



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

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Can you sense it? It's faint, but it's unmistakable. On a good day, the air's clearer, the chill a *little* less biting. You can see it in the quality of the light, feel it in the gradual lengthening of the days. At 5:30 in the evening, there's still enough sunlight to identify the gulls and waterfowl coming in to roost at Turner's Falls, appreciate the subtleties of a Savannah Sparrow's plumage, or mark the features separating a Hoary from a Common Redpoll. Though there are days when it still feels far off, spring is coming.

You know what that means: time to warm up the shoulders, loosen up the neck, and prepare for staring straight up into the canopy for a glimpse between the leaves of an elusive Blackburnian or Bay-breasted Warbler—or any of their colorful cousins. Yes, the season of warblers—and the concomitant affliction we all affectionately know as “warbler neck”—is nigh.

But we live in New England, land of notoriously fickle weather. Before we bid Old Man Winter adieu, there's still time enough for a snowy deluge or two (or a half-dozen. I mean, who are we kidding?). And while that means wielding a shovel a few more times, it also allows we intrepid birders to get our last looks at wayfaring waterfowl, roving Redpolls, jaunting Juncos, trekking Tree Sparrows, and all the other wonderful birds that get us through the winter. As much as I thrill to the advent of spring and joyfully anticipate the arrival of our warm-weather migrants, I'll miss these endearing characters. Myself, I'll get out a few more times and, with tingling toes and frozen fingers, bid them a fond farewell. And when spring finally breaks upon us, I'll greet its feathered flood with warmth, with joy, and with shoulders and neck loose, stretched, and ready for the challenge.

NEXT PROGRAM

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

Isabel Brofsky presents

Farmland Bird Research in the Connecticut River Valley

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant Street, Amherst

Isabel Brofsky, M.Sc. candidate at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, has spent the last few years exploring many of the Valley's local farms and studying the birds she's encountered on them. Join us as she takes us on a tour of these farms and provides some insight into her research—the birds she found, how they use the farmland, and why they're there.

COMING PROGRAMS

April 8, 2019. Sam Fried. Birding Honduras.

May 13, 2019. John Van de Graaff. Spirits of Spring: Warblers and More.

June 10, 2019. Tom Ricardi. Raptor Rehabilitation. Our local raptor rehab expert brings his knowledge, his experiences, and his raptors!

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Please contact leaders if a phone number or email is listed at least *two days* in advance of the trip 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

Illustrated Owls: A Who's Hoo from the Museums's Vault. Eric Carle Museum, Central Gallery, through April 21. Take an indoor field trip with or without your children and/or grandchildren to the Museum (125 West Bay Road, Amherst, MA) to view this delightful exhibit depicting some of our famous owl characters in children's books. You will find illustrations from Beatrix Potter and A.A. Milne among other favorites. Admission is \$9.00 for Adults and \$6.00 for Seniors or free with a pass from your local library.

Date TBD. Westover Air Force Base. Half Day. Mike Locher will coordinate and lead the HBC's annual trip to New England's premier grassland habitat, looking for Upland Sandpipers, Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks. This trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members only. Contact Mike (413-585-5864) by **May 1** to register and check on the date and time for meeting. (E/M)

Sunday, March 10, 7:00 a.m., Half Day, Connecticut River Waterfowl. Join Mike Locher as he looks for ducks and geese migrating up the Connecticut River to their breeding grounds. We'll start in the south (Holyoke Dam and Canal Park in South Hadley) and then head north (Hadley Cove, Great Pond, Turner's Falls Power Canal, and Barton's Cove). Contact Mike (413-585-5864) for further information. Meet at the Hadley Village Barn Shops (41 Russell St., Hadley) at 7 am. (E/M)

Wednesday, April 10, 8:00-10:00 a.m., Fort River Refuge. Check out the centrally located Fort River Division of the Conte NWR in Hadley which can produce a wonderful variety of early spring migrant species, including American Kestrel, Eastern Phoebe, Tree Swallow, and Rusty Blackbird—plus Fox and Chipping Sparrows, among others. The 1.2 mile 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. You may also contact Janice Jorgensen (413-585-0145) for details. (E/M)

Saturday, April 13, 7:00 a.m., Half Day, Ashley Reservoir. Join Mike Locher as he looks for early migrants like Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Louisiana Waterthrushes. Meet in the Holyoke Elks parking lot (250 Whitney Ave.), near Exit 15 (Holyoke Mall) off Rt 91 at 7 a.m. Contact Mike (413-585-5864) for more information. (E/M with one optional S section)

Wednesday, April 24, 8:15 a.m., Mt. Tom State Reservation. Join Tom Gagnon as he looks for a few early migrants and does a hawk watch on Mt. Tom (125 Reservation Road, Holyoke, Ma.) Contact Tom (413-584-6353 or tombwhawk@aol.com). (M)

Saturday, April 27, 7:30-9:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge. Check out the centrally located Fort River Division of the Conte NWR in Hadley which can produce a wonderful variety of early Spring migrant species including American Kestrel, Eastern Phoebe, Tree Swallow, Rusty Blackbird, plus Fox and Chipping Sparrows, among others. The 1.2 mile 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. You may also contact Janice Jorgensen (413-585-0145) for details. (E/ M)

Sunday, April 28, 6:00 a.m., All Day, Coastal CT. Reprising last year's trip (but without his intrepid expert guide), Devin Griffiths will lead a trip to some of his favorite spots along the CT shore. Meeting place TBD. Contact Devin (413-323-8417 or dcgwriter@gmail.com) to register. (E/M)

Saturday, May 4, 6:30 a.m. Station Road Rail Trail. Devin Griffiths will walk the rail trail with a possible extension to Wentworth Farm in Amherst. Meet at the rail trail parking area on Station Road at 6:30 a.m. Contact Devin (413-323-8417) for more information. (M)

Sunday, May 5, 6:30 a.m. Quabbin Gate 5 and Lake Wallace. Devin Griffiths visits two Belchertown hotspots looking for spring migrants and anything else he can find. Meet at Gate 5 (end of Old Enfield Rd. in Belchertown) at 6:30 a.m. Contact Devin (413-323-8417) for more information. (M/S)

Sunday, May 12, 7:00 a.m., Half Day, Mineral Hills Conservation Area. Join Marcia Merithew and Betsy Higgins as they lead birders through one of the lesser-known Northampton conservation areas. This has been a consistent place for Prairie Warblers over the past several years. For information, contact Marcia (413-896-9539 or mmerithew@comcast.net). Meet at the JFK Middle School parking lot (100 Bridge Road, Florence, MA) at 7 a.m. (E/M)

Saturday, May 18, 7:30-9:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge. May is a great birding month at the centrally located Fort River Division of the Conte NWR in Hadley. A nice variety of Spring migrants and breeding species are possible including Northern Harrier, Black and Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Willow, Least and Great-crested Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbird, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, Barn Swallow, Wood and Swainson's Thrush, Veery, Brown Thrasher, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, Eastern Meadowlark, Bobolink, Indigo Bunting and numerous warbler species. The 1.2 mile 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. You may also contact Janice Jorgensen (413-585-0145) for details. (E/ M)

Sunday, May 19, 6:00 a.m., Half Day, Mt. Holyoke. Join Mike Locher as he hikes up the park road to the top of this local peak hoping for some later Spring migrants and deep-woods breeding specialties including Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers (both quite reliable in recent years). Meet at the (gated) entrance to Skinner State Park (at the end of Old Mountain Road in Hadley) at 6:00 a.m. This is an occasionally steep hike on a paved road. For more information contact Mike (413-585-5864). (M/S)

Wednesday, May 22, 8:30 a.m., Mt. Holyoke. Join Tom Gagnon on this "Old Timers Walk and Ride" at Mt. Holyoke. Car pool to the top of Mt. Holyoke and then walk DOWN the hill. Then car pool back up the mountain to get cars. Young people are welcome also! We will be looking for warblers and other migrants and will also look for a few wild flowers along the way. Meet at the gated entrance to Skinner State Park (at the end of Old Mountain Road in Hadley) at 8:30 a.m. Contact Tom at 413-584-6353 or tombwhawk@aol.com. (M)

Thursday-Sunday, May 23-26, Monhegan Island. Scott Sumner leads the Hampshire Bird Club's pilgrimage to Monhegan Island. This charming island and the variety of migrating birds can be astonishing. The weekend promises to be memorable and enjoyable. The trip is limited to Hampshire Bird Club members and is currently filled. However, if you would like to be put on a waiting list, contact Carol Mardeusz (camardeusz@yahoo.com). Contact Scott (413-256-5438) for further information.

Saturday, May 25, 6:30 a.m., All Day, Hilltown Rambles. Join Dave Gross and Bob Zimmermann as they ramble around the Berkshire hilltowns to look for those migrants that prefer higher elevations than the valley provides. We'll be on the lookout for American Bittern, Sandhill Cranes, Blackburnian Warblers, and Spotted Sandpipers along with anything else we can turn up. There will be a bit of hiking at the Moran Wildlife Area. Meet at the *Northampton Stop & Shop parking lot* at 6:30 a.m. Pack a lunch or pick one up at our stop at the Cummington Creamery. For information or to sign up contact Dave (djgross@gmail.com 413-687-8161) or Bob (zimmermann@biochem.umass.edu 413-626-3381). (E/M/S)

Sunday, May 26, 7:00 a.m., Half Day, Knightville Dam. Join Marcia Merithew and Betsy Higgins as they visit Knightville Dam looking for Spring migrants and local residents. Contact Marcia (413-896-9539 or mmerithew@comcast.net) for details. Meet at 7 a.m. at the John F. Kennedy Middle School (100 Bridge Road, Florence, MA). (E/M)

Wednesday, May 29, 7:30-9:30 a.m., Fort River Refuge. May is a great birding month at the centrally located Fort River Division of the Conte NWR in Hadley. A nice variety of Spring migrants and breeding species are possible including Northern Harrier, Black and Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Willow, Least, and Great-crested Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbird, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, Barn Swallow, Wood and Swainson's Thrushes, Veery, Brown Thrasher, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, Eastern Meadowlark, Bobolink, Indigo Bunting and numerous warbler species. The 1.2 mile 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. You may also contact Janice Jorgensen (413-585-0145) for details. (E/ M)

VALLEY FAMILY BIRD FESTIVAL

This year's Festival takes place on Saturday, May 4 at MAS Arcadia Sanctuary in Easthampton from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Festival is co-sponsored by the Hampshire Bird Club. Tom Ricardi will be offering a program and there will also be bird banding, bird walks, bird crafts, and activities. Contact Patti Steinman at 413-584-3009 or psteinman@massaudubon.org for more information or to volunteer.

RESPIRE FOR A WEARY (BIRD CLUB) LIBRARIAN

The bird club library will not be at this month's meeting as your trusted librarian will be in Patagonia working on his member's meeting slides for December. You may still bring book returns to the meeting where they will be duly returned to the Hitchcock Center, or you can hold onto any due or overdue books for another month. The library is still available at the Hitchcock Center whenever it is open.

That's all for this month.

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

Devin C. Griffiths, Editor

323-8417

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