Mass Audubon Birders Meeting

Epic Journeys: Following Bird Migration

Sunday, March 8, 2020

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Migration Productions
# Birders Meeting 2020
## Schedule of Events

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 – 8:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Registration and continental breakfast*</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:45 – 9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Welcome&lt;br&gt;Gary Clayton, Mass Audubon President, and Wayne Petersen, Director of Important Bird Areas Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:45 a.m.</td>
<td>The Wayne Petersen Lecture: <em>The Epic Migration of Birds</em> by Peter Marra, PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:50 – 10:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Presentation of the Hemenway + Hall Wildlife Conservation Award</td>
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<td>10:15 – 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Break and vendor shopping</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:45 a.m.</td>
<td><em>Ecology of Migrant Songbirds</em> by Mariam Gutierrez Ramirez</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:50 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.</td>
<td><em>Hazards of Migration and Avian Collision Team</em> by William Freedberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 – 1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch* and vendor shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 – 2:15 p.m.</td>
<td><em>The Disappearance of an Almost-Invisible Bird</em> by Margaret Rubega, PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:20 – 3:05 p.m.</td>
<td><em>Unraveling the Mysteries of Great Shearwaters</em> by Kevin Powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:05 – 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Break and vendor shopping (last chance!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 – 4:15 p.m.</td>
<td><em>Birding During Migration</em> by Sean Williams, PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 – 4:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Thank You and Raffle Winners Announced</td>
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*Vegan options available upon request
Epic Journeys: Following Bird Migration

Bird migration is one of the most amazing phenomena on the planet. Millions of birds annually fly countless miles between their breeding and wintering areas in search of longer days, warmer climes, and abundant food.

The 2020 Birders Meeting will explore some of the reasons why birds migrate, the technology behind the study of migration, and how to plan the best birding days to appreciate and observe migration in Massachusetts.

Today's distinguished speakers are as follows.

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The Epic Migrations of Birds

Speaker: Peter Marra, PhD, Georgetown University

Migration is one of the most engaging phenomena of the animal world and one epitomized by birds. Migratory birds are the Olympiads of the natural world—traveling extreme distances, flying at night in flocks of tens of thousands of individuals, and moving through treacherous terrain with untold obstacles threatening their every move. Today, over 50% of North America's migratory species are declining at unprecedented rates—and for most of these species we don't know why. Marra will take us on a hemispheric journey to discover the unknown migrations of the birds, explaining the latest technologies used for tracking and why it's up to us to uncover the secrets of their biology to protect these marvelous species.

Peter Marra earned a Ph.D. from Dartmouth College in 1998 and an M.S. from Louisiana State University, in 1989 and is Director of the Georgetown Environmental Initiative, Laudato Si’ Professor in Biology and the Environment, and Professor in the McCourt School of Public Policy. Marra recently moved to Georgetown University after a 20-year career at the Smithsonian Institution, most recently as Director of the Migratory Bird Center.

His research in conservation ecology is both fundamental and applied, and emphasizes connecting events throughout the annual and life cycles of animals to understand how complex interactions drive the ecology, evolution and conservation of species.
Marra has authored over 225 papers including a recent widely-discussed study in Science magazine on the loss of nearly one-third of bird populations (2.9 billion birds) in North America over the last 50 years. Marra also co-edited the frequently cited book, *Birds of Two Worlds*, and recently published a second book, *Cat Wars: The Devastating Consequences of a Cuddly Killer*.

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**Ecology of Migrant Songbirds**

Speaker: Mariamar Gutierrez Ramirez, PhD candidate, University of Massachusetts Amherst

 Millions of migratory birds fly non-stop across the Gulf of Mexico from the wintering grounds in Mexico, Central, and South America to the breeding grounds in North America. Songbirds complete their amazing journeys through a series of long flights, punctuated by stopover periods when birds rest and rebuild depleted energy reserves. Birds use fat and lean mass to power migratory flight, which is especially critical during and after crossing ecological barriers, such as the Gulf of Mexico. Researchers from the UMass Amherst Integrative Environmental Physiology Lab have been using traditional field research and state-of-the-art technology, such as the Motus Wildlife Tracking Network, to evaluate the relationship between body condition and migratory decisions of birds that have completed a trans-Gulf of Mexico flight. During this program, we will explore how birds fare after crossing the Gulf of Mexico in spring and how this may impact their timing and arrival to the breeding grounds.

Mariamar Gutierrez Ramirez is a PhD candidate and Ford Foundation Fellow at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She has worked with migratory birds since 2002 across Central America and the U.S., and has extensive experience with field protocols for the study of breeding, wintering, and migrating birds. She has led the bird banding efforts for the UMass Amherst Integrative Environmental Physiology Lab for 4 years. She has experience training students and volunteers in bird monitoring techniques, including safe handling of passerine birds following the standards of the North American Banding Council. For her graduate research, she works primarily in coastal Florida studying the spring stopover ecology of long-distance migratory birds. Mariamar has a B.S. in Biology from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua, and holds a M.Sc. in Natural Resources from Delaware State University.
The Disappearance of an Almost-Invisible Bird: Where Do All the Chimney Swifts Go?

Speaker: Margaret Rubega, PhD, University of Connecticut

A Chimney swift may be the least-visible common bird in North America. A nearly uniform sooty brown all over, it flies high and fast, won’t come to your bird feeders, sits nowhere that you can photograph it, and glues its nest out of sight to the inside of chimneys with spit. Partners in Flight estimates their North American population at about 8 million birds, but classifies them as a "Common Species in Steep Decline"; birds which are still numerous, but whose populations have declined by 50% or more during the past 40 years. Research by University of Connecticut and Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and others, has shown that conventional explanations fail to account for this population decline on the breeding ground, suggesting that the answer lies in migration, or on the wintering ground. However, information about where those 8 million birds might be in the non-breeding season is strangely sparse. Stable isotope work provides some clues about where the birds go, and where all the lost birds may have gone.

Margaret Rubega is a Professor in the Dept. of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and Curator of Birds in the Biodiversity Collections at the University of Connecticut; she is also the CT State Ornithologist. Research in her lab addresses questions in avian conservation, ecology and evolution mechanistically, integrating tools from functional morphology, biomechanics, physiology, and animal behavior as necessary to produce explanations for why birds look, live and act as they do. Chasing chimney swifts since 2012, she hopes you won’t call the cops if you notice her staring at your chimney through binoculars.

Unraveling the Mysteries of Great Shearwaters Off the New England Coast

Speaker: Kevin Powers, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

A large variety of marine animals migrate in the oceanic environment, sometimes aiming at specific targets such as oceanic islands or offshore productive areas. Thanks to recent technological developments, various techniques have become available to track marine migrants, even when they move in remote or inhospitable areas. Seabirds cover the longest distances amongst marine animals,
sometimes undertaking interhemispheric flights. Kevin will provide a brief overview of different techniques now deployed to track birds in ocean environments with published examples of transoceanic migrations. Then focus on current research involving satellite-tracking of Great Shearwaters (*Ardenna gravis*) in the Atlantic Ocean conducted by the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, and where all the lost birds may have gone.

**Kevin Powers** is currently a member of the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council where he conducts research on seabirds, primarily Great Shearwaters. He is also a member of Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program Advisory Committee. He retired in 2013 after careers as a scientist and engineer. In 1976 he worked for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in Anchorage, AK cataloging coastal seabird breeding colonies on the Alaskan Peninsula as part of an Outer Continental Shelf Biological Assessment Study prior to the completion the Alaskan pipeline. He was a scientist at the Manomet Bird Observatory (1976-1983) in Manomet, MA, where he studied the distribution and abundance of marine birds on the continental shelf of the Northwest Atlantic. He has authored scientific publications on the distribution, abundance, and the ecological role of marine birds in the northwest Atlantic.

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**Birding During Migration**

Speaker: Sean Williams, PhD, College of the Holy Cross

It’s mid-May, and you have the full week to search for migratory birds. There is a seemingly unlimited selection of locations, and yet you can only choose one hotspot per day. In order to find the maximum number of avian migrants, it is critical to understand the physical and biological forces that lead to the spatial and temporal distributions of migrants. In this talk, we will explore the broad- and fine-scale patterns of migratory birds in order to help you make these important decisions for birding during spring and fall migration seasons.

**Sean Williams** is a Visiting Assistant Professor at College of the Holy Cross. He grew up in South Boston, where his childhood passion for observing birds led to a PhD from Michigan State University on antbird flocking behavior in Peru. At Holy Cross, he teaches Ornithology, Comparative Vertebrate Morphology, and Evolution. Currently, his research encompasses the interaction between birds, ticks, and disease in anthropogenically disturbed versus natural habitats. In addition, he is investigating the physical and biological factors that lead to avian vagrancy. Outside of the classroom, Sean enjoys searching for relatively poorly known taxa in Massachusetts.
Hazards of Migration and Avian Collision Team

Speaker: William Freedberg, Bird Conservation Program Assistant, Mass Audubon

Window strikes are an avoidable and surprisingly common cause of migratory bird deaths. After fattening up despite catastrophic insect decline, dodging storms over the Gulf of Mexico, soldiering on through deforested stopover sites, and evading the claws of feral cats, hundreds of millions of migrants annually die after simply colliding with windows. But window strikes are more easily mitigated than climate change or insect collapse: simple adjustments to lighting design and glass composition are all it takes to reduce fatal collisions. After discussing ways to prevent window strikes in your home and neighborhood, this talk will examine the first year’s results of the Avian Collision Team, a citizen science program to monitor window strikes in Boston.

William Freedberg

Ecological Niche: crepuscular, cavity-nesting herbivore. Phenology/Seasonal Habits: field work and bird censuses in summer months; coordinates citizen science projects for most of the year, including the Avian Collision Team. Occasionally migrates to tropics to lead bird tours in the cold season. Life History Traits: raised in Boston and reluctantly graduated from Yale College. Behavioral Notes: may scavenge window-killed birds in urban habitats; further research is needed to determine what he does with them.

The Science of Saving Birds

Mass Audubon’s Science and Bird Conservation staff addresses complex issues facing bird populations in Massachusetts, such as habitat loss, increasing predation pressure, toxic chemicals, and climate change.

To learn more about Bird Conservation at Mass Audubon or to make a donation, visit: www.massaudubon.org/birds
Hemenway + Hall Wildlife Conservation Award

Back in 1896, it was the passion and persistence of two Boston women who launched the modern-day conservation movement. When Harriet Hemenway and Minna Hall founded Mass Audubon in 1896 to stop the killing of birds for fashion, they left a lasting impact on the environment and served as an inspiration for future generations.

To honor their intrepid spirit, Mass Audubon has created the Hemenway + Hall Wildlife Conservation Award. This honor, which will be awarded annually, recognizes excellence in wildlife conservation and celebrates an individual or organization whose research and related ecological management successes have amply demonstrated and provided a significant and lasting wildlife conservation benefit.

This year's recipient of the award is Manomet. Launched on August 4, 1969, Manomet is celebrating its 50th anniversary. As a science-driven sustainability organization, Manomet believes people can live and work today in ways that will enable our world to thrive and prosper tomorrow. As scientists, Manomet understands we must take action to sustain our world. By applying science and engaging people, Manomet provides practical ways to act—where people live and work.

Today, Manomet's portfolio of work continues its 50-year tradition of avian research and conservation, complemented by a vibrant and growing body of work with the for-profit sector, especially those sectors that affect large ecosystems like forestry, fisheries, retail, and agriculture. To protect the bird species that we love, we need to not only apply what we've learned about protecting critical habitat, but also engage the larger forces that are shaping the world around us.

Manomet understands that drawing on different worldviews is how we solve complex problems that impact the world around us. With its partners, Manomet is leading change to create a more sustainable world: protecting habitat for migrating birds, creating new sustainable agricultural practices, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, safeguarding our air and water, and teaching children how the natural world is changing around them.
Raffle Items

RAFFLE # 1  Sibley First Look — Value $115
- What It's Like to Be a Bird by David Allen Sibley. EXCLUSIVE! Not available in stores until April 14.
- Sibley Birds East (second edition) by David Allen Sibley
- Eastern Bluebird print by David Allen Sibley
- Sibley Backyard Birding Flashcards by David Allen Sibley

RAFFLE # 2  The Gamer — Value $130
- Wingspan board game from Stonemaier Games, designed by Elizabeth Hargrave
- Droll Yankees tube bird feeder
- Eastern Bluebird print by David Allen Sibley
- Suet

RAFFLE # 3  The Naturalist — Value $135
- Arboretum board game from Renegade Game Studios, designed by Phillipe Guérin.
- The Guide to Walden Pond by Robert Thorson
- Field Guide to Nature of New England by Kenn Kaufman
- A Season on the Wind by Kenn Kaufman
- Peterson Reference Guide to Sparrows by Rick Wright
- Droll Yankees "Tweet Spot Dish"
- Suet

RAFFLE # 4  The Generalist — Value $140
- Bosk board game from Floodgate Games, designed by Daryl Andrews and Erica Bouyouris
- The Guide to Walden Pond by Robert Thorson
- Field Guide to Nature of New England by Kenn Kaufman
- Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers by Stephen A. Shunk
- Droll Yankees "Tweet Spot Dish"
- Suet

RAFFLE # 5  Birding Worldwide — Value $140
- A Season on the Wind by Kenn Kaufman
- Gulls Simplified by Pete Dunne and Kevin T. Karlson
Raffle Items

RAFFLE # 5  Birding Worldwide (continued)
- *Birds of Europe* by Lars Svensson, Dan Zetterström, and Killian Mullarney
- *Oceanic Birds of the World* by Steve N.G. Howell and Kirk Zufelt
- Suet

RAFFLE # 6  The Traveler — Value $145
- *A Season on the Wind* by Kenn Kaufman
- *Birds of Prey* by Pete Dunne and Kevin T. Karlson
- *Gulls Simplified* by Pete Dunne and Kevin T. Karlson
- *Birds of Europe* by Lars Svensson, Dan Zetterström, and Killian Mullarney
- *Oceanic Birds of the World* by Steve N.G. Howell and Kirk Zufelt
- Suet

RAFFLE # 7  Summer Sightings — Value $130
- *Baby Birds* by Julie Zickefoose
- *Saving Jemima* by Julie Zickefoose
- *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Eastern North America* by Nathan Pieplow
- *Eastern Bluebird* print by David Allen Sibley
- Suet

RAFFLE # 8  Backyard Buffet — Value $140
- Bird feeder and post mount
- Aspen Song Select bird food

RAFFLE # 9  Blissscapes Landscape Consultation — Value $175

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Robert Braunfield
rbraunfield@yahoo.com
Vendors (continued)

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Swarovski Optik
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Victor Emanuel Nature Tours
info@ventbird.com

Site Map
(Approximation, not to scale)
Mass Audubon Shop’s Spring Optics Sale

Friday, April 3 – Sunday, April 12
Located at Drumlin Farm, Lincoln MA
10:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Tues.–Sun.
781-259-2214

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Many thanks to Kristin Foresto, Mass Audubon Graphic Designer, for another fabulous design!