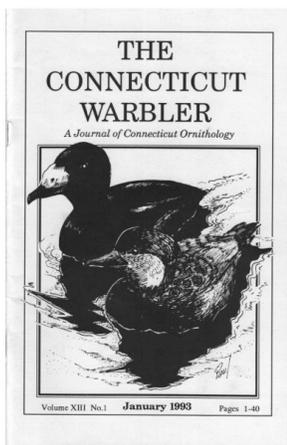


COA Bulletin



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Vice President's Message p. 1
- Annual Meeting Speakers p. 2-3
- Annual Meeting Agenda p. 4
- Annual Meeting Registration Form p. 5
- CT Bird Atlas Project p. 6
- Photo Gallery—Geese p. 7
- COA Sea Duck Workshop p. 8
- Photo Gallery—Owls p. 9
- 25 Years Ago in TCW p. 10-11
- My Patch—Birdcraft p. 11



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.

COA Vice President's Message Frank Mantlik

The Connecticut Ornithological Association is an amazing organization. I was among the founding members back in 1980-81 who saw the need for a state-wide organization devoted to CT's birds and its birders. Remaining active with the COA, I served as its president from 1991-1993. I'd like to share with you some of my thoughts.

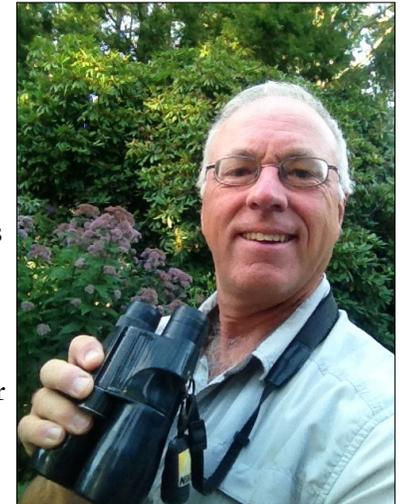
It takes a lot to maintain the vigor of an all-volunteer organization. Many groups have failed, with time, due to the "old timers" fading away or getting burnt out, with no "new blood" to captain the ship. I have served on a volunteer level on many organizations and boards over many years. But the level of dedication by so many on behalf of COA is nothing short of amazing. From the time I returned to the Board six years ago, I was impressed with the fact that Board meetings were well attended, well conducted, and productive. And people have a good time! It's a uniquely close-knit workforce.

It takes a lot to publish the journal and bulletin, to maintain the membership list, to handle the finances correctly, to maintain the website, to organize fabulous annual meetings, to manage the CT bird sightings list-serve, to offer scholarships and mini-grants, to organize and conduct workshops and field trips, to publicize activities, to maintain the official state bird list, to monitor environmental threats to birds and habitat, and so much more. But my friends, the COA continues to succeed in these endeavors, thanks to the cumulative hard work by many volunteers.

I applaud COA President Steve Broker (and those who served before him) for doing a fabulous job in not only maintaining "the ship", but also expanding the COA's mission. I can't begin to count the number of times I have been told by out-of-state birders how wonderful CT's birding community is. Some states aren't so lucky when it comes to birders helping birders. Along those lines, I applaud my long-time friend of over 40 years, George Zepko, for his generous contribution to the COA's Scholarship fund.

Now a word about membership. I thank each and every one of the 500-plus members for their support. Please keep it up. And, if you have some extra time, please consider serving on the COA Board, or volunteering to assist on a committee, or in a wide variety of ways. Contact Steve or me if you'd like to help. And if you know of someone who is not a member, get them to join, or buy them a gift membership.

Happy New Year, and good birding!



COA Annual Meeting Featured Speakers

March 24, 2018

Scott Weidensaul Of a Feather: A (Brief) History of American Birding

From the moment Europeans arrived in North America, they were awestruck by a continent awash with birds – great flocks of wild pigeons, woodlands alive with brilliantly colored songbirds. Join naturalist and author Scott Weidensaul as he traces the unpredictable history of bird study in America, from frontier ornithologists (one of whom barely escaped pursuing Apaches with a precious hawk egg hidden in his mouth) to society matrons who organized the first effective conservation movement; from luminaries like Alexander Wilson (a convicted libeler) and Audubon (an accomplished liar) to modern geniuses like Roger Tory Peterson.

Based on his book “Of a Feather,” this whirlwind history shows how ornithology and birding grew from eccentric hobbies into something so completely mainstream they’re now (almost) cool.

Scott Weidensaul is the author of more than two dozen books on natural history, including the Pulitzer Prize finalist “Living on the Wind,” about bird migration, “Return to Wild America,” and “The First Frontier.” His latest book is “The Peterson Reference Guide to Owls of North America and the Caribbean.” Weidensaul is a contributing editor for Audubon magazine, a columnist for Bird Watcher’s Digest and writes for a variety of other publications. He lives in the mountains of eastern Pennsylvania, and is an active field researcher studying migration from Alaska to Maine, and focusing especially on owls and hummingbirds.



John Himmelman Birds: Their Side of the Story.....

How did our best-known birds earn that distinction? What are some of the crazy things they make us do? Why are there so many pigeons in cities? How adept are crows – for real now, at using a screwdriver? What did Ben Franklin really think about Bald Eagles?

John shares light-hearted stories of birds and bird watching – from cuisine to cartoons, ornaments to icons, murmurs to murders. You’ll be given a whole new look at the avian friends we so admire (and some, not so much....)

John Himmelman is an author, illustrator, naturalist, and popular lecturer. He is a co-founder of the CT Butterfly Association, past president of the New Haven Bird Club, past president of The Nature Connection and past president of the

Killingworth Land Trust. He has lectured and led many trips afield in search of various flora and fauna throughout the country for over 25 years.

Himmelman has written and illustrated many books for adults and children on a wide variety of natural history subjects.

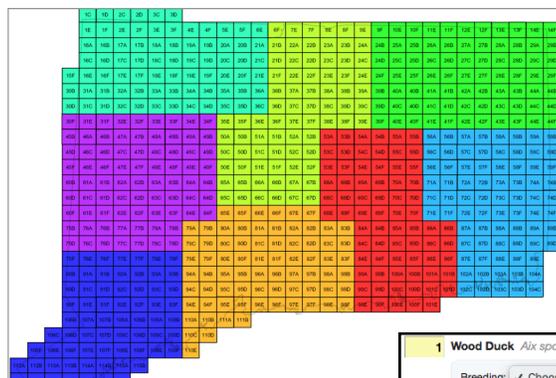
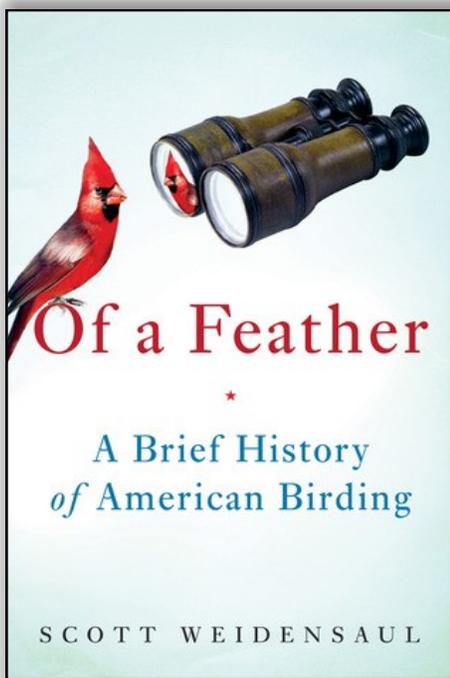


Chris Elphick Connecticut Bird Atlas

Field work for the new Connecticut Bird Atlas project begins in spring 2018 and will require the help of the state's birders to make it a success. The project aims to map the distributions and abundance patterns of all of Connecticut's birds during both the breeding and non-breeding seasons, determine how bird occurrence has changed since the first atlas in the 1980's, and inform conservation planning statewide. This presentation will provide a history of atlas projects, an overview of what the Connecticut study will achieve, and a description of how birders can get involved.

Chris Elphick is an Associate Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Connecticut. His work focuses on the conservation ecology of

birds, especially in wetlands, farmland, and forests. He has been studying coastal marsh birds and their habitats since 2002 and is a lead investigator for the Saltmarsh Habitat and Avian Research Program (SHARP). He participated in his first bird atlas in his early teens, mostly surveying blocks no one else wanted to visit (and still finding good birds). He has received Partners in Flight National Investigators' Awards for contributions to bird conservation both as an individual and as a member of the SHARP team. His research has been published in journals such as the *Auk*, *Biological Conservation*, *Condor*, *Conservation Biology*, *Journal of Applied Ecology*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, and *Science*. Book length projects include the *Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*, the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Nevada*, and the *Ecology and Conservation of Birds in Rice Fields: A Global Review*.



1 Wood Duck <i>Aix sponsa</i> Hide Details	
Breeding:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Choose the highest possible code...
	<input type="checkbox"/> NY Nest with Young
	<input type="checkbox"/> NE Nest with Eggs
	<input type="checkbox"/> FS Carrying Fecal Sac
	<input type="checkbox"/> FY Feeding Young
	<input type="checkbox"/> CF Carrying Food
	<input type="checkbox"/> FL Recently Fledged Young
	<input type="checkbox"/> ON Occupied Nest
	<input type="checkbox"/> UN Used Nest (enter 0 if no birds seen)
	<input type="checkbox"/> DD Distraction Display
	<input type="checkbox"/> NB Nest Building
	<input type="checkbox"/> CN Carrying Nesting Material
	<input type="checkbox"/> PE Physiological Evidence
	<input type="checkbox"/> B Woodpecker/Wren Nest Building
	<input type="checkbox"/> A Agitated Behavior
	<input type="checkbox"/> N Visiting Probable Nest Site
	<input type="checkbox"/> C Courtship, Display, or Copulation
	<input type="checkbox"/> T Territorial Defense
	<input type="checkbox"/> P Pair in Suitable Habitat
	<input type="checkbox"/> M Multiple (7+) Singing Males
	<input type="checkbox"/> S7 Singing Male Present 7+ days
	<input type="checkbox"/> S Singing Male
	<input type="checkbox"/> H In Appropriate Habitat
1 Great Horned Owl	<input type="checkbox"/> F Flyover

**Connecticut Ornithological Association
34th Annual Meeting**

Saturday, March 24, 2018

Chapman Hall, Middlesex Community College
100 Training Hill Road, Middletown, CT

- 8:00-8:45 Registration/COA Marketplace – includes continental breakfast and Birds and Beans coffee, plus tea.
- 8:45-9:15 Welcome/Business Meeting. Stephen Broker, COA President, will present a brief overview of the year's activities, followed by election of officers and board members.
- 9:15-10:15 **Chris Elphick – Connecticut Bird Atlas**
Chris Elphick is an Associate Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Connecticut. He will discuss field work for the new Connecticut Bird Atlas project which begins in the spring 2018.
- 10:15-10:40 **Presentation of COA Awards.**

Mabel Osgood Wright Award – presented annually to a person or persons in Connecticut who have made a significant contribution to the knowledge, study, and conservation of birds.

Betty Kleiner Award – honors the memory of Betty Kleiner, whose name is synonymous with *The Connecticut Warbler*, COA's flagship publication. The award recognizes a deserving author or artist in the field of ornithology.

COA Mini-grants Award – awarded annually to the applicant(s) whose project most benefits Connecticut birds.
- 10:40-11:10 **Break** – COA Marketplace – time to socialize, purchase COA Raffle tickets, and check out vendors' offerings of bird-related items.
- 11:15-12:15 **John Himmelman – Birds: Their Side of the Story.....**
John Himmelman is an author, Illustrator, naturalist, and popular lecturer.
John shares light-hearted stories of birds and bird watching. You'll be given a whole new look at the avian friends we so admire.
- 12:20-1:25 **Lunch** at Founders' Hall Cafeteria. Hot buffet lunch including a vegetarian option.
- 1:30-2:30 **Scott Weidensaul – Of a Feather: A (Brief) History of American Birding**
Scott Weidensaul is the author of more than two dozen books on natural history, including the Pulitzer Prize finalist "Living on the Wind," about bird migration. Based on his book "Of a Feather," this whirlwind history shows how ornithology and birding grew from eccentric hobbies into something so completely mainstream they're now (almost) cool.
- 2:45-3:30 COA Raffle – the ever popular Raffle concludes our day with many prizes including avian artwork and valuable birding equipment donated by generous artists, vendors, and friends of COA. Raffle tickets will be available throughout the day.

For map and directions: <http://mxcc.edu/community/directions/> or call 860-343-5800

Please bring this copy of the program with you to the Annual Meeting.
Additional copies may be accessed online at: <http://www.ctbirding.org>

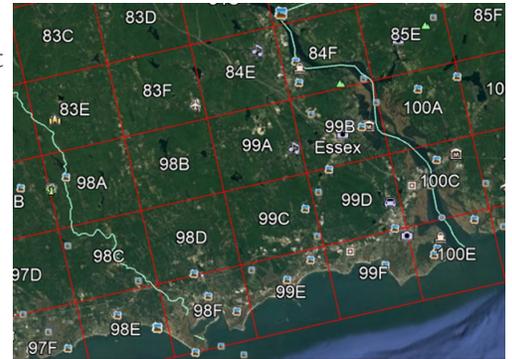
Connecticut Bird Atlas Project

By Craig Repasz

The Connecticut Bird Atlas Project is on schedule to begin surveys this spring. Since September the Project Team has given 17 presentations to bird clubs and land trusts. They will give three more presentations including at the COA Annual Meeting. They will also host a table at the Connecticut Land Conservation Council annual meeting in March.

The project is compiling a list of potential block adopters and volunteers that is approaching 400 names. They are well on track to cover all 596 blocks covering the state.

Seven of the eight Regional Coordinators have been recruited. The project team and the Regional Coordinators have met for an orientation meeting. The Regional Coordinators bring amazing knowledge of the birding areas throughout the state. They are very organized and enthusiastic. The Project team is still conducting a search for the last Regional Coordinator. The Regional Coordinators are: State Volunteer Coordinator-Craig Repasz; Northwest- Buzz Devine; North Central-Sara Zagorski; North East- Steve Moryko; West Central- Ken Elkins; Lower CT River- Melissa Baston; South East- Dave Provencher; South West- Frank Mantlik; New Haven- Steve Broker.



Google Earth map showing block grid

Dr. Valerie Steen, a postdoc at UConn has been building species prediction models by compiling data from eBird, Breeding Bird Surveys and other sources. These data are combined with information on land use, habitats and many other variables to create maps that indicate the probability of a certain species breeding in areas across the state.

The website <http://ctbirdatlas.org/> has been launched as a splash page. The site is on the brink of rolling out its full functionality. Dr. Morgan Tingley, professor at UConn has built out the maps that will be used to interface with data, facilitate the block adoption process, indicate block, region and state boundaries, and indicate public lands. The map functions can easily be used on mobile devices.

Dr. Chris Elphick of UConn and Dr. Min Huang of the CT DEEP are compiling and writing the protocols and handbooks that will be used to guide the project to its completion. They will have gathered together many education tools and resources that will be valuable to the volunteers.

Once the website is fully functional the adoption process will begin. As volunteers sign up and give feedback on the protocol and their birding skills the project team and regional coordinators will arrange for ad hoc training sessions to meet this need.

As the final steps for the breeding aspect are launched, the CT Bird Atlas Project Team will switch focus to finalizing the winter atlas aspect of the project, details of which will be rolled out over the summer.

Dr. Chris Elphick will give a presentation on the project at the COA Annual meeting. The Project Team will also host an information table at the meeting to help answer questions and sign up volunteers.

It is an exciting time to be a birder in Connecticut!



It's Been a Good Winter for Geese (and other waterfowl)!



Ross's Goose at Farmington Meadows (Bill Asteriades, 1/1/18)



Barnacle Goose and Cackling Goose at Harbor Road Bridge, Fairfield (Chris Wood, 1/9/18)



Snow Goose at Trumbull Ave., Stonington (Bill Batsford, 12/27/18)



Greater White-fronted Goose at Poquonock Plains Park, Groton (Dylan Pedro, 1/4/18)



Pink-footed Goose (center) with Canada Geese at Boom Bridge Rd., Pawcatuck River, N. Stonington (Anthony Vicciarelli, 12/21/17)



Tufted Duck at Captain's Cove, Bridgeport (Russ Smiley, 1/10/18)

COA Sea Duck Workshop Harkness Memorial State Park Dylan Pedro

On Sunday, January 8, the Connecticut Ornithological Association Sea Duck Workshop was held at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford, CT. We had a brief lecture on sea ducks at the Amphitheater at Harkness, and then we walked the shoreline from there to Goshen Point. We saw White-winged Scoters, a Black Scoter, plenty of Common Eider, Bufflehead, Brant, Common Loons, Horned Grebes, Purple Sandpipers, Great Cormorants, 2 Bonaparte's Gulls, and an Iceland Gull. Then, several of us drove to nearby Ocean Beach where we walked to the jetty to see the King Eider.



(photo by Sarah Faulkner)



Wood Duck, Milford, CT (Frank Mantlik, 12/27/18)



Canada Warbler at Sherwood Island, Westport (Chris Wood, Nov. 2017)



Short-eared Owl at Stratford Point (Frank Mantlik, 1/8/18)



Barrow's Goldeneye at Tuxis Island, Madison (Russ Smiley, 12/15/17)

Let it Snow!



Snowy Owl at Long Beach, Stratford (Chris Wood, 12/4/17)



Snowy Owl at Long Beach, Stratford (Scott Kruitsbosch, 12/3/17)



Snowy Owl at Long Beach, Stratford (Nick Bonomo, 1/3/18)



Snowy Owl at Long Beach, Stratford (Scott Kruitsbosch, 12/5/17)



Snowy Owl at Long Beach, Stratford (Bill Batsford, 1/15/18)



Snowy Owl at Lordship Marsh, Stratford (Paul Wolter, 1/13/18)

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

Volume XII, No. 4 (October 1992)

Fifth Report of the Connecticut Rare Records Committee, by George A. Clark and Louis R. Bevier

This report provides details on five additions to the Connecticut State list: Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*), Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*), Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*), Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*), and Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*). Two species formerly treated as hypothetical (supported by accepted records with written details only) are elevated to full status on the main list: Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) and Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*). This raises the official state list to 386, nineteen of which are considered hypothetical. [Ed's Note: The fifth report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (as now named) did not accept a submitted report of Eurasian Jackdaw in West Haven. The record was reopened in 2014 after "a broad pattern of vagrancy" of Eurasian Jackdaws in New England was recognized, and in the nineteenth report ARCC accepted this species on the state list.]

Connecticut's Fall 1992 Hawk Migration, by Neil Currie

Twenty years of hawk watching in Connecticut has produced a good picture of what to expect from the hawks each fall. Two major flights occur. The inland flight, through the western and northern parts of the state, features Broad-winged Hawks, with smaller numbers of other hawks. This flight gets underway about September eleventh and tapers off to small numbers ten to twelve days later. The coastal flight, along and close to Long Island Sound and featuring Sharp-shinned Hawks, American Kestrels, Ospreys and smaller numbers of the other species, picks up around September fifteenth and continues to just after mid-October.

First Documented Records of Bridled Tern in Connecticut, by James M. Zingo

The Bridled Tern nests in the Caribbean region, in some places in mixed colonies with Sooty and Roseate Terns. It has been reported as a stray in the region of the northeastern U.S. and southeastern Canada on more than 15 occasions [references given] but has not previously been reported for Connecticut. . . Once within Long Island Sound, this bird was perhaps attracted by the several thousand terns breeding on Falkner Island. An alternate hypothesis, given the sighting dates and the species' association with Roseate Terns, is that the Bridled Tern joined a group of Roseates migrating northward and arrived at and stayed within the North Atlantic breeding region.

[Ed's Note: James Zingo's sighting of Bridled Tern at Falkner Island on 27 June and 13-16 August 1992 was accepted by ARCC in its Sixth Report, published in 1996. Numerous birders witnessed Connecticut's second record, also at Falkner Island, from July 28 through August 11, 2017.]

Common Questions on Birds, by George A. Clark

Nature centers, museums and individuals who study birds in Connecticut receive numerous inquiries from the public. At the University of Connecticut in Storrs, we receive many such questions. It may be helpful for others who are asked about birds, to review some of the commonly asked questions and something of the answers given. Although some of this information is widely known, the material is seldom found in general ornithology texts or other bird books.

Ornithological Longevity, by Gordon Loery

At White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield, we have organized our own ornithological longevity club using data collected at our banding station since 1958, supplemented by additional records published in the *Journal of Field Ornithology* (formerly *Bird-Banding*). . . When large numbers of relatively short-lived species are banded, particularly if they are permanent residents, or return to a given locality with great regularity, we can assume that the longevity records shown are close to the limits attainable in the wild. [Ed's Note: Table I – Comparison of White Memorial Foundation Longevity Records with Published Records lists 24 bird species, including White Memorial records for Blue Jay as 14 yrs, 6 months, Hairy Woodpecker as 9 yrs, 8 months, and Eastern Phoebe as 5 yrs, 0 months.]

Connecticut Field Notes, Summer: June 1-July 31, 1992, by Jay Kaplan

What a strange summer! There wasn't a plethora of unusual sightings, with three Brown Pelicans off Stonington in late July one of the few real "rarities." It was, considering the weather, the lack of vagrants that made the period interesting from an ornithological standpoint. In the past few summers, we have tried to relate the appearance of unusual avian species to the unusual weather systems that may have precipitated their arrival. There is still a great deal of research to be done when it comes to the relationship between weather systems and bird movements.

[Ed.'s note: Four authors are recipients of COA's highest award, the Mabel Osgood Wright Award: Neil Currie (2005); George Clark (1993); Gordon Loery (1997); Jay Kaplan (2004).]

These and other articles in the January 1993 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* can be viewed in their entirety at the following link (pp. 1-40). <http://www.ctbirding.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CTWarblerVolume13.pdf>

My Patch—Birdcraft Sanctuary

Kathy Van Der Aue

I became aware of Connecticut Audubon's Birdcraft when I was invited to join the banding team, now more than 25 years ago. For those who don't know it, Birdcraft Museum and Sanctuary is a National Historic Landmark due to its importance in the Conservation Movement and as the birthplace of the Connecticut Audubon Society.

Truth be told, Birdcraft isn't that unusual most of the year, but it is a true hotspot during spring and fall migration. I didn't understand why until I saw it from a small airplane and was able to get the "bird's eye view" of our tiny sanctuary. An exhausted migrating bird will fly over mile after mile of concrete, pavement, buildings, lawns, highway and train tracks then arrive at our little pond and nearly six acres of brushy habitat, a refuge where it can rest and refuel. More than 120 species have been banded here. Occasionally we have had 100+ banded bird days when birds are dripping off the trees in a fallout.

We have recently been adopted by the Sasqua Garden Club, whose members have worked tirelessly to install demonstration gardens of bird-friendly native plants. These gardens are designed not only for beauty but as educational tools for those seeking information on native plantings to attract birds and pollinators.

When to come? The very best time to come is early to mid-May, say May 9th to the 15th, when spring migration is in full swing, featuring an impressive variety of warbler species. These are usually easily seen because of the trail system and close quarters. Fall migration is a bit slower, but also a more prolonged affair. Like all fall spots, activity can be dependent upon the weather, but on the right day it can be a magical experience. Gray-cheeked Thrushes are fairly regular and we occasionally get Mourning or Connecticut Warblers. One day last fall featured a fallout of seven species of warblers in one small bush along the side of the pond, including amazing views of Cape May Warblers. The White-throats replace the Catbirds and on it goes as winter creeps south. We start our banding just after Labor Day and continue until we get our first Fox Sparrow, the last of the birds we band to migrate. Although we don't allow visitors to the banding room without special arrangement, weather permitting, we usually give a public bird banding demo on International Migratory Bird Day (typically the second Saturday in May).

Birdcraft is located at 314 Unquowa Road in Fairfield.



Kathy Van Der Aue at Birdcraft for International Migratory Bird Day 2006 (photo G. Van Der Aue)

**CONNECTICUT
ORNITHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION**

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



COA OFFICERS

President	Stephen P. Broker, 50 Hidden Place, Cheshire, CT 06410
Vice President	Frank Mantlik, 195 High View Drive, Stratford, CT 06614
Secretary	Denise Jernigan, 618 Hopewell Road, South Glastonbury, CT 06073
Treasurer	Paul Wolter, 8 Sybil Creek Place, Branford, CT 06405

COA CHAIRPERSONS

Annual Meeting	Tina Green, Maureen Wolter, Bob Dixon
Conservation	Craig Repasz, Scott Kruitbosch
Finance	Paul Wolter
Membership	Larry Reiter
Avian Records	Jay Kaplan
Research	Tom Robben
Workshops	Bill Batsford
The Connecticut Warbler	Greg Hanisek
COA Bulletin	Andrew Dasinger, Kathy Van Der Aue
Christmas Bird Count Compiler	Steve Broker
Summer Bird Count Compilers	Joe Zeranski & Patrick Comins
Great Backyard Bird Count	Patrick Comins
Mini-Grants	Kathy Van Der Aue

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 April 15, 2018 to:
Kathleen Van Der Aue
COABulletin@gmail.com
762 Mill Hill Road
Southport, CT 06890