



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org
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October 2020

Dear reader, as we continue in this most unusual of years, 2020, we are constantly inundated with news of politics, climate change catastrophes, the pandemic, and on and on. It has gotten difficult to sort out the critical from the important from the interesting from the irrelevant (or irrational). I've found a couple of things that you might have missed that relate to the overarching news topics.

On a somewhat somber note, the raging wildfires are affecting wildlife in ways that were not expected. A wide variety of bird species have been dying in large numbers in the Southwest US as they head south for the winter. The reasons behind this are not yet known. Some hypotheses are that an early cold snap caused birds to leave early or killed insect food sources or smoke from western wildfires interfered with migration. There is a preliminary report on this at the National Audubon website: <https://www.audubon.org/news/the-southwest-facing-unprecedented-migratory-bird-die>.

On a brighter note, the human response to the pandemic, staying inside more, has had a beneficial effect on wildlife. There have been reports of animals moving into areas in national parks where they had seldom been seen in recent times. And birds, too, seem to have benefitted from reduced human activity. In a study published in *Science* in September, 2020, it was reported that songs of White-crowned Sparrows in San Francisco improved within weeks of the shutdown. The reason: less noise. Birds sang more softly and with greater vocal bandwidth when it was quieter. You can read about the study and hear songs prior to and after the shutdown at the National Geographic website (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/>). Search for "white-crowned" and you should find the article.

NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, October 19 at 7:15 pm via Zoom

Laura Berthold tells us about

Maui's Native Forest Birds

Maui's native forest birds are found nowhere else in the world. Known as the "Hawaiian honeycreepers", many of these rare birds are extinct or facing extinction. The Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project (MFBRP) has been working to recover these native birds since 1997. Our primary focus is on the two endangered species endemic to Maui, the Kiwikiu (Maui Parrotbill) and the 'akohekohe (Crested Honeycreeper). Learn more about the natural history of Hawaii, the honeycreepers and forests of Maui, invasive species and threats, and the current projects of MFBRP (<https://mauiforestbirds.org/>).

Laura Berthold is one of the lead conservation biologists for the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project. She has been with the organization since 2009. Originally from the suburbs of Chicago, Laura received her B.A. in environmental studies from Loyola University Chicago.

Zoom connection information and password for the meeting will be emailed to all HBC members on October 12. If you lose the email or do not get it, send a note to programs@hampshirebirdclub.org for the information.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you have renewed your membership this year, THANK YOU. If, however, you have not, we would ask you please to renew as soon as possible. Membership funds allow the club to bring great talks to the valley, fund kids' programs through Hitchcock and Arcadia, and provide services to club members. Use the **Online Renewal procedure** (<https://hampshirebirdclub.org/shop/>) or mail in a paper copy (found on pages 5 and 6) of the **Membership Form** with your check.

ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS BIRD CLUBS

The Association of Massachusetts Bird Clubs (AMBC) held its first Zoom meeting on September 23rd. Seventeen people representing 11 organizations attended. Topics of discussion included AMBC's successful efforts in conservation advocacy, 2020 Christmas Bird Counts, highlights of a survey of member clubs, club activities during the pandemic, and a presentation from Cory Elowe on his collaborative project around safety, accessibility and in-depth information on birding in hotspot locations around the state (a link to this innovative and ongoing project is located on the HBC website under 'Resources'). Time constraints postponed our discussion about membership diversity and inclusion. That topic will headline the agenda at AMBC's next meeting (spring 2021, date TBD). Any HBC club member is welcome to attend these meetings. Contact an HBC Board member for more information.

Amanda Kallenbach

NEWS FROM THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Committee has sponsored 3 virtual workshops in September, and they were all well attended. Hawks and Hawkwatching was led by Dan Russell as he described the more common hawks one is likely to see in the Valley and during migration. He also focused on field marks and behaviors to help tell them apart. Tim Walker of the Brookline Bird Club shared his research on finding an effective hearing aid for birders. He explained some particularly good features to share with an audiologist when choosing a hearing aid and some models that he thought were best for hearing bird songs and calls. The third workshop, offered by Sara Griesemer and Janice Jorgensen, expanded on the eBird workshops offered earlier by concentrating on "hotspots", an important element for those who use eBird.

Planning for another Book Discussion Group led by Education Committee members Jeremy Spool and Meghadeepa Maity is ongoing. They will once again use J. Drew Lanham's book *The Home Place* as the source for discussion. The group will be meeting in January. Look for the announcement about the group in upcoming newsletters and on Facebook.

If you are interested in helping the Education Committee implement any of these ideas or if you have ideas or topics you would like the Committee to consider please either share them or join the Committee by contacting Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com or education@hampshirebirdclub.org. You can also join by indicating your interest on the HBC membership application.

Blue jay on my deck
Browsing herbs in the planter
Healthy green breakfast
Haiku by Linda L. Marston

white breasted nuthatch
racing down thick white pine bark
in a headfirst plunge
Haiku by Marcia Merithew

MANO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Yes, we are planning to have it on 12/20/20.

The Northampton (MANO) Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Sunday, December 20th. It will be a challenge this year due to Covid-19 restrictions, and we're in need of more help with the count. Even if you haven't participated before, we hope you'll consider taking part in the largest citizen-science project ever... and have fun doing it! If you would like to participate in the count this year, let us know by emailing CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Don't let pandemic restrictions stop you from counting birds in your yard, or taking a walk around your neighborhood for the count! Prior to the event we will host Zoom workshops for feeder-watchers and new count participants, explaining how the CBC works and answering your questions. To view our count circle, browse to <https://tiny.cc/ManoCBCMap>. Did we mention it's fun?

For updates continue to check the HBC [website](#) and Facebook page and please feel free to contact the team with questions.

Have you recently flown on Delta Airlines and left onboard a pair of Nikon binoculars with an HBC tag on the strap? Then we may have good news. Someone named Robert from Lost and Found Central has them. Contact president@hampshirebirdclub.org for more information.

RECORDINGS OF HBC PRESENTATIONS

Did you miss the September meeting on Zoom? HBC speaker presentations this year will be recorded for your viewing pleasure, and John Van de Graaff's talk about a trip to Point Pelee is no exception. To view it, go to the Programs page of the HBC website and click on the "Videos of past presentations" link. John has given permission for the video to be viewable without a password. We will only post videos with the permission of the speaker, so some future meetings may not be recorded.

(And should you wonder about proper behavior during our HBC Zoom meetings, this YouTube video demonstrated the dos and don'ts: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFVHaus_pjI.)

SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE

Did you hear about the study published in July 2020 about an alternate **White-throated Sparrow** song that has spread across Canada? The study, published in the journal [Current Biology](#), describes the replacement of the old Canada, Canada, Canada song by a new two-phrase song. The article includes a video summary with examples of the old and new songs.

ONLINE BIRDING WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee is offering 3 more virtual workshops in October:

Tuesday, October 13 7:00 – 8:00 pm Sparrows Scott Surner

Scott will feature mostly local sparrows and some regular migrants. The program is designed to help introduce new birders to the subtle differences that birders use in sparrow identification.

Tuesday, October 20 7:00 – 8:00 pm iNaturalist Laura Beltran

Laura uses this app all the time when out birdwatching or walking to help identify many non-bird species. You must have the app loaded onto your phone and use a computer or tablet to participate so you can explore the app during the program.

Tuesday, October 27 7:00 – 8:00 pm Bird Feeders & Foods Dan Ziomek

There are a wide variety of feeders and bird foods available to backyard birdwatchers. With the potential of an eruptive year the yard might be more exciting this winter. Dan will show some of the options for feeders and foods as well as answer your questions about bird feeding.

If you are interested in attending any of these, please email virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org.

A CHAT WITH DAVID SPECTOR

David Spector is an expert in bird song, an emeritus biology professor, and a founding member of the Hampshire Bird Club. He and I met via Zoom for a chat in early August. Given the space constraints this month, the following is part 1 of the chat. Part 2 will appear in the November newsletter.

Newsletter: *What and when was it that you became interested in birds.?*

David Spector: Well, I've always had some interest in nature. My father was a biologist. But birdwatching really started when I was in my mid 20s. Friends of mine were moving to California and another friend and I drove one of their cars across country for them and stopped in Yellowstone and different places along the

California coast. I didn't really identify many birds. I remember in particular White Pelicans and Trumpeter Swans at Yellowstone, Ravens along the way, and Brown Pelicans on the Pacific. When I returned home, which was then Philadelphia, I read a newspaper article about the hawk migration at Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania, and I went up there. Arguably, that was my first official birdwatching trip.

And then I received some field guides as birthday presents and started bird watching in the Philadelphia area. One place that stands out is the Tinicum refuge near the Philadelphia airport. I didn't participate in any formal birdwatching activities, but I met various people there, in particular, Jim Carroll, the refuge manager. When I moved up here I learned that he had also been a major influence in getting John Green involved in bird watching.

At the time I started bird watching I was out of school and it was bird watching that inspired me to go back to college. I finished my undergraduate degree as a biology major, and then moved to Western Massachusetts for graduate school working with Don Kroodsma.

N: *You retired very recently. The academic work you have done for many years is based in biology, and in particular bird activity and bird behavior. What can you tell me about that?*

DS: In graduate school and the years following I did research on bird song, especially on the singing behavior of the Yellow Warbler and other warblers. In more recent years I have focused my intellectual efforts more on birds in literature. My academic career was more as a teacher than as a researcher. I taught in a department where we had a heavy teaching load. I taught subjects ranging from introductory level courses for general education on up through upper level courses for biology majors; I enjoyed the opportunity to develop a wider view of biology and various connections among different aspects of biology.

N: *You have been very involved with the Hitchcock Center (HCE) and also with the Hampshire Bird Club (HBC) for a long time. Would you expand on that?*

DS: In the period roughly half a year between when I finished my undergraduate degree and when I came up here to go to grad school at UMass, I worked at a nature center – The Wetlands Institute in Stone Harbor, New Jersey. When I moved up here one of the first things I did was to find a local nature center. I contacted the Hitchcock Center and connected with Clif Read to volunteer to do programs. One of the things we did was to organize trips back down to New Jersey. We did weekend trips for the fall migration to

Cape May which continued, I think, for six years in a row. That was a lot of fun. I was one of many people who taught the spring birding class at Hitchcock. One of the best things I ever did for the Hitchcock Center was that one year when I was asked if I would teach that class, I said that I wasn't available, but that it was time that Jan Ortiz stop taking the class and start teaching it. She took it over and ran with it for about a decade.

In addition to doing programs at the Hitchcock center I eventually was asked to be on the board and I was board president for a few years. When I was president, Dave Ziomek was HCE Director. He is one of many people, along with his brother Dan, Scott Sumner, Steve Stanne, and others, who were heavily influenced by Jerry Bozzo of the Amherst school system. So a lot of what's happened at the Hitchcock Center and in the bird club is due to the indirect influence of one middle school teacher.

N: *Let's move on to the HBC.*

DS: Okay. Well, my friend and grad school officemate Tod Highsmith and I one day were pulled over on South Maple Street scanning the fields there. That was before South Maple Street became a major highway, and it was still possible to pull over safely. Another car pulled up and the person I later realized was Sally Venman said, "Are you two bird watchers?" We said yes. Then she said, "Well, there's a new bird club forming" and she gave us the time and place. That meeting was in the Perry Room at the Hitchcock Center.

I showed up at the first meeting. I remember it well. The speaker was Dave Nelson, a grad student in wildlife at UMass working on the reintroduction of Bald Eagles at Quabbin. He was involved with the hacking of the first two eaglets there, named Betsy and Ross.

I've been a member of the bird club since that first meeting. I've done various things. For a while I was the refreshments coordinator. I've been a board member. I've given, I think, a dozen or more talks to the bird club on various topics. It's been a good place to connect with and meet people. I met my spouse and life partner there. And, of course, many friends.

(to be continued)

Dave Gross, Editor
newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Date	Payment: ___cash ___check ___online	Trip Release?	Newsletter ?	Date Entered
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HAMPSHIRE BIRD CLUB, INC. MEMBERSHIP FORM: 2020-2021

Use this form to join, renew, or update. The club membership year is October 1 – September 30.

If you wish to pay by credit card, you may join or renew online at our secure site, <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/shop/>

For questions, please contact: membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

Please note that contact information may be shared with other members of the club, unless you request otherwise.

CONTACT INFORMATION	NEWSLETTER: How do you want to receive your issues?
Name(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> By email link to download from HBC website.
Address	<input type="checkbox"/> By U.S. postal mail.
City, State, Zip:	OPTIONAL WAYS TO PARTICIPATE – PLEASE CHECK
Home Phone: Cell/Other:	(For questions, contact: membership@hampshirebirdclub.org)
Email(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally provide refreshments
May we publish your contact information in the fall club directory? <i>[Published only in hard copy, provided only to members.]</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Lead Field Trips
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> Share information on birding locations/networks
May we contact you via email with time-sensitive information such as cancellations, field trips, or educational and other opportunities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Serve on a committee:
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments committee
	<input type="checkbox"/> Education committee
	<input type="checkbox"/> Field trips committee
	<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation committee
	<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting room (chairs) set up committee
	<input type="checkbox"/> Share your skills. (Financial or database management; AV, computer or web technology; editorial; graphics; ornithology; environmental education; consider serving on the HBC Board) Other? Please specify:

Please choose a level of membership below. All membership contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.

MEMBERSHIP – REGULAR	
Student @ \$ 5.00	\$
Individual @ \$ 18.00	\$
Family @ \$ 30.00	\$
MEMBERSHIP – SUPPORTING	
Downy Woodpecker @ \$ 40.00	\$
Northern Flicker @ \$ 60.00	\$
Red-Bellied Woodpecker @ \$ 100.00	\$
Pileated Woodpecker @ \$ 250 or more	\$
OUTREACH ACTIVITY (Optional)	
Donate to Education Activity (Optional)	\$
TOTAL	
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED	\$

Please make checks payable to the **Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.** Bring to the next meeting, or mail to:
Hampshire Bird Club, P.O. Box 716, Amherst MA 01004-0716

On reverse side: **Field Trip Release (required for away trips); and Rare Bird Alert sign-up (optional) →**

FIELD TRIP RELEASE AGREEMENT

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:,,
(day, month, year)

All participating family members, please sign and print name:

- 1) *Signature* ▶ *print name* ▶
- 2) *Signature* ▶ *print name* ▶
- 3) *Signature* ▶ *print name* ▶

RARE BIRD ALERT SIGN UP: Optional

The Rare Bird Alert is an optional email-only alert system for members that informs you when and where rare birds are sighted in the valley, or, in some cases, the broader region. To automatically receive all RBA announcements, participants must provide at least one (1) active email address. And please also let us know if your email changes! Thank you.

To join here:

I would like to receive RBA alerts . Email address/es (1) _____
(2) _____

To join online:

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

HBC/ABA Code of Birding Ethics

1. Respect and promote birds and their environment.

(a) Support the conservation of birds and their habitats. Engage in and promote bird-friendly practices whenever possible, such as keeping cats and other domestic animals indoors or controlled, acting to prevent window strikes, maintaining safe feeding stations, landscaping with native plants, drinking shade-grown coffee, and advocating for conservation policies. Be mindful of any negative environmental impacts of your activities, including contributing to climate change. Reduce or offset such impacts as much as you are able.

(b) Avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger. Be particularly cautious around active nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display sites, and feeding sites. Limit the use of recordings and other audio methods of attracting birds, particularly in heavily birded areas, for species that are rare in the area, and for species that are threatened or endangered. Always exercise caution and restraint when photographing, recording, or otherwise approaching birds.

(c) Always minimize habitat disturbance. Consider the benefits of staying on trails, preserving snags, and similar practices.

2. Respect and promote the birding community and its individual members.

(a) Be an exemplary ethical role model by following this Code and leading by example. Always bird and report with honesty and integrity.

(b) Respect the interests, rights, and skill levels of fellow birders, as well as people participating in other outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience and be especially helpful to beginning birders.

(c) Share bird observations freely, provided such reporting would not violate other sections of this Code, as birders, ornithologists, and conservationists derive considerable benefit from publicly available bird sightings.

(d) Approach instances of perceived unethical birding behavior with sensitivity and respect; try to resolve the matter in a positive manner, keeping in mind that perspectives vary. Use the situation as an opportunity to teach by example and to introduce more people to this Code.

(e) In group birding situations, promote knowledge by everyone in the group of the practices in this Code and ensure that the group does not unduly interfere with others using the same area.

3. Respect and promote the law and the rights of others.

(a) Never enter private property without the landowner's permission. Respect the interests of and interact positively with people living in the area where you are birding.

(b) Familiarize yourself with and follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing activities at your birding location. In particular, be aware of regulations related to birds, such as disturbance of protected nesting areas or sensitive habitats, and the use of audio or food lures.

Addenda during the Covid era

Even so, there are gray areas and places where reasonable, caring birders will differ. Here are a few thoughts to help guide your birding as we all get through these challenging, rapidly changing times together:

- i. Birding is a GREAT thing to do right now, whether you're a lifelong birder or someone who has just started noticing birds out your window. Keeping a connection with birds and nature is a valuable way to improve mood, lower stress, and gain perspective on our current troubles. As such, birding should be strongly supported and encouraged.
- ii. Some types of birding and birding locales are specifically to be avoided now, particularly any situation or location that would encourage or require people to violate physical distancing guidelines or travel away from one's local area. These should be scrupulously avoided.
- iii. There is no "one size fits all" prescription for how to accomplish this. People are in many different types of living situations, from high-density urban dwellings to very lightly populated, rural landscapes. Exactly what is appropriate will vary significantly from place to place.
- iv. Please remember that every time you hike into the wilds or get on the road to drive to go birding, you have the potential to require emergency services. This could put pressure on an already strained group of emergency personnel at this challenging time. As such, work to stay as close to home as possible.
- v. People's judgement of what is safe will vary. There is little to be gained from birders attacking each other on social media and elsewhere about perceived lapses in physical distancing. However, thoughtful discussion, promotion, and modeling of one's own "quarantine" birding practices are welcome and appropriate.

In short, bird as much as you are able, close to home, and without exposing yourself or anyone else to risk. We look forward to seeing you in person in the field once these difficult times have passed!