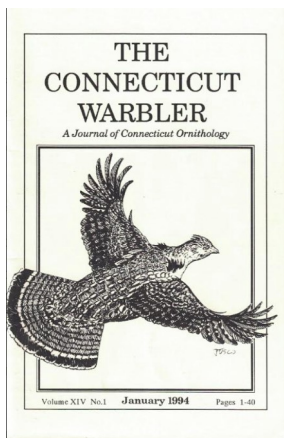


COA Bulletin



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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

Chris Elphick

News from the atlas has been slow lately, for which I apologize, but we've been working hard to get all of the 2018 breeding data entered and ready for review. That is largely done, and we've posted preliminary species lists for every block on the web site. We know that there will be mistakes - flawless data entry is a myth - so we are planning several layers of data review to help us identify and correct any errors. All checklists were given an initial quick scan when first submitted, but now we are seeking your input to help us identify problems as part of a more rigorous data-review process.

Please check the data summary for your block to make sure that everything looks right. Please also check the summaries for any other blocks you know well. For more information, there is a new blog post on the topic, here: <http://ctbirdatlas.org/blog/index.php/2019/01/14/preliminary-2018-breeding-results-available-for-review/>



Andrew Dasinger

Also, please keep the winter atlas data rolling in. Winter surveys are more of a challenge than those during the breeding season, but are every bit as important - especially as we've never had a statewide winter survey of all bird species before. And, in this year with several species more common than usual, getting the information now is especially useful. As Nick Bonomo recently noted, the most exciting northern birds are mostly not here yet - but it is perhaps just a matter of time. And, there is still evidence of other species irruptions, with higher than normal numbers of barred owls, pine siskins, red-breasted nuthatches, and perhaps also brown creepers. Surveys, like the atlas are the best way to fully understand the magnitude and scope of these events.

As always, thanks for your help,

Chris Elphick @ssts

Storrs, CT

elphick@sbcglobal.net



Bob Dixon

COA Annual Meeting Featured Speakers

March 23, 2019

Eric Hanson

The Natural (and Unnatural) History of the Common Loon

In this program, Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) biologist, Eric Hanson, will discuss the amazing recovery of loons throughout the Northeast over the past 30 years, the threats that they face, and the conservation actions that have brought them back, including capture and rescue stories. He will also explore their fascinating behaviors and natural history, including new research on how loons find a territory, what is being conveyed in the yodel call, and new findings on their migration pathways.

Since 1998, Eric Hanson has been the biologist for the Vermont Loon Conservation Project (VLCP), a program of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies. He has conducted research on the Common Loon since 1992. His early work focused on banding loons to answer basic biological questions and assess toxicology concerns. Eric then received his M.S. degree at the University of Minnesota setting up a volunteer-based monitoring program for Minnesota's 12,000 loons. His loon work in Vermont has focused on management around loon nest sites and education of lake users. He is an adjunct faculty member at Sterling College and also teaches courses for the Road Scholar program.



Jeff Spendelow

New Insights into the Secret (?) Lives of Endangered Roseate Terns



What happens after young Roseate Terns fledge and leave their colony sites? Where do they go? How long do they use North American staging sites until they migrate to South America? Where do they spend time before they first start to breed when 3 or 4 years old? Dr. Jeff Spendelow doesn't have all the answers to those questions yet, but he's working on them. Jeff's research inspired the "Young of Year" documentary filmed in 2016 which will start this presentation so COA members can see young at a colony site, and the habitats they use and problems they face as "Hatch Year" birds after fledging. Jeff also will present some new results which are leading to a better understanding of what these birds are doing during the "black hole" of time from after they first depart their natal colony sites until recruiting

into the breeding population several years later.

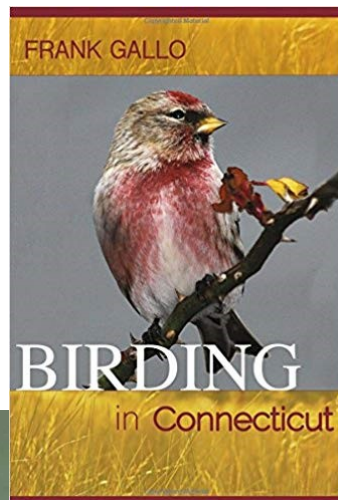
Jeff is a Founding Life Member of COA. He started working on Roseate Terns in 1977, was Director of the Falkner Island Tern Project from 1981-2003, founded the Cooperative Roseate Tern Metapopulation Project (CRTMP) in 1987, is a member of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife's (USFWS) Roseate Tern Recovery Team, and after 35+ years as a federal employee he retired in December 2018 to become an Emeritus Research Wildlife Biologist. Jeff has authored or co-authored more than 70 publications, his research played an important role in the decisions by the USFWS to list Roseate Terns as Endangered and to add Falkner Island, CT to the National Wildlife Refuge system, and he continues to direct the CRTMP which now includes cooperators spanning the entire range of the Northwest Atlantic breeding population from Connecticut to Nova Scotia. Since 2011 he has focused his attention on learning more about the factors that might impact individuals of different ages and breeding status in their use of summer staging sites, especially those sites in the "Cape Islands" area of Massachusetts.

Frank Gallo

The Best of Where, When and How to Find Birds in Connecticut

Join author/naturalist Frank Gallo for an in depth look into where, when and how to find birds in Connecticut. Frank's new book, *Birding in Connecticut*, is a state-of-the art, user-friendly guide packed with information valuable to birders of all skill levels, from species accounts and a first-of-a kind cumulative list of rare bird sightings to clear and current bar graphs showing seasonality and abundance for Connecticut's bird species. It is the first guide of its kind to offer QR code links to continually updated information on species occurrence at each location, and is beautifully illustrated with color photographs and maps.

Frank is a leading expert on finding birds in Connecticut and has led birding expeditions all over the world. Frank is a tour leader for Sunrise Birding, LLC, an international birding tour company; a COA board member, a member of the Connecticut Avian Rare Records Committee; and a federally-licensed master bird bander. Frank is also the author of two children's nature books, *Bird Calls* and *Night Sounds*, and is a published freelance photographer.



**Connecticut Ornithological Association
35th Annual Meeting**

Saturday, March 23, 2019
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 **Eric Hanson – The Natural (and Unnatural) History of the Common Loon**
Since 1992, Eric Hanson has been the biologist for the Vermont Loon Conservation Project, a program of the Vermont Center of Ecostudies. In this program he will discuss the amazing recovery of loons throughout the Northeast over the past 30 years.
- 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 Awards – awarded annually to the applicants whose projects most benefit Connecticut birds.
Zepko Audubon Camp Scholarship – awarded annually to a young birding enthusiast through a written application process.
- 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 **Jeff Spendelow – New Insights into the Secret(?) Lives of Endangered Roseate Terns**
Jeff started working on Roseate Terns in 1977 and was Director of the Falkner Island Tern Project 1987-2003. He is a member of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife’s Roseate Tern Recovery Team. He retired in December 2018 after 35+ years to become an Emeritus Research Wildlife Biologist. Jeff’s research inspired the “Young of the Year” Documentary filmed in 2016 .
- 12:20-1:25 **Lunch** at Founders’ Hall Cafeteria. Hot buffet lunch including a vegetarian option.
- 1:30-2:30 **Frank Gallo – Where, When and How to Find Birds in Connecticut**
Frank is a leading expert on finding birds in Connecticut and has led birding expeditions all over the world. Join author/naturalist Frank Gallo for an in depth look into where, when and how to find birds in Connecticut. Frank’s new book, *Birding in Connecticut*, is a user-friendly guide with information valuable to birders of all skill levels .
- 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>

REGISTRATION FORM
COA Annual Meeting
March 23, 2019, Middlesex Community College
Chapman Hall, Middletown, CT

PLEASE NOTE: This year your registration fee includes breakfast:
 muffins, scones, & bagels, Birds & Beans coffee, tea and juice,

and a light lunch:
 assorted wrap sandwiches, tossed and pasta salads, (includes vegetarian and
 gluten-free options), cookies, cake, water and iced tea.

Registrations must be **postmarked** by **Tuesday, March 12, 2018**
 for lunch to be included.

The registration fee for "walk-ins" will be the same as below
but will NOT include lunch.

Send your form in now to be sure of a seat (and lunch) this year

COA Members: _____ Persons @ \$37.00 \$_____

Non-Members: _____ Persons @ \$47.00 \$_____

Students: _____ Persons @ \$27.00 \$_____

TOTAL \$_____

Please print name(s) as you would like to have it/them appear on name tag(s)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Send check made out to "COA" and form to:

Connecticut Ornithological Association

314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06824

COA Research Committee Update

By Tom Robben

Science benefits from birders and their field work, their searching for rare birds, their Christmas Bird Counts, their Summer Bird Counts, their Bird Atlas projects, their eBird reports, and many of their other “citizen science” efforts. Birders are citizen scientists, one way or another, and the data we birders contribute to these projects are used by university scientists to learn more about entire ecosystems and how they work, including how they change seasonally and over many years.

In an effort to contribute even more to science, the current COA Research Committee was reborn in April 2013. One of the first phenomena that attracted our attention was the frenzied surface feeding of thousands of gulls off Long Beach, Stratford CT and nearby waters of Long Island Sound (LIS) (as shown in the photo below). What were those several species of gulls feeding on? What were the components of the food web there? How did all those pieces of the food web there interconnect? And how did they change month by month through the year? These became the most central questions for the Research Committee since then. Essentially, what is happening, and changing, in LIS waters?

There was a history of COA birders trying to understand what those gulls were feeding on, but those results seemed fragmentary. We wanted to review all that, confirm what we could, and go beyond it, to piece together the complete pelagic food web in those LIS waters in late winter and early spring.

Our new project was called the “Gulls, Plankton and Fish Project”. We have been pulling the pieces together, including multiple trips into LIS waters. For 2019 the long-planned trip for this project is a March 9th cruise, working with the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk and their \$2.7 million new research vessel. We plan to depart from Norwalk Harbor, heading east, searching for the best birds we can find, AND looking for flocks of thousands of gulls surface feeding, presumably on several kinds of plankton, typically 100 yards to half a mile offshore. We will sail slowly into the swimming flocks of gulls, trying to determine what they are eating, using binoculars, cameras, underwater video, and towing plankton nets. Here is the website for that March 9th trip:

<https://sites.google.com/view/lisgullsplanktontrip/home>

One of the results of our project is an emerging new document ([LIS Calendar for birds & fish & plankton](#)) describing the seasonal changes in LIS, focused on newly assembled information about birds, fish and plankton.

COA Gull Workshop

Sunday, March 24, at 8:00 am, Stratford Point, Stratford

Join us as we look for and learn about the gulls of Connecticut. Nick Bonomo will share his considerable knowledge about how to identify members of this extraordinarily challenging group of birds. We'll look for gulls along the shore and have a sit down session where we'll go over the finer points of gull ID. Meet at Audubon Connecticut's Habitat Management Area at 1207 Prospect Drive, Stratford. The workshop is free and open to COA members and non-members. Leader: Nick Bonomo. Contact person: Chris Loscalzo at: closcalz@optonline.net or 203 389-6508



A small portion of a flock containing the thousands and thousands of gulls engaged in surface feeding on Long Island Sound (by Frank Mantlik)

A Colorful King and Some Late Lingering Passerines



King Eider at Pequot Avenue, New London (Jannie Shapiro 1/6/19)



Yellow-breasted Chat at DEP Marine HQ, Old Lyme (Russ Smiley, 1/17/19)



Indigo Bunting, Pauline Court, Wallingford (Jason Reiger, 1/3/19)



Baltimore Oriole, Old Saybrook (James Sherwonit, 1/19/19)



Orange-crowned Warbler at Greenwich Point Park (Russ Smiley, 1/15/19)



Cape May Warbler at Gorham Island, Westport (Linda Olsen, 1/3/19)

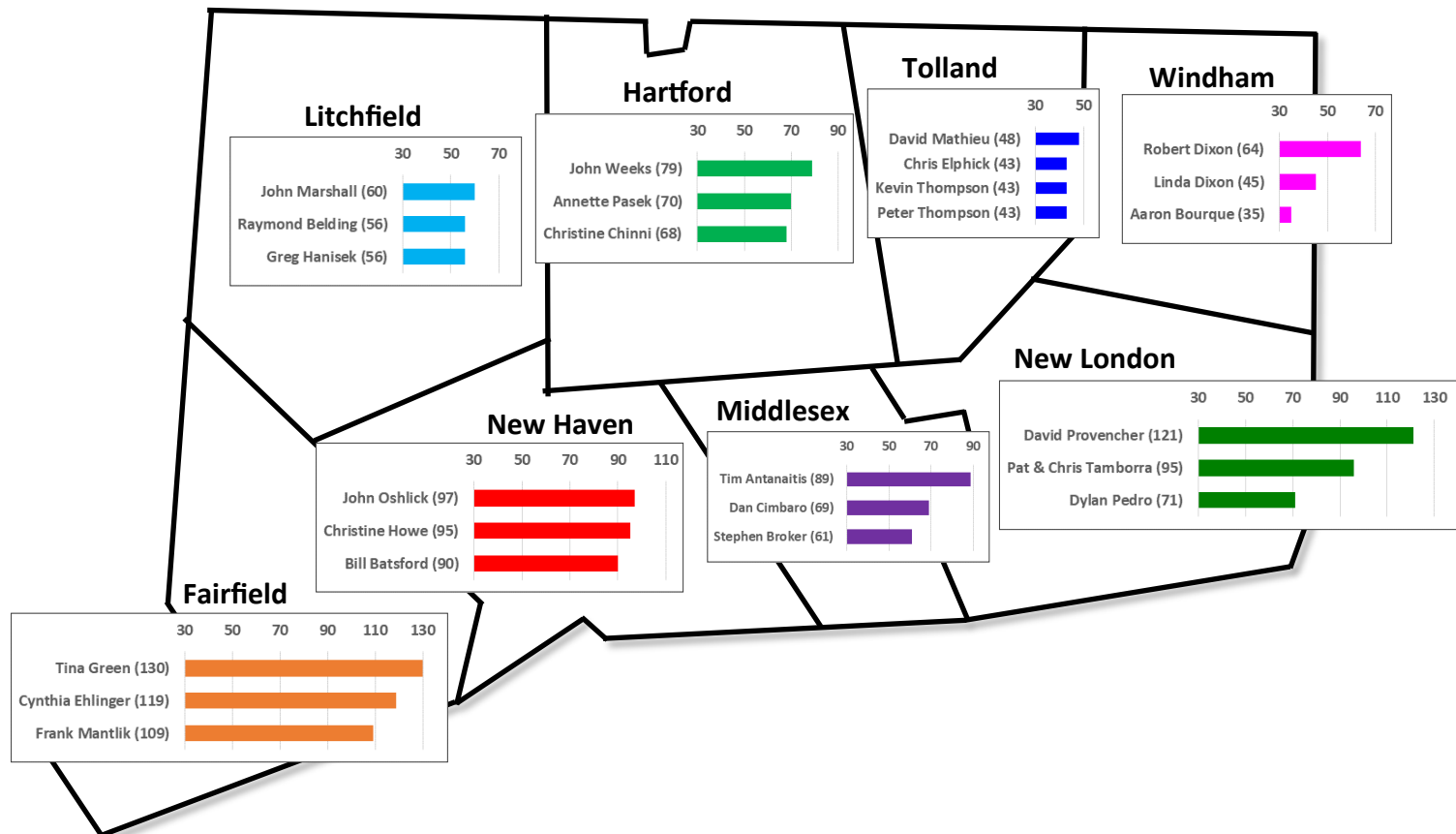
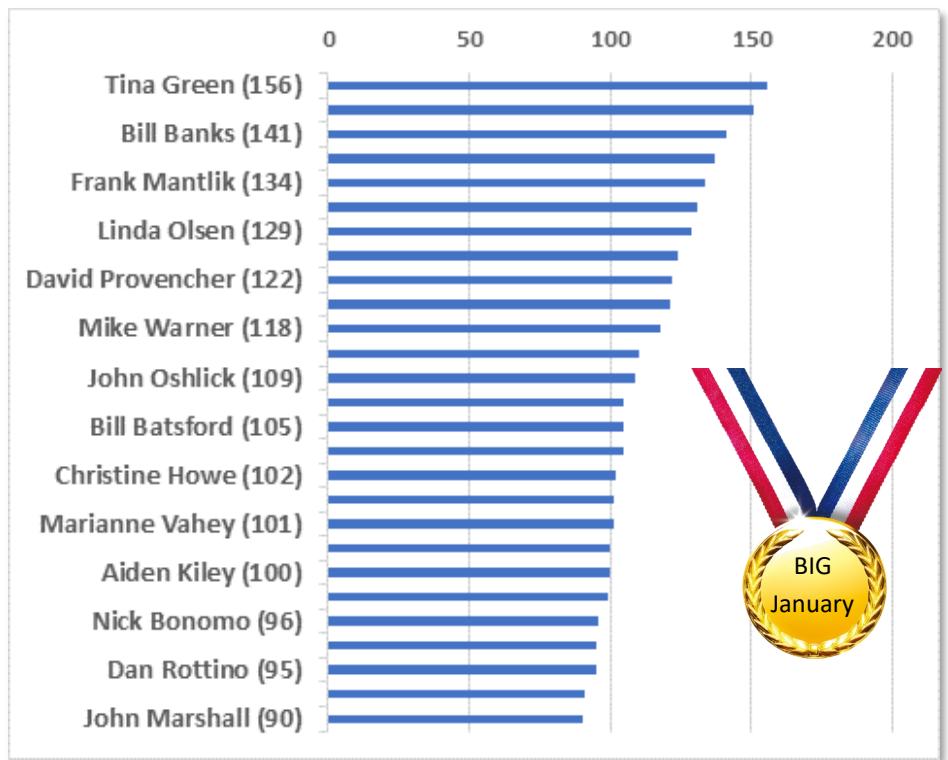
Big January 2019

Chris Loscalzo

Here are the birders, according to eBird records, who saw 90 or more species in the state of CT in January, 2019. Birders' names followed by their species totals are shown to the right. A total of 168 species were seen in CT in the month of January. That is likely to be more than half of all the species that will be seen in the state for the entire year.

Below are the results for the COA CT Big January event by county, with the names of the top three birders and their species totals for the month in that county

Congratulations to all CT birders!



A Gallery of Gulls



Mew Gull (Kamchatka) at Holly Pond, Stamford (Bruce Finnan, 1/12/19)



Mew Gull (Kamchatka) at Holly Pond, Stamford (John Oshlick, 1/8/19)



Black-headed Gull at Greenwich Point Park (Cynthia Ehlinger, 2/1/19)



Iceland Gull at Norwich boat launch (Dave Provencher, 2/9/19)



Lesser Black Backed Gull at Burying Hill Beach (Anthony Vicciarelli, 1/12/19)



Glaucous Gull at Long Beach, Stratford (Frank Mantlik 1/30/19)

Twenty-Five Years Ago in *The Connecticut Warbler*

Compiled by Steve Broker

Volume XIV, No. 1 (January 1994)

Winter Finches in Connecticut, by David F. Provencher.

The winter finches that normally occur in Connecticut, in greatly varying numbers from year to year, all possess very distinct calls from which they can readily be identified. Quite often the birder will see a flock of finches passing high overhead or will hear finches in the distance without ever seeing them. Being able to recognize their calls will allow the birder to identify them and can greatly increase the pleasure of winter woodland birding. The best way to find finches in Connecticut is to be prepared - know what to listen and look for prior to going into the field.

The following discussion will cover the various calls of the finches that normally occur in Connecticut in winter. It will also discuss differences in flight style and behavior as well as a few field marks. . . I have grouped the species by behavioral and vocal similarities which, for the most part, correspond to the actual taxonomy.

Group 1: American Goldfinch, Pine Siskin, Common Redpoll, Hoary Redpoll; Group 2: Red Crossbill and White-winged Crossbill; Group 3: Purple Finch and House Finch; Group 4: Pine Grosbeak and Evening Grosbeak. [Ed's Note: Each group of finches considered has general species information, descriptions of calls, and behavioral tips. Technological advances since Dave Provencher wrote this article enable one to play winter finch call notes from a phone while reading the article - highly recommended. The article gives information on the abundance or rarity of each species, emphasizing the irruptive nature of these birds. Several species have declined significantly in Connecticut over the past 25 years, especially Purple Finch and Evening Grosbeak. Bird vocalizations are very well described, and numerous nuggets of bird behavior are given. Dave Provencher served as president of COA from 1997 to 2001 and currently is on the COA Board.

Connecticut's Fall 1993 Hawk Migration, by Neil Currie.

The Year of the Eagle? The Year of the Broad-wing? The Return of the Osprey? The Return of the Harrier? Any one of these would be a proper title for a review of Connecticut's 1993 fall hawk migration. Put them all together, and it was a spectacular fall. Add the hundreds of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks, American Kestrels, Merlins, and Peregrines that passed through Connecticut, and it was more than spectacular.

[Ed's Note: Neil Currie recounts the fall passage of 15 species of diurnal raptors at 13 different coastal and inland hawk watch sites. The five tables of data accompanying the article include 1993 Broad-winged Hawk flights, the results of Lighthouse Point Park, New Haven and Quaker Ridge, Greenwich sites, and statewide results from all lookouts. His article ends with these words: "It is obvious that something special was taking place in Connecticut. Hopefully, birders who have not experienced such fall migration will come to Lighthouse Point or Quaker Ridge, or perhaps to one of Connecticut's inland sites next fall." Neil Currie was the 2005 recipient of COA's highest award, the Mabel Osgood Wright Award.]

Tree Damage by Nesting Double-crested Cormorants in Connecticut, by Carol R. Lemmon, Gregory Bugbee, and George R. Stephens.

One pair of Double-crested Cormorants first nested successfully in Connecticut in 1979 on East White Rock in the Norwalk Islands. The species has expanded its range in southern New England in recent decades and has shown marked increases in populations over that time [references given]. The Connecticut population has grown to almost 1200 pairs in the years 1980-1992 (Bull and Sibley, unpubl. data). Early nests in the state were on rocky islands. The first report of tree nesting in Connecticut occurred on Ram Island (near Mystic), with no nests in 1988 and 500 nests in 1989.

It is well documented in the ornithological literature that cormorants have nested in trees in other states and have

subsequently killed the trees and underlying vegetation [references given]. How nesting cormorants kill trees, while nesting egrets and herons do not, has not been determined. . . On 7 July 1993, we accompanied Terry Backer, Long Island Soundkeeper, to Grassy Island off the coast of Norwalk, Connecticut to view trees apparently being killed by the nesting activities of Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*). [Ed's Note: the authors describe the affected tree and ground cover at Grassy Island and the results of soil tests. The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Connecticut indicates that "the cormorant population was expanding during the (1982-86) atlas surveys and has increased dramatically since."]

These articles in the January 1994 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* can be viewed in their entirety at the following link; see pages 1-40. Also of note are two articles on Eastern Bluebirds as interspecific helpers (Zingo, Murphy, and Rosgen; Zingo), a book review by George A. Clark, Jr., Connecticut Field Notes by Jay Kaplan, and a photo challenge by Louis Bevier. <http://www.ctbirding.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CTWarblerVolume14.pdf>



Breeding Bird Survey Volunteers Still Needed

Andrew Dasinger

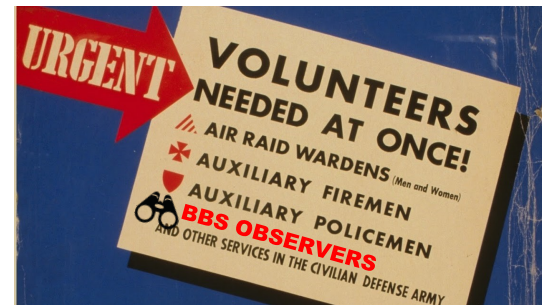
Connecticut has 16 BBS routes distributed across the state. As mentioned in the Fall 2018 COA Bulletin, for the 2019 season, three routes need to have new observers assigned:

- **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

The BBS is a long-term, large-scale, international avian monitoring program initiated in 1966 to track the status and trends of North American bird populations. Continuity in observations is important to maintain the value of the data.

Details at <https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/>

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



Conservation Issues

Glass collisions claim the lives of up to **1 billion** birds each year. The American Bird Conservancy is asking for your support: “**The Bird-Safe Buildings Act will reduce these deaths by requiring public buildings to incorporate bird-friendly building design and materials** — but its passage in Congress is far from assured. You can help change that by urging your U.S. Senators and U.S. Representative to support and cosponsor this critical law to protect vulnerable birds.”



A simple form to do this can be filled out on-line at <https://abcbirds.org/action/petition-bird-safe-buildings>.

CONNECTICUT ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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



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Summer Bird Count Compilers	Joe Zeranski, Patrick Comins, Tom Robben
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, 2019 to:
Kathleen Van Der Aue
COABulletin@gmail.com
762 Mill Hill Road
Southport, CT 06890