



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 23, No. 5

January, 2007

PROGRAMS

Monday, January 8 at 7:30 PM

Geoff LeBaron presents

“The Christmas Count: From Historical Conservation to 21st Century Citizen Science.”

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Should bad weather force a cancellation, it will be announced on WHMP 1400 AM radio.

Most birders have probably participated in a Christmas Bird Count (or perhaps many). However, some of us may not realize that, just by counting birds and contributing data in a program like the CBC, we are helping further our understanding of how bird populations are doing on a hemispheric level!

Since its inception on Christmas Day of 1900, Christmas Bird Census (now “Count”) volunteers have been counting birds in specific areas in the Holiday season—and also keeping track of how much time and effort they expend to tally those birds. The CBC is the great granddaddy of what has come to be called Citizen Science—where volunteer citizens partake in an activity and contribute data to a larger program. Scoffed at by many scientists for decades, in recent times the CBC and other large volunteer-generated data sets have become the wave of future investigation for conservation biologists. Population declines and increases, wintering ranges creeping northward with time, and the patterns of irruptive species over the years can all be studied by investigations using Christmas Bird Count data.

This program will look at the CBC in past, present, and future tenses, including stories—as investigated using the online CBC tool set—about how some species of birds are doing on local, regional, and continental scales.



Geoff LeBaron has been the Christmas Bird Count Director for the National Audubon Society since 1987. He is also involved in various other Audubon Science programs including Great Backyard Bird Count, eBird, and the Important Bird Areas program (on the Massachusetts IBA Technical Committee).

After graduating with a B.Sc. in Biology from the University of Miami in Florida (1976), and completing a Master's Degree in Zoology from the University of Rhode Island in 1981, Geoff has moved on to a variety of professional ornithological experiences. He spent five years on staff at the Ornithology Department at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia (including Collection Manager at VIREO) and conducted ornithological field work for the Audubon Society of New Hampshire. Geoff worked both as an environmental educator for the State of Rhode Island, and for the Audubon Society of that state. This tenacious field biologist has also logged over 3000 hours of aerial observation time while counting marine mammals, turtles, and birds along the entire east coast of the United States. He led whale and seabird watching trips off Cape Cod for three seasons.

Geoff has led natural history tours to: Alaska, the Aleutian Islands, and the Kamchatka Peninsula; Big Bend and the Texas Hill Country; Baja California; Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands; Panama and Costa Rica; the Galapagos Islands and Ecuador; Argentina, the Falkland Islands, and Antarctica; and Australia and New Zealand. Oh, and by the way, Geoff is also the beloved program chair and a universally acclaimed trip leader for Hampshire Bird Club.

Coming Programs

February 12, 2007. Elijah Goodwin.

March 12, 2007. Wayne Petersen.

April 9, 2007. Sam Fried.

Song Learning In Icterids.

Massachusetts “Important Bird Areas” Program.

Birding the Dempster Highway (North-West Territories).

FIELD TRIPS

Please see the included Winter-Spring- Summer Field Trip Schedule.

CHRISTMAS COUNT INFORMATION and THANKS!

Thank you to the following: ALL team leaders and team members (both nocturnal and diurnal), feeder watchers, the Hitchcock Center, Sue Emerson, John Green, David Gross, cooks and clean-up crew.

Final data summaries will be distributed at the January meeting (mailed to participants unable to attend) and are available at hampshirebirdclub.org. ***Provisional*** and abbreviated results are included with this newsletter. Results of the Northampton Count, and counts for all the places you know are at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc. The Northampton count is MANO (MAssachusetts, NOrthampton) and will be posted by the time of the HBC January meeting.

Mary Alice Wilson

Pot Luck Thank You!!

The HBC "pot luck" coordinators - Sue Emerson, Helga Beatty, Sally Hills, the Wilsons and the Gross's - would like to thank you all for the delicious donations to the Compilation supper. There were 13 main courses, 8 salads, 10 desserts, 2 gallons of cold cider and 2 1/2 gallons of hot mulled cider. It was fine fare that was enjoyed by more than 60 birders! Looking forward to another successful year in 2007.

Sue Emerson, ad hoc "coordinator".

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Sustainable Investing: *Eric Bright from Pennyfarthing Investment Management.*
Tuesday, January 23, 7 p.m.

The Geobacter Project: Microbial Fuel Cells: *Derek Lovley, UMass Microbiology.*
Wednesday, January 24, 7 p.m.

Through the Seasons with Wildflowers: *Ted Watt, Hitchcock Center Naturalist.*
Wednesday, January 31, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Tracking Otter and Mink: *Alan Amond, Little Cree Spy Excursions.*
Saturday, February 10, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Residential Landscape Design Course: *Thomas Benjamin, Landscape Architect.*
Thursdays, February 1, 8, 15, 22, March 15, 22, 6:30 - 9 p.m.

Land Protection in the Pioneer Valley: Who, What and Why? *Terry Blunt, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation.* Held at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley.
Tuesday, January 30, 7 p.m.

National and Scenic Westfield River: *Carrie Banks, Department of Fish and Game.*
Held at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton.
Wednesday, February 7, 7 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.

That's it for this month! Left out this month was Mike Locher's Moran trip report (which will come your way in February). Results of the Northampton Christmas Count are presented on the following page. Held as it was amidst a disturbingly mild winter, the count featured a startling number of record high species counts. Also included is the Winter-Spring-Summer field trip schedule. Until next month, walk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones. Editor. newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org; 413-529-9541.

NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS COUNT HIGHLIGHTS

Sunday, December 17, 2006
(All 2006 numbers are provisional)

Species

79 on count day.

Individual Birds

47, 336.

| Species High Counts in 2006 | Number |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Great Blue Heron | 27 |
| Peregrine Falcon | 4 |
| Eastern Screech Owl | 82 |
| Northern Saw Whet Owl | 5 |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker | 152 |
| Pileated Woodpecker | 26 |
| Common Raven | 13 |
| Tufted Titmouse | 894 |
| Carolina Wren | 96 |
| House Wren | 1 |
| Eastern Bluebird | 474 |
| American Robin | to be determined |
| American Pipit | 61 |
| Cedar Waxwing | 1647 |
| Dark-eyed Junco | 3585 |
| Red-winged Blackbird | 128 |
| Common Grackle | 501 |
| Brown-headed Cowbird | 876 |
| American Goldfinch | 2094 |

| Unusual Species | Number |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Red-shouldered Hawk</i> | 1 |
| <i>Merlin</i> | 1 |
| <i>Iceland Gull</i> | 1 (count week) |
| <i>Long-eared Owl</i> | 1 |
| <i>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</i> | 1 |
| <i>Eastern Phoebe</i> | 1 |
| <i>Northern Shrike</i> | 2 |
| <i>House Wren</i> | 1 |
| <i>Gray Catbird</i> | 1 |
| <i>American Pipit</i> | 61 |
| <i>Chipping Sparrow</i> | 2 |

The Summary Report with a great deal more detail (including historical data) will soon be online at www.hampshirebirdclub.org. Click on "Christmas Count." You may also review records for the Northampton Count since 1934 at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc. The name of the count is MANO.

Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule, 2007

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, while a new coding (A) indicates that the trip is accessible. However, check all information with the trip leaders.*

JANUARY

Saturday, January 6. North Shore: Cape Ann to Plum Island. All day. Bob Bieda will head to the coast in search of wintering specialties like Eared Grebes, Barrow's Goldeneyes, Harlequin Ducks, Purple Sandpipers, and much more. Dress for cold weather. For meeting information call Bob at 413-527-2623. (E)

Saturday, January 13. Winter Finches. Three quarters of a day. Shirley Hammerschmith (413-586-6237) leads her annual trip looking, hoping, praying for winter finches, Bohemian Waxwings, and whatever else might be around. Meet at the Stop & Shop on King St. in Northampton at 8 a.m. (E)

Saturday, January 27. Coastal Rhode Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron looks for the birds of winter along the warm southern coast of New England. (Tip: dress like it won't be warm.) Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for meeting information and further details. (E)

FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 10. South Shore: Plymouth and Falmouth. All day. Al Richards heads to the coast south of Boston to find ducks, gulls, owls, and whatever happens to be around. Dress warmly. Call Al (413-665-2761) for meeting information. (E)

Wednesday, February 21. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) scours the local area in search of birds, and shows off his favorite birding sites along the way. Meet at 8:00 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

MARCH

Saturday, March 3. Plum Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron will seek out late-winter specialties like Rough-legged Hawks, Barrow's Goldeneyes, Glaucous Gulls, and Snowy Owls. Dress warmly. For meeting information, call Geoff (413-268-9281) as the date approaches. (E)

Wednesday, March 21. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) leads a local trip to find seasonal specialties, probably migrating waterfowl. Meet at 7:30 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Saturday, March 24. Connecticut River Waterfowl. Half day. Al Richards shows you to the waterfowl migrating along the Connecticut River. Call Al (413-665-2761) for meeting information as the date approaches. (E)

APRIL

***Saturday, April 14. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher tries to fill Bob Bieda's shoes in searching out early migrants. We're hoping to find Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and migrating Broad-winged Hawks and Ospreys. Meet at the Holiday Inn parking lot, Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7:00 a.m. (If anybody is interested, we may listen for American Woodcock nearby in the predawn hours. Call Mike (413-585-5864) to express interest and get meeting details.) (E)

Wednesday, April 18. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) looks for the early migrants Bob missed. Meet at 7:30 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

***Saturday, April 21. More Migrants.** Half day. Betsy Higgins (413-586-7585) looks for migrants, starting around Look Park in Northampton. Meet at 6:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the JFK Middle School on Bridge Street in Northampton. (E)

MAY

On the first three **Tuesdays** in May, we will offer guided walks at Wildwood Cemetery (E) in Amherst from 6:30 - 8:30 a.m. Meet in the small parking area just outside the entrance on Strong Street. On the first three **Thursdays** in May, we will offer guided walks along the rail trail (E/A) from 6:30-8:30 a.m. Look to the newsletter for leaders and more details as the time approaches.

Sunday, May 6. Spring Migration in the Quabbin. All day. Tom Gagnon guides birders through the Quabbin in search of its varied avifauna. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Tom (413-584-6353) well ahead of time for meeting information and to register. (M)

Saturday, May 12. Mt. Auburn Cemetery. All day. David Peake-Jones goes to Boston's most historic cemetery, which is also one of the Eastern Massachusetts' birding hotspots, to see what happens to fly in. The numbers and variety can be astonishing. Call David (413-529-9541) for meeting information. (E)

Wednesday, May 16. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) shows off his favorite birding spots. Meet at 7:00 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Saturday, May 19. Coastal Rhode Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron heads to our petite southern neighbor for the warm (really, this time) season to track down migrants and other seasonal specialties. Call Geoff (413-268-9281) for meeting information and further details. (E)

Friday, May 25 – Monday, May 28. Monhegan Island. Overnight trip. Betsy Higgins and Andrew Magee guide birders on the Hampshire Bird Club's annual pilgrimage to this charming Atlantic isle. Not only is the island charming, but the migrating birds can be astonishing. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) to register. (E/M)

Saturday, May 26. Poor Man's Monhegan. All day. Bob Bieda guides the rest of us to Massachusetts' less artsy, but no less birdy, isle. Past trips have found Wilson's Phalaropes, Piping Plovers, Seaside Sparrows, Orchard Orioles, and Evening Grosbeaks. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and get meeting information. (E)

JUNE

Saturday, June 2. Westover Air Force Base. Half day. Pending permission, Bob Bieda will lead his annual trip into New England's premier grassland habitat, looming for Upland Sandpipers, Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only, and is cosponsored by Project Inspire. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E/A)

***Saturday, June 9. West Quabbin ramble.** Half day. Dave Gross offers a trip "through his backyard" and will be listening for nesting migrants, permanent residents, and hiking through blooming Mountain Laurel. If this sounds appealing, email or call David (413-253-2897) for further details. (M)

Sunday, June 10. Mt. Greylock. Full Day. David Peake-Jones will revive this never-predictable trip to our states' highest point. We can expect some high altitude breeders, great views, and maybe even the elusive Mourning Warbler. Please expect to hike up to a mile or two on the AT and other rough hiking trails. Please call David (413-529-9541) for meeting details. (M)

Saturday, June 16. Hammonasset Beach State Park, CT. All day. In a new trip for the Hampshire Bird Club, Betsy Higgins goes to the coast of Connecticut to find unusual sparrows, rails, and other seaside denizens. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for details as the date approaches. (E)

Wednesday, June 20. Midweek half day in the Connecticut River Valley. Morning. Harvey Allen (413-253-7963) leads birders through the local landscape, seeking out late migrants. Meet at 6:00 a.m. across from Atkin's Farm (on the corner of Rt. 116 and Bay Road, Amherst). (E)

Friday-Sunday, June 22-24. Connecticut Lakes, NH. Overnight trip. David Peake-Jones and Mike Locher fill in for Tom Gagnon this year. They will be leading this trip to northern New Hampshire. Migrants, boreal specialties, and moose abound. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Contact David (413-529-9541) or Mike (413-585-5864) to register. (M)

JULY

Saturday, July 28. New South Beach, I. All day. David Peake-Jones goes looking for early migrating shorebirds, especially Red Knots. Bring a lunch, a jacket, water and \$20 for the boat ride. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (M)

AUGUST

Saturday, August 25. New South Beach, II. All day. Bob Bieda leads birders in their quest for late shorebird migrants, including Curlew Sandpipers and Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits. Bring a lunch, a jacket, and \$20 for the boat ride. Call Bob (413-527-2623) to register. (M)