



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 35, No. 1

## September 2018

Throughout my life, birds have been a constant source of inspiration, wonder, and joy. They provide solace and comfort, and connect me to all that is beautiful and sublime. I've stood rapt on the shores of the Galápagos among the finches that inspired Darwin, and I've been moved to tears by the grace of a backyard sparrow. Through birding, I've created lifelong friendships with perfect strangers, and I've shared birds with the people closest to my heart. Birding to me is more than a hobby; it's an abiding passion as necessary as food, water, shelter, and air.

If you're reading this, you know what I mean. Some time ago—three days, three years, three decades—a bird lit a spark in you, and you've been captivated ever since. As with me, your life and the lives of the birds are intertwined, and a world without them is beyond contemplation. Sadly, the birds we love are in trouble. The world over, birds are in the fight of their lives. Many are teetering on the brink, and they need our help.

There is much we can do as individuals, but the roar of our voices is far louder when we raise them as one. Bird clubs like the HBC play a critical role in organizing and amplifying those voices, and focusing the power of their members on the goal of conserving the birds who share their lives with us. But a bird club is only as strong as the people who comprise it. If you haven't yet renewed your HBC membership, please do so today; if this is your first time with us, we hope you'll consider joining. It may seem like a small step, but great change is built on such steps. Never underestimate the power of a group of people united in common purpose. Together, we stopped the assault on Santa Ana. Together, we can create a better world for the birds we love, and ensure that they continue to delight us long into the future.

### **Please Renew Your Membership NOW** (or join us for the first time).

- Your **membership status** is shown on the cover page. Check to see if you owe dues this year.
- Complete the **Membership Form**. This will involve deciding on your membership contribution for this year, any additional support you may want to provide for the Education Committee, and also keeping us updated with important information about your membership. Please note that even if you got the ONLINE newsletter last year we ask all members to make a choice of newsletter options on the membership form this year as well.
- Fill out the reverse side of the Membership Form, which includes the **Field Trip Release Form** and **Rare Bird Alert** sign up,
- Fill out the **HBC Member Skills Survey**,
- Write a **check** for the required funds (if any), and
- Mail** the forms and check as shown on the Membership Form, or bring them to the first program.

**Our first program for this year is on MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 (details p. 2)  
The Fall Field Trip Schedule is enclosed, too!!**

**NEXT PROGRAM**  
**Monday, September 17 at 7:15 p.m.**  
**Mara Silver presents**  
**Aerial Insectivores and Barn Swallows in New England**  
 Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst

Many species that belong to the group of birds known as aerial insectivores are showing alarming declines in the Northeast, including both Cliff and Barn Swallows. Both species commonly breed in agricultural settings—they use barns and other farm buildings for nesting, forage in open fields, and use mud for nest building. Reasons for population declines include habitat loss, large-scale agricultural practices, and competition from House Sparrows; more recently, pesticide use, climate change, and threats during migration and on wintering grounds have been implicated as well. However, in spite of large population declines, breeding success of both species can increase when habitat is improved at local nesting sites.

Mara Silver has been involved in swallow conservation projects for the past 25 years. She holds a Masters Degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where she researched characteristics of riverbanks used by nesting Bank Swallows.

### **COMING PROGRAMS**

**October 15, 2018. Mark LaBarr, Audubon Vermont.** Golden-winged Warblers in the Champlain Valley of Vermont.

**November 12, 2018. Peter Trull.** The Symbiotic Relationship Between Humpback Whales and Marine Birds.

**December 10, 2018. HBC Members' Meeting.** Celebrate our 35<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE: The Mission**

The Education Committee is looking to develop school presentations, senior walks and programs, live bird interactions (captive and wild), visits to raptor centers, falconry demonstrations, boy & girl scout merit badge events, member workshops... in fact ANY activities that will bring the wonder of birds to new people. You can contribute with your donation (via the Membership Form) and by sharing your ideas with the committee. You can reach them at [education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org).

That's all for this month. **Please send us your membership renewal NOW!**

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

Devin C. Griffiths, Editor

323-8417

[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)



# FIELD TRIP RELEASE FORM

## Required if you will participate in field trips.

We need members to share responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others during field trips. The signed release will be filed with the club secretary. For family memberships, all participating members should sign.

### Release Of All Demands - Hold Harmless

I hereby acknowledge that as a participant in field trips with the Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. (HBC), I may be exposed to significant risks. These may include, but are not limited to, vehicular travel over land and water, foot travel over difficult terrain, and hazardous weather conditions. I may also encounter poisonous plants, dangerous wildlife, and/or disease-carrying insects. In the event of injury, I understand that I may face considerable delays in reaching professional medical help.

I/we fully accept these risks and agree to hold the Hampshire Bird Club, Inc., its officers, directors, volunteers, employees, and agents free from any and all liability for injuries and/or loss which I/we may incur, directly or indirectly, while on field trips run by HBC within one (1) year of the date below.

EXECUTED freely and voluntarily this day:....., ....., .....

(month) (day) (year)

All participating family members, please sign and print name:

- 1).....print name▶ .....
- 2).....print name▶ .....
- 3).....print name▶ .....

## RARE BIRD ALERT FORM: Optional

The Rare Bird Alert is an optional 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 via this form

Complete the form and return it with your membership form or turn it in at the Sept./Oct. meetings.

To join online:

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

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

I would like to receive RBA alerts . email address/es (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
(2) \_\_\_\_\_

Return with membership form to HBC, P.O. Box 716, Amherst, MA 01004-0716 or turn in at the September/October meetings.