Dear reader, have you become enamored of Wordle? I have. In the slim chance that you are asking yourself “What in the world is he on about now?”, let me assure you that Wordle is THE NEW BIG THING. It’s an online word-guess game that one can play for free one time per day. It scratches the itch for a word game without the allure of an hours-long dive into game play. The gist is that you guess a five-letter word. The game tells you which of the letters are in the day’s word and if a letter is in the correct position. You get a maximum of six tries to get the day’s word correctly entered. Wordle combines vocabulary with logic. I am proud to have a three-week streak going with only two of my entries requiring six entries. The link to Wordle is https://www.powerlanguage.co.uk/wordle/.

Doing the five-letter word game got me to thinking about something similar but with birds. There are a lot of bird names in five letters. I haven’t come up with a way to parlay that into a game that would work in the newsletter, but stay tuned. I’ll keep thinking.

And in a coincidence (are there really ever any coincidences?) my yearly yard list got a good five-letter bird just last week: eagle. The Quabbin is across the street from my house, and once in a great while a Bald Eagle will fly over even though we are about a mile west of the reservoir. So far the only other five-letter birds in my yard have been two finch species. How about for you?

NEXT PROGRAM
Monday, February 14 at 7:15 pm via Zoom
Natasha Vanderhoff presents
The American Robin and How It Has Adapted to Put Up with Humans

Dr. Natasha Vanderhoff is Associate Professor of Biology and Marine Science at Jacksonville University. Her core area of interest is behavioral ecology, a discipline within animal behavior that seeks to find evolutionary explanations for behavior. She has a passion for natural history and her best work has been inspired by her observations in the field. She has worked with birds, spiders, monkeys and cats, in both North and South America. Most of her research has focused on communication and foraging behavior. She also has an interest in tropical ecology and conservation.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS
March 14, 2022. Holly Jones. Island bird population responses to the eradication of non-native mammals
April 11, 2022. Susan Fox Rogers. Learning the Birds
May 9, 2022. TBA.
June 13, 2022. TBA.

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT
As in the past 20-plus years the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the National Audubon Society and Birds Canada/Oiseaux Canada have joined forces to host the Great Backyard Bird Count for the four days of February 18-21. Information on participation, observation protocols, reporting and the importance of citizen science can be found at www.birdcount.org.
MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We welcome these new members who have joined in January: Hany Aziz, West Springfield; Jonathan Dean, Sanibel FL; Emily DeMartino, Northampton; Wesley Fleming, Holyoke; Carol Fournier, Chicopee; Sally Galman, Amherst; Peter & Anna Jacke, Belchertown; JuPong Lin, Amherst; Micky McKinley, Northampton; Heather Oliphant, Agawam; Fred Perkins, Becket; Dianne Quilty, Port Charlotte FL; Issa Revell & Jack Byerly, Florence; Linda C. Smith, Hatfield; and Carol & Renato Wendel, Conway. We also continued to welcome back returning members in the past month – it’s never too late to renew.

The HBC Nominating Committee will be active over these next few months, seeking candidates to run for Board positions in the May election. Committees are another way to volunteer, so please consider getting involved. The club thrives because of membership participation!

Lissa Ganter, membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

FIELD TRIP NEWS

Field Trip Guidelines

All trips will be limited to 10 participants and up to 2 leaders.

The following additional rules will apply this winter due to the continuing COVID-19 situation:

1. All field trip leaders and participants must be fully vaccinated (including a booster) 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 should use the contact information in the description if they have any questions or would like to register for the trip.
4. Participants will receive specific information about their trip directly from the leader once they register.

Upcoming Field Trips

**Friday, March 18.** American Woodcock Display – Easthampton Community Garden. 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Jim Lafley will meet participants at the Garden and bring them to a site that has been reliable over the years for observing the mating sounds and displays of the American Woodcock. It will be a very short walk from the car but be dressed in subdued colors for camouflage and for warmth and in tick discouraging clothing. Binoculars are helpful. Please contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com or 413-221-1941 with questions or to sign-up.

**Thursday, March 31.** Waterfowl & Early Migrants – MAS Arcadia & West Meadows. 6:30 – 10:30 am

Ted Gilliland will meet participants at the Mass Audubon Arcadia Sanctuary parking lot. This is a walk from the parking lot through the sanctuary and out to West Meadows over moderate terrain. Boots and clothing appropriate for the weather outside for 4 hours are recommended. Binoculars needed. To sign-up contact Ted Gilliland at tgillila@mtholyoke.edu or 480-381-5617.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

On Sunday, January 16 around 4:15 pm Jim Lafley and Patti Steinman met a hardy group of 6 members at the Valley View School in Chicopee because the night before it was a major staging area for American Crows. Although we did observe streams of incoming crows, they decided not to land in the surrounding trees. We followed them down to Van Horn Park in Springfield where they had roosted on Saturday night. We were able to see many perched American Crows there and we heard a couple of Fish Crows. The crows seemed restless as they flew around us by the thousands before many finally settled in the adjoining neighborhood. It was, once again, a spectacular avian event enjoyed by all.
EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

Mike Locher’s enjoyable January 26 workshop, Waterfowl of Coastal Massachusetts, was attended by over fifty people. Mike showed us field marks and described the behavior and habitat of Common Eiders, White-winged Scoters, Black Scoter, Surf Scoters and Harlequin Ducks. He also included a short quiz to be sure we all got it! Several of the participants were from the Allen and Hoffmann Bird Clubs, and we have received emails from a number of people thanking us for including them.

Birding For Everyone:
The club’s new Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is underway! This group is geared towards beginner birders and those who historically have not been included in the birding community: young people, minorities, the disabled. Each month there will be a one-hour online educational session (15 minute presentation, 45 minutes for questions, bird ID help, etc.) and a two-hour in-person beginner bird walk at an accessible location. The online sessions will take place on the third Saturday of the month at 10:00 am and the in-person walks will occur on the fourth Saturday of the month at 8:00 am. Please spread the word! Those interested should email dallard@hampshirebirdclub.org to sign up for the February offering:

- **February 19, 10-11 am**: Learning Bird Song (online presentation)
- **February 26, 8-10 am**: Heritage State Park, Holyoke (in-person walk/sit)

February workshops:
Please register for these workshops by emailing education@hampshirebirdclub.org with the name of the workshop in the subject line.

Monday, February 7, 7-8 pm. *February Do-It-Yourself.*
Our next Do-It-Yourself Field Trip will be on Monday, February 7, 7 pm on Zoom. Each month an area is chosen and the leaders describe the location and five target species for that area. Participants have a month to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the Zoom event the following month. To find out the target species and the location for February please register for the Zoom by emailing education@hampshirebirdclub.org. January’s location was Paradise Pond in Northampton and the target birds were Canada Goose, Cackling Goose, Belted Kingfisher, Hooded Merganser, and Common Merganser.

Wednesday, February 23, 7-8 pm. *Advancing Your eBird Skills and Effectiveness.*
Sara Griesemer will offer an interactive workshop on eBird. Send your questions directly to education@hampshirebirdclub.org before the workshop. How do you change locations? How do you find a new location? Can you link several lists together on a single birding trip? Whatever questions you have, let us know!

Coming up on Wednesday, March 2, 7-8 pm. *Birding the Rhode Island Coast.*
Naturalist and educator Matt Schenck will offer a program on birding the Rhode Island coast. He leads birding trips in Rhode Island and southern New England, as well as an annual pelagic trip. Be sure to sign up by the end of February.

Also coming up, on March 16: *Getting to Know the Saw-whet Owl* by Bob Stevens. Details will be forthcoming in the March newsletter.

Reminder: Our programs are now recorded and available at the Hampshire Bird Club website. You can find the link under PROGRAMS or under EDUCATION on the Education Committee Goals page: https://hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/.
HBC CODE OF BIRDING ETHICS AND CONDUCT

The HBC Board of Directors adopted at its January meeting a new Code of Conduct for the club, which is found below. Included in the code is a mechanism to report concerns about violations of the code to two Community Conduct volunteers. Ruth Garbett and Jim Lafley have agreed to be the initial pair of volunteers.

Adapted from the American Birding Association, with thanks to the Brookline Bird Club

The Hampshire Bird Club expects that members, field trip leaders, and participants at HBC events will follow this Code in the interest of respectful, enjoyable, and thoughtful birding for all.

Respect and promote birds, their welfare, and their environment
- 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.
- Be mindful of your movements and minimize habitat disturbance.
- Support and promote the conservation of birds and their habitats.

Respect and promote the birding community by positive example.
- Be an exemplary ethical role model by following this Code and leading by example.
- Never enter private property without the landowner’s permission.
- Be cognizant of the laws, rules, and regulations governing activities at your birding location.
- Be considerate of and interact positively with other people you may encounter when on field trips with the club. Be good ambassadors for birding and HBC.
- Share bird observations, provided it does not put birds or their habitat at risk.
- Report with honesty and integrity.

Respect fellow birders and others.
- Welcome fellow birders and other participants at HBC events with kindness and respect, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, color, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, political affiliation, level of birding knowledge or experience.
- Please know that HBC does not tolerate behavior that disrespects or threatens the rights and safety of others, whether through verbal, physical, or other inappropriate behaviors, including online interactions.

Two HBC members have volunteered to respond to the concern of any person about behavior inconsistent with the HBC Code of Conduct. If you are aware of such behavior at an HBC-sponsored activity or event, please send a message to conduct@hampshirebirdclub.org. Your message will be acknowledged within 48 hours and held in confidence to the extent possible. HBC will make every effort to address your concerns promptly. Others will be brought into the discussion only with your express agreement except in cases where there appears to be clear evidence of an infraction of law.

QUABBIN CHRISTMAS COUNT 2021

First and foremost, thanks to everyone who participated in the Quabbin Christmas Bird Count this year. The weather forecast heading towards count day looked marginal to say the least, with talk of freezing rain, but happily that didn’t come to pass. Instead, we endured fog, light rain at times and temperatures that reached to 51 degrees. Nearly every bit of water was open. We tallied 61 species with five new high counts: Ring-necked Duck (54), Belted Kingfisher (9), Red-bellied Woodpecker (69), Carolina Wren
(38), and Eastern Bluebird (136). The owling teams had great success this year, tallying four species including 22 Northern Saw-whet Owls. Other highlights included three Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, one Merlin (only the fifth recorded sighting), one Ruby-crowned Kinglet, four Hermit Thrush (tied high count), one Gray Catbird, and an Eastern Towhee. There were three unusual count week birds: American Wigeon, Northern Pintail and a pair of Red-breasted Mergansers. During the count ten species of mammals were reported.

Scott Surner

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Hitchcock Center for the Environment

Winter Tracking with Kathy Dean
Saturday, February 19, 9 am – noon in Buckland
Please register online or call 413-256-6006

Join us for a winter morning exploring the tracks and sign that animals have left behind in the woodlands and wetlands surrounding Kathy's home in western Massachusetts. All levels welcome. Cost is $30.

Kathy Dean has worked in the field of outdoor education since 1983 as a wilderness guide, rock climbing instructor and teacher of animal tracking, bird language and nature awareness. In addition to working with several nature education centers, she offers wildlife tracking, bird language and custom-tailored nature programs through Trotting Fox Programs. Kathy is the author of Abbreviated Field Guide to Mammal Behavior: New England Region. She lives in a small hill town in western Massachusetts and is blissfully surrounded by woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife.

The Odyssey Bookshop

On Monday, February 21 at 6 pm Jonathan Meiburg will discuss his book A Most Remarkable Creature: The Hidden Life of the World's Smartest Birds of Prey. The discussion will be on Zoom, hosted by the Odyssey Bookshop in South Hadley. The book provides an account of a modern voyage of discovery of the clever, social birds of prey called caracaras, which puzzled Darwin, fascinate modern-day falconers, and carry secrets of Earth’s past in their family history. The author received a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship to travel to remote communities around the world, a journey that sparked his enduring fascination with islands, birds, and the deep history of the living world. Further information on the program can be found at https://www.odysseybks.com/event/jonathan-meiburg.

WORDS FOR OUR TIMES

Flapdoodle — Foolish and blatantly false ideas or words
Humbuggery — Nonsense or deceitful language or ideas
Humgruffin — An appalling, hideous repulsive person
Mumpsimus — A stubborn person who refuses to change their mind despite being proven wrong
Smatchet — An ill-mannered despicable person
Ultracrepidarian — A person with opinions beyond their knowledge

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