

The Woodcock

Volume 3 issue 3

Welcome to ABC

The Antioch Bird Club Team extends a hearty welcome to previous and new readers to this edition of *The Woodcock*! This is your one stop to find out all things Antioch Bird Club (ABC). Each month within its pages you will find ABC news and updates, previous event highlights, upcoming event descriptions, and new ways to get involved. Sometimes there will be special editions of this newsletter as well, such as the Global Big Year edition coming soon! Have a creative idea for an event, trip, or activity? We are always accepting suggestions just email an ABC team member or stop by our next meeting (4:15pm February 28th; Rm 231). We are excited to learn about our club members' diverse passions, and we look forward to finding new ways to connect to each other through birds. As a supporter of ABC, you have made a statement for bird conservation locally and globally; thank you!



ABC members leading a guided community bird walk at Horatio Colony Preserve in 2018.

ABC News

Meet the ABC Team

ABC welcomes back Steven Lamonde and Rachel Yurchisin as ABC Coordinators for the spring semester. Steven is a third-year Con Bio student studying Golden-winged Warblers in Vermont, and Rachel is a second-year Con Bio student working on Liz Willey's turtle conservation project.

ABC brought on two new assistants this semester, Kim Snyder and Jessica Poulin! Kim is a first-year Con Bio student and has already brainstormed some exciting new ideas for ABC projects and events. Jessica is a first-year SDCC student, and she will be managing ABC's Facebook page, designing our popular Bird Of The Month flier, and editing *The Woodcock*.

Projects and Events Update

It may be the dead of winter outside but AUNE campus is bustling with activity! Spring semester is well underway and ABC is busy hosting events for our bird-loving members.

Thursday Bird Walks: Our lunch-time bird walks have been well-attended each week by birds and birders alike! We currently have 20 species spotted for the year, 13 of them in the last month (despite the bitter cold). Attendees of our walks have watched for Rock Pigeons at the Elm City Brewery tower, searched for Common Redpolls in the Ash Brook Wetland birches, and scoured the Ashuelot River for ducks. Our efforts have rewarded us with a flock of Common Redpolls on campus, a Brown Creeper at our feeders, and a Hooded Merganser on the icy river.

Birds & Bagels: Held this past weekend (2/16) with bagels courtesy of The Works Cafe, coffee courtesy of CTEC, and birds courtesy of the Cornell Lab Feeder Cams! Our local birds were shy about attending, but the feeder cams were a big hit. The Sapsucker Woods camera showed us a "charm" of american goldfinches, a variety of woodpeckers, and even a surprise cameo by a passing flock of ducks. We also watched the Panama camera and got a chance to admire some tropical residents like Rufous Mot-Mots, Clay-colored Thrushes, and Euphonia species! We had 12 people attend the event and participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count. Thanks for a great turnout! Everyone who attended will receive a participation certificate in the coming weeks.



Attendees of the Bagels and Birds event, using the coloring book from the Bird Club Corner, bird trivia game, as well as resources from the library to identify birds from the feeder watch cameras!

Project FeederWatch: ABC has also officially joined Project Feederwatch and is keeping track of birds that attend our feeders. Counts are taking place on Thursdays and Fridays and data sheets will be in our corner of the library next to the iPad.

Spring Field Ornithology Course: One of our most exciting offerings this semester marks the pilot year of what we hope will be a long-running tradition: Spring Field Ornithology! We have partnered with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to offer a remote screening of their popular online course meant to help beginner and experienced birders alike better understand bird ID, behavior, and habitat. We will be hosting the lectures in person and via Zoom, Fridays at 4:15pm from campus so that local and commuter students may both participate however they can. Students who are unable to attend may access the webinars on their own if they purchase access through the Lab. The Lab was generous enough to give us discount coupons for several of their online courses and we hope that by offering these lectures and coupons, we can reach out to the greater Keene community as well to make this a great outreach opportunity for ABC.

AUNE eBird Hotspot Update

As many of you already know, Antioch University New England has its very own eBird hotspot! Collecting bird observations at popular locations, known as hotspots, allows researchers (this includes students!) to track local bird populations over time. The AUNE hotspot currently lists 118 species, all of which have been seen on, or from, campus. The last species added was a Peregrine Falcon, seen on October 4th by Steven Lamonde. Which species will be next?? Since our last issue of *The Woodcock*, we've tied or surpassed 11 high-count records: Ring-billed Gulls (2), Common Raven (2), Golden-crowned Kinglet (1), Red-bellied Woodpecker (1), Herring Gull (1), Hairy Woodpecker (2), Downy Woodpecker (3), Bald Eagle (1), Northern Cardinal (11), American Tree Sparrow (8), House Sparrow (26), and Mallard (7). A big shout out to John Dunham for seeing a juvenile Bald Eagle fly over campus while watching the bird feeders from the library windows. While this is impressive enough, his sighting of a Bald Eagle ended a 12-year drought since the previous Bald Eagle had been reported!

Headed out for a walk on campus? Make note of which birds you see, and ABC will enter the data into eBird for you!

Bird of the Month

February's highlighted bird species is the Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*). New England's smallest woodpecker, this bird can be frequently seen on campus. Similar in shape and appearance to the larger Hairy Woodpecker, the Downy Woodpecker is readily identified by its smaller size, short bill relative to head length, and black partial striping on its outer white tail feathers. Next time you are outside, listen for the Downy Woodpecker's *descending* rattle call (for comparison,

Bird of the Month

February 2019

Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*)



Size & Shape

Downy Woodpeckers are small versions of the classic woodpecker body plan. They have a straight, chisel-like bill, blocky head, wide shoulders, and straight-backed posture as they lean away from tree limbs and onto their tail feathers. The bill tends to look smaller for the bird's size than in other woodpeckers.

Color Patterns

Downy Woodpeckers have a black and white checkered pattern. The black upper parts are checkered with white on the wings, the head is boldly striped, and the back has a broad white stripe down the center. Males have a small red patch on the back of the head. The outer tail feathers are typically white with a few black spots.

Behavior

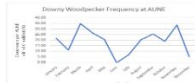
Downy Woodpeckers hitch around tree limbs and trunks or drop into tall weeds to feed on galls, moving more acrobatically than larger woodpeckers. Their rising-and-falling flight style is distinctive of many woodpeckers.

Songs/Calls

Both sexes make a whinnying call during the breeding season. It's a somewhat excited string of hoarse, high-pitched notes that descend in pitch toward the end, lasting about 2 seconds. Rhythmic birds also give a very sharp put note, occasionally repeated several times.

Both sexes drum on trees to claim territories, attract mates, and signal readiness for mating. The drumming is made up of very rapid strokes given at a steady pace. As they excavate, they also make a slow, deliberate and much quieter tapping sound which can attract a mate to the site.

More Information



Scan here or please visit: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Downy_Woodpecker/id

Antioch Bird Club

All images and information courtesy of All About Birds and Audubon

Hairy Woodpeckers have a *horizontal* pitch to their rattle call). So just remember: Downy Woodpecker = descending call, Hairy Woodpecker = horizontal call.

ABC Global Big Year: Request for Content

To commemorate our first-ever Global Big Year, we are creating a final report that summarizes our year-long effort to find birds all over the world. A number of participants have shared their favorite Big Year memories, stories, and moments, but we are still looking for more! If you would like to share one of your stories, please send it to Steven (slamonde@antioch.edu) before March 1st. To get your creative juices flowing, here are some ideas:

- A short story of a favorite bird-related moment from 2018
- A brief paragraph on what participating in the Big Year meant to you
- A recollection of a fond bird related memory from 2018
- A bird-related inspirational message to others
- A sentence about a bird-related tip, trick, or fun fact that you learned in 2018

We are also looking for bird photos taken by Big Year participants! If you have a favorite bird photo from 2018, please send it to Steven (slamonde@antioch.edu) with mention of the date and location.



Malachite Kingfisher photographed by Kevin Vande Vusse (AUNE alum) on April 2 at Lake Baringo, Kenya.

Upcoming Events

Nest Dissection Workshop

Saturday, February 23 (AUNE) 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Ever wondered what goes into making a nest? Join Antioch Bird Club where we will learn about different bird species' nest construction through this hands-on workshop. We will learn why birds use different materials and how they create nests through nest dissection. This workshop will also contribute to a greater understanding of bird nesting success and survivorship in our backyards as we participate in a local citizen-science project called Neighborhood Nestwatch. Snacks provided!



Please meet in E101 at 10:00 AM. For more information, please contact Kat Lauer (klauer1@antioch.edu).

Coastal Birding Trip: Cape Ann and Plum Island

Monday, February 25th all day (6:00 AM to ~8:30 PM)

Join us for a fun-filled day of seabird and raptor viewing as ABC journeys to Cape Ann, MA and Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. This is a great opportunity to enjoy true birding hotspots of coastal New England. This trip will be an opportunity to see a variety of seabirds including eiders, scaups, loons, grebes, mergansers, scoters, and with any luck the stunning Harlequin Duck. Likely raptors include Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, and Red-tailed Hawk, with Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Rough-legged Hawk, Short-eared Owl, and Snowy Owl distinct possibilities.



Other winter specialties we may see include Horned Lark, Snow Bunting, Lapland Longspur, Purple Sandpiper, alcids, and Iceland and Glaucous gulls. Recent rarities seen in Essex County include Ross's Goose, Dovekie, Dickcissel, Mew Gull, and Thick-billed Murre.

Please bring binoculars if possible (available at AUNE Herbarium), lots of water, and plenty of warm layers.

After touring Cape Ann throughout the morning, we'll swing north to Plum Island and Parker River NWR, staying there until ~45 minutes after sunset to see Short-eared Owls hunting.

The only trip costs will be money for food as stops will be made throughout the day. In past years, we've had dinner at The Flatbread Company in Amesbury, MA. We will meet at AUNE (See times above) the morning of to carpool to the coast and back.

Questions? Contact Steven Lamonde (slamonde@antioch.edu)

First Signs of Spring: A Bird's Perspective (Part I)

Friday March 1st (AUNE) 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

With just a few weekends left in winter, many birds have started getting ready for spring. Back by popular demand, join the Antioch Bird Club for an educational presentation about the spectacle of spring migration.

This presentation will take place in the Community Room at Antioch University New England (40 Avon Street, Keene, NH).



First Signs of Spring: A Bird's Perspective (Part II)

Saturday March 2nd (Horatio Colony Nature Preserve) 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Join the Antioch Bird Club for an educational walk and guided identification of late-winter birds. Join us for a moderately strenuous hike at the Horatio Colony Nature Preserve, beginning and ending at the parking lot on Daniels Hill Road. Please bring water, a snack, and binoculars for spotting birds. Weather is highly variable this time of year, so take care to dress appropriately and wear hiking footwear. Co-sponsored by Antioch Bird Club, Horatio Colony Nature Preserve, Cheshire County Conservation District.



Registration required; call 603-283-2115 or email colonypreserve@antioch.edu for details. FREE

Join us for our next meeting

Thursday, February 28th, 2019

4:15 - 5:15 pm (Room 231)

Follow us on Facebook for all of our latest events, fun birding and bird related articles, and bird photos.

<https://www.facebook.com/AUNEBirdClub/>

Contact us at: antiochbirdclub@gmail.com