



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

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November, 2003

This month, as the piranha might have said to the buffalo, "All I can offer you is bare bones." October seems to have fled by, as have the birds (without my glasses on them). I remember seeing a million Swamp Sparrows at the Ibis Pool on some surreal morning in early October, and the same weather pattern that wowed the Cape May participants brought about 2000 accipiters and falcons to Lighthouse Point on the day I happened to be there. Other than that, all I can really say to you this month is "Hope you got out more than I did!"

Alert readers will have noticed the omission in the October edition. To my eternal shame, I forgot to include the HBC "Guidelines for (field trip) Participants" along with the Field Trip Policy. The waves of reproving mail washing over my desk have shown me the error of my ways. Mercy! Enough already! I have included both the Guidelines, and another copy of their sister document, the Field Trip Policy, with this edition. They are juxtaposed on either side of the same bit of paper, as nature intended. *Mea culpa!*

PROGRAMS

This Month

Monday, November 10

Kathleen Anderson describes **New England's Changing Avifauna**.

All programs are held at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant St. in Amherst. Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.

Fifty thousand years ago the Massachusetts landscape was covered by ice a mile thick. About twelve thousand years ago the ice retreated, allowing plants, wildlife and humans to resume their activities. The land and its cover of vegetation and animals have been changing constantly ever since. Condensing this time period into sixty minutes is a challenge but, aided by slides, Kathleen Anderson will attempt to put what we see about us into a new perspective. We are all aware that our towns and our state have changed in the past few decades, but we tend to think in terms of a few human generations. Taking the long view has always intrigued Kathleen and she will help us skim across the centuries, learning as we go, to better understand what we see about us at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Kathleen Anderson's lifelong interests, apart from her family, have involved birds and conservation. Her research activities have included 11 years of work on the equine encephalitis virus in birds and several banding expeditions to Belize in Central America and James Bay in Arctic Canada. She served for 15 years as the Founding Director of the Manomet Bird Observatory and currently chairs the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Kathleen is a Board member of the American Birding Association and has been actively involved with the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts, and a variety of other organizations and projects. All are concerned in one way or another with preserving birds and open space for all wildlife.

Coming Up

December 8, 2003. Members Meeting.

January 12, 2004. Sam Fried. Kansas: Shorebirds and Prairie Chickens.

February 9, 2004. Don Kroodsma. Bird by Bike.

Past Programs

A link to the "*Harriman Expedition Revisited*" Website has been added to the HBC Website. You can find it by clicking on the "*Related Links*" section of the homepage at www.hampshirebirdclub.org.

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Geoff LeBaron and fourteen others picked their way along the balmy coast of **Rhode Island** on **September 20**. I cannot improve on Geoff's highlight section, so here it is as he sent it!

1) *Napatree Point, Watch Hill, RI.* (34 American Oystercatchers, fantastic views of many different species of shorebirds, flyby Merlin and Peregrine, and JUST GETTING OUT THERE!)

2) *Richmond Turf Farms, Richmond, RI.* OK, it was hot, and they weren't as cooperative as the shorebirds at Napatree, but we DID have a flock of 8 Baird's Sandpipers.)

3) *Trustom Pond N.W.R. & Moonstone Beach, Matunuck, RI.* In addition to perhaps discovering why it's called MOONstone beach, once we left the over-full beach parking lot we had a lovely walk through the thickets at Trustom Pond. Gray Catbirds were everywhere. White-eyed Vireo, Connecticut Warbler, and other migrants skulked about the shrubbery, and Pied-billed Grebes were everywhere around the shoreline of Trustom Pond.)

4) *Point Judith, Narragansett, RI.* We didn't add any species of birds to the trip list, but the sunset was gorgeous—and the surfers crazy!

Other species of note amongst the total of 89 included American Wigeon and Green-winged Teal, Bonaparte's Gull, Common- and Forster's Terns, and a nice selection of warblers.



Al Richards took six people to the **Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area** on the eastern shores of Lake Champlain on **October 18**. This trip is one of the few we run that takes in a migratory spectacle rather than simply unusual species. The expected Snow Geese did not disappoint. Al estimates 6-7, 000 nested amongst the rolling farmland of Western Vermont.

In addition to the Snow Geese, the group had Red-necked- and Pied-billed Grebes, ten species of ducks (including Long-tailed Duck), Wilson's Snipe, Great Egrets (2) and Greater Yellowlegs. The group heard an Eastern Screech Owl at the pre-trip rendezvous.

Coming Trips

Wednesday, November 12. Connecticut River Valley. Half day. Harvey Allen will seek out migrants on his monthly sweep. Meet at 8 a.m. across the street from Atkins Farm, at the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

Sunday, November 23. East Quabbin. All day. Tom Gagnon ventures to the far side of the reservoir on this annual late fall trip. Bring snacks, warm clothes, and a lunch. The trip will be limited to 15 participants. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to reserve a place and make arrangements for meeting.

Friday, November 28. Turkey Trot: Cape Ann. All day. Al Richards and Bob Bieda lead this annual trip to the north shore searching for wintering sea ducks, Purple Sandpipers, seabirds, and perhaps a Snowy Owl. Bring snacks and warm clothing. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register.

Wednesday, December 10. Connecticut River Valley. Half day. Harvey Allen prepares participants for the Christmas Bird Count by seeking out our seasonal residents. Meet at 8:30 a.m. across the street from Atkins Farm, at the corner of Route 116 and Bay Road in Amherst. Call Harvey (413-253-7963) for further information.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Rain or shine, snow or sleet, ready or not, it's time for the 103rd National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count! Take this opportunity to contribute to the longest running database in ornithology! Join more than 50,000 volunteers in the US, Canada, the Caribbean, Latin America and Pacific Islands as they take to the field to count birds! You don't have to be an expert and you don't have to devote the entire day to this effort. You can also contribute from the warmth and comfort of your own home by being a feeder watcher. Everyone is welcome!

Some of the HBC December meeting is devoted to allowing area leaders and volunteers to get together and begin planning their efforts for the Northampton count. For most, the day starts at dawn, but for the die-hards, the owling can start at midnight. There is typically a compilation of results, which commences in the late afternoon.

The **Northampton Christmas Count** (in its 70th year) will be held on **Sunday, December 14**. For information contact Jan Ortiz (413) 549-1768; jtortiz@aol.com or Mary Alice Wilson (413) 548-9078; mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu. A potluck supper will be held at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst the evening of the count.

The **Quabbin Count** will be held on **Saturday, December 27**. Contact Scott Sumner (413) 253-5999; ssurner@aol.com.

Potluck!!

Now, at the risk of belaboring the point, the potluck is the real reason for doing this! We really need people to prepare dishes for the famished participants and to help with set-up. Please either call or email **Sue Emerson** -- 413-584-6736 or wle33@aol.com.

MORE CHRISTMAS COUNTS

For some strange reason, (perhaps the paucity of other things for me to do) we have decided to publish the most comprehensive guide to the Christmas Counts of Massachusetts in the history of this publication. Please enjoy it!

Date to be Determined

Buzzards Bay: Richard Harlow (508) 748-1297

Cape Cod: Blair Nikula (508) 432-6348; odenews@odenews.net

Cobble Mountain: Seth Kellogg (413) 569-3335; skhawk@comcast.net

Greenfield: Mark Fairbrother (413) 367 2695; bogelfin@crocker.com

Marshfield: Warren Harrington hwharrington@att.net and David Clapp

Mid-Cape Cod: Peter Trimble (508) 477-3847; merlin@capecod.net

Plymouth: Trevor Lloyd-Evans (508) 224-6521; tlloyd-evans@manomet.org

Truro: Tom Lipsky (978) 897-5429; tlip@massed.net

Sunday, December 14

Central Berkshire: Thomas Collins (413) 499-2799; tcbirder@berkshire.rr.com

Greater Boston: Robert Stymeist (617) 926-3603; rstymeist@juno.com

Groton - Oxbow N.W.R.: Julie Lisk (978)448-0147; jalisk@earthlink.net and Peter Alden (978)369-5768

Northampton: Jan Ortiz (413) 549-1768; jtortiz@aol.com and Mary Alice Wilson (413) 548-9078; mwilson@k12s.phast.umass.edu

Westminster: John Williams (978) 249-7831; cwstudio@yahoo.com

Tuesday, December 16

Sturbridge: Mark Lynch; moa.lynch@verizon.net

Saturday, December 20

Andover: Lou Wagner (978) 927-1122 x2705; lwagner@massaudubon.org

Athol: David Small (978) 249-2094; dhsmall@gis.net

Millis: Elissa Landre (508) 655-2296, x7301; elandre@massaudubon.org

Newport County, RI - Westport, MA: David Emerson (508) 822-7430; emdav12345@aol.com and Robert Emerson (508) 541-8364; remerson@duffysweeney.com

Northern Berkshire: Pamela Weatherbee (413) 458-3538; pambweath@aol.com

Quincy: Glenn d'Entremont (781) 344-5857; gdentremont@juno.com and Patricia O'Neill (617) 696-0831

Springfield: George Kingston (413) 525-6742; gcking@yahoo.com

Stellwagen Bank: Simon Perkins (781) 259-2148

Worcester: John Liller (508) 757-6377; jliller@worcesteracademy.org

Sunday, December 21

Cape Ann: Barbara Volkle (508) 393-9251; barb620@world.std.com

Saturday, December 27

New Bedford: Michael Boucher (508) 990-3910; britmm@juno.com

Quabbin: Scott Sumner ssurner@aol.com

Uxbridge: Strickland Wheelock (508) 278-5885; skwheelock@yahoo.com

Sunday, December 28

Martha's Vineyard: Robert Culbert (508) 693-4908; rculbert@dukescounty.org

Newburyport: Tom Young (603) 424-4512; redscreechowl@earthlink.net

Taunton-Middleboro: Russ Titus (781) 344-3516; rct6@cornell.edu

Thursday, January 1

Southern Berkshire: René Laubach (413) 637-0320; rlaubach@massaudubon.org

Friday, January 2

Tuckernuck: Simon Perkins and Richard Veit (781) 259-2148 (tentative date)

Saturday, January 3

Nantucket: Ken Blackshaw (508) 228-0709; kenandcindy@copper.net and Edie Ray (508) 228-1693; ackbird@aol.com

Sunday, January 4

Concord: Hank Norwood (508) 358-7524 hankn583@aol.com

And now some well-earned levity!

A linguistics professor, addressing his class said, "There are numerous cultures in which a double negative is used to denote the positive. It is also common for a negative and a positive to be used in tandem to emphasize the negative. However, in no culture does a double positive connote a negative!"
After an exquisite pause, a sarcastic response came from the back, "Yeah, right!"

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 is looking for ideas on how we can contribute to the conservation of species in our area. Contact her at (413) 586 7509, or aslombard@attbi.com*

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. **Henry Lappen** 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. Henry is happy to bring items to meetings, given a few days notice! Call him at (413) 549 3722.

HITCHCOCK CENTER PROGRAMS

GROWING SUSTAINABLE FORESTS

Scott Maslansky, Director of North Quabbin Woods Project
Sunday, Nov. 9, 1:00 -3:00 p.m.

FALL BIRDING TRIPS

Berkshire Lakes Waterfowl
Scott Sumner, Bird Class Instructor
Saturday, Nov. 8, 6 a.m. - 3 p.m. Fee.

THE NON-TOURIST TOUR OF GREAT BRITAIN

Thelma Isaacs, Geologist, Writer and Photographer
Tuesday, Nov. 18, 7:00 p.m.

BLIZZARDS and BRIE! A BENEFIT for the HITCHCOCK CENTER for the ENVIRONMENT

Friday, November 14, 2003, 6:30-9:30pm

The Garden House at Look Park, Northampton, MA

\$20 per person (includes hearty appetizers, light fare, desserts, & cash bar)

NOR'EASTER! For some, the word conjures up thoughts of shoveling heavy snow, travel problems, coastal erosion, flooding and fishing boats stuck in the harbor. For others, it means fun, days off from school, and skiing. Regardless of the impact on one's personal life, these very powerful and complex storms are an integral part of New England's climate and they have helped shape the lives of all New Englanders since the region was first inhabited. Come eat, drink and be merry while becoming an expert on New England weather. This Hitchcock Center event will be serving up sumptuous food, desserts, and drinks at the fabulous Garden House at Look Park, Northampton and will bring to you one of New England's leading experts on our ever-changing weather. Gregory Zielinski, State of Maine's Climatologist and author of the recently released New England Weather, New England Climate, will offer in-depth explanations and insights into New England's famous Nor'easters and other historical storms along with a flurry of stories, slides and lore about the vagaries of our climate.

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 PROGRAMS

West Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary: Ron Wolanin
At West Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary
Saturday, November 8: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Reading the Forested Landscape: Tom Wessels
Sunday, November 9: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Trees Without Leaves: Pat Steinman
At Laughing Brook Sanctuary
Saturday, November 15: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Winter Ecology: John Green
Saturday, December 6: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

MISCELLANEOUS BACKYARD BIRDS

17 Strong St., Northampton (near Eastside Grill). Phone 586 3155

Your local source for birding and bird-feeding supplies, including feeders, optics, gifts, written and audio-materials. Ten percent discount for members of the Hampshire Bird Club. Remember, with local merchants, your dollar stays here!

Preliminary Piping Plover Breeding Success Data for 2003

From Mass Wildlife

MassWildlife has compiled preliminary figures for piping plovers with data gathered through the cooperation of nearly seventy biologists and beach managers from state and federal agencies, private conservation groups and local municipalities. A total of 510 pairs of Piping Plovers nested at over one hundred Massachusetts coastal beaches. This represents a 5% decline from the 538 breeding pairs tallied in 2002. “The population decline is likely due to the relatively poor reproductive success recorded in 2002, when statewide productivity averaged only 1.14 chicks fledged per pair,” said Dr Scott Melvin, Senior Zoologist for MassWildlife. “This figure is considered too low to sustain the population. Productivity increased slightly in 2003 to about 1.2 chicks fledged per pair, but is still considered slightly below the minimum reproductive success needed to sustain Massachusetts's breeding population of Piping Plovers.” Melvin reports that loss of eggs and unfledged chicks to a variety of avian and mammalian predators continues to be the primary factor limiting productivity. Sites with the largest number of breeding pairs in 2003 were Crane Beach in Ipswich (34 pairs), Sandy Neck in Barnstable (31 pairs), South Monomoy Island, Chatham (31 pairs) and South Beach, Chatham (30 pairs).

For more information, contact Dr. Scott Melvin at 508/792-7270x 150

Welcome New Members!

Hope to see you on Monday night, or in the field soon!

Caitlin Robinson, Amherst, MA

Larry Therrien, Florence MA

Mercifully for you lot, that is it for this month!!
Until next time, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones
Editor
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