



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 28, No. 10

June, 2012.

In this edition we have:

- details about the last **program** of the year and the slate for next season,
- **field trip reports** and the **summer field trip schedule**,
- some well-deserved **thanks**,
- the **Education Committee** annual report,
- a new opportunity for **citizen scientists**,
- programs from other organizations, and, to close on a high note,
- news of lasting **memorials** to **Sally Venman** and **Deedee Minear**,

I hope you find some of useful!

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, June 11 at 7:30 p.m.

John Van de Graaff brings us **Peregrinations II. Six Years More.**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Here's what John has to say about the program.

"I titled my first presentation to the HBC 'Peregrinations of a Bird Photographer.' That was May 2006, six years after I began seriously photographing birds in 2001, and three years after we moved to Northampton from New York in 2003. This club has been wonderfully welcoming and here we are, six years further on. This show includes a wide range of species and various bird behaviors. Like the first one, it will be organized geographically, comprising the United States (New England, Florida); several areas west from there (all the way to California and Alaska); Latin America (Galapagos and Costa Rica); Canada (Alberta, Saskatchewan and Point Pelee); and Europe (especially France). The work of putting it together has been both demanding and fun. I am really looking forward to actually presenting it to all of you."

"Photographing birds seriously has been, at times, an all-encompassing activity, with frequent travel. I've made frequent digital slide presentations to birding and photography groups, including the CCBC and other major bird clubs in Massachusetts. My images have been widely used by Mass Audubon in support of their activities. I am a member of the Pioneer Valley Photographic Artists (PVPA). My website is easily remembered: www.birdsbyjohn.com."

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Alice Wilder, Amherst.

Jane Mildred, Amherst.

Ximena Zuniga, Amherst.

Judith Perera, Leeds.

Mikkel Thorup, Shutesbury

Carolyn & John Friedman, Philadelphia, Pa.

Bonnie Krotkov, Hadley.

Devin, Rachel & Aidan Griffiths, Belchertown.

John Worrell & Linda Ammos, Brimfield.

Linda McCarthy, Belchertown.

COMING PROGRAMS: 2012-2013

September 10, 2012. Marshall Iliff. eBird.

October 15, 2012. John Nove. A Tale of Two Scottish Isles: Adventures in Orkney.

November 12, 2012. Don Kroodsma. (Something vocal...)

December 10, 2012. HBC Members. Members' meeting.

January 14, 2013. Chris Rimmer. Bicknell's Thrush.

February 11, 2013. Shawn Carey. Shorebird Migration Hotspots.

March 11, 2013. Joey Mason. Kestrels.

April 8, 2013. Joan Walsh. Breeding Bird Atlas II – the Next Steps.

May 13, 2013. David Spector? (To be determined...).

June 10, 2013. Mara Silver. Swallows in the Connecticut River Valley.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

MacLeish Field Station, Sunday, May 7.

Ten of us met on a beautiful spring morning and had a great hike through the oak/hemlock forest, fields, and second growth in Smith College's field station. The Bird of the Day had to be **Blackburnian Warbler**. We saw and heard multiple individuals, singing multiple song variations, including great looks at a male on a low song perch for as long as cared to study him. What a breathtaking bird! Altogether we had twelve other confirmed warbler species, (some heard-only): Black-and-White, Black-throated Green, Yellow-rumped, Magnolia, Pine, Northern Parula, Wilson's, Ovenbird, Black-throated Blue, American Redstart, Chestnut-sided, and Yellow. We also heard possible Bay-breasted and Nashville, and for those of you that came back to our house after the walk, there was a **Prairie Warbler** that spent the afternoon there as well.

Other highlights included a flyover Common Loon; beautiful first-of-year **Scarlet Tanagers**; both Sharp-shinned and **Red-shouldered Hawks**; and the loudest Pileated Woodpecker drumming I've ever heard! Those who came back to our house also were treated to a beautiful male **Indigo Bunting**, and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at the feeders. A great May morning with a very congenial group--thanks to all who participated.

Bill Benner



East Quabbin. Saturday, May 12.

Tom Gagnon and **Larry Therrien** led a goodly contingent on the annual foray into the beautiful interior of the eastern Quabbin. It was a beautiful day, and it started auspiciously with a Prairie Warbler calling from the power cut near the spillway, and a nice flurry of warblers in the trees overhanging it. The regular nesting Common Ravens entertained us near their nest (without ever actually divulging its whereabouts), and the columbines put on a beautiful show by the road.

As we moved through the closed area, we came across sixteen species of warbler, including Nashville and Canada. Recently-arrived Least Flycatchers were vocal and we spied a pair building a nest at close range. The birds of the day were, without question, the gorgeous **Black-billed Cuckoo** which po-po-poed at us in full view for 20 minutes, and the **Yellow-throated Vireos** at close range and in beautiful light, a bird which has become quite the trip specialty.

David Peake-Jones with help from Larry Therrien

Mt. Auburn Cemetery. Sunday, May 13.

Carol and John Gabranski, Bruce Hart, Betsy Higgins, Nidhin Joseph, Elaine Pourinski and Donna Rickerby accompanied **David Peake-Jones** to America's oldest garden cemetery on a pretty day. Starting out along the Indian Ridge path, past Longfellow's sublime resting place, we spent a good ten minutes trying to spy out a Black-throated Blue Warbler singing invisibly in a Yew tree. It was immediately apparent that we would have to work for birds today, and this proved entirely the case. Around Halcyon Pond we picked up a few more "usual suspects," and were treated by a friendly birder to scope views of a nesting Warbling Vireo. However, it was not until the morning was well advanced, and we were rounding out of Auburn Lake toward the Dell, that we found **Blackburnian-** and **Blackpoll** warblers in the same tree. Scarcely had we savored these gems for a few moments, than we found ourselves scampering across the Willow path toward a strident "Chicka-, chicka-, chicka, swee-, swee-, swee-, che-. che-, che-. We were the founding members of one of those knots of excited birders that can occur anywhere there is a special bird, and the whole amoeboid mass of humanity flowed frantically from tree to tree as the bird played ventriloquial tag with us for at least half an hour. When the hubbub finally died down, we could boast at least brief glimpses of this (now hard-to-find) **Tennessee Warbler**, and we were well pleased.

On the way home, we stopped at the Westboro WMA to try to pad the list a little. We were able to add Yellow Warbler, and a pair of courting Eastern Kingbirds, but the habitat and the now oppressively hot day gave us little to cheer about. Overall, a good day. Not historic, but certainly worth the time.

David Peake-Jones



Mt Holyoke. Wednesday, May 16.

Tom Gagnon took a group of stout-legged birders up the hill at Mt Holyoke on a cloudy day with some sprinkles (I think these were the meteorological, not culinary, variety). The group was delighted to find a female **Cerulean Warbler** building a nest near the summit, with the male bird singing nearby!

David Peake-Jones from a conversation with Tom.



Fort River Division: Silvio Conte NFWR, Hadley, MA. Sunday, May 20. Josh Rose.

Eleven birders joined me (a far cry from the one who showed up for my last trip!) at the new Fish & Wildlife Service property off Moody Bridge Road. Numerous Barn Swallows were on, in, and all around the former Bri-Mar Stables buildings, and a **Blackpoll Warbler** sang from the roadside trees; a **Northern Parula** later sang in this vicinity as well.

The headline attraction here at this time of year is the Bobolink show, and they did not disappoint, with at least 20 birds swirling around the top of the hill, singing and chasing and making a spectacle of themselves. Savannah Sparrows were behaving much more subtly in the grassland habitat. A quartet of Wild Turkey stalked through the grass later. A badly damaged road kill near the top of the hill turned out to have been a **Common Nighthawk**. We walked up the road to the woods and shrubs there and were entertained by American Redstarts, Yellow Warblers, Warbling Vireos, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, a Baltimore Oriole, and a **Wilson's Warbler**, among others.

As traffic on the road picked up, we walked a trail behind the stables downhill toward the river and around the old riding loop, where we heard (but never saw) several **Blue-winged Warblers** and had good looks at a Chestnut-sided. We also encountered several **Brown Thrashers** and **Field Sparrows**, heard a few Willow Flycatchers singing and, maybe the most noteworthy bird of the day, an **Alder Flycatcher**. After four hours and change, we had tallied 57 species.

Josh Rose

COMING 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.*

JUNE

Saturday, June 9. Westover Air Force Base.

Registration is closed.

Sunday, June 10. October Mountain State Forest. All day. Ed Neumuth explores the habitat on October Mountain and ventures to surrounding areas like Post Farm and Tyringham Valley. October Mountain has recently been a fairly reliable spot for Mourning Warblers, as well as a number of other unusual species. Call Ed (413-884-4961) around trip time for meeting time and place. (E)

Friday, June 15 – Tuesday, June 19. The Crown of Maine

Geoff LeBaron and local guide Bill Sheehan.

Registration is closed.

JULY

Saturday, July 28. New South Beach. All day. David Peake-Jones will look for Red Knots and other early shorebird migrants. We'll be walking a long way over wet sand. Bring sun protection, water, food, and \$20 for the boat ride. Call David (413-529-9541) to register. (M)

AUGUST

***Saturday, August 18. Knightville Dam.** Half day. Betsy Higgins repeats her trip to Knightville Dam WMA. This is a rich habitat where almost anything could turn up. Call Betsy (413-586-7585) for meeting details. (E)

Hampshire Bird Club Board of Directors: 2012-2013.

The following will serve from June 11, 2012 until June 10, 2013.

President: Scott Surner

Vice-President/Program Chair: Geoff Lebaron

Membership Secretary: Sue Emerson

Communications Secretary: Donna Rickerby

Treasurer: Janice Jorgensen

Members-at-Large:

Bruce Hart

Jaap van Heerden

Mike Locher

Jan Ortiz

David Peake-Jones

Josh Rose.

Our thanks again to out-going Communications Secretary Elissa Rubinstein.

THANK YOU

It's June, and time to thank the many people who have kept our club not only going, but going STRONG this year. Take a deep breath. Here we go.

The Board

Scott Sumner makes sure we meet and that some sort of order prevails.

Geoff LeBaron brings an exciting diversity of wonderful speakers to the club, and handles all the logistics associated with hosting them.

Janice Jorgensen not only appears to understand our increasingly complicated finances, but she also manages to help the rest of us do so too.

Sue Emerson somehow keeps track of our peripatetic membership and the never-ending changes in their email addresses.

Elissa Rubinstein has been doing our minutes and other communications. With a sigh of relief she now hands the baton to **Donna Rickerby**.

Our members-at-large (in ascending order of size) serve to keep the officers honest. They include **Jan Ortiz**, **Jaap van Heerden**, **Mike Locher**, **Josh Rose**, **Bruce Hart**, and **David Peake-Jones**.

Field Trips

Mike L. also coaxes and cajoles our field trip leaders to keep the field trip program vibrant.

Just this year, the following richly talented people have led or will lead trips for us:

Bob Bieda, **Bill Benner**, **Chris Beulow**, **Sue Emerson**, **Tom Gagnon**, **Betsy Higgins**, **Janice Jorgensen**, **Henry Lappen**, **Geoff LeBaron**, **Mike Locher**, **Ed Neumuth**, **David Peake-Jones**, **Josh Rose**, **Bill Sheehan**, and **Scott Sumner**.

Bruce Hart, **Janice Jorgensen**, and **Jan Ortiz** (with help from **Harvey Allen** and **Tom Gagnon**) are the Education Committee, reaching out to the community with learning opportunities about birds and habitats.

Betsy Higgins lugs a suitcase into every single meeting. It contains not her worldly possessions, but the bewildering array of handy paraphernalia which makes up the boutique.

Henry Lappen not only maintains our lending library, but schlepps selected bits of it to meetings to increase our access and convenience.

Just for the record, I am running out of verbs to describe folks trudging into club events bearing heavy burdens.

Sally Hills and **Helga Beatty** somehow find ways to provide delectable refreshments at every meeting.

Bob Bieda, **Geoff LeBaron**, **Scott Sumner**, and **Jan Ortiz** are our Rare Bird Alert Gatekeepers.

Dave Gross is truly the Master of our Website.

Mary Alice Wilson is the officially designated Provider of Mysterious Assistance in almost all things.

Oh, and I think someone is supposed to be in charge of the newsletter.

We thank the Immanuel Lutheran Church for providing our meeting venue, and the Hitchcock Center in Amherst for their on-going support and collaboration.

Last, but certainly not least, thank YOU, our members. Whether it is by paying dues, coming to meetings, attending field trips, BRINGING REFRESHMENTS (especially you folks!!), buying yet another T-shirt, or in whatever other ways you contribute to our community, you ARE our community. **Thank you!**

Whoops!

In the Ashley Ponds trip report from the May edition we referred to a Painted Turtle riding on the back of a larger turtle. An alert reader has pointed out that the beast of burden could hardly have been an "Alligator Snapping Turtle" as we claimed, since this is a southern species not found in these latitudes (except, apparently, in erroneous trip reports). The larger reptile in the piece was, most likely, a **Common Snapping Turtle**. The offending reporter has been suitably chastised.

LIBRARY

If you need some light reading to while away the long summer days, HBC has a substantial library at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. **Hours** are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday. Items can be signed out and borrowed for a period of up to one month, or longer by arrangement. **Henry Lappen** is happy to bring items to meetings, given a few days notice! Call him at **(413) 549 3722**.

Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts

Recently, the Hampshire Bird club obtained a number of copies of the *Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts*, originally published in 2003. The book retails for \$29.95 but can be purchased from HBC for \$ **12.00!** This volume is not currently in print and is unlikely to be reprinted.

Perhaps you may be new to this area and are unaware of this great guide written by our local birders and illustrated by local artist and club member **Andrew Finch Magee**. If you don't yet have a copy, it is an indispensable companion to birding in our part of the world. Look for it at the HBC Boutique at the June meeting!

NATURE'S NOTEBOOK – Citizen Science About Birds and More

Do you enjoy contributing data to citizen science projects? I've participated in a few and recently discovered Nature's Notebook which is my favorite. Hence, I'm letting HBC members know about the opportunity. For birds, data are collected about whether you saw or heard a species, was it eating fruit or insects, was it nesting, and a bit more.

The project is administered by the USA National Phenology Network to monitor the influence of climate change on the phenology of plants, animals, and landscapes. A contributing citizen scientist selects plants and/or animals from an extensive list and defines her or his location.

You can check it out at <http://www.usanpn.org/participate/observe>.

Janice Doppler

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS

Firefly Watch: *Ted Watt*

Wednesday, June 13, 7-9:30 p.m.

That Rowdy Bird of Birds, the Poet's Bobolink: *David Spector*

Thursday, June 14, 7-9 p.m.

Birding By Ear: *John Green*

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

Native Wildflowers of the Valley: *Nancy Goodman*

Saturday, July 21: Mt. Norwottock, Amherst, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Wednesday, August 22: Podick Swamp, Amherst, 10 a.m.-2 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.

BROAD BROOK COALITION PROGRAMS

Dragonflies, Damselflies, Beetles and Bugs: *Josh Rose*

Saturday, June 30, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. FLCA North Farms Road Entrance.

Water Color Sketching: *Betty Wolfson*

Saturday, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. (rain date Sunday, July 15). FLCA North Farms entrance.

Call 548 1470 to pre-register and for details.

Water Chestnut Removal from Fitzgerald Lake.

Sunday, July 15, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.. Contact Bruce Hart at 584 4176.

It's All About Habitat: *Molly Hale*

Saturday, July 21, 9 a.m. FLCA North Farms entrance.

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 manages 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.

ARCADIA PROGRAMS

Bike with Mike at the Deerfield River Rail Trail: *Mike Whalen*

June 9, 10 am – 2 pm

Birding at Rattlesnake Gutter: *John Green*

June 16, 7 – 10 am

Remedy for Craziness: *Boot Boutwell*

June 24, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Hawley Bog: *Nan Childs and Patti Steinman*

July 8, 10 am – noon

Water Chestnut Removal at Arcadia: *Dave McLain*

July 14, p am – noon

Dragonflies in the Field: *David McLain*

July 21, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Boreal Forest Ecology Hike (Windsor): *Aimee Gelinias*

July 28, 10 am – 1 pm

And lots more.....

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**.

HBC Education Committee Annual Report: 2011-2012

The Education Committee exists to bring knowledge about birds to HBC and the wider community. The primary focus is on youth and under-served populations in the area. The committee currently consists of Janice Jorgensen, Scott Sumner, Jan Ortiz, Bruce Hart, and Tom Gagnon.

Scholarships

The committee is now accepting applications for scholarships to support youth up to 18 years in pursuing bird-related educational opportunities. Details will be on the Website this month and were posted in the newsletter in May. The scholarship program is in its infancy, so we anticipate a lot of growth in this area.

Programs

Janice organized a well-attended program on the new eBird technology, and Scott followed up with a second complementary presentation on the same topic.

Bruce, assisted by Nidhin Joseph, conducted a birding program for 42 Williston-Northampton Middle School students at Warm Colors Apiary.

John Van de Graaff wowed a group of over 20 seniors at the Lathrop Community in Northampton.

In June, Jan will be introducing Chris Davis and his falcons to a packed house of young people and their parents.

The Future

Coming plans include a dawn chorus walk, possibly at the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, birding-by-ear with Don Kroodsma, an Education Committee page on the Website, a possible bird-banding demonstration, more presentations by John Van de Graaff, and many other ideas.

The Committee incurred NO EXPENSES this past year, and has a total of \$1, 521 in reserve for coming events, some of which is already committed for the falconry program.

The Education Committee welcomes your participation and suggestions.

Bruce Hart

Backyard Birds (on Strong St. in Northampton) offers a wide range of birding books, audio resources, gifts, feeders, and other paraphernalia. I was in there this past month to buy a replacement for my aging Sibleys, and the owner gave me a 10% discount without my even asking for it!! (The discount is current for all HBC members). It's a great, locally-owned company, and when you shop locally, your money stays here!

That's about all for this month.

The club takes a break from programs until September, but don't forget the field trips which continue through the summer. You can look for another communication from us in mid-August, when we will be asking you to pony up your dues for another year. That is, of course, unless you joined the club for the first time since January, 2012, in which case you get the 2012-2013 season dues free!!

We close this month with a remarkable story about a lasting tribute to Deedee Minear and Sally Venman, which follows on the last page.

So, until next month, talk softly and carry a big scope!

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

The Deedee and Sally Sitting Stones

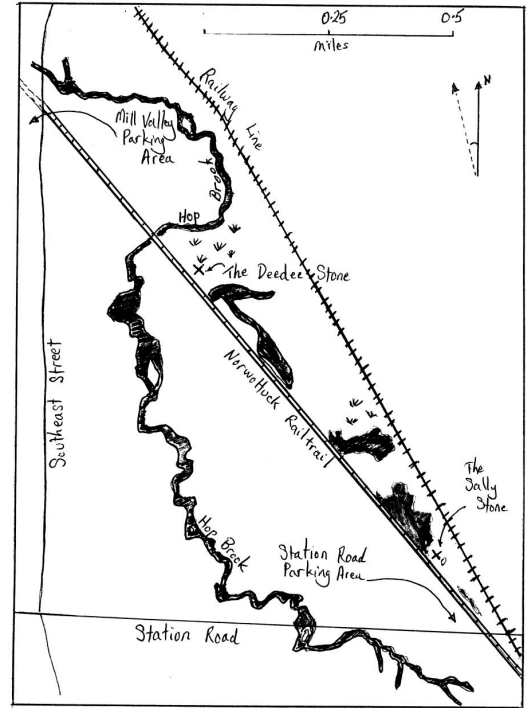
On May 22, two sitting stones were placed along the Lawrence Swamp section of the Norwottuck Rail Trail. The stones are unmarked, but they are in memory of Deedee Minear and Sally Venman. Both women were prominent members of HBC and contributed powerfully to both the birding and broader local communities.

The Sally stone is located about 1/8 mile NW of the Station Road parking lot. It overlooks the southern margins of the first large beaver marsh you encounter as you make your way northwest along the trail from the Station Road intersection. The Deedee stone is about 0.9 miles NW of the Station Road parking lot, and just before you reach the bridge over Hop Brook. From the other direction, the Deedee stone is about 0.5 miles southeast of the Mill Lane parking lot, just after you cross Hop Brook, and overlooks the marshes of that stream.

The stones could not have been placed without the determined advocacy of a number of people and the good will of many. The Department of Conservation and Recreation, which controls the bike path, graciously allowed the installation. The Town of Amherst (Department of Public Works) donated the stones. Two local companies, R.H. Roberts and Landscaping by Earthcare Inc., moved them to their final locations on the trail and installed them.

Richard Minear, Deedee's husband, has worked tirelessly to bring the project to fruition. He has been assisted by many, including Mary Alice Wilson, Harvey Allen, Bill Venman and Elissa Rubinstein. Funds for the project have come from a number of sources, including HBC members who donated through the club.

HBC played a role in advocating for this project, and we are delighted that our friends Deedee and Sally can be remembered in this way. We encourage you to visit the Deedee and Sally sitting stones this year and through the years to come. Enjoy the birds, marvel at the effort involved to get the stones in place, and spend some time with Deedee and Sally.



The Deedee Stone



The Sally Stone