



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

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Dear reader, my next-door neighbor Joe is the Pied Piper of Turkeys. Joe has a feeder in his front yard. When he fills it, he scatters seed on the ground for the critters that prefer that format. The local Wild Turkeys discovered this bounty years ago. They've gotten to the point that they will swirl around Joe like moths to a night light while he's filling that feeder. After filling the feeder, Joe usually goes to his back deck and puts seed out there, too. It is not unusual to see Joe walking along his driveway away from his front feeder toward his back yard with a string of turkeys behind him, looking not unlike the tail on a comet.

The turkeys often walk past my house headed toward Joe's. This past Friday, seventeen of them trooped from the woods to the south toward Joe's place to the north. If you drew a line through the group you'd intersect with Joe's back porch. You can watch them at tinyurl.com/turkeysFeb2024. Wait for the last one. She's both aloof and a bit nervous for being so.

By the way, did you know that the Pied Piper story is a German one from Lower Saxony (*Niedersachsen*), the land of half of my forebears, in the Middle Ages? In the German story *Der Rattenfänger von Hameln*, or the rat-capturer of Hamelin, is promised a big payday to rid Hamelin of its rats that were, of course, a big problem in the age of the plague. He piped the rats away, but Hamelin stiffed him. In retribution the piper piped away the village's children. Joe's not like that, though I do keep a watchful eye on him.



The evidence.

NEXT PROGRAM

Tuesday, March 12, at 7:15 PM

Al and Lois Richardson present

Birding the Mountain Kingdome of Bhutan

Wesley United Methodist Church

Nestled in the heart of the Himalayas and protected by a geography of high mountains and deep valleys, Bhutan has remained one of the more mysterious countries in the world. Colorful birds, fluttering prayer flags, visits to ancient shrines and fortresses, and beautiful scenery were all part of a birding adventure in this magical place.

Lois and Al Richardson are long-time members of the Hampshire Bird Club and the Allen Bird Club. They have led field trips and presented at club meetings many times.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

- April 9, 2024. 7:15 PM. Ethan Clotfelder. **Tree Swallows and Chickadees.**
- May 14, 2024. 7:15 PM. Curt Griffin. **Botswana.**
- June 11, 2024. Time TBA. **Club picnic.** We hope.

HBC NOMINATING COMMITTEE

It's that time of year again. The HBC will be having its annual election for the Board of Directors, immediately following the May club meeting. To begin the process, the HBC President Derek Allard has formed a Nominating Committee as outlined in the club bylaws. The members are Cory Elowe, Sara Griesemer, and Janice Jorgensen. They are soliciting candidates to run for open slots on the board. If you are interested and willing, please contact one of them.

The committee will present the list of candidates for the board at the April, 2024 club meeting. Current board members in year two of their terms include Laura Beltran, Greg Brown, Annemarie Chapdelaine, Dave Gross, Kalpesh Krishna, Donna Lee Ubertalli, and Steve Winn. Greg Brown resigned from the board in January. Bill Randolph, who was one vote short of winning a board position in the May 2023 election, has agreed to fill Greg's slot through the remainder of his term.

NEWS FROM THE HBC LIBRARY

Thanks to a big sale at Princeton Books, our library now has the following bird guides:

- *Pocket Guide to Birds of Australia* by Menkhurst et al., 2022
- *Field Guide to the Birds of Chile* by Piña & Gonzalez 2021
- *Field Guide to the Birds of the Dominican Republic & Haiti* by Latta et al., 2022
- *Birds of East Africa* by Stevenson & Fanshawe, 2020
- *A Guide to the Birds of Panama* by Ridgely & Gwynne, 1989

You can check them out from the Hitchcock Center or come to the March meeting where I will have them.

Henry Lappen, HBC Librarian

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared toward beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: people young in age, from underrepresented minority groups, or who have disabilities that make birding difficult. Based on participant feedback, we have a new schedule! On the third Saturday of the month, at 8:45 AM, there will be a two hour, in-person, beginner bird walk at an accessible location. On the Thursday preceding the walk there will be a one hour online educational talk, at 7 PM.

All events are free and open to the public. Please help spread the word! The online presentation requires no registration (check the HBC website for the Zoom link). Those interested in attending the walk can register at bit.ly/2024bfe.

March 14, 2024, 7–8 PM: Identifying Ducks (Talk)

March 16, 2024, 8:45–11:00 AM: Lake Wallace, Belchertown (Walk)

TREASURER'S UPDATE

As we approach March and the start of the final quarter of our club's fiscal year, I wanted to provide a brief update on our finances. Our board-approved budget for this year is just under \$8,900. Our expenses fall into three main categories: *services for members* (about \$5,000) that include the newsletter, rent for space for our live meetings, and honoraria for speakers; *club operations* (\$2,900) that include internet and website fees, insurance, PO box, etc.; and *donations* from the club to support birding activities in the community that include support for a Christmas Bird Count activity for children and families at the Hitchcock Center as well as support for summer birding and nature programs at local camps. At this point in the year both our revenue, which is mostly from dues and donations, and our expenses are tracking as we expected. If you have any specific questions about the club's finances, feel free to email me at Treasurer@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Steve Winn, HBC Treasurer

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

Grant Van Horn, who created the Merlin Sound ID app, offered a fascinating workshop on how the app was developed. He explained how sound data is collected (from us, the birders!) and how it is used to improve the accuracy and range of identification produced by the app. If you missed the workshop be sure to go to **EVENT VIDEOS** under **EVENTS** on the HBC website and watch the recording!

Upcoming workshops.

The Zoom link for workshops is on the Education Workshop page of the Hampshire Bird Club website. Meeting ID: 822 7788 5665. Passcode: Education.

March 4, 7–8 PM. DIY with Brian and Lesley. Are you new to the area? Are you new to birding? Would you like to know where to go and what to look for? Or do you just want to connect with other HBC birders? Then come to a Zoom meeting of the DIY Field Trip. Each month we select a local hot spot and five target birds that can be at that location. During our Zoom meeting we give directions to the month's location and offer ID information for the target birds. Join us!

March 6, 7–8 PM. American Woodcocks: Learn Their Habitat and How to Find Them with Patti Steinman. Spring is when male American Woodcocks perform a unique aerial courtship dance to attract females. This spring ritual happens in the fields just after sunset. Learn the natural history and habitat of the woodcock, as well as where to look to see its display. You'll also learn more about the woodcock populations in Massachusetts and the Northeast and how we can help protect them.

Patti Steinman has studied woodcocks for over a decade. This workshop is connected to the HBC New Member Bird Walk (open to everyone) on March 9 at 5:45 pm at the Easthampton Community Gardens on Park Hill Road in Easthampton.

March 19, 2024, 7–8 pm. What Do You Know About Condors? Maybe Not Enough? with Christina Baal. The California Condor is known as one of the rarest birds in North America. A conservation icon, the story of its remarkable recovery stands alongside the reality of a species that still teeters on the brink of extinction. Learn more about the bumpy journey of this Pleistocene relic from its Ice Age past to the present day and the incredible stories of people working to keep this bird soaring free.

Christina Baal is an artist, birder, writer, and naturalist. She currently works at *Pinnacles National Park*, home to more than 20 condors, in California. She says "My dream is to meet and paint 10,000 different species of birds over my lifetime. Going after this dream has afforded me the opportunity to see hundreds of beautiful birds, travel to incredible places, and meet wonderful people." Website: drawing-tenthousandbirds.com.

New Member Bird Walks—open to all:

1. March 9, 2024, 5:45 PM at Easthampton Community Gardens on Park Hill Road in Easthampton, looking for American Woodcocks.
2. May 19, 2024, 7 AM at Fort River (Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge), focusing on spring migrants.

More details will be available on the Education webpage, and we'll send email reminders.

Did you miss a workshop last year? Our recorded programs are available on the [Hampshire Bird Club website](#). You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page. Scroll down to the bottom of the videos page to find Education workshops. If you have an idea for a workshop, email us at education@hampshirebirdclub.org. **We are looking for new members!** If you would like to join the Education Committee, please email us.

The doctor told a friend of mine that she needed to switch to a vegan diet. She had to give up meat for lentil.

If dogs are canines and cats are felines, then planes must be airlines.

FIELD TRIP COMMITTEE NEWS

The HBC board would like to make you aware that we have a new Field Trip Committee who will be responsible for planning, well, field trips for the club. Previously, this was the work of one person. However, as we continue to make volunteering with the club less burdensome and open to anyone who wishes to participate, this work will now be undertaken by six club volunteers.

We would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the members of the new committee: Marcia Merithew, Peggy MacLeod, Katie Doe, Brian Zylich, Tim Langevin, and Joseph Seftor. We look forward to the trips the committee organizes. If you would like to reach out to the new committee members, you can do so at fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Please register **online** at least **two days** in advance of the trip at the HBC website (hampshirebirdclub.org, go to EVENTS → FIELD TRIPS). Contact leaders (if a phone number or email is listed) if you have questions. It's always wise to bring snacks and dress appropriately. Whether with or without a leader, please follow the HBC's guidelines for ethical birding and conduct (hampshirebirdclub.org/hbc-code-of-ethics-and-conduct/) and those on our website regarding field trips (hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines/).

Remember that we encourage carpooling. We ask that riders share costs with drivers as a matter of courtesy. The HBC recommends the current federal mileage reimbursement rate, shared by all occupants, but the rate for a vehicle is entirely up to the driver and passengers and should be determined before leaving. Note that sign-ups for field trips are now online at the HBC website, not through trip leaders.

Sunday, March 10. Great Pond. 7 to 10 AM. Join Brian Zylich for a slow outing along a flat dirt road at Great Pond in Hatfield, MA. The road can be uneven and muddy in spots – wear appropriate footwear. We will look for migrating waterfowl on the pond, as well as other early migrants and residents. Trip leaders will have at least one scope for viewing distant ducks on the water. Birds likely to be seen include American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Wood Duck, and Hooded Merganser. This is also a good location for other less common waterfowl. We will meet at 7 AM at the intersection of Main St. and Cow Bridge Rd. in Hatfield. We can carpool to Great Pond Rd. where most of the walk will take place. *Register online.* Questions? Contact brian.zylich@gmail.com. (E/M)

Sunday, April 21. Quabbin Park–Hank's Meadow. 7:30 to 10:00 AM. Join Greg Brown for a 2.5 mile loop from the Hanks Meadow area, west along the shoreline and back up through the woods to the main road. The trail is moderate difficulty and may be muddy in spots – wear good boots! Our path will go through a variety of habitats, where we may see any number of earlier migrants along with year-round residents. Possible sightings include warblers (Pine, Palm, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green), woodpeckers, eagles, ravens, and towhees. We will meet at 7:30 AM at the Hanks Meadow parking lot and return to the same place by 10 AM at the latest. Bring water, snacks, binoculars, appropriate footwear, and outerwear. Note: there is usually a toilet at the parking lot, but this is not guaranteed. *Register online.* Questions? Contact gwb@gregorywbrown.com. (M)

Thursday, April 25. Silvio O. Conte NWR–Fort River Division. 7:30 to 9:30 AM. Join Marcia Merithew and Janice Jorgensen for an easy walk on the accessible trail and road in Hadley, MA. The trail is 1.2 miles long, and road walking could be another mile. The forest and meadow habitats are excellent in April for early migrants, year-round residents, and possibly some surprises (visit this link for a list of species seen in any April: (ebird.org/hotspot/L907119?m=4&yr=all&changeDate=)). We will meet at 7:30 AM in the parking lot at 69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley. Plenty of parking is available as is a toilet. Ending time is flexible. Limited to 18 participants. *Register online.* Questions? Contact mmerithew@comcast.net. A cancellation will be posted to the HBC website and Facebook page. (E)

COME VOLUNTEER WITH THE TRUSTEES!

Looking to get involved with a local wildlife monitoring project? Join The Trustees volunteer nest box monitoring program! We are seeking dedicated birding volunteers to help monitor Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallow, and American Kestrel nest boxes at Bartholomew's Cobble (Sheffield, MA), Tyringham Cobble (Tyringham, MA), Jewell Hill (Ashburnham, MA), and Peaked Mountain (Monson, MA). Monitoring and cleaning nest boxes is the best way to help increase native cavity-nesting bird populations on our properties with open grassland habitat and provides us with information about these birds, their nesting habits, and breeding success. Such monitoring and box maintenance also allows us to help control populations of non-native species, such as European House Sparrows and Starlings. Through this volunteer opportunity, you will have the chance to connect with the local landscape and wildlife, take part in a community science initiative, contribute breeding bird data to Cornell's NestWatch program, enhance your birding skills, and join an enthusiastic community of birding volunteers. For more information, contact Isabel Bronson at ibronson@thetrustees.org.

THE HBC PUZZLE

Here are some more bird questions, some silly, some trivial, most obscure. [Ed note: Don't blame me. Speak to Prof. Spector about this.]

34. Although most ornithologists doubt that Ruby-throated Hummingbirds migrate on the backs of geese, there is another bird species with which this hummingbird does associate closely. What is that species?
35. Why do sports fans care about the city in which a famous poet died?
36. How many eggs, on average, does a peacock lay in a nest?
37. Why are hummingbirds called hummingbirds?
38. What is the official city bird of Madison, Wisconsin? Hint: It can also be seen in Western Massachusetts.
39. If someone is looking over your shoulder and giving advice while you take this quiz that would be kibitzing. What bird gives us the word "kibitz"?

Answers to last month's questions:

27. The "teacher bird," named for the repeat unit in its song, is the Ovenbird, and the "preacher bird," presumably named for the persistence of its singing, is the Red-eyed Vireo.
28. Red-tailed Hawk.
29. Black-headed Gull.
30. Cardinal robes are red, but prothonotary robes are not yellow.
31. "Puffin" originally referred to the Manx Shearwater, especially to the very plump nestlings that were collected in large numbers and sold for food.
32. cob = male swan; pen = female swan;
tiercel = male falcon (especially Peregrine Falcon);
tom = male bird generally, especially a male turkey; jake = yearling male turkey.
eyas (originally nyas) = nestling hawk or falcon;
squab = nestling pigeon or dove;
gander = male goose.
33. Acadian Chickadee—Boreal Chickadee (more eastern subspecies)
Baldpate—American Wigeon [editorial comment: I'd like to go back to Baldpate.]
Brünnich's Murre—Thick-billed Murre
Cabot's Tern—Sandwich Tern
Duck Hawk—Peregrine Falcon [I know one person who got this one!]
Hudsonian Chickadee—Boreal Chickadee (more western subspecies)
Hudsonian Curlew—Whimbrel
Man-o'-War Bird—Magnificent Frigatebird

Migrant Shrike—Loggerhead Shrike (specifically the more northern subspecies; southern birds were called Loggerhead Shrike)
Olive-backed Thrush—Swainson’s Thrush (the West Coast subspecies, not included in eastern guides, were the Russet-backed Thrush)
Pine Woods Sparrow—Bachman’s Sparrow
Red-backed Sandpiper—Dunlin
Richardson’s Owl—Boreal Owl
Sycamore Warbler—Yellow-throated Warbler (more western subspecies)
Water-Turkey—Anhinga
Wood Ibis—Wood Stork

A Reminder About 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.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The following programs are offered by Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. Sign up online. More programs can be found at www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia.

Birding By Ear Series—Sundays, April 21 (9 AM–noon), April 28 (8–10 AM), and May 5 (8–10 AM)

Spring is a season filled with the beautiful sounds of birds, many returning to their breeding grounds. Learn the difference between bird songs and bird call notes and how to identify birds by their songs. This 3-session class will begin with an instructional session, followed by two morning walks to practice what we’ve learned.

Saturday Morning Bird Walk at Arcadia—Saturday, April 27, 7:00–8:30 AM

We’ll search for songbirds as we walk the trails through the various habitats at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. We’ll watch for behavior, listen to bird songs, and learn how to submit our data to eBird, one of the largest wildlife databases in the world. We’ll also explore the resiliency and adaptations of some birds to our changing climate.

Saturday Morning Bird Walk at Graves Farm—Saturday, May 4, 7:00–8:30 AM

We’ll search for songbirds as we walk the trails through the various habitats at Graves Farm Wildlife Sanctuary. We’ll watch for behavior, listen to bird songs, and explore the resiliency and adaptations of some birds to our changing climate.

Hitchcock Center for the Environment

The following program is offered by the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. Sign up online.

Senior Nature Walk with John Green—Wednesday, March 20, 10 AM–noon

Join naturalist John Green on this gentle and slow walk through the woods. There should be signs of spring and the fading of winter to explore.

Belchertown Planning Department

The Belchertown Planning Department will be holding photography workshops and exhibitions through May, 2024. More information and registration information can be found at www.belchertown.org/planning/.

Belchertown Wildlife & Landscape Photography Workshops

Participants in the workshops will learn more about wildlife and landscape photography from photographer Mark Lindhult, who leads the Quabbin Photo Group. Youth-focused photo programs at the Quabbin will be

exploratory. Meet other local photographers while learning new skills, build a portfolio of work, and then submit your top photos to the photo contest.

Photography in the Field (adult) led by Mark Lindhult, Saturday, March 2 from 2–3, Clapp Memorial Library

Teen Beginner Photography workshop for teens & tweens with Ed Comeau on Sunday, February 11 at 1 PM, Quabbin Visitor Center

Focus on Youth photo explorations for preschool through 4th grade led by Jennifer Whitehead, Sunday, February 11 at noon, Quabbin Visitor Center

Belchertown Wildlife & Landscape Photography Contest

The photo contest is open to all Belchertown residents of all ages who may submit up to three images in either or both categories of wildlife and landscapes. These photos must have been taken in Belchertown, and indicate in the application where they were taken and other details about the images. Participation in the workshops is not required for the photo contest.

Belchertown Wildlife & Landscape Photography Exhibition

An exhibition of the submissions for the photography contest will be held at Clapp Memorial Library during May 2024. The exhibition opening and awards ceremony will be held on May 3, 2024.

BIRD NEWS OF THE WORLD

Read all about it! On January 30 Indian police released from custody a suspected Chinese spy pigeon after eight months of detention. The pigeon, with suspect leg rings attached to writing that appeared to use Chinese characters, was captured in Mumbai. The bird was held until it became clear that it was a racing pigeon from Taiwan. The police had no comment after the bird's release. Apparently, the bird also had no comment. You can read more by searching for "India Chinese spy pigeon" at apnews.com.

MORE BIRD FUN

Who says that birds don't have fun? Check out this duckling enjoying a slide with a humanling: twitter.com/yoda4ever/status/1758874854764184026?s=46&t=V7Vfs2X8f7Tb8bB5srchIg.

BAR JOKES

The professor of mixology, Dr. Shaken-Stirred, did his cocktail research in the field. One day he dropped in to his local bar to find a new bartender there. He asked her to surprise him. She mixed rum, lime juice, simple syrup and some ice together, vigorously shook it, and poured it into a martini glass. She dropped in a hickory nut and passed the drink to him. "What's that?" the prof asked. Replied the bartender, "It's a hickory daiquiri, doc."

A weasel walks into a bar. The bartender looks up and says "Wow! In all my years tending bar, I've never had a weasel stop by. Welcome! What can I get you?" "Pop", goes the weasel.

A priest, an imam, and a rabbit walk into a bar. The rabbit says "I think I'm a typo."

A guy walks into a bar and sits down. The bartender says "We were debating how to pronounce the name Wagner. Do you pronounce it with a 'w' like in wary or like in vary?" The guy says "Vary." The bartender says "Thanks." The guy says "You're welcome."

A termite walks into a bar and says "Excuse me. Where is the bar tender?"

[Ed. note: Ouch!]

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor