

N: You said that you visit elementary schools. Which ones do you usually visit, or is it all over the place?

LB: It's all over the place. I've gone into Littleville Elementary in Huntington, an elementary school in West Springfield, and elementary schools in Northampton and Easthampton, so we're all over the place. I have taught in high and middle schools. I did a middle school program this summer in Springfield. I have also taught in middle school in Northampton and at Hampshire Regional in Westhampton. I've also taught high school students.

N: The Hitchcock Center also does similar programming. Do you ever interact or collaborate with Hitchcock staff?

LB: I don't so much, although my co-workers definitely do. We've collaborated on certain things, especially when they have to do with the older grades. We also have collaborated on various events with Hitchcock.

N: Clearly, your whole career has had a nature focus and your work with HBC shows that you are interested in birds and bird watching. What is it that got you interested in nature and started you down this path?

LB: Oh gosh, I don't even remember.

N: You were born that way.

LB: I'm the third and youngest child. Years ago parents would have baby books to keep track of first words and all that sort of stuff. Because I was the youngest, the only thing that was written in my book was the time of day I was born and my birth weight. And it said "Laura loves animals." The rest of the book has nothing in it, unlike my brother's that is completely full because he's the oldest and my sister's that is halfway full.

I can remember that I've always loved the outdoors. I grew up in the late 60s/early 70s when the trend was for families to go camping in the national parks. It was a big thing then – people would just pack up their station wagons and go. My family did. And so I grew up in the outdoors by hiking and camping and doing all that stuff, so I think my love of nature was really nurtured by my parents.

And then birding. My dad had a woodworking shop in our basement – it was his hobby. After reading *Ranger Rick* magazine where there were instructions to create a bird feeder, I went down into my dad's woodworking shop and I built a one. I nailed it to the side of our house, right outside our kitchen window. I'm surprised my parents let me do that. I must have been about 10 years old. My mom bought bird seed and my whole family was totally amazed by the number of birds that we had in our yard. We had no idea. Ever since then I have been hooked. It was from years and years of just watching birds at bird feeders.

In college I did a whole project on birds at a feeder. I had this huge bird feeder that my brother had built that had different platforms and levels for the seed. My study in college was to see which birds would come to the highest platform, the middle platform and the ground feeders and compare them. I really didn't get into birding actively – out walking with binoculars – until my 20s. That happened because I was

hiking with a friend and right in front of us landed a male Indigo Bunting. We said “What's that?” We just couldn't believe it. So then, then I knew that I had to look beyond just the feeders and look at birds that are migrating through.

In graduate school I took ornithology. That was totally fascinating, especially aerodynamics and flight, we did a lot of that. I have to admit that I wasn't a great graduate student. I didn't really have direction for where I wanted to go. One day in that class our TA announced that he was doing a research project in South America for his PhD, and if anyone would like to apply to join him... I applied that day. The work involved mist netting of birds in the tropical rainforest of Venezuela. I took a whole semester off just to do that. Since I had no direction of where I was going, I thought I might as well just go and do something fun. It was an incredible experience. It was phenomenal to mist net everything from hummingbirds to hawks. We were trying to find out the diversity of bird species in correlation with logging practices. It was great.

It also was interesting because I was the only woman living in a logging camp. The men just loved that I was there. They worshiped the ground I walked on. They would give me little gifts all the time and they just couldn't believe that a woman could go out and hike in the woods and survive. That was so culturally different than what they expected. We would cut our own trail with our machetes, and every night we'd have to sharpen them to make sure they were ready to cut trail the next day. I never had to sharpen mine because all the men said “No, no, that's not woman's work. Men have to sharpen the machete.” Meanwhile the TA that I went with just groaned and had to sharpen his own.

N: You've had more introduction to birding than many people who are asked about their start in it. For a lot of people their hook was the first time they saw a particular bird.

LB: I call them gateway birds. I think for me it is the Black-capped Chickadee. It is so charming. I think that the first time I saw a Black-capped Chickadee I thought “Oh my God. Birds are so cool.”

N: The virtual birding series that the Education Committee has been doing seems like it's pretty much your baby. Is that right?

LB: I feel like it was an idea from all of us. Jim [Lafley] took over the Education Committee and then Janice [Jorgensen], Jim and I just got to talking. Janice is so full of ideas and she said “We really need to connect. Maybe we should try to connect with each other once a week.” This was at the point during the pandemic when we were all supposed to stay home and only go to the grocery store.

Doing online workshops wasn't yet a thing, and so that was the idea that sparked the first get togethers. At that point HBC didn't have Zoom account so our sessions lasted only 40 minutes. Four or five people would log in from their back yards and report what they were seeing, like a woodpecker that had just come to a feeder or the Bluebirds that were nesting nearby. It was just a weekly event where we connected. One thing led to another, and the Education Committee decided to do these workshops. That that's how it came to be.

I have to say it's been very helpful for me. Hosting the Zoom workshops and learning Zoom happened in a low stress environment. It was good practice for me for work where I now have to present virtually, and I have to know how to use these platforms. Being able to do all these workshops and learning the glitches and stuff has been great.

N: I listen to the public radio program Living on Earth on WAMC on Saturday mornings. The host Steve Curwood lists the associate producers at the end of each show, and one of them is Paloma Beltran. I have to ask: is she any relation to you?

LB: Beltran is a Spanish name. In some countries it is almost like Smith is here. Beltran is my husband's name, though he's not of Latin American or Hispanic descent. And I don't know of any relationship to Paloma.

N: What are the kinds of things do you do to keep yourself amused when you aren't working or birding?

LB: I've been learning the guitar. I take lessons every week. I'm trying to play electric blues, but I also do a little bit of acoustic. I spend a lot of time doing that because I love playing the guitar,

but that does not mean I'm good at it. It has been a really nice way to use some creative energy. I use *Garage Band* a lot to jam and create music that way.

I do a lot of that, and then the other thing I do is digital storytelling. I make short – two or three minute – nature videos every once in a while. I have a YouTube channel where I put them up, and I also post them up on Facebook sometimes.

They are on whatever's happening that I notice out in nature. I record it and then I do a two or three minute video on some fun nature facts about you know, whatever it is. I did something on Hooded Mergansers one time. Subjects might be a flower that's blooming or an insect I see. This started through Mass Audubon early, early on in the pandemic. People were putting out educational videos, and I did it a few for Mass Audubon. They decided to do something different, so I just continued on my own.

I am on the HBC Board and also the board of the Broad Brook Coalition that oversees the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area in Northampton. I'm thinking of doing videos for

them for their social media presence to show what the coalition is doing.

N: I bet that our readers would like to find your work. How would they locate it?

LB: For YouTube just search “Nature Investigations” or “Nature Investigations with Laura Beltran.” That should get you there.

N: Do you have a favorite birding spot in the valley or elsewhere?

LB: That's a hard question. It really depends on what types of birds I'm looking for.

N: What about beyond the valley?

LB: I would say anywhere in Maine. I've traveled all across the country, and I would say there are two favorite places I love to go, whether it's birding or not. They are Maine and the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. I love those places. Gettysburg was pretty cool too. I went to Gettysburg one spring, and that was amazing both for birding and for history. I was on eBird at the time and I saw that Mike Locher was also in the area posting bird sightings. It turns out he goes to Gettysburg every spring. Small world.

THE HBC QUIZ

Did you know that the Hampshire Bird Club has an official quizmaster? Neither did I until about 5 minutes ago when I decided that we need one. Our Official, Okey-dokey, Grand Pooh-bah Quizmaster is Professor David Spector. He has produced a substantial and challenging set of quiz questions that you can use to exercise your mind, amaze your friends and pass along to unsuspecting strangers. Here are the first set of questions from the category “Field Marks and Identification”. The answers to these questions will appear in the November newsletter if you are lucky. You will get more questions as space allows in future newsletters. Enjoy!

- 1) By carefully looking at an American Robin here in Western Massachusetts one can be reasonably confident that one is not on the West Coast. What feature provides this information?
- 2) What local wood-warbler sings “Trees, trees, murmuring trees”?
- 3) Two species that one *might* see in Western Massachusetts, if one is *extremely* lucky, share the field mark (admittedly not the most obvious field mark on either) of a white tail with gray central tail feathers. What are they?
- 4) If in March I see an American Robin with an all-dark throat and very dark head and back, where might I guess that bird is headed to breed?

Please renew your membership now if you intend to do that and haven't gotten around to it yet. And choose the online newsletter option to save the club some dough and to get the newsletter within 15 minutes of its publication on the club website rather than waiting for printing, mailing and delivery.

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

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November 2021

Dear reader, I was unaware that November is National Native American Heritage Month until a notice popped up on my Google calendar. I did a little bit of research (Google, of course) and learned that the first of these national month celebrations was in 1990 when George H. W. Bush signed a Congressional joint resolution naming the month. The first governmental commemoration of our native people that I could find was American Indian Day, celebrated in May 1916 in New York. This event culminated an effort by Red Fox James, a member of the Blackfeet Nation, who was seeking approval from 24 state governments to have a day to honor American Indians. He rode across the US on horseback to pursue his goal.

Thinking about our native people drew my thoughts to the bird life that was here 500 years ago. And that brought me to the Passenger Pigeon. Wikipedia notes that Passenger Pigeons were hunted by Native Americans, but hunting intensified after the arrival of Europeans, particularly in the 19th century, ultimately leading to their extinction. In turn, that brought me to the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

Arthur Augustus Allen wrote about the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in 1939 [*Smithsonian Institution United States National Museum Bulletin* 174: 1-12]: “Ever since the days of Mark Catesby (1731) this species has attracted popular attention, and even at that time, as he stated in his *Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*: ‘The bills of these Birds are much valued by the *Canada Indians*, who made Coronets of 'em for their Princes and great warriors, by fixing them round a Wreath, with their points outward. The Northern Indians having none of these Birds in their cold country, purchase them of the *Southern People* at the price of two, and sometimes three, Buck-skins a Bill.’ At that time the species was found throughout the Gulf States as far north as North Carolina and up the Mississippi Valley as far as southern Ohio and Illinois.”

So that brings me to my last thought. I have Native American ancestors. One that I know of is Eady Isbell who moved from the Carolinas to the Ohio River portion of Southern Illinois in the early 19th century with her husband Shadrack Lowry. Grandma Eady likely was very familiar with both Passenger Pigeons and Ivory-billed Woodpeckers. And that is what I’ll be thinking about during National Native American Heritage Month.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

November 8, 2021: **Jonathan Meyrav: Conservation Champions: migratory bird conservation in Israel, and how a “white-knuckle” birding contest fits in**

December 13, 2021. **HBC Members’ Meeting.**

January 10, 2022. **TBA.**

February 14, 2022. **TBA.** 🍷

March 14, 2022. **TBA.**

NEWSLETTER TIMELINESS

If you subscribe to the print version of the newsletter, you may have seen that it arrives a bit late for you to sign up for or participate in some of our HBC programming. The online version is posted at the HBC website under the newsletter tab as soon as it is available, when it goes to the printer. Printing and mailing delays lead to print copies arriving 3 or more days after the online version is available. Just sayin’.

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, November 8 at 7:15 pm via Zoom

Jonathan Meyrav presents

Conservation Champions: migratory bird conservation in Israel, and how a “white-knuckle” birding contest fits in

Israel's position between the Red and Mediterranean Seas places it in the path of hundreds of millions of birds as they migrate between Asian and European breeding territories and African wintering habitats. The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, the oldest and largest conservation group in the country, promotes bird conservation, ornithology research, and environmental education through the Israel Ornithological Center and the International Center for the Study of Bird Migration. *Champions of the Flyway* is part of IOC's Eilat Birds Festival, timed to coincide with spring migration; teams compete to identify the most birds, but more importantly to raise the most money for birds, adding up to nearly \$500,000 in its first 5 campaigns. Each year's contest has a different conservation emphasis, supporting initiatives in countries all along the eastern Mediterranean flyway in partnership with *BirdLife International*.

Jonathan Meyrav has been birding since the age of 10, and banding birds since he was 14. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours calls him “the most experienced birding tour leader in Israel”. He has been the Tourism Director of the Israel Ornithological Center since 2010, and is the founder and coordinator of Champions of the Flyway.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee hosted Scott Sumner as he offered his popular Sparrow Workshop on October 8th. This virtual workshop was attended by more than 25 participants. Scott helped us identify those tricky sparrows and provided suggestions for locating the best habitats for each species. His beautiful photos, as always, were an outstanding feature of his presentation.

Our programs are now recorded and available at the Hampshire Bird Club website at <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/>.

November workshops are still in the works, but we plan to include a duck/waterfowl identification workshop. Please check the [Education page](#) on the website for updates. Coming along before the end of the year will be a workshop on feeder watchers and the Christmas Bird Count. Stay tuned.

We continue to offer virtual do-it-yourself (DIY) workshops. On Monday, October 4th participants shared their observations from the Pine Grove Conservation Area in Northampton where target birds were White-throated Sparrows, Field Sparrows, Palm Warblers, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Dark-eyed Juncos. If you would like to participate in next month's DIY field trip, see the note in the *Field Trip News* section below.

This summer the Education Committee sent a survey out to HBC members. Thank you to all who were able to fill it out. We asked about the kinds of education programs that people would like us to offer and feedback on the programs we have conducted this past year. Bird identification workshops were the overwhelming favorite, along with workshops that suggest birding areas and resources for birding. Fortunately, though the technology can be frustrating, most respondents felt that the Zoom meetings were working well and allowed them to connect with other HBC members in ways that would have otherwise been unavailable.

Finally, this little news item introduces Janice Jorgensen and Lesley Farlow as the new Co-Chairs of the Education Committee. We will miss Jim, but we are looking forward to working with this very dedicated committee. We also welcome anyone who wishes to join us. If you are interested in joining the Education Committee, please email us at education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Lesley Farlow and Janice Jorgensen

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Please join in welcoming these new members who have joined us recently: Maggie Kearney, Hadley; Megan and Mark Gollehon, Conway; Lisa Stoffer, Northampton; and Brian Zylich, Ware.

Thanks to the many returning members (200!) who have already renewed. If you are not among them, now is the time to renew! To pay online go to <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/membership/>. To renew by mail, download the form in the September 2021 newsletter from the HBC website. When you renew please consider indicating your willingness to share your skills or to serve on the HBC Board or a committee. If you have a suggestion for a special interest or a new committee that you think other members might also enjoy, please let me know too. Thanks!

The Member Directory will be published at the end of this month. It will include all renewed members who agree to share their contact information with other members. The Directory is published (in hard copy only) and mailed in early December, and is not shared outside HBC.

Again, thank you for being a part of HBC!

Lissa Ganter, membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

FIELD TRIP NEWS

Upcoming Field Trips

All scheduled field trips are now filled. We will list the winter and spring trips in the December newsletter. We are hoping to organize trips to the Springfield Crow Roost and to the Connecticut or Massachusetts (or both!) coast this winter.

If you have an idea for a field trip or would like to lead a trip, please email us with your idea or information at fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Do-It-Yourself Field Trips

As of press time the species and location for the November DIY field trip were not known. Eleven people enjoyed a field trip to Fort River Refuge in Hadley on September 26. They observed 32 species of birds, with highlights including a Peregrine Falcon, Northern Harrier, and 6 different species of warblers.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Scott Sumner led a sparrow trip October 13th in the Deerfield North Meadows area for 9 club members. There were plenty of sparrows along the road just past the famous “dirt piles” as well as some late migrating warblers. A diligent search while circumnavigating the piles resulted in some beautiful views of **White-crowned Sparrows**, but, alas, no Dickcissel. The shrubby wetland along the turf area was also very productive. One of the trip highlights was watching a feisty Merlin harass crows, finding 4 Kestrels, observing both a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a Coopers Hawk, and locating a secretive **Rusty Blackbird**.

On October 16th Derek Allard and Jim Lafley took a group along Pynchon Meadow Road in the Arcadia Meadows searching for sparrows and other open field birds. The sparrow variety was limited, but we did get both Song Sparrows and Savannah Sparrows in the scope for those attending to see field marks. There were several Palm Warblers providing good looks as well. An immature **Harrier** put on a display throughout the walk and a few other raptors were observed.

The now defunct Pine Grove Golf Course was the location for our October 24th field trip on a chilly but beautiful fall morning. The foliage was brilliant, birds were cooperative, and the company of eight members hosted by Jim Lafley made for a pleasant and memorable walk. There were few sparrows, but eight Yellow-rumps and one Palm Warbler put on a good show. An immature Great Blue Heron was found foraging in the meadow and then along the stream.

NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS COUNT

The Northampton (MANO) Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Sunday, December 19th. Despite last year's pandemic challenges we had one of the best counts ever. And this year looks promising, even with continued COVID-19 hurdles. Once again, we need your help! Even if you haven't participated before, we hope you'll consider taking part in the largest community science project ever... and have fun doing it! Let us know if you'd like to participate. Please email us at CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Even if you don't join one of the count groups, you can still count birds in your yard, or take a walk around your neighborhood! We're delighted to welcome feeder-watchers and new count participants, explain how the CBC works and answer all your questions. We'll have Zoom orientation meetings for leaders, participants, and feeder-watchers. As in last year's pre-count sessions, we'll cover how it all works, and instructions on filling out the forms. Activities around compilation are yet to be determined.

Please feel free to contact the team with questions: CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org. To view our count circle click <https://tiny.cc/ManoCBCMap>. For updates, continue to check the count website at hampshirebirdclub.org/cbc and HBC's Facebook page.

Did we mention it's fun?!

Janice Jorgensen

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia

Fall Ecology Series: Waterfowl

with Laura Beltran

Saturday November 6, 10:00 am - noon

Please [register online](#) or call 413-584-3009

Late fall is when many ducks, geese, and other waterfowl migrate south. We will walk along the Mill River, by the Arcadia Marsh, to the 1840 Oxbow, searching these prime wetland habitats for waterfowl and other late fall migrants. Bring binoculars, a scope (if you have one) and a field guide.

Birdwatching Around the World Series – Online

Tuesdays, November 30 – December 21, 9:00 – 10:00 am

Please [register online](#)

Learn about birds and other amazing animals from around the world in the comfort of your home. Immerse yourself in the incredible and diverse bird life found in Central Asia, Central America, and South America. Each of these areas support rich avian biodiversity, including many endemic species.

Over four weeks, Mass Audubon will take you on a virtual tour of these iconic destinations and the fascinating birdlife found there.

- Tuesday, November 30 - Colombia with Elissa Landre, Community Advocacy and Engagement Manager for Mass Audubon, is an ornithologist who has led natural history tours and done volunteer service work in many parts of the world.
- Tuesday, December 7 - Mongolia with Chris Leahy, author, artist, Mass Audubon Bertrand Chair Emeritus, who first visited Mongolia in 1982 and has been making almost annual visits since 1994.
- Tuesday, December 14 - Galápagos Islands with Scott Santino, Teacher Naturalist, led trips to the Galápagos to interpret the islands birdlife in 2018 and 2019.
- Tuesday, December 21 - Costa Rica with David Moon, Environmental Educator, has taught tropical ecology in Costa Rica regularly since 1991, beginning with a Costa Rican non-profit, as well as ongoing classes for Franklin Pierce University.

Join for one, some or all!

THE HBC QUIZ

Our quizmaster has a whole bushelful of obscure bird questions. The answers to the first four, found in last month's newsletter, are below. The remaining questions in the topic of "Field Marks and Identification" are

- 5) On what locally common bird can one distinguish the sexes by the color of the base of the bill in breeding season (blue for males, pink for females!)?
- 6) What bird with a white rump is most commonly seen flying in Western Massachusetts with wings held in a steep dihedral?
- 7) Who wants to see Miss Beecher?
- 8) If you had a very narrow view of a puddle where birds were drinking, and all you could see was that a bird was using its bill like a straw rather than scooping up water, how far could you narrow your identification?
- 9) Many call notes are difficult to distinguish and to remember; a few, though, are quite distinctive, even for those of us with poor hearing. What local bird has been called "chewink" but is now better known by another transliteration of its call note?
- 10) How does a Black-bellied Plover differ structurally from most North American plovers? (Hint: The answer is the reverse of how a Sanderling differs from most sandpipers.)

Answers:

- 1) The white spots on the outer corners of the outer tail feathers are usually absent in West Coast populations of American Robins.
- 2) Black-throated Green Warblers evoke wind in the treetops with "Trees, trees, murmuring trees."
- 3) Franklin's Gull and White-tailed Kite (don't hold your breath waiting for these species in Western Massachusetts, and if you do happen to see one look first at more obvious field marks).
- 4) Dark American Robins breed in Newfoundland and nearby areas of mainland Canada.

Scoring: Give yourself some points for each correct answer (and, if you want, points for effort or for anything else that strikes your fancy). If you get a bunch of points and/or enjoyed the quiz you win. If you disagree with any of the answers let us know, but you might have points deducted for insubordination.

BE GLAD YOU DON'T LIVE IN BUNN, NORTH CAROLINA

This article in the October 26, 2021 online edition of *The Guardian* says it all:

www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/oct/26/buzzards-vultures-north-carolina-small-town. For those of you who don't use the internet, let's just say that acid feces, projectile vomit and damaged chimneys feature prominently in the article.

Editors note: Yes, I know that you have become accustomed to getting a full seven pages of in-depth newsletter content every month. Events have conspired for this month to reduce the newsletter to only five pages. I figured that you didn't want to have two pages of juvenile-level bad jokes, so I spared you.

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
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Volume 38, No. 4
December 2021

Dear reader, have you heard that Black-browed Albatrosses are getting divorces more frequently? Historically, just 1% of albatrosses separate after choosing their life partner. These separations appear to be due to a pair's reproductive failure. A recently published study looks at albatross pairs observed near the Falkland Islands over a 15 year study period. When the sea surface temperature anomaly (SSTA) leads to warmer than normal water temperatures, up to 8% of albatross couples split up. The authors of the study suggest two possible theories for the increased divorce rate when SSTA is warm. One is linked to the stress caused by the need for the birds to hunt for food for longer times and further distances away from the nest. Some birds fail to return in time for the breeding season, and thus their partners may move on with a new partner. A second theory is that albatross stress hormones go up in harsher environments, such as when waters are warmer. With tougher breeding conditions and food scarcity, a partner can be blamed for poor reproductive performance that can then trigger divorce.

The original article is in Proceedings of the Royal Society B. You can view it at <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/full/10.1098/rspb.2021.2112>.

NEXT PROGRAM
Monday, December 13 at 7:15 pm via Zoom
Members' Meeting

This is your chance to show off your favorite pictures from the past year of birding. For those of you who are new to the club, the December meeting is reserved for members to present up to 10 pictures, presumably bird-related, to the meeting attendants. Because we are not meeting in person, we need to coordinate the pictures into one Powerpoint program prior to the meeting. If you would like to share pictures for this meeting, please send them in an email attachment to Laura Beltran at lauraandnature@gmail.com by December 3. Please let her know the precise order you would like your slides to appear. You may send separate images or images embedded in a Powerpoint presentation. The Northampton CBC organizers will also tell us about plans for the count on December 19.

As we won't be meeting in person, you will have to provide your own cookies and beverages. The obvious loss is that we won't be able to schmooze with each other like we did pre-pandemic. The obvious gain is that the beverages can be of the adult variety. Skol!

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

January 10, 2022. **TBA.**

February 14, 2022. **TBA.** ♡

March 14, 2022. **TBA.**

REMEMBERING SETH KELLOGG

Seth Kellogg, a highly accomplished Valley birder, died on October 13 of this year. Among his many contributions to bird watching and the natural world, he wrote a weekly nature column in the *Springfield Republican* for 20 years, he was editor of *Bird News of Western Massachusetts* and the Hawk Migration Association of North America's journal, he was the Voice of Audubon, and he served the Allen Bird Club as its president.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Greetings! Please join me in welcoming these new HBC members who have signed up in the past month: Anna Anderson, Grantham NH; Lisa McDaniels, Easthampton; and Elizabeth Vierling, Amherst. Our current membership total is now 228, reflecting a total of just over 300 individuals. If you're an unrenewed member who happens to see this newsletter, we'd love to welcome you back – it's never too late to rejoin! With some holidays already upon us, and more ahead, I wish you a happy season.

Lissa Ganter, membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

FIELD TRIP NEWS

Field Trip Report

Mike Locher led the annual Dead Creek, VT Field Trip on October 31st and here's his report:

There were four of us (David Peake-Jones, Andrew Magee, and Pat Eagan – Jan Lamberg dropped out the night before). It was miserable weather all day – cold and rainy. We found 44 species overall, and the highlight (of course) was about 1700 **Snow Geese**. Unfortunately, they were always a little too far away to scan for Ross' Goose with any hope of success. As we left for the day, the whole flock rose up from the Gage Road area and flew back toward the main goose viewing area. The lake was quiet; we had single-digit numbers of White-winged Scoters, Horned Grebes, Common Loons, and Ring-necked Ducks. We had one **Red-throated Loon**, and another small loon that I suspect was a Pacific (but the viewing conditions were bad enough that I was unwilling to attach an ID to it). Other highlights were 8 Killdeer (the only shorebirds), a Pied-billed Grebe, at least five **Northern Harriers** (including one gray male), one Rough-legged Hawk, and three Yellow-rumped Warblers.

Upcoming Field Trips

Winter field trips will be posted in the January newsletter and the spring field trips in the March newsletter. Any Hampshire Bird Club guidelines and restrictions for participation on field trips will be outlined at that time based on the CDC advisories and HBC Board decisions.

If you are interested in offering an unusually exciting field trip, one of our regular annual trips, or a mundane trip, please contact Jim Lafley at fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org

Club Insurance Coverage

On May 15th of this year the HBC insurance policy changed. The club no longer carries any vehicle accident or liability insurance. For any car travel during an HBC field trip, the driver's automobile insurance policy covers your travel. If you choose to carpool, the driver's policy provides coverage.

A CHAT WITH GEOFF LEBARON

In early November Geoff LeBaron and I talked about his work as Director of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, his early introduction to the natural world, some of his favorite trips, speakers who he invited to the HBC, and his interest in flying things other than birds. The portion of the chat about the Christmas Bird Count is below. The second half of the chat will be in a later newsletter issue.

***Newsletter:** I know that not all readers of the newsletter know who you are and what you do, so can you tell me what it is that you do for work?*

Geoff LeBaron: Sometimes I wonder about that myself. I'm the International Director of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count. A lot of people ask "What do you do for the other 49 weeks of the year?" That's really where almost all the work is for me.

I'm in charge of managing the entire program: managing the online data entry system, managing the database behind the data entry system, and managing the public output of all of the CBC data including the overall review. The first six months of the year involve convincing compilers to finish their data entry. Then a group of about forty regional editors review the data. We can't finalize a season until every single account is reviewed after its data entry is completed.

Once all that happens, the regional editors write the regional summaries. This is the state that I'm in right now, trying to get the last of last season's regional summaries in so that we can publish all the results of last year's CBC before the end of this month.

We're also now starting up the 122nd CBC. Many CBC participants shifted how they did things last year given the Covid disruptions. There is a lot of hand-holding and coercing on my part.

My position is within the Audubon Science Division. We get at least one if not a couple of requests from researchers every week for CBC data. I also do a lot of interviews for media and such about the Christmas Bird Count. There's a lot of other stuff that we do that requires not just in-depth statistical analysis or a technical paper kind of knowledge, but also plain birding and natural history knowledge, and those don't necessarily go hand in hand. So I'm on call to review things and help with input on projects, programs, publications and products that the Audubon Science Division is putting out or for papers that we're writing.

One of the things we're trying to do now is to delve a lot more deeply into the longer-term data set of the Christmas Bird Count. It's about the only database that goes back over 100 years. We're trying to figure out what has happened with bird populations over time and how their ranges have shifted over time.

N: You mentioned the regional editors. Do they do a lot of the reviewing and writing up of the data?

GL: Wayne Petersen is our New England regional editor. He makes sure that the data as they are in the database are accurate and valid. For example, if a compiler was to enter six Resplendent Quetzals for the Northampton Christmas Count, then the database software would let them do that. It doesn't have the kind of built in validation checks that eBird has. The regional editors are basically doing the last level of data checking based on their expertise on the birds of their regions. The first level is the field party leader. The next level is the compiler because the compiler has to agree that the data that they enter into the database are the official results of each count. And then, once the compilers check the entry off as completed, then the regional editors cast their eyes on it and make sure that not only the bird data but also the effort data

are complete, because the effort data on the Christmas Bird Count are as important as bird data. In theory, the more people there are counting in a given area, the more birds they will see, even if there aren't more birds in that area. When we're doing long term analyses, we use count effort to normalize the count data based on party hours put in.

I do a lot of other stuff, not only for the Science Division, but also for the organization as a whole. I do product reviews for the brand marketing team. I review both the online and print Audubon magazine prior to publication and stuff like that. It's enough to keep me busy.

N: I imagine that you work out of your home now. Is that the way that it has always been?

GL: No, when I started in December of 1987 and continuing through my first 11 years I did a weekly commute to New York City. I would drive from Williamsburg on Monday and stay in New York through at least Wednesday, but often Thursday and sometimes Friday. If I came back before the end of the work week, I would work at home.

When I started, the CBC was 100% a paper program. I sent out an identical paper-form booklet to every compiler everywhere, and they filled them all out by hand and mailed them back to me. To get them into printable form, I had to edit all of them for typesetting. Then we had to proofread it all to prepare for printing. We ended up with what some people may remember as the telephone book issue of six to seven hundred pages that included all the results of every Christmas Bird Count that was done everywhere.

There was no digital database at all at that point though there were some subsets of the data that had been computerized by researchers here and there, and a couple of decades worth of data had been digitized, but the long term database we have now didn't exist. In about 1998 National Audubon and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology collaborated and got a very large NSF grant to create what we called "BirdSource" at the time. One person in New Mexico, John Shipman, hand-entered all the data from 100 years' worth of CBCs from Xerox copies. And this Christmas Bird Count database allowed us to start BirdSource which evolved into eBird.

These days the CBC is 100% online. There's no paper at all. It has been an interesting evolution

as the Christmas Bird Count transformed to an online program and much more. When the majority of what I was doing became online work, it didn't really make sense for me to be commuting to New York to do that. So as soon as we completed the initial year of online data entry I began working from home full time.

N: You must have been on the phone all the time on those days when you worked from home back in the 1980s.

GL: Yes, there were lots of phone calls and a bit of that newfangled email. And there were a lot of letters. Remember handwritten letters or typed letters?

Back then I had to hand edit every single Christmas Bird Count booklet that came in. And, at that time, there was, as many people will remember, a participation fee of \$5 per field observer. A fair number of people didn't particularly like that. Back then a significant portion of my job was raising \$200,000 each year, \$5 at a time. It was then up to the compilers to collect the fees. Around here the fee was never a major problem, but there were some hardcore people who were influential in the CBC program, especially in Kansas and Oregon, who felt that Audubon should not require volunteers to pay for doing their volunteer work.

There was an Oregon revolt. One person communicated with many of the compilers in Oregon and said "If you don't want to collect the fees then don't collect the fees and don't send in your counts." For a couple of years I only got about half the number of counts that I had been getting from Oregon. In Kansas the counts just were never submitted. Eventually the situation in Oregon turned around and the person who had been the instigator of the Oregon revolt became the Oregon and Washington regional editor for several years, and became one of the biggest supporters of the CBC out there. After the last published hardcopy report for the 102nd CBC, we dropped the fee because the bulk of the money raised went to publishing and mailing the printed report.

My last interesting CBC anecdote is about Covid. Prior to the pandemic Audubon had migrated to Zoom as our institutional conference

calling system. I'd been working from home for twenty-something years so the day-to-day shift in work had no bearing on me, because I'd been on Zoom calls almost every day for years. That was certainly not true for most people. National Audubon has 85 people who work in the headquarters office in New York, which is still closed. And all the centers had to be completely shut down because of Covid.

For last year's 121st count there was a significant period of time in which I strongly felt that we were going to have to cancel it because of Covid. The social aspect of the CBC is so important. It's the main reason, I think, that a lot of people keep doing it. I am a good example – I still go to Rhode Island for my traditional Christmas Bird Count that I did when I was in graduate school. I couldn't do that last year. It wasn't like there were police at the border, but I felt, as the international director of the program, that I shouldn't be breaking the rules.

This year participation will be based on state and local regulations when we get to December 14. We are giving compilers the option again this year to cancel if they don't want to deal with Covid restrictions. We fully supported their decisions last year and not as many counts were canceled as I had expected. Only about 200 or 250 were, and those were very regionally specific. A lot of the big counts in California got canceled because California was really in bad shape Covid-wise during the CBC last year.

We have been wondering if the change in protocols to deal with Covid would affect the data and if the data would be comparable to the last sixty years worth of data when things were more standardized. An interesting thing is that, even though we had 200 to 250 fewer counts than for the previous season, the species totals and numbers of birds that were tallied last year for most counts are as high as if not higher than average. I think that may be because people were in smaller groups so that they could more thoroughly cover their areas plus we had a lot more feeder watchers which would make for a lot more birds. Also, it was an unusual year in that the weather across North America was good for most of the count period.

NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS COUNT

We will offer three Zoom meetings for the MANO CBCers. These are orientation/review meetings to prepare for this year's MANO Christmas Bird Count. They will be held:

Area Leaders Meeting – Tuesday, December 14, 7:00pm

We'll talk via Zoom about continued COVID-19 protocols: team coverage, how to manage multiple groups and times, forms for data submission (that will follow eBird taxonomy) and owling. Dealing with rare bird forms and photos will also be discussed.

Participant Meeting – Thursday, December 16, 7:00pm

This Zoom session will cover the "how, where and when" of the count, Covid-19 protocols, maps, the website, rare bird documentation and how to track what you count for the area leader.

Feeder Watcher Meeting – Friday, December 17, 6:00pm

In this Zoom meeting we will describe how to count feeder birds and how to submit the information.

On Monday, December 20th, 7 pm, we'll have a Zoom summary of the count.

To register for these free Zoom meetings, please email virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org. Put your meeting title role in the subject line (CBC Leader, CBC Participant, CBC Feeder Watcher or Compilation Meeting) so we can include you in the correct Zoom meeting list. The count will take place on Sunday, December 19. Check the HBC website <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/cbc> and [HBC's Facebook page](#) for updates.

Janice Jorgensen and Amanda Kallenbach

THE HBC QUIZ

The answers to the second set of six quiz questions, found in last month's newsletter, are below. We'll have more questions in future newsletters.

Answers:

- 5) In breeding season European Starling sexes differ in the color at the base of the yellow bill; the bill is dark the rest of the year.
- 6) The Rock Pigeon (= Rock Dove = Pigeon) has a white rump and glides with its wings in a steep dihedral. The dihedral of a Red-tailed Hawk is not nearly as steep, and Northern Harriers are not nearly as common here.
- 7) A singing male Chestnut-sided Warbler says, "I want to see Miss Beecher," "Pleased, pleased, pleased to meetcha," and/or "I want to kill my teacher."
- 8) Most birds drink with a scooping motion; doves, however, use their bills as straws. Here in Western Massachusetts such an observation would, barring a rarity or escapee, narrow the possibilities to Rock Pigeon or Mourning Dove.
- 9) The Eastern Towhee was once better known as the Chewink.
- 10) Most of our plovers lack a hind toe (hallux for those who like fancy words), but Black-bellied Plovers, like most birds, have 4 toes, including a hind toe, on each foot. Most sandpipers have 4 toes on each foot, but Sanderlings lack the hind toe.

THE NEW YEAR IS UPON US

I think that the great philosopher Yogi Berra summed up pretty well what I think 2022 and beyond hold for us. He said "The future ain't what it used to be." Happy New Year to you!

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

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Dave Gross, Editor