



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

## Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org  
Volume 23, No. 1

### September, 2006

Pluto is now a dwarf planet, and we can no longer exult in the rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Amidst such global uncertainties as these, it is refreshing to remember that Hampshire Bird Club is gearing up for another year. Trips have already been to Westover this summer to check out the largest habitat for grassland species in the north east, and two groups have been to New South Beach for different snapshots of the shorebird migration. A quick glance at the enclosed **Fall Field Trip Schedule** will convince you that these summer activities are but the prelude to a wonderful set of trips to sample the fall migration. We will be active throughout the bracing scarcity of winter, and we will be on hand next spring to welcome migrants back in their full breeding regalia. Similarly, you will find in the **Coming Programs section on page 2**, a varied array of speakers to interest any intellect. In addition, you will find the club offers a library with a wide range of birding resources, and has a diverse membership, amongst whom you will find others to share and broaden your passion for birding.

Your immediate assignment, should you choose to accept it, is to **RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP** for the coming year. The form is included with this newsletter. **We need your membership contribution** to fund the speakers who will be visiting this year, and to pay the myriad of other expenses which this thriving bird club incurs in the course of its annual activities. In response to concerns about distribution of information, you have the option this year (via the membership form) to have your name and contact information excluded from the membership list we distribute to members later in the year. Please note that the club distributes member contact information **ONLY** to members via a hard copy. This information **IS NOT** published on the Internet, and **IS NOT** shared with any other organizations or individuals **FOR ANY PURPOSE**.

Please also review the enclosed **Rare Bird Alert Form** and make your careful decision about whether to sign up. Above all, strap on the noccies and get ready to go birding!

## PROGRAMS

### This Month

**Monday, September 11 at 7:30 PM**

**Laurie Sanders speaks on Birding In Costa Rica**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Laurie Sanders is perhaps best known to us here in the valley as the host of *Field Notes*, a weekly natural history series heard on WFCR and on Connecticut Public Radio. Laurie also hosted more than 35 short natural history documentaries, forming a series entitled "A Natural Focus," which aired on WGBY Channel 57 between 1994 and 1998. Laurie's diverse career has included stints as an educator with UMass Extension's Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation program, specializing in watershed-related issues. She has also worked on wetlands assessment and protection for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and as a botanist for the U.S. Forest Service in Vermont. Working with her husband, she has found dozens of new locations for rare species of plants, reptiles, amphibians, dragonflies, damselflies, and tiger beetles in Massachusetts and Connecticut. In addition to her home in Westhampton, MA, Laurie and her family own a house in Costa Rica and she has, in recent years, lead several birding trips to this enchanted country. When last I ran into her, Laurie had recently become active with a collaborative working to increase the use of local, sustainably-harvested lumber in the Pioneer Valley.

**Please Note: It is NOT a Typo. The October program is on Tuesday, October 3.**

## HBC NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ON-LINE!

You can choose to get the newsletter on-line via the club website, instead of through the mail. Please choose this option if you have internet access and are even moderately comfortable online.

### “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 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, and you reduce the labor involved in distributing the newsletter.

### “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** and make sure you include your email address.

### “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.

### 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.

## Coming Programs. 2006-2007

<b>Tuesday, October 3, 2006.</b>	<b>Dr. Reuven Yosef.</b>	<i>Bird Conservation in Israel.</i>
<b>November 13, 2006.</b>	<b>Greg Budney.</b>	<i>The Stories Behind the Making of the McCauley LNS.</i>
<b>December 11, 2006.</b>	<b>Members’ Meeting.</b>	<i>Members’ Slide Show.</i>
<b>January 8, 2007.</b>	<b>Geoff LeBaron.</b>	<i>The History and Future of the Christmas Bird Count.</i>
<b>February 12, 2007.</b>	<b>Elijah Goodwin.</b>	<i>Song Learning In Icterids.</i>
<b>March 12, 2007.</b>	<b>Wayne Petersen.</b>	<i>Massachusetts “Important Bird Areas” Program.</i>
<b>April 9, 2007.</b>	<b>Sam Fried.</b>	<i>Birding the Dempster Highway (North-West Territories).</i>
<b>May 14, 2007.</b>	<b>Paul Sievert.</b>	<i>The Short-tailed Albatross.</i>
<b>June 11, 2007.</b>	<b>Dr. Paul Green.</b>	<i>TBA</i>

## FIELD TRIPS

### Reports

**Saturday, June 10 at Westover Air Reserve Base.**

**Bob Bieda** lead a group from the Hampshire Bird Club under HIGH security. Here’s what they found:

Great Blue Heron	4	Bobolink	18
Kestrel	1	Eastern Meadowlark	16
<b>Upland Sandpiper</b>	<b>15</b>	Field Sparrow	1
Willow Flycatcher	1	Savannah Sparrow	8
Brown Thrasher	2	<b>Grasshopper Sparrow</b>	<b>15</b>
Horned Lark	5		
Prairie Warbler	1		

Speaks for itself, don’t it?

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On **Sunday, June 11**, **Chris Ellison, Betsy Higgins, and David Peake-Jones** set out along the Mohawk Trail for an impromptu exploration of **Mt Greylock**. The Forest Tent Caterpillar outbreaks that are devastating southern New England forests were painfully evident in the leprous patches that covered normally green slopes on the way through the Berkshires. To our despair, the weather deteriorated as we approached the park, and by the time we paused at Patterson Reservoir on the lower slopes of the mountain, there were strong, cold winds making birding almost impossible. Chestnut-sided Warblers and a few other species made themselves heard above the keening of the wind, and an odd-sounding Indigo Bunting made us perk up our ears for a few moments. before proceeding slowly up the mountain. Least Flycatchers and Redstarts seemed *de rigour* on the lower slopes. We paused to walk a few yards into the woods at the Wilbur's Shelter trailhead. Here we heard Blackburnian Warblers making several of their bewildering array of songs, pursued a singing female Purple Finch through the treetops for a bit, and heard the distant "Cu-Cu-Cu" of a **Black-billed Cuckoo**. We also surprised a rather ratty but striking Yellow-bellied Sapsucker working his way through the trees, and heard Black-throated Blue Warblers proclaiming territory.

We eventually reached the intersection of Notch Road and the summit loop, and took to our feet for a bit. In driving cloud, we picked our way up the Appalachian Trail toward the summit, hearing Blackpoll Warblers and more Purple Finches eking our a living amongst the short spruces. After wandering about in the clouds at the local roof of the world for a while, we began to make our way down the summit road. We were disappointed to find the scrubby slopes almost free of birds, save for an invisible Magnolia Warbler. Moving down Rockwell Road a little, we walked briefly along another stretch of the A-T to a location known for breeding **Canada Warbler**. To our delight, a bird began singing in exactly the predicted place. We were each rewarded for our own brands of perseverance with good views of the secretive singer picking its way through the dense hobblebush of the understorey.

The spruce bog further along the trail was green, delicately mossy, and tranquil, but free of all but a Yellow-rumped Warbler.

From here we traveled down Sperry Road and wandered about in the campground for a while. We heard lots more Blackburnian Warblers, Blue-headed Vireos and Brown Creepers. Rocky Ledges were remarkably bird and butterfly-free, but Chris alertly picked a Broad-winged Hawk's delicate whistle out of the dwindling wind, and we watched the singer flirt with the breezes while enjoying views out over the Hopper. Our last stop of the day was Jones Nose, where we had high hopes of encountering a Mourning Warbler. **Indigo Buntings** were outrageously well-represented, along with a singing **Field Sparrow, Eastern Towhees**, and Chestnut-sided Warblers, but the Mourning Warblers kept their own counsel. We exited the park via the Cheshire entrance, drifting slowly down the road past some fabled Mourning spots of yesteryear, but the bird continued to elude us. We ended the trip determined that the annual HBC presence should be renewed, preferably starting in the other direction next year!



It is one of the ironies of birding that, as we dust off rusty senses after the lethargy of summer, in preparation for the excitement of fall migration, we have to start with the shorebirds. Putting oneself on a mudflat in Chatham in late August with a bunch of sandpipers moulting into winter plumage is like asking the Patriots to play the Superbowl in the first week of training camp. Nevertheless, a keen band of birders alighted at the far tip of **New South Beach** on **July 28** to immerse ourselves in the beginning of the shorebird migration. Toward the tip of the beach we were almost immediately rewarded by a **Marbled Godwit** standing enigmatically on the shore, and a rather lonely **Brant**. Further toward the mainland, we were relieved to find good numbers of **Red Knot**, attesting to the fact that the species is, at least for now, hanging on. We had in excess of fifteen **Hudsonian Godwits** for the day, and the usual wonderful assortment of shorebirds and terns of all shapes and sizes. We slogged through the blazing sand to the ocean beach on no fewer than two occasions, for the dubious reward of one **Cory's Shearwater**, identified after later research by Bob Bieda. Even as the rising tide created ideal birding conditions, we found out time running out and had to make a frustrating rush for the pickup point. After some shameless indulgence at the Cream and Cone we made our way back to western Massachusetts, more than satisfied.

David Peake-Jones



There is just nothing better than a perfect summer day on **South Beach, Cape Cod**. Seven HBC members boarded the Outermost Harbor ferry at on **August 19** at 8:30 a.m. for the fifteen-minute trip to the south tip of the beach. From there we worked our way north through three miles of shorebirds and terns, some clustered around high tide pools and others nicely spaced over mud flats as the tide receded. Highlights included a near breeding plumage **Curlew Sandpiper** first found by Bob Clem and later re-found by our group. We were able to study this bird at close range for a long period of time as it fed, preened, and rested on the mud-flat. Of course, Al Richards reminded us of broken promises by Shawn

Smolen-Morten, who is now safely residing in South Carolina (See A1 for more details). Other highlights were three **Stilt Sandpipers** found by Sol Satin. These birds provided an excellent opportunity to compare them to Short-billed Dowitchers and a reminder, at least for me, of how humbling identifying shorebirds can be. Also an adult **Lesser Black-back Gull** and as many as eight **Black Terns** in various plumages. Our usual artery-clogging meal of fried seafood finished off the day.

Bob Bieda

## Library

HBC has a substantial library, located at the **Hitchcock Center for the Environment** in Amherst.

Hours are those of the Hitchcock Center:

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. from Tuesday through Friday, and

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday.

The collection is catalogued on-line at [www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org).

The library contains birding resources in various media, including field guides, bird-finding guides to almost every major birding destination in the U.S., and overseas, natural histories, periodicals and videos. Items can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. Henry Lappen oversees the collection and is happy to bring items to meetings, if you give him a few days notice. You can reach him at **(413) 549 3722**.

## Hitchcock Programs

**Wind Power Tour:** *Searsburg Wind Facility, Searsburg, VT*

Tuesday, September 19, 1 - 4 p.m.

**Amherst's Renewable Energy Campaign:** *Peggy MacCleod, Center for Ecological Technology*

Tuesday, September 26, 2006. 4:30-6:00 p.m.

**Mushroom Foray:** *Tyler Seavey, local mushroom hunter*

Wednesday, September 13, 7 - 9 p.m.. AND Saturday, September 16, 9 a.m. – noon

**Monarch Butterfly Tagging:** *Jennifer Wiest, HCE Educator*

Thursdays, September 14 (at the Hitchcock Center) and 21 (at Mt. Pollux), 4 p.m.

**Hawk Watch on Skinner Mountain:** *John Green, local naturalist & nature photographer*

Sunday, September 17, 10 a.m. – noon. Meet at the Summit House.

**Goldenrod Identification Workshop:** *Arieh Tal, Botanist*

Saturday, September 9, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

**Aster Identification Workshop:** *Arieh Tal, Botanist*

Saturday, September 23, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

*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](http://www.hitchcockcenter.org).*

## Welcome New Members!

**Ginny Fuhringer:** Northampton, MA

**Allison Keeler:** Florence, MA

**Robert MacLauchian:** Williamsburg, MA

**Dick Wynne:** Northampton, MA

Pre-empted by lack of space this month: Great Falls Discovery Center and Arcadia programs.

Until next month, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor

(413) 529 9541; [newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)

Date received:	Payment: __ cash, __ check, \$ _____	Release Form signed?	Newsletter Choice?	Data entered:
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*For administrative purposes only.*

**HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC. MEMBERSHIP FORM: 2006-2007**

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

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone(s): [\_\_\_\_\_] \_\_\_\_\_

[\_\_\_\_\_] \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone(s): [\_\_\_\_\_] \_\_\_\_\_

[\_\_\_\_\_] \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please select ONE of the two options below to receive the newsletter:**

\_\_\_\_\_ I will download the newsletter from the HBC Website (club will send monthly reminders)

\_\_\_\_\_ Send me the newsletter via US mail

**Please check any activities listed below in**

**which you would like to participate:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Occasionally provide refreshments

\_\_\_\_\_ Conservation Committee

\_\_\_\_\_ Field Trip Committee

\_\_\_\_\_ Lead field trips

\_\_\_\_\_ Share information on birding locations

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (describe)

Please mark this box only if you would like to EXCLUDE your name and contact information from the club membership list (distributed ONLY to members). Thank you.

Please choose a level of membership from the options below. Funds generated through supporting membership categories aid in financing the outstanding programming for which our club has become known. **All membership contributions are tax deductible** (if you itemize your deductions).

**MEMBERSHIP - REGULAR: Tax deductible**

Individual @ \$15.00

\$
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Family @ \$25.00

\$
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**MEMBERSHIP – SUPPORTING: Tax deductible**

Downy Woodpecker @ \$35.00

\$
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Northern Flicker @ \$50.00

\$
----

Red-bellied Woodpecker @ \$100.00

\$
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Pileated Woodpecker @ \$250.00 or more

\$
----

Other

\$
----

Please make checks payable to the **Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.** and send (with this form) to:  
**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. P.O. Box 716, Amherst, MA 01004-0716.**

*Reminder: fill out and sign the Release Form enclosed.*

## RELEASE FORM: 2006-2007

Please complete the release form below if you intend to go on field trips or think you might participate in the future. 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 club 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 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 may incur, directly or indirectly, while on field trips run by HBC during the 2006-2007 membership year.

EXECUTED freely and voluntarily this day:....., ....., .....  
(month) (day) (year)

.....  
(Signatures of all participating family members)

Please print names:

# HBC RARE BIRD ALERT. Where are the Birds Today?

All of us are interested in knowing what birds are in our area each day. We do this by:  
birding  
talking with other birders  
calling the Voice of Audubon or reading "The Voice" in the newspaper  
checking the Web  
joining the Rare Bird Alert (for those interested in unusual species)

**To check The Voice of Audubon:**

Call toll free **1-888-224-6444**

Follow the directions (press 2 to listen to Seth Kellogg, the Western Mass voice). Seth updates The Voice once a week - more often when necessary - so check regularly. (Thanks to Trudy Tynan, the transcript also appears weekly in most of our local papers.)

**To share local sightings with other valley birders via email:** You may wish to join the Allen Bird Club "Bird News of Western Massachusetts" network. To join, email Seth Kellogg at [skhawk@comcast.net](mailto:skhawk@comcast.net)

**To check various sources on the web:**

Go to the HBC website: [www.hampshirebirdclub.org](http://www.hampshirebirdclub.org). From the **Related Links** section on the Home Page, you can go to **the Voice** and/or to **Massbird**

**To join the Rare Bird Alert (RBA).**

If you want to be notified by email, fill in the form below and return with your membership form **by October 3** (date of Monday night program).

If you want to be on the phone tree AND HAVE AN ANSWERING MACHINE, fill in the phone tree information below and return with your membership form **by October 3**.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Rare Bird Alert (RBA) Form: 2006-2007**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL ONLY:** Some people give both home and work email address. You cannot sign up for both email and the phone tree. Email participants automatically receive both "Valley Only" and Valley and Beyond" announcements.

email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE TREE ONLY:** Please understand that signing up for the telephone tree means that you must participate in passing along the information. *It is absolutely essential that you call the next person on the list immediately.* If unable to reach that person, leave a message on the answering machine and keep going down the list. *Please do not sign up if you cannot commit to doing this every time.*

home phone \_\_\_\_\_ work phone: \_\_\_\_\_

(phone tree) Rare Birds in the **Valley Only** \_\_\_\_\_ (phone tree) Rare Birds **Valley and Beyond** \_\_\_\_\_

## Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Fall Field Trip Schedule, 2006

*Please register with the field trip leader(s) and check this schedule's information when a phone number is given. The Field Trip Chair (Michael Locher – 413-585-5864) is always looking for new trip ideas and leaders.*

*The Hampshire Bird Club recommends carpooling whenever possible, and suggests that all riders share equally the per-car cost of \$0.40 per mile, as well as tolls and parking. See also the "Field Trip Guidelines for Participants" (September newsletter or on the Website).*

*Some trips have been marked with an asterisk (\*), which indicates that they are good trips for beginning birders. All trips have been coded as Easy (E) or Moderate (M) to give a rough indication of the pace and/or terrain. However, check all information with the trip leaders.*

### SEPTEMBER

**Saturday, September 16. East Meadows: Migrating Warblers.** Morning. Bob Bieda seeks out the fall migrants in Northampton's East Meadows. Meet at the Northampton Bowl, 525 Pleasant St. (Route 5) in Northampton at 7 a.m. Call Bob at 413-527-2623 to confirm meeting details. (E)

**\*Wednesday, September 20. Midweek in the Connecticut River Valley.** Morning. Harvey Allen leads his monthly midweek trip to local hot spots. Meet at 7 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 details. (E)

**Saturday, September 30. Bolton Flats.** Half day. Scott Sumner looks for sparrows, late warblers, and other denizens of the marshes. Meet at 5:30 a.m. at the Sumner Heating Company parking lot, 60 Shumway St. in Amherst. Conditions can be wet, so bring waders/boots/a change of shoes as well as snacks. Call Scott 413-256-5438 for further details. (M)

**Saturday, September 30. Quabbin: Fall Migrants.** All day. Tom Gagnon leads participants into the Quabbin to see birds, insects, and mammals. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to register and get meeting information. (M)

### OCTOBER

**\*Saturday, October 7, OR Sunday, October 8. Lighthouse Point: Hawk Migration.** All day. David Peake-Jones identifies all those little specks in the sky around New Haven harbor. Meet at the Northampton Bowl, 525 Pleasant St. (Route 5) in Northampton at 6 a.m. The actual date of the trip will be decided based on weather forecasts, so call David at 413-529-9541 *at least a week ahead of time* to register or for information. (E)

**Saturday, October 14. Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area: Snow Geese.** All day. Al Richards will lead birders to the annual spectacle of thousands of Snow Geese (and a Ross's Goose or two, with any luck) fueling up for their migration, then explore nearby sites around Lake Champlain. Call Al (413-665-2761) to register and get meeting information. (E)

**\*Wednesday, October 18. Midweek in the Connecticut River Valley.** Half day. Harvey Allen looks for migrants in his monthly midweek trip. Meet at 7:30 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 details. (E)

**Saturday, October 21. Coastal Rhode Island.** All day. Geoff LeBaron will seek out migrants along the shore of our neighbor to the southeast. For meeting information and further details, call Geoff (413-268-9281) as the date approaches. (E)

### NOVEMBER

**Saturday, November 4 and Sunday, November 5. Cape Cod.** All day. Scott Sumner goes to Cape Cod for late migrants. Join Scott for one or both days (lodging is on your own). Call Scott (413-256-5438) for meeting information and details. (M)

**Sunday, November 5. Berkshire Lakes: Migrating Ducks.** All day. Tom Gagnon searches out the productive lakes of western Massachusetts. Meet at Stop & Shop in Northampton (228 King St.) at 6:30 a.m. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to register and for further details. (M)

**\*Wednesday, November 15. Midweek in the Connecticut River Valley.** Half day. Harvey Allen introduces birders to his favorite local spots. 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 details. (E)

**Sunday, November 19. East Quabbin.** All day. Tom Gagnon leads his annual adventure to the other side of the reservoir. You must be a Hampshire Bird Club member to go on this trip. Bring snacks, warm clothes, and a lunch. Call Tom (413-584-6353) to register and get meeting information. (M)

**Friday, November 24. Cape Ann: Turkey Trot.** All day. Bob Bieda and Al Richards help you work off all that stuffing by seeing what they can find along the coast. Usual sightings include sea ducks, Purple Sandpipers, and a few alcids. Bring snacks and warm clothing. Call Bob (413-527-2623) or Al (413-665-2761) to register. (E)

### DECEMBER

**Sunday, December 10. Moran Wildlife Management Area.** Half day. Mike Locher goes to Moran WMA to look for Northern Shrikes, crossbills, and other northern species. In the event of difficult snow conditions, the site may be changed. Wear boots, and dress for the weather. Call Mike (413-585-5864) for meeting information and details. (M)