Dear reader, along with four birding friends I spent five days in mid-May on Monhegan Island. I find Monhegan to be a perfect place to relax so long as the visit is not so short that constant, hectic birding is the top order of business. It’s nice to have a relaxed pace with sensible breaks, and to spend more time in one spot. One morning I decided to keep track of the birds I saw and/or heard for the first hour that I was out. On May 20 I walked out the door alone at 5:56 am and immediately heard one of the several Black-billed Cuckoos that were on the island for a few days. As I walked down Main Street past the marsh there were several Virginia Rails calling, a call that I heard so frequently in my five days that I will never lose track of it. A bit farther on, near a small grove of flowering apple trees I heard a Ring-necked Pheasant, a Sora, Herring Gulls, a Gray Catbird, a Song Sparrow, several Red-winged Blackbirds, and a few warblers, all while standing in one spot. Farther down the road were a Great Black-backed Gull, a Warbling Vireo, a Least Flycatcher, a Green Heron, a Brown Thrasher, and a group of Cedar Waxwings so close that I was listening to their wing beats. At the end of my hour I had walked 0.84 miles and seen or heard 34 species without really trying to push up the numbers. Monhegan is a treasure.

NEXT PROGRAM
Monday, June 13 at 7:15 pm via Zoom
Henry Stevens presents
Project Redstart: A full annual cycle approach to studying migratory birds

Birds are in trouble, with migratory species exhibiting the steepest annual population declines. However, the culprits explaining these declines remain largely unknown. This is likely due to the fact that most ornithological research in North America has focused on the breeding grounds, overlooking crucial events that take place during migratory and nonbreeding periods. If we hope to elucidate the drivers of declines for migratory species, we must first understand their migratory connectivity, or the degree to which populations of a species remain together throughout the full annual cycle. With these temporal and spatial data, we can begin to tease apart how different factors may be limiting populations of migratory species across their annual cycles. I’m using this exact approach with the American Redstart, an acrobatic wood-warbler in decline.

Henry graduated from Tufts University in 2019 with a joint BS in Biology and Environmental Science. He grew up in Exeter, NH, where he discovered his passion for ornithology. He LOVES birds, and his desire to understand their ecology is what gets him out of bed in the morning (#ForTheBirds). Henry’s research interests lie at the intersection of conservation ornithology and tropical ecology, and his past research has focused on the breeding biology and dispersal of Gray Vireos (Vireo vicinior) in New Mexico, the use of remote audio recorders for surveying cryptic species in the Amazon, improving the conservation site network for migratory shorebirds in the Americas, and uncovering the life histories of Andean Cock-of-the-rocks (Rupicola peruvianus) and other understudied species in the cloud forests of Ecuador. At Georgetown, Henry plans to study the full annual cycle of Neotropical migratory wood-warblers, and use integrated population models to pinpoint factors driving their declines. With over 3.2 billion individual birds lost in North America since 1970, understanding and addressing the threats faced by these species is paramount for mitigating further declines.
FIELD TRIP REPORTS

We’ve had a number of field trips over the past month. Here are reports from some of them.

April 27, Thursday – Jim Lafley led ten early rising birders on a trip around Park Hill Orchard in search of early migrants. Although it was a beautiful day for walking at the orchard, including the abandoned section, the birds were less than cooperative. **Pine Warblers**, **Blue-headed Vireos**, **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**, **Field Sparrows**, **Tree Swallows**, an **Eastern Towhee**, and a pair of **American Kestrels** were the only migratory species in evidence during our walk. The Kestrels did copulate twice. The other 30 species we found were ones that are often listed on the area Christmas Bird Counts. It was good to get out with a friendly group of birders and increase our binocular and identification skills while socializing.

May 8, Sunday – Laura Beltran greeted the group in the parking lot of the old Moose Lodge on Cooke Ave. in Northampton for the walk into the Pines Edge section of Fitzgerald Lake. Some of the birders were there celebrating Mothers’ Day with their mother! They viewed and heard many **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** and some warblers and vireos along the trail toward the marsh including a great view of a **Blackburnian Warbler** and a Blue-headed Vireo. At the section along the marsh Wood Ducks perched on logs and Great Blue Herons on nests were very accommodating. All possible woodpeckers were noted including watching a pair of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers building a nest. A pair of **American Goldfinches** put on quite a courtship display. Altogether there were 54 species recorded by the group including ten warbler species.

May 15, Sunday – Thirteen people enjoyed a field trip at Fort River led by Laura Beltran and Steve Winn. We observed 48 species. A **Purple Martin** was observed at the martin box and at the very end of the trip, some of us heard the **Sora** which had been observed there the prior week. There were not many warblers but it was a lovely morning to be out.

May 21, Saturday – Arriving at Mount Tom in dense fog, the group led by Derek Allard didn't have high hopes for the morning. We were happy to be wrong. We walked the paved road from the Mount Tom entrance at Route 141 and in the opening minutes the warblers were in good numbers. True, they were often high up in trees, which in the fog made it difficult to determine exact species but this was a very birdy morning. Multiple **Tennessee Warblers** were singing their three-part song, **Worm-eating Warblers**, **Prairie Warblers**, Black-throated Blue and **Black Throated Green Warblers** were all heard. However, the highlights of the morning were a **Bay-breasted Warbler** that emerged from the fog without giving a sound and, on the way out, a **Canada Warbler** that sang loudly on our way out and allowed exactly one of our group see it, which is proper Canada Warbler behavior. We ended with thirteen species of warblers as well as great looks at a **Scarlet Tanager**, always a show stopper.

May 22, Sunday – Mike Locher led this trip up Mt. Holyoke. Seven intrepid birders braved the weather forecast (very hot) and hiked up the slope in search of its avian treasures. To the Mike’s relief, we got looks at most of the target birds. Between the gate and the Halfway House, we found a **Swainson's Thrush**, which seems regular on the mountain in May. It was a little distant for great looks, but a birder with a camera took a picture that clinched the identification. Soon after we saw a brilliant male **Scarlet Tanager**, one of several that we found, and the first of the many Ovenbirds. After passing the Halfway House we heard our first **Worm-eating Warbler**, and although we had to look up at an angle that human necks aren't meant to attempt, we got good looks at it. **Winter Wrens** were singing at several points between the gate and Taylor Notch, although we didn't get views of any. Uphill from Taylor Notch we got **Blackpoll Warbler**, **Blackburnian Warbler**, **Yellow-throated Vireo**, many American Redstarts, even more Red-eyed Vireos, and several Pink Ladyslippers (which I identified by song, impressing the group immensely). [Ed. note: I presume the song was “I Could Have Danced All Night” from *My Fair Lady* as that is the best-known song of the Pink Ladyslipper.] As we approached the first upper parking lot we heard our first **Cerulean Warbler**, and the whole group got decent looks. And, from the Summit House (now open!), we heard and saw a male Indigo Bunting in great light. In all we had 38 species listed on eBird for Skinner State Park, May 22, starting at 5:55 am.
May 28, Saturday – Despite threatening weather, four hardy HBCers joined Bob Zimmermann and Dave Gross on the Hilltowns Ramble around Williamsburg, Cummington, Worthington, Ashfield, and Windsor. Overall 60 species were found at the eight primary stops on the trip. Highlights included a Spotted Sandpiper on Old Post Road in Worthington, Belted Kingfishers and great looks at a Great-crested Flycatcher at the Adams Road wetland, a calling Virginia Rail at the Flat Iron Road Marsh in Cummington, and a pair of adult Sandhill Cranes with their two chicks on Ranney Corner Road in Ashfield. Rain fell on and off during the day, and most of the birds we identified were from vocalizations. We found five species of flycatcher, seven of warbler and four of thrush. We also had some luck with wildflowers near the Cummington Fairground: Painted Trillium, Canada Mayflower, Starflower, Clintonia and Pinkster were all in bloom. A Red Fox was seen crossing Spruce Corner Road in Ashfield. [Ed. note: This, of course, begs the question “Why did the fox cross the road?”] The day was cut short at the Windsor Pond stop when rain became heavy enough to convince the group that it was time to head for home.

May 29, Sunday – The morning began with foggy conditions, but, thankfully, the birds didn't sleep in. Led by Derek Allard, the group traversed a four-mile loop around Nonotuck Park checking habitats from swamps to hemlock forests. The warblers were a bit quiet already here at the end of May, though we did have a Blackburnian Warbler singing just above our heads that none of the thirteen of us could get eyes on. Later in the walk we heard and staked out a Canada Warbler that flew up to an exposed branch ever so briefly and allowing only a few of our group to have a good look before flying away. On the non-warbler front the highlight was a Sharp-shinned Hawk that was perched on a lowish branch and was much more cooperative than the Canada Warbler. Everyone had good looks at this bird, which isn't often seen in the park. We also had a very cooperative Veery that posed for binoculars. By the end of the day we had fifty-three species of birds and not one person was lost in the swamp. Success!

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared towards beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: young people, minorities, the disabled. On the third Saturday of each month at 10:00 am there is a one hour online educational session (half presentation, half discussion) and on the fourth Saturday of the month at 8:00 am a two hour, in-person, beginner bird walk at an accessible location. All events are free and open to the public. Please help spread the word! Those interested should email dallard@hampshirebirdclub.org to register. Registration is required.

June 18, 10:00-11:00 am: Herons (Online Presentation)
June 25, 8:00-10:00 am Paradise Pond, Northampton (In-person walk)
July 16, 10:00-11:00 am: Apps, Field Guides, and eBird (Online Presentation)
July 23, 8:00-10:00 am: Pulaski Park, Holyoke (In-person walk)
August 20, 10:00-11:00 am: Sparrows (Online Presentation)
August 27, 8:00-10:00 am: Station Road Rail Trail, Amherst (In-person walk)

HBC BOARD ELECTIONS

The 2022 HBC Board election was held online between May 10 and 22. A total of 63 votes were recorded, all from HBC members. The candidates on the ballot and the votes received by each were Anemarie Chapdelaine (63), Dave Gross (61), Donna Lee Ubertalli (63), Gregory Brown (63), Kalpesh Krishna (63), Laura Beltran (62) and Steve Winn (62). Continuing on the Board for the second year of their terms are Derek Allard, Ruth Garbett, Jim Lafley and Josh Rose. Thanks to Harlee Strauss and Dave Pritchard for serving as election monitors, ensuring the integrity of the election.

By the HBC bylaw enacted last year, the new board will be convened at its June 2022 meeting by the outgoing President, Bob Zimmermann, and the first order of business for the new board will be to elect officers (President, Vice President/Program Chair, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Communications Secretary). The new set of officers will be announced in an email and in the September 2022 issue of the newsletter.
EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

Dana Grayson’s workshop on bluebird nest boxes was a well-attended and much-appreciated follow-up to her excellent presentation on bluebirds for our May monthly meeting. She has been kind enough to extend an invitation to anyone working on nest boxes to contact her. Her email address: danag@nabluebirdsociety.org.

Our May 24th workshop on volunteer opportunities was cancelled and will be rescheduled at some point next year.

DIY will meet Monday, June 6th, before we take a break for July and August. There is more information under DIY in this newsletter. The September DIY date will be in the September newsletter and will also arrive via an email reminder.

Derek Allard’s Birding For Everyone program, which includes both virtual workshops and field trips, is attracting a large number of participants. There is more on this exciting new program above in this newsletter. As the newsletter will be on hiatus for July and August, the BFE events for the next three months are listed. For more information, email dallard@hampshirebirdclub.org

Reminder: our programs are now recorded and available at the Hampshire Bird Club website. You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page: https://hampshirebirdclub.org/programs/videos/

June workshops:
Monday, June 6, 7-8 pm. June DIY
Wednesday, June 15, 7-8 pm. Garden Design to Support Pollinators and Birds with Larri Cochran

Birds feed on native insects; native insects feed on native plants; and native plants rely on insect pollination to survive. Estimates are that over ninety percent of native plants have unique relationships with specific insects for pollination - without whom they would not be able to reproduce. The pollinator/plant relationship is not only critical for those plants and insects - but also for the web of bird & animal life they support.

This talk will use two examples of local plant/pollinator relationships to discuss this topic: monarchs with milkweed and swallowtails with their species-specific host plants. I'll leave ample time for question and answers to help everyone in the audience better understand why we need to use native plants and how to use them in traditional lawn and garden environments to best support pollinators and birds.

Please register by emailing education@hampshirebirdclub.org with the name of the workshop in the subject line.

We may be able to schedule a workshop on Birding Apps for late June. Watch for more information on the Education Workshops webpage.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Please join in welcoming these new HBC members in the past month: Margaret Boone, Greenfield; Lori Eldridge, South Hadley; Anna Foster, Leverett; Nari Horton, Northampton; Michealle Larkins, Dorchester; Mariah Mason, Shutesbury; Mary Jane McGuire, Holyoke; Sam Moore, Turners Falls; and Jordy Rosenberg, Northampton.

I hope to see many of you in person at the all-club picnic on June 5 at Arcadia, and again at our final member meeting for the year on Zoom on June 13.

And here’s a happy bit of news, albeit not member-related: the injured bird I brought to the Tufts Wildlife Clinic on April 3 has recovered. “Male American Robin, Case 285” was released to the wild about a week ago.

Here’s wishing you all a great summer ahead. I hope you get to spend a lot of it out in the wild also!

Lissa Ganter, membership@hampshirebirdclub.org

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary
The following programs are being offered through Mass Audubon Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. All programs require registration and more information can be found at Arcadia events.

Breeding Birds – Online, Tues, June 28, 7:00-8:30 pm, Kathy Seymour & Jane Sender
Summer is the perfect time to watch Massachusetts birds pair up, build nests, and fledge their young. In this course, you will explore the elaborate displays and songs male birds use to attract a mate and defend territory and the subsequent intricacies of nest building, incubation, parental care, and fledging. You will learn how to find breeding birds near you, how to observe without disturbing them, and how to understand the fascinating behaviors you see.

Intro to Summer Wading Birds – Online, Tues, July 19, 7:00-8:30 pm, Kathy Seymour & Jane Sender
Wade into the world of herons, egrets, ibis and bitterns. These long-legged, colorful, graceful birds found in coastal and inland wetlands are especially adapted to hunt on the water's edge. You'll discover their fascinating natural history, including foraging strategies, elaborate courtship displays, and breeding rookeries, as well as what Mass Audubon's research at coastal breeding colonies can tell us. Learn wading bird identification tips and the best places to view them in Massachusetts and beyond.

Bird Photography – Online, Thursdays, July 28-August 11, 6:30-8:30 pm, Eduardo del Solar
This hands-on, online series is designed to hone your photography skills in the context of capturing images of beautiful, and sometimes elusive, birds. We will explore documentary, abstract, color, and black and white image-making just in time to capture the migrants returning to our fields and seashore. Appropriate for all skill levels; instructor will individualize lessons based on the skill set of each participant.

Each week will include a two-hour online classroom session, weekly assignments to practice skills and strategies covered that week, and the sharing of three images from each assignment with the group for constructive feedback and reflection. The instructor will use student work to demonstrate basic post-processing techniques, including integration of the digital flow including processing and editing images using a raw converter such as Adobe Lightroom for publishing or printing.

DSLR and mirrorless cameras with full auto and manual functions and wide, telephoto, and close focus capabilities are ideal for this class. While all levels of skill are accepted in this class, all students need to be familiar with their camera functions. In addition to 6 hours of online instruction, each student will receive one hour of individual instruction via email, phone, video chat, or in-person field instruction (adhering to current COVID safety requirements).

Massachusetts Shorebirds – Online, Wed, August 3, 7:00-8:30 pm, Douglas Lowry & Scott Santino
Shorebirds are avian superstars with Herculean migrations, unique feeding adaptations, and elaborate courtship displays. This online presentation will enrich your appreciation of these incredible birds, as we discuss several species that are currently passing through on both ends of migration, or settling in seasonally for nesting. Learn their unique and specialized features which support their ability to thrive in distinct but interconnected coastal/wetland environments. Once decimated by market hunting, shorebirds have shown remarkable resiliency as they populate ever decreasing habitats. Presently, they provide important metrics in our understanding of the effects of climate change and sea level rise. After this presentation, you'll know where and when to observe shorebirds, and tips on visual and vocal identifications.

We will soon be starting our summer hiatus. No more newsletters until September. Hasta la vista!

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