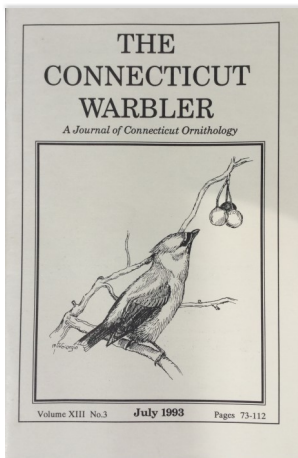


COA Bulletin



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COA is an all-volunteer organization with the mission of promoting interest in Connecticut birds, and collecting, preparing, and disseminating the best available scientific information on the status of Connecticut birds and their habitats. While COA is not primarily an advocacy organization, we work actively to provide scientific information and to support other conservation organizations in the state.

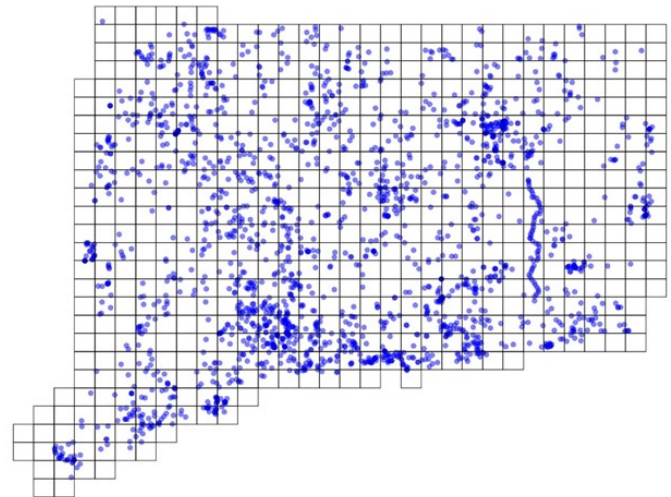
Connecticut Bird Atlas Update

Progress on the Connecticut Bird Atlas continues apace. As of early July, over 600 people have volunteered to work on the project and 450 atlas blocks (75%) have been assigned. Even more important, data for the first breeding season are pouring in. More than 5,000 checklists have been shared with the atlas eBird account, with over 35,000 individual records that include breeding codes. These checklists are distributed widely across the state, although, as Map 1 shows, there are clearly some areas that have received more attention than others.

To get an initial sense of what this survey effort means in terms of data gathered, Map 2 shows the number of breeding species in each atlas block that have been reported via eBird. The map shows great progress in some areas, but also reflects the pattern evident from Map 1 – that there are several parts of the state where we will need more surveys in the future.

It is important to remember, though, that we are still early in the project. Data submitted via eBird are easy to enumerate as they can be downloaded directly into the atlas data base. In addition to eBird submissions, however, we have many records that are being submitted via the atlas project's forms. These data will need to be entered into the data base manually, and are not yet included in any of our preliminary results (including the maps in this article). Work to incorporate this information will begin soon, and we anticipate having all of this year's data summarized by sometime this fall.

We are also just beginning to incorporate atlas data from other sources – for example, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection technicians have been conducting specialized “point count” surveys all summer, designed to help us



Map 1. Distribution of checklists shared with the Connecticut Bird Atlas eBird account between the start of the 2018 breeding survey and early July 2018. Each blue dot represents a location where at least one checklist has been submitted.

describe abundance patterns across the state. These technicians were also tasked with reporting atlas breeding codes, so their data will add to the block counts. And, we are working with various researchers around the state who have been conducting other studies that involve breeding birds. Many of these researchers have already agreed to give us location information for all of the nesting birds that they have found for inclusion in the atlas, and we will be reaching out to others who might have valuable data.

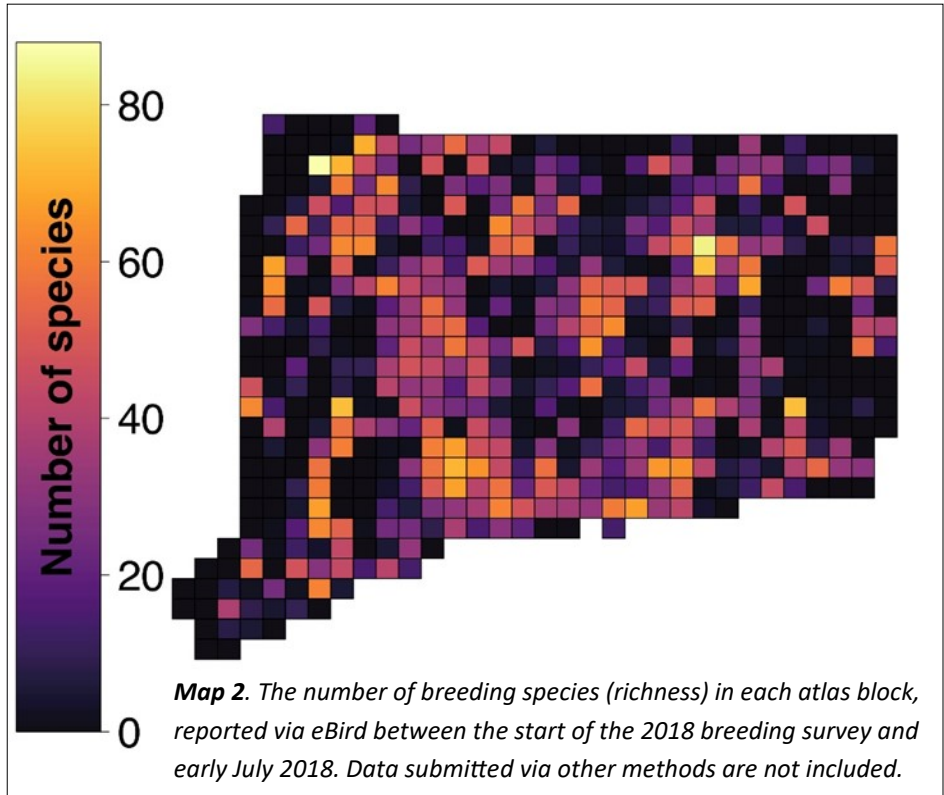
All this is to say that the preliminary maps we present here, and the block totals that can be found on the interactive map on the atlas web site, should be taken with a grain of salt. In

many cases, we expect species counts to increase as additional data are compiled and added to the data base. This fall we will also begin a series of detailed quality control analyses, designed to identify breeding codes that have been misused, and to flag any records that are in surprising locations – we will then follow up with observers to ensure that these records are correctly entered into the data base.

Later this fall, we will also update the web site's interactive map to provide a preliminary species list, and associated breeding codes, for every block. This will allow anyone familiar with a block to review the data and let us know if they see any problems. Once these quality control steps are complete, we will also generate initial maps for each species.

Although we are cautious about releasing too much preliminary information before we have completed a careful review of the data, we thought it would be interesting to provide a couple of examples for individual species, to show the type of information that the final results will provide. First, we already know that there are several species for which we have confirmed breeding in more blocks than during the first atlas in the 1980s. For example, common raven had only just begun to return to the state when that survey was conducted, with a handful of probable and possible breeding records in the far northwest corner of the state. In contrast, as Map 3 shows, we've already confirmed breeding in three dozen blocks this year, with records distributed across the state. Other species for which we have confirmed breeding in more blocks than during the first atlas include black vulture, osprey, bald eagle, sedge wren, and boat-tailed grackle.

At the other extreme, there are many species for which we have many fewer records than during the first atlas. For example, American robin has been confirmed in many places, as shown in Map 4, but nothing like the 99% of blocks during the first atlas. This difference does not necessarily indicate a declining population, and is presumably due mostly to the lack of surveys in many blocks, but it helps highlight the work that remains to be done.



Speaking of work still to be done, remember that this is not simply a breeding bird atlas. We are still finalizing survey protocols for the migration and winter portions of the project, but we expect to release these over the next 2-3 months. Data collection methods for migration atlases are less well worked out than for breeding projects, so we have decided to run just a pilot survey this year using trained technicians, so that we can refine our methods before asking for lots of volunteer help. Birders can still add to our understanding of migration in the state, by submitting eBird checklists whenever they go birding. Next spring and fall, though, we will have more detailed information on ways that birders can contribute. The winter atlas, on the other hand, will begin in earnest this year, with birders asked to conduct surveys in their blocks during the months of November-December, and again in January-February. Full details on the protocols will be released in the fall. We are also beginning to plan a get together for atlas volunteers at Hammonasset on October 7th (12-3 pm). This event will give volunteers a chance to meet, share stories, and for the atlas team to present some initial results and answer questions about the winter surveys.

In the meantime, we would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the study so far, and to encourage those who have not to consider doing so. Such a large effort is only possible because so many people have given up their time to contribute. As the summer wanes, please continue to keep an eye out for breeding evidence, while being mindful that species have safe dates at the end of the breeding season after which only certain confirmed breeding codes will be accepted. And, of course, if you have a pile of field cards, or eBird checklists, that you have not yet submitted, please send them to us as soon as possible.

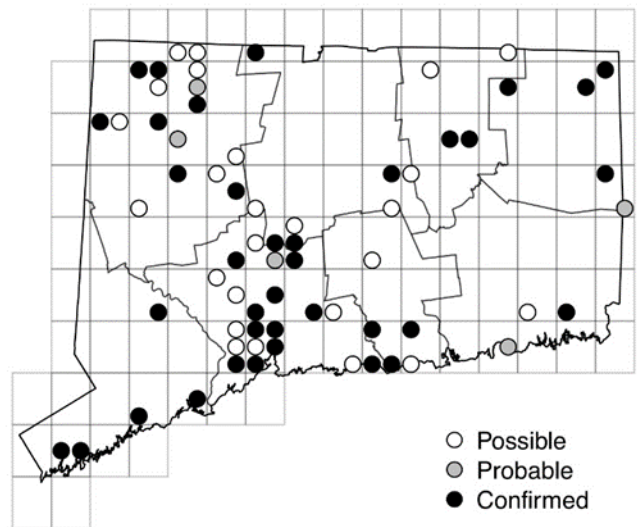
Chris Elphick, Min Huang, Morgan Tingley, Craig Repasz

Website: www.ctbirdatlas.org

Submit data to: ctbirdatlasdata@gmail.com

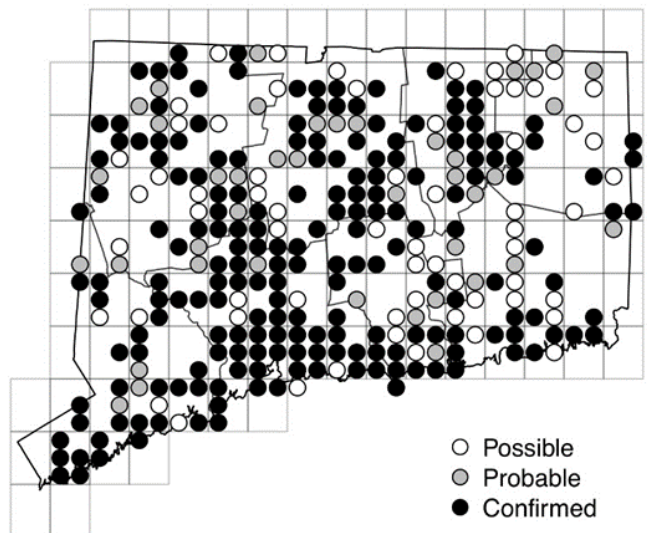
Volunteer via: ctbirdatlasvol@gmail.com

Common Raven



Map 3. Preliminary breeding distribution data for common raven, showing records reported via eBird between the start of the 2018 breeding survey and early July 2018.

American Robin



Map 4. Preliminary breeding distribution data for American robin, showing records reported via eBird between the start of the 2018 breeding survey and early July 2018.

Upcoming Events and Workshops

(these and many other events are also listed on the COA web site's [Birding Calendar](#))



Annual Migration Festival

Sunday, September 16th,
Lighthouse Point Park
21 Lighthouse Rd, New Haven CT

This festive event is sponsored by the New Haven Department of Parks, Recreation and Trees; the NHBC; and other fine organizations. There will be hawk watching, bird banding, live raptor demonstrations, bird walks, and more. Chris Loscalzo will lead a walk at 8 AM, Mike Horn will lead a 9:30 AM walk, and Flo McBride will lead a kid's walk at 9:30 AM. Additional details will be forthcoming on the New Haven Bird Club web site.



COA Raptor Workshop

Sunday, September 16th, 9 AM-10 AM
Lighthouse Point Park
21 Lighthouse Rd, New Haven CT

Learn how to identify raptors as they pass by in fall migration. You'll learn how to identify the various buteos, accipiters, eagles, vultures, and falcons that can be observed in CT. The workshop will be held during the Migration Festival, run by the New Haven Parks Department.

Leader: Steve Mayo (coordinator of the Lighthouse Point Hawk Watch).

Contact person: Chris Loscalzo at closcalz@optonline.net and 203 389-6508



Connecticut Bird Atlas Volunteer Appreciation Fall Get Together

Sunday, October 7th, 12 PM - 3 PM
Hammonasset Beach State Park, Pavilion 4

We will give updates of the Atlas Project, data, trends and stats; present the winter survey protocol; and present awards and door prizes. Refreshments will be served. Stay tuned for more announcements.



COA Sparrow Workshop

Saturday, October 20th, 8 AM - 11 AM (Rain date, Sunday, October 21)
Sherwood Island State Park, Westport

Improve your identification skills of the numerous sparrow species that are found in CT by attending this workshop. We will have an indoor review session followed by a walk in the park. We'll review how to differentiate between similar species and gain a greater appreciation for this remarkable group of birds. October is the height of sparrow migration and we may see ten or more species on the trip. Meet at the nature center parking lot at the east end of the park at 8 AM. The workshop is free and open to COA members and non-members alike.

Leaders: Tina Green, Chris Loscalzo, et al.

Contact person: Chris Loscalzo at closcalz@optonline.net and 203 389-6508



COA Sea Duck Workshop

Saturday, November 24, 8 AM - 11 AM
Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison

Learn how to identify the different waterfowl species that visit our coast in fall and winter, including loons, grebes, scoters, eider, and scaup. We'll review how to differentiate between similar species. After a discussion session, we'll look out into the sound to see what we can find. Meet at the nature center parking lot. Bring a scope if you have one.

Leader and contact person: Chris Loscalzo at closcalz@optonline.net and 203 389-6508.

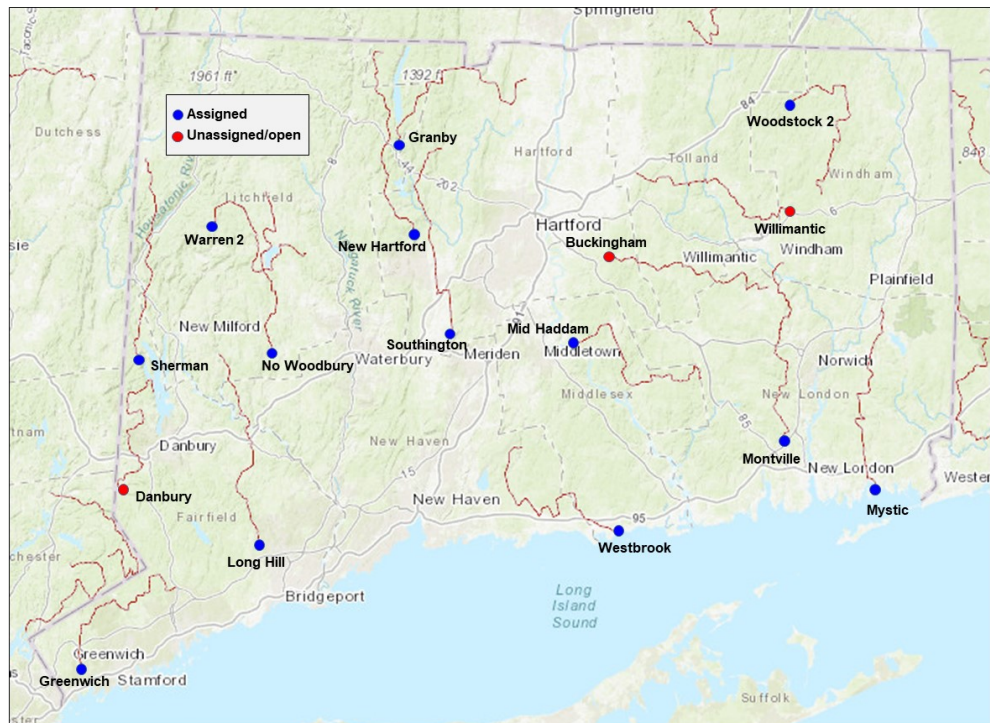
North American Breeding Bird Survey - Volunteers Needed!



In 1966, 52 years ago, the North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) was launched to track the status and trends of bird populations in the continental United States and Canada. Over 4,100 roadside survey routes (each with 50 fixed observation points spaced 0.5 miles apart) are scattered across this vast territory. The data obtained from 3-minute point counts at each stop, year after year, during the peak of the nesting season, is analyzed to provide an index of population abundance that can be used to assess population trends and relative abundance across a variety of geographic scales. The length of time over which the BBS has been conducted makes it an extremely valuable source of information in establishing conservation priorities at the state, regional, and national levels. Visit the BBS web site www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/ for more details.

Connecticut has 16 BBS routes distributed over the state, as shown below. For the 2019 season, three routes need to have new observers assigned (red dots on map).

- **Danbury** - originating in Ridgefield and ending in New Fairfield
- **Willimantic** - originating in Chaplin and ending in Vernon
- **Buckingham** - originating in Glastonbury and ending in Lebanon



Because surveys start at 4:45 a.m., you might prefer a route with a starting point not too far away from your house. First-time observers should also plan on driving the route beforehand to become familiar with the stop locations. A survey takes around 5 hours, and can be performed on any morning between the end of May and the beginning of July (as long as there's no rain or excessive wind).

Requirements for participation are:

- Good hearing and eyesight.
- The ability to identify all breeding birds in the area by sight and sound. Knowledge of bird songs is extremely important, because most birds counted on these surveys are singing males.

New BBS participants must also successfully complete the on-line BBS Methodology Training Program before their data will be used in any BBS analyses.

Please e-mail Andrew Dasinger, state BBS coordinator, at amdasinger@gmail.com if you want to become an official observer for the BBS. Thanks!

The Coast Guard Heard Us!

Design for proposed National Coast Guard Museum modified to address potential for bird collisions

Past COA president Kathy Van Der Aue and current president Steve Broker both submitted comment letters to the National Coast Guard Museum Association to express concerns with the large amount of reflective glass in the initial design of this multi-story waterfront building, and the potential hazards this posed to migratory birds (initially alerted to the situation by Paul Fusco of CT DEEP). COA recently received a letter from Malone & Macbroom, the architects for the proposed museum, announcing the release of the supplemental environmental assessment (SEA). Due to COA's comments, design changes were implemented to significantly reduce the risk of bird collisions. We should never underestimate COA's ability to influence projects like this by serving as an authoritative source of information on matters related to bird conservation!

The following text from the SEA discusses the design modifications:

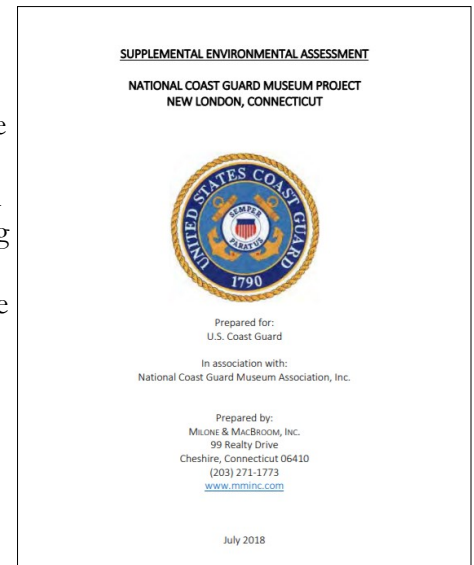
“One of the important features of the NCGM site is its proximity to, and engagement with, the Thames River. As a result, it is important for the building to maintain transparency, both as a way to provide views from the interior and to interact with the public realm. This provides unique opportunities to enhance the visitor experience through programming centered on the views to the Thames River and observable vessel traffic in the area. At the same time, however, glass in a building creates the potential for bird strikes. Birds cannot see glass. Instead, they see what is reflected in its mirrorlike surfaces or through it to potential resting areas. Bird strikes often occur in areas of shaded glass or in areas where glass reflects adjacent vegetation or the sky.

Scoping comments raised a concern for bird strikes with the initial design concept. In recognition of the risks to migratory birds, the Coast Guard was urged to consider incorporating bird-safe glazing options to make the glass more easily detected by birds. A variety of approaches have been considered, such as fritting, silk-screening, ultraviolet coating, creating a pattern that breaks up the reflectivity of the glass and alerts birds to its presence.

Understanding that bird-safe glass is only one part of the equation and not guaranteed to be 100 percent effective, efforts were first made to simply reduce the total amount of glass, virtually eliminating the north- and east-facing glass on the upper floors and concentrating transparent sections of the building on those areas facing to the south. The net impact of this was an approximately 30 percent reduction in transparent surface from the initial concepts.

Having accomplished this, a combination of techniques were considered to make the transparent glass less of a hazard to birds. First, there would be no vegetation near or inside the building, so its installation would be less attractive as a stopping off point for birds. The glass would also be broken up with structure and mullions to provide visual breaks that are easily seen by birds. The proposed design would also employ bird-safe glass strategies to mitigate the impact of transparent glass, focusing on ultraviolet patterned glass (such as Ornilux) and fritted glass in areas deemed most vulnerable, such as the tall entry vestibule on the southwest corner of the building.

Finally, understanding that the science of protecting birds from building glass is evolving, the design would also provide for devices that could be added after construction to “tune” the way the building is perceived by birds. This would be achieved by designing interior surface-applied and appropriately spaced decals that could be placed after the fact in the event it is found that the measures employed up front were not sufficient in one part of the building or another. These would likely be translucent, die-cut shapes that would simulate and blend with frit patterns (lines or dots) that might be deployed with the initial construction.”



Selected Late Spring and Summer Rarities



**Black-Bellied Whistling Duck, Essex
(John Oshlick, 8/13/18)**



**Red-necked Phalarope, Portland Fairgrounds
(Russ Smiley, 5/29/18)**



Clay-colored Sparrow, Sterling (Bob Dixon, 5/27/18)



Wilson's Phalarope, Sharon (Tina Green, 5/16/18)



**Little Egret, Stonington breakwater
(Dave Provencher, 8/8/18)**



**Sedge Wren, Connecticut Audubon Society Bafflin
Sanctuary (Patrick Comins)**

Scenes from the COA Shorebird Workshop August 25, Milford Point



It was standing room only for the lecture portion of the workshop!
(photos by Frank Mantlik)



Now for the field portion ...
(photo by Patrick Comins)



Attendees trained their scopes on a Western Sandpiper (bird on right)
(left photo Patrick Comins, right photo Frank Mantlik)



Plenty of room for everyone on the beach
(photo by Chris Wood)



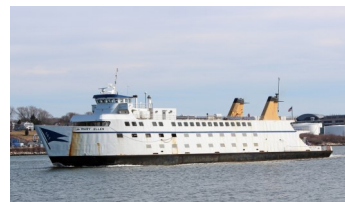
Can you estimate how many birders are in this flock?
(photo by Frank Mantlik)



These workshops are free to members and non-members of COA. If you are not a current member and find them to be useful learning experiences, please consider joining COA (photo by Patrick Comins)

Pelagic Magic on Long Island Sound!

(all photos taken from New London - Orient Point ferry, in CT waters)



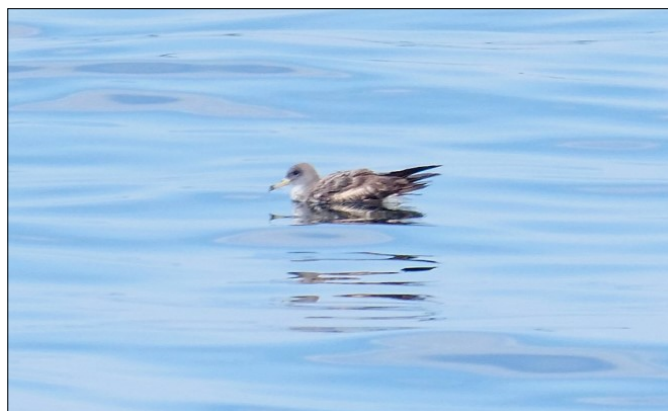
Great Shearwater (Jason Reiger, 7/29/18)



Sooty Shearwater (Nick Bonomo, 7/25/18)



Parasitic Jaeger, (Dave Provencher, 7/29/18)



Cory's Shearwater (Russ Smiley, 7/28/18)



Roseate Tern (Bill Banks, 8/13/18)



Wilson's Storm-Petrel (John Oshlick, 7/26/18)

Twenty-Five Years Ago in *The Connecticut Warbler* Compiled by Steve Broker

Volume XIII, No. 3 (July 1993)

Site Guide: Bluff Point Coastal Reserve, Groton, by David F. Provencher

Bluff Point Coastal reserve in the town of Groton, Connecticut, is one of the premier birding locations in southeastern Connecticut. Well over 200 species have been recorded on the reserve including numerous species of special interest to Connecticut birders. As a migrant trap, it ranks as one of the best in southern New England and the passage of a fall cold front can produce an impressive array of south bound migrants. The reserve is primarily a peninsula bordered on the west by the Poquonock River, to the east by Mumford Cove, and to the south by Long Island Sound. A ridge runs north-south through the peninsula, terminating in a rocky bluff which offers a panoramic view of the surrounding coastline, as well as Long Island Sound and Fisher's Island, New York.

Bluff Point and the Migration Phenomenon. Each spring and fall the night sky sees a passage of many birds heading to or from their breeding grounds. These nocturnal travelers are often pushed to the coastline or beyond by the southwest winds of spring or the northwest winds of fall. These exhausted individuals then make for the first familiar habitat they find. Dawn at Bluff Point finds such individuals dropping out of the sky into the reserve. They then jump across the developed area to the forested area to the north as they move inland to find food to replenish their depleted store of energy. Many of these birds funnel into the northwestern corner of the reserve as they move northward. This corner, at the juncture of the entrance road and the railroad trestle, is **THE** place to start birding during migration. Standing at this 'Hot Corner' after the passage of a fall cold front, one can observe hundreds of migrants flowing past. Starting at dawn after a night of good migration, the trees and shrubs will be alive with warblers, orioles, tanagers, sparrows, thrushes, etc. The sky above you will have many other species moving back and forth. You will not be able to identify everything that goes by simply because there are too many birds. If you know the call notes of the different species, you will be at an advantage during the flurries of birds that shoot past. If you don't, this is a superb place to learn them. [Ed's Note: Dave Provencher writes further about Bluff Point specialties and nesting species, covering the four seasons with detailed information about waterfowl, diurnal raptors, shorebirds, gulls and terns, and songbirds. He has played a key role in informing birders of the phenomenon of 'morning flight'. This is an essential site guide to Bluff Point.]

The Connecticut Bluebird Restoration Project - Successfully Managing for the Eastern Bluebird and Other Native Cavity-Nesting Birds, by David Rosgen and James M. Zingo

Sage, Bishop, and Bliss (1913) noted that bluebirds were an abundant summer and common winter residential Connecticut. However since the early 1900s, and especially since about 1947 with the advent of the DDT era, bluebird populations have declined severely. Several factors have contributed to this: loss of habitat (including nest cavities), competition with non-native species, unnaturally high predation, pesticides, adverse winter weather, and a decline in winter food supply. The erection of nest boxes in suitable habitat, control of alien competitors, and planting of winter food trees and shrubs have helped to conserve and increase [this and other] species.

The Connecticut Bluebird Restoration Project (CBRP) is a division of the Connecticut Wildlife Atlas (CWA), a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to wildlife conservation by providing research, inventorying, and management services. The CBRP, established in 1984, is involved principally with modern management of Eastern Bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting birds to achieve maximum nesting success and productivity. [Ed's Note: Rosgen & Zingo show plans for construction and assembly of a standardized blue-

bird nest box and describe the monitoring of some 2,200 boxes in the statewide network. They discuss protection from vertebrate and invertebrate predators, ectoparasites and bacterial disease, as well as habitat management. Six tables summarize the usage in 1992 of bluebird boxes at Hartford and New Haven county regional water authorities, University of Connecticut (Storrs), and two golf courses.]

[Ed's Note: See also The 1992-93 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count, by S. Broker; Connecticut Field Notes: December 1, 1992-February 28, 1993, by Jay Kaplan; Photo Challenge, by Louis R. Bevier. The July 1993 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* can be seen in its entirety at the following link to the COA website. Download Volume 13, and scroll down to pages 73-112.].

<http://www.ctbirding.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CTWarblerVolume13.pdf>

A Note of Appreciation from George Zepko Hog Island Camp Scholarship Recipient, Nicolas Main

I'd first off like to give a big thank you to the Connecticut Ornithological Association's board of directors for reviewing my application and giving me the opportunity to attend the Hog Island Audubon Camp under the George Zepko Hog Island Camp Scholarship. At the most recent COA annual meeting I met Mr. Zepko for the first time, the generous person who sent me to camp. He spoke about how rewarding the experience was for him and how it consequently inspired his career, stating that he wanted to recreate that spark for another young naturalist. So I owe a massive thanks to Mr. Zepko for his unselfishness and good intentions for donating the money so someone like me could attend camp and have that same experience.

My camp experience has inspired me to continue with my passion for birds and has furthered my interests in pursuing a career in this subject area. I think the biggest takeaway from attending Hog Island was that it introduced me to deeper thinking and highlighted the importance of asking questions more often. By focusing on being more inquisitive, I immediately noticed that the more questions you ask, the more knowledgeable you'll become.



Each night before we would go to bed, we would receive some great informational speeches from the instructors. One particular speech resonated with me deeply. The presentation was about how the conservation on Easter Egg Rock Island came to be and why those methods worked on bringing birds back to their breeding grounds. Before this, I already knew that I wanted to do something with birds when I get older. Hearing how Allan D. Cruickshank developed successful conservation techniques that are now used around the world inspired me and made me realize that I want to do something with conservation. On top of this, the camp gave me an opportunity to experience Maine, meet new friends (who I'm still in contact with), and learn from

some very educated people. This experience is something that I will never forget and I am truly thankful that I got to attend this camp.

Nicolas Main

CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

314 Unquowa Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
www.ctbirding.org



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Great Backyard Bird Count	Patrick Comins
Mini-Grants	Kathy Van Der Aue

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to:
Kathleen Van Der Aue
COABulletin@gmail.com
762 Mill Hill Road
Southport, CT 06890