



# Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

Volume 38, No. 3

**November 2021**

Dear reader, I was unaware that November is National Native American Heritage Month until a notice popped up on my Google calendar. I did a little bit of research (Google, of course) and learned that the first of these national month celebrations was in 1990 when George H. W. Bush signed a Congressional joint resolution naming the month. The first governmental commemoration of our native people that I could find was American Indian Day, celebrated in May 1916 in New York. This event culminated an effort by Red Fox James, a member of the Blackfeet Nation, who was seeking approval from 24 state governments to have a day to honor American Indians. He rode across the US on horseback to pursue his goal.

Thinking about our native people drew my thoughts to the bird life that was here 500 years ago. And that brought me to the Passenger Pigeon. Wikipedia notes that Passenger Pigeons were hunted by Native Americans, but hunting intensified after the arrival of Europeans, particularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ultimately leading to their extinction. In turn, that brought me to the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

Arthur Augustus Allen wrote about the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in 1939 [*Smithsonian Institution United States National Museum Bulletin* 174: 1-12]: “Ever since the days of Mark Catesby (1731) this species has attracted popular attention, and even at that time, as he stated in his *Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*: ‘The bills of these Birds are much valued by the *Canada Indians*, who made Coronets of 'em for their Princes and great warriors, by fixing them round a Wreath, with their points outward. The Northern Indians having none of these Birds in their cold country, purchase them of the *Southern People* at the price of two, and sometimes three, Buck-skins a Bill.’ At that time the species was found throughout the Gulf States as far north as North Carolina and up the Mississippi Valley as far as southern Ohio and Illinois.”

So that brings me to my last thought. I have Native American ancestors. One that I know of is Eady Isbell who moved from the Carolinas to the Ohio River portion of Southern Illinois in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with her husband Shadrack Lowry. Grandma Eady likely was very familiar with both Passenger Pigeons and Ivory-billed Woodpeckers. And that is what I’ll be thinking about during National Native American Heritage Month.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

November 8, 2021: **Jonathan Meyrav: Conservation Champions: migratory bird conservation in Israel, and how a “white-knuckle” birding contest fits in**

December 13, 2021. **HBC Members’ Meeting.**

January 10, 2022. **TBA.**

February 14, 2022. **TBA.** 🍷

March 14, 2022. **TBA.**

## NEWSLETTER TIMELINESS

If you subscribe to the print version of the newsletter, you may have seen that it arrives a bit late for you to sign up for or participate in some of our HBC programming. The online version is posted at the HBC website under the newsletter tab as soon as it is available, when it goes to the printer. Printing and mailing delays lead to print copies arriving 3 or more days after the online version is available. Just sayin’.

## NEXT PROGRAM

Monday, November 8 at 7:15 pm via Zoom

Jonathan Meyrav presents

### Conservation Champions: migratory bird conservation in Israel, and how a “white-knuckle” birding contest fits in

Israel’s position between the Red and Mediterranean Seas places it in the path of hundreds of millions of birds as they migrate between Asian and European breeding territories and African wintering habitats. The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, the oldest and largest conservation group in the country, promotes bird conservation, ornithology research, and environmental education through the Israel Ornithological Center and the International Center for the Study of Bird Migration. *Champions of the Flyway* is part of IOC’s Eilat Birds Festival, timed to coincide with spring migration; teams compete to identify the most birds, but more importantly to raise the most money for birds, adding up to nearly \$500,000 in its first 5 campaigns. Each year’s contest has a different conservation emphasis, supporting initiatives in countries all along the eastern Mediterranean flyway in partnership with *BirdLife International*.

Jonathan Meyrav has been birding since the age of 10, and banding birds since he was 14. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours calls him “the most experienced birding tour leader in Israel”. He has been the Tourism Director of the Israel Ornithological Center since 2010, and is the founder and coordinator of Champions of the Flyway.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee hosted Scott Sumner as he offered his popular Sparrow Workshop on October 8<sup>th</sup>. This virtual workshop was attended by more than 25 participants. Scott helped us identify those tricky sparrows and provided suggestions for locating the best habitats for each species. His beautiful photos, as always, were an outstanding feature of his presentation.

Our programs are now recorded and available at the Hampshire Bird Club website at <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/>.

November workshops are still in the works, but we plan to include a duck/waterfowl identification workshop. Please check the [Education page](#) on the website for updates. Coming along before the end of the year will be a workshop on feeder watchers and the Christmas Bird Count. Stay tuned.

We continue to offer virtual do-it-yourself (DIY) workshops. On Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup> participants shared their observations from the Pine Grove Conservation Area in Northampton where target birds were White-throated Sparrows, Field Sparrows, Palm Warblers, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Dark-eyed Juncos. If you would like to participate in next month’s DIY field trip, see the note in the *Field Trip News* section below.

This summer the Education Committee sent a survey out to HBC members. Thank you to all who were able to fill it out. We asked about the kinds of education programs that people would like us to offer and feedback on the programs we have conducted this past year. Bird identification workshops were the overwhelming favorite, along with workshops that suggest birding areas and resources for birding. Fortunately, though the technology can be frustrating, most respondents felt that the Zoom meetings were working well and allowed them to connect with other HBC members in ways that would have otherwise been unavailable.

Finally, this little news item introduces Janice Jorgensen and Lesley Farlow as the new Co-Chairs of the Education Committee. We will miss Jim, but we are looking forward to working with this very dedicated committee. We also welcome anyone who wishes to join us. If you are interested in joining the Education Committee, please email us at [education@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:education@hampshirebirdclub.org).

Lesley Farlow and Janice Jorgensen

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Please join in welcoming these new members who have joined us recently: Maggie Kearney, Hadley; Megan and Mark Gollehon, Conway; Lisa Stoffer, Northampton; and Brian Zylich, Ware.

Thanks to the many returning members (200!) who have already renewed. If you are not among them, now is the time to renew! To pay online go to <https://hampshirebirdclub.org/membership/>. To renew by mail, download the form in the September 2021 newsletter from the HBC website. When you renew please consider indicating your willingness to share your skills or to serve on the HBC Board or a committee. If you have a suggestion for a special interest or a new committee that you think other members might also enjoy, please let me know too. Thanks!

The Member Directory will be published at the end of this month. It will include all renewed members who agree to share their contact information with other members. The Directory is published (in hard copy only) and mailed in early December, and is not shared outside HBC.

Again, thank you for being a part of HBC!

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

## FIELD TRIP NEWS

### Upcoming Field Trips

All scheduled field trips are now filled. We will list the winter and spring trips in the December newsletter. We are hoping to organize trips to the Springfield Crow Roost and to the Connecticut or Massachusetts (or both!) coast this winter.

If you have an idea for a field trip or would like to lead a trip, please email us with your idea or information at [fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org).

### Do-It-Yourself Field Trips

As of press time the species and location for the November DIY field trip were not known. Eleven people enjoyed a field trip to Fort River Refuge in Hadley on September 26. They observed 32 species of birds, with highlights including a Peregrine Falcon, Northern Harrier, and 6 different species of warblers.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Scott Sumner led a sparrow trip October 13<sup>th</sup> in the Deerfield North Meadows area for 9 club members. There were plenty of sparrows along the road just past the famous “dirt piles” as well as some late migrating warblers. A diligent search while circumnavigating the piles resulted in some beautiful views of **White-crowned Sparrows**, but, alas, no Dickcissel. The shrubby wetland along the turf area was also very productive. One of the trip highlights was watching a feisty Merlin harass crows, finding 4 Kestrels, observing both a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a Coopers Hawk, and locating a secretive **Rusty Blackbird**.

On October 16<sup>th</sup> Derek Allard and Jim Lafley took a group along Pynchon Meadow Road in the Arcadia Meadows searching for sparrows and other open field birds. The sparrow variety was limited, but we did get both Song Sparrows and Savannah Sparrows in the scope for those attending to see field marks. There were several Palm Warblers providing good looks as well. An immature **Harrier** put on a display throughout the walk and a few other raptors were observed.

The now defunct Pine Grove Golf Course was the location for our October 24<sup>th</sup> field trip on a chilly but beautiful fall morning. The foliage was brilliant, birds were cooperative, and the company of eight members hosted by Jim Lafley made for a pleasant and memorable walk. There were few sparrows, but eight Yellow-rumps and one Palm Warbler put on a good show. An immature Great Blue Heron was found foraging in the meadow and then along the stream.

# NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS COUNT

The Northampton (MANO) Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. Despite last year's pandemic challenges we had one of the best counts ever. And this year looks promising, even with continued COVID-19 hurdles. Once again, we need your help! Even if you haven't participated before, we hope you'll consider taking part in the largest community science project ever... and have fun doing it! Let us know if you'd like to participate. Please email us at [CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org).

Even if you don't join one of the count groups, you can still count birds in your yard, or take a walk around your neighborhood! We're delighted to welcome feeder-watchers and new count participants, explain how the CBC works and answer all your questions. We'll have Zoom orientation meetings for leaders, participants, and feeder-watchers. As in last year's pre-count sessions, we'll cover how it all works, and instructions on filling out the forms. Activities around compilation are yet to be determined.

Please feel free to contact the team with questions: [CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org](mailto:CBC@hampshirebirdclub.org). To view our count circle click <https://tiny.cc/ManoCBCMap>. For updates, continue to check the count website at [hampshirebirdclub.org/cbc](http://hampshirebirdclub.org/cbc) and HBC's Facebook page.

Did we mention it's fun?!

Janice Jorgensen

## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Arcadia

*Fall Ecology Series: Waterfowl*

with Laura Beltran

Saturday November 6, 10:00 am - noon

Please [register online](#) or call 413-584-3009

Late fall is when many ducks, geese, and other waterfowl migrate south. We will walk along the Mill River, by the Arcadia Marsh, to the 1840 Oxbow, searching these prime wetland habitats for waterfowl and other late fall migrants. Bring binoculars, a scope (if you have one) and a field guide.

*Birdwatching Around the World Series – Online*

Tuesdays, November 30 – December 21, 9:00 – 10:00 am

Please [register online](#)

Learn about birds and other amazing animals from around the world in the comfort of your home. Immerse yourself in the incredible and diverse bird life found in Central Asia, Central America, and South America. Each of these areas support rich avian biodiversity, including many endemic species.

Over four weeks, Mass Audubon will take you on a virtual tour of these iconic destinations and the fascinating birdlife found there.

- Tuesday, November 30 - Colombia with Elissa Landre, Community Advocacy and Engagement Manager for Mass Audubon, is an ornithologist who has led natural history tours and done volunteer service work in many parts of the world.
- Tuesday, December 7 - Mongolia with Chris Leahy, author, artist, Mass Audubon Bertrand Chair Emeritus, who first visited Mongolia in 1982 and has been making almost annual visits since 1994.
- Tuesday, December 14 - Galápagos Islands with Scott Santino, Teacher Naturalist, led trips to the Galápagos to interpret the islands birdlife in 2018 and 2019.
- Tuesday, December 21 - Costa Rica with David Moon, Environmental Educator, has taught tropical ecology in Costa Rica regularly since 1991, beginning with a Costa Rican non-profit, as well as ongoing classes for Franklin Pierce University.

Join for one, some or all!

## THE HBC QUIZ

Our quizmaster has a whole bushful of obscure bird questions. The answers to the first four, found in last month's newsletter, are below. The remaining questions in the topic of "Field Marks and Identification" are

- 5) On what locally common bird can one distinguish the sexes by the color of the base of the bill in breeding season (blue for males, pink for females!)?
- 6) What bird with a white rump is most commonly seen flying in Western Massachusetts with wings held in a steep dihedral?
- 7) Who wants to see Miss Beecher?
- 8) If you had a very narrow view of a puddle where birds were drinking, and all you could see was that a bird was using its bill like a straw rather than scooping up water, how far could you narrow your identification?
- 9) Many call notes are difficult to distinguish and to remember; a few, though, are quite distinctive, even for those of us with poor hearing. What local bird has been called "chewink" but is now better known by another transliteration of its call note?
- 10) How does a Black-bellied Plover differ structurally from most North American plovers? (Hint: The answer is the reverse of how a Sanderling differs from most sandpipers.)

Answers:

- 1) The white spots on the outer corners of the outer tail feathers are usually absent in West Coast populations of American Robins.
- 2) Black-throated Green Warblers evoke wind in the treetops with "Trees, trees, murmuring trees."
- 3) Franklin's Gull and White-tailed Kite (don't hold your breath waiting for these species in Western Massachusetts, and if you do happen to see one look first at more obvious field marks).
- 4) Dark American Robins breed in Newfoundland and nearby areas of mainland Canada.

**Scoring:** Give yourself some points for each correct answer (and, if you want, points for effort or for anything else that strikes your fancy). If you get a bunch of points and/or enjoyed the quiz you win. If you disagree with any of the answers let us know, but you might have points deducted for insubordination.

## BE GLAD YOU DON'T LIVE IN BUNN, NORTH CAROLINA

This article in the October 26, 2021 online edition of *The Guardian* says it all:

[www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/oct/26/buzzards-vultures-north-carolina-small-town](http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/oct/26/buzzards-vultures-north-carolina-small-town). For those of you who don't use the internet, let's just say that acid feces, projectile vomit and damaged chimneys feature prominently in the article.

Editors note: Yes, I know that you have become accustomed to getting a full seven pages of in-depth newsletter content every month. Events have conspired for this month to reduce the newsletter to only five pages. I figured that you didn't want to have two pages of juvenile-level bad jokes, so I spared you.

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

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

Dave Gross, Editor