



**Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.**  
**Amherst, Massachusetts**  
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Dear reader, do you know which song was awarded the “Song of the Century” by the National Endowment for the Arts? This song also has the same rating from the Recording Industry Association of America. And the American Film Institute ranked it as the best movie song of the past 100 years. The music was composed by Harold Arlen and the lyrics by Yip Harburg. And is about bluebirds. Yes, it’s *Over the Rainbow*. I am sure you know Judy Garland’s original version. There are many other covers. One you absolutely should hear if you haven’t is by Israel Kamakawiwo’ole. This recording is the single, first demo take of a “Rainbow” and “What a Wonderful Life” medley. It is phenomenal. You can find it on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1bFr2SWP1I>.

I think the lyrics really align with the state of the world right now as we get more and more people vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 just as we begin to enter bird spring migration season. Here they are.

Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high  
There's a land that I've heard of once in a lullaby.  
Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue  
And the dreams that you dare to dream,  
Really do come true.

Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high  
There's a land that I've heard of once in a lullaby.  
Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue  
And the dreams that you dare to dream  
Really do come true.

Someday I'll wish upon a star  
And wake up where the clouds are far behind me.  
Where troubles melt like lemon drops,  
High above the chimney tops,  
That's where you'll find me.

Someday I'll wish upon a star  
And wake up where the clouds are far behind me.  
Where troubles melt like lemon drops,  
High above the chimney tops,  
That's where you'll find me.

Somewhere over the rainbow, bluebirds fly.  
Birds fly over the rainbow  
Why then, oh why can't I?  
If happy little Bluebirds fly beyond the rainbow  
Why, oh why can't I?

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Why then, oh why can't I?  
If happy little Bluebirds fly beyond the rainbow  
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## COMING PROGRAMS

**March 8, 2021. Lukas Musher.** Amazing Amazonia: The Evolution of South America's Mega-diverse Biome.

**April 12, 2021. Daniel Klem.** Collisions between birds and windows: A deadly conservation issue for birds and people.

May 10, 2021. **TBA.**

June 14, 2021. **TBA.**

# NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, March 8 at 7:15 pm via Zoom

Lukas Musher presents

## Amazing Amazonia: The Evolution of South America's Mega-diverse Biome

The outstanding biodiversity of Central and South America has fascinated biologists for centuries. Amazonia – the most biodiverse biome in the Neotropics – contains at least 10% of all bird, 18% of all tree, and as much as 40% of all butterfly species globally. Notably, Amazonia is observed to be the primary source of biodiversity to other Neotropical biomes, meaning that this region has produced a large portion of the biodiversity seen across tropical America in general. What drives species origination and accumulation in these biodiverse regions? Why is the Amazon rainforest so species-rich? What biological processes cause new species of birds to form in tropical America? How has the historical landscape influenced the patterns of biodiversity seen today? In this talk I will examine what makes Amazonia so extraordinary, focusing primarily on South American birds. I will discuss the history of the South American landscape and its biodiversity, highlight current challenges in studying this history, and point to some of the conservation concerns threatening South America. I will additionally discuss my own research and field experience in the American tropics, and try to answer some of the questions about what makes this region of the world so biodiverse. Using a combination of field sampling, genomic sequencing, and statistical analysis, I will show that the history of Amazonian birds is complex, but is closely tied to changes in the Neotropical landscape. I will also show that because much of the bird diversity in Amazonia is range-restricted and remains undiscovered, future deforestation and climate change pose major threats to Amazonian biodiversity in the near term.

Lukas Musher is a postdoctoral researcher at the American Museum of Natural History and a Research Associate at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University. He obtained a B.S. in Ecology and Evolution from the University of Pittsburgh, a M.A. in Conservation Biology from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. from the American Museum of Natural History's Gilder Graduate School. His research combines population, genomic, biogeographic, and macroevolutionary modeling in order to study how Neotropical bird diversity originates and is maintained.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

As announced at the February club meeting, the 2021 HBC Nominating Committee has been formed. The members are Betsy Higgins, Jim Lafley, and Dave Gross. The committee is charged with identifying candidates for board membership to be presented at the April club meeting.

If you have a suggestion for a club member who would make a good board member (including yourself) please let one of the Nominating Committee members know soon after the March club meeting.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We welcome these new members who joined last month: Cindy Drumgool, Deerfield; Jerry Schwartz, Hamilton; Karen and Joe Shea, Harvard; and Mary Sullivan, Boxborough.

It was a pleasure to meet the many who were able to attend the recent Zoom event for this year's new members!

Lissa Ganter, [membership@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:membership@hampshirebirdclub.org).

## FIELD TRIP NEWS

*Please check the HBC website or Facebook page for updates.*

Given the ongoing pandemic, there are no in-person field trips scheduled. The Board will reevaluate this decision on an ongoing basis and will schedule some get-togethers as soon as possible. The [Resources](#) page of the HBC website includes links to some activities and descriptions of birding locations. A few field trips throughout New England may be accessed by going to [www.birdingcalendar.com](http://www.birdingcalendar.com).

Carol Mardeusz, Field Trip Chair

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee held 3 well-attended virtual sessions in February. Plum Island Birding and Sharpies v. Coopers were very popular. The HBC Board and Education Committee members enjoyed meeting and sharing aspects of the Club with several new HBC members at the New Members Meeting on February 17.

We are featuring four virtual sessions in March and three in April on Wednesday nights. 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, March 10, 7:00 – 8:00 pm      American Woodcocks      Patti Steinman**

Patti will review the natural history and unique mating ritual of these fascinating birds. This is prime season for the mating display and, although we can't do a field component, Patti may reveal some local observation spots.

**Wednesday, March 17, 7:00 – 8:00 pm      Mississippi Kites in NH      Steve Mirick**

There is a breeding population of Mississippi Kites in New Hampshire and Steve has been studying them for several years now. Since this is not a common New England bird, it would make an interesting road trip for birders. Come find out about it.

**Wednesday, March 24, 7:00 – 8:00 pm      Bird Song      Don Kroodsma**

Don is well-known for his work with bird songs and recordings. He will share the inside story of this enthralling aspect of these animals we find so engaging, especially in the spring as they sing an amazing variety of songs.

**Wednesday, March 31, 6:30 – 7:30 pm      Volunteer Opportunities for Birders**

If you are interested in using your birding skill to assist a local non-profit organization, come listen to the local opportunities at the Mass Audubon Connecticut River Sanctuaries by Jonah Keene, Sanctuaries Director and available at The Trustees (formerly The Trustees of Reservations) by Julie Richburg, Lead Ecologist, Inland Natural Resources.

**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 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.

Do-It-Yourself Field Trips started on February 1<sup>st</sup> with a virtual meeting to learn about Aqua Vitae Road, our first DIY field trip location. The session provided directions to the area and reviewed the access information and habitats so individuals could bird the area on their own. The five target birds were Horned Lark, Barred Owl, Peregrine Falcon, Song Sparrow, and Savannah Sparrow. On March 1<sup>st</sup> we will share our individual experiences with each other. We are hoping to record the session and make it available on the website.

Our next Do-It-Yourself Field Trip orientation session will be on Monday, April 5, 7 pm on Zoom. Each month an area is chosen, and a leader describes the location and the five target species for that area. Anyone who wishes to participate 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. For March our location is the 1840 Oxbow, Northampton and the target birds are Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, and Bald Eagle. If you wish to join the April DIY Zoom, report your findings at the Oxbow, and learn of April's field trip location, e-mail [virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:virtualbirding@hampshirebirdclub.org).

## PROPOSED HBC BYLAWS CHANGE

The HBC board is proposing a change to the club bylaws that will alter the election of board members. The gist of the proposal is that the vote will be on individual candidates rather than a slate of candidates at the annual meeting. In addition, Board positions will be changed from one-year to two-year terms and officers will be elected by the Board. The rationale for these changes is given in the February newsletter as are the current and proposed bylaws.

As noted in the newsletter and at the February club meeting, all HBC members are eligible to vote on this bylaws change. That vote will be done online between March 8 and March 22. The link to vote is [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSftwLjeklajay\\_UPcwQYXi1AiMUjQF6yzPu9BDF1pmbF9oaYQ/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSftwLjeklajay_UPcwQYXi1AiMUjQF6yzPu9BDF1pmbF9oaYQ/viewform?usp=sf_link). HBC members who wish to vote using a paper ballot should contact the newsletter editor at [newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org) by March 10 to allow for mailing delays. The proposed new language for the bylaws is below, with new language in italics.

### Article V - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

5.1 The HBC shall be directed by a Board of Directors (hereafter called "the Board") composed of the following: President, Vice President/Program Director, Treasurer, Communications Secretary, Membership Secretary, and six members at large.

5.2 *Board members shall be elected for two-year terms and Officers for one-year terms; Board members and Officers shall be eligible for re-election.*

### Article X - ELECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

10.1 *Directors.* In consultation with the Board, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee to be announced at the February program/members meeting each year. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three members of the HBC. At least one member of this committee shall be a member of the Board and at least one shall be a person who is not on the Board, but from the membership at large. *HBC members shall be invited to suggest individuals for Board membership to the Nominating Committee by the March program/members meeting.*

10.2 *Nominations.* At the program/members meeting in April, the Nominating Committee shall propose a list of at least five or six nominees (in alternate years) to replace those Board members whose terms are expiring. Board incumbents are eligible for re-election and all nominees must have been members of the HBC for at least one calendar year prior to the election. *The Nominating Committee shall strive to select nominees that represent the diversity of the HBC membership with respect to gender, color, race, age, and physical ability and, further, reflect any specific directions from the Board regarding diversity.*

10.3 *Election.* The nominees shall be voted on individually by written ballot at the annual program/members meeting in May. Nominations may be made from the floor at the May meeting and, if seconded, added to the list of nominees. Only HBC members may make nominations and vote in the election. Following the vote, the five or six candidates (depending on the year) with the highest vote totals will join the Board. In the event that the members meeting cannot be held in person, the Board can hold the election in an alternate format that will allow all members to participate. In the case of a tie for the final (fifth or sixth) spot, one of the tied candidates will be selected by coin toss. Newly elected Board members shall assume their duties on June 1.

10.4. *Officers.* Officers shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors at the first Board meeting after June 1. This meeting will be convened and presided over by the President of the preceding club year. Each officer shall hold office for one year.

10.5. *Vacancies.* A vacancy on the board may be filled for the unexpired portion of the term by a two-thirds vote of the Directors.

10.6. *In the first year in which this policy is enacted, the six Board members who have been serving the fewest number of years will be considered to be in the first year of their terms; other Board members, if nominated, may be considered for re-election.*

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

In mid-February I joined Marylee and John for a chat about birds, photography, travel and people they have known. This month is the first part of the chat that covers their entries into bird watching and some of the characters that they met along the way.

**Marylee Bomboy:** John isn't here yet, but I will just do a preface for you. When I met John Van de Graaff he had never in his life been to a US National Park.

*Newsletter: Oh, my.*

**MB:** He did not know one bird from the next. He had lived in Europe a lot, had been to every art museum in Europe, and he knew a lot about art. I knew very little, so when we got together he taught me about art and I slowly, slowly introduced him to the idea that it might be nice to visit a national park and to have some binoculars to look for a few birds. And, as with many people who are converted, he got really into it. So that's the preface to the story.

*N: What got you started in bird watching?*

**MB:** What got me started with birding was going to Kenya. I went to Kenya in 1980 and spent a month there. I was taking a graduate course on international education for which I visited schools, but part of the program was also going on safari. We went to the Maasai Mara and a number of other parks, but what blew me away was not so much the giraffes, zebras, lions and elephants, but the birds!

That was true even in Nairobi. There's a bird there called a Superb Starling and, indeed, it is a starling that is superb. It is turquoise and orange and it just *hits* you. It's all over the place. Out in the reserves there are tons of weaver birds that make all kinds of nests and colorful rollers among others. When we came back from that trip, my first husband and I bought a house in the country, bought a bird book, put up bird feeders and became birders.

*N: John, how do you describe your entry into birdwatching?*

**John Van de Graaff:** I was living in New York City close to Central Park and I had gotten to know a legendary Central Park birder called Starr Saphir – not her real name -- she invented it. She was leading regular birdwatching walks in

Central Park and I began joining her. It was it was great fun; after a little while I brought a camera and I started taking pictures of the birds. At one point I said to Starr, “Would you like to come over and see some of my bird pictures?” and she said, “Oh yes I'd love to.” So she came to our apartment and I showed her the pictures and she said, “Oh John, these are great.” I said “Would you like copies of them?” And she said “Oh yes.” They were in the form of slides and I said “Fine. I can make copies for you.” I ended up giving her probably 100 or more over the next couple of years. She used them in the classes on birding that she taught for New York Audubon. Her interest and support gave me a lot of confidence in my bird photography skills.

**MB:** Starr really became a friend and we had the good fortune to bird with her in Arizona when she was visiting her daughter there. She also came to visit us in Northampton soon after our move here and found our life Cerulian Warbler for us on a walk up Mount Holyoke. Unfortunately she died in 2013; she was featured in an HBO documentary called “Birders: The Central Park Effect.”

**JVdG:** She was a wonderful person. And as I said, she was very encouraging to me about my bird photography. A bit later I got to know Arthur Morris, in Florida. We met him in 2001 at Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island. We were lined up early one morning to go in and there was a guy in a big car in front of us. He had a pony tail down his back and had a very large camera.

When the gate opened we headed in; our first stop was the same as his – he was photographing Roseate Spoonbills with his large camera. We fell into conversation, and he gave us a pamphlet with some of his bird photos. I later bought his book *The Art of Bird Photography*.

A couple of years later we were going out birding with him. Once we stopped with a number of people around and I told them, “We

are with Arthur Morris. He's one of the best bird photographers in the United States." He turned to me and said "What's this *one of \$#~+?*"

*N: That's an interesting revelation about him. Roughly at that same time, maybe the late 1990s or early 2000s or so, he gave a talk to the HBC. I recall that there were some comments in the audience that align with your recollections.*

**JvdG:** I went on a couple of birding sessions with him in Florida, but the most significant thing I did with him were three wonderful trips to the Galapagos for a total of four weeks in 2006, 2008 and 2010. You may remember that I gave a talk to the HBC on the Galapagos.

**MB:** I had gone to the Galapagos on my own in 1987 so I did not go with John in any of these trips. But I did a lot of birding before I met John: in the Galapagos, in parts of Ecuador, in Costa Rica, in Mexico, as well as in the US. My first husband died in 1987 and birding provided a wonderful way for me to travel alone but with lovely people with interests similar to mine.

After John and I got together, one of the first birding trips that we did was to the Camargue in France (the Rhone delta, east of Marseilles). We went there in February 2001 and with a British organization called The Traveling Naturalist. It's a wonderful birding area and we have returned there on our own many times. We've also traveled throughout Europe, including to Albania, Bulgaria, Sweden, Italy and Spain with The Traveling Naturalist or Naturetrek (another British company that does excellent trips). I would particularly recommend Spain as a great destination for birding in Europe.

*N: John, which comes first? Is it the photography that comes first, or is it the subject that that draws you to take the picture of the subject?*

**JvdG:** It's very hard to prioritize those two. I photograph all the time. For example, my subject early this morning was shadows on snow just outside our back door. You may know my blips [<https://www.blipfoto.com/VandeGraaff>]. I put up an image every day, so if you go through them you get a good sense of what I do

photography-wise. I started on blipfoto in 2010, and I've posted some photos from earlier. That's a good way to see what I've been doing for the past decade (and more). Every blip has a commentary, mainly short but some longer. They include our stays in Paris in the winter, if you're curious about them.

**MB:** I would like to add something on the question of birds versus photography. John likes to photograph birds, and so, when there are birds available, he'll do birds. A lot of the time there aren't birds around, and he photographs of whatever is available. He really enjoys taking photos!

*N: To what extent has this pandemic and the related restrictions on everything, including travel, affected your birding?*

**MB:** We were in Paris in the middle of March 2020. We usually go to Paris the first week in January and we stay through the end of March or beginning of April. As you may know, the European Union now gives you 90 days without a visa, so we stay for 90 days. They used to not pay attention, so we used to stay longer, but now we come back in 90 days. We were there, as the pandemic hit, and we were going to wait it out over there until I got an email from my brother-in-law, who said "Look, I think Trump is going to close the airports. You better get back if you want to get back." So we left on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, and since the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, we haven't gone any further than Springfield. It's quite a change for us – spending the winter with snow and ice.

We've been doing birding around our neighborhood and at Fort River Refuge in Hadley, a 10-minute drive from our house. John has gotten some nice shots of Blue-winged Warblers there. We sometimes go to the Rail Trail, but the Rail Trail birding area for us is a longer drive and it is also full of people with bicycles and prams and so on. We sometimes go up Mount Holyoke for the Cerulian and Worm-eating Warblers and any others that happen to be there. Usually in season you'll find Indigo Buntings and Scarlet Tanagers.

(continued in the April newsletter)

## MASS AUDUBON VIRTUAL 2021 BIRDERS MEETING

Mass Audubon's annual [Birders Meeting](#) has been a constant in the birding community for nearly 30 years. And we're determined to keep the tradition going in 2021! Online sessions will be held on March 7, 8, 14 and 15. Each session will include a live presentation followed by a Q&A.

This year's theme—*The Bird Next Door*—is all about birding locally. Birding your "patch" means focusing your efforts on one local area to develop a deep knowledge of the place and its birds. Your patch can be your yard, your neighborhood, the swamp down the street, your apartment balcony – any place you visit regularly.

We'll hear from experts on how to create bird-rich and biodiverse yards, the effect of neighborhood birds on the human-nature connection, strategies for finding interesting local species, and birding in urban landscapes. To sign up, click the link above or navigate to the Mass Audubon website.

### UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

#### Hitchcock Center for the Environment

##### *Nature Trivia Night*

Wednesdays 7 pm-8:30 pm: March 10, April, 10

\$50 per team of 1-4 people; please [register online](#) at [www.hitchcockcenter.org](http://www.hitchcockcenter.org)

Join us for a monthly online trivia contest fundraiser for environmental education. The quiz will test you on a wide breadth of science, nature and environmental knowledge. **The winning team will split the award with the Hitchcock Center for the Environment that will help provide 25%-50% discounts on program fees for economically challenged and low-income households.**

#### Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

##### *Beginner Birdwatching 1 – Online*

Wednesdays, March 3-31, 6:30-8:30 pm (8 sessions, some back-to-back on the same evening)

[Register online](#) at the Mass Audubon website.

Learn birding basics from the experts--from different bird families to various tools and resources used by birders. Find out what makes birds unique in the animal kingdom; where and how to locate birds in urban, suburban, and rural areas; and get introduced to basic bird biology and behavior. This online class will help you get started and build your skills at locating, observing, and identifying local birds so you can join one of the fastest growing hobbies in North America, with opportunities to practice every week.

Each weekly class will include optional, self-directed outdoor observation exercises and a 30-minute follow-up discussion session a week later, providing an opportunity for you to observe birds and share your discoveries and questions with classmates and instructors.

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)