



**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
www.hampshirebirdclub.org  
Volume 30, No. 4  
**December, 2013.**

In this edition:

- **program information** for this and the ensuing few months,
- a **trip report** from October (November trips later),
- more new books for the **library**,
- **Christmas Count** reminders, and
- The **HBC Membership List**, which is to be used strictly for non-commercial contacts between members.

I hope you find some of it useful!

**NEXT PROGRAM**

**Monday, December 9 at 7:15 p.m.**

**The Annual Members Meeting**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

*Weather-related cancellations announced via the HBC email list and local media.*

**Please bring**

- some sort of **snack** to share (Sally and Helga are taking a break), AND
- **slides** to show the group.

Slides can be of birding exploits, other adventures in natural history, or even some scenic wonders you visited during the year. As in past years, please limit your show to 15 or fewer slides and be prepared to narrate your own stuff. Please contact either **Jaap van Heerden** ([jvanheerden@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:jvanheerden@hampshirebirdclub.org)) or **Geoff LeBaron** ([programs@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:programs@hampshirebirdclub.org)) by 6 p.m. on Sunday, December 8. Please let them know:

- Are your slides digital (on a memory stick or CD ROM please) or 35 mm format?
- If digital, are the images in Powerpoint format or just stand-alone images?

See you Monday!

**Caw-ny**

The Massachusetts Turnpike Authority received a large number of anecdotal reports to suggest that crows were being struck by big-rigs along the Massachusetts Turnpike, but seemed to be avoiding smaller vehicles.

It took years of painstaking observation and several generations of graduate students before the reason for the discrepancy became apparent. It turns out that crows, when feeding on road kill along the sides of the road, would always post a lookout, whose job appeared to be to alert its companions to oncoming traffic. When faced with an approaching passenger vehicle, the crows nearly always managed to shout "Caw!" but were struck dumb when it became necessary to yell "Truck!"

This item replaces a treatise on stapling the paper newsletter for those of you who get the on-line version and so have already had to learn how to staple your own. Ed.

## COMING PROGRAMS

\*Please note that the January and February speakers have swapped places.

**January 13, 2014. Geoff LeBaron.\*** Hummingbirds at Home.

**February 10, 2014. Don Kroodsmma.\*** Bird by Bird by Bike 3.

**March 10, 2014. Chris Dwyer.** Common Eider Die-off in MA.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### October 26, 2013. Coastal Rhode Island.

Peter Allison, Kenley Clark, The Griffiths family (4), **Geoff LeBaron** and Elaine Pourinski took a spin along the intertidal zone of our petite southern neighbor. Here are the highlights:

1. **South Kingstown, East Farm, and Peckham Farm, URI:** in search of, without success, both Northern Wheatear (which we discovered left mid-day yesterday...) and Sandhill Crane. Still good numbers of **American Pipits** and **Horned Larks**, plus **Eastern Meadowlarks**
2. **Richmond Turf Fields:** nothing but an American Kestrel
3. **Charlestown Breachway:** flyover **Peregrine Falcon** on arrival, lots of wind and blowing sand, and a very confiding **Snow Bunting**
4. **Trustom Pond N.W.R.:** very windy but otherwise pleasant; fantastic looks at a diversity of waterfowl, plus an immature **Bonaparte's Gull** and two very late **Blackpoll Warblers**
5. **Charlestown area and Firehouse Pond:** no Eurasian Wigeon, but lovely Wood Ducks
6. **Matunuck area and Moonstone Beach:** no goose flock; lots of wind; moonstones!
7. **Jerusalem and Succotash Marsh:** no joy on the sweater or Clapper Rail, but lots of gulls
8. **Point Judith:** very windy with impressive surf; nice assortment of sea ducks, and some close fly-by **Northern Gannets**.

**Species total for the day was 82.**

Geoff LeBaron

### Computer Applications for Outdoor Educators

The **National Environmental Education Foundation** has created a list of ten recommended **free applications** allowing students and educators to do a wide range of things in the field, ranging from documenting sightings of animals in migration to tracking trash in local watercourses.

You can see the list at

<http://usergeneratededucation.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/technology-outdoors.jpg>

## LIBRARY

### New books!

*"A Field Guide to Mesozoic Birds and other Winged Dinosaurs"* by Matthew Martyniuk. Not exactly useful in the field but thought-provoking to look through.

*"A Kingdom of Rarities"* by Eric Dinerstein. Essays on species that are currently more common than Mesozoic ones and how to protect them.

HBC has a substantial library at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. You can check books out at Hitchcock or ask our librarian, **Henry Lappen** to bring them to meetings! Contact him at [library@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:library@hampshirebirdclub.org); (413) 549 3722.

## CHRISTMAS COUNTS

### The 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Northampton Christmas Bird Count

#### Sunday, December 15

If you haven't yet signed up for a team and want to take part, it's never too late. You are welcome to take part regardless of your birding expertise. Join us after the count for a **potluck** and the **compilation** at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst!

#### Northampton Count

**Sunday, December 15.**

*Jan Ortiz*, 413 549 1768, [jtortiz-at-aol-dot-com](mailto:jtortiz-at-aol-dot-com), OR

*Janice Jorgensen*, 413 585 0145, [janicejorgensen-at-charter-dot-net](mailto:janicejorgensen-at-charter-dot-net)

#### Quabbin Count

This fair weather favorite has not been going on for quite so long, but needs help just as much, p'raps more.

**Saturday, December 28.**

*Scott Sumner* (413 253 5999; [ssurner-at-aol-dot-com](mailto:ssurner-at-aol-dot-com))

### Northampton CBC Pot Luck

#### Hitchcock Center, Amherst. December 15 at 4:30 pm

#### Contributions Needed

We are looking for:

- main (hot or vegetarian) dishes,
- salads, and
- desserts.

You can arrange with Sue Emerson for a drop off or call if you will be out in the field until 4 p.m. Her phone numbers are 413-588-6900 (home), 413-336-3535 (cell). You can also reach her by email: [spe33-at-charter-dot-net](mailto:spe33-at-charter-dot-net)

#### The Lame Name Game

The Eastern Screech Owl isn't screeching,  
 For a more fitting name p'raps beseeching.  
 It whinnies and will  
 On occasion just trill.  
 But to say that it's screeching is reaching.

**Big** thanks this month to **Sue Emerson** and **Sally Hills** for assembly help with the September, October and November editions, and **Mary Alice Wilson** for formatting the membership list!

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

David Peake-Jones, Editor  
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