



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc.
Amherst, Massachusetts
www.hampshirebirdclub.org
Volume 39, No. 5
January 2023

Dear reader, I have a MAJOR ANOUNCEMENT to make. The HBC is proud to unveil the Complete Archive of Newsletters dating from the beginning of the CLUB. For the low, low price of \$99 you will receive an NFT that gives you Full Access to the Archives. Nothing FAKE here. If you prefer, you can just download and view any of the archived newsletters for free, just like with all of the other HBC newsletters. They're right there on the website for the grabbin'.

On a serious note, you, the DISCERNING READER, have clearly noted the Complete and Total absence of ANY dripping sarcasm in the above Announcement. You will also have noticed by now, since you immediately went to the website to look at the archive, that the newsletter was much funnier in the adolescent years of the club. That is because Sally Venman was editor back in the day, and she was hands-down hilarious. And then David Peake-Jones with his wry, Aussie style picked right up where Sally left off. As I was sorting the archival files prior to scanning them, I laughed out loud several times. I can guarantee that you will too if you dig into the old newsletters. Aside her humor, Sally was simply a good writer as was David. If you don't know the story of Ruffie, the Rufous Hummingbird, or even if you do, Sally's essay about her in the April 2001 newsletter is a must-read. Ah, for the good old days when we could afford decent newsletter editors!

And finally, in Sally's own words from her last newsletter, "As I believe I have said before, 'A pun is its own reward.'" There are many, many more of those in the newsletters from 1984 to 2001.

NEXT PROGRAM
Tuesday, January 10 at 7:15 PM
Amar Ayyash presents
Getting to Know Your Gulls
Via Zoom

Often approached with apprehension, gulls have gained a love-hate relationship with many birders. Among these larids are some of the most coveted bird species in the world. Amar will highlight key identification field marks for separating our winter gull species, and he will also touch on some of the often-ignored topics in gull-study such as the aging process and molt. Come learn why an increasing number of people are being drawn to this family of birds and are eagerly calling themselves "larophiles".

Amar Ayyash is both an expert on the gulls of North America and an evangelist for "gull recreation". He hosts the popular website anythinglarus.com and is often found speaking at birding events throughout the continent. Much of his free time is dedicated to traveling the world to photograph and study gulls. Ayyash has published a number of articles on gulls and he is the author of the upcoming book *The Gull Guide*. Amar lives in northern Illinois where he teaches mathematics.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

February 14: John Kircher, *Galapagos, Darwin, and Biology's Biggest Discovery* (via Zoom)

March 14: Nathan Senner, *TBA* (via Zoom)

April 11: Joan Walsh, *Full Life Cycle Conservation of Roseate Terns* (Wesley Church, also via Zoom)

May 9: Matt Kelly, *TnT: Where Birding is Dy-No-Mite!* (Wesley Church, also via Zoom)

June 13: BYO Picnic (Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary)

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

December was devoted to the Northampton Christmas Bird Count. Janice Jorgensen offered a workshop for Feeder Watchers, and Janice and Lesley Farlow gave a workshop on what to do and what to expect when participating as a Field Observer.

Coming up on Tuesday, January 17 at 7 PM Mike Locher will offer “Coastal Birding in Winter.” We are so pleased to host another of his wonderful workshops. Note that we are finalizing a simpler form for one-step registration for our workshops through Google Forms and hope to inaugurate the new form with Mike Locher’s workshop. Keep an eye out for an email about the new form.

Upcoming new member bird walks—open to all:

Directions to each meeting place will be posted on the Education page of the website

- Jan. 8, 2023 – 9-11 AM at the Silvio Conte National Wildlife Conservation Area parking lot
- April 23, 2023 – 7-9 AM at Lake Wallace, behind the Belchertown Police Station
- The fourth one will be our usual new member bird walk before the June HBC picnic at Arcadia

Our **Do It Yourself** workshops continue with Laura and Lesley. Our next Do-It-Yourself Field Trip meeting will be on Monday, January 2 at 7 PM on Zoom as usual. We will be reporting on our two-month DIY field trip. For DIY an area is chosen and a leader describes the location and five target species for that area. Anyone interested has time to visit the area on their own, record the species they see, and report back at the next DIY Zoom meeting. Our November and December field trip location was Ashley Reservoir in Holyoke, and the target birds were Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Osprey, Ring-billed Gull, and Herring Gull. Join our January Zoom to share your November and December sightings and learn of the upcoming field trip.

To register for the January DIY, please email education@hampshirebirdclub.org and put DIY in the subject line, as usual. We will add DIY to the new workshop registration forms in February.

January workshops:

- Monday, Jan. 2, 7-8 PM. DIY on Zoom
- Tuesday, Jan. 17, 7-8 PM. “Coastal Birding in Winter” with Mike Locher

To register: There will be a link to the new registration form on the Education Workshop page. ***An email will be going out in the next week with more information.***

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/program-videos/>.

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program is geared toward beginner birders and those who, historically, have not been included in the birding community: people young in age, from underrepresented minority groups and who have disabilities that make birding difficult. On the third Saturday of each month at 10:00 AM a one hour online educational session is held (half presentation, half discussion) and on the fourth Saturday of the month there is 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! The online presentation requires no registration (check the HBC website for the Zoom link). Those interested in attending the walk can register at bit.ly/2023bfe. Upcoming sessions for January and February are

January 21, 2023 10-11 AM: What Gear Do I Need? (Presentation)

January 28, 2023 7:45-10:00 AM: Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, Longmeadow (Walk)

February 18, 2023 10-11 AM.: Learning Bird Song (Presentation)

February 25, 2023 7:45-10:00 AM: Power Canal, Turners Falls (Walk)

WINTER & SPRING FIELD TRIPS

Field Trip Guidelines

1. Field trip participant numbers are determined by the field trip leader.
2. All field trip leaders and participants must be fully vaccinated, are required to wear a mask when asked and must be aware of maintaining a safe social distance during the event.
3. Participants should use the contact information in the trip 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 after they register. Please do not show up for a trip unless you have registered for it.

Thursday, January 19. Old Trolley Line Conservation Area, Easthampton. 8:30 – 10:00 AM.

During the last northern finch irruptive year this area had Redpolls, Pine Siskins, and Pine Grosbeaks. We will search the area in an effort to locate these and other overwintering species. Dress warmly for this walk on flat but potentially icy terrain. For more information and to register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com or 413-221-1941. (E/M)

Sunday, January 29. Springfield Crows – location to be determined. 4 – 6 PM. Jim Lafley and Patti Steinman visit the Springfield winter crow roost for this spectacular avian event. Each year American Crows and some Fish Crows find a site in Springfield to roost for the night. Thousands of birds gather at staging sites and at the final roost so a variety of behaviors and vocalizations can be witnessed. There is no walking involved. Dress for cold weather as we'll be standing around. Binoculars help. To register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com or 413-221-1941. (E)

Sunday, February 12. Old Trolley Line Conservation Area, Easthampton. 9 – 11 AM. Join Laura Beltran to search for those northern finches, Pine Siskins, Common & Hoary Redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, and Pine Grosbeaks all of which were found in this area during the last northern finch irruption. Dress warmly for this walk on flat, but possibly icy terrain. For more information and to register contact Laura Beltran at lauraandnature@gmail.com. (E/M)

Sunday, March 12. Waterfowl of the Connecticut River, Holyoke Dam – Turners Falls. 8 AM – noon. Mike Locher will lead this trip along the Connecticut River starting at the Holyoke Dam and visiting areas along the river up to Turners Falls in search of overwintering and migrating waterfowl. This will be car birding primarily. A scope is helpful. To register contact Mike Locher at (413) 585-5864. (E)

Tuesday, March 21. Quabbin Park HQ, Belchertown. 7 – 10 AM. Join Dave Gross on a leisurely walk around the south end of the Quabbin reservoir on a search for very early migrants and overwintering species. We'll look and listen for birds on land and on the water. Meet at the Quabbin Visitor Center for a walk along the dam and beyond. Depending on our luck we may drive to other spots in the park. Contact Dave at djgross@gmail.com or 413-687-8161 to sign up. (E)

Friday, March 24. American Woodcock Display – Easthampton Community Garden. 6:30 – 8:00 PM. Jim Lafley will meet participants at the garden site 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 warmth and in tick discouraging clothing. Binoculars are helpful. To register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com. (E)

Friday, March 31. Waterfowl & Early Migrants – 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 four hours are recommended. Binoculars are necessary. To sign-up contact Ted Gilliland at tgillila@mtholyoke.edu or 480-381-5617. (E)

- Friday, April 14. Westover AFB, Ludlow. 8 – 11 AM.** To reach the fence at Westover AFB, Jim Lafley will lead participants along Tilley Road in Ludlow where many species can be heard and seen before reaching the fence. This will be a flat one mile walk along an abandoned road. Scopes are recommended, but the leader will have one available. Upland Sandpipers, Grasshopper Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks, American Kestrels as well as other birds are possible. To register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com. (E)
- Sunday, April 16. Ashley Reservoir. 7AM. Half day.** Mike Locher looks for early migrants like Pine and Palm Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Louisiana Waterthrushes, and possibly holdover ducks. Meet in the Holyoke Elks parking lot (250 Whitney Ave.) near Exit 15 (“Holyoke Mall”) off Route 91 at 7 AM. Contact Mike (413-585-5864) for more information or to register. (M with one optional S section to listen for the waterthrushes) **Note** - The Elks has a "donate to park" policy, so it would be good to throw a dollar in their box.
- Sunday, April 23. Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, Longmeadow. 7:00 – 10:00 AM.** Laura Beltran will lead a trip that will include some stationary observations and a walk along a flat, woodland road and trail. The group will be searching for spring migrants through a variety of habitats. To register contact Laura Beltran at lauraandnature@gmail.com. (E/M)
- Wednesday, April 26. Park Hill Orchard, Easthampton. 6:30 – 9:30 AM.** The Park Hill Orchard with surrounding fields and woodlands can be an excellent place to see a wide variety of spring migrants. Join Jim Lafley as he leads the group around this area with stunning views of the Mt. Tom range. To register contact Jim Lafley at jimlafley@gmail.com. (E/M)
- Sunday, May 14. Gate 5 at Quabbin Reservoir, Belchertown. 6:30 – 9:30 AM.** Greg Brown knows this area well as he lives nearby and birds it frequently. It’s a good time and a good location for finding both migrating and resident nesting birds. The variety of habitat along this easily accessed road makes it a great spot. To register contact Greg at gwb@gregorywbrown.com. (E)
- Saturday, May 20. All Day, Hilltown Rambles. 6:30 AM.** Join Bob Zimmermann and Dave Gross as they ramble around the Berkshire Hilltowns to look for those migrants that prefer higher elevations than the valley provides. We’ll be on the lookout for American Bittern, Sandhill Cranes, Blackburnian Warblers and Spotted Sandpipers along with anything else we can turn up. There will be a bit of hiking at the hilly Moran Wildlife Area. Meet at the Northampton Stop & Shop parking lot at 6:30 AM. Pack a lunch or pick one up at our stop at the Cummington Creamery. For information and to sign up contact Dave (djgross@gmail.com or 413-687-8161) or Bob (raz@umass.edu or 413-585-0405). (E/M/S)
- Sunday, May 21. Mt Holyoke. 6:00 AM.** Half day. Mike Locher hikes up the park road to the top of this local peak hoping for some later migrants and deep-woods breeding specialties including Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers and Yellow-throated Vireos. Meet at the (gated) entrance to Skinner State Park (at the end of Old Mountain Road in Hadley) at 6 AM. This is an occasionally steep hike on a paved road. For more information or to register contact Mike (413-585-5864). (M/S)
- Thursday, May 25 through Sunday May 28, Trip to Monhegan Island with Scott Surner.** The classic HBC field trip. Last fall the trip to Monhegan cost \$475 for double occupancy and \$580 for a single. These figures may be different for this trip because the Trailing Yew hasn't posted any pricing yet for the 2023 year, though these numbers should be a good guess of the cost. Trip limit is 12 people. Contact Scott Surner at ssurner@aol.com to register.

Field Trip designations:

- (E) – Easy walking conditions, fairly accessible for most, usually flat terrain on improved trails or roads.
- (M) – Moderately difficult, more challenging trail conditions, short steep sections, longer hikes involved.
- (S) – Strenuous conditions, muddy or rocky trails, steep sections, difficult footing in part.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Thank you to all of you who renewed your membership this month and welcome to our newest members joining in December, Hannah Durham, Rich Baker – Florence; Rachel Bellenoit – South Hadley; Denise Lelio – Northampton; Joe Oliverio & Lara Shephard-Blue – Amherst; Vivian Venskowski – Gill; Mary Moriarty – Holyoke; Ling Chin – Longmeadow; and, Al Sylvia – Amherst, NH. We're happy to have you birding among us!

Any questions? You can reach me at membership@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Donna Lee Ubertalli, Membership Secretary

2022 NORTHAMPTON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

It was a pitch-black, starry night when many of us headed out in the wee hours of December 18. There was little to no wind, and dawn brought along a lovely day with a good amount of sunshine, open water, and temperatures that hovered in the mid-30s. The MANO (Northampton) CBC's 89th year was a rousing success. By all accounts, everyone had a blast! Many thanks to everyone who pitched in.

The count's 260+ participants counted 46,231 individual bird, about 1500 more than last year. Twenty-nine feeder watcher homes counted more than 1400 birds. The final total of 90 species is two shy of our record high count. A continuing exceptionally rare **Smith's Longspur** obligingly stuck around for count day at the Hadley Honey Pot and massive numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles (5,000 of the latter put on a spectacular display at Arcadia's West Meadows) were seen, adding to the day's excitement.

You can view the full spreadsheet of species found on the count at hampshirebirdclub.org/cbc/. This spreadsheet will continue to change as data arrives and the expertise of the Excel operator increases.

Of note in the data is the reduction in numbers of sparrows seen this year. We found a 38% drop in American Tree Sparrows, 40% in Song Sparrows and 45% in White-throated Sparrows. Black Vultures have continued to be seen on the count day. The number of American Robins decreased by over 80% this year due to the absence of the roost site found in previous years. Ruffed Grouse continue to be absent from our counts.

The CBC team is looking to enlarge our team to spread out the tasks. We need people willing to work with the Feeder Counters and participants, organize and conduct the Zoom meetings, and more. Email cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org about your interest, and we will have a meeting to explain more.

Next year's CBC will fall on Sunday, December 17. Please save the date!

Amanda Kallenbach and Janice Jorgensen

THE HBC NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

As mentioned in the introduction to this newsletter, the formerly hardcopy archive of HBC newsletters dating to the beginnings of the club have now been digitized and are available at the HBC website. To get to them one can go to www.hampshirebirdclub.org/newsletter/ and click the appropriate links with their conveniently organized sublinks. Also included for your browsing pleasure are scans of trip announcements that were sent to members but that were not part of a newsletter. And there is one item that is neither of these. It is in the 1987-1988 newsletter subset, and it is called "Venmans' humor". If you'd like a laugh, check it out.

According to club records a few newsletter issues from the 1987-1988 club year are missing from the files. They include October 1987, February 1988 and March 1988. It is also possible that issues from the 1984-1985 club year are also missing, though the records are not clear about this. Those issues include October and November 1984 as well as April and May 1985. If you happen to have a copy of any of these newsletters in your records, please contact newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org so that we can scan and post them.

In the archives you will find the May, 2009 HBC newsletter, David Peake-Jones, editor. In an addendum by Trudy Tynan is chapter 8 of a history of the HBC, done for the club's 25th anniversary year. Here's a summary of the 2005 Christmas Bird Count:

The Northampton Christmas Bird Count was moved up a day to Dec. 15 because of a threatened blizzard, which did blow in as predicted on Dec. 16. The massive winter finch eruption was in evidence, and despite the 8-to-12 inches of snow already on the ground HBC observers, gently chased into the cold by coordinator Mary Alice Wilson, tallied 160 Pine Grosbeaks, along with a count-high 2,194 Cedar Waxwings. It wasn't just finches. The snow-blown crew also counted a surprising new high of 22 very chilly Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. The previous high for sapsuckers was three in 2001.

David Spector, clearly stuck inside with too much time on his hands, filed this report:

A Dozen Not-So-Common Redpolls on the Northampton CBC, 15 Dec. 2007

With red caps and streaks

And triangular beaks,

Some had pink on breast

But not all, not the rest;

Paler than siskins,

Feeding on catkins,

They were a dozen cute finches,

Not big, in length just a few inches,

That found a dozen slender perches

On just one, not a dozen white birches

None, alas, so frosty,

No rumps so streak-free

As to suggest Hoary--

A dozen Commoners they be,

But not so common to me,

Living from redpoll view southerly,

Delighted to see

Every few years

These charming dears.

Well, my compilers and editors worthy,

There's my write up in few words pithy. I know

details are weak,

From tail end to beak--

No tarsal scutellation noted,

No rictal bristles counted,

Just impressions of a quick, happy view;

I hope that they'll pass, I hope that they'll do.

And Mary Alice Wilson, the count compiler, patiently replied in kind:

There once was a redpoll description

That met every Rare Bird restriction.

The words they did rhyme,

It was snail mailed in time:

Your report is accepted as written.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

All programs require registration.

Winter Crows – Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary – Jan. 8, 2:00 – 5:30 PM

Join Patti Steinman to learn about the habits of the American Crow, a common bird with uncommon intelligence. We'll start with a presentation about crows, then head to Springfield in search of a nighttime roost. If we're lucky, we'll observe crows congregating by the thousands - a spectacular winter natural event. We'll watch the skies "as the crows fly," and follow them as they change location.

For more information and to register: <https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/arcadia/84944-winter-crows>

Winter Birding Class at Arcadia – Sundays, January 22 – February 19, 9 AM - noon

What is an irruptive bird species and is this an irruptive year? What birds are at the feeders and how can we learn to identify them? Join naturalist John Green for this three-session indoor/outdoor class. Each class will include an indoor learning session, followed by outdoor time looking for birds.

For more information and to register: <https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/arcadia/85038-winter-birding-class>

TP AND BOREAL FOREST NESTING BIRDS

The National Resources Defense Fund (NRDC) has published a number of reports on the role that paper companies have played in the degradation of the Canadian boreal forest despite claims to the contrary. There is a lot to unwind in the reports that you can find on the NRDC website at www.nrdc.org/save-canadian-boreal. You, the discriminating bird watcher, are also a consumer and you can do your part by buying tissues that have no or minimal impact on the boreal forest. A summary of brands with their ratings that reflect the boreal forest impact of the product can be found at nrdc.org/tissue. Take a copy of this handy list to the store when you go shopping. Do the birds a favor and buy your TP with the boreal forest in mind.

THE HBC QUIZ

The topic for this set of questions is again “Local Connections.”

- 16) Ornithologist Joel Asaph Allen, native of Springfield, has a bird club named for him. He also has an ecological rule named for him; what is “Allen’s rule”?
- 17) What drama professor at Smith College was a coauthor of the 1937 classic *Birds of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts*?
extra credit: Who was his famous student better known for cooking birds than for watching them?
- 18) What Worcester member of a family of taxidermists wrote and illustrated an early (1905) field guide to the birds?
- 19) What novelist with a summer house in Plainfield described urban rioters as moving “like sandpipers swinging around to glean the shore after a furious wave's recession”?
- 20) What graduate of Smith College wrote what is sometimes considered the first field guide (1890) and went on to write a professional handbook of western birds?

The answers for the quiz questions in the December 2022 newsletter are as follows:

- 11) Mt. Whitney in California and the Elf Owl (*Micrathene whitneyi*) are both named for Josiah Dwight Whitney (1819-1896). His sister Maria Whitney was a friend of Emily Dickinson. His brother William Dwight Whitney made an early collection of birds in Western Massachusetts (now in the Peabody Museum at Yale), was a Sanskrit scholar, and edited the massive *Century Dictionary* (of special interest to birdwatchers because the zoölogical entries were written or edited by Elliott Coues and many natural history illustrations are by Ernest Thompson Seton). Appropriately for a geologist, Josiah Dwight Whitney’s grave in Northampton’s Bridge Street Cemetery is marked by a glacial boulder. He was a third cousin twice removed of ornithologist Jonathan Dwight (1858-1929, known especially for his classic works on gulls and on molt).
- 12) Bobolink. Dickinson mentioned the species in at least 14 poems and letters. In her lifetime the Dickinson home faced a hay meadow.
- 13) Bobolink.
- 14) Bobolink. I won’t add a dozen other New England poets who wrote about this species.
- 15) Song Sparrow. Anson Morse is credited with being a major influence on Northampton mayor (and U.S. president) Calvin Coolidge.

Answers will be in the January newsletter.