



**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
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Dear reader, it with considerable sadness that I must announce that this will be the last issue of the Hampshire Bird Club newsletter. The crushing expense of USPS mail costs piled on top of the tremendous overhead of the HBC website has broken the HBC treasury to the point that the club must disband. I didn't want to be the one to break this to you, but, alas, it is my duty to do so. So here we are, with one last foolish newsletter, of all things, coming out on April 1!

If I got you with that one, you'd best pay attention to other parts of the newsletter that I and my merry band of fools, David Spector and Henry Lappen (one professional and two amateur, and one a bit naughty), have come up with. I realize that it may be difficult to tell the difference between the usual newsletter blather and actual satire, so best of luck. And yes, those are real towns in the USA. You'll see.

And speaking of Wisdom (?), did you see the article in *The Guardian* about Wisdom, the Laysan Albatross? She, at age 70, is the oldest known wild bird. That in and of itself is quite an accomplishment. What is in more remarkable is that on February 1 of this year she hatched a chick, approximately number thirty-seven for her, in the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge. You can read more about her at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/05/wisdom-the-albatross-the-worlds-oldest-known-wild-bird-has-another-chick-at-age-70>. And that's no foolin'!

## **NEXT PROGRAM**

**Monday, April 12 at 7:15 pm via Zoom**

**Daniel Klem presents**

### **Collisions between birds and windows: A deadly conservation issue for birds and people**

Past and current investigations repeatedly document that birds behave as if clear and reflective windows are invisible to them. Building upon the published works of the 1970s-1990s, current investigators have refined estimates of annual avian mortality attributable to sheet glass and plastic, and the species, structure, and landscape settings involved in these unintended and unwanted strikes resulting in injury and death. With the exception of habitat destruction, and according to some estimates domestic cats, more birds annually are killed flying into windows than any other human-associated avian mortality factor, exponentially more than are attributable to communication towers, oil spills, pesticides and poisons, vehicles, and wind turbines. A billion birds annually are estimated to die striking windows in the U.S. alone, consisting of more than 12.5% (1,311 species) of the 10,500 avian species worldwide. The results of research addressing the evaluation of preventing bird-window collisions have revealed several effective methods, but additional education and short- and long-term solutions are needed to ensure the human-built environment is safe for birds the world over.

[Daniel Klem, Jr.](#) is Professor of Biology and [Sarkis Acopian Professor of Ornithology](#) and Conservation Biology at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Among other diverse avian investigations, for 47 years and continuing to the present, he studies, writes, and teaches about the [threat that sheet glass and plastic](#) pose to birds. Considered the foremost scientific expert on avian mortality attributable to windows, he regularly prepares up-to-date review articles on the topic, and is supported by research grants from government agencies, non-government organizations, and industry to evaluate methods to prevent these unintended and unwanted tragedies, by retrofitting existing windows and

developing new bird-safe panes for remodeling and new construction. His research has resulted in U.S. patents to guide the development of novel films and windows using ultraviolet (UV) signals that birds see and humans do not. He is motivated by available and growing evidence that bird-window collisions are an important animal welfare, architectural, legal, and wildlife conservation issue for birds and people worldwide.

## COMING PROGRAMS

May 10, 2021. **Utku Perkas**.TBA.

June 14, 2021. **Aparajita Datta**.TBA.

## BYLAWS VOTE RESULT

The proposed bylaws change for election of HBC board members passed by a vote of 69-0. Starting with the upcoming May election we will be electing board members for two-year terms and the new board will appoint club officers from among its ranks for one year terms at the board's June meeting. The goal of this change is to provide a straightforward procedure for nominating candidates from the floor at the club's May meeting and to encourage members who haven't served on the board to do so.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE REORT

The 2021 HBC Nominating Committee (Betsy Higgins, Jim Lafley, and Dave Gross) has assembled a group of candidates for the upcoming board election. The nominees new to the board are Derek Allard, Ruth Garbett, Jim Lafley and Val Miller. The ballot will also include Josh Rose, who is the longest serving current board member, plus any additional candidates nominated from the floor at the April and May meetings. The current board members who will be continuing on the board, and by the new bylaw in the second year of their terms, are Laura Beltran, Lissa Ganter, Dave Gross, Helen Symons, Steve Winn, and Bob Zimmermann. They will not be on the ballot as per the new bylaw language.

A call for nominees from the floor will be made at the April and May meetings. The voting procedure will be announced at the May members' meeting and in the May newsletter.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee held four successful virtual sessions in March. The first three featured birds – *Woodcocks* by Patti Steinman, *Mississippi Kites* by Steve Mirick, and *Bird Song* by Don Kroodsma – and were all well-presented and appreciated by those attending. The fourth program focused on volunteer opportunities at Arcadia and The Trustees. The organizers of the fourth program are still looking for participants from the HBC to become involved with Arcadia and The Trustees activities.

We are featuring 3 Wednesday evening sessions in April. If you are interested, please register by sending a message to [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org) and please **mention the workshop you would like to attend.**

### **Wednesday, April 14, 7:00 – 8:00 pm    Birding Hampden County**

Join us for the third installment of our series on local birding places in the Valley. Several birders will share some birding locations in the southern county in Massachusetts' Connecticut River Valley.

### **Wednesday, April 21, 7:00 – 8:00 pm    Dragonflies & Damselflies    Dave Small**

Expand your sightings while out birding by watching and identifying those fast-flying Odonates, aka dragonflies and damselflies. Dave will show us some of these beautiful and amazing creatures which can be an interesting diversion when birding gets slow in the summer.

### **Wednesday, April 28, 7:00 – 8:00 pm    Plantings for Birds & Bees    Dan Ziomek**

Spring is a good time to consider expanding your garden. Dan is joining us again to share some ideas for plants we should consider adding to our yards to support the birds and bees that visit us. These plantings will aesthetically enhance our gardens for our pleasure as well.

The **Do It Yourself Field Trips** are continuing. Each month an area is chosen, and a leader describes the location and 5 target species for that area. Anyone interested has a month to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the Zoom event the following month. We will meet on Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup> to share our findings from the 1840 Oxbow where the search in March was for ducks and Bald Eagles. If you are interested in joining us contact [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org).

For April the DIY Field Trip location is the Fort River, Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge and Moody Bridge Road in Hadley. The target birds are American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, Eastern Meadowlark, Turkey Vulture, and Black Vulture. Our next DIY Field Trip meeting will be on Monday, May 3, 7 pm on Zoom. If you'd like to join the meeting, report your findings at the refuge, and learn May's field trip location, e-mail [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org).

***Join us in a 30-Day Sitspot Challenge!*** We are inviting you to a challenge: do a "Sitspot" every day for 30 days in a row! A sitspot is a 20-minute practice of sitting at one spot outdoors and focusing on what is going on around you: the birds, the plants, the insects, the soil, the wind – all of it. You can choose to sit on your porch, in the woods, in a park – anywhere that you feel safe and comfortable to settle in for a bit. The idea of a sitspot is to widen your awareness and deepen your understanding of the natural world and you as a part of it, how you are impacting it, and how it is impacting you. What happens when you slow down and take the time to notice what is going on?

Halie Parker, Hannah Schwartz, and Janice Jorgensen will be offering a 30 minute Zoom session on **Thursday, April 15th at 6 pm** to go deeper into what a Sitspot is, the lineage of the practice, and how we can all participate in the challenge together. If you are interested in attending, please contact [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org).

### **Nature Journaling with Jan Ruby-Crystal**

The HBC Education Committee is featuring this new program in April. Nature Journaling has gained popularity lately and Jan Ruby-Crystal has generously offered to conduct a class for us on Zoom. Jan is the Volunteer Director of Arcadia's Art House. She has a Master's in Fine Arts and has shown her artwork locally.

In this two-hour workshop you will learn to use a Nature Journal to deepen your knowledge about birds, their behaviors, and their environments. Through Nature Journaling you will see more in nature, develop sharper awareness, improve your memory, and spark your curiosity. Whether you are new to birding or an experienced birder, bring your curiosity and a willingness to learn. No experience is necessary. You will need a blank paged journal or some blank paper (printer paper is fine), and a writing instrument. Keep it simple. If interested contact: [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org).

**Date: April 22, 2021 Time: 1:00 – 3:00 pm. Location: Zoom**

Cost: Jan would appreciate a donation to Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary's Art House. Make out checks to Mass Audubon and mail to Mass Audubon – Arcadia, 127 Combs Rd., Easthampton, MA 01027 with a note or memo line that it is for the Art House.

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

We welcome these new members who joined the HBC in the past month: Kristin and Matthew Bein, Belchertown; LeeAnn Kim and Alexi Arango, Amherst; Judith Lambert, Hatfield; Kevin Lewis, Belchertown; Florence Masson, Northampton; Jaime Rodominick, Brattleboro; Lenore Shepard, Northampton; Elaine Howes and Don Mientka, Williamsburg; and Kell Julliard, Shutesbury.

Also joining us on April 1 are H. Finch, streets of Northampton; W. Pleasure & W. Funn, Gum Springs, AR; U. R. Knott & I. M Tew, Cranky Corner, LA; R. D. Arrarr, Happyland, CT; I. M. Lost, East Westmoreland, NH; and Theophilus Punoal, Florida, MA.

## A CHAT WITH MARYLEE BOMBOY AND JOHN VAN DE GRAAFF

Here is part two of a chat I had with Marylee and John back in February. Part 1 in the March newsletter covered their starts in birding, Starr Saphir, Arthur Morris, and how the pandemic has interrupted their birding lives.

*Newsletter:* When you moved to the valley, how did you find the Hampshire Bird Club?

**Marylee Bomboy:** Do you remember how? I'm not sure I do.

**John Van de Graaff:** I think we must have looked on the internet.

**MB:** We did a lot of birding in New York City's Central Park. When we moved up here, we were already into birding, we knew we wanted to bird and we wanted to get to know local birders. We moved up here quite by accident. We wanted to leave New York, and we were going to see some friends who lived in Burlington Vermont. Northampton was about halfway, and we stopped here for lunch. We thought it was a nice small town. And we liked the idea of a small college town between New York and Boston.

**JVdG:** I can tell you how I found my local photographic group, the Pioneer Valley Photographic Artists (PVPA), which I think is the best photographic group around here. One day I went to see an exhibition of photographs at the Burnett Gallery in the Jones Library – nothing to do with birding, simply a show of photos by Bob Hallock, Professor of Physics at UMass. He told me about the PVPA, which I promptly joined.

I still am regularly involved in its meetings, usually putting up an image or two along with the other members. Another friend I met through PVPA was Les Campbell, a nationally known nature photographer. His wonderful property just up the road from the Quabbin Visitor Center in Belchertown became a frequent haunt, far more than simply the source of the frames which he provided for my photos. Sadly, Les recently passed away at age 95. We hope that the Quabbin Visitor Center will be named in honor of Les and his late wife Terry.

**MB:** Through the Hampshire Bird Club and the PVPA, we found a good way for us to get to know people and get to know the area. Both clubs have an interesting and lively membership

and have been a wonderful source of friendship for us.

*N:* John, I know the readers of the newsletter would love to find out about your father and his famous generator so, can you give us a brief description of him and the Van de Graaff generator?

**JVdG:** My father, Robert J. Van de Graaff, was the inventor of the Van de Graaff generator which he developed during the 1920s when he was at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. It generates high voltages which can be used for research and in industry. It is also used in physics courses to teach about static electricity. Its sparks can be spectacular, as in the shows at the Boston Museum of Science.

I'll tell you about his career. He was born in 1901 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama and studied engineering at the University of Alabama. Around 1926 he found his way to Paris, and, already interested in physics, he attended lectures by Madame Curie. We even have a letter where he described what she was like as a lecturer. Then he won a Rhodes Scholarship, so he spent four years at Oxford where he got his D.Phil. While he was at Oxford his research attracted the attention of Karl Compton, then Professor of Physics at Princeton. My father came back to the States just before Compton was appointed President of MIT and took my father along. He spent the rest of his academic career at MIT.

**MB:** The generator at the Museum of Science is in a large arena at the end of the museum. They do a show twice a day with it. We attended one of the shows last year, along with several groups of school children.

**JVdG:** My father was friends with Bradford Washburn, the museum's first director. In his early career, Washburn took a lot of aerial pictures of the western mountain ranges in the US and Canada. As the museum's founding director, he knew about my father and the generator, the original which by then was inactive in a building in Cambridge. It was

moved to its spot on the island in the Charles River where the Museum is before anything else was built. The museum was built around it. Unfortunately, my father died about a year before it was put into operation there. I have memories of a dinner at the Science Museum with my mother celebrating the opening of the generator exhibit.

*N: I do have one more question that wasn't on my original list. Do you have a favorite bird photograph?*

**JVdG:** The Painted Bunting.

**MB:** It's a beautiful bird. We happened upon one when we went to Texas to see Golden-cheeked Warblers. We took a side trip to a state park in Texas in the middle of nowhere; it was a long trek. They had a place where you could go into a blind to observe and photograph. The blind looked out at an area with food and water. Birds would come to bathe, because it, being Texas, was very hot.

**JVdG:** Soon after, in the early 2000s, I attended the National Association of Nature Photographers annual meeting and got to know a fellow called Ernie Mastroianni. I did a session with him; he was presenting. He became an editor of *Birders World*. Soon after that meeting he came upon my website with the photo of the Painted Bunting and asked if he could put it on the magazine cover. That photo is my most prestigious publication – and my favorite photo!

**MB:** Taking that photo was a wonderful experience. The male was there with the female – green and totally different from the multi-colored male. They were both splashing around in the water, and John took lots of pictures; it was very exciting. I suddenly looked down from the blind at something coming along crawling the ground – a big rattlesnake looking to me like it was going to come right into the blind. My life rattlesnake!

*N: Oh boy.*

**JVdG:** The other publication that I'm proud of is this one. [John holds up a copy of *MassAudubon Connections*.] This is a Piping Plover At Allens Pond in southeastern Mass.

**MB:** I love the Painted Bunting photograph, but the other one I love, is a gorgeous picture of an Elegant Trogon that he took in Arizona. It was in Patagonia State Park. The bird was known to be in one area of the state park and people were looking for it and looking for it, but nobody could find it. John got tired of looking and while he was having a little nap in the car I continued walking around, all alone, and there was the Elegant Trogon, sitting in silence. I ran back and got John and he ended up getting a fabulous picture of the bird from the front with all the beautiful red and green. It was our holiday card for a number of years.

*N: My favorite Van de Graaff photograph is of the mother Plover with her young underneath her. It looks like a bird with six or eight legs. It's just a wonderful picture.*

## NEW LIBRARY BOOKS!

Check out these new additions to our bird club library:

*Understanding Human Song* by Woody Thrush

*Feeder Etiquette: How to Eat, Drink and Be Merrily Patient at the Suet Cake* by Jay Blue

*Spot That Falcon: Eagle Eyes Save Lives!* by Mo Dove

*6 Fruits for Longer, Lusher Tail Feathers* by Snow E. Egret

*Why Bad Things Happen to Good Birds* by Hugh Knowes

*Posing for the Camera: How to Be the Most Popular Facebook Bird* by Len Scloth

*Qanon for the Birds* by Raven Loon

*Flycatcher in the Rye* by Bob White

*Seven Shortcuts to the Breeding Grounds* by Toots Weet

*Hi Sweetie!* by Poecile Atricapillus

Henry Lappen, Club Librarian

## HBC FIELD TRIPS RETURN!

*In order to be as safe as possible during a field trip, please be sure to wear your mask, social distance, and bring your own scope as sharing is not safe as yet. All HBC field trips are limited to no more than ten participants and two leaders unless otherwise indicated in the descriptions.*

**Thursday, April 1, all day.** Now that ice is gone from the lakes, we might have an opportunity to observe waterfowl that spent the winter hibernating under the ice. This is also the best day of the year to find Quabbie, the plesiosaur that inhabits the Quabbin Reservoir. Of course we cannot guarantee sightings of this leftover from the Cretaceous period, but we have as good a chance as anyone of seeing it. Because of the popularity of this trip, attendance is limited to those who have been on it previously. We will meet at the usual time and place, with the usual leader. Bring warm clothing, boots, food, and, in case we encounter snipe, flashlights and paper bags. Plans are being discussed for a trip to Scotland so that club members can compare Quabbie with Nessie, once international travel becomes easier again.

**Sunday, April 18, 7 – 10 am, Park Hill Orchard, Easthampton.** Join Laura Beltran to look for early spring migrants in Park Hill Orchard which has a variety of habitats including open fields, mixed forest, wetlands, and streams. Pre-registration is required by emailing [Lauraandnature@gmail.com](mailto:Lauraandnature@gmail.com). (E/M)

**Wednesday, April 21, 6:30 –? noon, Turners Falls Area.** Join Scott Sumner as he looks for various waterfowl and early spring migrants around Barton's Cove, the Montague Sandplains, and Deerfield Meadows among other places. This trip is limited to four people. Please contact Scott by email at [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com) to register and get the meeting location. (E)

**Thursday, May 13, 6:30 – mid/late morning, Orchard Hill, Amherst.** Join Scott Sumner as he looks for early spring migrants. This trip is limited to ten people. Please contact Scott by email at [ssurner@aol.com](mailto:ssurner@aol.com) to register and get the meeting location. (E)

**Thursday, May 20, Morning Half Day, Quabbin, Gate 35.** Join Janice Gifford and Dave Gross for this new park and walk field trip at Gate 35 in New Salem. A forested canopy, open areas, and open shoreline provide opportunities to see a variety of species. The path is wide for social distancing and is flat for easy walking. We will walk about 4-5 miles round trip and aim to be back at the cars by noon. Bring water and a snack. For information and to sign up please contact Dave at [djgross@gmail.com](mailto:djgross@gmail.com) or 413-687-8161. (E)

**Saturday, May 22, 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 am. Pack a lunch or pick one up at our stop at the Cumington Creamery. For information and to sign up, please contact Dave ([djgross@gmail.com](mailto:djgross@gmail.com) or 413-687-8161) or Bob ([raz@umass.edu](mailto:raz@umass.edu) or 413-585-0405). (E/M/S)

Carol Mardeusz, Field Trip Chair

## IN LIKE A LAMB

Remember March 1 and the wind? According to Paul Caiano, the morning weather person at WAMC out of Albany, Mount Washington, New Hampshire reported that the temperature overnight on March 1 was -27 °F. The winds were out of the northwest at 102 mph, gusting to 117 mph, for a wind chill of -80 °F. Aren't you glad you decided to postpone that hike to and overnight at the Appalachian Mountain Club's Lake of the Clouds Hut?

## DREAMING OF BIRDING IN BRITAIN

My breast was heaving with the hope of spying  
The lovelies of England  
I was Cuckoo with desire  
First to woo me was the exposed Whitethroat  
Atop the pendulous nests of the Golden Oriole  
Next came the erect Firecrest  
Naked as a Jay bird  
On a flowering bush  
The climax was the Ouzel

And the beautiful open Dunnocks  
Carousing on the Field-fare soft undulating grasses  
A Lark it was  
A sensuous experience for an old Coot  
Alas, I had but one Little Egret:  
I never did see a pair of Great  
...  
Spotted Woodpeckers!

Henry Lappen

## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Nothing of interest is upcoming.

Well, except for this:

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

*Mass Audubon Bird-a-thon*

May 14 - 15

This May bird lovers, climate champions, and nature enthusiasts from all over Massachusetts will participate in Mass Audubon's Bird-a-thon fundraiser. The birding will take place from 6 pm Friday May 14 to 6 pm Saturday, May 15. This year is particularly special because Mass Audubon is celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our goal will be to match our team's species count from last year: 153.

There will be special perks and prizes for those who fundraise at different levels, including a special event with David Sibley and Joan Walsh. For more details visit [web.massaudubon.org/goto/west](http://web.massaudubon.org/goto/west).

Ready to sign up for the Western Mass Bird-a-thon team? Email Patti Steinman at [psteinman@massaudubon.org](mailto:psteinman@massaudubon.org).

And there's this, too:

Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area

Would you be interested in maintaining bluebird and wood duck boxes at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area (FLCA)? FLCA in Northampton has 12-14 nest boxes. The bluebird boxes are cleaned and repaired annually, ideally in late winter, and the wood duck boxes should also be cleaned and prepared annually. There is need for someone to assist or lead this project. If that person is you, please contact Bruce Hart at (413)320-2841.

Raucous Blue Jays abound  
In summer, fall and winter  
Spring finds them skulking  
Haiku by Jim Lafley

dropping from the sky  
starlings mark naked branch  
like musical notes  
Haiku by Marcia Merithew

Dave Gross, Editor  
[newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org)