Dear reader, you should note the volume number above. The Hampshire Bird Club is now in its 38th year. It is approaching or has reached middle age, this depending on your point of view. And it is high time to tip the hat to the newsletter editors who preceded me.

For about the first third of the history of the HBC our newsletter came in the form of a postcard, arriving on an irregular schedule. The first newsletter editor was Sally Venman who was also known, along with her husband Bill, as a founder of the Valley Light Opera. Sally was one of the funniest people I have known. And I mean that in the comedic sense. She always had a way with a phrase to turn most anything into a pun or a humorous anecdote. Her shoes were certainly very large ones to fill.

Somewhere in the late 1990s Sally turned over the duties of newsletter production to David Peake-Jones who, with his acerbic Aussie wit, kept the humor going. He filled Sally’s shoes with a remarkably long run as editor, moving the newsletter from the postcard phase to the format you see now. David stepped down in 2018 and Devin Griffiths took over the editorship for the 2018-2019 club year. Alas, he moved to Cape May, NJ for a position at The Wetlands Institute in summer 2019 and had to step away as newsletter editor.

I recall a phone call from HBC President Bob Zimmermann in late July 2019 (which I remember quite well as I was madly trying to keep a soft-serve ice cream cone from Atkins from melting all over me) to see if I could help out. As I had just retired a couple of months earlier, and being in an ice-cream-induced addled state, I foolishly said yes. And, well, here we are.

David was the editor who brought the newsletter online (not without some outside encouragement if memory serves) in 2001. That makes this newsletter the 20th anniversary online edition. Surely that must make it worth double its usual cost!

Please Join or Renew Your Membership NOW

- Please check your membership status to see if you owe dues this year.
- Complete the Membership Form (both sides) either online or on pages 3 and 4 inside. We need your contact details, dues level (if owed), opt-in for USPS newsletter delivery, participation interests, Field Trip Agreement, and Rare Bird Alert sign up (the last being optional). Don’t forget to complete both sides.
- Note that the newsletter delivery is now opt-in for a printed copy. We hope that you will consider reading the newsletter online (or printing out your own copy) rather than having us send you one. Last year we spent $2600 sending out newsletters. That’s about the level of deficit spending that we have this year. That is the reason that we have moved to the default of online newsletter delivery. Please consider it if you don’t do that already.
- Use the Online Renewal procedure should you owe dues this year or wish to donate money. Go to the secure HBC website, https://hampshirebirdclub.org/shop/, select your dues level, and proceed to checkout where you will complete the Membership Form and make payment, or, alternately,
- Mail Form from the newsletter with your check enclosed for dues and/or donation (if applicable) to the address on the Membership Form.
- And thank you for getting this done by the end of September.
HBC PROGRAM DATES FOR 2021-2022

As of this writing the speaker for the first club meeting on Monday, September 13 has not yet been finalized. Please check the HBC website and look for an email announcement for details as they become available. The dates for HBC programs for the year are set. They are September 13, October 18, November 8, December 13, January 10, February 14, March 14, April 11, May 9 and June 13. The first three meetings will be online via Zoom as was the case last year. We are waiting to see how the pandemic plays out as we move into winter before we commit to in-person meetings for 2022. See the Membership News for more on this.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

The Education Committee held two very successful virtual sessions in July and August. We had about 50 participants sign up for each of the workshops.

In July David Larson, formerly of Mass Audubon’s Joppa Flats Sanctuary, gave a very thorough and informative presentation on shorebirds one is likely to see at Plum Island, Salisbury Beach, and Sandy Point. Participants learned not only about the birds, but also the locations along the island that are most productive.

In August Patti Steinman of Mass Audubon’s Arcadia Sanctuary described the life history of Common Nighthawks, their field marks and behavior for identification, and the timing and locations in the Valley to see them. She shared some of the reasons for their decline and conservation efforts to increase their numbers.

Three new workshops will be offered via Zoom in September and early October:

*Wednesday, September 8, 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. Fall Warblers with Scott Surner*

Those warblers in the fall can be a challenge as they move through and out of our area. Scott will share methods for telling these small, darting little birds from one another. We always learn some interesting techniques when Scott does a presentation.

*Thursday, September 16, 7 p.m. – 8 p.m. Hawks and Hawk Watching with Dan Russell*

This introductory hawk course will feature the more common hawks in our area and how to identify them. Dan will describe the methods he uses for telling these birds apart. He will also share some places in the area where hawks can be seen migrating this time of year.

*Wednesday, October 6, 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. Sparrows with Scott Surner*

Once again Scott is presenting on sparrows as we prepare to identify them in the field. Some of us remember most of what he shared last fall, but, of course, not all of those wonderful field marks that help us tell these little, brown birds apart from each other. The photography alone is worth attending this workshop.

To sign up for a workshop send an email to education@hampshirebirdclub.org. To see a past workshop, note that they are now recorded and available at the Hampshire Bird Club website at https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/.
HAMPshire BIRD CLUb, INC. MEMBERSHIP FORM: 2021-2022
Use this form to join, renew, or update. The club membership year is September – August.
If you wish to pay by credit card, you may join or renew online at our secure site, https://hampshirebirdclub.org/shop/
The first year is free for first-time members. 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.

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May we publish your contact information in the fall club directory? [Published only in hard copy, provided only to members.]

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May we contact you via email with time-sensitive information such as cancellations, field trips, or educational and other opportunities?

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OPTIONAL WAYS TO PARTICIPATE – PLEASE CHECK
(For questions, contact: membership@hampshirebirdclub.org)

- Occasionally provide refreshments
- Lead Field Trips
- Share information on birding locations/networks
- Serve on a Committee:
  - Programs
  - Education
  - Field Trips
  - Conservation
  - Meeting Refreshments set up
  - Meeting Room (chairs & AV) set up
- 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. First-time members may ignore this section unless they wish to contribute anyway.

| 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 membership 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► ..................................................

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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
FALL FIELD TRIPS

The Hampshire Bird Club has decided to resume offering field trips with some restrictions. If you are interested in any of the trips below, please carefully read this article and the field trip rules provided with your membership or found online at https://hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines/.

All trips will be limited to 10 participants and up to 2 leaders.
The following additional rules will apply this fall due to the continuing Covid situation:

1. All field trip leaders and participants must be fully vaccinated and required to wear a mask when asked (possibly in carpool situations) and be aware of maintaining a safe social distance during the event.
2. Field Trips are for Hampshire Bird Club Members only.
3. Members can only register for one (1) field trip from the fall selections. We have over 250 members and we want all of them to have a field trip opportunity. Members can request a second trip in case the first choice is full.
4. Participants will receive specific information about their trip directly from the leader once registration has been completed.

Field Trip Schedule, 2021

Friday, Sept. 10, 6:30 - 8:30 am; Fort River USFWS, Hadley; Ted Gilliland
Wednesday, Sept. 15, 7 am – 12; Amherst/Hadley; Scott Surner; Fall Warblers
Saturday, Sept. 18, 7:30 – 10 am; Arcadia Meadows, Northampton; Sara Griesemer/Steve Winn
Wednesday, Sept. 22, 7 – 10 am; Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton; Jim Lafley
Sunday, Sept. 26, 8 – 10 am; Fort River USFWS, Hadley; Laura Beltran
Wednesday, Oct. 13, 7 am – 12; Hadley; Scott Surner; Sparrows
Saturday, Oct. 16, 7 – 9 am; Arcadia Meadows, Northampton; Jim Lafley; Sparrows
Thursday, Oct. 21, 7:30 – 10:30 am; Nonotuck Park, Easthampton; Amanda Kallenbach
Sunday, Oct. 24, 8 – 10 am; Pine Grove Conservation Area, Northampton; Laura Beltran/Jim Lafley
Sunday, Oct. 31, 5:30 am (all day); Dead Creek WMA/Lake Champlain Valley, VT; Mike Locher
Sunday, Nov. 7, 6:30 am (all day); Berkshire Lakes; Tom Gagnon
Saturday, Nov. 27, 5:00 am (all day); Plum Island or Cape Ann; Scott Surner

To register for a field trip please choose the one you would like to attend and send your choice to fieldtrip@hampshirebirdclub.org. You may choose a second trip in case your first choice is full. You will receive an email confirming your registration and providing more details about the trip and the information from the leader.

Our next Do-It-Yourself Field Trip will be on Tuesday (to avoid the Labor Day holiday on Monday), September 7, 7 p.m. on Zoom. 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. Our summer field trip was Nonotuck Park, Easthampton, and the target birds were Chipping Sparrow, Cedar Waxwing, Tree Swallow, Northern Flicker, and Pileated Woodpecker. If you'd like to join the September Zoom and learn of the upcoming field trip, e-mail education@hampshirebirdclub.org.

If you have any questions, please contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com

BRING BACK THE FEEDERS

Over the spring and summer there were numerous reports of unusual bird deaths due to a mystery illness. Sick and dying birds with eye swelling and discharge, plus some with neurological symptoms, were reported across a swath of the eastern US from Indiana to Virginia, south to West Virginia and north to New Jersey. The majority of affected birds were reported to be fledgling Common Grackles, Blue Jays, European Starlings, and American Robins. No definitive cause(s) of illness or death have been determined at this time.

In early August Jim Lafley contacted Andrew Vitz, MassWildlife’s State Ornithologist, about bird feeder precautions that should be taken here in the Pioneer Valley. Andrew wrote “The agency is currently requesting reports of sick/dead birds to get a better idea if the mystery illness is in Massachusetts. Not surprisingly, we received a lot of reports of dead birds and a few of these did have signs consistent with the mystery illness. Interestingly, as far as I know, wildlife rehabilitators across the state are not getting sick birds showing signs of the illness. Cornell put out the recent post about going back to the cicada link, but I have not seen other wildlife health centers (including the National Wildlife Health Center where much of the testing has been conducted) echo that sentiment. CT is currently waiting to hear back on some suspect birds they sent in for testing and we anticipate hearing about those results soon. At this time, we are recommending people take down their feeders, and we have been reviewing updated information weekly to determine when we can relax this recommendation.”

And then on August 24, Mass Audubon posted an update to their earlier recommendation to take down feeders. They said “Wonderful news! Based on the absence of confirmed cases of the mysterious avian disease in Massachusetts and declining numbers of cases in states to our south, we are following the lead of our neighbors and recommending it is once again safe to resume bird feeding in Massachusetts.” You can read the full posting at https://blogs.massaudubon.org/yourgreatoutdoors/safe-to-start-feeding-birds-again/. (And be sure to read the bio of the poster, William Freedberg, at the bottom of the post!)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to all new members, and welcome back to all returning members! We're happy to report that a record number of new members have joined HBC during the past year and this summer. And we're more than happy at the prospect of the all-member outdoor picnic at Arcadia on September 12, preceded by a bird walk for those of you who are new. Masks will be required except when eating or drinking. I hope many of you will be able to attend. As you will learn elsewhere in the newsletter, our regular monthly meetings will continue on Zoom through this fall. We have been in discussion with the folks at Immanuel Lutheran Church, our longtime host, about prospects for resuming our in-person meetings that could also include Zoom. We will keep you informed as we know more. Please note a couple of changes on the Membership Form. There is now the option of listing your gender pronouns, if you wish, and online delivery of the newsletter is now the default. You must check the opt-in box if you want the newsletter by postal mail. Again, I hope to see each of you on September 12 at Arcadia and/or on Zoom for our first meeting on September 13.

Lissa Ganter membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

FRIENDS OF THE ORCHARD ARBORETUM

The Friends of the Orchard Arboretum, the group working with the Town of Amherst to manage the arboretum, is looking to schedule more birding events in the future. The Friends are interested in finding a member of the Hampshire Bird Club to work with them and join the group. There are about five meetings of the Friends each year. The Orchard Arboretum is opposite Applewood in South Amherst.

Please contact Anne G. Cann (cann.amherst@gmail.com) for further information.
SAVE THE DATE!
The MANO (Northampton) Christmas Bird Count will be held Sunday, December 19, 2021. More information will be forthcoming.

BIRDNOTE PODCASTS

The folks from BirdNote who have a goal to make bird conservation accessible to everyone, contacted the HBC President to let us know that they have online resources that may be of interest and that align with the conservation aspects of the HBC’s efforts.

BirdNote produces the podcasts Bring Birds Back and Threatened, as well as BirdNote Daily, their long-standing radio show, that serve to educate the public, draw attention to the alarming risks facing birds and their habitats, and inspire listeners to get involved in conservation.

Bring Birds Back is an interview-based podcast about the joy of birds and the ways that humans can help them through simple, everyday actions. It follows the journey of host Tenijah Hamilton as she falls in love with birds and learns they're in trouble. Through conversations with bird experts from all walks of life, and trips out into the field, she and the listener learn together how to bring birds back. The first eight-episode season wrapped up on August 25. You can find out more and listen here, or find it in your favorite podcast app.

Threatened is an in-depth, narrative show about answering the call to protect the birds and places we love. In season 2, host and science reporter Ari Daniel, along with local producers, explored stories from around the world about people who are taking action on behalf of our fragile ecosystems and the birds that depend on them. The season finale was on August 31. Take a listen to Season 2 episodes here.

BIRD PUZZLE SOLUTION

Did you try the bird puzzle from the June newsletter? Here’s the solution.

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R R E E
BIRCH DRAW

Spoil a good walk: go birding! newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org  Dave Gross, Editor