



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
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NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, January 11 at 7:15 p.m.

Dave Wiley takes us **Tracking Great Shearwater Migrations**

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

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

Greater Shearwaters ply their trade over the interface between the endless expanses of the ocean and the equally endless skies that overly them. It is a world we find inscrutable, unfathomable, perhaps even forbidding in its strangeness. But to a shearwater, the rolling billows of the Gulf of Maine are as navigable as the streets of a familiar city, as full of sustenance as a favorite salad bar, and as comforting, perhaps, as the rolling fields of Hadley are for us.

Shearwaters, named for their habit of gracefully trailing a wind tip through the waves, spend their lives at sea, coming to land only when they nest in giant colonies in the tiny Tristan Da Cunha Islands almost exactly midway between southernmost Argentina and South Africa. When winter comes to the southern hemisphere, they migrate north more than 6,000 miles to the rich waters of Stellwagen Bank five miles off Gloucester. Some of the long-lived birds that we see only during our summer have made the round trip between hemispheres for more than 60 years.

Beginning in 2013, **David Wiley** and other researchers used tiny transmitters, along with analysis of feathers and exhaled gases, to track the seabirds' movements and to learn more about the relationship between great shearwaters and sand lance, the main food source for the birds as well as the humpback whales that frequent the sanctuary.

The researchers found great shearwaters are capable of remarkably precise long-distance navigation, including the ability to repeatedly retrace migratory paths less than 30 miles wide and more than 1,800 miles long during their seasonal trek. And their current work now includes trying to better understand the shearwaters' navigation, including how they compensate for wind drift while beating their way across the seas.

Dr. David Wiley is the current Director of Research at the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. His research has appeared in many scientific journals such as *Behaviour*, *Animal Behavior*, *Biological Conservation* and *Conservation Biology*. He is the recipient of numerous awards and honors including the Department of Commerce's Gold Medal for scientific leadership, an Ian Axford (Fulbright) Fellowship in Public Policy, a NextGov Bold Award for scientific innovation and the Society for Marine Mammalogy's award for Excellence in Scientific Communication.

COMING PROGRAMS

February 8, 2016. David Spector. Sam Peabody and Friends - A Look at Bird Song Interpretation.

March 14, 2016. Scott Sumner. The Big Chicken Run.

April 11, 2016. Gary Langham. Climate Study.

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

The cooks amongst us sprang to the fore TWICE over this holiday season: the first time when the table at the December members meeting fairly groaned with a wonderful assortment of goodies. Cousin Vinnie is still recovering on the couch but waves a hand with a gesture of post-prandial acknowledgement.

And again at the Northampton Christmas Count Potluck

“Thanks to all who generously contributed a special dish to our compilation “pot luck” dinner. It is such a wonderful feeling to have everyone so helpful. The “elves” were so pleased with all the assistance that we wish to send our thanks and greetings for a wonderful New Year.

Our Best Wishes --- Sally Hills, Helga Beatty, Merry Cushing, Elaine Reilly, Jan Howard, Lisa Ganter, Sue & Wayne Emerson.”

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

The Halloween Extravaganza; Satan’s Kingdom, Hell’s Kitchen etc. with Josh Rose Saturday, October 31

Harvey Allen, Eric Huston, Tim Carter, and Bob Olson joined me for the annual Hampshire Bird Club Halloween birding expedition to the dark side of Franklin County. We tallied 52 species (give or take a few), including 14 species of waterfowl (not too bad for the state’s second-furthest-from-the-coast county). Satan’s Kingdom was actually almost devoid of birds, but Hell’s Kitchen was much better, and we did fairly well in some other parts of Northfield and Turners Falls. The dense fog in the morning felt appropriate for the occasion, as did the Witch Hazel in bloom. Some of the day's highlights included Greater White-fronted Goose, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Greater- and Lesser-Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded- and Common-Merganser and late Double-crested Cormorant. Some other interesting offerings included American Coot, Solitary Sandpiper, Horned lark, American Pipit, American Tree Sparrow and Fox Sparrow.

Josh Rose



Leaders Choice: Plum Island with Geoff Lebaron Saturday, November 7, 2015

Laura Beltran, Tim Carter, Andre Charron, Aidan Griffiths and Devin Griffiths joined Geoff for this trip to the birding jewel of Massachusetts. The day was sunny to start with a nippy wind, increasingly overcast as time progressed. The group started by scoping the bay from **Joppa Flats**, finding lots of Bufflehead dotting the water and skein after skein of migrating Double-crested Cormorants passing overhead, as they would all day.

The Griffiths’ vehicle struck it rich at **Parker River NWR** with an obliging **Dicksissel** just inside the entrance station. The ocean at Lot 1 was studded with loons including a number of Red-throated and a real find: a **Pacific Loon** viewed in direct comparison with its Red-throated and Common cousins. There were also a few Red-necked Grebes but no Horned Grebes. At the salt pannes, a stunning drake **Eurasian Widgeon** accompanied its American brethren and some lovely **Northern Pintail**. As we finally approached the far end of the island, we found a flock of **Snow Buntings** coursing around a mud-flat.

The group managed to get across to **Salisbury Beach State Park** in hopes of some crepuscular action. It was an owl-less but nonetheless atmospheric end to the day.

Geoff LeBaron

We will try to get the **Winter-Spring-Summer Field Trip Schedule** to press for the February edition. Until next month, talk softly and carry a big scope!

David Peake-Jones, Editor
529 9541

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC.
FIELD TRIP POLICY
Last Amended February 2, 2012

1. Field trips are an essential activity of the Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. (HBC). They are an important way to increase members' interest in and knowledge of birds, birding, and bird habitat. Field trips are announced in the HBC newsletter, on the website and at monthly meetings.
2. Each year, all HBC members are asked to sign the HBC Release Form. Minor children (under 18) must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or another adult who has written authorization to be responsible for the child's care and conduct. Please request a form from HBC if you want to authorize another adult to accompany your child.
- 3 The HBC conducts two different types of field trips: Day Trips and Overnight Trips.

Day Trips are planned by the Field Trip Committee, who prepare the schedule and select leaders. Day Trips generally do not require extensive planning by the trip leader. No costs other than travel (see #4 below), meals, and incidental fees will be involved. If requested to do so in the newsletter, participants must call the trip leader in advance to express interest in the trip. This allows the leader more flexibility and the opportunity to change the trip itinerary should that seem desirable. Day trips are open to both HBC members and non-members unless restricted to members by the host site.

Overnight Trips (one or more nights, reasonable driving distance) are planned by the Field Trip Committee and approved by the HBC Board at least 3 months in advance (see #5 below). Such trips generally require more planning by the trip leader, including, for example, arranging for lodging and travel. Participants will be charged an amount equal to actual predetermined costs (including liability insurance) plus a prorated amount to cover reimbursement of the leader's expenses (see #5 below). All fees, including the trip deposit, shall be paid to the HBC Treasurer. In the event of a cancellation, if the vacancy can be filled, the trip fee will be refunded, less a 10% processing charge. If the vacancy cannot be filled, the trip fee will be refunded, with the following exceptions:

- a) the portion of the trip fee that covers a share of the leaders costs,
- b) the portion of the fee that covers the insurance charge, and
- c) any portion of the fee which has already been paid to another party and cannot be recovered by the club.

Any excess fees remaining after costs have been met will be refunded, unless they are less than twenty dollars (\$20) per person, in which case they will revert to the HBC treasury. Overnight trips are open only to HBC members who have signed a release form and who have completed a medical information form.

4. The HBC Board recommends that passengers reimburse owners of vehicles used on HBC trips for costs associated with vehicle operation. The maximum recommended reimbursement is the federal government employee mileage reimbursement rate, rounded down to the nearest 10 cents, plus tolls and parking to be shared equally by all persons in the car including the driver. The participants (not the leader) are responsible for making carpool arrangements.

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HBC Field Trip Policy (continued)

5. Leaders of Overnight Trips shall:
 - a. Submit a trip plan to the Field Trip Committee, which must be approved by the Board at least 3 months in advance of the trip. The plan should describe in writing the nature of the trip as completely as possible. Include an itinerary, estimated cost, conditions of lodging and lead time needed for reservations, roughness of terrain, pace of the trip, extra costs not covered by the fee, date of deposit and final payment, date after which fee is not refundable, and provide a list of any specialized items that participants should take on the trip. Repeat trips led by the same leader need only submit necessary changes to the previous plan. The Board can waive the 3-month planning time if there is a special birding opportunity.
 - b. Consult with the membership secretary before the trip to make sure that all participants have signed the HBC Release Form and obtain a signed Medical Information Form from each participant.
 - c. Be reimbursed for all costs associated with planning (i.e. long-distance calls, postage), lodging, and transportation during the trip. The maximum reimbursement for automobile travel shall be one quarter of the costs incurred by a single vehicle under clause 4 of this policy.
 - d. Upon return, provide the HBC Board with an itemized account of all income and expenses related to the trip including receipts for major expenses.
6. The Field Trip Chair will send all participants in overnight trips the Field Trip Evaluation Form and a Medical Information Form. The completed evaluation form, to be returned to the Field Trip Chair, will help the Field Trip Committee plan future trips and provide feedback for leaders. Participants should give their signed Medical Information form to the trip leader prior to departure.
7. Leaders of both Day and Overnight Trips are asked to submit a Trip Highlights Report to the newsletter editor for publication in the next HBC newsletter.
8. HBC may ask professional bird touring organization to organize trips further away than the Overnight Trips. All responsibilities for planning the trip and all liability will be assumed by the touring organization. Such trips must be approved by the Board at least 6 months in advance.

Bird Sightings in Western Massachusetts

Many of us are interested in knowing what birds are in our area each day. We do this by:

- birding
- talking with other birders
- using on-line resources, including some accessible through the HBC Website
- calling the Voice of Audubon or reading "The Voice" in the newspaper
- joining the Rare Bird Alert (for those interested in unusual species).

At **hampshirebirdclub.org**, you will find the following:

- **BirdTrax**, (at the foot of the homepage) is a compilation of sightings from Hampshire County, extracted from eBird checklists (and updated as checklists are filed)
- Links to some other bird-finding resources from the **Resources** page.

To check various sources **on the web**:

Try **Massbird.org** for local and statewide birding listservs

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 **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. (The transcript also appears weekly in most of our local papers).

To join the **HBC Rare Bird Alert (RBA)**.

See the instructions below.

RARE BIRD ALERT: Optional

The HBC Rare Bird Alert is an email-only alert system that informs you when and where rare birds are sighted in the valley, or, in some cases, the broader region.

To Join

Provide name/s and email address/es to membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

Participants **will need to provide us with at least one (1) active email address**. You may provide as many email addresses as you like (within reason, please). **Rare Bird Alert subscribers** automatically receive all RBA announcements. Please email membership@hampshirebirdclub.org if your email changes.