



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

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Since I've taken over the mantle of responsibility for our newsletter from the capable and dedicated hands of David Peake-Jones, you may have noticed that it's been arriving a bit... well, late would be the kind way to put it. Barely in time for the month's meeting is perhaps closer to the truth. Now, I could say that it's a big job, I'm still getting up to speed, my organizational skills, never great to begin with, are being stretched... there are a number of reasons that might contribute to the newsletter's delinquency. And while they are all to some extent true, there's a simpler and more honest explanation that gets right to the heart of the matter.

There were birds.

I picture many of you nodding in solidarity, knowing looks crossing your faces. After all, who of us hasn't been delayed by an errant songbird skulking in the bushes, a skein of geese dropping in out of the sky, or a circumnavigation of raptors rising on a column of heated air? No matter the flavor, there is always some bird, in the words of Aldo Leopold—artfully summing up the birder's dilemma—“needing identification.”

And so it goes. If I'm running late for something, if I let a deadline slip or am up excessively late playing catch-up, it's likely because there were birds. And as long as there are birds, I will continue to be diverted by them. It's okay. I've embraced the birding obsession, the fundamental need to get out and see what's waiting for me in the next hedgerow, the next marsh, or that stand of trees just up ahead.

And I know I'm not alone.

Now if you'll excuse me, I've got to go. There's a bird.

ADDITIONS TO THE HBC LIBRARY

Henry Lappen, our inimitable collector and curator of bird tomes from far and wide, has two new additions to the HBC Library. See him before or after our monthly meeting to check out one of these, or any of the other great books available to HBC members.

- The new *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, by Jonathan Alderfer & Jon Dunn
- *Far From Land, the Mysterious Lives of Seabirds*, by Michael Brooke

Also, anyone with a CWMARS library card can log in for free to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Birds of North America. Check out <https://www.joneslibrary.org/birds> for more info.

NEXT PROGRAM
Monday, November 12 at 7:15 p.m.
Peter Trull presents
The Symbiotic Relationship Between Humpback Whales
and Marine Birds

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst

Symbiotic relationships occur throughout Nature, some subtle, others compelling! In the open sea, Humpback Whales create bubble columns and bubble clouds that trap and drive small fish to the surface, providing an opportunity for a diversity of marine birds to share in the bounty. Symbiosis occurs in three forms, Mutualism, Commensalism, and Parasitism. In “The Symbiotic Relationship Between Humpback Whales and Marine Birds,” we’ll see through vivid images how one form, commensalism, occurs in a dynamic display of power and beauty. Learn about the behaviors and adaptations of birds, most notably the gulls, shearwaters, and petrels found in our coastal waters, as they coexist with Humpback Whales. A diversity of marine birds and marine mammal species will be shown and described in close-up images.

Peter Trull has been involved in field research and education on Cape Cod for over 40 years. In the ‘70s and ‘80s he coordinated Massachusetts Audubon Society’s coastal seabird monitoring program, assessing the breeding success and its limiting factors on 4 species of terns as well as Piping Plovers. He conducted field research in Guyana and Surinam, studying the market trapping of Common Terns and Roseate Terns, working with local bird trappers in several coastal villages where he hesitatingly admits he’s eaten Common Terns and 15 to 20 species of sandpipers and plovers. As Education Director at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, he developed programs and began studying Eastern Coyotes in 1989. Through the ‘90s, as a researcher and Education Director at the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, he developed and taught classes related to whales and marine birds and has completed over 2300 whale watching trips related to education and research. He recently retired as a 7th grade Science teacher at the Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School in Harwich, MA, and holds a Master’s Degree in Education. He has written seven books about Cape Cod natural history. His newest book, *The Life of Terns, Birds of Paradox*, is due out in spring of 2019. Peter lives in Brewster on Cape Cod.

COMING PROGRAMS

December 10, 2018. HBC Members’ Meeting. Celebrate our 35th year with photos of the birds we’ve found both far and wide and right here at home.

January 14, 2019. Fred Baumgarten, Mount Holyoke College. Who’s Buried in Audubon's Tomb? The Artist, the Musician, and the Birds of America.

February 11, 2019. Bruce Beehler. North on the Wing: Travels with the Songbird Migration of Spring.

March 11, 2019. Isabel Brofsky, M.Sc. candidate, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Farmland Bird Research in the Connecticut River Valley.

April 8, 2019. Sam Fried. Birding Honduras.

Field Trips November 2018 – January 2019

Please contact leaders if a phone number or email is listed at least two days in advance of the trip (if possible) to register and if you have any questions. Activity level is indicated as E/easy, M/moderate, S/strenuous. It's always wise to bring snacks and dress appropriately. If you want to keep a list of birds seen during the field trips, Mass Audubon has checklists for each of their sanctuaries and these can also be used as trip lists (<https://massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/birds-birding/bird-checklists>). Finally, at all times, whether on a trip with or without a leader, please follow the American Birding Association guidelines dictating ethical birding behavior (<https://hampshirebirdclub.org/aba-code-of-ethics/>) and those on our website regarding field trips (<http://hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines/>). Thank you.
Carol Mardeusz, Field Trip Coordinator

November

Wednesday, November 14, 7:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge. Morning. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks, and has occasional benches for resting. Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628) in the lower parking lot at the Refuge, 69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley. (E/M)

Saturday, November 17, CT shore. All day. Join Devin Griffiths as he searches the CT shore for ducks, shorebirds, and late fall migrants. A little luck might reveal Nelson's and Saltmarsh Sparrows, and maybe something rare. Contact Devin at 413-323-8417 or dcgwriter@gmail.com for meeting time/place. (E/M)

December

Saturday, December 8, 7:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge. Morning. The entire Fort River Trail is fully accessible, including boardwalks, and has occasional benches for resting. Meet George Regmund (413-255-0628) in the lower parking lot at the Refuge, 69 Moody Bridge Road, Hadley. (E/M)

Sunday, December 9, 7:00 a.m., Moran and Peru WMAs. Three-quarter day. Join Mike Locher as he visits the most boreal habitat in Western Massachusetts looking for Northern Shrikes and hoping for an early winter finch eruption. Get warmed up for the CBC! Dress for the weather and choose footwear wisely; snowshoes may be useful. Lunch options are scanty, so you may want to pack something to eat. Contact Mike (413-585-5864 or mlocher@yahoo.com) to register and for further information. Meet at the Stop & Shop in NORTHAMPTON (228 King Street). (M/S)

January

Sunday, January 13, 6:00 a.m. The Third Annual Cape Ann Winter Ramble. All day. Aidan Griffiths makes his triumphant return from the halls of higher learning to co-lead the HBC to birding greatness on the chilly shores of Cape Ann. Join him and Devin for a day of searching the coast for ducks, alcids, gulls, and the near-certain appearance of something odd, unusual, or downright rare. Bring snacks/lunch and dress for the weather (many layers). Contact Devin (413-323-8417) for meeting place or further information. **Note:** This trip is limited, so please get in touch ASAP if you're interested. (M)

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

The Annual Halloween Adventure: Satan's Kingdom, Hell's Kitchen and More Sunday, October 28

We followed the usual itinerary, starting at the power canal in Turners Falls. The waterbirds were nice but fairly routine: Hooded and Common Mergansers, Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Ring-billed Gulls, etc. But there was a fair amount of landbird activity, including one active little green warbler. I tried my best to turn it into an Orange-crowned, or perhaps a Cape May, but we all had pretty good looks at the critter, and its field marks pointed decisively to a first-year Tennessee! On our way out, a bird perched atop an old factory building, which I expected to be a pigeon, turned out to be an adult Cooper's Hawk.

We headed north toward Satan's Kingdom. Sawyer Ponds, the pair of ponds which bracket the south end of Old Vernon Road, had few birds of note, but an adorable trio of River Otters put on a show for us there, climbing up on a log and grooming themselves and each other for a while. The next marshy little pond down the road, dubbed "The Devil's Pantry" last year, had a half-dozen Green-winged Teal and a male Mallard with a companion whom I originally skimmed over and assumed was a female, but one of the group members called attention back to it; it turned out to be a Black Duck-Mallard hybrid.

The large muddy wetland of Hell's Kitchen is usually the highlight of this trip, and this year was no exception. A group of five Pectoral Sandpipers was present—the third year in a row, and fourth time in six years, that we've seen the species during this trip. But maybe the surprise of the day was who these Pects had for company: a Semipalmated Plover, and a Dunlin! As usual, the Kitchen had Yellow-rumped Warblers and a few Palms swarming along the edges, looking for insects grounded due to the weather.

Satan's Kingdom can be a bit of a letdown after Hell's Kitchen, but this year had one more surprise in store, a Solitary Sandpiper! That made four shorebird species in Franklin County. We birded Caldwell Road and River Road next, hoping for a fifth shorebird species—sadly, to no avail. We did cross paths with a Pileated Woodpecker, then discovered a nice little flurry of sparrow activity in a weedy field edge, dozens of birds of six species including the increasingly unsurprising (this month, anyway) White-crowned Sparrow. A pair of Pine Siskins flew over the area calling.

We stopped for a picnic lunch at Pauchaug Brook WMA, on the river right near the state line. A female Purple Finch dropped down from the canopy and perched in a patch of riverside weeds just a few meters from David Peake-Jones and myself. A quartet of eclipsed Wood Ducks paddled away across the river.

We finished our day at Northfield Meadows. Most of the action was on the dirt road that runs along the edge of the plowed field: This road was covered with so many sparrows that it looked like we could have walked down it stepping on sparrows and never had to touch the ground! While we missed some of the species previously reported by James Smith from this area, we found an American Tree Sparrow, first of the fall for all of us. And White-crowned Sparrows here numbered easily into the double digits! We also flushed 14 Wood Ducks off of the nearby cattail-choked pond, and heard Horned Larks out in the field.

But the bird of the stop, maybe of the day, came when Peter Gagarin wandered away from the rest of us, leaving the rest of us in our sparrow-induced fog. At some point Dawn Winkler noticed that Peter was signaling for the rest of us to join him. He'd been scanning far off in the field, trying to spot the larks that we had heard earlier, when some movement much closer caught his eye. A Snow Bunting was sitting on the ground, feeding, only 25 feet or so away! It remained there, not flying away, not even moving around very much, while all of us basked in its beauty. The closest and best look I've had at that species, definitely for a while, maybe ever!

CHRISTMAS COUNT

The MANO Christmas Bird Count countdown has begun! Less than 45 days until December 16, 2018.

1. If you are set—know what team you're on, who your leader is, where to get the forms, where you are meeting, etc., TERRIFIC
CBC maps, forms and info online? <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/cbc/cbcforms/>
2. Contact us at cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org if you:
 - a. Don't know if we know you want to participate
 - b. Have not received anything from Jan or Janice or your area leader
 - c. Can't find the forms and need forms
 - d. Have questions.
 - e. Have children and are wondering how they can participate. Check out:
Christmas Bird Count for Kids and Families
Sunday, December 16
2:00pm-4:00pm
Free
At the Hitchcock Center for the Environment
Use this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/christmas-bird-count-for-kids-and-families-registration-51779062570>
3. Count is all night and day
4. Give your data to your team leader—numbers, species, miles walked, miles driven, and time spent looking for birds
5. Plan to come to the compilation and potluck at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst

CHRISTMAS COUNT POTLUCK

After the Northampton Christmas Count, please gather for a hearty and delicious potluck, beginning at 4:30 p.m. at the Hitchcock Center. It's a fun time, fine food, and we get to hear the reports from all the teams. For the potluck, we need main dishes, salads, desserts, and beverages. If you can contribute food or drink, please contact Lissa Ganter, lissa.ganter@gmail.com, or 413-253-1337. We also need a few helpers for an hour or so the day before (Saturday), to help set up the tables. Hope to hear from you!

Call for Help – AV and Meeting Setup

Are you a birder and a techie? After many years of providing AV and practical operations for HBC meetings, the retirement of Jaap Van Heerden has left us in need of a Coordinator (or Co-Coordinators) to carry on this important function. Our speakers need good technical support, and we all enjoy arriving to a welcoming array of places to sit!

What's needed:

- Coordinator(s) with technology skills to oversee the setup of our excellent audio-visual equipment, and with the computer knowledge to assist speakers in hooking up to our system.
- A pool of non-technical volunteers who will come early to set up chairs and clean up after the meeting. The post-meeting pickup goes very quickly because our HBC membership is wonderfully helpful. Several current volunteers, including the refreshments committee, will continue to help but we need more people.

These operations begin shortly after 4:00 p.m. on meeting day, with everything ready to go by 5:30 (if the speaker is coming for dinner beforehand; if not, set up can begin later, ready to go by 6:30). With 3-4 people, setting up the chairs takes about ½ hour. Full details about the AV setup and the other practical operations are available. With enough volunteers in the pool, not everyone will need to respond at every meeting. If you're interested and able, please email the HBC Board at board@hampshirebirdclub.org. We hope to hear from you!

That's all for this month.

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

Devin C. Griffiths, Editor
323-8417
newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org