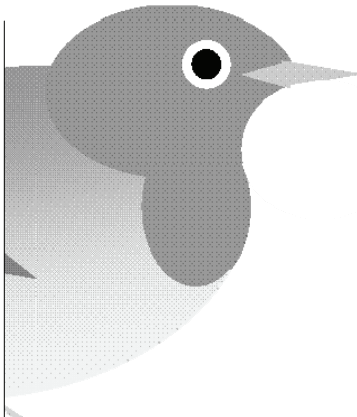
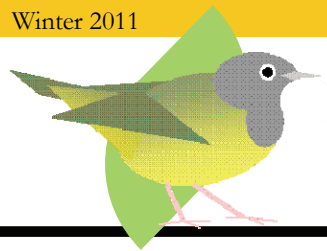


COA BULLETIN



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CBC Schedule	1-2
Big January advice	3-4
Autumn Rarities	5
CT Warbler 25 yrs ago	6
COA events	7



Yellow-breasted Chat photo by
Bill Batsford.

See page 5 for more fall birds.

112TH ANNUAL NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT CONNECTICUT CBC SCHEDULE 2011-2012

COMPILED BY STEPHEN P. BROKER

"It is not many years ago that sportsmen were accustomed to meet on Christmas Day, 'choose sides,' and then, as representatives of the two bands resulting, hie them to the fields and woods on the cheerful mission of killing practically everything in fur or feathers that crossed their path – if they could.

"These exceptional opportunities for winning the laurels of the chase were termed 'side hunts,' and reports of the hundreds of non-game birds which were sometimes slaughtered during a single hunt were often published in our leading sportsmen's journals, with perhaps a word of editorial commendation for the winning side. We are not certain that the side hunt is wholly a thing of the past, but we feel assured that no reputable sportsman's journal of today would venture to publish an account of one, unless it were to condemn it; and this very radical change of tone is one of the significant signs of the times.

"Now Bird-Lore proposes a new kind of Christmas side hunt, in the form of a Christmas bird-census, and we hope that all our readers will have the opportunity to aid us in making it a success by spending a portion of Christmas Day with the birds and sending a report of their 'hunt' to Bird-Lore before they retire that night. Such reports should be headed by the locality, hour of starting and of returning, character of the weather, direction and force of the wind, and the temperature; the latter being taken when starting. The birds observed should then be added, following the order in which they are given in the A.O.U. 'Check List,' with, if possible, the exact or approximate number of individuals of each species observed."

Bird-Lore, Volume II, Number 6 (December 1900)

Please contact compilers directly for information about participating in a count.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2011:

Hartford, CT (CTHA): Compilers: Jay Kaplan, 71 Gracey Road, Canton, CT 06019, jaybrd49@aol.com 860-693-0263 (days), 860-693-0157 (evenings), and Steve Davis, stevesuedavis@comcast.net 860-242-2135. ("blizzard date", Sunday, December 18) (Hartford Audubon Society)

New Haven, CT (CTNH) Compiler: Chris Loscalzo, 67 Wepawaug Road, Woodbridge, CT 06525, closcalz@optonline.net, 203-389-6508 (New Haven Bird Club)

Storrs, CT (CTST) Compiler: Steve Morytko, 288 Varga Road, Ashford, CT 06278, smorytko@yahoo.com (H) 860-429-9600, (M) 860-680-5728

Woodbury-Roxbury, CT (CTWR) Compilers: Renee Baade, 46 Obtuse Road, Newtown, CT 06470 rbaade@juno.com (H) 203-270-9953; Ken Elkins, Audubon Center at Bent of the River; 185 East Flat Hill Road, Southbury, CT 06488

kelkins@audubon.org

Continued on page 2 →

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2011-2012

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2011:

Greenwich-Stamford, CT (CTGS) Compilers: Brian O'Toole, 203-869-5272; Gary Palmer, 34 Field Road, Cos Cob, CT 06807. Direct e-mail to Brian O'Toole, otoole29@yahoo.com

Lakeville-Sharon, CT (CTLS) Contact Audubon Sharon, 325 Cornwall Bridge Road, Sharon, CT 06069, <http://sharon.audubon.org/>, 860-364-0520

Litchfield Hills, CT (CTLH) Compiler: Raymond E. Belding, 1229 Winsted Road #30, Torrington, CT 06790, hoatzin1@optonline.net, 860-482-4046 (Litchfield Hills Audubon Society)

Napatree, RI-CT-NY (RINT) Compilers: Shai Mitra, Biology Department, College of Staten Island, 2800 Victory Blvd, Staten Island, NY 10314, mitra@mail.csi.cuny.edu; Glenn Williams, 221 Pequot Avenue, Mystic, CT 06355, gswilliams9@yahoo.com

Oxford, CT (CTOX) Compiler: Roy Harvey, 32 Wanda Drive, Beacon Falls, CT 06403, rmharvey@snet.net, 203-888-5757

Quinnipiac Valley, CT (CTQV) Compilers: Melissa Baston, mbaston@tgimachine.com and Corinne Folsom-O'Keefe, 203-630-9640, jubilee832001@yahoo.com (Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society)

Salmon River, CT (CTSR) Compiler: Joe Morin, 8 West Street Terrace, Cromwell, CT 06416, 860-635-2786 (Mattabeseck Audubon Society)

Westport, CT (CTWE) Compilers: Mardi and Townsend Dickinson, 20 Blake Street, Norwalk CT 06851 mardi1d@gmail.com, 203-846-0359

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2011:

Barkhamsted, CT (CTBA) Compiler: David Tripp, Jr., 63 Dyer Avenue, Canton, CT 06019-3233, dtrippjr@comcast.net, 860-693-6524

Stratford-Milford, CT (CTSM) Compiler: Steve Mayo, 27 Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 06524, rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net, 203-393-0694

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2011:

New London, CT (CTNL) Compiler: Robert Dewire, 9 Canary Lane, Pawcatuck, CT 06379, robertdewire9@comcast.net, 860-599-3085

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2012:

Old Lyme-Saybrook, CT (CTOL) Compiler: Barbara Hawes (Potapaug Audubon Society, P.O. Box 591, Old Lyme, CT 06371) bhawes71@gmail.com

Pawling (Hidden Valley), NY/CT (NYHV) Compilers: Carena Pooth, 22 Brothers Road, Poughquag, NY 12570, carena@prodigy.net, 845-724-3236; Angela Dimmitt, P.O. Box 146, Sherman, CT 06784, angeladimmitt@aol.com, 860-355-3429 (snow storm date January 2, 2011)

MONDAY, JANUARY 2, 2012:

Edwin Way Teale Trail Wood Sanctuary - Hampton, CT (CTEW) Compiler: Sue Harrington, 28D Anton Road, Storrs, CT 06268, hoopoe@sbcglobal.net, 860-429-6257

Big January is Coming!

2011 Listers Offer Advice and Encouragement for 2012

COA encourages its members and friends to start the new birding year with enthusiasm and fun. It has traditionally supported an event known as "Big January," an informal competition designed to get birders out into the cold, wind, snow, and hail, to look for as many species as possible during that first dark month of the year.

The *Bulletin* contacted everyone who reported his or her bird species totals to Frank Mantlik at the end of January 2011, and asked about their experiences and advice for the upcoming challenge.

Bill Asteriades, Carl Ekroth, Tina Green, Greg Hanisek, Kris Johnson, and Sara Zagorski offer the following words of wisdom for the upcoming Big January:

What is the single most valuable advice you would give to someone doing a Big January in Connecticut?

BA: Besides a cooperative spouse/significant other and toe warmers, tenacity in chasing rarities is very important. 80-90% of most Big January participant's species list will be the same; it is the rarities that make the difference.

CE: If there is no snow in the beginning go for inland birds first. If you wait there may be too much snow on the ground to find many birds, then go to the shore unless there is a rarity at the shore.

TG: If you're thinking about if and why anyone would participate in Big January, here are some things to consider: I participated in my very first Big January in 2009 as someone who had only been birding for about a year.

If you're new to this hobby, it's a great way to see new locations that you otherwise might not visit. You will probably see species that you have not seen before which will surely help boost your enthusiasm to get out there no matter what the weather or the time of day. It's also very helpful to get out with experienced birders. Participate in as many of the bird walks that are offered by various organizations throughout the state as you can. It's a great way to see and learn about birding in general and to meet others who share your passion.

Most importantly, do a Big January for the fun of it!

GH: If you don't want to get involved in a lot of traveling and chasing, consider rounding up some friends and try doing it only with birds you've found on your own.

KJ: Go birding with friends, it's more fun. Try to go on every walk possible with "experts" throughout the month. Make a plan for January 1 to get the excitement and quest going.

SZ: Plan to get most of your birds the first week of January

January 1, 2012 is a Sunday.
What a great way to start the new birding year !

Continued on next page



What's the best way to get information about what birds are around or have been seen?

BA: CTBirds listserve, Birding on the Net for nearby states (birds may come into CT) and fellow birders. Maintaining birding contacts is also an important way to determine the birding sites which have the highest probability of seeing your target birds.

CE: CT list serve is the best way I know of to get information of what's around and where.

KJ: Read CT bird on the web several times a day and if possible be prepared to go out

SZ: Christmas count lists, especially for rarities, and eBird

How far would you travel to see a new January bird?

BA: Up to 1 1/2 hours.

CE: I wouldn't go to say Greenwich for one bird, if there are more than a few in the area then I would go anywhere.

KJ: CT is a small state; if it is safe to travel go all over the state.

SZ: Just about anywhere .

What's the best way to get weather information?

BA: Weather.com and Intellicast .

CE: I use WFSB.com and click on technical discussion.

KJ: Check the web and The Weather Channel.

SZ: Weather Channel and local TV news .

Are there any reference sources you would recommend (books, websites, etc.) to get ready?

BA: The Sibley Field Guide to Birds or your favorite bird guide and The Connecticut Warbler - Connecticut Birds by the Season.

CE: You should know your birds before you go out, a good field guide or two is what I would recommend.

KJ: Read Greg Hanisek's "Connecticut Birds by the Season" and keep a copy with you for reference about what is usual or unusual .

SZ: Just watch eBird for the previous week to get a sense of what birds are where .

What other information or advice would you share with other Big January hopefuls?

BA: 1) chase rarities as soon as they are reported;
2) report your findings to CT Birds promptly and;
3) have fun!

CE: Spend all the time you can in the field.

KJ: Have fun and dress warmly, forget about how cold it is. Go to Dunkin' Donuts for refreshments!

SZ: Every minute of every day counts!



Bill Asteriades had such a successful Big January (144 species) that he decided to extend his search into a Connecticut Big Year. At the beginning of December, his total is an impressive 304 species, and counting.

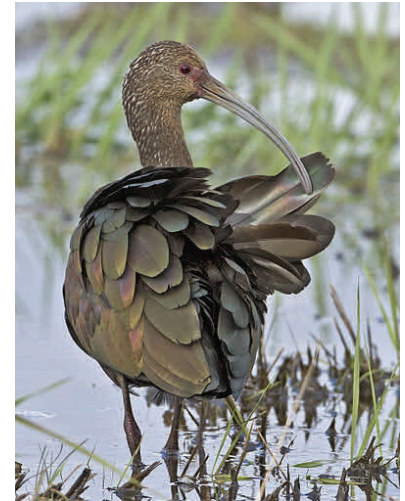
Bill is employed full time and lives in Glastonbury, so he is proof that it's possible to see a lot of great birds in our state even if you don't live on the coast or have all day to devote to birding!

AUTUMNAL RARITIES 2011

Was it the hurricane, the snowstorm, high winds, or just a mistaken migration navigation system that sent us these uncommon birds? In any case, Connecticut birders were happy to find and observe them this fall.



This yellow-breasted chat battled a territorial mockingbird for a small piece of territory at the west end of Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison from Nov. 19th to the 21st. Photo by Paul J. Fusco



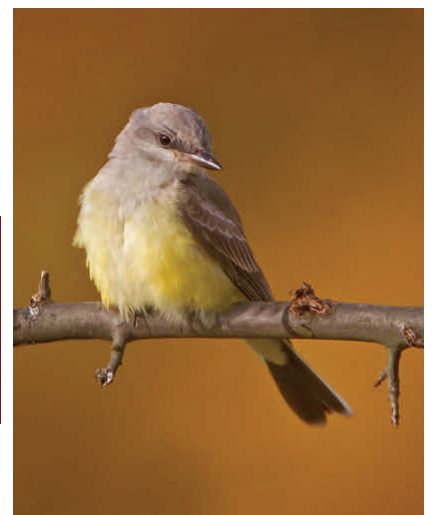
A white-faced ibis started off the parade of uncommon birds the third week of October. It enjoyed the marshes surrounding the Portland Fairgrounds for about 3 days. Photo by Mark Szantyr



This beautiful painted bunting was discovered by Patrick Dugan at Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary on November 25. It only stayed one more morning, but those birders who were able to get to Stamford appreciated its colorful beauty. @Townsend Dickinson, All rights reserved.



Several snowy owls delighted CT birders this November. This one showed up in East Haven on November 15. Others were reported from Hammonasset Beach SP, Stratford Point, and New Milford. Photo by Vanessa Caccamise



An uncommon but regular visitor, this western kingbird enjoyed the CAS Smith-Richardson Preserve in Westport from Nov. 12th until at least the 26th. Photo by AJ Hand

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN *THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER*
 COMPILED BY STEPHEN P. BROKER

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER, VOLUME VI, NUMBER 4 (OCTOBER 1986)

"IN PRAISE OF FAMOUS MEN . . ." by Alan H. Brush

"Connecticut's only Professor of Ornithology left this summer to return to California. Charles Sibley was born in California and received his formal education at the University of California, Berkeley. From the start he was interested in mechanisms of species formation and by implication, the evolution of birds. The connection between the 2 processes was unclear at the time, but his work over 40 years has contributed greatly to our understanding of the evolution and systematics of birds.



Charles Sibley

"Charles was probably the first avian systematist to embrace modern molecular approaches in the study of relationships among birds. His early work on the protein chemistry of egg-whites went through several phases and culminated in 2 Peabody Museum Bulletins. . . These years of work were only a prologue to the next step which involved moving from the gene products (proteins) to the level of the genes themselves.

"In recent years Sibley, in close association with Jon Alquist, developed DNA X DNA hybridization as a technique to study the evolution and relationships of birds. His laboratory produced a staggering amount of data on birds and recently studies were initiated on higher primates. . . As often happens in highly innovative work, some of the interpretations are hotly debated, but the primary data are recognized as a substantial contribution and the techniques are being widely adopted. . . Whatever the eventual outcome, the work has been instrumental in stimulating interest in the relationship of birds."

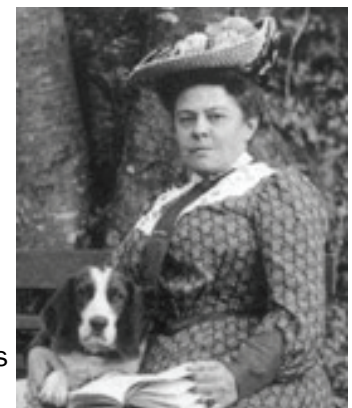
HIGHLIGHTS OF CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGY, 1780-1930, by George A. Clark, Jr.

"The first extensive report on Connecticut birds was by the Reverend James H. Linsley (1787-1843) who, after seven years of study published the first state checklist in 1843. By modern criteria Linsley's list is inadequate, for he included species not known to occur in Connecticut with the expectation that they should occur. Not until 1877 did another state checklist appear. This list (1877) by C. Hart Merriam (1855-1942) was more satisfactory in many respects. Merriam's major contribution to Connecticut ornithology came when he was an undergraduate student at Yale (1874-1877). Merriam was also a collector. His collections of Connecticut bird specimens can now be found in the British Museum (Natural History) at Tring, England. . . Later, he made important contributions to ornithology on the national scene, directing for 25 years the U.S. Biological Survey, forerunner of the present U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

[Other Connecticut ornithologists discussed in the article include: Professor O.C. Marsh; George Bird Grinnell; John H. Sage; Louis Bishop.]

"The late 1800s saw an awakening of interest in bird preservation and of scientific study of living birds in the field. Numerous state and local Audubon groups were formed between 1895 [and] 1915. Mabel Osgood Wright (1859-1934) was prominent in the formation of the Connecticut Audubon Society (C.A.S.) and its later acquisition of Birdcraft Sanctuary.

She was also a leader in the national Audubon movement.



Mabel Osgood Wright



More than 50 birders participated in the popular COA Sparrow Workshop October 16, 2011 at Silver Sands State Park, Milford. Although high winds made finding a lot of birds a challenge, seven species of sparrows, including a vesper, were identified. Photo by Steve Broker.

The eBird Workshop held at Greenwich Audubon on November 6 was conducted by Project Leader Marshall Iliff. In addition to discussing the what, why, and how of eBird, Marshall led a field trip around the property and then did a hands-on demonstration about entering sighting data and exploring the vast amount of information held by eBird.

SAVE THE DATE !

The 2012 COA
Annual Meeting
is Saturday,
March 24 at
Middlesex Community
College, Middletown.

It will feature
Richard Crossley
Wayne Peterson,
Alvaro Jaramillo

Watch for details in the next
COA Bulletin,
on the [COA Website](#),
and in your membership
renewal letter, coming soon.

COA Mini Grants Available! Application Deadline is January 15, 2012

COA is soliciting grant applications for projects that will support initiatives within the State of Connecticut which specifically benefit the avian wildlife of our state. It has always been part of COA's mission to reach out to all those in Connecticut who appreciate our state's birds and to support bird management and conservation initiatives whenever possible.

Grants will be awarded in amounts of up to \$500.00, with \$500.00 being the maximum amount awarded in any single year. Applications are due on or before January 15, 2012. Project selection will be made by the COA-Minigrant subcommittee and awards will be announced at the COA Annual Meeting on March 24, 2012.

Guidelines and an application are available on the [COA website](#) or at
<http://groups.google.com/group/coa-minigrants>

REMINDER

COA annual membership renewals are due in January
[RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH PAYPAL>>](#)

See full details of membership categories, fees, and all payment options at
<http://ctbirding.org/join.htm>

COA OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	Ken Elkins, 43 Park Street, Shelton, CT 06484
<i>Vice President</i>	Randy Domina, 248 Mansion Road, Cheshire, CT 06420
<i>Secretary</i>	Steve Broker, 50 Hidden Place, Cheshire, CT 06410, 203-272-5192
<i>Treasurer</i>	Fred Schroeder, 215 Lonetown Road, West Redding, CT 06896, 203-938-9165
<i>Assistant Treasurer</i>	Jack Wells, 103 Sheephill Road, Riverside, CT 06878

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<i>Conservation</i>	Milan Bull
<i>Finance</i>	Fred Schroeder
<i>Membership</i>	Larry Reiter
<i>Workshops</i>	Tina Green
<i>Annual Meeting</i>	Ken Elkins
<i>Connecticut Warbler</i>	Greg Hanisek
<i>COA Bulletin</i>	Denise Jernigan
<i>Rare Records</i>	Jay Kaplan
<i>Refuge Relations</i>	Milan Bull
<i>Science Advisory</i>	Milan Bull

The COA Bulletin is the quarterly newsletter of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, published in February, May, September, and December. Please submit materials for the next issue by
January 9, 2012 to:

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ASSOCIATION