



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

<http://hampshirebirdclub.org>

Volume 20, No. 1

September, 2003

Enclosures with the September Newsletter:

Please see links from the Home Page for the following:

- 1) Membership Form (2003-2004) pdf form, downloadable
- 2) Release Form (2003-2004) (pdf version, downloadable)
- 3) Fall Field Trip Schedule (2003): pdf version, downloadable)
- 4) Rare Bird Alert (2003-2004) pdf version, downloadable)
- 5) Directory of Hampshire Bird Club
- 6)

In order to renew your membership we need to receive your Membership form and dues.
To participate in field trips, we need to receive your Release Form.

Note to the On-Line Newsletter Faithful!

If you are reading this, the September edition of the newsletter on-line, it probably means you received the on-line version last year. You should receive a paper copy of this (September) newsletter. We do this to make sure everybody gets a hard copy of the membership form, and to allow everyone to select the version of the newsletter which best suits them. If you want to receive all the subsequent newsletters on-line, the first thing we would like to say to you is,

Thanks!

In choosing the on-line version of the newsletter you help us to keep costs down, not-to-mention making the job of newsletter distribution far less time-consuming. If you were happy with this version last year, please choose it again. It really helps!

To choose the electronic version of the newsletter, please choose "I would like to receive the electronic version of the newsletter only" in the top right-hand corner of the membership form.

Again, Thanks!

(Main body of the newsletter follows, pages 2-5)

A welcome change has brought dry, breezy conditions to both the valley, and the extreme southern tip of New South Beach on this late-August Saturday. A small but by no means inconsequential group of Hampshire Bird Club members alights from a motor launch onto the harsh glare of the beach and begins donning the tools of the trade. Before anyone is settled, Bieda flings up an arm as a burly, cinnamon shorebird lumbers across in front of us. It disappears over the enormous crowd of Brookline/ New Hampshire birders who preceded us by a few minutes. This Marbled Godwit is the first bird of the day. Another, alertly identified by Al Richards at the beach landing a couple of miles down the shore, will be the last bird of the day. In between, we wander through a landscape populated by shorebirds of every size and description. Periodically, something shakes the birds into the air like feathers from a quilt. Reassured by the familiar vastness of mud and water, they settle into new configurations on the sand, any one of which may reveal the rare gems that keep us coming back time after time.

After a long boat journey, you feel a residual swaying in your system. After a day on South Beach, you hear the crying of the terns.

So begins another migration season, and HBC swings into action once more. **Membership renewals are due by the end of September. Please send yours to us via the membership form, which may also be turned in at the September meeting.** Don't forget the release form to participate in field trips. For those who want to keep up with the latest sightings, the rare Bird Alert Signup is also enclosed. All these forms are available via the links from the HBC homepage. **See you on September 8, for the first program of the year** (see page 2).

HBC NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ON-LINE

The club offers on-line versions of the newsletters (after this one), as an alternative to the "hard copy."

"How does that work?"

The newsletter is posted on the HBC website. Participants receive an email notification, whereupon they can view and/or download the newsletter from the website at their leisure. You need to give us an email address on the membership form in order to get the on-line newsletter reminder.

"What's the point?"

You can archive our publication electronically, without accumulating paper files. You reduce postage costs for HBC, which keeps dues down for all of us.

What if I encounter technical difficulties?

Most users last year had no difficulty. In the event that you find the system does not work for you, a simple communication with the Membership Secretary will get you back on the "Hard Copy" mailing list.

What are the computer/software requirements?

The newsletter will be posted on the Website in PDF format. This means you will need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader software (version 5.0 or later) on your system. If you do not have it already, this software is available FREE via a link at the club Website.

How do I sign up?

Please sign up in the upper right hand corner of the **Membership Form**.

I signed up last year. Do I need to sign up again?

We ask all members to decide each year how they want to receive the newsletter. Regardless of how you got the newsletter last year, please make your choice of how to receive the newsletter this year on this year's membership form

Your bird club thanks you!

PROGRAMS

This Month

Monday, September 8 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant St., Amherst: **7:30 pm**
Deb DeRosier and Victorino Molina Rojas speak about **the Three-Wattled Bellbird**.

The Three-wattled Bellbird is endemic to Central America. Males have rich rusty-chestnut bodies, and a brilliant white cowl with three string-like wattles surrounding the bill. When breeding, they issue a resonating “bonk” up to 2000 times each day. These calls carry up to one kilometer, even in the dense cloud forest in which they breed. Bellbirds are important vectors for the seeds of a number of cloud forest species, and it hardly seems necessary or possible to describe their intrinsic value.

Arguably the most significant breeding population of about 500 Three-wattled Bellbirds exists in over 60, 000 acres of protected cloud forest in the Monteverde region of Costa Rica. However, the birds must leave this haven after breeding to congregate in the Pacific-slope forests closer to the coast, prior to their migration to coastal Nicaragua. On the Pacific slope, the birds find themselves in unprotected habitats, which are endangered by rapid human development driven, in large part, by growing ecotourism. *Fundacion Conservacionista Costaricensa* is working with the *Monteverde Institute* to actively acquire the forest patches required by bellbirds.

Deborah Hamilton DeRosier has an M.S from Duke University. She first came to the Monteverde region in the early 1990’s to study the effect of vegetative windbreaks established by pastoralists on the local bird fauna. After completing this research, she joined a group studying the reproductive biology and migration of the Three-wattled Bellbird. She became sufficiently concerned for its future to co-found the *Costa Rica Conservation Foundation*, dedicated to bellbirds and their future.

Victorino Molina Rojas spent many years as a natural history guide in Costa Rica. He is a co-owner of the *Ranario* (or Frog Pond) in the Monteverde region, which is dedicated to the conservation of amphibians and the education of locals and visitors alike about them. He is a co-founder of *Fundacion Conservacionista Costaricensa*.

Coming Up 2003

October 20. Tom Litwin: The Harriman Expedition Revisited.

November 10. Kathleen "Betty" Anderson: New England's Changing Avifauna.

December 8. Members’ Meeting.

2004

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

February 9. Jan Ortiz: Baffin Island.

March 8. Dave King: Golden-cheeked Warblers.

April 19. Peter Alden: Invasive Alien Plants of New England and their Impacts on Birds.

May 10. Don Kroodsma (provisional)

June 14. Harvey Allen et al (provisional)

FIELD TRIPS

Reports

Harvey Allen's group on **June 11** walked the bike path in Amherst from the Station Road car-park to the Bridge over Hop Brook, including a diversion along the KC trail. They had a handy 47 species for the morning. Amongst the highlights were a wonderful look at a Bittern in flight, a Cooper's Hawk attacking a Mourning Dove, several sightings of Green Herons, Cedar Waxwings building a nest, and a Northern Flicker peering out of a nesting cavity in a tree.

Jan Howard



Harvey Allen shouldered the leadership saddle for the second time in a week to lead eleven birders to **Bartholomew's Cobble** in the extreme Southwestern part of the state on **June 15**. After stopping briefly at Russell, (and being rewarded with Yellow-throated Vireo and a family of Common Ravens), the group went on to the Cobble. The highlights here were two Black Vultures and 56 other species, including a nice selection of warblers.

Sally Hills



Amazingly, both weather and security cooperated to allow **Bob Bieda** and HBC birders to visit **Westover Air Force Base on June 21**. In fine, sunny weather, the group found four or five Upland Sandpipers, some doing flight displays, about one dozen Grasshopper Sparrows, several Eastern Meadowlarks, and some Bobolinks.

Bob Bieda



A compact group of five people went with **David Peake-Jones** to **New South Beach on Saturday, August 2** in search of early shorebird migrants. Despite heavy rain on the preceding days, steady drizzle during the ride down, and torrential rains elsewhere, we had hazy sunshine for the entire day, after a refreshing early shower. We found thirty species of birds, including good numbers of Red Knot, still with apricot breasts suggestive of their recent breeding plumage. There were also tons of Short-billed Dowitchers, a dozen or so Hudsonian Godwits, and the usual peeps. Common Terns were abundant, along with a few Least Terns. Strange and troubling was the complete absence of any adult Roseate Terns, though a better birder than any of us assured us that amongst the frustrating sub-adult terns there were at least a few Roseates. Perhaps our bird of the day was a beautiful adult Parasitic Jaeger, which cruised nonchalantly by at close range, fooling all but the alert Betsy Higgins into not giving it a second look.

David Peake-Jones



Bob Bieda and seven others ventured onto **New South Beach** again on **Saturday, August 23**. Two sightings of **Marbled Godwit** in flight bracketed the trip. In our journey up from the southern end of the beach, we found that, though the large groups of Knot and Dowitchers had vanished, they had been replaced by a diversity of other species, and hordes of terns. Quite early we encountered an adult **Forster's Tern**, shortly followed by a pale, tall shorebird dashing energetically about on the sand. This proved to be a **Wilson's Phalarope**. We found both a **Whimbrel** and another Marbled Godwit resting on the beach. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** made a brief and tantalizing appearance. There were several **Dunlin** trying to blend in with the medium-sized sandpipers. They were nevertheless given away by the striking belly patches remaining from the romantic days of Spring. A **Curlew Sandpiper** barely qualified for the trip list (most of us were not content with brief and inconclusive views of the bird in a crowd), but **White-rumped Sandpipers** were in good numbers, and quite amenable to comparison with the smaller peeps. At least two **Lesser Golden Plovers** rewarded those willing to pick through the numerous Black-bellies. Amongst the terns, we found a **Black Tern** still showing almost complete breeding plumage, and numerous Roseate Terns as well. By the time we boarded the boat again, we had tallied 21 shorebirds and felt quite fulfilled.

David Peake-Jones

VOICE OF AUDUBON

For those who want the latest on birds being seen in the valley and beyond, there are two options. The **Voice of Audubon** maintains a report on birds being seen statewide. Call **1-888-224-6444** for a synopsis of interesting birds being seen, organized by region. **Seth Kellogg** maintains the report for Western Massachusetts. He tries to create a comprehensive picture of what is being seen in the region, meaning all reports are welcome. Seth asks that you include the numbers of birds seen in your reports, not just the species list. He can be reached by email at skhawk@comcast.net or phone at **(413) 569 3335**. Alternatively, you may leave a message in the Western Mass. section of The Voice.

For hard-core chasers, the **Rare Bird Alert** is an email/phone tree run by HBC. Please see the cautions on the RBA form (enclosed) if you are considering being part of it.

LIBRARY

We've got new books!

Are you going to NYC? NY State? the NH seacoast? Or sticking around here looking for a few good birds?

Well, your trusty library has the new bird finding guides you need. Check the following out from the Hitchcock Center, or at the upcoming meeting, or call Henry Lappen, your faithful librarian at 549-3722.

- *Birding the New Hampshire Seacoast*
 - *Birding New York's Hudson- Mohawk Region*
 - *Birding in Central and Western New York*
 - *The NYC Audubon Guide to Finding Birds in the Metropolitan Area*
 - *Birdwatching in Vermont*
- and our own *Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts*
 also: - *Animal Tracks of New England*
 - *Butterflies of New England.*

MISCELLANEOUS

Don Kroodsma Honored!

Don Kroodsma has won the **Elliot Coues Award**, one of the most prestigious honors bestowed by the AOU.

Volunteer Needed!

The **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** has a number of isolated national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries, and other offices that are far from good research libraries. The work that we conduct to conserve our nation's resources requires that our field biologists stay current on the literature within their respective fields, particularly journals. Our biologists have a difficult time traveling to libraries to maintain this scientific expertise. We are looking for a volunteer to help with this.

The process will probably occur something like this. A coordinator at the Fish and Wildlife Office will collect requests for articles from field biologists. Once per week, the coordinator would either email these requests to the volunteer, or the volunteer could pick them up directly from the office. The coordinator will provide the volunteer with a copy card and the list of article requests. The volunteer will then travel to a nearby library (probably UMASS), find the articles, and copy them. The volunteer will then return the copied articles to the coordinator, who will forward them to the field biologists. This process is open to negotiation, and can be tailored to fit the individual volunteer.

If you are interested, please contact **Scott Johnson, US Fish and Wildlife Service. Phone (413) 253 8557; email: scott_Johnson@fws.gov**

That's all for now!