



**Amherst, Massachusetts
Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
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September, 2010.

Hampshire Bird Club is embarking on its 27th year and, my goodness, there is some serious vibrancy in this organization! This fall, we have some quality field trips happening, including a new nocturnal offering that may knock your socks off! Geoff LeBaron has put together another tantalizing set of speakers to incite our curiosity, including a big name or two, and the club is breaking new ground through the Education Committee, which seeks to bring the wonders of birds and birding to a wider audience.

Your first task is to help us get the new year off to a flying start financially, and deal with a couple of other simple administrative tasks to make all our lives easier. Membership dues finance the programs for which we are justly famous, and the other costs of keeping our plucky little organization going. Your membership status is shown on the cover page, and will tell you if you need to pay dues this year.

- 1) Choose your membership contribution for this year,
- 2) Make a donation for the work of the Education Committee if you wish,
- 3) Complete the Membership Form and the Field Trip Release Form on the back,
- 4) Check the "Bird Finding In Western MA" form (sign up for the Rare Bird Alert if you wish), and
- 5) Mail all these things (with your check if necessary) to the club, or bring them along on Sept. 13.

Your membership status is shown on the cover page. Please renew before October 1 by mail, or at the September meeting. Thanks!

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, September 13 at 7:30 PM

John Green shares **My Favorite Slides**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

John Green needs little introduction for members of HBC. John is a local but widely travelled wildlife photographer and naturalist. He has presented natural history programs both locally at Hitchcock and further afield, and takes photographs of outstanding beauty. He is also well known to many of us for running the compilation (complete with avian sound effects) for the Northampton Christmas Count.

His favorite slides just might be worth seeing.....!

COMING PROGRAMS

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Oct 18, 2010 | Sam Fried | Florida Birds & Wildlife. |
| Nov 8, 2010 | Josh Rose | Birds of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. |
| Dec 13, 2010 | Members' Meeting | Members Slide Show |
| Jan 10, 2011. | Joanna Bailey-Hodgman/Jo Miles Shuman. | A Spicing of Birds: Poems by Emily Dickinson. |

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Monhegan Island. Memorial Day Weekend. 2010.

Marty Espinola, Rachel Greenwood, Isabel Higgins, Leslie Hoffmann, Rick McNeil, Marcia Merithew, Ed Olmstead, Lou Peugh, Josh Rose, Ilana Schmitt, Judy Smith, Sandy Woodrow, **Betsy Higgins** and **Andrew Magee**.

This year's Memorial Day Weekend field trip to Monhegan Island had its drama, but almost none of it referred to any bird sighting on the island itself. (The tally tied, perhaps, with my lowest recorded numbers ever at 95, and the birds' quantity and general visibility in the remarkably advanced foliage were similarly low. The early migration and lack of any real fall-outs seemed to be the deal).

My own drama came and went with remarkable speed: a too-long piece of rare roast beef (being consumed in the dining rooms of the Trailing Yew) became caught in my windpipe, and was expelled only after a deft Heimlich maneuver was performed on me by our own Ilana Schmitt M.D. I note that this report and all others in which I now partake and shall ever after, are in the post-Heimlich era of my life (assuming I am to have but one Heimlich, that is). Praise be to God and Ilana!

Having said all that, there was a remarkably available view of a spring **Philadelphia Vireo** (uncommon) for a few of us. And a fairly brief visit by a very-rare spring **Western Kingbird**, seen by many. There were also boat birds to see, despite the many misses. (It was not that we were not "ept." In our whole time there, there were only three species reported as seen on the island, that we did not see!)

The side trip to see the puffins on Eastern Egg Rock was extremely successful: not too wavy, and probably 80 or so Atlantic Puffins, many very close for good photography. (There are now 108 breeding pairs of puffins on the island, the most ever). Especially beautiful was a lovely little blood-red-billed **Arctic Tern** floating on a piece of driftwood right in front of the boat.

The weather was peachy, the lilacs and lupine show unbelievably rich the island ultra-charming, and the company kind, gracious, fun and cooperative. Thanks in particular to Josh Rose for his steady increase in our bird species numbers.

Andrew Magee



We will have to wait till October to read Leslie's charming account of the **Knightsville Dam** trip. Ed.

COMING TRIPS

Please see the attached **Fall Field Trip Schedule**.

THE GULF: FIRST HAND

Shawn Carey, who has spoken to the Hampshire Bird Club in the past, felt he needed to see the devastation caused by the Deepwater Horizon disaster first hand. He visited the Louisiana coast in late July, where he inspected various locations, including Brown Pelican colonies, and interviewed local fishermen, park rangers, and others. This is disturbing stuff, but Shawn hopes that by educating themselves on the catastrophe, birders will be better able to participate in the far-ranging debate we, as Americans, must have on the issue. Please visit Shawn's website at www.shawnpcarey.com, where he has posted several folios of photographs from the gulf, as well as an account of his visit.

Shawn is hoping to present the information and visual media he collected on his trip to local audiences in New England. HBC is negotiating with other conservation organizations in the valley to see if we can co-sponsor Shawn's program. Stay tuned!

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REACHES OUT

How to attract more young people to birding? Do most HBC presentations really hold childrens' interest? How do we get kids out into the field? What to do when physical issues due to aging, illness or accident won't allow one to participate at meetings or in the field as before?

In answer to these troubling questions, the HBC board has created an Education Committee to function in an outreach capacity. We hope that, through innovative, targeted programming and collaboration with other organizations we can help address these issues.

School presentations, senior walks and programs, live bird interactions (captive and wild), visits to raptor centers, learning about falconry, organizing boy & girl scout merit badge events, member workshops, purchasing and/or reading natural history and bird books to children, these are just a few of the ideas on the table. You can donate to support the work of the committee via your membership form, but just as importantly, we need your input and energy. What ideas do you have? Let us know! Or better still, join the committee! Contact **Bruce Hart**: bhart@hampshirebirdclub.org or call 584-4176.

"The purpose of the HBC is to help members and the general public enjoy birding and to educate them about birds, bird watching, and bird habitats."
(HBC Bylaws)

Welcome New Members

Here are the folks who have joined us for the first time during this calendar year. They receive membership for 2010-2011 free of charge!

Sara Haynes	Amherst	Bobbin Young and Eric Wheeler	Williamsburg
Kate and Peter Lamdin	Pelham	Nidhin Joseph	Amherst
Catherine Volpe-Proctor	Belchertown	Jamie & Galen Frank-Bishop and Dan Frank	Plainfield
Loiuse Colligan	Amherst	John and Linda Danielson	Amherst
Todd Wiley	Turners Falls	Frank Valier	Springfield
Joanne Dwyer	Leeds	Richard and Sally White	Northampton
Ilana Schmitt	Amherst	Ray Chapin	Greenfield
David Brown	Warwick, MA		
Rama Janaswamy	Amherst		

NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ON LINE

Though all members receive this first newsletter of the year as a hard copy via USPS, over half our members last year read most of the newsletters on-line.

This creates important savings in printing and postal costs for the club, and reduces the wear and tear on the editorial staff. It's really rather simple. For each month from October through June, on-line recipients receive a reminder email when the newsletter is posted, and read/download it via a link at the HBC Website. If this turns out not to work for you, a simple communication to the Membership Secretary will return you to the comforting world of the paper newsletter. If you want to continue with the on-line newsletter, or try it for the first time, please check the box on this year's membership form.

Thank you!

That is all we have space for this month.

The following page is devoted to remembering Chris Ellison. You can learn more about Chris' relationship to the landscapes of the Quabbin at "Birding Central Massachusetts and Beyond" (tpirro.blogspot.com, entry from August 4). There is also a link there to some of Chris' writings.

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

Remembering Chris Ellison

Chris, a long-time member of HBC, died late in July. We at Hampshire Bird Club saw only part of this talented and enigmatic man, but his passing leaves a space that is unlikely ever to be filled.

Chris was a fixture at bird club programs in recent years. He invariably sat close to the front, often in his trademark suspenders and sometimes with his binoculars on, as if there might be a sighting even during the meeting. He could be relied upon to question the speaker perceptively, putting more than one of them (pleasantly) on the spot over the years! He was also perhaps the most active field birder in the recent history of the club, sometimes signing up for trips a year in advance. Geoff LeBaron and Tom Gagnon remember, *“Usually when a trip was posted, I would expect to hear from Chris within an hour, or certainly on the first evening. He often signed up for every one of series of newly posted trips.”* and, *“Chris was ALWAYS the first to sign up for our Quabbin Reservoir trips. It was his favorite place to spend a day in the field.”*

Car journeys with Chris were a hoot. He had an extraordinary repertoire of comedy and music and would seize the slightest opening to launch into anything from a critique of a Black Sabbath album to a rendition of some sketch long-lost to the scourge of reality TV. His tastes ranged from Benny Hill to Stanley Kubrick, missing no corner in between, tied impeccably to the conversation at hand, and at a pace that could be exhausting. He was not only a master of content, but also of accent, bringing anyone from a New York cab driver to a Scottish highlander to life at will. Tom Gagnon recalls, *“Chris and I also connected in another field - British comedy. We both loved ‘Keeping Up Appearances’ and ‘Are You Being Served?’ He would often address me as Captain Peacock, and I would reply, ‘Yes, Rumbolt.’”*

Larry Therrien tells us that, despite living so far from the customary assembly points for trips, Chris would frequently spend several hours owling before a trip, and that the two of them often birded together before anyone else showed up. Chris Buelow confides that he had to dissuade Chris from starting his East Quabbin Bird Club trips at 4 AM, in an effort to spare the potential participants! Few could fail to notice his oversized binoculars, and the gunstock-mounted scope he took with him to the coast or the Berkshire lakes, nor the way he assiduously packed it into its travel case between every stop on a trip.

Chris was a relentlessly curious, intrepid birder, far more concerned with the aesthetics of birds, and the intricate relationship between birds and landscape than he was with the length of a bird list. He clearly found beauty in the natural world, and would share simple, yet often profound impressions about the color of a fall Bobolink, or the motion of a Short-eared Owl, insights which left us vowing to pay better attention next time. Not surprisingly, he was a key player in the East Quabbin Land Trust and loved the landscapes of Hardwick deeply. He could describe every conservation holding in his town and the changes taking place in them, often down to the level of individual shrubs.

Underlying Chris’ potent sense of humor was a gentle capacity for teaching and sharing. Chris Buelow reminds us that Chris could often be found on a bird trip, patiently assisting a new birder with the vagaries of using binoculars or locating subtle field marks. Bob Bieda recollects, *“Along with his engaging wit and robust enthusiasm, what most comes to my mind about Chris was that he always made you feel special. We were special in his eyes and he will be in mine.”*

Chris, you have left us too soon, but we are thankful for the time we shared with you. We can say farewell only through these words and in the quiet of our own memories. There will be a place reserved for you on the next three Quabbin trips, so you do not need to call. We will think of you as the first hawks soar over Barre Mountain in September, and we will hear your voice in the woods and fields, always. Hbc

RELEASE FORM: 2010-2011

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 between August 31, 2010 and October 1, 2011.

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

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

Please print names:

Bird Sightings in Western Massachusetts

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 **1-781 259 8805**

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

To check various sources on the web:

Go to the HBC website: 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 HBC Rare Bird Alert (RBA).

This operates by email ONLY. You will need at least one active email address.

To join before October 11:

Fill in the form below. Return it with your membership form or turn it in at the Sept./Oct. meetings.

To join anytime:

Provide name/s and email address/es to the HBC Webmaster at webmaster@hampshirebirdclub.org



Rare Bird Alert (RBA) Form: 2010-2011

Date: _____

Name(s): _____

You may provide as many email addresses as you like (within reason, please). Participants automatically receive all RBA announcements.

email address/es (1) _____

(2) _____