



Christmas Bird Counts 1998-99

by Steve Broker

One year shy of the centennial year for National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts, the birders of southern New England and New York prepare for the 1998-99 edition of these early winter population censuses. Once again, we have 17 Connecticut counts from which to choose. (Four counts extend their boundaries into neighboring New York and Massachusetts territory). The attached list of counts and compilers shows that 10 counts are being held on the first weekend of count period (December 19 & 20), three on the following weekend (December 27), and three during the first three days of 1999 (Friday through Sunday).

Each year this short article attempts to get people out in the field for their favorite counts with enticements of rare birds, unpredictable weather, and great camaraderie. Let me put a personal spin on the promotion this year. Those birders who participate regularly on counts from different parts of the state (northern, mid-state, or coastal) are aware that one CBC may be quite different in field experiences and birds observed than another. I devote my energy in the first weekend of count period to the New Haven count, where I look for loons and ducks (including Wood Duck, both teals, Eurasian Wigeon, Oldsquaw, and scoters), American Bittern, Northern harrier, rails, snipe and woodcock, Barn Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, warblers, and orioles. The habitat found in what we call

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HOTLINE HIGHLIGHTS

American Avocet	West Haven Aug 18-19
Cassin's Kingbird (prob)	Madison Aug 19
Eared Grebe	Stamford Sept 7
Sandwich Tern	West Haven Sept 12
Northern Wheatear	Westport Sept 19-22
Curlew Sandpiper	Old Lyme Oct 8-15
Y-legged Gull (prob)	Manchester Oct 12,20
Sandhill Crane	New Haven Oct 20
Golden-crnd Sparrow	Southbury Oct 24-26
Tundra Swans	Essex Nov 4-5

RARE BIRD ALERT: 203-254-3665

A Conservation Challenge

by Roland Clement

In a recent issue of *Bioscience* (August, 1998), David Wilcove and several colleagues offered a quantitative assessment of the causes of rare species declines. They confirmed what many of us have "known" intuitively for some time: habitat transformations (by agriculture, etc.), loss, and degradation account for 85% of the threat. Outright losses and transformations of habitat are usually obvious, but many types of degradation are difficult to document. They impose a need for detailed and extensive studies, always hard to fund. Which means that they are seldom done.

Two years ago, in September, 1996, several of us took advantage of a Public Hearing held at Westbrook by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to help assess the Final Environmental Impact Statement on electrification of the new high-speed rail line in Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, specifically from Boston to New Haven. Since the project had to be consistent with the goals of a joint federal/state Coastal Zone management Act, Amtrak readily agreed to mitigate identifiable hazards to bird life which we and DEP might point to. In October of 1996, Amtrak provided a memorandum of understanding to that effect.

A the 1996 hearing I testified from long experience with
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COA Bulletin

Christmas Bird Count

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Area K in that count circle includes residential areas and industrial sites, but also Furnace Pond (the southern tip of Lake Saltonstall), Branford salt marshes (and the trolley line), Cosey Beach, Lighthouse Point Park, and New Haven Harbor, Morris Creek marshes, and Tweed-New Haven Airport drainage ditches. The target species total is about 75 species each year (with 122+ for the entire count).

After a relatively few hours of rest, I drive to Moodus (East Haddam area) for the Salmon River count, where I see lots of Canada Geese and also Ring-necked Duck, Hooded and Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Wild Turkey, the occasional Killdeer and snipe, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, and Eastern Meadowlark. The habitat is completely different from that of New Haven area. In Moodus, I traverse the Dill Farm (trees) and the Cone Farm (cows), dodge additional cows at a nursery and garden center as I search for snipe, flush meadowlarks from a field at that same garden center, scout pine and hemlock plantations, walk the edges of red maple swamps and sand pits, look out on Moodus Reservoir and Bashan Lake for waterfowl, and visit bird feeders. The hoped-for species total in this area is 45 (with 80+ for the whole count). New Haven's count is locked on my calendar for Saturday, and Salmon River is locked on the calendar for Sunday. New Haven CBC experiences are unforgettable for a whole set of reasons, and Salmon River experiences are unforgettable for a completely different set of reasons. Not the least of it is the people with whom I have the opportunity to bird and share stories. The several additional Connecticut counts I've had the opportunity to participate in are unique and remarkable in their own ways. Every count in the state has its specialty species, its terrific habitat, and its great gatherings of birders.

So, how about it? Will we be seeing you out there this year? If you've done one or more Christmas Bird Counts before, you know the excitement of the event. If you haven't, the fun is just around the corner for you. Everyone contributes to the effort; everyone is needed. Take the plunge! (And dress appropriately!)

**The Newsletter of the
Connecticut Ornithological Association
is published quarterly in
February, May, August, and November.**

**Please submit materials for the next
issue by February 1, 1998 to
Dwight Smith, Editor,
241 Shepard Ave., Hamden, CT 06514.**

**99th Annual National Audubon Society Christmas
Bird Count Friday, December 18, 1998 through Sun-
day, January 3, 1999.**

Connecticut Christmas Count Schedule

Saturday, December 19, 1998:

**New Haven, CT (NH CT) Compilers: Stephen P. Broker, 50
Hidden Place, Cheshire, CT 06410-3723, 203-272-5192,
Frank Gallo, New Canaan Nature Center, 140 Oanoke Ridge,
New Canaan, CT 06840, 203-966-6756, and Chris Loscalzo,
67 Wepawaug Road, Woodbridge, CT 06525, 203-389-6508.**

**Storrs, CT (ST CT) Compiler: Steve Rogers, 75 Charles
Lane, Storrs, CT 06268, 860-4291259.**

**Woodbury-Roxbury, CT (WR CT) Compiler: Chris Wood,
6 Orton Lane, Woodbury, CT 06798, 203-263-5331.**

Sunday, December 20, 1998:

**Greenwich-Stamford, CT (GS CT) Compilers: Gary Palmer,
34 Field Road, Cos Cob, CT 06807, 203-661-4897, Brian
O'Toole, 6 Fort Hills lane, Greenwich, CT 06831, 203-629-
1027, and Pat Bailey, 1435 Bedford Street, Apt. 10H, Stam-
ford, CT 06905.**

**Litchfield Hills, CT (LH CT) Compiler: Raymond E. Belding,
1229 Winsted Road #30, Torrington, CT 06790, 860-482-
4046.**

**Lakeville-Sharon, CT (LS CT) Compiler: Bob Moeller,
P.O. Box 1119, Sharon, CT 06069, 860-364-5936.**

**Oxford, CT (OX CT) Compiler: Buzz Devine, 18 South
Street, Plymouth, CT 06782, 860-283-0744.**

**Quinnipiac Valley, CT (QV CT) Compiler: Wilford Schultz,
93 Harrison Road, Wallingford, CT 06492, 203-265-6398.**

**Salmon River, CT (SR CT) Compiler: David A. Titus, 278
Court Street #108, Middletown, CT 06457, 860-346-3735.**

**Westport, CT (WE CT) Compiler: Frank W. Mantlik, P.O.
Box 3161, Westport, CT 06880, 203-846-8601. Additional
contact: Ed Hiestand, 10 Woodside Lane, Westport, CT
06880, 203-227-5997.**

Sunday, December 27, 1998:

**Barkhamsted, CT (BA CT) Compiler: David Tripp, Jr., 19A
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Loomis Heights, New Hartford, CT 06507 860-379-9237

Stratford-Milford, CT (SM CT) Compiler: Steve Mayo, 27 Tuttle Court, Bethany CT 06524, 203-393-0694.

Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood, CT (EW CT) Compiler: Marilyn Higgins, Hammonad Hill Road, Hampton, CT 06247 860-455-0063

✂ **Friday, January 1, 1999:**

Pawling (Hidden Valley), NY-CT (HV NY) Compiler: Sibyll Gilbert, RR1, Box 236, Pawling, NY 12564, 914-855-3266, and Angela Dimmitt, New Milford, CT 860-355-3429 or 212-628-8348.

Saturday, January 2, 1999:

Hartford, CT (HA CT) Compiler: Jay Kaplan, 71 Gracey Road, Canton, CT 06019, 860-693-0157.

New London, CT (NL CT) Compiler: Robert Dewire, 9 Canary Street, Pawcatuck, CT 06379, 860-599-3085.

Sunday, January 3, 1999:

Old Lyme-Saybrook, CT (OL CT) Compiler: Patty Pendergast, 112-1 Main Street, Chester, CT 06412.

Conservation Challenge

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bird strikes at power lines and transmission towers, that new power lines along the Connecticut coast would pose new hazards for a host of migratory herons, waterfowl, shorebirds, and perhaps small birds who tend to concentrate on the Connecticut shore every year, especially in autumn. It is, nevertheless, another example of that "difficult to document" degradation of the environment.

I argued that we should, at a minimum, "birdproof" this construction project by equipping it with bird flight deflector

devices, especially where the rail line crosses the head of salt water inlets, where birds often pitch down from higher elevations in order to assess or land in tidal wetlands. Such marsh reentrants are a delightful characteristic of eastern Connecticut, and the railroad transects many of them. Our testimony was well received, and we confidently expected the DEP staff would spell out the requirements that Amtrak was to comply with.

In September, 1998, however, and perhaps only thanks to the prodding of Sue Holloway of Stony Creek, DEP again invited us to consult. To our dismay, although DEP and Amtrak had already initiated a program to minimize hazards to nesting Ospreys, we learned that the tables had been turned. We were merely being asked to help design a "monitoring program" to discover "whether" there was indeed a risk requiring mitigation. DEP staff, we were essentially told, had not been able to commit time to confirm the risk, not even to do the literature search that would document past experience. So far as waterfowl, herons, and shore birds were concerned, we were back at square one.

Herein, the conservation challenge. Amtrak assured us that they had alerted their road crews to the importance of reporting bird kills along the line, and that none had been seen. Even birders who were queried about this problem opined that if the rail lines were a bird hazard, they would be aware of it. This is the positivist's option: what I don't know about is likely to be of little significance.

But we know, for example, that most of the birds that strike these wires, and are crippled or killed thereby, do not fall immediately beneath the line. Only those who impale themselves remain visible; the others glance off and fall some distance away, already dead, or to die a slow death, half hidden from view, and seldom seen. When the nation was first extensively electrified with the advent of television, in the fifties and sixties, experiments demonstrated that birds killed in this way are quickly scavenged by small predators. So, neither the birders who have come to think that they see everything, nor untrained rail line crews, can assess this problem by casual observation.

Bird deflectors on lines that cross marsh reentrants are thus a modest investment in insurance. No one will "prove" their effectiveness or "their need" without a willingness to

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HOTLINE REPORTS

To report sightings of rare, unusual, or migrating birds, call one of the following:

Dave Procencher 860-885-1239

Frank Gallo 203-966-6756

Mark Santyr 860-455-0787

Frank Mantlik 203-854-9780

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Conservation Challenge

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make the investments in more detailed, localized, studies of a problem first analyzed a generation ago, and now neglected because scientists see no need to repeat the field research involved, and non-scientists are not even aware of the data that first documented the problem.

What action is indicated? Either DEP should request the installation of bird deflectors for this billion-dollar rail project, or it should add one or two biologists to walk the rail line full-time and assess the problem scientifically.

Wildlife Watching

by Patty Pendergast

While at the National Audubon Society annual convention this summer in Colorado, I was startled to learn that a Forbes magazine poll showed that more people participated in wildlife watching than golfing. For clarity's sake wildlife watching is defined as 'observing, feeding and photographing wildlife'. The 1996 National survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation (FHWAR), found that in 1996, 62.9 million people 16 years of age and older spent \$29 billion on trips and equipment in pursuit of wildlife watching. The Connecticut numbers are also very impressive, even just considering sales of equipment and related items - \$199 million was spent on everything from binoculars and cameras, birdseed, nest boxes, film, day packs through books, magazines and plantings. State sales tax revenue is estimated at \$11.3 million for total expenditures from wildlife recreation activities.

If we could only harness that positive synergy and use it to make our elected officials aware of our presence and impact. The COA board has indicated interest in the staffing and funding of the Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Natural Resources Wildlife Division. This division is one of the lowest funded in the country. *A good deal of the Wildlife Divisions' money comes through licenses and fees from the hunting and angler community.* That source is being depleted with the current public shift away from hunting. The Wildlife Division does not receive money from the state's general fund. The coming year will bring significant cuts in an already understaffed office. Odds are the biggest hits will be to the non-harvested game program of the wildlife division. These are the biologists who coordinate our grassland birds and Worm-eating Warbler censuses, colonial waterbird surveys; facilitate Roseate Tern and Piping Plover restoration and Osprey counts. Important data collection for open space determination, habitat protection and myriad other interests

to our community will be endangered.

At this moment it does not appear that the hoped for relief from the federal Teaming with Wildlife initiative will come through Congress. We will have to be on the lookout for funding sources from within to resuscitate these diminished yet important programs.

1999 Great Backyard Bird Count

Audubon and Cornell invite all birders to participate in the 1999 Great Backyard Bird Count.

During one weekend last February, more than fourteen thousand citizen scientists took part in the first-ever Great Backyard Bird Count. People all across the continent made birdwatching history on February 20th, 21st, and 22nd by taking to their backyards, parks and neighborhoods, counting birds, and then logging their results on the BirdSource website. As the weekend counts progressed, participants could literally see the results appearing on BirdSource's maps like election-count returns. By the beginning of the next week, scientists at Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology had gotten an unprecedented snapshot of the North American winter bird population the weekend before spring migrations began.

This year, Audubon members and Cornell staff are working together to increase the effectiveness of the count as a tool for conservation. Wild Birds Unlimited has also signed on to the project this fall as a sponsor, and information on participation will be made available through their network of stores throughout the United States and Canada.

"Participation made the Great 98' Backyard Bird Count a success; an undertaking this large simply can't succeed without birders counting every jay, crossbill, and chickadee," said Sally Conyne, Audubon's Director of Citizen Science. "The Great 98' Backyard Bird Count provided clues that began to answer questions about the location and status of birds, and the effect of El Nino on them. From Alaska to Florida, backyards were on display, and we began to realize their importance and potential. This year, with Audubon chapters, bird clubs, Wild Birds Unlimited staff, and birdwatchers working together, we can make BirdSource among the most effective conservation tools we possess."

The Second Annual Great Backyard Bird Count will cover February 19 through February 22. The goal this year is to multiply participation many times over. This year's data will allow Audubon and Cornell scientists to begin to look for

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Great Backyard Bird Count

trends and population shifts. The increased efforts of citizen scientists will help to define the status of birds at the close of the millennium, allow a comparison of the effects of El Nino on migration one year later, and create unmatched educational opportunities. "The Great Backyard Bird Count is a wonderful way to engage school children, some of whom are already involved in Audubon Adventures and Feeder Watch classrooms. We will offer curriculum materials on the website from Late October through the end of February," continued Conyne.

"When you consider the amount of media attention the count received, you realize that we also have a great chance to educate the public at large about the significance of backyard habitat and what it is we all do when we count birds," said Conyne. Media interest has never been high for an Audubon project - due to the straightforward appeal for help in counting birds and the novelty of the first count to be entirely conducted on the Internet media appearances came near the 1,000-story mark. "This is a great opportunity for chapters to use the inherent newsworthiness of this project as a means to get media attention for their own people and community outreach projects," continued Conyne. "We view the Great Backyard Bird Count as one of a series of effective tools for local Audubon Societies' and bird clubs' newsletter editors and public relations specialists to use for the benefit of their organizations."

The BirdSource Great Backyard Bird Count invites every family and individual in the country to identify and count the birds they see at their bird feeders, in their backyards and in local parks or other outdoor locations, aiding scientists' understanding of bird populations and their distribution. The key to this history-making event is that participants contribute their sightings online, through a revolutionary World wide Web site, BirdSource<<http://birds.cornell.edu>>, a joint National Audubon Society/Cornell Lab of Ornithology project. In turn, BirdSource provides almost instantaneous feedback to participants through compelling graphics, animated maps and constantly updated summaries.

"The Great Backyard Bird Count is a state-of-the-art project and a great family activity. It's fun, it's easy to participate in, and it's good for science," says Cornell Lab of Ornithology Director John Fitzpatrick. "All you need is a love of the outdoors and access to a computer. Everyone who participates in BirdSource's second backyard Bird Count can tell generations to come that they helped make history, being among the first to take part in an instant, continental bird survey on the Internet."

"It has become increasingly apparent that weather phenomena like El Nino may influence the winter movements of birds," says Audubon Senior Vice President for Science Frank Gill. "We need people to help us. If five percent of the approximately 54 million bird watchers in the United States participate, we will add significantly to our knowledge of the current health of wintering birds across our continent."

Now, everyone can help by being part of the Second Annual Great Backyard Bird Count. On the weekend of February 19-22, parents, children and grandparents - anyone with an interest in birds and access to the Internet - should watch their bird feeders and backyards, and count the maximum number of each of the different bird species he or she sees. For those without feeders, counts can be made in neighborhoods or local parks. Participants can spend as little or as much time as they want counting birds during the three-day period. They then submit their counts via BirdSource - which also offers assistance in bird identification in an easy-to-use form.

Forms will be integrated with the accumulating data and displayed almost instantly on the web. "BirdSource allows virtually up-to-the-minute analysis of important data," says Audubon's Gill. "Watching the count results will be like watching election returns from all across the country, right on your own computer screen. This exciting and engaging technology - a tool that just wasn't available before the creation of BirdSource - will revolutionize our ability to keep track of birds."

BirdSource contributors have already helped make some exciting discoveries. Winter finches typically remain in Canada throughout the year; however, as BirdSource's Winter Finch Survey revealed last season, finches streamed into the U.S. in record-breaking numbers in '98. The first Great Backyard Bird Count participants revealed that birds like the American Robin, which usually winters in southern locales, were found much further north, spending their winter months in New England and Canada, perhaps directly due to the effects of El Nino. BirdSource's Second Annual Backyard Bird Count will help scientists understand the continuing impact of El Nino as they watch this year's unique characteristics unravel.

To learn more about the Second Annual Great '98 Backyard Bird Count or the results of last year's count, readers can visit the BirdSource website, <http://birds.cornell.edu/>, or contact Sally Conyne at, sconyne@audubon.org.

Watch for more information at:

<http://birdsource.cornell.edu>

Suggestions? Ideas? Questions? contact: Sally Conyne, Director of Citizen Science. email: sconyne@audubon.org.

COA Bulletin

COA Shorebird Workshop Wrap-up

by Jay Kaplan

On Sunday, August 30th, more than seventy birders met at the Connecticut Audubon's Coastal Center for the COA annual shorebird workshop. It was probably fortunate that many birders opted for Jamaica Bay to look for the first "lower 48" record of the Borad-billed Sandpiper, otherwise the crowd might have been somewhat unmanageable. Thanks to Dori Sosensky and Greg Hanisek for agreeing to assist (in fact, Dori arrived early and scouted the sandbars for us prior to the workshop).

Workshop co-leaders Jay Kaplan and Frank Mantlik provided the group with information about fall migration and the natural history of some of the species to be expected. Among the more interesting birds observed were a Merlin flying eastward along the shoreline; a single Lesser Golden Plover amidst numerous Black-billed Plovers in all manner of plumage; and single Forster's and Black Terns that, after a great deal of difficulty, finally became more obvious amongst the many Common Terns massing on the sandbars in preparation for their long migration. Also noted were the more common shorebird migrants including Semipalmated Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Semipalmated and Least Sandpiper; as well as wading birds like Great Blue Heron, Great and Snowy Egrets, and Black-crowned Night Heron.

After about 90 minutes the group split up. Frank Mantlik continued down the beach to the platform at the entrance to the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, while others returned to the area around the parking lot and scanned from the platform located there. Additional birds noted included Glossy Ibis, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Green-winged Teal, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Clapper Rail, a fly-by Whimbrel, and two Ruby-throated Hummingbirds! A Roseate Tern was heard calling, although it could not be found. Fifty-three species were totaled for the trip.

In addition to tips on shorebird and tern identification, workshop participants were treated to information on the natural history of the area, as well as ideas on where to view upcoming birding spectacles such as the fall hawk watch. Many of the participants were new to COA and several were beginning birders. These trips are meant to offer something for birders of all skill levels, whether it be the chance to learn how to use a new spotting scope, to learn about a birding area that may be new to you, or to hone your skills on the nuances of fall dowitcher identification. Ideas for future workshops are welcome and may be addressed to Jay Kaplan, COA Field Trip Chairman, 71 Gracey Road, Canton, CT 06019

(hey Jay, how about a workshop on confusing fall sparrows next autumn?)

COA Winter Gull Identification Workshop

by Jay Kaplan

A gull identification workshop will be held on Saturday, February 13th at the Manchester Land Fill. This is currently the best location in the state to look for rarer gulls. Last year, Glaucous, Iceland, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls all frequented the area, and during last year's workshop, a probable first year Thayer's Gull was discovered. (A report is currently under evaluation by the Avian Records Committee). The sheer number of gulls at the landfill allows for viewing each of the common gull species in a variety of plumages.

The workshop is cosponsored by the Hartford Audubon Society. Meet at the K-Mart Shopping Center on Spencer Street, Manchester (exit 1 off Interstate 384). Leaders are Mark Szantyr (860-455-0787) and Patrick Comins (860-646-6600).

Nature Drawing and Painting in Trinidad & Tobago with Mike DiGiorgio

Birders are invited to take part in a unique opportunity to learn drawing and painting in a vibrant island rainforest! Surrounded by the splendor of the tropics, you can join illustrator Mike DiGiorgio for an 11-day art workshop in beautiful Trinidad and Tobago.

Participants will spend 8 days at the internationally famous Asa Wright Nature Center and Lodge. Field trips will be conducted to various parts of the island where you will see nesting sea turtles, hundreds of soaring Scarlet Ibis, unusual oil bird caves, and more. The last 3 days of our trip will be spent at the breathtaking beachfront Blue Waters Inn on Tobago. Here, you will have the opportunity to relax on the beach or snorkel among the contours of a lush coral reef. Our final field trip will take you to the small, uninhabited island of Little Tobago, where you will be able to hike the trails and see nesting tropical seabirds.

You do not have to be an accomplished painter to join this trip---beginners are welcome! Mike will conduct classes in field sketching in pencil and watercolor. The cost for this entire package---with airfare and all meals included is just \$1845. The trip will run from June 5-15, 1999, and will be limited to 10 participants. For more info, or to reserve your spot, call Mike DiGiorgio at 203-421-5848.

COA Bulletin

Trips & Events

The Audubon Shop

12th Annual Eagle Watches on the Connecticut River every Saturday, from January 16 through February 20. Price is \$15 per person. Price includes lunch at Oliver's Tavern. Preregistration required. Binocular rentals available. Beginners welcome. Call Jerry Connolly at 203-245-9056 for details.

Menunkatuck Audubon Society

Wildlife Lecture Series. The MAS sponsors a series of lectures of interest to birders and other wildlife enthusiasts. For information on these programs please contact Jerry Connolly at 203-245-9056.

Hartford Audubon Society

Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison, on Sunday, December 6. Meet at the park entrance at 8:00 am. to begin a search for Lapland Longspurs, owls, Snow buntings, Horned Larks, and other wintering species. Dress warmly for this morning trip. Call Louise Tucker at 860-749-8968 for details.

Beginner Bird Walk at Station 43, on Sunday, January 10. Everything you always wanted to know about bird identification but were afraid to ask. Meet at the corner of Newberry Road and Main Street at 9:00 am. Call leaders Len Kendall at 860-658-7952 or Roger Preston at 860-658-8010 for details.

Gull Identification Workshop on Saturday, February 13. Trip is cosponsored with the COA. Meet at the K-mart Shopping Center on Spencer Street at 8:30 am. Leaders are Patrick Comins at 860-646-6600 and Mark Szantyr at 860-455-0787

Beginner's Bird Walk at Station 43 on Sunday, March 14. Bring your binoculars, field guides, and questions! Meet at the corner of Newberry Road and Main Street at 8:00 am. Call leaders Len Kendall at 860-658-7952 or Roger Preston at 860-658-8010 for details.

Western Connecticut Shoreline, on Saturday, March 20. Explore the coastline for late wintering birds and spring arrivals. Dress warmly and bring lunch. Meet at the Long Wharf Information Center off I-95 in New Haven at 8:00 am. Call leader Carl Ekroth at 860-872-6372 for details.

Hammonasset for Beginning Birders, on Sunday, March 21. This trip will offer beginners another location to sharpen their skills. More advanced birders who are willing to help are encouraged to join us. Each trip begins at the park entrance at 8:00 am. Call leader John Gaskell at 860-669-1862 for details.

Sachuest Point, Rhode Island, on Sunday, March 28. Sachuest Point is home to the largest wintering flock of Harlequin Ducks in New England with upwards of 60 birds possible. Other ducks and seabirds are common and we may see Gannets as well as many other birds that are harder to find in Connecticut. Bring lunch for this all day trip. Meet at the Sachuest Point parking lot at 8:30 am. Call leader Paul Desjardins at 860-623-3695 for directions and details.

HAS Wildlife Lecture Series

"Belize" on Tuesday, November 17. Sam Fried, birder, naturalist, and photographer will be presenting his newest program, based on his adventures in the jungles of Northern Belize at the McAuley Residence Auditorium, 275 Steele Road, West Hartford.

"Birding the Four Corners of North America" on Tuesday, March 16. Shawneen Finegan will take us from the Tortugas to Alaska and Colorado to Cape May to share her many beautiful slides and adventures to these varied U.S. birding spots. Shawneen is a gifted artist and photographer and a trip leader for Wings and Cape May Bird Observatory.

HAS Monthly Meetings

All meetings are open to the public. Meetings are held at the Elmwood Community Center, 1106 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford, and begin at 7:30 pm unless otherwise noted. Meetings include presentations by a number of speakers on bird and other wildlife topics. Call Fran at 203-677-6129 for details.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

**COA encourages local bird clubs to send announcements of field trips and events to Dwight Smith, Bulletin Editor
241 Shepard Ave., Hamden, CT 06514**

COA Bulletin

Trips and Events *(continued from page 7)*

Connecticut Audubon Society

The CAS announces the following field trips and has generously offered to extend its members rate to COA members. Call Andy Griswold at 860-767-0660 or 1-800-996-8747 for more details on these trips.

Winter Birds at Hammonasset, on Sunday, January 10, from 9 am to noon. Join Jerry Connolly of The Audubon Shop in Madison for this trip to Hammonasset in search of snow buntings, horned larks, owls, and other wintering birds. Cost, CAS members \$8, nonmembers \$10.

Walk at Haddam Meadows, on Sunday, January 17, from 10 am to 12:30 pm. Join Mike Digiorgio for a winter bird watching trip along the Connecticut River. We will stop at Haddam Meadows Park in Haddam to look for sparrows, winter hawks, ducks, cormorants, mergansers, and possibly an eagle, then venture south along the river for eagles. Dress warmly. CAS members \$8, nonmembers \$10.

Connecticut River Eagles, either Sunday, January 31, or Sunday, February 7, from 10 am to 1 pm. CAS will sponsor two special boat charters to view wintering eagles along the Connecticut River, departing from the River Museum in Essex. Cost \$25, with brunch \$45.

Birds of Barkhamsted, on Saturday, February 6, from 9 am. Join Director of Education at Fairfield Jim Sirch in the state's northwest corner to search for winter finches, raven, and Golden Eagle. Transportation from New Haven and enroute is available. CAS members \$18, nonmembers \$25.

Harlequins at Newport, on Saturday, February 13, from 12:30 pm. Join CAS Director of EcoTravel Andy Griswold for a look at the Harlequins and other winter ducks at the Point plus a tour of additional birding spots around Newport. Optional overnight can be included at the Hotel Viking, followed by more birding the next day. CAS members \$50, nonmembers \$60 for the Saturday tour and dinner. Two day package is \$120 for members, \$130 for nonmembers.

Greenwich Point and Holly Pond, on Sunday, February 21, from 8:30 am to noon. Join CAS Trip Leader Frank Mantlik in exploring two of his favorite birding spots in SW Connecticut. Expect to see ducks, hawks, owls, gulls, numerous other waterfowl. CAS members \$8, nonmembers \$10

REGIONAL HOTLINES

Connecticut (203) 254-3665
Rhode Island (401) 949-3970
Eastern Massachusetts (617) 259-8805
Western Massachusetts (413) 253-2218
Vermont (802) 547-4861
New Hampshire (603) 224-9900
Maine (207) 781-2332
New York Metro (212) 979-3070
Northern New Jersey (908) 766-2661
Cape May, New Jersey (609) 884-2626

Ducks and Shorebirds on Sunday, February 28, from 8 am. Join naturalist Bill Yule for a search along the coast between Stony Creek and Guilford Harbor for the ducks and shorebirds of midwinter. Chances are good to see all three scoters, scaups, oldsquaw, purple sandpipers, and more. CAS members \$8, nonmembers \$12.

Winter Gulls on Saturday, March 13, from 9 am. Join expert Connecticut birder Mark Szantyr for this day trip which will explain the often confusing winter plumages of gulls. Trip originates in Old Saybrook. CAS members \$8, nonmembers \$12.

Along the Coast for Gourmets, on Sunday, March 14, from 1 pm. Join CAS Director of EcoTravel Andy Griswold to explore the shoreline from Westbrook to Old Lyme in search of late winter stragglers and early spring migrants. Lunch is at the famed Du Village of Chester. CAS members \$75, nonmembers \$85.

The New Haven Bird Club

Cape Cod in Winter, on January 9 and 10. See many of the birds usually seen at Plum Island. This trip will focus on the outer cape, covering Wellfleet, the Privincelands, Race Point, and other hot spots. Alcids and more northern ducks along with the chance to see whales, dolphins, seals. Call Frank Gallo at 203-966-6756 for details.

The Fat Robin

Eagle field trips to the Connecticut River. For times and dates and additional info call Jim or Carol Zipp at The Fat Robin at 203-248-7068.

COA Bulletin

Field Reports Requested

Birding observations by COA birders form the basis for the seasonal reports on the status of resident and migrating birds in the state which appear in *The Connecticut Warbler* and *Audubon Field Notes*. COA members are encouraged to report their sightings by filling in Species Report Forms. The forms can be obtained by calling Greg Hanisek at 203-574-3636.

Report periods and due dates are; Fall period from August 1 through November 30, report due December 10; Winter from December 1 to February 28, report due March 10; Spring from March 1 to May 30, report due June 10; Summer from June 1 to July 30, report due August 10. Please submit reports to Greg Hanisek, 175 Circuit Ave., Waterbury, CT 06708. Contributors should complete separate forms for each species observed. Sort the forms into phylogenetic order, using the COA *Connecticut Field List* as a guide. Detailed descriptions should be given for species on the *Field List* denoted by * (rare) or # (hypothetical) or for species not on the *Field List*. All reports will be preserved. Comments are welcomed.

Joining COA

The Connecticut Ornithological Association welcomes new members. COA is the only statewide organization devoted exclusively to birds and birding, and its members range from beginning birders to professional ornithologists. Joining COA is guaranteed to improve your knowledge of Connecticut birds and increase your enjoyment of Connecticut birding.

Membership costs as little as \$12.00 per year and includes a copy of *The Ten Best Birding Sites in Connecticut*, the quarterly *COA Bulletin*, the quarterly *Connecticut Warbler*, and invitations to COA events such as field trips and field days. Membership dues also support COA's rare bird hotline, conservation initiatives, and research projects. New members receive a copy of the official *Connecticut Field List* and a COA decal.

Present COA members who have not yet renewed for the current year can use the form below. Check the mailing label on the other side of this page to see whether your membership is current. If not, please send in the form today.

JOIN COA FOR THE BEST OF CONNECTICUT BIRDING

Please print or type

New Member Renewal Gift

Name _____ Name 2 _____

(Memberships above the individual level can include a spouse or partner)

Address _____

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Telephone* _____ Occupation* _____

Bird Club or Audubon Chapter* _____ Christmas Count Name* _____

Level of Birding Experience* Beginner Novice Intermediate Advanced Expert

Membership Category Individual (\$12) Family (\$18) Contributing (\$25) Sustaining (\$40)

**Optional*

Send this application with your check to:

Connecticut Ornithological Association, 314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06430

COA does not release its membership list to other organizations. Dues are tax deductible as allowed under the law.

MEMBERS: PLEASE GIVE THIS FORM TO A BIRDING FRIEND

COA Bulletin

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Vice President	Mark Szantyr, 662 Phoenixville Road, Chaplin, CT 06235 860-455-0787
Treasurer	Jim Zipp, 400 Mt. Sanford Road, Hamden, CT 06518 203-272-1439
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