

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~hampbird/>
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The shortening days of September bring something for any birder. Indeed, some of us find ourselves torn between staying with that group of confusing warblers in the meadows, or being a few minutes earlier up the mountain for what the first thermals of the morning may bring. Whether it is the promise of a white eye-ring deep in a dark thicket, or the breath-taking, sickle-winged flash of a merlin, we all find magic in the season.

On September 10, Gerry Bertrand delighted us with his account of birding the Peruvian Amazon. I can find little to say here about what happened the next day, and since. I hope that birding has given you, as it has me, some moments of gentleness and joy to hold onto.

PROGRAMS

On Monday, October 15, we will once again host Mark and Marcia Wilson, who will present “**Nantucket Through the Seasons**”.

Early in her career, **Marcia Litchfield Wilson** was the “Voice of Audubon” for MAS in Lincoln, Massachusetts, where she was extensively involved in public education, field work and bird research. After earning a B.S. in Biology, she moved to Nantucket, where she studied Piping Plovers and Least Terns for the Trustees of Reservations. During twelve years on the island, she designed and implemented a natural history tour program on a large barrier beach refuge, and wrote the newspaper column “Island Bird Sightings” for nine years. After leaving Nantucket, Marcia has become a widely known and respected environmental educator. Through her program “Owls of New England,” she has brought the ecology of the region to both adults and children, largely via live birds and husband Mark’s exquisite photographs.

Mark Wilson is a wildlife photographer, bird columnist, photojournalist, and avid birder. He has been a full time staff photographer at the *Boston Globe* newspaper and wrote the *Globe’s* weekly photography column for nine years. Mark’s photographs have appeared in *National Wildlife*, *Sanctuary*, *Canadian Wildlife*, *Equinox*, and a host of other publications. Mark’s photographs are imbued with his understanding of animal behavior and light. He has ranged widely through North America and the Arctic, often with his wife Marcia.

Mark and Marcia Wilson operate their lecturing and stock photography agency, WILDSHOT, as well as the “Eyes On Owls” education programs, from their home in Massachusetts. They are accomplished and inspiring presenters, who will no doubt share much of their personal insight into the remarkable island of Nantucket. Live birds will be part of this presentation and, as an added bonus, they will donate a Snowy Owl print to the club. This will somehow find its way to one lucky member.

Coming Up.....

November 12: Sam Friede on the Bolivian Amazon.

December 3: Members meeting.

January 14, 2002: Dave Small on Birds, Butterflies and Beyond.

FIELD TRIPS

The following trips are coming up. Please see the Fall Field Trip Guide (September edition) for details.

October 5-8. Cape May, New Jersey. Currently full. Scott Surner: 253-7486.

October 10. Morning Sweep of the Valley. Harvey Allen: 253-7963.

October 14. Quabbin. This trip is currently full, and is subject to cancellation due to security measures around the reservoir. Check with Tom Gagnon: 584-6353.

October 20. Dead Creek, VT. Al Richards: 665-2761.

November 4. Berkshire Lakes. Tom Gagnon: 584-6353.

The enclosures with this edition: the Field Trip Policy, Principles of Birding Ethics, and the Guidelines for Field Trips and Drivers are all designed to make field trips better. Please read them!

Trip Reports

Bob Bieda and Al Richards led a group of eight birders to **New South Beach** (off Cape Cod) on **August 25**. The tide was not cooperative, and perhaps contributed to modest numbers of shorebirds. However, there were a number of Hudsonian Godwits, one Marbled Godwit, at least one Whimbrel, and quite a few Red Knots. Several Parasitic Jaegers were observed at close range, harassing the terns off the ocean beach.

We spent a large part of the day picking through large flocks of Common Terns for Roseate and Forster's Terns, which were both quite numerous. The gentle breeze and sun led to an epidemic of napping, mostly afflicting the rank-and-file, while Bob and Al diligently hunted for a Black Tern. Toward the end of the day all seemed lost. Bob finally succumbed to the call of a soft sand bank, while lesser mortals picked forlornly through the piscivorous hordes. Imagine our chagrin when Bieda, still rubbing the sleep from his eyes, staggered to his feet a few minutes later and promptly found the elusive tern.

For his part, Al had bet that the group would not find a Curlew Sandpiper. Shawn Smolen-Morton agreed to carry Al up the stairs from the boat launch if the bird did show up. Those familiar with the story of Robin Hood may note Shawn's striking resemblance to Friar Tuck, who was compelled to transport the good Robin across a stream in just such a fashion. History did not repeat on this occasion, but did anyone else hear that strangled cry emitted by Shawn just after lunch?

On Wednesday, **September 19**, Harvey Allen and six others swept the **Connecticut River Valley**. Harvey reports that the amount of sweeping actually required was minimal. The group found a very cooperative Gray-cheeked Thrush almost immediately after setting out from Atkins. Thirty-six species were seen in about an hour and a half, in basically the same area, including Blackpoll Warbler, Northern Parula, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, and a family of Red-bellied Woodpeckers. Harvey's thinking of renaming his series the mid-week "vacuum" of the Connecticut River.

On **September 29**, Geoff LeBaron went somewhere mysterious with some other birders. You'll have to wait till the next newsletter.....

LIBRARY

Bill Clinton has one. George Bush Snr. has one. Ummm...the President before that has one. Some day, even G.W. will have one. More to the point, we have one!

A substantial library, that is. It is located at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst. **Anne Cann** maintains a collection of birding resources including field guides, bird-finding guides to almost every major birding destination in the U.S. and some overseas locations, natural histories, periodicals, and videos. **Hours** are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Items can be signed

out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. Anne welcomes questions about the library contents, or suggestions for future additions. She even brings a selection of items to meetings! Call her at (413) 253 7753, or send email to cann@uhs.umass.edu

CONSERVATION

*If you are interested in conservation of birds and birding habitat, you may like to share information and effort with others in the club. **Anne Lombard** is our conservation chair. She often organizes a stalwart band of volunteers conducting breeding-bird surveys, and is usually involved in various cutting-edge conservation issues. Contact her at (413) 586-7509, or annelombard@mediaone.net*

HITCHCOCK CENTER

Amongst the numerous public programs at the center this fall, "Wings in the Night" looks at the ecology of north-eastern bats and, in particular, a project to renovate a 1900 foot tunnel into the largest bat hibernation site in this region.

*With **John Foster**, New England Naturalist Training Center
Tuesday, November 13, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Free, with a suggested donation.*

Hitchcock Center Travel is collaborating with other local travel organizations to offer some truly groundbreaking experiences in foreign natural history and culture.

January 11-19, 2002. CUBA (with the Center for Cross-Cultural Study).

June 26-July 5, 2002. ICELAND: Land of Fire and Ice (with Cross Culture).

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

Arcadia

Hawk Watch at Mt. Tom

with **Dan Russell**

Tuesday, October 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (fee)

"Important Bird Areas"

Andrea Jones, (bird conservation biologist) and **Wayne Petersen**, (MAS ornithologist)

Saturday, October 13, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Raindate: Sunday October 14.

This session introduces the "Important Bird Areas" program in Massachusetts, which is part of an international effort to encourage protection of major breeding and migrational areas for birds. There will be a slide show, followed by a tour of IBAs in the Connecticut River Valley. Fee.

*For more details, and to register for programs at Arcadia, contact **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary**, 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton MA 01027. Telephone (413) 584-3009.*

Universal Resource Locator!!!

The club now has its own URL: <http://hampshirebirdclub.org>. Our address (listed at the head of this letter) has not changed but from now on, even if the address should change, the URL will always find us. We have the multi-talented David Gross to thank for thinking of this and following it up.

If You Cannot Make It to Meetings.....

A number of members are unable to attend meetings because of long-term health concerns which make driving difficult or impossible. We hope there are other members who can offer a ride to someone from the same geographic area who needs one.

If you need a ride to meetings, or can offer one, please contact **Sally Venman (549 1098)**. She will attempt to match people from each group. We want to emphasize that this is intended for those with long-term medical and/or age-related needs, and not to solve short-term difficulties such as car trouble.

Christmas Counts.

It's never too early to start ingratiating yourself with the top birders from your patch, or suggesting that an area leader from your department might like to take a sabbatical. Remember that last year's Northampton count took place on one of the wettest days of the year, and the Quabbin folk were almost blown away. This year has to be better!

Northampton Christmas Count: Sunday, December 16. Raindate; Sunday, December 16

For more information, contact Jan Ortiz (549-1768 or jtoriz@aol.com)/ Mary Alice Wilson (548-9078 or mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu)

Quabbin Christmas Count: Saturday December 29, 2001

"It never rains on the Quabbin Count"

For more information, contact Scott Surner (253-7486 or ssurner@aol.com)

Thank you for receiving the newsletter on-line. It helps our bottom line, and reduces the mailing madness considerably.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.....

Hampshire Bird Club Evening at WFCR

A group of 6-8 volunteers from HBC will be answering phones during the upcoming pledge drive at the local NPR station, WFCR. Join fellow birders for a few hours during "Prairie Home Companion," "The Thistle and Shamrock," and "Valley Folk." You'll be trained, and then take pledges from callers. Food and beverages are provided; all you need do is bring yourself (and friend if you wish). If you'd like to join the fun, call or email Dave Gross at 253-2897 or dgross@biochem.umass.edu to sign up.

Date: Saturday, October 20

Time: 6-10 p.m.

Location: WFCR studios, Hampshire House, UMass campus.

Club member **Chris Page** (who designed our beautiful logo, amongst other things), is exhibiting some of his latest paintings. The exhibition features "**new paintings from the stream works series,**" and is taking place at *The Grubbs Gallery in the Reed Center*

Williston Northampton School

19 Payson Avenue, Easthampton MA 01027

This, incidentally, puts the exhibition right smack at the cultural center of the valley, and on the fashionable side of the river (ed.) Come take a look!

That's all for this month!

David Peake-Jones;:529-9541 or davidpj@the-spa.com