



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
 www.hampshirebirdclub.org
 Volume 34, No. 2
October, 2017.

There is so much stuff going on in this club at the moment I have to leave things out of this newsletter for space! Feast your eyes on the (now complete) **program schedule** (“Coming Programs”) hot off the press, and the plethora of **field trips** (“Coming Trips”) going hither and yon. Things to be proud of!!

If you have renewed your membership this year, THANK YOU. If, however, there is a membership form with this newsletter, we need your renewal as soon as possible. Just send it in via the post office or bring it along on October 16. This is the only way we can bring powerful programs and great trips to the valley.

Thanks!

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, October 16 at 7:15 p.m.

John Van de Graaff brings us Birds of the American West

Immanuel Lutheran Church; 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

As many of you may recall, at the June meeting I polled your preferences for this presentation. Among locations, the West clearly came first and among species, raptors seemed the favorites. I’ll include as many as possible. Marylee and I have taken many trips to California since we met in 1994, including ten since 2003, when I switched to digital. I’ve looked through all of those, day by day, as well as trips to other western states. Many wonderful images have turned up, and I’ve enjoyed preparing them. If you haven’t headed West recently, I hope this show will tempt you!

A native of Boston, **John Van de Graaff** has photographed birds since 2001, often while travelling. He migrated from New York City to Northampton in 2003 with his wife Marylee Bomboy. Mass Audubon has used his photos extensively, especially those from the Massachusetts coast. He has given over four dozen presentations of his images--many to children. He’s a member of the Pioneer Valley Photographic Artists (PVPA). John’s website is: www.birdsbyjohn.com. Daily images are at blipfoto.com/vandegraaff.

COMING PROGRAMS

The 2017-2018 Hampshire Bird Club Special Reserve Vintage Program Schedule.

November 13, 2017. Brooke Bateman. Audubon’s Climate Watch.

December 11, 2017. Members’ Meeting.

January 8, 2018. Don Kroodsma. Birdsong Alaska (Or Somewhere)

February 12, 2018. Keenan Yakola. Seabird Research at Seal Island.

March 12, 2018. Dave Wiley. Great Shearwaters on Stellwagen Bank.

April 9, 2018. Shawn Carey. A Wing and a Care.

May 14, 2018. Sam Fried. Adventures from the Field.

June 11, 2018. Lois & Alan Richardson Adventures in Papua-New Guinea.

We warned you it was like a fine wine!

COMING TRIPS

***Saturday, October 14. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Jim Lafley, and Janice Jorgensen lead birders through the refuge to find late fall migrants. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the lower parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley). (E/M)

Saturday, October 14 or Sunday, October 15. Hawks at Lighthouse Point, New Haven. Three quarter day. Accipiters, falcons and other fall migrants. Bring sunscreen, protective clothing, food, and water. We will be leaving the valley at 6 a.m. sharp. Registration is required. The final date will be confirmed on the evening of October 11 (Wednesday). Contact David newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org) to register and for details of meeting time and place.(E)

Sunday, October 15. Sparrows. Half day. Scott Sumner looks for sparrows around Hampshire County. Meet at Stop and Shop in Hadley (440 Russell St. in Hadley) at 7:15 a.m. Contact Scott (president@hampshirebirdclub.org or 413-427-8896) for further information. (M)

Sunday, October 22. The Annual Halloween Adventure: Satan's Kingdom, Hell's Kitchen, and more. All day. Joshua Rose birds Massachusetts' northern stretches of the Connecticut River Valley from Northfield to Turner's Falls in his annual Halloween trip. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the parking area for the Power Canal on Migratory Way in Turners Falls. Call or e-mail Josh (413-835-0093; opihi@mindspring.com) for further details. (E/M)

***Wednesday, October 25. Fort River Refuge.** Morning. George Regmund, Stephen LaValley, Nancy Goodman, and Janice Jorgensen lead birders through the refuge to find late fall migrants. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the lower parking area (69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley). (E/M)

Sunday, October 29. Dead Creek WMA and Lake Champlain Valley. All day. Mike Locher heads north for the spectacle of hundreds of Snow Geese rising into the sun as a Rough-legged Hawk cruises by them. In addition to the geese and raptors, we'll look for ducks on Lake Champlain and late shorebirds on the muddy banks of the streams. Meet at Stop & Shop in Northampton (228 King Street) at 5:30 a.m. for carpooling. Contact Mike (413-585-5864 or mlocher@hampshirebirdclub.org) for further details. (E/M)

Saturday, November 4. Newburyport and Plum Island. All day. Geoff LeBaron heads to the northeastern extreme of Massachusetts, where rarities drip off the tree branches and lounge along the beaches. Seabirds, waterfowl, early winter birds: you'll have to be prepared for anything. Dress for the weather. Contact Geoff (413-268-9281) for further information. (M)

***Sunday, November 5. Ducks on the Berkshire Lakes.** All day. Al Richards and Bob Bieda visit the lakes and ponds of western Massachusetts to look for southbound waterfowl and anything else they can find. There will be a stop for cider donuts. Meet at Stop & Shop in Northampton (228 King Street) at 6 a.m. for carpooling. (Remember to set your clocks back!) Questions? Call Al (413-665-2761). (M)

CHRISTMAS COUNT

Reminder: The Northampton Christmas Bird Count is Sunday, December 17, 2017. If you want to participate please contact cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Leader's Choice with Aiden and Devin Griffiths.

Sunday, September 10.

The choice for **Aiden and Devin Griffiths** this morning turned out to be the almost-always-hot **Amherst Rail Trail** from Station Road. A large but generally well-behaved group assembled and set out past the White Wolf porta-potties toward whatever the trail might bring. Early song was quiet, but, as the sun hit the trees, things started to warm up. Soon, cyclists and other more athletic users of the trail were dealing with a full-blown fall birding trip, with a legion of athletically-challenged people wearing weird optics spiraling about across the trail, craning their necks toward obscure feathered shapes flitting about the tree-tops, gesticulating and blurting out strange coded messages toward one another. A first cluster of warblers included, as I recall, **Tennessee** and **Cape May**, **Blackburnian** and **Prairie** in quick succession, all in great light and, as is always the case, in varying degrees of detail according to the luck of the draw. The marsh to the north provided a staple diet of fall staples like Northern Flicker, Green Heron, a multitude of Eastern Phoebes and a mysterious distant raptor.

After the initial high-rolling birds had drifted off to cause consternation somewhere else, we drifted along the bike path racking up some more subtle fall delicacies at a more measured pace. Turning onto the Keith Cubbison Trail (I think), we made our way in single file through dense birch, juniper and cottonwood, turning up birds, including several more Cape May warblers at every turn. The warbler list included fourteen species by the time we were done, including such respectables as B-t Green, B-t Blue, Nashville and Blackpoll. Finally, with the day getting hot and things quietening down, we took a spin along the Harvey Allen trail in the company of Harvey himself, always a delight. The open fields allowed us great looks at a group of at least four (4) **Black Vultures**, plus Sharp-shinned- and Broad-winged Hawks, plus a late and very unexpected Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher. By the time we straggled back to the parking lot, the unofficial count included 52 species and a good day was had by all.

David Peake-Jones



Hawks from Mt. Tom

Saturday, September 16.

Saturday, September 16 was HBC's annual hawkwatching trip to Mount Tom, led by arch hawk pretender **David Peake-Jones**. He led the trusting group to Goat Peak Tower, which offers the best view in the valley of the southward migration. Unless, of course, the mountain is swathed in clouds, as it was until nearly 11 a.m. And although causality cannot be definitely established here, the arrival of Mike Locher at the tower, just before 11, started the gradual clearing of the skies.

David chose the time of the lifting fog to tell the story of the unfortunate hawk-watcher who saw a hatch of flying insects from the nearby treetops, and mistook the insects for the world's largest kettle of hawks. All of us, straining to see, got very quiet. But then, a falcon appeared out of the haze (almost certainly a Merlin, but hard to call); then a Sharp-shinned Hawk; an Osprey; a Bald Eagle; another Osprey; more Sharpies; and the day was rolling. Small kettles of Broad-winged Hawks started to appear over Mount Holyoke, then bigger groups rode the thermals in the distance over Westover. A Merlin circled less than 20 meters above the tower (the highlight of the day); a pair of Black Vultures cavorted in the updrafts (can vultures cavort?); a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a Cooper's Hawk soared side-by-side allowing careful study.

By the end of the expedition, the group had tallied 7 American Kestrels, 5 Merlins, 2 Black Vultures, 4 Bald Eagles, 1 Northern Harrier, 23 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 7 Cooper's Hawks, 3 unidentified accipiters, and the *raison d'être* for the timing of the trip, **223 Broad-winged Hawks**. All between noon and 3 p.m.

Mike Locher

Only one alternative fact has been corrected in the telling of this story. However, I let the alternative grammar go just for spite.

Editor.

(Note: the Southwick trip report will appear in the November issue)

HITCHCOCK PROGRAMS (A Sampler)

The “Environmental Canon” Book Club – *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold : Rae Griffiths
 First half of book: Sunday, November 5, 2pm-3:30pm OR Thursday, November 16, 6pm-7:30pm
 Second half of book: Wednesday, January 10, 6pm-7:30pm OR Sunday, January 21, 2pm-3:30pm

Viewing the Night Sky: *James Lowenthal*

Saturday, October 21, 7:00pm

Friday, November 10, 6:30pm

Saturday, December 2, 6:30pm. FREE. Registration Appreciated

Morning Nature Walks for Seniors: *John Green*

Thursday, October 12, 9am-11am – Hadley

Thursday, November 9, 9am-11am – Quabbin in New Salem.

Exploring for Mushrooms: *Diana Smith*

Saturday, October 14, 9am – 12pm, Mt Toby State Reservation.

“Holey Basalt”: Amazing Geologic Stories in the Holyoke Range: *Richard Little*

Friday, November 3, 7pm – 8:30pm (indoor presentation).

Saturday, November 4, 9am – 12pm (field trip)..

For details and registration for all Hitchcock programs, please contact the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 845 West St., Amherst MA 01002. Telephone (413) 256 6006, or on the web at www.hitchcockcenter.org.

ARCADIA PROGRAMS (A Sampler)

Photographing Fall Colors at Graves Farm with John Green

October 14, 8-11am.

Canoeing the Arcadia Marsh

October 15, 9-noon.

Peak Foliage Nature Walk on the Holyoke Range with John Green

October 15, 9-noon.

Nature Festival at Laughing Brook, includes **Tom Ricardi's** Birds of Prey

October 21, 10am-2pm.

Arcadia October Program Highlights - find a full list of programs and register at www.massaudubon.org/arcadia or call 413.584.3009

That’s all for this month.

The HBC Field Trip Guidelines for Participants and Drivers are attached to this newsletter. There will be a quiz at the October meeting!

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 Guidelines for Participants and Drivers

Field trips are one of the best ways to help the Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. (HBC) achieve its purpose: "to help its members and the general public enjoy birding and to educate them about birds, bird watching and bird habitats."

All Participants:

All HBC members are asked to sign the HBC Release Form each year. If you did not receive a copy, please contact the Membership Secretary or check the "Join" section of the HBC Website.

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.

Please do not bring pets and check with the leader before bringing children on a trip. Many of the trips are not appropriate for children. (All minor children (under 18) must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or an adult who has written authorization to be responsible for the child's care and conduct. See the Field Trip Policy for more information.)

Be on time at the meeting place. If you need to meet the group at the birding location, please offer to be early so the group can start promptly upon arrival. If you plan to leave the trip early, you must inform the leader in advance.

Carpooling is essential to allow the group to park when space is limited, reduce delays, reduce the likelihood of auto accidents and to reduce the chances of the group becoming separated. Carpooling from the valley is best. Carpooling once the trip location is reached is the next best option.

The participants (not the leader) are responsible for making all carpool arrangements.

Be prepared with binoculars, appropriate clothing (including protection from ticks), food and water. Assume the weather will be more extreme on the trip than at home and prepare accordingly.

Please share costs with courtesy. We recommend a cost of \$0.50 cents per mile plus tolls and parking to be shared equally among the driver and all passengers, but the rate for your vehicle is entirely up to the driver and passengers. Please agree on a mileage rate or flat contribution BEFORE the trip leaves to avoid misunderstandings. Please bring cash or checks and be prepared to reimburse the driver at the time of the trip.

HBC always encourages new birders to participate in trips. It is the responsibility of all trip members, leader and participants, to help new birders learn both identification techniques and bird observing skills.

While birding, please stay close to the group unless you have some specific reason to separate, and inform the leader if you are doing so. This reduces delays and distractions for the entire group.

All participants are responsible for their own safety. Use common sense if you feel that any part of the trip is too arduous for you. Always check with the trip leader if you have any questions or medical concerns about the trip.

Drivers:

1. It is the responsibility of the car owner to meet all registration, insurance, and inspection regulations. Please note that HBC liability insurance does NOT cover individuals who drive or allow the use of their own vehicles on club trips.
2. Please fill up your tank before the trip and set your odometer at the beginning of the trip.
3. If the trip is going to caravan, follow common sense rules to make sure no one is put in danger or lost.
 - Stay in the same order so that you know which car is in front of you and which car is behind you.
 - If the car behind you is stopped by a light, pull safely to the side of the road so that you can wait until that car catches up.
 - If you are driving the car or cars catching up with the group, slow down so that the lead/stopped cars can pull in front of you.
 - It is a good idea for all caravan drivers to have their lights on.
4. Always have a description of the next major stop from the trip leader so that, should the caravan become separated, you can join the group at the next major stop.