



Hampshire Bird Club, Inc. Amherst, Massachusetts

www.hampshirebirdclub.org

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Uh-oh!

Dear reader, a woman brought a very limp duck into a veterinary office. As she laid her pet on the table, the vet pulled out his stethoscope and listened to the bird's breast. After a moment or two, the vet shook his head and sadly said, "I'm sorry, your duck has passed away." The distressed woman wailed, "Are you sure?" "Yes, I am sure. Your duck is dead" replied the vet. "How can you be so sure?" she protested. "I mean you haven't done any testing on him or anything. He might just be in a coma or something."

The vet rolled his eyes, turned around, and left the room. He returned a few minutes later with a black Labrador Retriever. As the duck's owner looked on in amazement, the dog stood on his hind legs, put his front paws on the examination table and sniffed the duck from top to bottom. He then looked up at the vet with sad eyes and shook his head. The vet patted the dog on the head and took it out of the room. A few minutes later he returned with a cat. The cat jumped on the table and also delicately sniffed the bird from head to foot. The cat sat back on its haunches, shook its head, meowed softly, and strolled out of the room.

The vet looked at the woman and said, "I'm sorry, but as I said, this is most definitely, 100% certifiably, a dead duck." The vet turned to his computer terminal, hit a few keys and produced a bill, which he handed to the woman. The duck's owner, still in shock, took the bill. "\$150!" she cried. "\$150 just to tell me my duck is dead!"

The vet shrugged and said "I'm sorry. If you had just taken my word for it, the bill would have been \$20, but with the Lab Report and the Cat Scan, it's now \$150."

NEXT PROGRAM

Tuesday, April 9, at 7:15 PM

Ethan Clotfelter presents

Tree Swallows and Chickadees

Wesley United Methodist Church

Earlier phenology and warmer temperatures are two hallmarks of climate change in the temperate zone. The impacts of climate change on birds are becoming apparent, but in some cases are still poorly understood. In this presentation, Ethan Clotfelter will talk about his research on Tree Swallows and Black-capped Chickadees, and the myriad ways in which temperature affects their daily lives. He will discuss three separate studies on incubation dynamics, food availability, and social behavior that he and his students have conducted at Amherst College over the past 20 years.

Ethan Clotfelter is the Rufus Tyler Lincoln Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies at Amherst College, where he has taught since 2003. Ethan got his undergraduate degree at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, his Master's and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Wisconsin, and was a postdoctoral fellow at Indiana University. In addition to Tree Swallows and Chickadees, he has studied other common bird species such as Brown-headed Cowbirds, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Dark-eyed Juncos. He's also been known to dabble in studies of fish and crayfish behavior.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

- May 14, 2024. 7:15 PM. Curt Griffin. **Botswana.**
- June 11, 2024. Time TBA. **Club picnic.** We hope.

BIRDING FOR EVERYONE

The Birding For Everyone (BFE) program enters its third year in 2024. BFE 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, or who have disabilities that make birding difficult. Based on participant feedback, we have a new schedule. On the third Saturday of the month, at 8:45 AM, there will be a two hour, in-person, beginner bird walk at an accessible location. Two days prior to the walk, on Thursday at 7 PM, there will be a one hour online educational talk.

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/2024bfe.

April 18, 2024, 7–8 PM: Identifying Warblers (Talk)

April 20, 2024, 8:45–11:00 AM: Fort River Wildlife Refuge, Hadley (Walk)

REMEMBERING DOTTIE CASE

Dottie Case, a longtime member of the HBC, died on March 14. She was a quirky woman who was passionate about birds and created the best habitat for birds in her small yard on Bull Hill Road in Sunderland. Before she moved away, this yard was our best spot on the Christmas Bird Count where every species of woodpecker could be found as well as many winter finches. After she left, it was cleared of most of the vegetation and bird life significantly declined. As a tribute to Dottie, let your yard be messy and full of life!

Henry Lappen

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT AND WORKSHOPS

Patti Steinman gave a wonderfully informative workshop on American Woodcocks followed by a bird walk at the Easthampton Community Gardens on the evening of March 9th, where she guided us to just the right spots to hear the woodcocks! Artist, birder, and naturalist Christina Baal offered a multi-faceted workshop on the Condors of North America. Her website, in case you want to look at her beautiful artwork, is drawingtenthouseandbirds.com. If you missed these workshops, be sure to go to EVENT VIDEOS under EVENTS on the Hampshire Bird Club website and watch the recordings at hampshirebirdclub.org/program-videos/.

April 1, 7–8 PM. Do It Yourself with Brian and guest co-hosts. Are you new to the area? New to birding?

Would you like to know where to go and what to look for? Do you want to connect with other HBC birders? Come to a Zoom meeting for the DIY Field Trip. Each month we select a local hot spot and five target birds that can be seen at that location. During our Zoom meeting, we give directions to the month's location and offer ID information for the target birds. Join us!

April 16, 7–8 PM. Loons with Dana and Bob Fox. Don't miss this fascinating talk. Dana and Bob Fox are active in the Northeast Loon Working Group, which is dedicated to studying and protecting loons. They will introduce us to what makes a loon a loon, their evolution, and the world's five loon species. The Common Loon's lifecycle and efforts to protect them will be a special focus. And you will learn where you can help monitor loon nests near us.

The Zoom link for both workshops is on the Education Workshop page of the Hampshire Bird Club website. Login information is Meeting ID: 822 7788 5665, Passcode: Education.

New Member Bird Walk—open to all:

May 19, 2024, 7 AM at Fort River (Silvio O. Conte), focusing on spring migrants.

More details will be available on the Education webpage, and we'll send email reminders.

Did you miss a workshop last year? Our recorded programs are available on the Hampshire Bird Club website. You can find the links under PROGRAMS or on the EDUCATION page. Scroll down to the bottom of the videos page to find Education workshops. If you have an idea for a workshop, email us at education@hampshirebirdclub.org. **We are looking for new members!** If you would like to join the Education Committee, please email us.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Please register *online* at least **two days** in advance of the trip at the HBC website (hampshirebirdclub.org, go to EVENTS → FIELD TRIPS). Contact leaders (if a phone number or email is listed) if you have questions. It's always wise to bring snacks and dress appropriately. Whether with or without a leader, please follow the HBC's guidelines for ethical birding and conduct (hampshirebirdclub.org/hbc-code-of-ethics-and-conduct/) and those on our website regarding field trips (hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips/guidelines/). For the most up to date list of trips, visit www.hampshirebirdclub.org/field-trips.

Remember that we encourage carpooling. We ask that riders share costs with drivers as a matter of courtesy. The HBC recommends the current federal mileage reimbursement rate, shared by all occupants, but the rate for a vehicle is entirely up to the driver and passengers and should be determined before leaving. Note that sign-ups for field trips are now online at the HBC website, not through trip leaders.

Monday, April 1. The annual HBC Snipe hunt will be held at the usual place at the usual time. Join the usual leaders for an exciting and surprising trip to the usual haunts where we will search for the elusive Snipe. As usual, dress properly for the event. Thorn-resistant gloves are a necessity. A rain slicker and tennis racket are recommended. Don't forget to pack your paper bags and flashlight. Questions? Contact your local representative. (PG-13)

Friday, April 12. Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. 9:00 to 11:30 AM. Join Bill Randolph and explore the diverse habitats surrounding the nature center including flood plain forest, marshes, the Connecticut River oxbow, and grasslands in search of nesting waterfowl, herons, grassland sparrows, Bald Eagles, and other raptors. Plan on walking 2–3 miles on mostly flat, uneven terrain with a few muddy areas depending on rainfall this spring. There's an option to climb a 25 foot spiral staircase to a bird observatory over Hulbert's Pond. It's a good idea to bring repellent for ticks and mosquitos. We will meet at 9 AM in the Arcadia nature center parking lot at 127 Combs Road in Easthampton. Limited to 12 participants. Register online. (E/M)

Friday, April 19. Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. 9:00 to 11:30 AM. Join Bill Randolph and explore the mixed conifer and deciduous forest, flooded forest wetland, and marshes in anticipation of new arrival songbirds and warblers, nesting herons, and waterfowl. This outing will highlight how bird life changes with the warming of spring. Plan on walking 2–3 miles on fairly flat, uneven terrain with some muddy areas depending upon recent rainfall. There is an option to climb up to a bird observatory overlooking the marsh. It's a good idea to bring repellent for ticks and mosquitos. We will meet at 9 AM in the parking lot at the end of Cooke Ave (former Moose Lodge) in Northampton. Limited to 12 participants. Register online. (E/M)

Sunday, April 21. Quabbin Park—Hank's Meadow. 7:30 to 10:00 AM. Join Greg Brown for a 2.5 mile loop from the Hanks Meadow area, west along the shoreline and back up through the woods to the main road. The trail is moderately difficult and may be muddy in spots—wear good boots! Our path will go through a variety of habitats, where we may see any number of earlier migrants along with year-round residents. Possible sightings include warblers (Pine, Palm, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green), woodpeckers, eagles, ravens, and towhees. We will meet at 7:30 AM at the Hanks Meadow parking lot and return to the same place by 10 AM at the latest. Bring water, snacks, binoculars, appropriate footwear, and outerwear. Note: there is usually a porta-potty at the parking lot, but this is not guaranteed. Questions? Contact gwb@gregorywbrown.com. Limited to 10 participants. Register online. (M)

Thursday, April 25. Silvio O. Conte NWR—Fort River Division. 7:30 to 9:30 AM. Join Marcia Merithew and Janice Jorgensen for an easy walk on the accessible trail and road in Hadley, MA. The trail is 1.2 miles long and road walking could add another mile. The forest and meadow habitats are excellent in April for early migrants, year-round residents, and possibly some surprises (visit this link for a list of species seen in any April: ebird.org/hotspot/L907119?m=4&yr=all&changeDate=). We will bird by sight and by ear and record our findings in eBird. We will meet at 7:30 AM in the Silvio O. Conte parking lot at 69 Moody Bridge Road in Hadley—plenty of parking is available, plus a porta-potty. Ending time is flexible. Limited to 18 participants. Questions? Contact mmerithew@comcast.net. Register online. (E)

Sunday, May 5. Quabbin Park. 7 to 10 AM. Join Craig Allen and Brian Zylich for an outing around the south end of the Quabbin reservoir searching for spring migrants and waterfowl. We'll look and listen for birds on land and on the water. Meet at the Quabbin Visitor Center at 7 AM for a walk along the dam and various other parts of Quabbin Park. Bring water, snacks, binoculars, appropriate footwear, and outerwear. Note: there is usually a porta-potty at the parking lot, but this is not guaranteed. Questions? Contact brian.zylich@gmail.com. Limited to 10 participants. Register online. (E)

Friday, May 10. Sweet Alice Conservation Area (Kestrel Land Trust). 9:00 to 11:30 AM. Join Bill Randolph and explore this diverse habitat with chances to see herons, warblers, thrushes, and waterfowl. Plan on walking 1–2 miles on mostly flat, uneven terrain through mixed conifer and deciduous forest to Plum Brook, which creates a one acre beaver pond. It's a good idea to bring repellent for ticks and mosquitos. We will meet at 9 AM in the parking area at 59 Bay Road in Amherst. Limited to 12 participants. Register online. (E/M)

Saturday, May 11. Mineral Hills Conservation Area. 7 to 10 AM. Join Marcia Merithew and Betsy Higgins and travel around and into the quarry surrounded by woods and along the dirt road if time allows. This outing can feature Prairie Warblers, Eastern Towhees, Common Ravens, and Red-shouldered Hawks, as well as a variety of warblers and vireos. This will be a moderate walk on uneven ground with some slight inclines and declines. Meet in the parking area at the end of Turkey Hill Road in Northampton. Please note there are no facilities available. Questions? Contact mmerithew@comcast.net. Limited to 10 participants. Register online. (M)

Friday, May 17. Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. 9:00 to 11:30 AM. Join Bill Randolph and explore the mixed conifer and deciduous forest, flooded forest wetland, and marshes in anticipation of new arrival songbirds and warblers, nesting herons, and waterfowl. This outing will highlight how bird life changes with the warming of spring. Plan on walking 2–3 miles on fairly flat, uneven terrain with some muddy areas depending upon recent rainfall. There is an option to climb up to a bird observatory overlooking the marsh. It's a good idea to bring repellent for ticks and mosquitos. We will meet at 9 AM in the parking lot at the end of Cooke Ave (former Moose Lodge) in Northampton. Limited to 12 participants. Register online. (E/M)

Saturday, May 18. EQLT Rail Trail in Ware. 7:30 to 10:30 AM. Join Cory Elowe for an easy stroll along the flat, hard-packed, crushed stone rail trail in Ware that is suitable for all abilities. This trail at the eastern edge of Hampshire County is newly renovated by the East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT). It is under-birded, but it traverses diverse habitats that are excellent for migratory warblers and breeding Eastern Towhees, Field Sparrows, and Louisiana Waterthrush. Depending on conditions and abilities, we will complete an out-and-back of likely no more than two miles total. However, as this is also a lovely place to ride a bike, feel free to bring yours to explore more of the approximately three miles of trail than we can cover! Recent rain can leave puddles and mud, so please wear appropriate footwear. We will meet at 7:30 AM at the Mass Central Rail Trail parking area along Upper Church Street just prior to crossing the Ware River and intersecting with Route 32. Northampton-area participants can meet at Sheldon Field, 26 Old Ferry Road at 6:45 AM if they wish to arrange their own carpooling, as it is about a 40 minute drive to reach the rail trail. Questions? Contact coryelowe@gmail.com. Limited to 12 participants. Register online. (E)

Sunday, May 19. Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, MA. 6:30 to 11:00 AM (plus travel time; ending time is flexible). Join Peggy MacLeod at this hot spot known as one of spring's best land bird migrant traps in eastern Massachusetts, where the numbers and diversity of songbirds and surprise semi-rare migrants can be staggering. Both a wildlife sanctuary and stunning arboretum of native pines, oaks, and beeches, the cemetery is laid out in a network of ponds, wetlands, and dozens of winding avenues and paths. Accessible to individuals of all abilities, one can drive or walk to most areas as needed. While visiting the cemetery's diverse habitats over 1+ miles, the group will focus on helping all participants get eyes and ears on identified species, as well as checking in with other visitors about where to find the day's best encounters. Bring binoculars, water, snacks, and lunch. Notes: Mount Auburn is still an active cemetery—please review their guidelines for birding etiquette: www.mountauburn.org/birding-at-mount-auburn-2/. Restrooms are available at the entry gate. A lunch stop is possible on the return. We will meet at 6:30 AM to carpool from Sheldon Field Park and Ride,

26 Old Ferry Road in Northampton, and we will coordinate a meeting place at Mount Auburn. Questions? Contact sunraven99@gmail.com. Limited to 15 participants. Register online. (E)

Saturday, June 1. Station 43, South Windsor, CT. 7:00 to 11:30 AM (ending time is flexible). Join Peggy MacLeod at one of the most productive inland bird watching sites in Connecticut to enjoy seasonal birding for rails, herons, songbirds, ducks, sora, bitterns, and flycatchers. Station 43, a wetland bordered by farmland and wooded areas, is owned by Hartford Audubon and comprises a shallow pond and extensive marsh, with reported sightings of 229 bird species. Although the trail is flat, the unavoidable muddy areas make the site not handicap accessible. Preparation: Because water often covers parts of the path, fully waterproof high boots are required to bird at this location. Bring binoculars, a scope if possible, bug repellent, water, and snacks. We will meet at 7:00 AM to carpool from Sheldon Field Park and Ride, 26 Old Ferry Road in Northampton. Station 43 is located at 953 Main Street (corner of Newberry Road and Main Street), South Windsor, CT. We will park on the east side of Main Street, not blocking any driveways or mailboxes, and walk west from the intersection on what starts as a rutted driveway to the right side of a private yard. Please note that there are no restrooms at this location. Questions? Contact sunraven99@gmail.com. Limited to 12 participants. Register online. (M)

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.

PURPLE MARTIN PROJECT AT FORT RIVER

Three years ago, Purple Martins nested in the artificial gourds at the Conte Refuge's Fort River Division in Hadley. For the last two years the martins have been harassed by Tree Swallows, House Sparrows, and European Starlings. We are hoping to encourage them to nest again this year. In early March, George Regmund built the bird boxes being used to lure Tree Swallows away from the gourds. The box materials were purchased by the Hampshire Bird Club.

The new bird boxes were mounted on poles within 50 feet of the gourd pole by Jim Lafley and Jim Turcotte, with location assistance from Mary McKittrick and Theresa Gessing as well as the USFWS staff members. The new boxes are now being regularly monitored and cleaned of House Sparrow nesting material by Mary, Theresa, and Jim. When the Purple Martin gourds are returned to the pole they will be plugged to prevent Tree Swallows, European Starlings, and House Sparrows from occupying them. The hope is that those species will find alternative nesting places before the Purple Martins return to the area. Once we observe Purple Martin scouts in the area, we will remove the plugs and hope the martins will use the gourds with less competition from the other species.

Jim Lafley

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MANO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Question: Now that COVID seems to be subsiding, can we have a potluck at the culmination of the next CBC?

Answer: If we start planning a post-CBC potluck soon, it will happen. We need to identify a team of people who will organize it. What does that mean? Find a place, decide on the date, figure out the food, and advertise. If you are interested in being part of this team, contact the HBC board: board@hampshirebirdclub.org.

Question: How long do we wait until the next CBC?

Answer: Not so long. From April 15 to December 15 is only 8 months...

Question: I have neighbors who want to join a CBC team next December. What do they do?

Answer: Have them contact us at: cbc@hampshirebirdclub.org. We will find them a team to be on, help them prepare, and keep them informed.

CHIMNEY SWIFTS

by Sunny Kellner, Wildlife Rehabilitator and Outreach Specialist,
Sharon Audubon Center, Audubon Connecticut

The Chimney Swift, *Chaetura pelagica*, is a unique species of bird that can be identified by the “bow and arrow” shape of its body and wings, designed for adroit aerial maneuvering and high speeds. It belongs to the Family Apodidae, meaning “without feet” in Greek, because of their tiny feet and legs. These small appendages are frequently referred to as poorly developed but are in fact perfectly adapted to the needs of swifts. Chimney Swifts cannot stand upright like most birds but use their forward-facing toes to cling to vertical surfaces such as hollow trees and the inside of chimneys.

Chimney Swifts are aerial insectivores, catching thousands of flying insects a day “on the wing”. Flying continually, swifts leave their roost at dawn and only return at dusk (except for nesting pairs returning to feed young).

Beginning courtship in mid- to late April, Chimney Swifts breed and spend summer in North America, throughout the middle and eastern United States and Canada. The brick chimneys of European colonization replaced the once-plentiful hollow trees as ideal nesting habitat for the swifts, giving them the name “Chimney Swifts”. Because of this, the historical range of the Chimney Swift is very similar to what it is today. Wintering in South America, swifts depart in the late summer to early fall. Swifts gather (stage) in large flocks numbering from 100 to 10,000 individuals at historic roost sites along the migration route that remain the same year after year. The migrating flocks travel together 3,000 miles to the Amazon River Basin.

Chimney Swifts nest inside chimneys by constructing a small cup-shaped nest of twig pieces glued together and affixed to the vertical wall by the swifts’ sticky saliva. The saliva hardens, creating a structurally stable nest to hold young. There is typically one breeding pair per chimney, occasionally with un-mated “helpers” sharing the roost. During early summer through July the female lays a clutch of three-to-five oblong white eggs, incubating for 18-19 days. The swift fledglings climb out of the nest at around 20 days and cling to the chimney wall until they take their first flight around 20 to 30 days later.

Since the late 1960s there has been an estimated 67% decline in Chimney Swift populations due to breeding habitat loss, loss of insect populations from pesticides, window strikes, and climate change (Bogart, Roxanne. *On the Wing with Chimney Swifts*. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. www.fws.gov/story/chimney-swifts). Colonial style brick and mortar chimneys are becoming obsolete, and the modern practice of lining and capping chimneys has eliminated the critical nesting habitat that replaced hollow trees. Pesticides and climate change are devastating insect populations that are the food source of the swift.

While swift populations are currently stable throughout much of their range, with even an increase in their northern range, there are severe declines in the westernmost populations. Chimney Swifts are considered a vulnerable species by the National Audubon Society and a conservation priority species by Audubon CT and NY.

Many homeowners are unaware that they are Chimney Swift landlords until nestlings fall into a fireplace. If this happens, a wildlife rehabilitator specializing in swifts must be called to determine if the babies can be re-nested. It is essential that property owners understand that nesting swifts are benign to their chimney and that nests and nestlings are protected under the Migratory Bird Act. Being a good Chimney Swift landlord includes allowing nesting pairs, not lining or capping a chimney utilized by swifts, doing chimney maintenance before nesting season or after fall migration, and never using pesticides.

There are many ways for individuals to get involved with Chimney Swift conservation without being landlords! Chimney Swift towers can be constructed, creating new nesting habitat. Tower designs are plentiful and can be erected in creative locations with desirable designs. Gardening with native plants supports insect populations. Participating in roost monitoring during migration or contributing information on current nesting and roost sites provides data on resident populations for continued conservation efforts. The HBC Conservation Committee has been discussing Chimney Swifts with respect to the recent destruction of a roosting site in a school chimney in Williamsburg. The committee is exploring possible funding sources and locations for a Chimney Swift tower to include an educational kiosk. Contact the committee with your thoughts.

A CHAT WITH KIRSTEN STEVENSON

I was fortunate to be contacted recently by Dr. Kirsten Stevenson who completed, in January, 2024, her Ph.D. at Cornell University in the History Department under the guidance of Prof. Casey Schmitt. Dr. Stevenson has recently accepted a faculty appointment at Hampshire College. I spoke with Dr. Stevenson in late February.

Newsletter: Thank you for getting in touch with me, and welcome to the Valley. Would you say a few words about your ties to the Valley?

Kirsten Stevenson: Yes, I'd be happy to do that. I had the great joy to spend several summer break weeks with Bill and Sally Venman when I was in middle school. [Ed. note: Long-time club members will know that Sally Venman was one of the founders of the HBC, and her husband, Bill, was a fixture on club trips to Monhegan Island.] They were splendid hosts and very much influenced my interests and now my career. I went bird watching with Sally on many occasions, learning something about bird song and bird behavior. And Bill showed me the great fun that Gilbert and Sullivan provides. He was especially interested in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and that ignited my interest in operettas. And, of course, the classic picture one has of a swarthy pirate is with a parrot on his shoulder.

N: Many readers of the Hampshire Bird Club newsletter will remember Sally and Bill not only for their many contributions to the club but also for their wry humor. And of course Sally and Bill founded the Valley Light Opera [www.vlo.org/aboutus].

KS: I've heard that they both had a sense of humor. I don't have a strong memory of that and I am afraid that trait is something that I don't have.

N: Tell me a bit about your scholarship in graduate school.

KS: I have long had a deep interest in piracy since I learned as a fourth grader that my great-great-great grandfather was Robert Louis Stevenson, the author of *Treasure Island*. I chose Cornell for my graduate work after I graduated from Wellesley College because my mentor, Casey Schmitt, has a research focus on piracy and the Caribbean. [Ed. note: For those who are interested, some of Prof. Schmitt's work can be found on her Cornell website: <https://history.cornell.edu/casey-schmitt>.] As I was developing the kernel of a topic for my dissertation, I stumbled across the fact that the famous ornithologist John James Audubon was born in Les Cayes in the French colony

of Saint-Domingue, which, of course, is now the Caribbean nation of Haiti. That struck a chord with me since I knew that Sally was a dedicated bird watcher.

N: That's fascinating. Somehow it seems appropriate that piracy and birding would be associated with the Venman clan.

KS: I'm not sure what you mean by that. But to continue, the more I delved into Audubon's background, I found a previously unrecognized tie to piracy that may well have influenced his ultimate work on North American birds. That was the main reason for my choice of dissertation research. My dissertation title is "Caribbean Piracy of the 17th and 18th Centuries and Its Ties to North American Bird Identification".

It was known that Audubon spent a brief time at sea in his pre-teen years when he was living in France. What wasn't known was that also on the crew with Audubon was Ebenezer Teach, the grandson of Edward Teach who was the man known as Blackbeard the Pirate. Ebenezer loved to tell tales of his grandfather. From what I was able to learn, many of those tales were greatly embellished, but one of them wasn't. Pirates found that transporting colorful tropical birds to Europe and North America was very profitable, and parrots were particularly in demand. This trade in tropical birds prompted my great-great-great grandfather Stevenson to create the character of Long John Silver and his parrot Cap'n Flint in *Treasure Island*. I deduced that Audubon's great love of birds was kindled by the stories of Ebenezer Teach.

N: It sounds like you had an adventure yourself in unraveling that connection between Audubon and pirates. What are you planning for your scholarly work at Hampshire College?

KS: I have done some preliminary research on 21st century piracy in Somalia, and I've learned that these contemporary pirates also have an affinity for birds. It seems that they have used Taiwanese racing pigeons to ferry messages between their attack boats and home bases on the mainland. I think this will be a fertile area for future work, particularly when it is published on April Fool's Day.

HBC BOARD ELECTION

The HBC will be having its annual election for the Board of Directors immediately following the May club meeting. To begin the process, the HBC President Derek Allard has formed a Nominating Committee as outlined in the club bylaws. The members are Cory Elowe, Sara Griesemer, and Janice Jorgensen. They are soliciting candidates to run for open slots on the board. The committee will present the list of candidates for the board at the April 2024 club meeting. At the May 2024 club meeting, further nominations for the board will be accepted. Starting the day after the May meeting, online voting will commence for one week.

THE HBC PUZZLE

Here are some more bird questions, some silly, some trivial, most obscure. [Ed note: Yes, they are bird questions. Direct all irate queries to the Belchertown Bureau.]

40. What do musicians Édith Piaf, Jenny Lind, and Charlie Parker have in common?
41. What is the most abundant bird in the world?
42. If a birdwatcher were to address a bird, “Hail to thee, blithe spirit,” who would be quoted?
43. According to Arthur Conan Doyle, where does one hide a stolen gem (specifically a blue carbuncle stolen from the Countess of Morcar)?
44. What is the largest bird ever seen by people?

Answers to last month’s questions:

34. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. The hummingbirds follow sapsuckers to get sap and insects at the wells dug by the sapsuckers.
35. Edgar Allan Poe, who wrote a poem about a raven, died in Baltimore, where a team is named for that poem.
36. Zero. The peahen lays the eggs.
37. They don’t know the words.
38. Plastic pink flamingo.
- 39.. Northern Lapwing, from its call, via German and Yiddish to English.

A Reminder About 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.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

The following programs are offered by Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. Sign up online. More programs can be found at www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/arcadia.

Dance of the American Woodcock—Sunday, April 7, 6:00–8:15 PM

Spring is the time when male American Woodcocks perform an amazing aerial courtship dance to attract a female. This spring ritual happens in fields just after sunset. Our program will begin indoors, with a presentation to learn about the American Woodcock, its displays, ecology, and conservation, followed by a walk to look and listen for woodcocks in the field.

Birding By Ear Series—Sundays, April 21 (9 AM–noon), April 28 (8–10 AM), and May 5 (8–10 AM)

Spring is a season filled with the beautiful sounds of birds, many returning to their breeding grounds. Learn the difference between bird songs and bird call notes and how to identify birds by their songs. This 3-session class will begin with an instructional session, followed by two morning walks to practice what we’ve learned.

Saturday Morning Bird Walk at Arcadia—Saturday, April 27, 7:00–8:30 AM

We'll search for songbirds as we walk the trails through the various habitats at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. We'll watch for behavior, listen to bird songs, and learn how to submit our data to eBird, one of the largest wildlife databases in the world. We'll also explore the resiliency and adaptations of some birds to our changing climate.

Saturday Morning Bird Walk at Graves Farm—Saturday, May 4, 7:00–8:30 AM

We'll search for songbirds as we walk the trails through the various habitats at Graves Farm Wildlife Sanctuary. We'll watch for behavior, listen to bird songs, and explore the resiliency and adaptations of some birds to our changing climate.

Spring Migration Bird Walks at Arcadia—Weekdays, May 6-10, 6:30–8:00 AM

Discover the birds that migrate, breed, and stay all year as we take an early morning leisurely walk through different areas of Arcadia. We'll learn how to identify birds by sight and sound. We'll also explore the resiliency and adaptations of some birds to our changing climate.

Mass Audubon Birdathon—Friday, May 10, 6 PM–Saturday, May 11, 6 PM

Registration for Mass Audubon Bird-a-thon is open! There are some changes to this year's rules, including being able to bird on your own. Review all the rules at www.massaudubon.org/places-to-explore/activities/birds-birding/bird-a-thon/rules. We will once again compete for the County Cup and Sitting Duck Award. Ready to sign up? Register to bird at www.massaudubon.org/places-to-explore/activities/birds-birding/bird-a-thon. Bird-a-thon is also Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary's largest community fundraiser that makes possible the protection of resilient, bird-friendly landscapes, increasing access to nature and environmental education, and mobilizing to fight climate change in the Valley and throughout the West. Questions? Contact Jonah Keane at jkeane@massaudubon.org.

Other notable events

Hawk Watch on Bearsden Road, Athol—Daily through May 12, 8 AM–2 PM

A daily hawk watch is conducted at Adams Farm on 854 Bearsden Road in Athol, MA daily through Sunday May 12. Last year 12 species of migrants totaling over 2700 hawks were tallied. Email Mark Morris (mdmremodeling@gmail.com) for more information. If a count will not be conducted due to bad weather, Mark will email everyone in advance.

Peregrine Falcons 101, Online—Friday, April 24, 2–3 PM

Interested in Peregrine Falcons? Join this talk from the UMass Amherst DuBois Library about their resident rooftop falcons! Peregrines have nested on the library for the past two decades. The online presentation will cover that history, information about Peregrines, and a description of a new research program to reduce bird-window strikes on campus. Registration, which is required, is free and open to the public.

For more information or to register, go to libcal.library.umass.edu/event/11993076.

Peregrine Falcon Monitoring, Valley Locations

Tim Souza from the Allen Bird Club has, since 2020, been involved with David Paulson, the Wildlife Biologist and Peregrine Falcon Recovery and Conservation Coordinator in Massachusetts, to monitor Peregrine Falcon nesting sites. They are looking for volunteers to help with monitoring of Peregrine Falcon nesting sites in the area. They have a list of known sites and some potential sites as well. Any help would be greatly appreciated. For further information or to express interest, you may contact Tim at (413)519-3942 (call or text) or tsou420@gmail.com.

FEEDING THE BABY

I used to push my food around my plate when I was young. Still do, from time to time. So I have some affinity with this young bird: twitter.com/amazingnature/status/1769650142032900103.

Spoil a good walk: go birding!

newsletter@hampshirebirdclub.org

Dave Gross, Editor