



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

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Those who want bird-related material and have no interest in horticulture and juvenile criminology may wish to skip to page 2.

What is it with kids and daffodils? Both are, for the most part, symbols of renewal and innocence, yet they are about as compatible as bears and bird feeders.

Just this week, I wandered out into the back yard to survey the burgeoning buds and delicate blossoms of spring. One of the neighbors' little bundles of joy, dressed in the cutest little pink jumpsuit was sharing the bounty of the season, kneeling down next to one of the clumps of daffodils that bedeck the lawn at this time of year. Since I had apparently forgotten the experience of past years, my mind immediately leapt to noble thoughts about the joys of youth and the gentle curiosity of young people. I was only slightly perturbed when she reached out and delicately plucked one of the blossoms from its stalk. I approached, with a careful greeting, and we marveled together at the delicacy and perfection of this flower. I graciously suggested that, since she had now picked this one, she could keep it but leave the rest for others to enjoy. She murmured in what I took to be agreement, and wandered off on one of those trails of wonder and inquiry we all remember from our early years. As she knelt down in front of our largest clump of bi-colored daffs and bent to sniff the fragrance, I reflected proudly that I had managed to instill a little respect for nature and personal property in one so young, without destroying the curiosity of youth.

Then she reached out, grabbed the entire flowering mass with both hands, and pulled them from their stems.

The above turned out to be this year's prelude to the annual assault on all things botanical in our yard by local youth. Later the same day, I responded to a rhythmic thumping from the yard to find pink jumpsuit's brother having at one of our apple trees with a badminton racquet. He had found me working on said apple tree the previous day and asked what I was doing. I foolishly told him that I was helping the tree by taking small pieces off it – a process known as “pruning.” Racquet boy now proudly informed me that he was “runing” the tree, which, judging by the pile of buds and twigs accumulating underneath, was quite literally true.

It was only after I came across pink jumpsuit's sister and racquet boy absconding with about half the foliage from a-15 foot *arbor vitae* for their tree fort that my voice rose a notch and I was forced to place some prohibitions on the traffic in vegetation from what I selfishly like to think of as “my” land.

So, for those of you battling with invasives, weeds, or other unwanted plants (like the soon-to-be-world-dominating *hostas*), I have a suggestion. Invite the neighbor kids over, show them the wonders of nature right there in your own back yard, then tell them not to touch! Happy spring!

Well, it's all business from here on! In this edition we have:

- This month's **program** and the schedule for the remainder of the year,
- **Trip reports and coming trips,**
- **Last chance** to sign up for the **Crown of Maine** overnight trip,
- A by-law amendment (woo-hoo!),
- **Programs from other organizations,** and
- A few sundry items of general interest.

I hope you find some of it useful!

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, April 9 at 7:30 PM

Gina Nichol looks into the lives of **Hummingbirds: Feathered Gems**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

With 340 species known in the world, hummingbirds are the second largest family of birds after flycatchers. These tiny aeronautic marvels have the ability to hover, fly backward, and migrate long distances. The physiological capacity of hummingbirds to raise and lower their heart rate and body temperature to survive cold nights is unmatched in the animal world. This program illustrates the amazing adaptations of these glittering gems and describes their fascinating life histories. Vivid photographs of hummingbirds in North, Central, and South America tell the story of how these birds survive in habitats that range from tropical forests to the forests of the Andes.

Gina Beebe Nichol has been a naturalist and birder for thirty years. After receiving her B.S. in Environmental Education from Cornell University and her M.A. in Educational Technology from Fairfield University, she began leading wildlife tours for Audubon Nature Odysseys in the early 1990's in Greenland, Iceland, Scotland, the Pacific Northwest, and Baja California. Gina's avid interest in wildlife biology led her to the Yellowstone Institute in Wyoming where she studied animal behavior and methods for tracking animal movements. She also worked on a research projects investigating habitat requirements of Eurasian Otters in Scotland and Mountain Lions in the Jim Sage Mountains in Idaho.

Gina has led bird watching tours in Alaska, Antarctica, China, Kenya and countless countries in between. In 2005, she founded **Sunrise Birding LLC**, based in **Connecticut** to offer personalized, authentic, affordable private and small group bird watching and wildlife tours around the world.

COMING PROGRAMS

May 14. Bret Whitney: Birds of Brazil.

June 11. John Van de Graaff: Peregrinations 2 - Adventures of a Wildlife Photographer.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Connecticut Valley Waterfowl 1. Sunday, March 18.

Mike Locher led a contingent of folks through the lower valley looking for waterfowl. We had a few Wood Ducks at Hadley Cove, a nice encounter with a Bald Eagle on the Route 202 bridge in Holyoke, a pleasant but unbirdy stop at the dinosaur footprints, and some Rusty Blackbirds on the shores of Great Pond in Hatfield. A nice trip in good company. The waterfowl, though, seem to have made it to the prairie potholes without even a brief stop around here.

David Peake-Jones



Field Trip Reports (continued)

Connecticut River Waterfowl 2. Saturday, March 24.

Josh Rose and one (mystery) birder toured the northern part of the valley looking for all the waterfowl Mike missed the previous week.

We started at the Turners Falls power canal, then checked the TF Rod & Gun Club and Barton Cove. We stopped briefly in downtown Turners Falls to check the crabapples (all the waxwings there were Cedar), then returned to the opposite side of the canal via Depot Road and walked the powerline cut down to the little marsh there. Our final stop for the official trip was the fields near the Bement School in Deerfield, but I did a little on my own afterwards.

The total tally was 48 species. Highlights included an **Eastern Meadowlark**, singing near the runway of the Northampton Airport in East Meadows; an early Double-crested Cormorant on a buoy in Barton Cove, a Field Sparrow at the wet end of the powerline cut south of the power canal (where we had several of them during the Greenfield CBC); a gull on the power canal, (tentatively identified at 2nd-year Great Black-backed); an American Kestrel on Mill Valley Road in Hadley; a crowing Ring-necked Pheasant somewhere between the power canal and the river, and my first-of-the-year Fish Crows. The only diving ducks of the day were a drake Ring-necked Duck at the TF Rod & Gun Club, and some Common Mergansers.

Josh Rose

COMING FIELD TRIPS

(See also the Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule)

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 cost of travel.

**marks 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.*

***Sunday, April 15. Ashley Reservoir: Early Warblers.** Half day. Mike Locher (413-585-5864) looks for early migrants like Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Northern Waterthrushes. Meet in the Friendly's parking lot, near the Holiday Inn, close to Exit 15 ("Holyoke Mall") off Rt. 91 at 7 a.m. (E)

***Sunday, April 29. Early 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 Road in Northampton. (E)

***Saturday, May 5. Forest Park/Fannie Stebbins, Springfield.** Half to $\frac{3}{4}$ day. David Peake-Jones leads a new HBC trip to what is generally considered to be "the Central Park of Springfield." There is a possibility of an extension to the Stebbins refuge depending on interest and what's being seen. Call David (413-529-9541) for meeting time and place. (E)

Sunday, May 6. MacLeish Field Station, Northampton. Half day. In a new trip for the HBC, Bill Benner explores a newly-opened property managed by Smith College. Call Bill (413-320-4422) as the date approaches for meeting information. (E)

The Crown of Maine

Friday, June 15th, 2012 through Tuesday, June 19th, 2012

Leaders: Geoff LeBaron and Bill Sheehan (of Woodland, ME, our local expert).

You must be a Hampshire Bird Club member to go on this trip.’

Registration closes on APRIL 30, so ACT NOW!!

Target bird species will include boreal forest specialties around New Sweden (**Black-backed- and American Three-toed woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied and Olive-sided flycatchers, Gray Jay, Philadelphia Vireo, Tennessee-, Bay-breasted-, Cape May-, and Blackpoll warblers**, etc.), wetland, grassland, and shrub-land species around Presque Isle and Aroostook N.W.R. (nesting **Redhead and Ruddy Ducks** amid a myriad of other waterfowl, **American Bittern, Upland Sandpiper, and Mourning Warbler**), and especially **Spruce Grouse** among other boreal species in the Maine North Woods. We also hope to encounter wonderful wildflowers, intriguing large mammals, (editor not included) and the boreal dawn chorus.

HBC Cost Estimate: Participants will pay HBC a trip fee of approximately \$90, depending on how many people sign up. Additional costs include lodging, meals and transportation. The cost may drop by up to \$20 as more people sign up.

Additional Costs:

Accommodation

Look to be spending between \$120 and \$200 for the four nights, for accommodations at Russell’s in Caribou. Prices will be higher if Russell’s is full. See also “Further Information.”

Transportation

We will travel independently to- and from Caribou, Maine. The round trip is approximately 1, 000 miles, and we will add an additional 250 miles or so per car while we are up there. Again, to keep costs down, it’s important to car-pool and share costs, which will depend on your vehicle and the number of people you share with. See also “Further Information.”

Food and Sundries

Individuals will be responsible for all food costs during the trip, though Bill has a delightful habit of laying on coffee and snacks in the field. Breakfasts in-motel (fridges, microwaves etc. in all rooms) or at local convenience stores. Sack lunches/restaurants for lunches. Dinners will be at home-style restaurants in Caribou. See also “Further Information.”

Further Information

A detailed trip description is posted on our Website: www.hampshirebirdclub.org/trips.

You may also contact Geoff LeBaron: programs@hampshirebirdclub.org; 413 268 9281.

Registration. Registration is open. Contact Mike Locher at fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org or 585 5864.

Payments and Cancellations

To ensure your place, you need to register and pay the HBC trip fee (approx. \$90) BY April 30. Fourteen (14) is the maximum trip capacity. Trip fees may be partially or fully refundable after April 30, depending on the circumstances. Full details are available in the trip information on our Website or from the Field Trip Chair.

A WORD FROM MISS MANNERS!

As the field trip season ramps up, our field trip leaders need your help. At the best of times, there are plenty of things that can take the gloss off a day of birding. These might include inclement weather, the State Police, a recalcitrant spouse, or the newsletter editor hovering at the back of the group documenting the dearth of birds. Notwithstanding these vagaries of fate, we can all do our part to make sure trips go as smoothly as possible. Here are a few items adapted from the HBC Field Trip Guidelines....

- Please call the trip leader at least a few days before the trip. It helps the leader plan the trip and you learn about any special arrangements or any change of plans.
- Carpooling is essential to allow the group to park when space is limited, reduce delays, minimize the likelihood of auto accidents and to help keep the group together. If possible, carpool from the valley. If you do meet the group at the birding location or en-route, please be willing to carpool while birding is in progress. The participants (not the leader) are responsible for making all carpool arrangements.
- Be on time at the meeting place. If you need to meet the group at the birding location or *en route*, agree on an easily-located meeting point (preferably doubling as a “pit stop”) and arrive there early so as not to delay the group. Every stop *en route* to the birding location extends travel time and reduces birding time.

Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation!

Wildlife Sightings at the Conte Refuge (Moody Bridge Road)

Do you list your bird and other species when you go out on field trips? The staff at Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge would be grateful for documentation of your sightings on refuge lands and other nearby conservation lands of its **Fort River Division**. This division of the refuge is a patchwork of conserved lands including and centered around the **Bri-Mar Stables** property at **69 Moody Bridge Rd.** and is open to the public. It is comprised of hay fields, old field, riverine and forest habitat.

If you would like to contribute to our knowledge of the area, please send sightings to refuge biologist **Cynthia Boettner**, (cynthia_boettner@fws.gov). Eventually, an official system of reporting will be developed, but until then, please send a list that includes your name and contact information, the date of observation and notes about the location of the sightings. If you have questions or would like a map of the area, feel free to email a request or call 413-548-8002 ext. 115. Thank you!

Cynthia Boettner

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Tina Barsby	Amherst
Ann & Michael Brooks	Northampton
Ethan Carr	Amherst
Tim Corbin	Granby
Stephanie Chapko & George Regmund	Amherst
Janet Lansberry	Amherst
Caitlin McKinnell & Dan & Henry Klatz	Northampton
Susan Tyler	Amherst

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

An Artist In Antarctica: *Bob Marstall*

Thursday, April 12, 7-9 p.m. Fee.

Volunteer Citizen Scientists Wanted: Henry Street Salamander Egg Mass Survey

Date TBA: a sunny afternoon in April. Free.

Amherst Sustainability Festival : *Held on the Amherst Town Common and around town*

Saturday, April 21, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Birding By Ear: *John Green*

Saturday, April 21, 7-10 a.m.: Quabbin, New Salem

Saturday, May 26, 7-10 a.m.: Graves Farm, Williamsburg

Saturday, June 23, 7-10 a.m.: Fitzgerald Lake, Northampton . Fee.

The Shortest Route From The Sun To Fuel: Microbial Electrosynthesis : *Kelly Nevin*

Tuesday, April 24, 7-8:30 p.m. Donations appreciated.

Pruning Fundamentals : *Jim McSweeney*

Saturday, April 14, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Held in Chesterfield. Fee.

Low-Maintenance Design With Native Plants : *Owen Wormser*

Saturday, April 28, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Held at the New England Wild Flower Society's Nasami Farm in Whately. Fee.

Birds And Breakfast At Brookfield Farm: *Peter McLean*

Sundays, April 29, May 6, 13, 20, 27, 7-10 a.m. Held at the Brookfield Farm, Hulst Road, Amherst. Fee.

Native Bee Pollinators: *Joan Milam and Tom Sullivan*

Tuesday, May 1, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Fee.

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.

Binoculars Wanted

Club member Zeke Jakub is doing research on bird conservation in urban central America (Panama City, Panama), along with Panamanian high school and college students. Together, they are looking at the viability of urban areas as conservation zones for migratory and resident birds through species richness surveys and landscape/patch analyses. Zeke and *Conservación de Aves Tropicales* (Panamá) are looking for 4-6 pairs of binoculars (in working condition) for the observers to use. If you can help, please contact Zeke care of

Conservación de Aves Tropicales (Panamá)

U.S. Ph: (413)773-7906

Panama Cell Ph: (507) 6718-9397

Panama Home Ph: (671) 89397

ezekiellakub@gmail.com or ejakub@antioch.edu

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Bear Swamp Reservation Discovery Hike: *Mike Whalen*

At Bear Swamp Reservation, Ashfield. Saturday, April 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Fee.

Ducks in the Valley: *Peter Redfern*

Saturday, April 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Fee.

Bird Sounds....Songs and Calls: *John Green and Patti Steinman*

Wednesday, April 11 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Fee.

Beyond Novice Digital SLR and Photoshop Nature Photography: *Robert Floyd*

Fridays, April 13, 20, 27 and May 4. 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Fee.

Keystone Arch Bridges Trail Hike: *Mike Whalen.*

At Keystone Arches, Chester. Saturday, April 14 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Fee.

Intensive Field Study Program: *John Foster.*

11 sessions various times. Saturdays and Sundays from April-September

Co-sponsored with the New England Naturalist Training Center.

Details and application: www.nentc.com/courses.htm.

Great Blue Herons: *Patti Steinman*

Saturday, April 14 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. Fee.

Hallockville Pond Mill Trail Walk: *Mike Whalen*

At Hawley, MA. Saturday, April 21 from 12:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Fee.

Birding the Amherst Rail Trail: *John Green*

Saturday, April 27 from 7:00 – 9:00 a.m. Fee.

All State Volunteer Day at Laughing Brook Sanctuary, Hampden, MA

Saturday, April 28 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Windsor Bush Discovery Hike: *Mike Whalen*

At Windsor Jamb State Forest. Saturday, April 28 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Fee.

For more details of these and other programs go to www.massaudubon.org (select “Sanctuaries”, then “Choose a Sanctuary: Arcadia”) or call the sanctuary at the number below. To register for programs contact **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary**, 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton, MA 01027. Telephone **(413) 584-3009**.

BROAD BROOK COALITION PROGRAMS

Lives and Loves Amid the Vernal Pools: *Brandon Abbott*

Saturday, April 7, 1:00 – 3:00 PM. North Farms Road entrance. Free.

Broad Brook Coalition (BBC) is a non-profit, all-volunteer community organization dedicated to the preservation of open space and the promotion of affordable housing. Amongst other things, the coalition helps manage the 646-acre **Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area** in Northampton. For details of this and other programs, and all you could want to know about BBC, please visit www.broadbrookcoalition.org.

BY-LAW CHANGE

The Board proposes a change to the club by-laws.

We would like to do all we can to attract students to our ranks, and as part of this effort, we would like to offer a new membership category with a discounted rate for students.

Article 3.2 of the present By-Laws reads as follows:

“3.2 There are five membership classes:

- a) Individual - single person**
- b) Family - two or more persons of the same household**
- c) Supporting - an individual or family member making a contribution at or above a minimum level determined by the Board of Directors of the HBC.**
- d) Complimentary - conferred annually by the Board to individuals who through their professional activities directly contribute to HBC.**
- e) Honorary - lifetime membership conferred by the Board to recognize extraordinary contributions to the HBC or its stated purpose.”**

The Board proposes that section 3.2 be amended to read as follows (deleted language ~~struck through~~, new language *in italics*).

3.2 There are five ~~five~~ six membership classes:

- a) *Student – a person who is currently a full-time student.***
- b) Individual - single person.**

etc.

There will be a vote on this proposed amendment at the April club meeting.

ATHOL BIRD AND NATURE CENTER PROGRAMS

Early Birding with Jeff Johnstone

Sundays April 8, 15, 22, 29 from 7-10 a.m.

The Quest for the Eastern Cougar: *Robert Tougias*

April 12, 7 – 9 p.m. Athol Town Hall. Free.

Asian Long-horned Beetle Workshop

April 14, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Mt Auburn Cemetery: *Joan and Larry Duprey*

April 28, 6 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Northfield Birding: *Bob Coyle*

May 5, 6:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

For more details, go to www.millersriver.net or call (978) 248 9491.

Unless otherwise noted, programs meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

That’s it for this month!

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor

529 9541

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